

9. MeToo Far

Sexual harassment law was initially envisioned to encompass a limited scope - it was not aimed to enforce civility code, but to redress actual measurable harms upon people based upon their sex and came at a time when women were often frozen out of entire industries or harassed so strongly/frequently that meaningful participation in the workforce was prevented. Massive strides have been made over the last 30-40 years, but work remains to be done and sexual harassment and even sexual abuse in some industries still festers.

However, with the recent #MeToo movement, some worry that what the U.S. Supreme Court wanted to avoid - the civility code, may now be emerging and impeding personal freedom—one author has termed this more recent #MeToo trend a moral panic, like the Salem Witch Trials (or a more McCarthyism may also be an apropos comparison).⁴⁶ While much good can come from this moral panic insofar as we push the window of acceptable behavior to a more appropriate place, a minority worries that the sanitization of workplaces can sap a lot of the fun out of human interactions and harm the ability of some who are limited in their socialization opportunities of the chance of meeting Mr. or Mrs. Right.

Of course, as exhibited at the funeral services for Aretha Franklin, #MeToo still appears to be an essential movement given the distance women have to go.⁴⁷ Singer, Arianna Grande performed at the services, but found herself the target of jokes about her name and familiar touching by the officiant at the funeral, but many commenting on the services found more to complain about with regard to Ms. Grande's costume choice than the actions of her male colleague, visible to a national audience, and apparently outside the bounds of normal decorum.

Notably, the minister involved in the service apologized and claimed not to have realized where his hand was placed. His actions by no means approach the level of gross misconduct perpetrated by other famous figures like Harvey Weinstein, Bill Cosby, Matt Lauer, and others, but nevertheless, the public was torn between accusing Ms. Grande of failing to comply with the unwritten code for funerary fashion, whereas others focus on the actions of her male colleague in getting familiar with the young singer.

⁴⁶ "The Warlock Hunt," Claire Berlinski, The American Interest, December 6, 2017, <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2017/12/06/the-warlock-hunt/>

⁴⁷ "Bishop Apologizes to Ariana Grande For 'Too Friendly' Grope During Aretha Franklin Funeral," Jem Aswad, Variety, September 1, 2018, <https://variety.com/2018/music/news/bishop-apologizes-to-ariana-grande-for-grope-aretha-franklin-funeral-1202924472/>.