

**Emergency Meeting of the
Yale University
Women Philosophers Group**

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Time: Present. Scene: University office.

Cast: Jane, Deborah, Carla (Carl), Cherie (Sherry), Allison, Anonymous/Celia.

CARLA: It 's got to be a fake! (*Reading at times from accuser's statements*) *My hero! – My global justice hero! A graduate student! – PHD, yet – Shamelessly presenting herself like an infatuated groupie. I'll wager there's a male hand pulling the strings on this. Is the Amazing Randi still with us?*

ALLISON: He'd only concern himself with persons claiming magical powers. My guess would be Sokal.

JANE: Perhaps, but is this babbling sufficiently philosophical that it might pique his interest?

DEBORAH: Babbling?! You think sex harassment accusations aren't to be taken seriously?

JANE: I just wish to separate philosophical babbling from everyday. . .whatever.

ALLISON: Then why aren't we hearing from our babbling expert – Oh, sorry, I meant to say our expert in babbling. (*All look to Cherie*)

CHERIE: This is a prime case that may reveal to you philistines the controlling power that cultural dynamics have in making seemingly counterproductive actions effective. Just because –

JANE: Thank you, Cherie, for that fine example of philosophical babbling, but I would still like –

(*continuing*)

CHERIE: Just because Anonymous' messages appear to us as pathetic, self-abasing –

DEBORAH: *I never said, nor even implied, that Anonymous wrote of her experiences in anything but an honest and coherent manner.*

CHERIE: Okay, Deborah, you are excused. Since you are a supporter of the alleged babbler, I'll make you test subject one.

CARLA: Uh Oh, Deb, watch out for what a worshiper of a culture that permits ugly presidents to have pretty mistresses on the side has prepared for you.

DEBORAH: Oh, I'm sure I can handle anything after our own presidential sex power abuse.

CARLA: Personally, I think that was just a case of networking. Given the gross differences in power, Monica was merely *semen-ting* their relationship.

ALLISON: Carl, I love those rare occasions when you demonstrate a genuine understanding that even the social world is held together by matter.

JANE: I preferred *gross differences*. I believe Goethe employs the expression for the same purpose at the end of Faust when he has him say –

CHERIE: *Do you mind?! –*

DEBORAH: Yes, why are we always interrupting each other. As feminists we must cut men short because they are always dominating discussions, but among ourselves –

CHERIE: **Deb!**... *You were the last to interrupt!* – Okay, now may I –

CARLA: One second, Cherie. I am not a feminist. Class supersedes gender, thus making the latter as an ultimate explanation of discrimination the same as the false biological claims with respect to racism. As for cutting up men – *(becomes aware that Cherie is glaring at her)*. Sorry, Cherie, but I know that even your off the wall philosophy consigns a degree of importance to class consciousness.

(brief pause and then as Cherie is about to speak)

DEBORAH: -- Just don't label me a Valerie Solanas.

CHERIE: **All right!** Even if this place bursts into flames, not another word! As I was about to say so long ago, I do believe that this stuff is babble, but I do not think that makes it necessarily false or unworthy of our careful consideration. All that is written or spoken carries a significant message. Note the form this one takes – The virtuous true believer in morality against a type of Dionysian behavior that's been with us since time immemorial. The tiresome refrain of being wronged; of alleged concern for all those young, inexperienced women being seduced by a mighty intellect – Mind you, these are females that have completed advanced study in philosophy and presumably know quite a bit about the workings of the world.

DEBORAH: So you are saying that someone is duping us by way of a Nietzschean Apollonian – Dionysian charade?

CARLA: The messages do have the tedious smugness of the Apollonian.

CHERIE: Not the German state philosopher. Denmark may be the dregs of Scandinavia, but it's still not Germany. No, much of this stuff seems to have been copied from Kierkegaard's *Diary of a Seducer*. Look at the opening aphorism - "His ruling passion is the fresh young girl". Anonymous repeats this charge in various wordings throughout her messages. Cordelia to her seducer - "You were the rich man; rich in all the glories of the earth; I was the poor maiden who had only her love. You took it; you rejoiced in it; then passion beckoned, and you sacrificed the little I possessed; of your own you sacrifice nothing."

JANE: Please, stop! – I'm tearing up!

DEBORAH: *(Missing the sarcasm)* Even though it was written by a man?

CARLA: Anybody can churn out that stuff. As for me, I had that wincing, throat catching feeling that comes from the, *please feel sorry for me*, appeal.

ALLISON: Well, I hope this is all some sort of a gag because I'm not too



The mystery girl had entered and closed the door.

keen on supporting someone who declares to her alleged seducer that she will be staying after he invites her to his hotel room, then later decides that she never really consented to have sex with him. . . I mean, the guy would have had to call in security just to *not* have sex with her.

CARLA: What concerns me is that the fellow's reputation as a moralist can make his engaging in consensual sex some sort of crime. Isn't it apples and oranges – words and something like –

JANE: What was that? Did you say things?

CARLA: Desire! – Words and desire! Gellner's argument against your precious will-o'-the-wisp Wittgenstein was merely an entertaining expression of despair. (*brief pause*)

DEBORAH: Words are controlling when a person can offer career promotion in exchange for sexual favors.

ALLISON: But who is manipulating whom? She consults a lawyer and carries on the relationship in order to gather evidence. Want to bet that we'd never have heard a thing had she gotten enough out of him to work a sub rosa deal? It's insulting to suggest that we are not capable of the same manipulative conduct.

CHERIE: Yeah, a *gross* insult. Kierkegaard was of a different era, but even then the seducer had to get her to accept an engagement, and then agree to the breaking of it in order to reach the sublimity of erotic love. Illicit sex within the rules of engagement merely led to the dreariness of marriage.

JANE: "Rules of engagement" for the war to come. Cherie, your linguistic formations are like music to my ears; I love the sound of them; but the meaning is lost in the background noise.

CHERIE: You would know the importance of the "noise" if you only had the nerve to drop the traces of your logical positivism

ALLISON: Just don't shift that pseudo science into my field. What do we actually know about this incident? That an alleged woman has alleged a sexual relationship with a man who via a convenient quotation appears to be a member of our department, none other than our celebrated Thomas (*pronounced Toe-mas*). We can't know much about what really occurred without hearing from him, but being a big shot he is positioned around the world and outside of our reach, thus we are stymied without more facts.

CARLA: Yes, and from Anonymous. Has anybody ID'ed her yet? She says she'd identify herself to anybody that emailed her through that Lisbeth address. Imagine dozens of women keeping a secret!

JANE: (*With fingers in her ears*) We didn't hear that! – (*To Carla*) I know you meant to say 'people' – And there still may be a man behind it. (*To Deborah*) When I first saw 'Lisbeth' I wondered if they intended 'Lillith.'

DEBORAH: Whatever they intended, Lisbeth is there and I have exchanged emails with Anonymous.

JANE: You've met with her?

DEBORAH: No, but when I told her of our meeting she said she would be willing to talk with us. Are

we all in agreement on seeing her?

JANE: (*Looking at everyone*) I should think so.

CARLA: Sure. All we know of her is that she is a nameless Asian woman or a Latina.

ALLISON: (*Jest*) Are we dressed appropriately?

CHERIE: (*Also joshing*) You look more like a lab technician than a philosopher, but it will do. As for Carla, I think we should leave the door open to be on the safe side.

DEBORAH: Fine. I'll give her a call. She's at the Tastee across the street. (*Makes call*) Hi, this is Deborah. We spoke a little while ago. (*pause*) You would like me to state your name as proof? (*Everyone moves closer to the phone. Deborah scans them.*) I'm at the meeting with a roomful of people, some of whom may be untrustworthy, and would prefer that you be the one to reveal your identity. Okay – You know it's legit because of the location. Fine, we'll see you in a bit. (*ends call*)

JANE: All right – So what do we want to find out? Is this just a tiresome *getting even* of a woman scorned?

ALLISON: And that logically her accusations are a series of slanders that merit no claim for consideration?

CARLA: Does she realize her great moral hero makes his living covering up the immorality of the system that he serves?

DEBORAH: How sexism contributes to the fact that women make up only 29% of the nation's philosophy departments?

CHERIE: Is she concerned that her actions appear to be in league with the worldwide anti-sex witch hunt? – Oh, and is her name Cordelia?

(*Door buzzer. Jane presses button.*)

JANE: Yes?

ANONYMOUS: Anonymous!

JANE: OK – Second floor – Right – 321 –

CARLA: (*whisper*) Wait! Ask if she needs help lugging up the mattress.

DEBORAH: Buzz!

(*Jane buzzes her in*)

ALLISON: Imagine the world we'd live in if all Anonymouses were allowed entry.

CHERIE: Yeah. They'd probably join with the rhinoceroses and trample us all.

(Knock at the door. Jane opens it.)

JANE: Welcome! Please come in.

(Anonymous enters carrying a beverage with a straw through the center of its cover which she is using to take a sip)

JANE: Well, I'm –

ANONYMOUS: I know who you all are.

ALLISON: Thought I recognized you.

CARLA: But you don't appear to be either Asian or Latina.

ANONYMOUS: Look – I've passed out my name to dozens of women. I'd like for now to at least keep some part of my identity from traversing the world.

(Carla gives everyone a significant look)

DEBORAH: Then let's leave identity as it is.

CHERIE: Uh, except for one little name. *(To Anonymous)* I have an intellectual bet on your first name. Do you mind?

ANONYMOUS: No problem – It's Celia.

CHERIE: Ah, Ha! *(Looking at everyone)*

DEBORAH: What, "Ah, Ha!" – Didn't you say Cordelia?

CHERIE: It's a contraction!

ALLISON: *(laughing)* It's like Cherie is the same as Louella except for the 'C, H, R, I' and one 'E'.

CHERIE: No, but all of Celia is within Cordelia – Just the 'ord' has to go.

DEBORAH: *(To all the profs)* How about if we actually speak with the person we invited here for a discussion? *(Brief pause. To Celia.)* Have you developed a legal case against our Thomas?

CELIA: We think so.

ALLISON: On what basis?

CELIA: We claim that legal lines have been blurred when a person in a powerful position offers career advancement in exchange for sexual favors.

ALLISON: Which in your case never happened because you granted the favors before he offered

anything. *(pause)*

JANE: Really, isn't this all much like the networking every professional is expected to participate in?

CELIA: Where our masters select the choicest young women for seduction?

CHERIE: But you practically locked his hotel room door and shoved a chair under the knob!

CARLA: And don't we usually find our sex partners at such gatherings where we have an opportunity to socialize and learn about each other?

DEBORAH: Aren't we forgetting the predatory pattern in his conduct – Misusing his prominent position in philosophy in order to maintain a string of young mistresses?

CHERIE: He's a Kantian – This is just his way of maintaining a *perpetual piece*. *(Laughter)*

CELIA: *(Through all this she maintains a perfect calm, sipping once more from her drink.)*
We have gathered the evidence of what we regard as wrong doing. Now it's time to let the public decide.

CHERIE: Forget about the public – They are only useful to establish your celebrity status. The law and the anti-intellectual right will get you a conviction.

CARLA: Yeah, like the law couldn't try the fellow that actually raped and almost murdered the Central Park jogger because the statute of limitations had run out while the courts were busily framing the innocent, but someone can charge a person with sexual abuse 50 years after the alleged event and have them sent away for life. Some system of justice! – it's more like the predator seeking out victims!

ALLISON: What troubles me is that you move from your consensual sex with the man to the discovery of his consensual sex with many women – and then on to your alleged sex abuse and the prevalence of such abuse in women with the lumping spuriousness of a well trained lawyer. You are aware that evolution favored those with enhanced reproductive drives and components because it promoted dominance of the species? One would never know that most sex is fun for most people.

CELIA: What's next? – You telling me that a famous man said: "Even bad sex is still pretty good?"

DEBORAH: *(To Celia)* A perfect example of the male abusers' mentality. No woman would hold such an opinion.

CHERIE: Speak for yourself – The race would probably die out if women rejected anything but great sex.

CARLA: I'd prefer to drop all this 'women have been born into victimhood crap.' It's quite conceivable that Martha, being the daughter of a college president, was the seducer of George. But with real abuse –

JANE: *(To Celia)* You say you were sexually abused when you were three. Is that something you remembered from the time it occurred, or was it brought back to you later? I presume you've had psychotherapy since you mentioned "daddy issues."

CELIA: I suppose you are now going to defend Freud's abandonment of the misnamed seduction theory?

JANE: No, but Freud was a great excavator and interpreter of our psychic dimensions, he –

ALLISON: Oh, come now, Jane, he created a bogus science by way of a well thought out private language – Don't forget the later Ludwig.

CARLA: As for me, I would never defend anything about Freud except for the great notes he kept on the way he developed that theory. Cherie, since you owe much of your vast store of gobbledegook to the great man, will you please be my patient?

CHERIE: But of course, Herr Professor Doctor Freud. *(She kneels before Carla)*

CARLA: *(Places hand on Cherie's forehead)* Now my dear Cordelia, I've learned the cause of your hysterical hypereffrontery. It's because you were abused by your father. Is that not so?

CHERIE: No, Doctor Freud.

CARLA: Of course it's true, my dear, it's just too painful for you to accept. Now you must courageously reflect back on your earliest experiences, Cordelia, and bravely acknowledge that you *were* abused by your father.

CHERIE: I cannot, Doctor Freud, I loved my father; he was an absolutely divine daddy.

CARLA: Now listen to me Cordelia, do you know who I am?

CHERIE: Yes, the great Doctor Freud.

CARLA: Then you must understand that you *were indeed* abused by your father! *(brief pause)*

CHERIE: Okay, I will admit that I was abused by my father if I'm now allowed to hate you for making me say it. *(pause)*

DEBORAH: But even you would have to admit that real sexual abuse is plentiful enough to require therapy for many of its victims. Is that not so?

CARLA: Of course.

CELIA: Then why didn't he find a legitimate way to make it part of his psychoanalytic theory?

CARLA: Because he received such a negative public reaction to the seduction theory that he realized he'd never be able to make a living among the bourgeoisie if he said that many of them abused their daughters. I am for a real solution to the sexual abuse problem, especially because it's connected to many others. To accomplish that we must overthrow private property, patriarchy and the nuclear family.

(brief pause)

JANE: Before we can plan the overthrow of the system, we must determine if such an act would be

just. *(To Celia)* The focus of your studies revolves around Rawls' *Theory of Justice*, does it not?

CELIA: Yes, but I hope to bring justice into the private sphere where it can also serve to govern personal behavior.

ALLISON: Justice already enters the private and personal sphere when someone is robbed or assaulted. You do not foresee a problem in using it to try to fix up bad conduct among consenting adults?

CELIA: I'm not here to defend a thesis. I and others were victimized by this man. We plan to fix the problem much in the way –

CARLA: – the way your "living legend" proposes to end world poverty – He, by shifting 0.14 per cent of wealth from the powerful nations to the poor ones without applying even that much justice to the crimes perpetrated by those powerful nations that made the weak ones poor and miserable – And you, by fast tracking your career, if not in philosophy, then in something like a much more lucrative Fox News blather station. There you can engage in a sensational witch hunt while doing nothing about sexism, racism, and a class system that channels most of the wealth of the nation into the hands of a few.

CELIA: *(Smiling and rising. Then slowly walking toward the door while sipping more of her drink.)* I will always be grateful to my *hero of morality* for having learned how to promote justice while thriving within the system. *(Opens door)*

CHERIE: Wait a moment – Just one more question. What was his line? – I mean so we can watch out for it and protect whatever virtue we may still have.

CELIA: He told me that with age he now only obtains *aesthetic* satisfaction in his relationships with women. Since satisfaction means the absence of desire, I never expected the come on.

CHERIE: Ah, the old Apollonian trick.

JANE: Yes. – *(To Celia)* But when you slammed his hotel room door on him, *you* were Dionysus!

CHERIE: – And so was he under the Apollonian mask. That means –

ALL *(but Deb)*: *You were made for each other!*

CELIA: *(with smirking smile)* Bye. *(Departs. Pause)*

JANE: *(To Allison)* I'm more concerned about our dear Tom's philosophy. Seems a trifle illogical to speak of promoting justice while taking acceptance of the system as a given.

ALLISON: Not if you include rottenness in the initial conditions.

DEBORAH: Damn! I should have brought in more of Rawls, like the *Veil of Ignorance*, that way we would have found common ground for a better understanding of Anonymous.

CHERIE: “Veil of Ignorance” – When I first learned of the expression I thought it referred to marriage.

DEBORAH: I still feel certain that we have to find a way to help people now and not rely on promises in the distant by and bye. Yes, I know humans create a heritage that lives on for generations, but people want change while they live so they can see and experience it.

CARLA: Great, life changing world events can happen at any moment, but admittedly, small, almost worthless ones are much easier to accomplish. Any small change that doesn't hamper the gigantic one is okay by me. And that means nothing like the 0.14% red herring offered by our cretinous associate.

JANE: What sort of philosopher would even try to compute a figure to solve the world poverty crisis?

DEBORAH: He doesn't say it solves it; it only halves it.

CHERIE: Then what kind of damn philosopher comes up with a lousy 0.14% when a 0.28% solution would fix the whole thing?

JANE: A believer in Mini-Morality? (*Cherie affects great shock*) All right. Now I've done it. Let's end our gathering so I can apologize to Cherie for almost slighting her dear Adorno.

CARLA: We all must defend our sources: Cherie has her existential and god knows what favorites; I have my Rosa Luxemburg and Marx, etc., Allison has her natural science logical types, and even Popper; Jane has her Kant and acolytes; and even Deborah has Hume and maybe another –

DEBORAH: . . .Hobbes. . .

CARLA: *Hobbes!* – All right, Deb. (*Hugs her*)

DEBORAH: May I call you Calvin?

CARLA: Most assuredly.

JANE: Yet, with all of those great names, consider the wretched rubbish that will probably replace Zizek as the only philosopher to be noted by the general public.

ALLISON: But if a great one comes along that happens to be male, he will not be *my hero*. What a complete trashing of objective reasoning. It's like the women at the Vienna Radium Institute charged with counting scintillations to verify an experiment sent to them from Cavendish. They anticipated the desires of their hero the director, and counted non-existent scintillations.

CHERIE: Wow! Celia should have heard that – A woman using a hard science event as an example.

DEBORAH: There should be more female involvement in the hard sciences. Look what happened a few centuries ago when the Chamberlens kept the existence of obstetric forceps secret for generations.

ALLISON: Do you know how they managed to get away with that?

CARLA: Weren't they Huguenots that had to flee France for their lives? They had an especially urgent need to ensure a livelihood for their families – But that is only a why.

ALLISON: Female prudishness forced male doctors to work with only their head above a sheet that

covered the area of attention. That way they were able to use the forceps with no one seeing them.

DEBORAH: A great example of why women should be more involved in the sciences.

CHERIE: Yes, but note how much more than science is involved. Female prudishness forbade the male doctors from viewing their private parts. So they put a sheet over that and most of the doctor and without being able to see he fumbled around with her private parts much more than if he was able to view them. Thus a socially enforced prudishness was surreptitiously converted into a liberating sexual experience!

CARLA: Cherie discovers the nub at last!

JANE: No, *uncovers!*

DEBORAH: Thank goodness Celia didn't stay around for this.

ALLISON: Please don't try to pass off that crap as my science.

CHERIE: I couldn't help it – The thought of counting scintillations pushed me over the edge!

(They all rise and prepare to depart)

JANE: Then let's go someplace where we can cool her off.

CHERIE: ***Finale!***

CARLA: Why bother going out there when it's always Jane and her carrot cake, Allison, something with oatmeal in it, and. . .

DEBORAH: I thing I'll have lady fingers saturated, I mean enveloped, in a mocha sauce. . .

CARLA: Oh, well...

ALLISON: *(Looking at Cherie)* And I'm having the third isotope of hydrogen – with oatmeal.

CHERIE: *(To Allison)* Stop! I'm so overheated I must have an emergency bowl of. . . *Decadence!* *(To Carla)* And you?

(as they leave)

CARLA: Since it really is the end, I guess I'll invoke the crème de capitalist, brulee.

[End – Second edition]

###

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