

Protocols of Engagement for All Feminists

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If the non-feminist sector is to begin existing politically, its partisans must assert non-feminist authority at appropriate times. Among other things, this will involve a code of conduct enforced upon feminists themselves. Such action will set a moral barrier in the path of feminist aggression, and begin to erode feminism's intellectual hegemony in public and private conversation.

The following protocols are written in a voice which specifically addresses the feminist sector:

Preamble

A cultural change of the guard is under way, with a new order of social and moral authority coming into focus. This development is nascent, but already the shape of the future is evident to discerning eyes. We can no longer pretend that feminist ideology speaks with sole authority about the human condition. New voices must and will be heard. Furthermore, co-existence between the feminist sector and the non-feminist sector must be initialized.

Beginning in the year 2018 a code of conduct will be enacted, and all who consider themselves feminist will be encouraged to abide by this code. The code, in the form of six protocols, runs as follows:

First Protocol: Respect non-feminist alterity

Non-feminist alterity means the essential, unassimilable "otherness" of the non-feminist sector in relation to the feminist sector. The world beyond feminism is a sovereign thing, a transcendent thing, morally and intellectually independent of all feminist control and all feminist theorization about the nature of reality. Feminism is not the world, nor entitled to rule the world. It follows that non-feminist people are not bound to treat feminism with unquestioning deference or servility. It is fitting that feminists, in their conversation with us, or in their public communication about matters of a political nature which concern us, will abide by certain terms. These terms are partly laid out in the present protocols. Violation of any of the protocols is, *ipso facto*, a violation of the first protocol.

Second Protocol: Self-disclose when addressing the non-feminist sector

Feminism is not the world, so it follows that not everybody you meet is feminist. In communications of a political tenor you must acknowledge this early in the talk, by expressly declaring your position as feminist. By that simple courtesy, you let non-feminist people know where they stand in relation to you, so they can properly orient themselves in the discussion.

You are not to assume that your feminism is self-evident. You are to announce it forthrightly, in set terms. It is arrogant and underhanded to omit this.

The self-disclosure protocol applies not only to individuals in private conversation but to all who would address the public in matters that bear upon so-called gender politics. This would include authors, journalists and public speakers. It would also include organizations operating under color of feminism in any way. These latter should make the point unmistakably clear at the head of their websites and publicity materials by stating "we are a feminist organization" or words to that effect.

You are not to carry on obliviously or cavalierly as if the non-feminist sector did not exist, or as if feminist discourse was a lingua franca. By your act of self-disclosure you nip any such tendency in the bud, because you acknowledge non-feminist alterity by implication. You signal your awareness of the difference and you set the communicative process on a footing of diplomatic equality.

Third Protocol: Do not assign group membership to the non-feminist individual

The non-feminist sector is not a collective of any kind but simply a demographic container encompassing a large majority of the human race. Every non-feminist man or woman you meet is an individual marked by many traits, only one of which is lack of feminism. They might share certain other traits with certain other people who lack feminism, or they might not. You are not to presume anything.

The individual non-feminist, who is merely one person, is patently not a "group" or "movement". Furthermore, they are not a *member* of any such thing unless they clearly tell you so. You will bear this in mind throughout your engagement with that person, and voice no such assumption. If you mentally entertain such an assumption, you will keep it private.

Fourth Protocol: Do not make the non-feminist individual

the subject of discussion

Unless your non-feminist interlocutor informs you otherwise, he or she is there to talk about *issues and ideas*. Do not make the conversation about them, personally, in any way. You must address issues and ideas in the spirit which your interlocutor proffers, on the terms which they have laid out. If they wish to talk about themselves they will make this clear, so wait for your cue.

Remember that the person you are talking to is not feminist, hence, not bound by the feminist axiom that “the personal is political”. Their politics and their personality shall not be intermingled in the realm of discussion. Further, it should go without saying, in the spirit of this protocol, that the ad hominem argument fallacy is prohibited. That includes not simply *attacking* the other person, but making the argument about them, in any way at all – even a seemingly benign or friendly way.

Fifth Protocol: Do not pretend that women and feminism are the same thing

Feminism is an ideology, while *female* is a biological demographic. The difference between ideology and biology ought to be self-evident.

Furthermore, it ought to be clear that not all women are feminist. You will learn to accept that graciously.

The majority of women are not feminist. Calling yourself “the women's movement” thousands of times over the years will not alter this.

Extorting women's gratitude by commandeering their name is a poor strategy that will backfire. Using women as a moral shield against anybody who opposes feminism will also backfire. We call that “hiding behind women”, and it is cowardly. If you do such things, you discredit yourself and forfeit the right to be taken seriously.

Sixth Protocol: Do not monopolize the meaning of the word "feminism"

As a feminist, your definition of feminism is simply a local meaning that you share with other feminists. Non-feminist people often mean something very different when they say "feminism" or "feminist", and you as a feminist must allow for this. You must not assume that your local meaning operates beyond your locality and you must not construe non-feminist words or arguments on the basis of any such assumption.

Similarly, you must make no character imputation about your non-feminist interlocutor on the basis of any such assumption. So if feminism signifies certain laudable things in your mind, it does not follow that the

non-feminist rejects those things. In fact, one or both of the following are likely possibilities: that he or she does not consider those things to be part of feminism, or that he or she rejects feminism for a different reason, unrelated to those things.

If you are speaking or writing for the general public, you must also bear this protocol in mind. A large part of your audience will rate you poorly if you don't.

Conclusion

No non-feminist man or woman owes you any conversation at all, so don't come to them making demands or demanding answers. The right of the non-feminist sector to exist is not in question, nor is the right of non-feminist people to go about their lives unmolested. If they find feminism problematic for any reason, they will speak up audibly and publicly about this, and you will not hinder them.

As an individual feminist, you are representing for all other feminists. Violation of these protocols will reflect negatively upon both you the individual feminist, and upon the feminist collective. If therefore you comport yourself undiplomatically, you are putting all other feminists, to some degree, under a cloud.

We shall expect all feminists to abide by these protocols and to exert peer pressure, among themselves, to that end. To flout these protocols, to ignore them, to treat them flippantly or derisively, will sink feminism under the accumulating weight of non-feminist judgment.

Understand, that nuances have been pretermitted from this document in the interest of brevity. Therefore, consider these protocols not the last word, but the first of many.

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