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How “Me Too” Hollywood Types Destroyed Feminism

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ABSTRACT

“Me Too” is a historical and social event which needed to happen; moreover, it needed to happen in the workplace to assist women all over the world. It further needed to occur. Why? To stop the misogynistic behaviors of men in the film industry. However, and sadly so, it happened of all places in Hollywood. This ‘fantasy-land’, an industry in which more often than not—the truth is mired in double standards, hypocrisy and couch-casting calls. It is a place where always the latter three problems are part of the game. If not diluted into ego, drugs and alcohol. It is my point through this investigative paper, that tragically feminism came to die in Hollywood. Therefore, the only way to save the “Me Too” movement is to take it out of the politics and film industry. Then, apply it more to supervisors/men of power in the work centers around the world. This is the reason why, I strongly believe, if the “Me Too” movement either continues in Hollywood or in politics, it will surely become extinct with the remnants of feminism.

Keywords: Couch-Casting Calls, Double Standards, Hollywood, Feminism And Politics, Hypocrisy, “Me Too”.
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1. Introduction

Many attributed the feminist movements which came to defend females’ rights around the world, to the British and Americans. Females in these two respective countries began to gather to protest as a minority their ill treatment. An ill treatment that more often than not had extended to: slavery, abuse, rape, mutilation and killing if they didn’t agree to obey their masters, husbands or in contemporary times, their supervisors. This had been ongoing for millennium, since recorded history began.

Where in some professions, feminism went forward by ‘light years’ in the late 19th and early 20th Century; upon Hollywood’s foundation over 100-years ago, this concept seemed to stagnate and die.

But it was actually the French who had these enlightened visions to begin females’ movements and their suffragist during the 18th and the latter part of the 19th Century. Women like *Simone de Beauvoir* took it to new heights with *Female existentialism* and the *second wave-feminism*.¹

Women have always had to fight their way in society against male exploitation and discrimination. The movie businesses around the world has certainly made this all too clear with the

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objectification of women.

Females had to combat their way through history to: own property, to have the right to divorce, the right to vote, have the right to an education, equal pay for equal work in their careers, to be treated as an equal and not a servant.

What has led us to this point? Calling the 20th Century the ‘Century of Women’ and women still suffer the backlash of societies’ prejudices. It happens in all countries, females are all affected equally by this wrongful treatment. That’s why the movie business is no exception to this phenomena, in an all too negative way.

Little has changed in certain societies around the world; especially in the Middle East and Africa, where women are still stoned to death and suffer in their early childhood FGM (Female Genital Mutilation).² These cases aren’t part of the issue, because Hollywood, like other film organizations have thrown light on this social issue. However, in films, the entertainment industry still treats women like ‘disposable-lesser beings’ when it comes to their years in this business.

When the women in Saudi Arabia have to be accompanied by a male-family member (son, father, grandfather, uncle or husband) on the streets. If not, they can easily be harassed, chastised, abused or whipped by the moral police on the roads.³ This says a lot about how women are still treated. Finally, this year, women were given the right to drive; and after all, the auto industry is over a century old.⁴ But the issue here is, as we point the finger and criticize places like Saudi Arabia; Hollywood has to take a long-hard look when it still violates, rapes and abuses women on the big screen.

In other societies like Japan, 60 percent of the women in this country had reported unwanted touching or groping throughout their lives.⁵ Just recently, in 2017 the rape laws had finally been changed in Japan after a century to meet up with the current reality of the 21st.⁶

Taking these examples from around the world and the ones actors/actresses call out as disgusting behavior. The same behavior they frown and judge upon, happens 94 percent of the times in Hollywood.⁷ Yes, this same behavior that goes around and continues in a wanton way, even after the “Me Too” scandal broke out.

Changes are slow for the rights of women around the world.

However, before we get off the topic and women suffragist. What this paper intends to expose, other than the effects of the “Me Too” movement, is the need for further changes and betterment in females’ lives rights around the globe.

I’d rather hear a speech on *Gloria Steinem’s* ‘old-fashioned’ style of feminism. A feminist for the masses to help women grow.⁸ Not what contemporary Hollywood is trying to sell us, a freak show that pits one person against another or male versus female. A brand new form of uptight-Americanism behavior, which most of us won’t be able to tolerate. Part of being human is that we are allowed to make mistake.

I can’t agree entirely with *Catherine Deneuve’s* comments, calling the “Me Too” movement a ‘witch hunt’.⁹ Because the “Me Too” was a must. But one tiny fact I can go with, it shouldn’t be a ‘witch hunt’ to declare all men guilty before they have their day in court to defend themselves. And more often than not, ‘the court of public opinion’ is already judging these men and destroying their careers before actual facts have gone through the court system.

After all, there’s grand difference between rape and sexual harassment. In both cases, men must be further educated to not go into these pitfalls. But one How “Me Too” Hollywood Types Destroyed Feminism behavior must be differentiated from the other, and when sexual harassment occurs--have males, as well as, females in the industry to correct the problem. Education and laws are the key! Starting from the cradle, in schools, colleges/universities and the workspace has to begin with educating genders.

This shouldn’t be only a means to castigate. So we don’t as a society have the deal with problems like, *Bill Cosby* or *Harvey Weinstein*, which are now tearing Hollywood apart!

Although, the Hollywood types are always mentioning about these social problems, as they carry the banners or beating the drums of protest. Where are the equal rights for women in Hollywood against exploitation, physical and verbal abuse, murders and rape?

But the main focus here is to deal with the Hollywood machine and call out their lying. What an industry doesn’t do in their own studios or by a example, cannot ask the rest of the people to follow. Leading by good behavior has never been one of Hollywood’s strong suits!

Confucius once said, “Don’t criticize your neighbor about cleaning his front lawn, when your own roof needs cleaning!”

2. Methodology

When the “Me Too” scandal broke out in October, 2017, I decided like the majority of those worldwide--to follow this story interestingly.

At the time, I had been working as a Freelance Writer for several organizations (Beijing/Shanghai Global Times Metro, Future Handling Hong Kong & L.A. Latino). Therefore, I decided to write several pieces on the issue and do my part through an Oped (Opinion Editorial) article.

From this movement, I decided to write my own take on the issue; however, I had to keep myself objectively-honest. It didn’t matter whether I liked Hollywood or not. It was to express and make a difference on what was ongoing.

I learned about “Me Too” and its founder, *Tamara Burke*. Then, continued to follow-up and understood more about what had happened to actress, *Alyssa Milano*.

I was happy to see that something was being done about woman’s harassment and inequality in Hollywood.

Since, I’m an ESL (English as a Second Language) High School Teacher and have hundreds of students, I wanted to educate them on what was sexual harassment (which is rarely taught and “Me Too” is virtually non-existent here in China).

As time progressed, I didn’t like what the “Me Too” movement began to turn into; especially in Hollywood. This beautiful organization began to turn into something dark, dirty and nasty. Actresses/actors getting on the bandwagon to revive their careers and people suddenly turning against each other to ‘save their own skin’. Something all too common in Hollywood with the hypocrisy and backstabbing.

After approximately a year, I read all that I could about the issue and researched what was happening. That was when, I decided to show my students and teaching colleagues through an eight-week (two months) written investigation (September 3 to October 27, 2018) about what was occurring with the “Me Too” movement and how it came to literally ‘die’ in Hollywood.

From this point, I titled the work, ‘How “Me Too” Hollywood Types Destroyed Feminism’.

I hope any person who reads it can get a greater or better incite on the issue. I thank you ahead sincerely!

3. Hollywood, how it all began

Hollywood, like Washington politics are areas where its leaders double-speak to their fans and constituents in the same way. By hiding the truth!

In the same way, Hollywood and Washingtonian elected officials can help society, by exposing social issues. The same people that through film or lawmaking assist their citizens, can also hinder the latter into a dark world. This dark part has to do with secret-backroom and often illegal deals, drugs, alcoholism, infidelity, sex, rape, abuse, going as far as pedophilia and murder.

The same industries who protect those in power, and why do they do it? It all comes down to money. As the saying goes, ‘We rather lose our morality, than lose our earnings!’

With Hollywood, this entertainment industry has been around for a little over a century and my goodness, all the scandals and controversies it has incurred throughout the previous 12 decades.

Before the censors (Motion Picture Production Code or Pre-Code) began affecting on what Hollywood could/show or couldn’t say/show after 1934.¹⁰ Movies like, ‘Baby Face’ (*Barbara Stanwyck*, 1933) already were telling many truths about society and the celluloid industry. ‘Baby Face’ dealt with the ugly truth about a woman whom had been sexually exploited all her life and suddenly, turns the tables and sleeps her way to the top of a corporate bank.¹¹

Not only did Stanwyck’s movies dealt directly with this issue. Several decades later a movie came out, ‘Starlet’ (*Shari Mann*, 1969). Moreover, it was intensely controversial, that the studios decided to give it a Triple ‘X’ pornographic rating. However, in an industry even [then] affected by controversy: directors, producers and those in the business wanted to distance themselves from this motion picture. This movie ‘hit too close to home’, when it gave an honest portrayal about Hollywood’s

dealings and seedy underworld in the production of flicks. This ‘tit for tat’ was always part of the ‘end game’. Portraying a young actress who sleeps her way to the top!¹²

This reality is far from the fictional idealism which Hollywood often tries to portray. That everything is all about: an egalitarian, equal society, without discrimination, no racism or no sexism; in which prejudice doesn’t exist and where, we are all ‘family’.

Have you all heard the sayings, “Truth is stranger than fiction!”¹³ or “Life imitating art!”¹⁴

The above two are the constants in Hollywood circles. But Hollywood studios can never place themselves as vessels of morality, when in truth they never were!

4. Pre-Hollywood “me too” era

Hollywood always had a ‘publicly known-dirty little secret’. The scandals have always started from the casting calls, and when they ended with producers/directors on the ‘casting couch’.

Actors/Actresses accepted this fact of life in their careers and as a standard practice. This practice didn’t only affect men; however, the majority of those affected were usually women.

The ‘couch-casting call’ was one of Hollywood’s most pervasive ways to get free sex out of the movie actors involved in the production. It was more about power and who controlled the motion picture. In other words, certain producers and directors would affirm to the actors or actresses, “If you want me to cast you, either sleep or give me oral sex!” Of course, the latter expressed in a milder form. An exchange, a favor... This was the abuse of power held over a performer’s head! Like the ‘dangling carrot’.

However, it always led for most actresses to become emotionally affected and sometimes it permanently destroyed their lives by this one-single act! We will actually never know how many lives they actually affected or destroyed. Since, we live inside a ‘culture of silence’ around the globe. That same silence which affected these women/men. Possibly causing them to abuse drugs, alcohol, suffer Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders¹⁵ and leading in rear instances to suicide.

But others used this method of the ‘couch-casting call’ to promote and take their career literally to new heights! Two prominent actresses in the business have been known in the past for this practice: *Chelsea Handler*¹⁶ who slept with the CEO of *E! Entertainment* to get her own show and *Gwyneth Paltrow*¹⁷ who was groomed since the beginning by *Harvey Weinstein* when she landed the role of ‘Shakespeare in Love’.¹⁸ Paltrow was often called, one of ‘Harvey’s Girls’. More about Weinstein below, in this investigative paper.

Where things began to unravel for Hollywood was with the *Bill Cosby* cover-ups. How men in power could easily get away with it because of fame and fortune. Cosby had been a serial rapist for a better part of 50 years. Stories had intended to surface, but with ‘hush-money’ many of the victims were quieted. At least for the time being. However, allegations of sexual misconduct began to resurface once again in 2014, and this was when these accusations couldn’t be silenced anymore. Mister Cosby was investigated and later found guilty in 2018 of three counts of aggravated-sexual assault and given up to 10-years in prison.

During all that time, powerful men as well as women protected Cosby for half-a-century with payouts about his assaults, rapes and sexual indiscretions.

Soon after, accusations began to surface in 2015 about Harvey Weinstein. Stories which had been squashed for a while began to come out into the limelight; especially when he was questioned by the *NYPD* (New York City Police Department) about sexually-assaulting a 22-year old actress.¹⁹

Rumors had been swarming around Mister Weinstein’s behavior for years; which made people wonder. If his former wives, *Georgina Chapman* and *Eve Chilton* weren’t just covering-up for his sexual indiscretions and philandering.

5. During the Hollywood “me too” era

“America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves.” - Abraham Lincoln²⁰

Hollywood had already been losing money for the last 25-years. With productions being taken overseas and the growth of industries like, *Bollywood*. Hollywood was already making less and less movies a year by the 21st Century, in comparison to China or India; and many of the productions were

often loses for the American-movie industry.

On top of it all, what began as a slippery-slope in monetary loses came with the Cosby and later, Weinstein scandals.

By October, 2017 *The New York Times* broke the story on Weinstein and on his 30-year assaults and harassment against women.²¹

Forcing Hollywood executives to take a deep-hard look into their behavior and what had once made the industry great, was now destroying it with greedy males' megalomania!

What came with the Weinstein scandal were a slew of actresses accusing him of improper behavior; and I do believe that this megalomaniac whom pressured, violated or harassed most of these women needed to be exposed. Therefore, I do believe what the majority of these women are saying.

However, what came after in the industry were the problems which often affect when these scandals brake out! The women who joined in the 'bandwagon' after all had been said and done This amount was only a fraction of fake accusers. Few females used this method, after the fact, just to hide a night of impropriety. One example comes clearly to mind, it was the *Tawana Brawley*²² case; which amounts to about 2 to 10 percent.²³

Suddenly, those who once called Weinstein a 'God', like actress *Meryl Streep* or actor *Matt Damon* whom had called him a 'friend', now were calling him 'disgusting and repulsive'. Turning totally against this fallen mogul.²⁴ Streep didn't only do it once, but did it twice. Because after she pointed the finger at Weinstein, then she went after *Dustin Hoffman*. Possibly, Hoffman had touched her breast improperly and he did slap her in his rough 'method-acting style' during "Kramer vs. Kramer" (1979); however, he did apologize! Doesn't this mean anything in Hollywood anymore? The man apologized, then my question is the following: "Did Ms. Streep forgive him or not?"²⁵

In truth, Cosby and Weinstein were moneymakers in Hollywood, and while they made money, nobody cared for the lives these two men destroyed! The truth is harder to stomach in this industry; which often wants to be told honestly about life and few times can handle it!

This was when Hollywood shook to its foundations in the hypocrisy, lying and backstabbing when the story was exposed.

Men from *Steven Seagal* to *Kevin Spacey* were accused of sexual harassment, as well.

In my opinion, I do believe these stories ought to come out! But the problem remains for me, like with most people whom are fans, investigators and observers: should we believe the so called 'victims' who accepted payments after their assaults or waited decades to come out and say something?

People like *Rose McGowan*, with a history of unstable behavior and drug addiction: is she a credible 'victim and witness'?²⁶ I sincerely believe not. To call herself, 'Brave' and act out when she accepted a settlement smells like hypocrisy. In the eyes of most people with common sense, it'd feel the same.

How about members of the Hollywood elite who didn't stand-up to Weinstein before? Take for example actresses like: *Mira Sorvino*, *Angelina Jolie*, *Ashley Judd* or *Gwyneth Paltrow*. All these women came from powerful-music and Hollywood families. Now, suddenly, "Me Too" happens and they want to confront Weinstein and accuse him. What happened before? Ah, this is the answer on everybody's lips, money and career were more important than dignity.

For this reason, I consider Hollywood a cesspool of untruths when it comes to people's rights! It's the common trend, that these Hollywood types will only come out when it's for the benefit or like the 'flavor of the month', what's the most popular thing/issue at the moment? Therefore, their looks are now fading and they desperately need to make money; so, they'll join the masses!

I wouldn't say it didn't occur. But, what happened between the before, now and after? That is certainly questionable.

It is my opinion, all these actors and actresses lost their credibility once they started attacking each other and accepting money in lieu of silence.

With the recent scandal of *Asia Argento*, like BBC's *Jimmy Savile*. The entertainment industry has shown its darker side. One often ignored and investigators ought to look more into, pedophilia.

Asia was one of the biggest advocates of the "Me Too" movement and when her story broke out this past August, 2018--it shocked the world! Demonstrating how flawed and sick the entertainment industry had become. Miss Argento had slept with a 17-year-old minor (*Jimmy Bennett*) in 2013. She had

worked with the young actor since 2004, already adding ‘full to the fire’ in a slew of allegations of improper behavior. What she did after made the matter even worse, when she asked her then boyfriend, the now deceased-celebrity chef, *Anthony Bourdain* to payoff Bennett with \$380,000 (USD).²⁷

Hollywood was never an industry noted for its moral compass or grounded people. It was more a place for shady deals, corruption and immorality. However, what has happened in recent years has taken ‘Tinseltown’ to an extremely-new low! One where already ‘the court of public opinion’ is judging people without due process. When women and men only turn on each other for media recognition and to be on top, and in all of this, what happened to the victims?

I was hoping to hear more from the women who stood-up to Weinstein! The real brave ladies... Women such as, *Paz de la Huerta*²⁸ (actress) or *Ambra Gutierrez* (model) whom actually went to the *New York District Attorney’s Office* and the NYPD.

For the feminist cause, it has been a serious blow to trust those in politics or the stars. These two entities are commonly embedded with: liars, addicts, hypocrites and perverts! Those who will sell themselves to the highest bidder!

How can we trust people in industries which function in this way? Because, ‘the higher they are, the greater they fall!’

6. Conclusion and what will happen

While Hollywood continues to implode, financial disaster will continue to loom in the horizon. Learning that the “Me Too” movement ought to be a cause to help women as well as men on an equal stage. However, when women are against women, men against men, women against men in the industry and vice-versa; this cause will quickly go ‘nowhere fast’!

The internal squabbling has caused divisions amongst several actors and divisions with performers like: *Argento* and *McGowan*. Causing an unbelievable riff between the women whom have suffered and the women who are only using this organization [“Me Too”] as a means to advance their careers. Therefore, not caring for the actual feminist movement at all and destroying a cause which started beautifully--with the best intentions!

Women, and this is especially true in America, have to understand that not all men are the enemy. Furthermore, allow due process to take its course and before they [the women] literally start hurling stones in anger!

This is my main point and focus in this investigation. To not go with the grain, but against what’s happening. Therefore, taking the “Me Too” out of the politics and movies. To give feminism an actual fighting chance and place it where it matters: in the workplace for the common people. Furthermore, allow due process to occur for those accused. And if proven guilty, to be properly punished for their crimes. However, on that same note, if a person accuses another, they ought to be investigated and if it’s proven to be a false accusation--they ought be castigated for their crime as well. With this said, allowing the falsely accused to resume their career and not leaving their life in shambles.

What has caused the “Me Too” mess to continue spiraling out of control, are also the financial aspects affecting the studios. Presently, investors to avoid the ongoing headaches are exploring more and more film sites overseas. Therefore, to not deal with the turbulence manifesting in the U.S. and hiring actors from other countries to stay away from the fray.

If Hollywood doesn’t get their act together soon, the movie industry will be ridiculed, collapse and become part of a bygone era.

It’s all about allowing justice to take its course and to not get into these verbal confrontations, which do not help anybody. These conflicts only destroy the fabric of our society. Feminist have to stop attacking each other and accept what has happened, and only speak when necessary. When there’s no use, it’s more important to just keep absolutely silent. Because, while everybody argues, an industry/system literally ‘burns itself’ to the ground and these Hollywood types and politicians are just adding ‘fuel to the fire’!

It’s about having enough common sense to grow from these experiences. To never again allow the leaders and Hollywood moguls to get away with rape and harassment for so long!

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