

The snobbish nastiness and division perpetuated by gender studies experts

By Janet Albrechtsen, *The Australian*, 16 November 2016

Hillary Rodham Clinton, the Democrat heiress, should now be president-elect Clinton. Women were going to rally to put the first woman in the White House. In the feminist dream and the determinist world of identity politics, the only possible event that could follow the election of the US's first black president was the election of its first female president.

We are now witnessing what happens when reality explodes this take-it-in-turns determinist dream. Clinton was bound to blame something other than her own failings. That's the calling card of left-liberal feminism. Of course, Barack Obama would blame the tight race on sexism. Identity politics demands that its adherents recast different views into an ism or a phobia — sexism, racism, homophobia, Islamophobia and so on. Clinton said it best when she described Donald Trump supporters as deplorables: “racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic — you name it”.

The post-election histrionics from so many women reveal why the so-called sisterhood has no claim over what women think, how they live and who they choose in the sanctity of the polling booth. After the US election, Mamamia's Mia Freedman said she had “shut down”. Trying to process her “tumultuous, distressing, depressing feelings” she listed 11 things she learned after Trump's win. Had Freeman stopped after No 1 — learning that she lives in a bubble of social media where like-minded people blissfully reinforce their own views — Freeman's flash of self-awareness might have been noteworthy.

Sadly, her remaining list goes like this: facts no longer matter, white people are furious their power is being taken away, Trump appealed to the lowest common denominator and children are scared. This miasma of emotion simply confirms Freedman's bubble where Clinton's win was never questioned.

If women want to be treated seriously, they need to choose reason over emotion. You can't have it both ways. You can't, with any credibility, attack Trump for saying that Fox's Megyn Kelly had “blood coming out of her wherever”, then give yourself over to pure, unadulterated emotion.

Guardian Australia's Katharine Murphy used the-facts-no-longer-matter theory to explain Pauline Hanson's success at the last federal election and she regurgitated it last week to explain Trump's win. According to Murphy's post-fact analysis, people aren't just stupid, they are deliberately stupid. “The journalism I consumed was gutsy, intelligent, richly reported, insightful, sceptical and self-aware,” wrote Murphy last week as she explained why the left-liberal media didn't do a terrible job reporting Trump's rise.

For all of that apparent consumption of intelligent news, Murphy's analysis that Trumpland is a place where truth doesn't matter is wrong and patronising. Nowhere in Murphy's analysis is there any acknowledgment that millions of US voters, forgotten by the Washington insider class, turned to Trump out of this deep sense of frustration and discontent. Nowhere is there any curiosity about Trump, the outsider, as the powerful change candidate up against Clinton's status quo politics.

Freedman and Murphy aren't alone in choosing the superficial over soul-searching. Gillian Triggs remonstrates about it being a dreadful year for women. She has this is common with

Clinton: the actions of both women have been their own undoing. Jamila Rizvi prefers to speak over and interrupt rather than listen to Steve Price explain Trump's win on Network Ten's *The Project*.

Those card-carrying feminists who display such a dearth of intellectual curiosity, and honesty, expose the sisterhood as an increasingly sanctimonious, clueless and diminishing clique.

Rebecca Sheehan, a lecturer at the University of Sydney's United States Study Centre and an expert in feminist, gender and cultural politics, said that white people, with their "part of a college education or less", voted for Trump because they were "clinging on to privilege".

Sheehan's anti-fact, derisory white-lash analysis fails to account for the two white candidates in the 2016 election and that millions of Americans voted for Obama in 2008 and 2012. What irks gender experts is that you don't need a college education — part or whole — to understand that girl power didn't rally to make Clinton commander-in-chief. Neither did Latinos, blacks or millennials. On election day, Clinton was predicted to grab the white college-educated female vote by 27 points. It fizzed to six points. Clinton's share of the overall female vote — 54 per cent to Trump's 42 per cent — was behind Obama in 2008 and only one point ahead of Obama in 2012.

Inadvertently, Sheehan's comments explain Trump's win by expressing the high-horse disdain, the ignorance and determined divisiveness of feminists. It's not a privilege to watch your dignity dissolve when you lose your job or see your weekly wage stagnate for two decades. It's not a privilege to be forgotten by an insular political class. It's not a privilege to watch Clinton enrich her private coffers through her public office. It's not a privilege to watch a woman who held the office of secretary of state to imagine a different set of rules apply to you, deleting 33,000 emails after congress subpoenaed her to produce them. It's not a privilege to watch Hollywood stars line up for Clinton, perpetuating the insider-outsider divide. There's nothing privileged about a once proud culture of Western enlightenment being crushed by a pervasive leftist culture that infantilises students: last week students at Cornell University gathered for a "cry-in" with tissues and hot chocolate provided. Tufts University offered Play-Doh to distressed students. The University of Kansas made therapy dogs available to comfort students.

The biggest danger to women is not Trump: it's the snobbish nastiness and division perpetuated by gender studies experts.

Contrast the offerings from Freeman, Murphy, Sheehan, Triggs and Rizvi with Tina Brown's observations. Last week, the writer and former editor of left-wing opinion website *The Daily Beast* wrote: "Here's my own beef. Liberal feminists, young and old, need to question the role they played in Hillary's demise. The two weeks of media hyperventilation over grab-her-by-the-pussygate, when the airwaves were saturated with aghast liberal women equating Trump's gross comments with sexual assault, had the opposite effect on multiple women voters in the Heartland."

"These are resilient women," wrote Brown, "often working two or three jobs, for whom boorish men are an occasional occupational hazard, not an existential threat. They rolled their eyes over Trump's unmitigated coarseness, but still bought into his spiel that he'd be the greatest job producer who ever lived. Oh, and they wondered why his behaviour was any worse than Bill's."

And it has taken a man to say what many left-wing women should be saying. Last week, Matthew Dowd from the US ABC News wrote: "I want to take this opportunity to say I was wrong about who would win the election. But my biggest regret, and what I would like to

apologise for, is the arrogant, close-minded, judgmental, and sometimes mean-spirited way I related to many who believed Trump would win. They were right, and I was wrong.”

Bunkered in the New York bubble, Dowd admits he didn’t spend enough time listening to Trump supporters and understanding the communities “where another portion of America lives and breathes”.

It took a cool head to deliver a rational and informed mea culpa. The ill-informed and often emotional responses from so many women on the Left over Clinton’s loss confirms that the gender prism has become an anti-intellectual prison, locking them away from exploring, let alone understanding, the world beyond them.

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