

An Angry Non-white Man? Research and Rhetoric in Michael's Kimmel's *Angry White Men*

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A leading spokesman for men's studies, sociologist Michael Kimmel, published a widely read and referenced book in 2013, Angry White Men. American Masculinity at the End of an Era (New York; Nation Books). This review article examines the research methodology employed to arrive at the author's conclusions. Serious limitations are detailed.

Keywords: men's studies, male studies, current events, males, masculinity, manhood, whiteness

The Purpose of This Review

Given the extraordinary claims made by Michael Kimmel in *Angry White Men. American Masculinity at the End of an Era* (New York: Nation Books, 2013) (= AWM), I was concerned to examine the nature of the research on which they are based. I leave it to the reader to acquire a library copy of the book, as I have, and read it carefully against the background of the information the author has given us about his methodology and sources, which I summarize here. Whether it is a work of scholarship or journalism, the credibility of a writer's assertions or reporting must rest on the quality of the information or data on which they are based and the integrity of the methodology by means of which the data or information were gathered. Professor Kimmel's book purports to be a work of scholarship.

Background of the Publication

The SUNY Stony Brook webpage (March 2014) for Michael Kimmel tells us that his "current research is 'Angry White Men,' a comparative study of the extreme right, White Supremacists, and neo-Nazis in the United States, Germany, and Scandinavia" (<http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/sociology/people/faculty/kimmel.html>). Clearly, Kimmel's book is, in part, the fruit of that research. The discussion in its pages is only about the United States, however, and no mention is made of Germany or Scandinavia. Its BISAC headings are, accordingly: 1. Men – United States – Attitudes. 2. Whites – United States – Attitudes. 3. Masculinity – United States. 4. Equality – United States. 5. Civil rights – United States.

The publisher, Nation Books, is a "co-publishing venture" of Perseus Books Group and the Nation Institute (AWM, copyright page), a "nonprofit media center" "dedicated to continuing this country's long tradition of progressive thought" (<http://www.nationinstitute.org/about/>) (p. 315). The Institute is affiliated with *The Nation* magazine.

Some general information about the marketing of book is in order. It is offered by its publishers as "Current Events / Sociology." It is provided with endorsements ("advance praise" [front dust jacket]) by "Gloria Steinem, feminist activist and author," "Katha Pollitt, columnist for *The Nation*," "Martin Duberman, professor of history emeritus at the Graduate School of the City University of New York," "Madeline Kunin, former [1985-1991] governor of Vermont, author of *Pearls, Politics, and Power: How Women Can Win and Lead* [2008] and *The New Feminist Agenda: Defining the Next Revolution for Women, Work, and Family* [2012]," and sociologist "Pedro Noguero, Peter L. Agnew Professor of Education at New York University" (back dust jacket).

Duberman, Kunin and Steinem are members of the advisory board of the Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities at SUNY Stony Brook that Kimmel opened in the fall of 2013 and directs (http://commcgi.cc.stonybrook.edu/am2/publish/General_University_News_2/Stony_Brook_University_to_Create_Center_for_the_Study_of_Men_and_Masculinities.shtml). Other advisors include the actor and fitness expert, Jane Fonda, Carol Gilligan (a psychologist who published *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* [1982]), James Gilligan (a psychiatrist who has written on violence), and Eve Ensler, author of *The Vagina Monologues*. Duberman founded the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York and is the author of *In White America* (1963).

Since Fall 2013, Kimmel's Center has to date (March, 2014) offered six two-hour seminars (<http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/csmm/>) given by Lauren Josph (on male clients of prostitutes), Anna Klonkowska (on transgender men and women in Poland), Niobe Way (on boys' friendships), Byron Hurt (on "manhood, music and soul"), Darrell Moore (on Black masculinities), and Ozgend Felek (on circumcision and masculinity among Turkish soldiers). Four additional seminars are planned for 2014: Svend Aage Madsen (on men's mental health), Anna Sofie Bach (on "Henpecked Husbands and Power Women? Negotiating Masculinity, Power and Status Relations within the Heterosexual Couple"), Tal Peretz (on "Engaging Diverse Men: An Intersectional Analysis Of Men's Pathways To Antiviolence Activism"), and Brett Stoudt (on "Brooks Brothers' Blazers & Ivy League: The Use of Participatory Action Research to Examine and Interrupt Masculine Privilege in an Elite Private School").

Scholarly Context

Kimmel notes that his data are derived primarily from interviews, but he has also consulted print and online sources, and radio and television programs (p. 11). Unlike most scholarly works, the book lacks a bibliography. Its 13 pages of 300 notes for 293 pages of text refer to (roughly) 105 books, 85 articles in peer-reviewed journals and chapters in books, and 115 newspaper articles, internet sites, and radio and television programs.

A review of the Index (pp. 301-314) reveals several patterns of emphasis:

Angry American white boys, transform aggrieved entitlement into mass murders; Aggrieved entitlement, Al-Qaeda as allies to white supremacists; Anti-Communist paranoid movements; Anti-Semitic extreme Right; Anti-Semitism, as exclusion strategy to protect white race, masculinity; Capitalism, creative destruction of; Christianity, white supremacists preach racial purity; Entitlement of men, as key to understanding violence against women—with sense of proprietorship of America; Fathers' rights movement (FRM), reassert[s] traditional patriarchal arrangements; Feminists, blamed by rampage shooters—blamed for fatherlessness—blamed for white boys' problems; Gay men, blamed for white men's problems—promote fathers' responsibility—visibility blamed on feminists; Gender discrimination, white men perceived as victims of feminists; Government, as feminist; Jock culture, with administrators complicit with rape; Language of aggrieved entitlement, compared to Nazis, Hutus, promoting genocide—of fathers' rights groups; Masculinity, needs decoupling from entitlement; Masculinity ideology, key to understanding anger; Media, perceived by white supremacists as controlled by Jews; Men's rights activists (MRAs), as movement of angry white men; Mental Illness, resulting from bullying, gay bashing; Neo-Nazis, committed to race and family—interviewing process; Obama, Barack, and Limbaugh's racism; Rape, of father's rights movement leaders [?]-fueled by aggrieved entitlement—turned inward as depression; Rampage shooters, compared to Middle East suicide bombers; Religion, feminization of; School shooting, with bullying, madness, ignored by administrators; Suicide among men, as inwardly exploding anger; Violence, applauded against women, as sense of entitlement—as form of conflict resolution for boys; White supremacists, emasculation politics—portrayals of Jewish men; Women, feminizing clutches of—as masculinized; Working-class white men, as right-wing extremists. I leave it to the reader to conclude what he or she will about what, apart from "angry white men," preoccupies the author in his discussion of them. Kimmel notes in his "Preface": ". . . I've been angry too." He has been "impatient," "easily ired," and

“incensed.” He tells us he has felt “anguish,” “heart sick,” “torn apart” and “horrified” about certain things (pp. x-xi). He self-identifies as an activist and an academic (p. xi) among “we straight white men” (p. xii).

Nearly 200 pages into the book, Kimmel explains the “intention in this book” “to document the various ways that America’s angry white men are expressing their aggrieved entitlement” (p. 195). To determine whether he has accomplished this using viable and credible data is the purpose of the present review.

Concerning Methodology, Sources, and Data

The hallmark of scholarly research in the social sciences is careful sampling. In qualitative research (of which *Angry White Men* is an example), while preserving the anonymity of one’s sources, an author is expected to explain how and why he has chosen the subjects represented. Readers must know whether the author’s conclusions are based on the reports of a few people or many thousands. The demographics (geographic location, age, ethnicity, occupation, level of education) of subjects must be summarized. Interviewing protocols must be explained.

A look at the methods and materials of Kimmel’s research, chapter by chapter, section by section, will show how well he has met his commitment to solid research as a sociologist.

The Text

“Preface”

Item: Writing from “Brooklyn, May 2013” (p. xv), in the “Preface” to AWM, the author cites “people,” “my friends,” and “my friend, Dan, a doctor” as sources of reports of ubiquitous unpleasant, angry behavior in everyday American life. This is the broader context of the anger of “white men” that concerns Kimmel. Understandably, names cannot be given, but one must ask about the details of his sources here. Who are these “people” and “friends”? What is their distribution by sex, age, level of education, occupation and the like—all standard headings for classifying research subjects.

Item: “Data are plentiful” that a society’s “level of gender equality” correlates with “lower rates of depression” and higher rates “happiness” in its members “whether in a relationship or marriage” (pp. xii, xiv, 283). This would appear to be a relevant observation, but no references are provided to support it.

Item: This book about “a sense of . . . ‘aggrieved entitlement’” attributed to “all white men” (p. xiv). The notion itself is referred to as “a gendered emotion” (p. 75). No data are given to support Kimmel’s assertion about universality. As one continues through AMW, it only later becomes somewhat clear to whom the term “angry white men” refers—all men other than “[g]ay men, black men, Asian men, Latino men, and other racial and ethnic minority men” (p. 125).

Item: “The data are persuasive” that most men in this country have “accommodated themselves to greater gender equality” (p. xiv) and are happier as a result. To what data is Kimmel referring? We

are not told.

The “Preface” ends with a quotation from the Greenwich Village “bohemian writer” (p. xix), Floyd Dell (1887-1969), an American “progressive” (cf. the Mission Statement of the Nation Institute, which co-published AWM) journalist, author and playwright. It is taken from a journal called *The Masses* (1916): “Feminism will, for the first time, allow men to be free” (p. xv). The details of the reference, “Feminism for Men,” are not given. It is standard practice, of course, for scholars to provide just such information so that readers can understand the context of a quotation. A closer look repays the effort. Given Kimmel’s being “heartsick for gays and lesbians still targeted for violence by hateful neighbors for loving whom they love” (p. x), it is of some interest that Dell, who was the first male lover of the “bisexual” American poet, Edna St. Vincent Millay, is credited with having said in his autobiography that he assumed that role with the poet since he “he felt it was his duty to rescue her from her homosexuality” (*Homecoming*, 1933; reprinted in 1969—referenced and paraphrased, http://www.sappho.com/poetry/e_millay.html). Does Kimmel know this about his source? Dell was the author of *Feminism for Men* (1914) and *Enter the Woman* (1915). Kimmel himself is the author of books entitled *Against the Tide: Pro-feminist Men in the U.S., 1776-1990* (1992) and *The Guy’s Guide to Feminism* (with Michael Kaufman) (2011).

“Introduction”

The “Introduction” to AWM, which begins with a quotation by Glenn Beck (p. 1), presents the scenario of a breakfast meeting with “Rick,” a man Kimmel meets at a high school in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, where he has gone to attend a gun show. Kimmel recalls asking himself, “What’s a nice Jewish boy from Brooklyn doing in a place like this?” (p. 1). He had introduced himself to “Rick” as “a writer . . . on a research trip” (p. 2).

Item: We are not told why Kimmel has singled out this man as a source, other than that he is with other men at the first table inside the venue. Kimmel writes: “They eye me suspiciously. I am not very tall, obviously ‘ethnic’ . . .” (p. 2). One of the men asks: “What are you writing about? . . . You Jewish?” (p. 2). Kimmel replies to one or all of the men: “I’ll answer your questions. Yes, I’m Jewish. I’m a sociology professor from New York. I am writing a book about what is happening to guys like you in our country” (p. 2). Kimmel does not tell them who to his mind “guys like you” are. “I’m not here to convince you of some blue-state liberal agenda. My job is to understand how you see all this” (p. 3). “Rick” agrees to talk with Kimmel. This is how he comes to be one of Kimmel’s sources. What were the criteria of selection operating here? Social science requires that there be such criteria to ensure integrity of sampling. One of the other men comments: “Yeah, Rick, you go talk to this guy. Yeah, I sure as shit don’t want to talk to no Jew” (p. 3).

At breakfast the next day (for which the author “arrived a half hour early and parked my car a few blocks away” (p. 3), Kimmel produces a tape recorder to preserve the material of the conversation in order to authenticate it for scholarly purposes. Doing so ensures a verbatim account of the data to which other researchers may refer, especially when direct quotations are given. “Rick” responds: “Are you a fed? I can’t talk to you” (p. 3). Kimmel shows “Rick” his university ID (which functions as a sort of press card), puts away the tape recorder, and the conversation begins. There is, then, no protocol of what transpired between Kimmel and “Rick.” Lacking a transcript, the content

of the conversation remains entirely a matter of what Kimmel recollects. We are not told whether he took notes while having breakfast with “Rick.” It is important to maintain the anonymity of people interviewed, but it is just as important to detail why a given person was interviewed and not someone else.

Item: Kimmel writes: “I’ve spent the past several years talking to these guys” (p. 11). Here we expect to be told how many years, how many men interviewed, where, under what circumstances, using what protocol for interviewing. Usually, an author provides this information in a table. We are not told any of this. Instead, Kimmel goes on: “As I have crisscrossed the country, first interviewing younger men on college campuses for my book *Guyland*, and late while crisscrossing it again being interviewed about the book, I’ve also been interviewing these angry white men” (p. 11).¹ Kimmel then mentions “reading their blogs, lurking in their chat rooms . . . and listening to the collection of radio ragers” (p. 11). Which blogs? Which chat rooms? Which radio shows? Several blogs and radio shows are mentioned later, but here, at the outset, the reader expects to be given the details of the author’s sources.

Item: “Many of the men I interviewed for this book are not bad men” (p. 11). How many? What are the criteria for determining what a “good man” is? These are “the American men with whom I most disagree politically” (p. 11), writes Kimmel. But what has agreement with one’s “politics” got to do with a work of research?

Kimmel provides some clues about who comprise the group of the aggrieved entitled he is studying. “They’ve blamed women, minorities, gays and lesbians, and immigrants. Some blame the Jews” (p. 12). The group make use of scapegoating: “Scapegoating—whether of Jews, minorities, immigrants, women, whomever . . .” (p. 24). See also pp. 51, 52

Item: We are introduced to “Al, a fifty-two-year-old divorced father of three” (p. 27). We are not told how “Al” was chosen to be interviewed or under what circumstance or to what extent.

1 – “Manufacturing Rage. The Cultural Construction of Aggrieved Entitlement”

Item: “Tom” is a caller to the Rush Limbaugh radio show (p. 31). How many episodes of the radio show did Kimmel audit? When was the show aired? What is the context of “Tom’s” remarks on the economy. The visitors to Limbaugh’s website are profiled (p. 33). The source of the numbers is not given. Numbers of listeners to “outrage media” are referenced (p. 33, n. 6).

Item: Angry white women are considered, including “Debbie,” “whom I met at a Tea Party rally in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania” (p. 65). “Debbie’s sentiments were echoed by pretty much every one of the Tea Party women with whom I spoke” (p. 65). Why was the venue chosen? How many women did Kimmel speak to? In what way is “Debbie” representative of them?

2 – Angry White Boys

Item: This chapter reprises a theme to which Kimmel returns often: school shootings by boys and young men. In this chapter, Kimmel explains: “With my colleague Matt Mahler, I have investigated all the rampage school shootings that took place in the United States since 1987” (p. 77). We are not given a summary of the study. Dr. Mahler’s credits are not given, but an internet search reveals that he completed his PhD where Kimmel teaches (SUNY/Stony Brook) in 2011. Kimmel was on his dissertation committee.

3 – White Men as Victims. The Men’s Rights Movement

Item: Kimmel interviewed Roy Den Hollander, Esq., an attorney who practices in New York. The conditions of the interview are not described (where? how long?).

Item: After referring to a character in a television series, Kimmel mentions Robert Bly, Michael Meade, and Same Keen, all associated with the earliest men’s mythopoetic consciousness-raising efforts in the United States. He writes parenthetically (p. 106): “In my research, many mythopoets had far better second marriages than their first . . .” No publication is cited and the nature of the research is not described. Several sources are quoted (p. 112): “One writer fumed . . . Another one wrote that . . .,” but they are not identified.

Item: “Jeff” is quoted. “Jeff is a men’s rights fellow traveler I met at one of my campus lectures—after he followed me back to my hotel, peppering me all the way with questions and challenges” (p. 114; cf. p. 95). We are not provided with a description of “Jeff” (student? faculty? local community member?). Another individual interviewed for *Guyland* is referenced just following the presentation of “Jeff’s” comments (tape recorded? reconstructed from notes?) (pp. 114-115). “While researching my previous book *Guyland*, I happened on a Brooklyn bar that has been home to generations of fire-fighters and their pals” (p. 115). Here Kimmel interviewed “Patrick.” Why was “Patrick” chosen for interviewing? What were the conditions of the interview? What sorts of controls were in place? Was informed consent acquired?

Item: Kimmel then reports: “Some years ago, I was doing some research with a graduate student on the levels of violence in various pornographic media” (p. 115). The record of their findings is not given.

Item: Discussing the “disinhibiting effect” of the internet on individuals who communicate there, Kimmel refers to “researchers” (p. 116) who have studied. Only one citation is given (Ch. 3, n. 20, p. 291, where the citation is incorrectly given as *Cyberpsychological Behavior*; the journal is *CyberPsychology and Behavior*).

Item: A sampling of contributors to one site is given (p. 117). “Here’s one guy: . . . And here’s another: . . . And a third: . . .” What was the basis of Kimmel’s choices? From how many contributions did he make his selection?

Item: In a note to this chapter (Ch. 3, n. 27, p. 291), Kimmel refers to a 2002 article in *Violence Against*

Women: “I have reviewed all the empirical studies that claim to show the ‘gender symmetry’ [of domestic violence] . . .” Later, in Chapter 5, “Targeting Women,” Kimmel refers to a study by “a California psychologist, Martin Fiebert” (p. 191). The articles covered by Professor Fiebert cover the years 1978–2001. In a conversation with Fiebert, I learned that in the 12-year period following the article cited by Kimmel, Fiebert has since presented findings that confirm the gender symmetry of domestic violence (Martin Fiebert, personal communication, March 2014). The data are readily available on Fiebert’s website. At p. 193, Kimmel claims that Fiebert’s “annotated bibliography *turns out to be far more of an ideological polemic than a serious scholarly undertaking* [emphasis added].” No comment.

Item: The chapter is devoted to attempting to discredit research on misandry. Reading of the extensive work published by Paul Nathanson and Katherine Young seems to be limited to only their first book, *Spreading Misandry* (2001). Kimmel notes that his critique of their work in the present volume (“my analysis of their books,” Ch. 3, n. 38, p. 291) is based on his article in *Common Review* (2002; the journal ceased publication in 2011). But only one of their books had been published then, the next two in 2006 and 2011, respectively. Clearly, the authors’ books (plural) have not been fully taken into consideration.²

Item: A “men’s rights blogger” wrote to Kimmel about the “manosphere”? What are the features (age, level of education, other demographics) of this blogger, whose significance is signaled by having been chosen for quotation? From how many writers did Kimmel have similar responses? Considering the anecdotal nature of Kimmel’s evidence, the following observation about men’s rights activism is ironic: “Most of what constitutes men’s rights activism is this sort of recitation [the blogger’s comment], supported by a few anecdotes, and the occasional series of empirical inversions that usually leave the rational mind reeling” (p. 118).

Item: Kimmel reports that he “often” asks men’s rights activists about domestic violence as perpetrated by both women and men (p. 120). How many men so identified has he asked this sort of question? What precisely was the question? How was it formulated? In social science research, it is well known that crafting the questions asked is half the work of carrying out qualitative research or for that matter quantitative research involving questionnaires. Casual conversations, informally arranged, do not count as solid, robust data.

Item: Concluding his discussion of male studies (by contrast with men’s studies, as a branch of gender studies/women’s studies), Kimmel writes: “Male studies reminds me of the right wing of the Republican Party . . . Male studies has about as much chance of catching on in academia as would ruling-class studies” (p. 133). A background of stereotypic party politics (liberal/conservative) seems evident. But what might any of that have to do with research on men as carried out by an academic sociologist?

4 - Angry White Dads

Item: The section on “Angry Dads” includes quotations from “Mickey,” someone interviewed by “Jocelyn Crowley for her book *Defiant Dads*” and “Jeff,” whom Kimmel “met at a Long Island fathers’ rights group meeting” (p. 138). Why was the group chosen? Apart from “Jeff, a forty-four-year-old

computer salesman,” with whom did Kimmel speak? Quoting “Jeff,” Kimmel adds in an important footnote (Chapter 4, Note 5, p. 291): “For this chapter, I interviewed several leaders of the movement by e-mail and telephone and attended meetings of two different father’s rights groups, one in Long Island and one in the Los Angeles area. I’ve changed the attendees’ names to preserve anonymity, but I’ve identified the leaders by name.” Leaders are identified, but do two meetings with (how many?) men constitute a valid sample of the fathers studied by the author?³

Item: The author does not give us the real name a “suburban support group for recently divorced guys” (p. 147), which he calls “Fathers United.” Just why the identity of the group (“some meeting” of which he attended) should be masked is not clear, since Kimmel promised to reveal the names of leaders of such groups. We are not told how many meetings and over what period of time the meetings occurred. One meeting hosted a half-dozen men at the leader’s apartment (which Kimmel refers to as “Arnie”’s “man cave”). He reports on what he has heard from “Arnie,” “Tom,” “Greg” and “Hal” (pp. 148-150). Did Kimmel record the conversations? Did he take notes? The details of the conversations are quite precise. Kimmel notes that attendance at the meeting(s) had been difficult to secure. The group leader was “hesitant” to permit Kimmel to attend a session (or sessions). “Arnie” is reported to have said that “he didn’t trust me personally, since I’m known to be on the other side of this debate.” Kimmel wanted to attend “because I wanted to get it right, didn’t want to be too dismissive, and because I thought there was some value to what was happening among fathers” (p. 148). The objectivity required of a researcher and the importance of not being dismissive at all are breached here.

Item: Statistics about the consequences for boys of being raised by a single parent are provided (p. 151). No source is given. In the next paragraph, a report by the National Academy of Sciences the causes of violent crime is referenced, but no citation is given.

Item: Kimmel writes that “all available evidence” concludes that “alleviating poverty would actually lead to an increase in marriages” (p. 152). The reference (Chapter 4, Note 22, p. 292), is a *New York Times* article from 1994.

Item: “I’m sure I don’t need to tell you that there is no empirical evidence whatsoever that suggests that overdominant or single mothers ‘produce’ more gay sons than less dominant moms in husband-wife homes . . .,” write Kimmel (p. 153). But he does tell us this, without providing data that show this is not true. Moreover, there is a psychoanalytic literature from more than a century that has provided strong evidence that this is the case. The comment follows the presentation of an anecdote by “Roger” from Washington, DC. The “activist” is not further profiled. The conclusion is then presumably justified by asserting that “Roger” and other such fathers “just want to promote intact marriages and restrict the options for terminating a bad marriage” (p. 153).

Item: On fathers’ “overstating their involvement in family life,” Kimmel’s authority is “a colleague” who was at one time a “custody evaluator in the Massachusetts family court system (p. 154). (The “colleague” and source of data are identified as “ Bancroft, personal communication, August 12, 2012,” Chapter 4, Note 26, p. 292. On Bancroft, see <http://lundybancroft.blogspot.com/>). But also note: “Lundy Bancroft is reported to have boasted that he was fired by the Massachusetts family courts as a domestic violence educator because of his extreme views” (<http://www.breakingthe->

science.org/: <http://www.breakingthescience.org/BTSResearchCritiqueWithComments.pdf>).

Item: A parenthetical remark—“(Only 30 percent of all black college students in America are male.”—is not referenced (p. 155).

Item: Kimmel quotes “one [fathers’ rights] activist” (p. 158) on fathers’ attitudes towards the support of two households—one left behind by the father and the other maintained by the father after divorce—but does not provide the reader with information about the group membership of source (age, income, conditions of the marriage and divorce, number of children) that would provide the assertion with context (p. 158).

Item: Kimmel cites a statistic on the proportion of “Americans who have ever spanked toddlers” (“more than 90%”) and the proportion of “mothers who spanked their three- to five-year-olds” (“three-fifths”) (p. 159), but does not provide his source.

Item: Kimmel refers to “many of the fathers’ rights websites, magazine, and blogs” (p. 159), concluding that if one is to believe their content, one would erroneously conclude that “courts routinely side with the mother” in custody cases. On how many sources and on which ones is Kimmel basing his conclusion? We are not told.

Item: “Virtually no studies actually find any particularly compelling outcomes for children in joint custody arrangements,” writes Kimmel (p. 168). Which studies has he consulted? We are not told, but only referred to an article in *Marriage and Family Review* (Chapter 4, Note 17, p. 292), “Organizational Responses to the Fatherhood Crisis. The Case of Fathers’ Rights Groups in the United States.” No other reviews of literature are provided to complement Professor Crowley’s. (See <http://www.jocelyncrowley.com/>.) What are Kimmel’s criteria for accepting the author’s data? What studies are there that suggest a different conclusion? (Crowley is the author of *Defiant Dads: Fathers’ Rights Activists in America* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008).)

Chapter 5 – Targeting Women

Item: On the number of men murdered by their female partners, Kimmel writes: “Data vary . . .” (p. 174). What are the data he is comparing? We are not told. In the same paragraph, several studies are cited on the numbers, but they are from the years 1988-1994, 1993-2001 and 1981-1992 (Chapter 5, Notes 9-11, p.294). How are these data comparable since the nine covered different periods of time? Could this be why the widely varying figures are “disparate” (p. 175)?

Item: US Department of Justice figures are given on rates of intimate partner homicide (p. 176). The direct references are not given.

Item: Kimmel again refers (p. 176) to Lundy Bancroft in explaining his thesis about a reaction of “aggrieved entitlement” as the source of white men’s anger and quotes him as an authority on domestic violence (p. 176; see Chapter 5, Note 13, p. 294). (See **Item**, re p. 154, above.)

Item: Making reference to Freud (p. 177), Kimmel writes: “This association between violence in love

is so intimate, so central for men, that it practically screams out for answers. Freud wasn't the first to notice the association between love and anger, between sex and aggression." The unattested reference may be to the Greek tragedians. If it is, however, the association is just as often made by the Greeks of women, sex and violence, as it is of men. Kimmel does not cite Freud, but perhaps only because Freud speaks of sex and violence only in the context of the perversions (paraphilias) or as one element of foreplay. Freud does postulate two primary drives: desire and aggression.

Item: Invoking the testosterone hypothesis as having a "permissive effect" on aggression [in men], he refers to "scientists" who have proposed this. Just which scientists, however, we are not told. "Kimmel writes (p. 181): "This sense of entitlement is the key to understanding men's violence against women. Mountains of research suggest that men hit women not when everything is running smoothly, but when it breaks down, when things aren't going so well." Two examples are given, "a young guy, only sixteen years old" and "a twenty-three-year-old guy named Jay." The first is referenced to Mark Totten, *Guys, Gangs, and Girlfriend Abuse* (2002). The second is attributed to a "researcher," Tim Beneke. No citation is given. Beneke is the author of two books, from 1982 (*Men on Rape*) and 1997 (*Proving Manhood: Reflections on Manhood and Sexism*, respectively (<http://www.amazon.com/Timothy-Beneke/e/Boo1KDW7DO>)). Kirkus Review describes Beneke as a "free-lance writer and anti-rape activist" (<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/timothy-beneke/proving-manhood/>).

Item: "Again and again, what the research on rape and domestic violence finds is that men initiate violence when they feel a loss of power to which they feel entitled," writes Kimmel (p. 186). No references are given. The paragraph ends with a quotation from "Emile" in Bancroft's *Why Did He Do That?* (2002, p. 61; cited Chapter 5, Note 23, p. 295).

Item: Kimmel provides an example from his own experience of "men's violence against women" (p. 186). "Having been a somewhat sheltered suburban boy, I had no idea, really, about the extent of violence against women." We are not told where he grew up. "My girlfriend was working at a shelter at the time . . . I wanted to do my part, so I offered to do my part, so I offered to volunteer at the shelter where she worked." Since only women were permitted at the shelter, Kimmel was advised by his girlfriend (we are not told where he was a graduate student) to "go talk to the men who beat women up." He was "eventually trained in one of the first batterers' intervention programs" (p. 187). This was the beginning of his "research," which is related by the author to contemporary hook-up culture. All this to say that, "even the most cursory review of the data will tell you that domestic violence has a certain pattern" (p. 187). The data are not provided, however. A batterers' group member, "Al," is recalled. Kimmel's CV is not available at his page on the SUNY Stony Brook site (<http://www.stony-brook.edu/commcms/sociology/people/faculty/kimmel.html>) but according to the wiki entry, he completed his PhD in 1981 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Kimmel) so that presumably his interview with "Al" dates from the late 1970s. His memory for detail is remarkable for the counseling work he did (pp. 188-189). He compares his approach to working with the men to what "therapists" recommend. There are more than 300 varieties of counseling and psychotherapy offered in this country, so it is difficult to know which modality or modalities are being referenced here.

Item: Kimmel's data from sources from 1991-1997 on violence committed by men and women are taken from the *New York Times*, an article in the *Yale Law Journal*, Deborah Rhode's *Speaking of Sex*

(1997), June Stephenson's *Men Are Not Cost Effective* (1991), and *Masculinities and Violence* (no date given, cited as "edited by Bowker"). The volume is from 1998, edited by Lee H. Bowker.

Item: In considering "gender symmetry" in the commitment of intimate partner violence, Kimmel cites provides that support it but does not give the sources. He concludes: "Such assertions are not at all supported by empirical research" (p. 190). His sources to the contrary are from 1978-1995 (Chapter 5, Note 26, p. 295).

Item: "Dan" and "Steve" (an "affable fifty-four-year-old college professor") (pp. 195-196) appear without context other than a reference to "Steven Botkin, a founder of the Men's Resource Center of Western Massachusetts." Who is quoted (p. 196). Kimmel's colleague in publishing, Michael Kaufman, is quoted on the White Ribbon Campaign. So is Joe Torre, "former manager of the New York Yankees and Los Angeles Dodgers," who is "among our most revered celebrities—athletes" and "one of the most visible and galvanizing voices in the choir" (p. 197) voicing themselves against violence against women. Although Mr. Torre is quoted, no reference is given for the source.

Chapter 6 - Mad Men

The epigraph to the chapter (p. 199) is taken from Bruce Springsteen (from "The Promised Land," 1979), who is mentioned a number of times in *Angry White Men* (pp. 11, 18, 204, 216, 218, 277-278).

Item: Kimmel states that "a higher percentage of white people now believe that they are the victims of discrimination than do black people" (p. 203). The percentages are not given; nor is the source.

Item: Interviewed by Kimmel on the changing economic situation of "white men" is "Bill, a patron at a local coffee shop" (p. 208). How the interview was arranged is not explained. Nor is the protocol used given.

Item: As a sociologist, Kimmel is familiar with the work of Emile Durkheim, whose work on suicide (1897) is mentioned in passing (p. 212). A great deal has been written on the topic since then, however. This literature, which builds on and sometimes challenges Durkheim, is not discussed.

Item: Kimmel, a sociologist, discusses suicide and depression among men, claiming that "although depression has a physiological basis" (p. 217), it "is also socially distributed. There is no evidence whatsoever that depression has a physiological basis (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th ed., 2013). There are no tests for depression, as there are for physical diseases such as diabetes. Every sort of behavior is "socially distributed," that is, "different groups of people in different social circumstances" experience it to a greater or lesser extent. Continuing his psychological analysis, Kimmel next refers to alexithymia, which he introduces as a "socially conditioned" psychological disorder but corrects psychologists' understanding of it by suggesting that they should "bring that personal focus into a dialogue with the social context in which men struggle to prove themselves" (p. 218). The analysis ends with a quotation from a song by John Lennon of the Beatles, "Working Class Hero." It is well known among psychologists that alexithymia is a pseudo-disorder among the many that have been designed by psychiatrists since the 1950s to expand the range of diagnoses of mental illness, most often with a view to treating them with drugs.

That *Angry White Men* is in part a sequel to *Guyland* seems plausible, given what Kimmel says pp. 218-219 ff. Interviews with members of “fight clubs” are reprised in order to suggest that these young men become the eponymous angry white men of the book under review. One “Dustin,” a “senior at Vanderbilt [University]” is quoted. How he was selected and what the context of the interview was are not revealed.

Item: A comment (p. 224) on gender among nurses and doctors (“Doctors are rarely threatened by female nurses; it’s female doctors they resent”) is made without reference to any studies.

Chapter 7 - The White Wing

This chapter makes an equivalence between angry white men and the political right. (It is fair to say we may read the title as “the Right Wing.”) A connection is also made between the racist white right and “the more anti-Semitic Right” (p. 236).

Item: Kimmel quotes “Alex,” from Michigan (pp. 232-233). We are not told how Kimmel met him or what the conditions or protocol of the interview were. So, too, for “a thirty-eight-year-old farmer housing construction worker” from Ohio (pp. 234-235) and “Randall,” from Western Pennsylvania (p. 235).

Item: “Chatting up white supremacists and neo-Nazis was not exactly the travel itinerary that this nice Jewish boy from Brooklyn had originally planned” (p. 239). First in chat rooms then in person, Kimmel talked with his subjects. Just how many is not made clear. Nor do we learn his process of selection of material quoted. Asked where he had met his subjects in person, Kimmel replied to “colleagues and friends”: “I did the lion’s share of my interviews in areas like the soulless suburban sprawl north of San Diego, in towns like Temecula, of Fallbrook, or Poway, or around Long Beach, and San Pedro, a bit farther north, closer to Los Angeles. I ventured around Tennessee, close to Nashville and Murfreesboro. But mostly I stayed pretty close to home” (p. 240). He refers to another gun show he visited, this one in Northeastern Pennsylvania. “Eventually I talked with about forty guys, some just for a few minutes outside the school, others for full-scale interviews. I had ground rules. I never went to their homes, meetings, concerts, or festivals; I never met them after dark and never more than one on one. I met them at diners off highways near the towns with the gun shows; usually, I took them to lunch. I never tape-recorded them. . . . Afterward, waiting again [for the interviewed people to leave the diner], frantically scribbling notes from the interview and then walked to my car” (p. 241). How detailed can the notes be? How accurate can the quotations be? There is no archive to check against Kimmel’s notes.

Kimmel adds: “Of the guys I spoke with, about a dozen were active in specific organizations, and another dozen were occasional members.” No formal protocol of interview was used. We are not told how some of the “forty guys” were chosen from among those available to Kimmel at the gun shows. But are attendees at gun shows a methodologically sound sample of “white supremacists”? Kimmel admits that “there has been no formal survey [of white supremacists], for obvious reasons” (p. 241). But research in the social sciences depends on formal surveys. Kimmel nevertheless infers “noticeable patterns” (p. 241). He concludes, for example: “They’re certainly Christian, but not just any Christian—they’re evangelical Protestant, Pentacostalist, and members of radical sects that

preach racial purity as the Word of Jesus” (p. 243). “A large proportion of the extreme right wing are military veterans” (p. 243). But without formal surveys, how can he know this? Kimmel reduces the group to sharing the same “class”: “downwardly mobile, lower-middle-class white men” (p. 244): “All of the men I interviewed—all—fitted this class profile.” But without detailed histories, how can Kimmel know this? “(The average age of the guys I talked with was thirty-six.)” (p. 245). Are there then records of the demographics of the men Kimmel interviewed?

Item: Reviewing “white-wing websites, blogs, magazine, and newsletters” (p. 256) Kimmel surveyed, he summarizes: “Article after article decry how white men have surrendered to the plot [to harm the men]” (p. 256). But how many articles are being considered? Two sources are cited (Chapter 7, Notes 36-37, p. 298).

Item: On white supremacist men’s attitudes toward gay men, Kimmel quotes “Tom” (“a thirty-two-year-old welder from Riverside, California”) and “Jeff” (“a twenty-seven-year old auto mechanic in Buffalo, New York”) (p. 260). We are not told from which sample these examples are chosen.

Item: In a section on “Women of the Right,” Kimmel refers to Lori Linzer, “a researcher at the Anti-Defamation League” to the effect that “there are small numbers of women involved in the movement” (p. 267). But how many we are not told. There is no citation for Linzer’s data. Two pages later, however, we read: “Women compose about a quarter of the white supremacist movement” (p. 269). Here Kimmel cites “sociologist Kathleen Blee” who “interviewed nearly three dozen women on the extreme Right” (*Inside Organized Racism. Women in the Hate Movement*, 2006; Chapter 7, Note 57, p. 299, for full citation). He reports that Blee found “that virtually all were of the same class background as the men I interviewed, indeed, as the men profiled in virtually every study of the extreme Right” (p. 269). Without a clear methodology of establishing the profile of the men, however, no comparison can be made with Blee’s findings. On the next page, citing Robert Putnam, Kimmel makes the surprising statement that “only a handful of the women [studied by Putnam] followed a man into the racist world” (p. 270). How is the reader to put in balance the 25% of women in the white supremacist movement (Blee’s data) with Putnam’s data?

Item: Kimmel interviewed “Al,” a Ku Klux Klan member and reported what he heard in conversation is not described in detail (age and other demographics). Nor is why he was chosen to be quoted from among others interviewed (p. 271).

Item: A selection of websites is referenced. We are not given a list of them. What was the basis for his choice of websites to visit?

The chapter ends with a reference to a song by Bruce Springsteen.

“Epilogue”

The concluding section (pp. 279-285) consists of several generalizations about changes in patterns of relationships Kimmel has observed in society (friendships, families). No studies are cited.

* * *

Conclusion

This was a tedious job. It is up to the reader to confirm the items offered as examples of Kimmel's flawed research methods and the data they have yielded. The reader should also see whether acceptable data have not been mentioned here. Casual references to newspaper articles and blogs are not sufficient when offering broad claims about gender and race of the kind Kimmel makes. There are many other items that could have been adduced, but those given here should be enough of a sample to raise questions about the nature and quality of the "research." Whether the conclusions offered and the claims made can be taken seriously as scientific research or whether the appearance of a scholarly study hides other agenda, I leave to the reader to decide.

Appendix

Some of the difficulties in the research methodology of *Angry White Men* were characteristic of Kimmel's earlier book, *Guyland. The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men* (New York: Harper, 2008). What follows are two reviews of that book from amazon.com that point to similar flaws. Although *Publishers Weekly* asserts that the book is "based on more than 400 interviews, over a four-year span, with young men ages 16–26," the nature of the sample and the interview protocol are not made known to the prospective reader. The following reviews reveal just what these were.

Both reviews may be accessed at: (http://www.amazon.com/Guyland-Perilous-World-Where-Become/dp/0060831340/ref=sr_1_1_title_2_har?ie=UTF8&qid=1397584147&sr=8-1&keywords=kimmel+guyland).

The first review addresses methodology:

1. Anonymous ((Hu)Man)

If as an undergraduate I had turned in a term paper of the quality of *Guyland*, it would have been returned to me. Statistics are cited without sources. (Some are, some aren't.) Works cited posing as current are sometimes twenty-five years old, presented alongside current research. The assumption is evidently that the reader will not go to the line notes at the back, caught up in the snazzy, cool rhetoric of the writing. Most sources are popular press articles. Masquerading as research and scholarly work, it is hard to know what readership Professor Kimmel has in mind with this book. This is a work of misandry (man-hating). (The word misandry does appear in the Oxford English Dictionary.) Its methodology is not clearly defined. His several hundred interviews with "guys" (defined as males between age 16 and 26), which are apparently the sources of his "data," were gathered while on invited college campus visits throughout the country. Yes, there are references to other, non-college students interviewed, but the book is essentially based on chats with undergraduates. But under what conditions? What are the research controls? Quoted directly, did the sources give consent? Professor Kimmel claims that males who have been subjected to the "boy code" (a term from a successful popular work on boyhood) are here heirs to the "guy code," a catch phrase Professor Kimmel must hope will make him as famous as the "boy code" author. A profeminist who is the editor of a widely used anthology for "gender studies" courses and a journal on men and masculinity, he has

written a book for fans of the view that harsh, destructive males are still everywhere at large, but are now complaining about their loss of status since the second wave of feminism in the United States. Young college men are, on the basis of what they said have to Professor Kimmel, dim-witted witnesses to their own depravity, especially in the area of continuing bad behavior toward women. Given the interview material, which is provided at great length, Professor Kimmel must have transcribed his interlocutor's comments at great speed. Were the conversations recorded? This we do not know. This is mediocre journalism. There is nothing in the author's disparaging portrait of young men about their experience. Only behavior is recounted. Here and there is a bit of speculation at the level of daytime television talk shows about the psychological motivations for the behavior described. The account of "guys" is acidic generalization, determined to envision all young males in this newly "discovered" age period (Professor Kimmel's "finding") as just reincarnations of countless generations of white males who have, according to Professor Kimmel, made life miserable for women by demeaning them. There is a great deal of mileage to be had from exploiting this new theme. But why this misandry by one of the world's authorities on men and masculinity? Another, R.W. Connell, so hated masculinity that after 60 years undertook transformation to being a woman. Professor Kimmel writes about his love of sports but repeatedly makes young men who play sports into goons, rum-soaked, woman-exploiting ruffians. The solution? A return to white middle class marriage and family life. This is the result of decades of study by a prominent sociologist. And the readers? Parents? The "guys" themselves, perhaps to see if they were quoted? To laugh at the caricature of them? School administrators? This is not clear. It's an odd tirade. Better to tune in to online chat rooms and read the same sort of "conversation" as this work of "social science" (terms Kimmel favors) offers up to the daytime TV reading public.

The second review is more general:

2. Peter Allemano:

Michael Kimmel's GUYLAND is a masterpiece — of manipulation and deceit.

Ostensibly a concerned but kindly portrait of young American males, the book is actually a scathing, unforgiving indictment. Indeed, an in-depth analysis of how adroitly Kimmel has crafted his monumental insult of young American males and impugned their dignity — while patting himself on the back for being simultaneously insightful and avuncular — is the stuff of a doctor's thesis with potential to run for more pages than the book itself. This review constitutes but a brief glance at a few of the salient points that such a thesis would highlight.

It is through a combination of neatly interwoven tacks that Kimmel navigates the tricky process of passing off a brutal — and very shallow — portrait of young males as a thoughtful assessment.

The overall structure of the book, in and of itself, constitutes Kimmel's primary tack. Focusing, in sequence, upon various unseemly aspects of Guyland — the term Kimmel has coined to demarcate the social and psychological world of males approximately 16 to 26 years in age — he carefully cushions his words with polite disclaimers.

The basic gist of what Kimmel initially tell us is this: The wonderful young man you care about probably is not like what you'll be reading here. But you should know about the “disturbing undercurrent” (p. 9) of the realm in which he spends much of his time.

Then, as the book progresses, Kimmel's disclaimers become less cautious. Eventually they are mere passing mentions and finally they all but completely disappear. In this manner, slowly over dozens of pages, Kimmel stealthily escalates his unwary readers' ire as he heats up his criticism.

At last — without our consciously realizing that the concerned analysis has turned into an excoriating diatribe — we have come to understand that our beloved young man, at heart, is actually a scoundrel.

Kimmel saves his best for last, launching into a fevered discussion of the harassment and rape of women. At this point, unless we have been paying attention to the tack and putting up psychological defenses, we find ourselves maneuvered into the passive position of uncomplaining (and perhaps by now even supportive) witness to Kimmel's most impassioned passages — collectively, an orgasmic thrashing of his subjects' now-unconscious bodies. Indeed, our blood may boil so indignantly that it may escape our notice that Kimmel does not even mention how young men, too, get victimized by the opposite sex — with far-reaching consequences and, unlike victimized women, with no sympathy from the media or the criminal justice system (for one thought-provoking depiction of the phenomenon, I recommend [It's Not About the Truth: The Untold Story of the Duke Lacrosse Case and the Lives It Shattered](#), by Don Yaeger with Mike Pressler).

Embedded within the structure of this screed of intellectual terrorism lie several additional tacks for seducing readers to agree with Kimmel's woeful conclusions.

One insidious tack for imbuing his writing with an apocryphal aura of credibility — and thereby deflecting potential criticism that he is nothing but a pompous, finger-wagging scold — is to state, every now and then, positive things about young males. But Kimmel artfully makes these concessions about their good qualities with extreme care — backhandedly placing his upbeat statements within the chapter, paragraph or sentence structure to ensure that they are tinged with doubt, or, offset by some assessment or other of ignominy. Either way, Kimmel essentially wants us to understand that if we wish to praise young males for any reason, then doing so ought to leave a bad taste in our mouths.

Another tack — that imparts to Kimmel's writing a simulacrum of broad-mindedness and simultaneously helps to protect him against accusations that his views are rigid or ideological — is to acknowledge that, yes, alternative perspectives about young men do exist. Impliedly, Kimmel has been willing to give these other views his serious consideration while arriving at his own conclusions.

Indeed, the casual reader might think, what more broad-mindedness could Kimmel possibly reveal about himself than to include some of these alternative perspectives — as expressed by the very young males that Kimmel interviewed and about whom he draws such scornful judgments? According to Kimmel, many of them feel browbeaten and violated in ways that makes it very difficult

to live in comity with society at large — a society that seems out to get them at every turn. “[A]ngry right-wing radio personalities,” according to Kimmel, constitute a key source of “permission” for young men’s “aggrieved entitlement.” (pp. 161-63) Therefore, we are to understand, most of them are rash, selfish and unreasonable.

However, the careful reader will note, if a young man successfully expresses his angst in a cogent way about “substantive issues” (p. 162), Kimmel pays him no heed.

One such fellow, a 22-year-old named Matt, does exactly that and is quoted at length. (p. 161) Kimmel’s response is to ignore the issues completely and to carry on about “unacceptable” rhetoric instead. Kimmel apparently assumes that his smooth side-stepping of some meaty topics of discussion will go unnoticed. And, indeed, perhaps the casual reader, caught up in Kimmel’s drama-by-distortion, will regard Matt’s words simply as transitory, distracting static midst Kimmel’s titillatingly hair-raising narrative.

But the issues that young Matt raises, along with many more, deserve very much to be pondered — and there are some noteworthy writers doing so.

To be sure, Kimmel does not pretend to be the sole published author who writes about gender issues, and he makes approving reference to several writers, ranging from the famous (e.g., Susan Faludi and Carol Gilligan) to the obscure (Norah Vincent). Therefore, it is inconceivable that Kimmel is unfamiliar with writers whose perspectives differ markedly from his and, at their core, have sympathetic understanding for young males’ feelings. But he will discuss only one such author — Christina Hoff Sommers — and it is for the sole purpose of trying to discredit her widely-praised book *The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism Is Harming Our Young Men*. Kimmel poo-pooes Sommers’s concerns, maintains silence about the successful programs she describes for improving boys’ academic performance, and dismisses her out of hand with a jaw-droppingly ludicrous mischaracterization of her conclusion.

Here is how Kimmel does it. The old chestnut, “boys will be boys,” according to Kimmel, gets invoked mindlessly by society at large to excuse young males’ wrongdoing. Sommers invokes the phrase too. Therefore, Kimmel tells us through innuendo, this means she believes that bad behavior is acceptable and normal. Obviously, then, with this bit of perversity as Sommers’s salient point, the woman must be a nutjob.

But Sommers makes no such barbaric claim, and she means something totally different by writing “boys will be boys”: young males’ unique personal energy and joie de vivre deserve to be acknowledged and honored — so these qualities can be channeled productively.

With his below-the-belt strike at Sommers, Kimmel takes an audacious gamble with his credibility — because some readers may actually have read *THE WAR AGAINST BOYS* too. Whether or not they agree with the thesis of Sommers’s book, Kimmel’s willfully duplicitous re-framing of Sommers’s writing will be instantly recognizable — and they would have to be nutjobs to believe that Kimmel is being forthright.

But Kimmel dares not risk even passing mention of certain other writers with perspectives different from his own — and it is for good reason. Inadvertently prodding unfamiliar readers' curiosity about them could not only make him look dishonest and foolish but could prove catastrophic for him. Specifically, Warren Farrell's seven books present a wealth of data and statistics that would prove the majority of Kimmel's specious contentions to be embarrassingly inaccurate — especially his repetitious carping about male "entitlement." Additionally, two books by McGill University professors Paul Nathanson and Katherine K. Young (part of an ongoing development of a series about misandry) not only express views very different from Kimmel's but embody the highest standards of probity and intellectual rigor. *GUYLAND*, in contrast, would seem as nothing but a bundle of sanctimonious rodomontade and flapdoodle suited, at best, as source material (especially its catchy title) for a sensationalistic miniseries on Lifetime TV.

Kimmel is far too smart to tell very many outright lies in *GUYLAND*. Instead, he cherry-picks facts in support of his contentions while ignoring, trivializing, or mischaracterizing facts that militate against the book's disheartening conclusions. Kimmel follows this tack with such wild abandon that, for any reader who possesses a full-spectrum education on gender issues, it is blatantly obvious. But for the less-informed reader, Kimmel's writing may seem very convincing. And, in these readers' minds, why should Kimmel be perceived as proffering anything besides clear-minded truth? After all, Kimmel is the father of a young son himself (a fact repeatedly affirmed throughout the book). Would such an author not have his own scion's best interests at heart?

But, as explained above, Kimmel does not content himself with arousing readers' concern. For Kimmel, concern is merely the launching platform from which he seeks to propel us into stratospheric realms of outrage. Alas for Kimmel, sometimes he ham-handedly contradicts himself in the process.

To cite one example, Kimmel bashes males first by invoking a stereotypical view of masculinity that he calls "The Guy Code," lamenting its notion that men should "show no emotions at all." (pp. 49-50) The fact that suppression of emotions is necessary for the self-sacrificing role that society expects males to fulfill — as providers and protectors — does not warrant mention in Kimmel's analysis.

Next Kimmel tells a personal story in which he ridicules young men who do show emotion (specifically, anger) — by describing them as "angry white males." (p. 60) Kimmel even puts the phrasal epithet in quotation marks, ensuring that readers will recognize the derisive insult for what it is and enhancing his chances of provoking readers' deepest contempt too.

But why should we feel appalled by young men's anger, and why are they wrong for feeling the way they do?

According to Kimmel, the emotion is unjustified — and utterly inexplicable — except to the degree that it arrogantly arises out of frustrated "entitlement." Kimmel uses a fascinating rhetorical sleight of hand to try to prove his point.

In this specific instance, Kimmel was a featured panelist on a TV talk show with the inflam-

matory title, “A Black Woman Stole My Job.” On the air, Kimmel mocked and taunted the men by asking: “Where did they get the idea it was ‘their’ job? Why wasn’t the show called ‘A Black Woman Got a Job,’ . . . ?” (p. 60)

But a far more honest — and compassionate — line of questioning would have been: Where did they get the idea that, by putting loaded language in their mouths, the show’s producer had any intention of hosting a rational debate on affirmative action? Why couldn’t the guests have foreseen that the show might as well have been called ‘Let’s Have Fun Tricking and Skewering Naive Young Men?’”

Apparently oblivious to the irony, Kimmel begins the section of his book wherein he relates his smug, self-satisfied anecdote with the statement, “Many young men today have a shockingly strong sense of male superiority and a diminished capacity for empathy.” (p. 59)

So who is Kimmel and why does he present such an outrageously slanted, calculatedly awful portrait of young males?

Kimmel answers the first part of this question himself: he is “a sociologist” specializing in “the study of men and masculinity,” which is “a relatively new subfield of the study of ‘gender.’” (p. 22)

There is a long explanation behind what Kimmel is telling his readers about his place in the academic world, and it is provided in detail by Professors Daphne Patai and Noretta Koertge in Professing Feminism: Education and Indoctrination in Women’s Studies. According to these authors, gender studies — a.k.a. feminist studies — is not so much a field of serious scholarship and learning as a highly politicized “academic arm” for the women’s movement. Like Kimmel, these authors consider gender to be a legitimate basis for research into numerous aspects of the human experience. But in the postmodern academe, these authors regretfully report, research and analysis in gender issues seldom get undertaken with any regard for scholarly integrity. Even the most basic standards of objective writing — like substantiating conclusions with concrete evidence — all too often get set aside in favor of more subjective “ways of knowing,” which are supposedly superior. But, again, the primary purpose of feminist studies is not so much education as persuasion — for the espousing of a specific worldview as well as for unquestioning acceptance of feminism’s pre-determined prescriptions for correcting human flaws. GUYLAND is a book very much in this vein and is remarkable for its excellence in disguising its monumental deficits so readers will think that it is something it is not.

Indeed, it is more than passing interest to note, near the end of GUYLAND, that Kimmel openly acknowledges he is a feminist. And he affirms how sweet life would be for the recalcitrant young males of Guyland if only they would become feminists too: “Feminism loves men enough to expect them to act more honorably and actually believes them capable of doing so.” (p. 264)

But what kind of richness in life does Kimmel believe men will experience when they embrace the “love” that feminism extends so generously to them?

Strangely enough — judging from the tone of Kimmel’s writing — it apparently means that males’ greatest fulfillment and self-actualization is to be found in a state of shame and embarrassment that arises out of stoop-shouldered self-abnegation and hand-wringing obeisance to their betters, i.e., to females.

Writing of feminism’s “love” for men in a book about 16-to-26-year-old males seems downright bizarre when we consider that one of the most vicious feminism-inspired slogans of the last decade — a multi-million-dollar blockbuster for the company that coined it — was directed at the subjects of GUYLAND when they were children: “BOYS ARE STUPID, THROW ROCKS AT THEM!”

At its outset, GUYLAND purports to try to “enable guys” to “steer a course with greater integrity and honesty, so they can be true not to some artificial code, but to themselves.” (p. 8) But feminism itself — at least Kimmel’s version of it — constitutes an “artificial code.” In one of his most blatant misstatements of reality, Kimmel claims feminism is about “equality.” (p. 263) Ironically, one of the most dramatic aspects of inequality that exists between the sexes — with which feminism refuses to grapple and Kimmel does not even acknowledge — manifests itself during the very period of males’ lives that is the specific focus of GUYLAND: males’ obligation to register for Selective Service and to live thenceforward knowing that, if called upon, they must subject themselves to the draft. No woman in American history has ever experienced the phenomenon, nor would any sane one want to, whether in the idealistic spirit of fostering “equality” or for any other reason. Would it not make sense, in at least a few of the hundreds of interviews Kimmel claims he conducted, to ask how “the guys” face and then carry through on fulfilling their extraordinary burden? If feminism really wanted gender equity — and not just privileges for women unaccompanied by obligations — then Kimmel would not have done his subjects this highhanded disservice.

Another area of inequality that feminism fails to address is in the realm of male/female personal relationships. Despite females’ supposedly “liberated” status, the male is expected, as in the days of yore, to handle all the difficult work of initiating relationships as well as to finance their progression into something long-lasting. Maybe the enormous amount of casual “hooking up” on college campuses — which Kimmel disparages — arises not so much out of males’ sexism as males’ brass-tacks level inability to afford dating. Especially because unprecedented numbers of women earn substantial paychecks nowadays, why shouldn’t equality — in the form of shared responsibility — be promoted in this realm?

But feminism does not teach women that they should even think that new — and sometimes very considerable — burdens might exist as inherent accompaniments to women’s expanding lifestyle options. Instead, feminism teaches women that their lives should in every respect be enjoyable and personally fulfilling, and it is not part of the deal to perform any of the onerous duties traditionally belonging to males.

So if it is true, as Kimmel claims, that many young male denizens of Guyland do not respect young females, perhaps to some degree it is because “the guys,” like any normal person, find it very hard to feel respect for someone who relates to them in ways that are hypocritical. Maybe, despite all the “minuses” that Kimmel describes about Guyland, young men tend to bond with their male peers instead of their female peers because their relationships among themselves tend to be inher-

ently more honest.

But even if males accept the fact that they must do all the initiating and paying in relationships with females — because females simply will not do it — males' chariness in the face of potential long-term commitment is perfectly understandable in light of the recent track record of females' behavior. In divorces where both husband and wife have college degrees — the vast majority of potential marriages among the population under Kimmel's discussion — 90% are initiated by the woman. With an overall divorce rate of 50%, this basically means that, for the males of GUYLAND, investing one's life in a marriage is akin to investing all one's savings in a speculative "flyer" on the stock market. Maybe young males' reluctance to marry is not a sign of "aversion to adulthood" (p. 205), as Kimmel claims, but, instead, a sign of intelligence.

Selective Service registration and responsibility for initiating and financing male/female personal relationships are but two of many important issues for young males that Kimmel will not touch with a ten-foot pole. So it is utterly preposterous to state that he advocates on behalf of "equality" and wishes to "steer guys" in a helpful way.

So, returning to the second part of the question above and rephrasing it: Why, then, is Kimmel — to put it bluntly — so mean?

I have no idea and can only speculate that Kimmel's motives may have something to do with the glory that he experiences as one of America's foremost voices in public discourse on gender issues. For better or for worse, the discourse is presently dominated — with uncompromising ferociousness — by dogmatic feminist perspectives.

The words of author/philosopher Francis Baumli come to mind:

"These feminist men — the squalling hysterical type — for all their protests against male power actually garner a great deal of power for themselves by thus setting themselves up as the archetypal protectors of women and feminism. They are, in their own minds at least, and in the ranks of their (relatively few, we hope) cohorts, the alpha males. It is a parasitic status, of course, and a pathetic power. But it is real, nonetheless, and they pride and preen themselves with it, although they would be the first to deny that they are feeling power, even as they glory in it."

If Baumli is correct, then perhaps another way to characterize GUYLAND is to say it constitutes a pseudosensitive man's personal form of chest-pounding.

The power that Kimmel experiences as a thoroughgoing feminist evidently feels so rapturously intoxicating that he is even willing, in GUYLAND, to sacrifice his own son at feminism's altar. "Nine years ago," Kimmel reports, "at Zachary's naming ceremony, we each offered a wish for our newborn son. When it was my turn, I quoted the poet Adrienne Rich, who wrote 'If I could have one wish for my own sons, it is that they should have the courage of women.'" (p. xvii)

Although the story, by early 21st century standards, might seem like a sweet-little-nothing, in the context of a book about gender issues, it deserves to be examined carefully and objectively.

Although human nature is universal, we nevertheless traditionally associate certain qualities more with one sex than the other. Sometimes it is because of stereotyping, and sometimes it is because our culture tends to provide one sex with more dramatic ways to manifest certain virtues than it provides to the other sex. Kimmel himself acknowledges these differences in *GUYLAND*. (p. 270)

In our culture, for a variety of reasons, courage is a virtue we traditionally associate with the male sex. Zachary is male. But by quoting Adrienne Rich, Kimmel is cruelly denying for his son a strength that society affirms for Zachary, and Kimmel is claiming that to develop courage, the boy should look to the opposite sex for inspiration.

If this somehow feels “all right” for us, then it is worthwhile to pause and apply the gold standard for determining the presence or absence of gender bias: reversal. Let us imagine that, instead of naming a baby boy, Kimmel and those close to him were naming a baby girl. Imagine the reaction had Kimmel found some corresponding quotation from a male poet and invoked it on the baby’s behalf: “If I could have one wish for my own daughters, it is that they should have the nurturing ability of men.”

If Kimmel dared repeat the story in writing, indignant cries of “bigotry!” and “sexism!” would be heard far and wide across the land.

Indeed, in American culture today, especially in academia and among those entrusted with the formation of public policy, feminism occupies an unassailable position — supreme and inviolate — akin to an officially-sanctioned religion. Dissidents and would-be reformers are either coerced into silence or shown the way to society’s periphery. There, any criticism they may publish about feminism — regardless of how constructive — more often than not gets ignored. And if some of the heretical blasphemy does wind up getting widespread attention (like Sommers’s *THE WAR AGAINST BOYS*) and feminists must acknowledge its existence, they could hardly be more scoffing than if they were commenting on Unabomber rants.

Kimmel — by toeing feminism’s ideological line with a zeal that exceeds even that of many female acolytes — guarantees his continuing occupancy of an exalted position in the pantheon of the feminist establishment. So, for the foreseeable future, Kimmel can safely write whatever atrocious folderol he wants with impunity — no matter how much hurt he perpetrates against males or how much animosity and mistrust he fosters between the sexes. Indeed, the higher the barriers that Kimmel and his fellow mainstream “gender experts” construct to forefend genuine understanding in the realm of discussion that they control, the more in demand these venal rogues can assuredly find themselves in the future. Whether as status-building talking heads on TV talk shows, fee-generating members of blue-ribbon assessment panels, or authors of additional misleading books and articles — as long as we remain in their thrall, there will be no end to their tsk-tsk-ing.

But the insanity of the present, of course, is unsustainable. To quote Martin Luther King, Jr., “Life cannot be fooled.”

Someday — maybe several generations hence — male-bashing will inevitably cease to be considered “enlightened” behavior and people will look back with aghast bewilderment at the taken-

for-granted anti-male Zeitgeist of our era, of which Kimmel is a guiding light. If, at that time, someone establishes a Museum of Misandry with which to document the phenomenon, then a copy of GUYLAND will deserve to sit in its own glass display case, at the center of one of the institution's exhibit halls.

Notes

¹ Kimmel describes the context of his research (p. 95): “. . . [i]n twenty years, lecturing at about twenty to twenty-five colleges and universities every year.” This would amount to 400-500 lectures, or about 1 per week, given that colleges and universities are in session only 30 weeks of the year (roughly 15 weeks per semester). Since *Guyland* was published, in 2008, that would amount to about four years worth of lectures (20%) or about 80-100 lectures. We are not told how much time was spent following or preceding each lecture interviewing subjects. Although most of his contacts would have been college and university students, there was presumably time for other interviews, especially as sources of data on white men in general.

² Kimmel suggests that the word ‘misandry’ is a neologism. It is that (1885), but its meaning as used by Nathanson and Young is not that presented as authoritative (“the hatred of men’s traditional male role,” quoted from David Gilmore, *Misogyny* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1999, p. 21). As given in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, ‘misandry means “The hatred of males; hatred of men as a sex.” Professors Kimmel and Gilmore are colleagues at SUNY Stony Brook. Interestingly enough, Kimmel seems not to have read anthropologist Gilmore’s important book *Manhood in the Making*, which challenges Kimmel’s basic premises about the meaning of masculinity. Kimmel’s citation of his review is error. It was published in *The Common Review* 1(3), 2002.

³ Kimmel introduces interesting autobiographical aside at this point in the text. He tells us that, at age seventeen, after his parents had divorced, he sat in on a group of divorced fathers having lunch. It was a “manly conversation” in which “each guy told his sad story” (pp. 140-141). The memory is remarkable for its detail, given that the incident occurred forty-five years before Kimmel write about it. One of the fathers, “Paul,” had no contacts with his children, something, Kimmel reports, he believed the other fathers envied. He also notes that his father “seemed somewhat at a loss about what, exactly, to do with his children for a whole weekend day” (p. 140). The autobiographical interpolation is odd, given the nature of the work as a sociological study. Usually, observations about one’s life is reserved for the “Acknowledgements” section. In a chapter on “deadbeat dads,” the note is especially interesting.

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