

Institution: University of Sheffield
Unit of Assessment: 32 - Philosophy
Title of case study: Changing Practices and Perceptions Concerning Sexual Harassment in Philosophy
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Jennifer Saul's research on sexual harassment in philosophy has received extensive media coverage. It has influenced practices of philosophy departments and professional associations, leading to the establishment of an American Philosophical Association Task Force on Sexual Harassment and to working groups in various departments. It has played a role in shaping the best practice guides of the American Philosophical Association and British Philosophical Association, both in progress. Finally, it has affected the thinking of many individuals. This research has been crucially informed by Christopher Bennett's work on mechanisms for expressing disapproval.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Women make up only 17% to 24% (roughly) of professional philosophers worldwide. As part of Jennifer Saul's efforts to understand the causes of this, she decided that she needed to learn more concerning the nature of the issues that women face in the discipline. She therefore began gathering stories of women philosophers' experiences at a blog, <i>What is it Like to be a Woman in Philosophy?</i>: http://beingawomaninphilosophy.wordpress.com/. This blog was founded in October 2010, and receives up to 25,000 hits per day. The stories gathered have helped to demonstrate vividly the significance of the problem of sexual harassment for women in philosophy. They have also shaped Saul's thinking on the subject and they play a key role in the central argument of her paper [R1 below].</p> <p>Since 2011 Saul has been working on a paper concerning sexual harassment in philosophy, based on insights gained from running the blog, and it has been presented in three different countries. It was first presented as a paper in June 2012 in Valencia, and has also been presented as an invited paper at Birkbeck, Reading and Oxford. It was presented in June 2013 at an international conference on Diversity in Philosophy at the University of Dayton, USA. From 2011 on, Saul discussed the arguments of the paper widely with colleagues around the world. It has been accepted by the <i>Journal of Applied Philosophy</i>.</p> <p>This paper argues for two claims: (1) That those attempting to deal with cases of sexual harassment in the real world have been excessively focussed on formal claims procedures as a response; and (2) That philosophers working on the topic of sexual harassment have been excessively focussed on the definition of 'sexual harassment'. This paper also draws heavily on Christopher Bennett's work [R2 below] on informal mechanisms for sanctioning wrongdoers. Bennett argues that 'the withdrawal of civility and solidarity' can be a powerful means by which a community symbolises its attitude toward wrongdoers. This idea underpins the informal approach that Saul argues has been wrongly neglected by those seeking to deal with this problem, and thus Bennett's work has had an indirect influence on the debate.</p>
<p>3. References to the research</p> <p>R1. Jennifer Saul: 'Stop Thinking (So Much) About 'Sexual Harassment'', paper presented at the Birkbeck, Reading, Oxford and Valencia Universities and at the international conference <i>Diversity in Philosophy</i> at the University of Dayton, USA. Forthcoming in the <i>Journal of Applied Philosophy</i>.</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

Indications of quality:

- Paper given as keynote at Oxford Graduate Philosophy Conference. Paper given as invited departmental seminar speaker at Birkbeck, Reading, Oxford and Valencia. (Saul has also been invited to present it at Notre Dame University, USA, in January 2014, for which Notre Dame is flying her to the United States.)
- Paper accepted via a process of anonymous peer review for international conference *Diversity in Philosophy*.
- Paper accepted via a process of anonymous review by the *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, the leading journal for applied philosophy.

R2.Chris Bennett: 'The Varieties of Retributive Experience', *Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 48 No. 207 (April 2002), pp. 145-163.

Indications of quality:

- *Philosophical Quarterly* is one of the leading philosophy journals in the world, and practices anonymous review.

4. Details of the impact

Saul's work on this subject has reached large audiences due to the blog *What is it Like to be a Woman in Philosophy?* (up to 25,000 hits/day); Saul's talks to Philosophy Departments on the topic; and Saul's discussions of her work with philosophers around the world. [text removed for publication]. Moreover, the impact is also beginning to reach beyond Philosophy, via international media attention.

Impact on practices in Philosophy

1. The British Philosophical Association is in the process of producing Best Practice Guidelines, where Saul's work is playing a central role in shaping the guidelines on sexual harassment and relationships with students.
2. The American Philosophical Association has founded a task force on Sexual Harassment in Philosophy, where Saul was a consultant on the founding of this task force. [S3]
3. The American Philosophical Association is setting up a program of site visits to improve the climate for women in philosophy departments. This program makes use of both Saul's blog and her paper. The program's Director writes: '*Site visit team members are able to refer to the anonymous accounts on Jennifer Saul's blog without needing to point to particular department members in the particular departments being visited. For instance, I recently was invited to give a keynote address entitled, "Women in Philosophy: Why so Few?" at a large U.S. philosophy department. As part of this presentation I devoted several PowerPoint slides to a case described on Jennifer Saul's blog. When talking about how best to respond to sexual harassment, I was also able to reference Jennifer Saul's paper on sexual harassment.*' [S2]
4. The American Philosophical Association is drawing up best practice guidelines on sexual harassment, making extensive use of Saul's work, which is quoted repeatedly in the current drafts of these guidelines and which has been cited as crucial to their development. [S3]
5. Saul has confidentially consulted on sexual harassment issues in philosophy departments in the US (4 departments), UK (2 departments), Australia (1 department), Spain (1 department) and Norway (1 department).

Impact case study (REF3b)

6. As a result of *What is it Like to Be a Woman in Philosophy?*, many departments have instituted initiatives related to the climate for women. For example, Rutgers University Philosophy Department has founded a Climate Committee, runs regular Climate Surveys, and is starting a programme of ally training. [S4]

7. Scores of individuals have contacted Saul to note the effect of her work on their thinking. Two examples:

A Professor of Philosophy at SUNY Buffalo, USA: *'I have been a long-time reader of your blog "What It is Like to Be a Woman in Philosophy." Its frequent stories about sexual harassment in philosophy have horrified me. I believe I have consequently become more alert to signs of sexual harassment. I cannot say that I have prevented or remediated any cases of harassment. But I hope that my heightened awareness of its possibility will contribute to reducing its occurrence in philosophy.'* [S1]

[text removed for publication]

Impact outside philosophy

1. Saul's work on sexual harassment is shaping the thought of equality professionals, leading to more attention to early intervention rather than only to after-the-fact responses to what have become very serious situations. The Equalities Adviser at Leicester University writes: *'[Saul's] paper provides the most practical proposals I have come across. In my experience by the time I have been involved the damage is well and truly done. What [she is] offering are real ways in which most of us, despite our embarrassment or other fears, can still put into practice.'*

2. Saul has been consulted on a movie script, in which the lead character is a woman philosopher.

3. Saul's work has received extensive media coverage, often in very prominent places. An interview with Saul (conducted in July 2013) about this work appeared on the front page of the *New York Times* [S6]. Two interviews with Saul have appeared in *Inside Higher Ed*, and she has also been interviewed by the *Times Higher Education Supplement* [S7] and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. The blog *What is it Like to be a Woman in Philosophy?* has been discussed on the websites *Gawker* (a popular culture blog) [S8] and *Jezebel* (a leading feminist blog) [S9].

Given the breadth of their audiences and the size of readership, it is clear that Saul's work is impacting on non-philosophers.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

S1. Professor of Philosophy, SUNY Buffalo (impact on own thinking and actions)

S2. Director of APA's program of site visits, University of Dayton (on use in Site Visit Program)

S3. Professor of Philosophy, MIT (on formation of APA Sexual Harassment Task Force).

S4. Associate Professor of Philosophy, Rutgers University (on climate initiatives stemming from *What is it Like* blog)

S5. Professor of Philosophy, Vanderbilt University (role in shaping APA best practice document)

S6. Interview in the *New York Times*: <http://tinyurl.com/lolefj6>

S7. Interview in THES: <http://tinyurl.com/d4rscd6>

S8. Discussion of the blog *What is it Like to be a Woman in Philosophy?* on *Gawker* <http://tinyurl.com/6xzxntg>

S9. Discussion of the blog *What is it Like to be a Woman in Philosophy?* on *Jezebel*

<http://tinyurl.com/q8kvkyq>