

National Affairs by Claire Hoy ? A new double standard

Here's what the 18th century English writer and woman's rights advocate had to say about women:

?My own sex, I hope, will excuse me, if I treat them like rational creatures, instead of flattering their fascinating graces, and viewing them as if they were in a state of perpetual childhood, unable to stand alone.?

This is a reality that continues to be overlooked, and no, not just by macho men who see themselves as modern Apollos, but often by the very women (and men too) who continue to be outraged by what they see as the second-class treatment of women.

One need look no further than the overwrought news coverage of two related political events, i.e. the chants of ?lock her up? directed against Hillary Clinton by Donald Trump supporters, and the same chants directed against Alberta Premier Rachel Notley during a meeting of anti-carbon-tax protesters in Edmonton recently.

Of all the charges leveled against politicians in recent times, this chant strikes me as relatively mild. But ? and here's the thing ? because they were aimed at a woman politician, well, that apparently makes it not only, as a recent Globe and Mail editorial characterized it, ?misogynistic (and) anti-democratic? to boot.

It even sparked a Star column by Judith Timson appropriately headlined: ?Political attacks on women must stop.?

Dare I ask, ?Why??

Nobody is advocating that male politicians aren't open to attack, whether the attacks are deserved or not. So why do those who see themselves champions of women's rights assume that female politicians are too meek and mild to take the same abuse?

Certainly during the recent U.S. election ? and continuing on since ? Trump has been called every horrible thing you can think of. To be sure, he has deserved much of it ? although not all ? just as Clinton surely deserved much of the negativity directed her way.

That's the way it goes, or the way it should go if you truly believe that the sexes are equal and that, as the old saw says, what is good for the goose is good for the gander.

It has become routine now to characterize any political attacks against women ? with the exception, of course, of Conservative women ? as being ?misogynistic.?

Some may indeed be that. But surely not all.

Would anybody seriously argue that all attacks against male politicians are, by definition, a prime example of ?misandry.? Not likely. So why is the reverse true?

Want a recent example that illustrates the point? Well, consider the swearing-in of 19-year-old Sam Oosterhoff as Ontario's youngest MPP, who upset even the Conservative establishment to win the byelection in Niagara West-Glanbrook, the riding held by former Tory leader Tim Hudak.

While an Ottawa byelection running at the same time was virtually ignored by the media ? even though the Tories had a so-called ?star? candidate in the former ombudsman Andre Marin (he lost) ? Oosterhoff's campaign received wildly disproportionate coverage. Why? Because Oosterhoff is an ardent social conservative and relied on (horror of horrors) local Dutch Reformed church members for his electoral success.

National Post columnist Michael Den Tandt, who describes himself as a ?social progressive,? nonetheless wrote that Oosterhoff was under attack by the media because he is ?an orthodox Christian and a social conservative, in an era when being such is tantamount to thought crime, punishable by revulsion, penalty to be administered by the flash mob on social media . . .?

Den Tandt tells of the media scrum at Queen's Park where ?the tone of many of the reporters' questions, which were framed as accusations, with nary a cursory effort to mask the questioners' contempt,? and then offers several Facebook examples posted against Oosterhoff, a collection too vile and rude to be repeated in a family newspaper, and far worse than anything said against Clinton, Notley, Kathleen Wynne, et al.

But, unlike the apparently ?delicate? female politicians, not many columnists and/or editorialists came rushing to his defence.

When it comes to criticizing women politicians ? fair or foul ? these things, writes the Globe, ?must be denounced by all.?

But when it comes to vicious attacks on a young politician on his first day on the job, then, of course, anything goes. After all, he's a man, he can take it. No treating men and women equally apparently, even though the so-called ?progressives? claim that's their goal. Talk about a double standards. Wow

