VCE Unit 2 English
Outcome 2 – Analysing and Presenting Argument
COURSE READER
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A fascinating study that is monumental in its research scope and ambitions is published in the fall American Political Science Review, the flagship scholarly journal for the discipline. Researchers S. Laurel Weldon and Mala Htun have conducted the largest global study on violence against women. They’re interested in progressive policy change, and how it happens.*

The scope of their data is unprecedented. It includes every region of the world, 70 countries, and encompasses 85 percent of the world's population. The data analysis alone took five years, and the research itself was conducted over four decades.

Out of this herculean research effort, Weldon and Htun conclude that the “mobilization of feminist movements is more important for change than the wealth of nations, left-wing political parties, or the number of women politicians” in a country, according to the APSR press release.

The authors found that these vibrant and autonomous feminist movements were the first to articulate the issue of violence against women, mobilize political will against it, and catalyze government action. Other organizations, even those with progressive leanings, tended to sideline issues perceived as being only relevant to women.

Once movements have called public attention to the damage of violence against women—it’s a drain on society, and not just women’s lives—those movements have an “enduring impact through the institutionalization of feminist ideas” about violence.

The autonomy of the movements in civil society emerges as a key characteristic. These movements commandeered public attention and support, and they could organize around these priorities without “having to answer to broader organizational concerns or men’s needs.”

Weldon and Htun define “autonomy” as “independence not only from the state but also from all institutions with a more general focus.” It’s “a form of women’s mobilization that is devoted to promoting women’s status and wellbeing independently of political parties and other associations that do not have the status of women as their main concern.”

In other words, women need a movement of their own, as well as a room of their own.

A second key insight is that social movements matter. The grassroots, often tiresome work of one-on-one organizing, mobilization, advocacy and education about the issue makes a difference. The authors conclude from this research that social movements and civil society are crucial to change.

This is heartening news. There’s a tendency to feel hopeless in the face of the Big Trends and the analyses of the violence and degradation against women as collateral damage of what feel like almost insurmountable “larger problems” and social pathology. For example we sometimes think of violence against women as mostly a by-product of economic development and educational opportunities, or lack thereof.
Conversely, there’s a consoling tendency to think that once these economic conditions improve, violence against women will diminish naturally, as a happy consequence of other social changes.

This research concludes that the work of individuals in civil society not only makes a difference, but makes the difference in comparison to other potential but more indirect levers of social change, such as having left-leaning parties or more national wealth. Write Weldon and Htun, the “effects of autonomous organizing are more important in our analysis than women’s...representation inside the legislature or the impact of political parties. Nor do economic factors such as national wealth trump the societal causes of policy making. Although these intra-legislative and economic factors have received a great deal of attention...they are inadequate to explain the significant changes in policies on violence against women. Civil society holds the key here.”

The authors observe that “violence against women is rarely raised as an issue, much less as a priority, without pressure from feminists,” and “this is true even among progressive social justice organizations and human rights groups.” Progressive groups aren’t inclined to see violence against women as human rights violations, even when they adhere to human rights perspectives and priorities. Having an autonomous feminist movement makes the issue relevant and visible.

In other words, there is no proxy cause, or substitute, for raising the issue as its own issue, and not an ancillary one in a larger social agenda. And the “me, too” approach of appending a concern for “women's issues” to a left, progressive or liberal agenda doesn't have the same magnitude or effect, either.

Weldon confirms that violence against women is a global problem, of sobering dimensions. Other research confirms “astonishingly high rates of sexual assault, stalking, trafficking, violence in intimate relationships, and other violations of women's bodies and psyches,” she says. A powerful tool to mitigate and combat these conditions is an autonomous feminist movement.

I’m going to remember this study's findings every time I read another toss-out line about how “annoying” or irrelevant people find feminism to be, or that we’re in a post-feminist age. Feminism works globally. And it works, here, too. It raises issues and addresses them in ways that other movements—even kindred movements and parties—do not.
Why boys should read girl books
by Caroline Paul for IDEAS.TED (Mar 29, 2016)

The other day, I got rejected. It wasn’t over love, but nevertheless it stung: a middle school declined my offer to speak to their kids about my latest book, The Gutsy Girl: Escapades for Your Life of Epic Adventure, because it would exclude boys.

At first I shrugged, said I understood and went on to other things. But the more I thought about it, the more wound up I became.

Yes, the book is called The Gutsy Girl: Escapades for Your Life of Epic Adventure. Yes, it opens with an author’s note that starts, “Dear Gutsy Girl.” Yes, all the drawings feature girls.

But that doesn’t mean boys are excluded. It just means that the book isn’t about them.

This, it turns out, is basically the same thing. If you’re talking about boys, I mean.

We are raising our boys to lack empathy.

I thought of all the books I’d read in middle school. Shane, for starters, a Western that centers on fistfighting and shoot-'em-ups. (I loved the book.) The only female character was a mother, who (of course) falls into chaste love with the hyper-masculine duking-and-gunslinging Shane. There was The Red Badge of Courage, which takes place on the Civil War battlefield. Loved it too, but I don’t recall a single female character. These books’ storylines — and many more — were as far away from my life as a girl I could imagine. Yet no one excused me from reading them. And for that I have been very glad.

Then I heard a disturbing story, about a writer who had also written a book that featured girls. When she attended a school assembly to speak to the kids, she saw that many of the seats were empty. Boys, it turned out, had been excused from the program.

So girls are expected to read books about boys, and people of color are expected to read books about whites (and boys). No one thinks twice about whether we should attend the assembly. But boys are immediately excused.

Curious, I looked at that week’s New York Times children’s bestseller list. At first the books seemed to vary wildly. There were robots, cats on surfboards, Norse swords, and pet foxes. But of the top ten, nine featured Caucasian boys. The remaining one starred both a boy (of color) and a girl (white); it was the book adaptation of the movie Star Wars: The Force Awakens. For this week at least, not a single bestseller had a sole female protagonist. Not a one.

Yet the United States is a country where there are more females than males, and which has a public school system in which people of color outnumber white students. What’s up with such a misrepresentative bestseller list? The conclusion I draw is that authors and publishers are throwing their weight behind certain books because of this widespread belief that, hey, everyone will read about boys. So what does this mean for the fate of books? More important: what does this mean for the fate of boys?
We read to experience a panoply of perspectives. We read to learn of people and situations outside and beyond ourselves, so we can deepen our connection and understanding. We read to prepare for life. It follows, then, that we are raising our boys to dismiss other people’s experiences, and to see their needs and concerns as the center of things. We are raising our boys to lack empathy.

This insistence by adults that boys want only boy things ultimately damages girls. But it hurts boys too.

The writer whose presentation was not attended by boys is named Shannon Hale, and in her blog post about the incident she goes even further. She says that the agreement that boys shouldn’t read about girls, that in fact it’s shameful to be interested in what girls do and think about in books, is an agreement that “leads directly to rape culture.”

This is serious stuff.

The Representation Project, a nonprofit that challenges destructive cultural stereotypes, comes to similar sinister conclusions. Its movie, *The Mask You Live In*, looks at how media, among other forces, convinces boys that anything considered remotely girl-like in oneself is not only to be avoided, it’s to be reviled. The movie asks, how can a boy steeped in contempt for the feminine grow up to respect women? Answer: he can’t and won’t.

I asked Representation Project staffer Cristina Escobar what happens when boys read only books by males, about males. She said that they will be “taught that girls are objects, that they are prizes that they can win,” and that “boys go out and do things and girls sit back and wait to be rescued.”

So this insistence by adults that boys want only boy things ultimately damages girls. But it hurts boys too. Escobar believes that boys do want to read about girls, and the persistent statements otherwise are “a stereotype that adults put on kids.” She points to an extensive study that showed that almost 80% of boys who play video games don’t care about the gender of their avatar. “We all need to explore different parts of our identity and what is unique about us,” she told me. “Unfortunately, media often uses stereotypes to communicate. It puts people in boxes and makes it hard for them to live up to their potential.” She says that this pressure on boys to “stick to a model that doesn’t fit” leads to high rates of binge drinking, depression, school truancy, and even suicide as they become teens.

When a boy is directed to books that reflect only a narrow aspect of the world — often a part he already knows — or he is shamed for any interest in what is considered a “girl book,” his understanding of girls and of himself is devastatingly incomplete. So the school that rejected me is doing boys no favors. Ironically, *The Gutsy Girl: Escapades For Your Life Of Epic Adventure* is a “girl book” that boys might love. There are no girls tied to the tracks. There are no love interests. There is only mishap, mayhem and close calls on high mountains, raging rivers and ocean expeditions. Daring, skilled women like “Queen Bess” Coleman (barnstormer and parachutist), Mae Jemison (astronaut) and Ashima Shiraisi (one of the best climbers in the world, man or woman, hands down) are highlighted. The only person who needs to be rescued is the narrator (me), and I always manage to rescue myself. Yes, *The Gutsy Girl* was written to inspire values of bravery and resilience in girls. But it is also a manifesto against the lame stereotypes boys and men hold of us. It’s time that boys see that, as Escobar says, “women are as much doers as the men.” It’s time that boys read girl books, for everyone’s sake.
"[I want] better education regarding sex for both boys and girls [and] information about pornography, and the way it influences harmful sexual practices."

These are the words of Lucy, aged 15, one of 600 young Australian women and girls who took part in a just-released survey commissioned by Plan Australia and Our Watch. The survey, conducted by Ipsos, gathered responses from the girls and young women aged 15-19 in all states and territories.

In the survey report, entitled Don't send me that pic, participants reported that online sexual abuse and harassment were endemic. More than 80% said it was unacceptable for boyfriends to request naked images.

Sexual bullying and harassment are part of daily life for many girls. Young people are speaking out more and more about how these practices have links with pornography - and so they should, because they have most to lose.

Pornography is moulding and conditioning the sexual behaviours and attitudes of boys, and girls are being left without the resources to deal with these porn-saturated boys.

My own engagement with young women over the last few years in schools around Australia, confirms that we are conducting a pornographic experiment on young people - an assault on their healthy sexual development.

If there are still any questions about whether porn has an impact on young people's sexual attitudes and behaviours, perhaps it's time to listen to young people themselves. Girls and young women describe boys pressuring them to provide acts inspired by the porn they consume routinely. Girls tell of being expected to put up with things they don't enjoy.

[...]

I meet girls who describe being groped in the school yard, girls routinely sexually harassed at school or on the school bus on the way home. They tell me boys act like they are entitled to girls' bodies. Defenders of porn often say that it provides sex education. And it does: it teaches even very young boys that women and girls are always up for it. "No" in fact means yes, or persuade me.

[...]

A 2012 review of research on "The Impact of Internet Pornography on Adolescents" found that adolescent consumption of Internet pornography was linked to attitudinal changes, including acceptance of male dominance and female submission as the primary sexual paradigm, with women viewed as "sexual playthings eager to fulfil male sexual desires." The authors found that
"adolescents who are intentionally exposed to violent sexually explicit material were six times more likely to be sexually aggressive than those who were not exposed."

I have asked girls what messages they might like me to pass on to boys. So far, these messages include: "Stop telling us we are wet," "Stop commenting on our bodies," "Stop demanding pictures," "Rape jokes are never funny" and "Sex before the age of consent is illegal."

The proliferation and globalisation of hypersexualised imagery and pornographic themes makes healthy sexual exploration almost impossible. Sexual conquest and domination are untempered by the bounds of respect, intimacy and authentic human connection. Young people are not learning about intimacy, friendship and love, but about cruelty and humiliation. As a recent study found:

"online mainstream pornography overwhelmingly centered on acts of violence and degradation toward women, the sexual behaviors exemplified in pornography skew away from intimacy and tenderness and typify patriarchal constructions of masculinity and femininity."

It is intimacy and tenderness that so many girls and young women say they are looking for. A young woman told me that on dating sites she lists under "fetish" wanting to stare longingly into someone's eyes and to take sex slow. She said if she didn't put these desires in the "fetish" category, they wouldn't warrant a second glance.

But how will young women find these sensual, slow-burn experiences in men indoctrinated by pornography? Psychologist Philip Zimbardo says of young men: "They don't know the language of face to face contact ... Constant arousal, change, novelty excitement makes them out of sync with slow developing relationships - relationships which build slowly."

It is wrong to leave sexual formation in the hands of the global sex industry. We need to do more to help young people stand up against warped notions of sexuality conveyed in pornography.

Fortunately, the ill-effects of the pornographic experiment on relationships and sexuality are being named out loud. A groundbreaking Australia-first symposium on the issue was held at UNSW last month, to a standing room crowd, and a current Senate inquiry is gathering evidence of the distorting harmful impacts of porn on our young people.

Most importantly, it's young people themselves demanding change. Josie, 18, is quoted in the Plan Australia/Our Watch report:

"We need some sort of crack down on the violent pornography that is currently accessible to boys and men. This violent pornography should be illegal to make or view in Australia as we clearly have a problem with violence and boys are watching a lot of pornography which can be very violent ... This is influencing men's attitude towards women and what they think is acceptable. Violent pornography is infiltrating Australian relationships."

Girls like Lucy and Josie deserve our response.
Sympathy for the Rapist: What the Stanford Case Teaches
by Kate Manne for The Huffington Post (06/09/2016)

So if you meet me
Have some courtesy
Have some sympathy, and some taste
Use all your well-learned politesse
Or I'll lay your soul to waste.

... Tell me baby, what's my name
I tell you one time, you're to blame.

-Sympathy for the Devil, The Rolling Stones

Brock Turner, 20, treated a young woman, 23, like a proverbial piece of meat, violating her behind a dumpster while she was unconscious. Among his father’s chief concerns was that Brock can no longer enjoy a nice rib-eye steak fresh off the grill, having lost his appetite. Many of us lost ours, reading Dan Turner’s statement, in which he lamented his son’s no longer being the “happy-go-lucky self” and “easy going” Stanford swimming star he once was. He described the assault as a mere “twenty minutes of action,” out of twenty years of good behavior. But just as the murderer can’t claim credit for all of the people he didn’t kill, Turner is no less a rapist for all of the women he didn’t violate.

Much was made throughout the trial and sentencing of Brock Turner’s swimming prowess, and the fact that he would have to give up his scholarship and dreams of competing in the Olympics. The judge in this case, Aaron Persky, notoriously worried about “the severe impact” of the conviction on Turner’s future, and gave him what has been widely recognized as a very lenient sentence for crimes of this nature – six months in a county jail, of which he is likely to serve just three, and three years’ probation. The maximum penalty Turner was facing was fourteen years in prison.

Many have called for a harsher sentence, to which there’s already predictably been some pushback. Is incarceration really the answer? But that is not the question. We can ask that question any day of the week. The particular issue which this case raises is what disposes people to feel sorry for the rapist, rather than the victim. The fact of the leniency is to my mind a symptom, rather than constitutive, of the main problem. And the problem is even bigger than rape culture.

For this case vividly illustrates the often overlooked mirror image of misogyny: androphilia, as I’ll call it. It is so overlooked that it is a “problem with no name,” to use Betty Friedan’s phrase. But this isn't because it is a rare phenomenon. On the contrary – it is so common that we tend to regard it as business as usual. The term ‘androphilia’ as I’m using it is intended to encompass all of the ways we collectively ignore, deny, minimize, forgive, and forget the wrongdoing of men who conform to the norms of toxic masculinity, and behave in domineering ways towards their historical subordinates: women.

The specific tendency on display here is the excessive sympathy sometimes shown towards male perpetrators of sexual violence. (Himpathy? Menpathy?) It is most frequently extended to
men who are white, nondisabled, and otherwise privileged “golden boys” like Turner. There is a subsequent reluctance to believe the women who testify against these men, or even to punish the golden boys whose guilt has been firmly established – as, again, Turner’s was.

One reason for this denialism is a mistaken idea about what rapists must be like. Brock Turner is not a monster, wrote one of his female friends, in a letter blaming his conviction on political correctness. He was the victim of a “camp-like university environment,” in which things “get out of hand” due to alcohol and “clouded judgment.” Turner’s crime was “completely different from a woman getting kidnapped and raped as she is walking to her car in a parking lot.” “That is a rapist,” she writes. “I know for a fact that Brock is not one of these people.”

This exemplifies two common inference patterns, the first of which goes like this: a golden boy is not a rapist. So-and-so is a golden boy. Therefore, so-and-so is not a rapist.

The second one: rapists are monsters. So-and-so is not a monster. We reach the same conclusion.

It is high time to give up both of these myths, and reject the major premises in the corresponding arguments. The first myth exonerates by dint of lionizing some men, and placing them beyond reproach and above suspicion. The second exonerates by dint of positing a non-existent class of bogeymen in place of them. The point of calling someone a monster is that they are unlike anyone with whom you would willingly associate – in being completely heartless, or callous, or unintelligible, or malevolent. The convenient upshot is that there is no possibility of the shock and grief of discovering your son or friend, say, is a rapist.

But this is what his father and friend did indeed discover. And if you think that someone like Turner can’t be a rapist, then you need to revise your theory – rather than positing the existence of rape without rapists, as his friend did, incoherently. Turner was found actively violating his victim, who was unconscious and intoxicated, in an alley behind that dumpster. That is rape. Someone who rapes is a rapist. So Turner is a rapist – as well as a golden boy. Therefore...

The excessive sympathy which flows to perpetrators like Turner both owes and contributes to insufficient concern for the harm, humiliation, and trauma they cause to their victims. This plausibly owes something to a tendency to take up the perspective of the golden boys first and foremost. This is part of privilege: a default claim to the moral spotlight, or being the locus of moral attention. But if someone sympathizes first with the rapist, insofar as he loses his appetite or swimming scholarship, then he will be prone to figure as the victim in the story. And a victim narrative needs a victimizer, or at least a harbinger of disaster. And who is the ‘but-for’ cause of the rapist ending up in this situation? None other than the person who testified against him: his victim may hence be recast as the villain.

This is just how it worked in the case of Brock’s friend. “I don’t think it’s fair to base the fate of the next 10-plus years of his life on the decision of the girl who doesn’t remember anything but the amount she drank, to press charges against him. I am not blaming her directly for this, because that isn’t right.” (She was, and it isn’t.) The impulse, however, doesn’t arise out of nowhere, and I don’t much feel inclined to blame the friend either. This is one of so many ways women are encouraged to practice, and signal, excessive loyalty to men of privilege.

The excessive sympathy extended towards perpetrators is hence one of the factors which gives rise to victim-blaming. Indeed, it gives rise to victim-blaming in a particularly pernicious form,
in which the moral narrative is turned on its head, and the real victim and victimizer undergo a role reversal.

Neither the judge nor the father blamed the victim in this case. Instead they made a move as, if not more, insidious: they erased the victim from the narrative entirely. In this case, she courageously refused to go quietly. Her powerful testimony explains, with devastating clarity, what the impact on her was. That is the main reason the case came to our attention – that and the fact that Brock Turner was caught, thanks to the two Swedish graduate students who were active bystanders.

Too often, we avert our eyes, and refuse to face both the ubiquity and character of sexual assault in the US in general, and on college campuses in particular. Even among those who are prepared to acknowledge its prevalence, there is a subtler form of wishful thinking that is also very common: the idea that the latter occurs primarily due to alcohol and sexual miseducation, to the exclusion of misogynist aggression, frat culture, serial sexual predation, and norms that enable and protect the perpetrators. Dan Turner says his son is fully committed to educating others about “the dangers of alcohol consumption and sexual promiscuity.” The judge spoke of this plan approvingly. But so-called promiscuity is not the issue; violence is. And Brock Turner is not an appropriate spokesperson against sexual violence at this juncture. He needs a moral education before attempting to provide one.

He might start by listening closely to the words of his victim, who spoke to him directly for the bulk of her impact statement. What she has to say is too important to excerpt. I urge anyone who can afford the emotional investment to read every word of it. Let me just quote her closing lines, in which she shifts from Brock to address “girls everywhere,” so as to echo them: “You are to be valued, respected, undeniably, every minute of every day, you are powerful and nobody can take that away from you... I am with you. Thank you.” Truly.
The damage being done when people insist 'boys will be boys'
by Clementine Ford for Daily Life (June 3, 2016)

Another small American town has been rocked by revelations of sexual abuse at the hands of some of their most protected football stars this week, and local response is sadly much as we've come to expect. According to the Washington Post, the town of Dietrich, Idaho is "a community on edge" after charges were filed against three high school football players alleged to have sexually assaulted a fellow student.

While it's not uncommon for residents to rally around young men with "promising futures" (remember Steubenville?), there is one key difference between this case and most of the ones we hear about - in Dietrich, the victim is a male teammate. He's also an intellectually disabled black male in an overwhelmingly white town. Prior to the assault, he had been subjected to racist bullying. During the assault, the three defendants allegedly inserted and then kicked a coat-hanger into his rectum.

It's hard to imagine a situation in which anyone could find this kind of behaviour defensible, but it's incredible how flexible people can be when it comes to forgiving their heroes. Local resident Hubert Shaw was clear in his position to the Washington Post: "They're 15, 16, 17 year old boys who are doing what boys do...I would guarantee that those boys had no criminal intent to do anything or any harm to anyone. Boys are boys and sometimes they get carried away."

Further south, students at South Fort Myers High School in Florida were being similarly defended by community members intent on protecting boys from the consequences of their actions. After footage taken of a 15 year old girl engaged in sexual activity in a school bathroom with up to 25 boys (some of them participated simply by spectating) resulted in the arrest of one of the school's football players, the Lee County Schools Superintendent Greg Adkins corresponded with parents, urging them to "move forward from this incident without further harsh judgment of those involved...They are adolescents who have made a serious mistake. They must now be afforded the opportunity to learn from their mistakes."

Meanwhile, the media and public were predictably quick to condemn the girl and question her motivations. Indeed, when incidents like this occur people are often full of scathing judgment for 'sluts' and 'hoes' who need to 'respect themselves more' while excusing any young men involved for acting on their instincts.

It's telling how much leniency is given to boys allowed to 'learn from their mistakes' while girls continue to be subjected to scrutiny and shame for similar engagement. And again, there is a key element in this situation that not only compounds the girl's exploitation but makes the shaming of her especially repugnant. At 13, she was trafficked into sex slavery where she spent the next two years being raped for the sexual gratification of large groups of men.

As her advocate Megan Estrem argues, this is a victim who has been conditioned into sexuality at the threat of extreme punishment. For her to be now labelled as 'promiscuous' by a community more intent on sheltering its boys is simply inflicting further abuse on her.
At the same time, the sexuality of boys is both revered and given free reign to experiment without risk.

Just this week, a 24 year old female teacher was arrested in America for grooming and raping her 13-year-old student. The teacher, now pregnant, briefly tried to flee authorities but was soon captured. And although there is commentary from the public calling this what it is - rape and paedophilia - there's also a significant amount of back slapping and praise being foisted on the 13 year old, whose ability to "nail and impregnate the teacher" is apparently the stuff of envy.

These stories all share the commonality of reducing male sexuality to something base. Why is a 13-year-old boy not entitled to the same protection from predatory adult behaviour as a 13-year-old girl, just because the society he lives in views his sexuality as something dominant and invulnerable? To what extent do those attitudes inform the behaviour of a pack of boys who gather in a bathroom to watch as sequences more at home in a porn film are recreated with a 15-year-old rape victim?

Isn't is at least possible that some of those boys stood there and watched despite not wanting to because they feared not doing so would expose them as somehow less manly in front of their peers? And how does that kind of peer pressure and performative toxic masculinity then lead to a trio of young men brutally raping a teammate as a means to assert their own pack dominance, before passing it off as a joke?

What damage is really being done when people insist that 'boys will be boys'?

It's perplexing how fiercely some people will defend what they see as the natural impulses of male sexuality, while also demonising feminists for 'stereotyping'. How many times have you either heard someone say - or perhaps even expressed the sentiment yourself - that it's feminists who 'paint all men as rapists', while ignoring the much more tacitly accepted belief that this kind of inappropriate and even illegal sexual behaviour in young men is just unavoidable?

The truth is frustratingly different. It's feminists who advocate tirelessly against the entrenched view that men are one dimensional animals incapable of restraint. We repeatedly stare down the kind of victim blaming attitudes that insist short skirts, alcohol consumption and flirtatious conversation are among the many things that provoke a man to force himself on an unwilling partner because, funnily enough, we hold men in a much higher estimation than that.

But despite being the group that shows the most faith in men's inherent humanity and complexity, we are still abused as man-haters even while mainstream society continues to police the behaviour and dress of girls and women so they might prevent being 'taken advantage of' by a Shadow Man looking for an easy opportunity.

I've spent countless hours trying to wrap my head around this double standard, and my ultimate conclusion is depressing to say the least. Anti-feminists do seem to believe that feminists view all men as rapists or sexual predators, but only because feminists have a definition for rape that involves acknowledging it exists in the first place.

Simply put, for these people the real offence isn't in attributing a certain kind of behaviour to boys, but in attributing criminality to that behaviour. Why should they be made to feel bad for
perfectly normal, natural behaviour? That doesn't sound like equality. That sounds like misandry, this argument goes.

But what could be more misandrist than conditioning young boys to view their sexuality as a weapon that both empowers them and exists outside of their control?

Not only does it deny them a depth of vulnerability, it tells them that the vibrancy of their masculine identities is dependent on how forcefully they not only express their sexuality but perform it for other men to admire. It encourages them to view girls and women as conquests instead of human beings, while denying them the right to prioritise intimacy over physicality if they choose or indeed to reject sexuality altogether when it suits them.

We are doing damage to our young boys and this in turn compounds the damage we already do to our young girls. We should all be disgusted to live in a world where an assault on either of them can be ignored met with high fives or praise. Society should absolutely demand more of boys.

But we should also expect more for them.

BOYS WILL BE BOYS

HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS. JUST LIKE GIRLS.
How to Explain Mansplaining
by Julia Baird for The New York Times (APRIL 20, 2016)

It was on a recent trip to Indonesia that, as a male bureaucrat sounded forth on a vast span of subjects without being asked to do so, I realized that the English language was in need of a new addition: the manologue. This otherwise perfectly charming man droned on and on, issuing a steady stream of words as I sat cramped in a tiny room with a group of fellow journalists and squinted at the labels on the soda cans hospitably placed on a table in front of us.

Finally, I deciphered the words “HERBAL — TO RELEASE TRAPPED WIND.” After several minutes during which I silently prayed none of my colleagues would reach for a drink, the official at last uttered the words, “Now, to answer your question.”

So why did we get so many words between the question asked and the answer given? Why were they spoken at all? And how can you stem such extraneous, long-winded trains of thought? How can you politely say to a prolix associate, as a TV host might: “We’re almost out of time; can you keep this short?”

Above all, why do so many men do this?

It was not the first time one of us had asked a question about a minor issue during our study tour of the bustling, gridlocked capital Jakarta and been treated to a largely unrelated exposition on an entirely different idea. Our schedule was jammed with politicians, diplomats, ministers and editors from Indonesia and Australia, important men who were used to occupying space, time and attention, and would talk at numbing length. The perfect conditions, in other words, for an epidemic of manologues.

The manologue takes many forms, but is characterized by the proffering of words not asked for, of views not solicited and of arguments unsought. It is underwritten by the doubtful assumption that the audience will naturally be interested, and that this interest will not flag. And that when it comes to speeches or commentary, longer is better.

The prevalence of the manologue is deeply rooted in the fact that men take, and are allocated, more time to talk in almost every professional setting. Women self-censor, edit, apologize for speaking. Men expound.

Of course, some women can be equally long-winded, but it is far less common. The fact that this tendency is masculine has been well established in social science. The larger the group, the more likely men are to speak (unless it is in a social setting like a lunch break). One study, conducted by researchers at Brigham Young University and Princeton, found that when women are outnumbered, they speak for between a quarter and a third less time than the men.

Men also talk more directly; women hedge. They use more phrases like “kind of,” “probably” or “maybe,” as well as more fillers like “um,” “ah” and “I mean.” They also turn sentences into questions, seeking affirmation: “Isn’t it?” Women are interrupted more, by both men and women.
It is also clear that the more powerful men become, the more they speak. This would seem a natural correlation, but the same is not true for women. The reason for this, according to a Yale study, is that women worry about “negative consequences” — that is, a backlash — if they are more voluble. Troublingly, the study found that their fears were well founded, as both male and female listeners were quick to think these women were talking too much, too aggressively. In other words, men are rewarded for speaking, while women are punished.

The problem is global and endemic across all media. Female characters speak less in Disney films today than they used to — even princesses get a minority of the speaking lines in films in which they’re the principal: In the 2013 animated movie “Frozen,” for example, male characters get 59 percent of the lines. A quick search for best monologues in film or movies reveals that they are almost all male. If you took Princess Leia out of “Star Wars,” the total speaking time for female characters is 63 seconds out of the original trilogy’s 386 minutes.

One New Zealand study found that in formal contexts calling for expository speech, like seminars, TV discussions and classroom debates, men talk more often and for longer. Women use words to explore, men to explain.

So here is the conundrum: Including women is not the same as hearing women. As the Princeton and Brigham Young study noted, “having a seat at the table is very different than having a voice.” Women at the table will attest to finding themselves talked over, cut off, interrupted or forced to politely listen to reams of lengthy speeches.

The conditions required for women to speak more are, not surprisingly, that more women are present, and that women are leading. According to a Harvard study, female students spoke more when a female instructor was in the classroom.

One leading Australian current affairs television show, “Q&A,” came up with an obvious yet smart response. After a review found that the program featured a greater number of male panelists, who were asked more questions and spoke longer, the producers promised to publish data documenting not just the show’s gender balance, but accounting for how much time guests spoke.

“We won’t get the voice share perfect straight away,” wrote the show’s producer, Amanda Collinge, “but we are actively trying to improve, and being open about it.”

But if you’re a man who wants to counter your manologue tendency, try this: When you hear yourself saying, “Now, to answer your question,” ask yourself whether there was a good reason you didn’t start at exactly that point. Otherwise, these manologues may never, ever end.
First Woman to First Woman  
by Julia Gillard for The New York Times (July 26, 2016)

Having served as Australia's first female prime minister, I often get asked for advice by bright young women interested in politics.

What sustains someone through the rigors of modern politics, I tell them, are passion and purpose: knowing what you want to achieve for your nation and the world. Then I tell them to build a sense of self that can survive all the ugly sniping.

This week at the Democratic National Convention, where I participated in a forum on women and leadership, I’ve been asked what advice I’d have for Hillary Clinton as she seeks to become her nation’s first female leader. I’m not egotistical enough to think that the most qualified and prepared presidential candidate the United States has ever seen needs my advice on policy. And she needs no lectures on sustaining a sense of self when under news media scrutiny or attack by her rivals. Few politicians have shown more resilience than Mrs. Clinton.

But even someone of her vast experience has been buffeted by what I call the “curious question of gender.” She knows what it’s like to be the subject of the stereotype that a powerful woman cannot be likable, that if she is commanding then she must be incapable of empathy.

If a female candidate notes the sexism of all this, she is told — as Mrs. Clinton has — that she’s playing the “woman card,” or is fragile, or a whiner.

Mrs. Clinton should not have to deal with this alone. Every Democrat, every Republican, every person who believes that women and men are equal should call out any sexism.

When I was prime minister, I created a carbon-emissions trading program. The debate grew vicious, with the leader of the opposition attending a protest next to signs that described me as a witch and a bitch.

No one called for my execution by firing squad, as a supporter of Donald Trump did for Mrs. Clinton, but a radio talk-show host did say I should be put in a bag and dropped in the sea. Witches can’t be drowned, I cynically joked.

I have often reflected how powerful it would have been if, at that moment, a male business leader, especially one who opposed my policies, said, “I may not support the prime minister politically, but Australia must not conduct its democratic debates this way.”

Unfortunately, that never happened.

To my dismay, some of the young women who chat with me are not asking for political insights. Instead, they tell me that, having seen how I was treated, they have decided politics is too punishing for them. I always try to talk them out of this position. Sometimes I succeed.

In 2016, I hope there are many brave voices naming and shaming any sexism in the presidential contest. The next generation of potential female leaders is watching.
Why So Many Men Don't Stand Up for Their Female Colleagues
by Adam Grant for The Atlantic (April, 2014)

The percent of women in executive-officer positions at Fortune 500 companies has stagnated at less than 15. As more women "lean in" and we collectively continue to fight sexism, there’s another barrier to progress that hasn’t been addressed: Many men who would like to see more women leaders are afraid to speak up about it.

In the conversation about women in leadership, male voices are noticeably absent. Of Amazon’s 100 top-selling books this week about women and business, a grand total of four were written by men, and the first one doesn’t appear until far down the list. In the media, the most vocal advocates for women are influential women, including Sheryl Sandberg, Condoleezza Rice, Arianna Huffington, Anne-Marie Slaughter, Christine Lagarde, Sallie Krawcheck, Beyoncé, and Michelle Obama. Why aren’t more men stepping up to support gender parity in the upper echelons of organizations?

Some men want to voice their support, but fear that no one will take them seriously, because they lack a vested interest in the cause.

The traditional explanation is sexism. Psychologists Peter Glick and Susan Fiske have eloquently highlighted two different kinds of sexist ideologies that cause men to justify gender inequality and resist sharing their power and wealth. "Hostile sexists" believe that men are superior beings who deserve to rule the world. "Benevolent sexists" are more pro-women—just not in leadership. They view women as beautiful, fragile creatures who ought to be protected by men, not be followed by men. And, of course, some men are comfortable with the status quo: They’d like to preserve hierarchies—particularly those they benefit from—rather than destabilize them.

Although there’s little doubt that these reasons prevent some men from being better advocates for the women around them, a more subtle cause has been overlooked. Some men want to voice their support, but fear that no one will take them seriously because they lack a vested interest in the cause.

Is this just an excuse, an elaborate self-deception designed to disguise sexist beliefs? I don’t think so. There’s evidence that when a cause seems inconsistent with our self-interest, we fear that we’ll incur a backlash, so we hold back. Research by a pair of psychologists-turned-business-professors, Rebecca Ratner at the University of Maryland and Dale Miller at Stanford, shows that such fears are not without reason. Across a series of studies, when men took action to promote women’s rights, people responded with surprise and anger. Both men and women were shocked and resentful toward the men: What business did they have speaking up for women?

I saw this happen recently when I facilitated a conversation for a group about gender and leadership. A man raised his hand to share his support for bringing more women into leadership positions. I expected enthusiastic reactions from his female peers, but instead, his comment was greeted with skepticism. One woman directly questioned his intentions: What was his ulterior motive? Was he trying to ingratiate himself with women to improve his dating prospects?
I have experienced this backlash myself. In the past year, I have written two articles covering evidence on the benefits of women in leadership—one how women can make men more generous and another on teaching girls to avoid bossy behavior. In both cases, readers have asked, “What business do you have writing about women?” As a man, it is true that I will never know what it is like to be a woman. As an organizational psychologist, though, I feel a responsibility to bring evidence to bear on dynamics of work life that affect all of us, not only half of us.

Research reveals that when women take the same actions to advocate for women, people respond less negatively. “These findings point to a novel account of people's reluctance to act on behalf of causes for which they have sympathy,” Ratner and Miller explained. “Without a stake in a cause, people ... perceive that it is not their place to act.”

If we want men to support women in leadership, we need to challenge this perception. In one experiment, Ratner and Miller invited male and female Princeton students to write a statement opposing a policy change that would harm either men or women. When the students were invited by an organization called Princeton Opponents of Proposition 174, half wrote the statement to support their own sex, but only 22 percent voiced support for the opposite sex.

That support more than tripled through a simple change of phrase. Instead of sending the request from Princeton Opponents of Proposition 174, Ratner and Miller altered the name of the group. When the request came from Princeton Men and Women Opposed to Proposition 174, instead of 22 percent, 72 percent of participants advocated for the opposite sex. Now vested interest didn’t matter at all: Men supported a women’s cause, and women championed a men’s cause, as passionately as they supported their own causes.

According to Ratner and Miller, the language worked because it served to “legitimate the participation of non-vested individuals.” When the group was titled as an alliance between men and women, men no longer worried that it would be inappropriate to fight on behalf of women.

For women to achieve equal representation in leadership roles, it’s important that they have the backing of men as well as women. As Sheryl Sandberg wrote in Lean In, men need to “become part of the solution by supporting women in the workforce.” That support depends not only on breaking glass ceilings and attacking overt sexism, but also on dismantling the fears that prevent men from being better allies.
How men and women can help reduce gender bias in the workplace
by Emma Johnston for The Conversation (15 July, 2016)

I am a professor and a newly minted pro vice chancellor and I have spent my entire research and working life with male bosses or supervisors. I have never reported to a woman.

This phenomenon is particularly acute in the fields of science, technology engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM).

It’s why more than 30 universities, six medical research institutions and four publicly funded research agencies have joined the Science in Australia Gender Equity pilot project (SAGE).

The SAGE project involves both men and women, as all gender equity programs must. Gender equity is not only a problem for women, just as advances in gender equity are not only a blessing for women.

Improving women’s status, workforce participation, legal protections, and physical security benefits the whole of society.

There are many wonderful things that are positively correlated with increased gender equality. Men’s psychological and physical health improves and the gender gap in life-expectancy decreases. There is less domestic violence.

Companies with more women on the board have higher financial returns and greater levels of innovation. Countries with greater gender parity have higher annual GDP.

A study of 50 US states and 31 European countries found that, on average, men are also happier, they have better quality of life, spend more time with their friends and family and are less constrained by strict gender norms. Gender equality lifts us all.
Enter the mainstream

So for the good of us all, men and women must mainstream gender equity. This means building gender equality into every practice and process so that it becomes the new norm.

Mainstreaming means shifting cultural norms and baselines, accepting that gender bias exists, encouraging discussions of gender inequity, speaking out against sexism and harassment, recognising and removing conscious and implicit bias, and weakening stereotypes.

We all have a lifetime’s worth of experiences but depending on our background, those experiences may be quite different. This can become a problem if one dominant group holds most of the powerful positions.

Men comprise seven out of eight of Australia’s current Go8 university vice chancellors, 79% of our STEMM professors, 83% of Australia’s CEOs and about 88% of our learned Australian Academy of Science fellows.

These powerful people – directors, professors, academy fellows – who are making decisions and defining merit; they can design out gender bias if they have the motivation to do so. Attaining that desire for change, in the face of resistance, may require some recalibration of their world view. This will be more difficult for people in positions of privilege for whom discrimination is less visible.

It is not easy to reduce conscious or implicit bias but we can read studies that document gender bias and provide data to help us reset our baselines. We can take implicit bias tests online, we can replace intuition with formal analysis and slow down our decision-making to allow for considering bias.

We can also surround ourselves with female mentors and colleagues so that we gain ‘outsider’ perspectives. Women will have diverse experiences and attitudes towards the gendered workplace. If we surround ourselves with women and we avoid the four Ds, set out below, we can help recalibrate our world view and break down stereotypes.

D for denial

Denial is the outright dismissal of the existence of inequity. Denial might be more common if you have never experienced that particular bias. For example, one study revealed that male STEMM faculty members were less likely to accept evidence of gender bias.

To mainstream gender equity, we need to avoid denial by first listening and accepting, in order to enable discussion. If we are listening to a first-hand account of bias then we must assist the person to find appropriate professional support.

If we remain in doubt about the likelihood of bias, we can always look for empirical evidence of general patterns. We might even consider doing an analysis or experiment to test for discrimination ourselves.

D for diminish

This is when we diminish the problem by saying something like: “You’re making too big a deal out of it.”
This is a difficult one. We develop a thick skin. So it is tempting to dismiss the worries of our juniors in whatever form the hierarchy takes.

But people who experience inequity don't always develop thick skins. They can experience real-time reactions and under-confidence resulting from a lifetime of exposure to biased evaluations and stereotypes.

Mainstreaming gender equity into the culture of an organisation requires accepting the gravity of the situation as presented, and looking for solutions to problems even if we do not suffer them.

**D for do not defend**

If we find ourselves using the phrase “I’m sure they didn't mean it that way” then we need to stop, reflect and reconsider our perspective.

Again, it may take a conscious effort to accept that the inequity is real. A great example of this is the uncritical use of the term “merit”. People believe they are making judgements based entirely on “excellence”.

But several studies show that men and women will judge CVs, papers, teaching and even student essays to be superior when labelled with a male name.

**D for do not derail the discussion**

Derailment happens when we are being empathetic or trying to get attention ourselves. We may listen to an example of bias and respond with the phrase: “Oh yes, but you won't believe what happened to me...” This can, inadvertently, change the topic.

If our own experience is less intense, and the consequences less severe, then our contribution may derail and diminish the discussion. We need to have these discussions about the serious issues of harassment and bias.

**Rocket science**

If men and women are to mainstream gender equity, our heart must be in the right place and we must value fairness, but this will not guarantee success.

We know we must work proactively to put systems and practices in place that reduce bias and promote equality and diversity.

For the most part we already know what those systems and practices are. They are hardly rocket science.

The rocket science is in learning to listen to very quiet voices; it is creating spaces for those voices at work. The rocket science is also recognising and addressing our own implicit biases and our own limited experience.

They say that travel broadens the mind, so maybe what we all need to do is leave our comfortable universe and step into a female rocket scientist’s shoes.
Ignorance is bliss: How young men ignore the gender pay gap
by Angela Priestley for Women’s Agenda (18 July, 2016)

Talk of the gender pay gap is everywhere: in newspapers, on social media, in workplaces and in our bank accounts.

But young men are blissfully ignorant of the situation.

According to research commissioned by Westpac and released today, just 15% of males aged 18 to 65 believe pay inequality exists, with a quarter of men under 25 saying there’s no gender pay gap in their industry. Meanwhile, 80% of men surveyed said they earn the same as women in their industries.

This is despite comprehensive data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency that says otherwise. The national pay gap is currently at 17.9%, a figure that goes as high as 30% for certain industries, such as finance.

Back in March, Westpac also revealed women start on nearly 12% less than men working full-time – meaning common excuses like career breaks and flexibility can not alone explain the gender gap.

So is gender pay a women’s fight only, given so many men can’t actually see the issue?

Absolutely not. What this research may show is that despite all the talk, there is some fatigue on the issue and that young people particularly – men and women included – may still believe time alone will solve the issue.

What we need to do is show the gender pay gap and the many different reasons for why it exists points to issues that affect both genders. Catalyst highlights research that shows pay equity is linked to eradicating poverty, creating more motivated workforces and contributing to an increase in GDP. Meanwhile pay equity also helps promote women’s workforce participation, ultimately creating a stronger and more diverse economy. In Australia, further research suggests that just a 1 percentage point reduction in the gender pay gap could boost Australia’s GDP by 0.5%

There’s something in this issue for everyone. It’s about more than ensuring women get the additional 17.9% more that they’re worth.

Although from a woman’s perspective, that 17.9% would certainly be handy.