

Kate Manne, *Entitled: How Male Privilege Hurts Women* (New York, NY: Crown, 2020), 270 pages. ISBN: 1984826557 (hbk.). Hardback/Paperback \$27.00/\$17.00.

Entitled is Kate Manne's latest book, following in the footsteps of her widely-discussed *Down Girl*. In chapter 1, Manne introduces the notion of entitlement and the goal of the book, which is to show how women are hurt by men's entitlement. In subsequent chapters, Manne explains how women are hurt specifically by the entitlement that men feel to admiration, sex, consent, medical care, bodily control (this chapter concerns abortion), domestic labor, knowledge, and political power. In the final chapter, Manne describes the things she wishes her own newborn daughter will come to see herself as rightfully entitled to.

What does Manne mean by entitlement? One of the clearer statements of Manne's notion of entitlement is found in her opening vignette about Brett Kavanaugh's U.S. Supreme Court confirmation hearings, which she writes, "perfectly captured the concept of *entitlement*: the widespread perception that a privileged man is owed something even as exalted as a position on the U.S. Supreme Court" (p. 4, emphasis original). Manne seems to be thinking of entitlement as a social norm or cultural expectation. On this view, entitlement refers to the widely-shared assumption that privileged men are owed various social or political goods. (We set aside what Manne means by "privileged" and what relationship this has to entitlement—this is not addressed in the book.) If this social conception of entitlement, or something like it, is Manne's target, then the main theses of the book are something like the following:

1. There is a widely-shared assumption that privileged men are owed various social or political goods.
2. This widely-shared assumption harms women.

Manne provides another glimpse into how she thinks about the nature of entitlement later in the first chapter: "All in all, this book shows that an illegitimate sense of male entitlement gives rise to a wider range of misogynistic behavior" (p. 11). Here, Manne might still have in mind the social view of entitlement. Or she might instead be invoking a more individualized notion of entitlement, one that has been much-studied by psychologists (more on this soon). On this individual understanding of entitlement, many males have entitled personality traits. If this individual conception of entitlement, or something like it, is Manne's target, then the main theses of the book are something like the following:

3. Many individual men possess the personality trait of entitlement.
4. Trait entitlement in men tends to harm women.

Throughout *Entitled*, it is difficult to know which conception Manne has in mind. In some passages (like the Kavanaugh passage, or the discussion in chapter 7 about the cultural norms leading men to believe that housework will be taken care of for them), the idea seems to be that social norms about what men deserve hurts women. In other instances, we are presented with a story about a man who has done something very bad to a woman (such as stalk or kill her) from his own personal sense of entitlement. Naturally, Manne may have both these notions of entitlement in mind.

Entitled contains many stories about women being hurt by men. The purpose of these stories can be understood in one of two ways. First, they may function as *illustrations* of Manne's central theses. Or, second, these stories may function as the *evidence* for the central theses. If these stories are intended to be illustrations of how male entitlement hurts women, then we are left with the conclusion that the main theses turn out not to be argued for. That is, we have not been provided evidence for the existence of entitlement norms or traits, and their widespread causal effects. If, on the other hand, these stories are meant to function as evidence for the central theses, then we are left with a lack of engagement with the main source of relevant evidence (described below). This is especially clear in those instances where the stories are fictional. Manne devotes five pages to recounting an episode of the TV show *Girls*, for instance.

Fortunately, however, there is a rich and robust literature in psychology that defines, delimits, and describes entitlement. We know from hundreds of studies that entitlement is a maladaptive aspect of narcissism more broadly (for a review, see Grubbs, J. B., & Exline, J. J. (2016), "Trait entitlement: A cognitive-personality source of vulnerability to psychological distress," *Psychological Bulletin*, 142(11), 1204–1226). Entitlement is generally characterized by a sense of unmerited deservingness and unmerited demandingness. It is, at its core, a sense that one deserves more and better than others for no other reason than one's own existence. It's important to understand that entitlement causes several personal and interpersonal problems. It leads to unmet expectations (Grubbs, J. B., & Exline, J. J. (2016), "Trait entitlement: A cognitive-personality source of vulnerability to psychological distress," *Psychological Bulletin*, 142(11), 1204–1226), dissatisfaction (Ackerman, R. A., Witt, E. A., Donnellan, M. B., Trzesniewski, K. H., Robins, R. W., & Kashy, D. A. (2011), "What Does the Narcissistic Personality Inventory Really Measure?" *Assessment*, 18(1), 67–87; Harvey, P., & Harris, K. J. (2010), "Frustration-based outcomes of entitlement and the influence of supervisor communication," *Human Relations*, 63(11), 1639–1660), feelings of disappointment (Grubbs, J. B., Exline, J. J., & Campbell, W. K. (2013), "I deserve better and god knows it! Psychological entitlement as a

robust predictor of anger at God," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 5(3), 192), conflict with others (Moeller, S. J., Crocker, J., & Bushman, B. J. (2009), "Creating hostility and conflict: Effects of entitlement and self-image goals," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 45(2), 448–452), antisocial behavior (Zitek, E. M., & Jordan, A. H. (2017), "Psychological Entitlement Predicts Failure to Follow Instructions," *Social Psychological and Personality Science*), and anger (Zitek, E. M., & Jordan, A. H. (2021), "Individuals higher in psychological entitlement respond to bad luck with anger," *Personality and Individual Differences*, 168, 110306).

Perhaps men are more likely to exhibit this trait. In fact, there are several studies that suggest that men generally exhibit higher levels of entitlement, though the magnitude of this difference between men and women is very small (Campbell, W. K., Bonacci, A. M., Shelton, J., Exline, J. J., & Bushman, B. J. (2004), "Psychological entitlement: Interpersonal consequences and validation of a self-report measure," *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 83(1), 29–45). There are also studies that suggest that entitlement predicts sexism (Grubbs, J. B., Exline, J. J., & Twenge, J. M. (2014), "Psychological entitlement and ambivalent sexism: Understanding the role of entitlement in predicting two forms of sexism," *Sex Roles*, 70(5–6), 209–220; Hammond, M. D., Sibley, C. G., & Overall, N. C. (2014), "The Allure of Sexism: Psychological Entitlement Fosters Women's Endorsement of Benevolent Sexism Over Time," *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 5(4), 422–429).

What's interesting to note, however, is that entitlement in *both men and women* predicts sexism against women. Broadly speaking, in the psychological literature sexism is often broken down into two domains: hostile sexism (the kind that Manne seems to have in mind in *Entitled*) and benevolent sexism (Glick, P., & Fiske, S. T. (1996), "The ambivalent sexism inventory: Differentiating hostile and benevolent sexism," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70(3), 491). Hostile sexism is obviously bad. Saying "women are weak and manipulative and they use their sexuality to control men and they deserve to be punished" is bad. There are indeed studies that suggest that more entitled men endorse more hostile sexist attitudes—but they also endorse more hostility toward everyone (Grubbs, J. B., Exline, J. J., & Twenge, J. M. (2014), "Psychological entitlement and ambivalent sexism: Understanding the role of entitlement in predicting two forms of sexism," *Sex Roles*, 70(5–6), 209–220). It's not particularly clear then that hostile sexism is a result of entitlement in men so much as hostility is a result of entitlement more generally. Trait entitlement in men may make men more prone to hostile sexism in virtue of them simply being more hostile in the first place.

Benevolent sexism, on the other hand, is the notion that women are special, sacred, or superior with regard to virtue or purity (Glick, P., & Fiske, S. T. (1996), "The ambivalent sexism inventory: Differentiating hostile and benevolent sexism," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70(3), 491). On measures of benevolent sexism, you see items like: "No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman" or "Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste" or "A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man" (ibid.). Yet, there's compelling evidence that although there's much less effort to confront them, these attitudes are also harmful to women (Dardenne, B., Dumont, M., & Bollier, T. (2007), "Insidious dangers of benevolent sexism: Consequences for women's performance," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93(5), 764–779). For example, they reinforce traditional gender roles and foster dependency on others rather than autonomy or independence (Shnabel, N., Bar-Anan, Y., Kende, A., Bareket, O., & Lazar, Y. (2016), "Help to perpetuate traditional gender roles: Benevolent sexism increases engagement in dependency-oriented cross-gender helping," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 110(1), 55–75).

Here is an interesting feature of entitlement. In women, entitlement predicts this kind of benevolent sexism (Grubbs, J. B., Exline, J. J., & Twenge, J. M. (2014), "Psychological entitlement and ambivalent sexism: Understanding the role of entitlement in predicting two forms of sexism," *Sex Roles*, 70(5–6), 209–220). This finding is particularly clear longitudinally, with more entitled women demonstrating increases in benevolent sexism over time (Hammond, M. D., Sibley, C. G., & Overall, N. C. (2014), "The Allure of Sexism: Psychological Entitlement Fosters Women's Endorsement of Benevolent Sexism Over Time," *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 5(4), 422–429). In men, however, entitlement does not lead to more benevolent sexism over time (ibid.). The resulting, and more complex picture of entitlement, therefore, is this: entitlement, whether in men or women, leads to sexism. Entitled men tend towards hostile sexism. Entitled women tend towards benevolent sexism.

How do we change social norms concerning entitlement? And what kinds of interventions might be useful in preventing trait entitlement from being so harmfully expressed? Unfortunately, *Entitled* addresses neither of these questions. In the final chapter, Manne details what she wants her young daughter to know she is entitled to, for as Manne observes, "entitlement is *not* a dirty word" (p. 186, emphasis original). For example, Manne writes: "I want her to know that she is entitled to eat heartily, to take up space, to be loud, and to enjoy the kind of lack of bodily self-consciousness I can only dream of" (p. 189).

If entitlement is not a dirty word, when is a sense of entitlement a legitimate one? How do we discern this?

One might be tempted to confront entitlement with more entitlement. According to this proposal, we should respond to men's entitlement by encouraging women to be more entitled. However, this strategy is likely to breed greater conflict, feelings of victimization, and, quite possibly, more entitlement in all parties involved (Zitek, E. M., Jordan, A. H., Monin, B., & Leach, F. R. (2010), "Victim entitlement to behave selfishly," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98(2), 245–255). Further, if Manne is right that women are hurt by entitlement, then an entitlement arms race is a bad idea. Because entitlement (in both men and women) predicts sexism, we should be reticent to encourage more entitlement as a response to sexism. Instead, promoting humility in those who are entitled is likely a better path forward in addressing the negative effects of entitlement (Banker, C. C., & Leary, M. R. (2020), "Hypo-Egoic Nonentitlement as a Feature of Humility," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 46(5), 738–753; Grubbs, J. B., & Exline, J. J. (2016), "Trait entitlement: A cognitive-personality source of vulnerability to psychological distress," *Psychological Bulletin*, 142(11), 1204–1226).

Although facilitating virtue development has proven to be a difficult task for behavioral scientists (Lavelock, C. R., Worthington Jr., E. L., Griffin, B. J., Garthe, R. C., Davis, D. E., & Hook, J. N. (2017), "Humility intervention research: A qualitative review," in *Handbook of humility: Theory, research, and applications* (pp. 274–285), Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group), there is some evidence that humility can be fostered by asking people to spend more time reflecting on their own limitations and the context of their own abilities (Lavelock, C. R., Worthington, E. L., Davis, D. E., Griffin, B. J., Reid, C. A., Hook, J. N., & Van Tongeren, D. R. (2014), "The Quiet Virtue Speaks: An Intervention to Promote Humility," *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 42(1), 99–110). Taking the time to embrace openly our own limitations and let go of entitled attitudes appears to promote both humility and total wellbeing (Lavelock, C. R., Worthington, E. L., Griffin, B. J., Garthe, R. C., Elnasseh, A., Davis, D. E., & Hook, J. N. (2017), "Still Waters Run Deep: Humility as a Master Virtue," *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 45(4), 286–303).

Overall, Kate Manne's latest book is an engaging treatment of a topic that has been neglected by philosophers and that deserves much greater discussion going forward.

Joshua B. Grubbs

Department of Psychology, Bowling Green State University,
Bowling Green, OH, United States

grubbsj@bgsu.edu

Brandon Warmke

Department of Philosophy, Bowling Green State University,
Bowling Green, OH, United States

bwarmke@bgsu.edu