

Update to *The Envy of Excellence*, two decades later, 2020

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I am glad and grateful for twenty years of life since I wrote this book, for the opportunity now to write this update. It remains the single main statement of my thinking about workplace mobbing, especially in universities, and in particular the kind led by administrators. Researchers around the world and I myself have added a wealth of new insights, concepts, and findings since this book was published. My goal of lodging the word *mobbing* in academic and public vocabularies is less distant now. I revisit this foundational work with humility and pride.

Consequences of Mobbing for the Target

Heinz Leymann, the German-Swedish psychologist who coined the term “workplace mobbing” and produced invaluable studies of it in the last two decades of the twentieth century, made a forgivable mistake. In his basic conceptualization and definition of the phenomenon, Leymann tended to conflate the process of mobbing itself and its consequences. He was both researcher and clinician. He earnestly wanted to help mobbing targets suffering from the cluster of ailments commonly called “Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.” As he saw it, PTSD was part of the package of being ganged up on at work.

The main mobbing case analyzed in this book, that of Herbert Richardson at the University of Toronto, along with the several dozen

other cases more briefly discussed, underscores how essential it is to distinguish between the actions that define the mobbing process and what effect those actions have on the target. This is all the clearer when we update these cases, look at what became of some of the protagonists.

Richardson. This theologian was 63 years old when he was ousted from Toronto in 1994, in the most publicized academic dismissal in Canadian history. His humiliation seemed to be complete. He was metaphorically burned at stake, just as his heroine, Joan of Arc, had actually been. He might have had a heart attack and died, or lapsed into chronic depression. Instead, he expanded Mellen Press, the enterprise he had founded in 1972. Mellen has published literally thousands of scholarly books since 1994, including a dozen authored or edited by Richardson himself. Ignoring so far as possible the aches and pains of old age, Richardson continues to work full-time even now. His next birthday will be his ninetieth.

Mike S. Adams. Compare Richardson to a sociology professor at the University of North Carolina Wilmington who has been in the news in this summer of 2020. Adams epitomized conservatism. He was anti-feminist, anti-leftist, pro-life, devoutly Christian. Most students loved him. Many colleagues loathed him. Denied promotion in 2007, Adams sued the university for discrimination – and won. Mobbers continued their campaign to get rid of him. This past spring, fearing they might lose in court a second time, UNCW administrators offered Adams half a million dollars to retire in August, at the age of 56. Adams took the buyout and publicized it widely. This was more victory and less stigma than a mobbing target could hope for, in marked contrast to Richardson’s fate at Toronto in 1994. Yet Adams committed suicide on 23 July 2020, just before he was due to retire. Humans vary in their resilience. Meat for one is poison for another. The effects of an academic mobbing are something like those of the coronavirus that swept the globe in 2020: negative but variable, ranging from a day in bed to death.

Jean R. Cobbs. I devoted a Compare/Contrast page of this book (p. 63) to professors at Virginia State University who did not fit with the predominant leftist, African-American ethos. Cobbs, an African-American social work professor who was at the same time Republican, conservative, and Christian, came in for brutal collective hostility. She sued VSU. In 2007, she left with a settlement of \$600,000. “I will always have the battle scars,” she wrote at the time, “but at some point they’ll stop hurting.” To me she sent one of the hundreds of notes of appreciation that have kept me going in this line of research for a quarter-century: “Your scholarship has been extremely helpful to me and many others similarly situated around the world. I thank God for you and your work.”

Hector Hammerly, Roland Pomeroy. Another Compare/Contrast sidebar (p. 180) was about casualties of the politically correct, postmodern

administration of Simon Fraser University. Linguistics professor Hammerly bore the brunt of Murder Panic Syndrome (p. 227) and agreed to retire in 1997, at the age of 62, after spending a night in jail and being smeared in the Vancouver press. His health failed steadily thereafter. When he died in 2006, he left behind a poignant, trenchant essay now available online: “*Mob*, v t., to kill by pack.” He also left a bequest that supported my research on mobbing from 2008 to 2010. His colleague, chemistry professor Pomeroy, lost the right to teach graduate students and is now emeritus, but he is still alive, kicking, and speaking truth to power. He describes himself as inclined to depression, says a deep spell of it overtook him when he was attacked and falsely accused after exposing unethical practices in his department – but that was twenty years ago. He survived.

Dr. Zed. Out of respect for this gentle, unassuming colleague at the University of Waterloo, a very private African-Canadian man, I made up a name for him in my report (p. 266) on the horrific destruction of his career as a scientist. He told me he dreaded so much bringing public shame on his family that he contemplated driving at high speed into a concrete highway pier, but abandoned the plan, for fear that the crash of his heavy Swedish car would fail to kill him, instead leave him an invalid, even more of a burden on his beloved wife and children. Zed was not a fighter. I wrote multiple letters to UW presidents seeking some form of redress for the wrong done to him, since his real name was known across campus, but to no avail. Zed lived twenty years after his forced retirement. He died in 2017, at the age of 83.

Jack Edmonds (p. 43). It was the 1991 ouster of this eminent mathematician from Waterloo that first brought academic mobbing into focus in my mind, spearheading the line of inquiry I have pursued ever since. If Zed was a retiring violet, Edmonds is a glaring tall poppy. It would take more than collegial hostility and institutional sanction to make him feel ashamed, much less sink into depression. He is as indomitable as Richardson. To the credit of his colleagues in the rarefied world of math, he has been honoured and feted as a founder of combinatorial optimization, and encouraged to keep on working. He received an honorary doctorate in 2006, from the hands of the Queen of Denmark. In late 2019, at the age of 85, he gave the Goldman Distinguished Lecture at Johns Hopkins University.

Philippe Rushton. The famous Canadian psychologist gave this book a generous review – he said it was worthy of a screenplay – despite my over-optimistic account (p. 107) of his defeat of the mob that sought to have him fired from Western University in the early 1990s, for his genetic explanations of racial differences in IQ. In fact, the fanatic hostility against Rushton never abated and he remained a low-paid campus pariah. He taught few courses, had few students, but continued his research with

private grants and published prolifically. He succumbed to cancer in 2012, at the age of 68. Perhaps the decades of collective hate weakened his immune system, or perhaps his disease had other causes. Whatever the case, his death did not still the torrent of vituperation aimed at him and his sober scholarship. In the midst of the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, the Department of Psychology at Western approved and published on its website a fresh denunciation of Rushton as a racist whose flawed and discriminatory concepts are misused by white supremacists.

Conclusion. The lesson to be drawn from how things turned out for the mobbing targets discussed twenty years ago in this book is reinforced by hundreds of other cases I have studied before and since. Mobbing is a major negative event in the target's life, a big bump in the road, but how well if at all the target gets past it depends on many things: temperament, stamina, family situation, religious faith, support network, financial resources, job market, happenstance, and more. Any scholar intending to advance understanding of mobbing has to keep the process itself distinct from how it impacts the target's life.

Consequences of Mobbing for the Mobbers

A where-are-they-now inquiry for the perpetrators of Richardson's mobbing is similarly instructive, sheds further light on the general process. What became of the key participants in the action against Richardson, as listed on pp. 49-54 and elsewhere, and what can be learned from this?

One foundational player in the Richardson case became the Roman Catholic pope: **Joseph Ratzinger** (pp. 164ff), "God's Rottweiler" as he was called in the 1980s, when he served as Pope John Paul II's enforcer of orthodoxy. Ratzinger's visit to St. Michael's College in 1986 set the ball rolling toward getting rid of Richardson. So far as I know, Ratzinger had nothing more to do with it. He mellowed a bit after his election as Pope Benedict XVI in 2005. He became pope emeritus in 2013. Even at the age of 93, he was well enough to make a trip to his Bavarian homeland in the spring of 2020.

Formally, Richardson was dismissed twice, first from the University of Toronto and then from St. Michael's College. As president of the former, **Robert S. Prichard** (p. 264 *et passim*) was responsible for the first termination. He left academe in 2000, still just 51 years old, to become CEO of Torstar, the newspaper chain. As of 2020, he is chairman of the Bank of Montreal.

As president of St. Michael's at the time, **Richard Alway** (pp. 189ff) put the final nail in the coffin of Richardson's academic career. Alway went on to a series of high-level boards, service that yielded him high-level honours and awards. Now past 80, he continues on the Historic Sites

and Monuments Board of Canada, and as president of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies in Toronto.

John Evans (pp. 211-59) presided over Richardson's trial from May through July, 1994, and wrote the decision upholding the university's decision to dismiss. Evans was appointed a judge of the Federal Court of Canada in 1998. He remained there until 2013. As of 2020, he is Public Law Counsel for Goldblatt Partners in Toronto.

In the lower-level administrative posts they held at Toronto in the early 1990s, theologian **Joanne McWilliam**, economist **Donald Dewees**, theologian **Michael Fahey**, and philosopher **Joseph Boyle** (pp. 50-52 *et passim*) gathered evidence against Richardson and took steps toward getting rid of him. All continued their scholarly careers in the years and decades after. Dewees is now emeritus at Toronto, active on various boards. McWilliam was president of the American Theological Society in 1999, and Fahey the following year. Academic tributes poured in when McWilliam died at the age of 80 in 2008, and Boyle at the age of 74 in 2016.

By their careers after Richardson's dismissal in 1994, these eight drivers of the deed illustrate an important principle about academic mobbing: that it rarely has serious consequences, positive or negative, on those who carry the process out. For the target, it is an ordeal, a crisis, a life-changing event. Things are never the same afterwards. For the mobbers, life returns to normal. They perceive one another as most bystanders perceive them: performing an unpleasant but necessary task, doing their duty to the collective and to the values for which it stands. They may spend much time and energy bringing the target down, but once that objective is achieved, they promptly turn their attention to other things.

The contrast is stark between McGill professor Justine Sargent and the university's principal, David Johnston, who gave Sargent an official reprimand for ethical misconduct in January 1993 (p. 25). The reprimand was the culmination of colleagues' collective campaign against her. The *Montreal Gazette* publicized it in a big story on April 9. The humiliation was beyond what Sargent could bear. She and her husband Yves committed suicide. Principal Johnston, on the other hand, went on to become president of the University of Waterloo. I once reminded him of the Sargent tragedy on her birthday, in a quixotic effort to enlist his support for raising awareness of academic mobbing. Johnston was as adroit an administrator at Waterloo as he had been at McGill. In 2010, he was named Governor-General of Canada, a role he performed capably for seven years, as if he was cut out for it from birth.

By definition, mobbing represents the ganging up of many against one. This allows for a diffusion of responsibility, such that almost any mobber can accurately say in retrospect, "I had only a small part in that affair,

didn't really know much about it." Prichard, Alway, Evans, Johnston – each of these did no more than approve recommendations or decisions made by others. In Sergeant's case, her main accuser, the author of anonymous accusations and reports, was never publicly identified, but if he was ever challenged for what he did, he could honestly reply, "I was just an ordinary professor, I had no administrative authority to impose sanctions on her, and it was the newspaper, not me, that made her reprimand public knowledge." No social process illustrates so well as mobbing the classic adage that there is strength in numbers.

The Agenda: a Science of Mobbing

I feel more need today than I did twenty years ago to emphasize that the purpose of this book is not to defend Richardson or the couple of dozen other mobbing targets whose cases are discussed. The politicization of the social sciences has worsened over time. Sociologists are widely understood to be, on the whole, leftist advocates for a formulaic litany of alleged victims: women, people of colour, aboriginals, people with disabilities, non-heterosexual "alphabet people" (2SLGBTQIA+), immigrants, refugees, the poor and oppressed. Richardson was prescient enough in the mid-1960s to see what was coming (pp. 78ff). Relativism, he predicted, the loss of belief in an objective reality, the turning of science back on itself, would lead to irreconcilable ideological conflicts. In most respects, the postmodern era (pp. 80-84) has entrenched itself further over the past two decades.

If you look at this book from within the current *Zeitgeist*, the main context of discourse in our time, you can misread it in either of two ways, positive or negative. You can applaud it for recognizing a new class of victims that can be added to the standard litany, namely the innocent sufferers of shunning, harassment, bullying, intimidation, and other kinds of hostility from managers and co-workers in academic and other workplaces. Viewed in this way, the book champions a new category of underdog and serves the cause of social justice. Contrariwise, you can take a more skeptical view, noting that the main subject of analysis herein is a cranky old white heterosexual cisgendered man, a Christian minister no less, a skilled academic wheeler dealer with scant claim to innocence. Accordingly, this book may look like backlash against social-justice concerns, rationalization of misconduct by a man on the wrong side of history, defense of a dog whose day is past.

It is important for readers to understand that (as I explained in different terms on pp. 290-92) this book was written from *outside* the current *Zeitgeist*, to serve the classic agenda of building a science of human behaviour. Both originally and now with this update, this book is intended

as a contribution to science, a reasoned explanation that squares with evidence of a particular kind of squabbling human beings engage in.

I learned the scientific agenda first on the hundred-acre Missouri farm where I was born and raised. My father was traditional in many ways. His last year in school was Grade 6. We went to Mass on Sundays, prayed before and after meals. At the same time, Dad treasured scientific knowledge relevant to our farm. Year after year, he experimented with new hybrids of corn and tobacco, cattle and hogs. I helped him collect soil samples for testing, to see whether potash, lime, rock phosphate, or some other amendment needed to be spread in our fields. I sometimes saw him sterilizing a syringe in a pan of boiling water on our kitchen stove, for injecting streptomycin into a sick animal. Dad respected and was friends with the county extension agent, whose job was to share with everyday farmers the findings of agricultural research at the state university.

The vocation I came to embrace in college and graduate school in the 1960s was to be a scientist of society, to apply to human behaviour the same scientific sensibility I observed in Dad's approach to farming. I wanted to study, teach, and produce knowledge about human social life. I never aspired to be a champion of the underdog, much less the overdog. I had and still have respect for activists, advocates, crusaders, organizers, diplomats, and preachers, but none of these occupations seemed right for me. I wanted to be a scholar: to make sense of puzzling events in human life.

As much as anyone, the German sociologist Max Weber was my role model. His twin essays, "Science as a vocation" and "Politics as a vocation," helped me grasp the difference between two ways of life, and see that the former was my calling. My way of helping make a better world would be to study scientifically how the world is now, and how it got to be this way. Weber's book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), exemplified the kind of knowledge I wanted to produce. By studying lots of evidence and thinking about it systematically, Weber had shown how and why a particular variant of Christianity came to be associated with a particular kind of economy. This was a wondrous revelation to me. It helped me understand my home community, where I could see that the Protestant farmers were by and large more capitalist than the Catholic ones like my father and uncles. The bankers and lenders on whom my father depended were Protestant. Weber helped me make sense of my own experience. What a gift! I set out to make a career of giving similar gifts to anybody with questions about our common life.

Looking back now at the research projects I undertook in the first decades of my fifty-year career – on churches in Canada and the United States, church-state relations in Paraguay, the hippie movement, conflict between newcomers and oldtimers in an Ontario town, history of the Little

Dixie region of Missouri – I find no predilection for a particular method. I did statistical analyses of datasets, conducted surveys and interviews, read archives and history, made case studies, pored over written records – whatever might help answer some question. Nor did I tie myself to Marxism, behaviorism, Social Darwinism, or systems theory. My broad, eclectic, humanist approach to science came from William James, John Dewey, Jane Addams, and other pragmatists (see Westhues 1987). It was moral (so I hoped) but not stiff or polemical. The theme running through diverse projects was fascination with some human reality, curiosity and questions about it, and earnest effort to spell out in words and numbers a reasoned, empirically sound description and explanation.

I brought this same scientific sensibility to the study of the strange type of conflict in the academic workplace that caught my attention in the 1990s, a phenomenon that puzzled me and challenged me to make sense of it. Mobbing has been the main focus of my scholarship ever since. This book was the first major outcome.

Science Begins with Giving Something a Name

The first step in any scientific project is to bring into focus some constellation of data and give it a name. That is what Carl Linnaeus did in the eighteenth century, naming one genus and species after another. It is what Heinz Leymann did in the 1980s when he coined the term “workplace mobbing,” the title of Chapter 3 of this book and the overall organizing principle. Among all the things that go on in a workplace, Leymann trained his eye on hostile communications by multiple workers aimed in concert at a targeted workmate, toward tormenting and eventually eliminating him or her. Leymann named this phenomenon.

This first step of science has enormous value, even laying aside hypotheses and research findings about whatever it is that has been named. In his discussion of my work in the *Guardian* (2006), the British litterateur John Sutherland observed that “it’s often hard to see something until you have a word to see it with.” He gave examples of new words that “make facts of working life around us materialise and, thereby, easier to deal with.” *Mobbing*, he said, is “another necessary word” for making sense of life in universities.

Corroborating Sutherland’s observation are the many hundreds of appreciative emails I have received these past twenty years for my scholarship. The single main thing these kind correspondents have thanked me for is giving them a label for a cluster of hostile deeds – from name-calling, invective, eye-rolling and shunning to censure, exclusion, and dismissal – that might otherwise be a confusing blur.

Two examples. There came a note in 2015 under the subject line, “So that’s what it’s called!” The writer identified herself as an African-

American female professor in the process of being ousted from a department of African-American Studies. She recounted years of ill-treatment despite, so she said, superior performance in research and teaching. “I know you have heard this many times before,” she wrote, “but I must thank you because now I have a name for what happened to me. Being able to name one’s experience is the first step to healing.” Similarly, an engineering professor in Germany wrote in 2019: “Thank you for your important work. I had no idea this was so common, I always thought it was just me.”

Reading emails like these, I have often recalled a letter I wrote in 1980 to James Lance, a medical scientist in Australia who had written a book about cluster headaches, a scourge that had pained and occasionally disabled me for the previous twenty years. It is a rare disease, affecting one in ten thousand people, mostly males, at any given time. Once or twice a year, you come down with a six-week spell of daily unilateral headaches so severe they make work impossible and have been known to trigger suicide. But I had no name for this recurrent plague in my life. I had never heard of cluster headaches. Doctors had mislabelled my ailment as allergies or sinusitis or infection. I thought sometimes I might be going nuts. Not until I was 35 years old did a New York City neurologist tell me simply, after thorough examination, “You have cluster headaches.” This term hit me like the Biblical bolt of lightning, making scales fall from my eyes. Armed with a name entirely new to me, I went to a library, found Lance’s book, and felt such joy and relief at his review of exactly the symptoms I experienced that I wrote him a letter of heartfelt thanks. He sent a kind reply.

My gratitude to Lance was not because I learned from him an effective remedy or cure for cluster headaches. Even now, no cure is known and the remedies are hit-and-miss. My gratitude was just for that basic first step of science, a word that fits the facts, because it made my life less of a mystery, enlarged the intelligibility of my own experience. It is the same when people thank me for the word *mobbing*. They know there is no quick fix, but just having the word is a boon.

Cluster headaches are like mobbing in a further way. Generally, time heals. Reflecting the common pattern, my headaches gradually disappeared after I turned fifty. Similarly, the ill effects of mobbing gradually ease as years pass and constructive relations at home and at work make the bad time a steadily more distant memory.

Progress in the Science of Mobbing since 2000

Research on mobbing has burgeoned these past twenty years. The reasonably comprehensive database for Google Scholar includes just 60 books, journal articles, and book chapters on “workplace mobbing”

published between 2000 and 2004. For the next five-year period, 2005-2009, the number rose to 285. There were 792 for 2010-2014, then 986 for 2015-2019. The same trend for successive five-year periods appears for the more specific search term, “academic mobbing”: 3 items in 2000-2004, 27 in 2005-2009, 82 in 2010-2014, and 115 in 2015-2019.

The enlargement of scholarship on mobbing can be traced to many factors, many researchers. The field has enlarged to the point that I can no longer stay on top of it. In 2019, Caroline Crawford published a stimulating new collaborative volume, *Confronting Academic Mobbing in Higher Education: Personal Accounts and Administrative Action*. This was 15 years after the 2004 publication of my collection on the same topic, *Workplace Mobbing in Academe: Reports from Twenty Universities*. While Crawford’s book contains many citations to my earlier one, there is no overlap at all between the 23 contributors to her book and the 21 contributors to mine. I count this a positive development, a good measure of how far the field has advanced. It is no longer tied to one small network of researchers – Heinz Leymann, Noa Zanolli, Sue Baxter, a few others, and me – but is instead a research literature nourished by scholars in many different networks and disciplines.

While research on mobbing, as a scholarly enterprise, has grown far beyond my own place in it, it may nonetheless be helpful, for setting this twenty-year-old book in the context of today, to review the main projects it spawned in my own working life. Following are a baker’s dozen milestones.

Follow-up books from Mellen Press. To its everlasting credit, the publisher invited essays in response to a preliminary printing of *The Envy of Excellence*, a kind of beta version, and accepted forty of these responses for publication. It published nine of them with the first (2004) edition, and invited me to organize the remainder. I leapt at the opportunity, especially because, in a pragmatist philosophy of science, truth lies less in what any scientist says than in honest, reasoned, empirically grounded dialogue *between* scientists, each one contributing insight from his or her own experience and research. I ended up editing four volumes, each of which included also my own work. First, the collection of reports from twenty universities cited above, entitled *Workplace Mobbing in Academe* (2005). Second, the sequel I am proudest of on account of its emphasis on practical action, *The Remedy and Prevention of Mobbing in Higher Education* (2006), which includes conversation between me and half a dozen scholars, along with my papers on mobbing at Medaille College in Buffalo NY. Third, nine case-studies from academe and medicine under the title, *Winning, Losing, Moving On* (2006). Fourth and finally, entitled *Anatomy of an Academic Mobbing* (2010), two essays that came later.

Going online at kwesthues.com The digital revolution in scholarly publishing, the shift from paper to computer screen, was already

underway when this book was first published. The shift has accelerated since then. Accordingly, I began publishing my own website in 2002, and have been adding month by month papers, reviews, book selections, commentaries, and countless links, so that anybody wanting to learn about workplace mobbing, especially in academe, can access most of the key ideas online at home for free, without having to visit a library or bookstore. Far more people have read my work on my website than in my books. By rough estimate, my webpages have had a million visits since 2002. My papers on other sites have had probably a million more. These numbers are small potatoes compared to posts on social media that go viral, but the latter serve poorly as building blocks of science. I continue to augment my website, while continuing also to eschew Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and similar media. To use a current catchphrase, they are not who I am.

Conferences on bullying and mobbing. In this book (pp. 42-49) and in several papers, I have argued that *bullying* is too broad and vague a concept for scientific purposes, while the term *mobbing*, as Leymann defined it, is scientifically useful. Activist scholars who disagree (like Gary and Ruth Namie, David Yamada, and Loreleigh Keashly), focussing directly on bullying, have nonetheless, much to their credit, included me and other more orthodox disciples of Leymann in stimulating conferences on workplace bullying: in Oakland in 2000, Dublin in 2006, Montreal in 2008. There have also been sessions and conferences specifically on workplace mobbing, like the one in Brisbane to which Linda Shallcross and her Queensland colleagues invited me in 2003. These events yielded fresh insights and constructive feedback for all participants, broadened networks of dialogue, and created a genuine research community. Its boundaries are blurry, but the same is true in most scientific fields.

Lectures and workshops on academic freedom and governance. Since publication of this book, I have received a few invitations to talk about mobbing at meetings of learned societies, but in keeping with the pragmatist ideal, most invitations have come from groups defined by practical interest in the conditions of working life. Organizations concerned about academic freedom and the future of the university gave sought me out: Canada's Society for Academic Freedom & Scholarship and its U.S. counterpart, the National Association of Scholars; faculty associations, affiliates of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and its U.S. counterpart (AAUP); associations of college administrators. I have given talks to groups of nurses and other health professionals, to police services, and public-service unions. These lectures and workshops have taught me a lot, since many attendees have recalled cases of mobbing in their own working lives, whether as targets, mobbers, bystanders or rescuers. On almost every such occasion, I have been regaled with accounts of mobbing episodes. After carefully defining

what workplace mobbing is to a large audience of symphony musicians, I asked for a show of hands: “Have you personally witnessed this phenomenon in your orchestra?” Everybody laughed, because they all raised their hands.

John Gravois in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2006. My first book on academic mobbing, a parody entitled *Eliminating Professors* (1998), caught the attention of some dissident faculty at Southern Illinois University, a fact that led eventually to an invitation to speak there in the spring of 2006. John Gravois, an able young journalist at *The Chronicle*, asked to accompany me on the trip, toward writing an article about my research. This became the cover story on 14 April. Such publicity in America’s leading periodical for career academics, the targets and perpetrators of academic mobbing, lent unprecedented legitimacy to research in this field. *The Chronicle*’s helpful coverage has continued from time to time since then, notably with Jake New’s cover story on 15 April 2013, an excellent, balanced profile of Herbert Richardson.

Collaborations with Joan Friedenber and Mark Schneider. My trip to Southern Illinois in 2006 yielded a bonus outcome, a series of joint sessions at learned societies with this fireball couple, Friedenber from linguistics and Schneider from sociology. We presented on mobbing as an administrative problem at a 2009 conference of the AAUP in Washington; on the case of law professor Richard Peltz at the 2010 meeting of the Association of American Law Schools in New Orleans; and on the role of consulting psychologists in academic mobbing at the 2010 meeting of the American Psychological Association in San Diego. Our papers from these sessions, like most of the resources cited in this update, are available on my website, most easily found by plugging key names and terms into Google, Bing, or some other search engine.

Additional resources from Mellen Press. In the main, research on mobbing has progressed without institutional support, as a grass-roots movement of talented scholars in varied disciplines working hard, without financial incentive, to make sense of events in their own experience. The big exception has been institutional support from the Edwin Mellen Press, which has published not only my work but other valuable contributions to the research literature on mobbing: in 2009, Hugo Meynell’s heart-wrenching account of his detenuring at the University of Calgary; in 2014, Clyde Forsberg’s aptly titled *Savageries of the Academy Abroad*; in 2015, Jerome Popp’s *Sociopaths on the Faculty* (insightful, albeit too demonizing for my taste); in 2016, Michael Corballis’s nuanced analysis of the case of Justine Sergent at McGill, *How a Distinguished Scholar Was Driven to Kill Herself*.

The Leymann Translation Project. Progress in any field of science depends on close attention to the scholarship of whoever set forth its basic concepts and initial findings. For a science of workplace mobbing, that

scholar is Heinz Leymann, who wrote almost entirely in Swedish and German. In 2010, Mellen published Sue Baxter's English translation of Leymann's basic book, *Workplace Mobbing as Psychological Terrorism*, and then in 2016, Sergio Navarrete Vázquez's Spanish translation of the same book. In 2014, Mellen published Baxter's translation of one of Leymann's most important research reports, *Why Nurses Commit Suicide — Mobbing in Health Care Institutions*. As editor of the translation project, I made two memorable trips to Stockholm to meet with Baxter, who was Leymann's friend and one of his two literary executors, the other being Noa Zanolli. For Baxter, these translations were a labour of devotion and remembrance.

The Ibero-American Network. By happenstance, I chaired a session at the 2008 Montreal conference at which anthropologist Florencia Peña Saint Martin gave a sparkling paper on academic mobbing in Mexico. Like me, Peña was building on Leymann's work. We seemed to be on similar wave-lengths. She came to Waterloo in 2010, to give a Hammerly Memorial Lecture. She then invited me to Mexico City in 2011, to speak at the first Ibero-American Conference on Workplace Mobbing. Needing help with lecturing in Spanish, I sought out psychologist Sergio Navarrete Vázquez, who had written to me earlier about Leymann's work. Thus was I drawn into a vibrant network of Spanish-speaking researchers of mobbing. With her colleague Silvia Karla Fernandes Marin, Peña published *Mobbing in la Academia* in 2013. My own website now includes a section in Spanish, including Navarrete's translations of work by Leymann, me, and others, and his own original analyses.

Fruits of the Hammerly bequest. In 2014, I sent Hector Hammerly's family a report of how I had spent the \$60K he had left Waterloo in support of my research on mobbing. His son wrote back, "What you've been able to accomplish with the modest bequest is truly amazing." In truth, I was amazed myself. The funds had supported three memorial lectures, all subsequently published, by Friedenberg, Meynell, and Peña, expenses of the Leymann Translation Project, travel to conferences, and the work of two talented research assistants, Rachel Morrison and Hannah Masterman. The website these young women created, mobbingportal.com, was a valuable resource for researchers across the globe. Morrison's research report, "Mobbing in the context of a woman's life" (*Workplace: a journal for academic labor*, 2014), is a gem. I hope Hammerly's son was right: "While there was a sad end to my father's academic career, your work gives it value through the heightened awareness that may reduce the chances of this happening to others."

A new generation of researchers. One of the most delightful sequelae of my publications on mobbing in the years around the turn of the century was tentative, appreciative emails from younger scholars who went on to produce important contributions of their own to the research literature on

mobbing. Four examples: psychologist Maureen Duffy, who with co-authors, has published multiple books on mobbing (2012, 2013, 2018) with Oxford Press, as established and prestigious a publisher as there is; anthropologist Janice Harper, whose 2013 book, *Mobbed!: What to Do When They Really Are Out to Get you*, is not only scientifically sound but the best-written of any book in this field; Eve Seguin, a political scientist at the University of Quebec at Montreal, whose 2016 article in *University Affairs*, “Academic Mobbing: or How to Become Campus Tormentors,” will be cited as a classic half a century from now; and Richard Schwindt, whose social-worker sensibilities inform his practical guide, *Emotional Recovery from Workplace Mobbing: a Guide for Targets and their Supports* (2013).

Collateral scholarship, as on sham peer review in medicine. Abundant references in this book show how much I had learned by the time I wrote it from collateral bodies of scholarship – on lynching, witch hunts, the Inquisition, the Holocaust, and so on. Brian Martin’s analyses of how organizations deal with whistleblowers and dissidents were especially instructive (pp. 153, 180). In 2006, I put up a webpage about an important research literature of direct and current relevance to workplace mobbing, the trenchant essays of Lawrence Huntoon on sham peer review in medicine. Huntoon has powerfully illuminated a common and effective way administrators and physicians in hospitals get rid of a disliked colleague, namely by arranging an ostensibly objective evaluation of the target’s clinical skills, but one that is contrived from the start to reach a negative conclusion. Sham peer review is essentially one form that mobbing takes. Post-tenure review in universities often works the same way.

Journalists at *Quillette* and other ezines. Despite their differences, a mother-son pair of talented Canadian journalists, Barbara and Jonathan Kay, are alike in their understanding of the research on mobbing and in their use of it to make certain academic conflicts intelligible to public audiences. The son is currently an editor of *Quillette*, an online jewel founded in 2015. In 2018, it published Brad Cran’s cogent overview of the mobbing research and then his meticulous dissection of the case of Steven Galloway at the University of British Columbia. That same year, *Quillette* published Barbara Kay’s analysis of the case of Ahmed Fekry Ibrahim at McGill, and the editors’ own analysis of the case of Noah Carl at Cambridge. The British *spiked*, the Canadian *C2CJournal*, and the Swiss *Republik* are among other ezines that have helped develop the field.

Some books are like a baby from a one-night stand, from which the author moves on to an altogether different topic. This book is more like a child from a long marriage. On first publication, it was the culmination of seven or eight years of research on mobbing that had already yielded one book and several papers. As the paragraphs above demonstrate, this book

turned out to be also the springboard for continuing research on the same topic, and by others besides me. This book was one moment in a research program that has captured a quarter century of my working life, which itself forms part of the longer, broader movement toward a science of mobbing, that began earlier and will continue long after my part in it is done.

Expert-witness assessments for refining scientific thought

A big chunk of my time since this book came out has gone into applying the mobbing research to specific cases in universities and hospitals. Typically, a professor or physician subjected to collective hostility, humiliation, and punishment at work has self-diagnosed as a mobbing target, sought confirmation from an independent expert, and accordingly asked me to review the relevant documentation and write an assessment. Sometimes this has been just for peace of mind, assurance that he or she is not crazy. More often, the request has come from the alleged target's lawyer, in anticipation of submitting my assessment as evidence in a grievance arbitration, court case, or tribunal proceeding.

I have accepted about twenty such requests, declined at least that many. Making sense of a heap of documents, often enough to fill a banker's box, then writing a report of 20 or 30 pages, can take weeks of work. Money has not been my object. My fee in each case was modest, a few thousand dollars at most. The role of expert-for-hire does not appeal to me. Mainly, I have viewed these assignments as learning opportunities. Each pile of documents on a workplace conflict is a puzzle to solve. Maybe it is a mobbing case, maybe not, and even if it is, no two mobbing cases are alike. Each one is a chance to broaden and deepen my understanding of the phenomenon. If my assessment eases the confusion and pain of a mobbing target, perhaps even helps the target gain redress or reconciliation, that is a bonus benefit.

Pages 27-35 of this book are my first systematic statement of empirical indicators of mobbing, twelve in number, that allow one to decide more or less objectively whether or not and to what extent a given workplace conflict is a case of mobbing. Such a checklist, an operational definition of the foundational concept, is essential to any science. I later expanded the list to 16 indicators and published it as my "standard checklist." In each of the cases for which I served as expert witness, as well as in many I withdrew from, I applied this list to the available evidence. Analysis of the case in terms of these indicators was the core of my assessment report.

What an adventure these expert-witness gigs have been! Each one has meant trying to make sense of abnormal, tempestuous, bizarre events in professional organizations that are normally cool, collected, rule-bound and fairly rational. Not all workplace conflicts fit the definition of

mobbing. Some are like those described in the sidebars on pages 36 and 210 of this book: defensible eliminations, sanctioning of professors who had clearly violated the laws of the land or established rules of academic conduct: an accomplished historian found to have been sexually molesting children, a sociologist who had turned her garage into a cannabis grow-op (illegal at the time), a charlatan computer engineer who had appropriated the credentials of her ex-husband, claiming to have had a sex-change.

In 2012, lawyers for an ousted university president asked me to assess the relevant documentation, hoping that my opinion that she was mobbed might strengthen her case in court. On preliminary inspection, I saw that she had indeed faced collective hostility from trustees, professors, and staff. I found also, however, compelling evidence that she had embezzled close to \$1 million from the institution, income she had then failed to report to the tax authorities. The criminal case against her looked solid. It was plain to me that day-to-day collective hostility was incidental to the nub of the matter, namely fraud. Accordingly, I declined to get involved. Some weeks later, the ex-president committed suicide. This was not conclusive proof of her guilt. The humiliation from which suicide is an escape may be deserved or undeserved. Even so, the case was a powerful reminder of the gravity, the seriousness, and usually the sadness of what a science of mobbing has to deal with.

In 2015, a professor denied tenure, suing the university for wrongful dismissal, had her lawyers send me a package of documents. It included the long list of complaints of obnoxious, abusive behavior that had been used to justify her being let go. I suspected mobbing initially, since many cases I have come across (like Richardson's and others in this book) involve multiple co-workers casting vague aspersions on the target, often having been encouraged to do so by instigators of the mob. Social contagion is one of mobbing's telltale signs. In this case, however, as I examined the evidence more closely, the numerous complaints appeared to be not only unsolicited but entirely independent, made by people unknown to one another, in different situations and at different times. By my standard checklist of indicators, this academic elimination scored too low for me to declare it a mobbing case. I saw later in the news that denial of tenure to this professor was upheld by external authority – a defensible outcome, in my opinion.

The twenty or so disputes on which I wrote detailed assessments, those that scored high on my mobbing checklist, were good learning experiences especially because, in discovery depositions and at trial, I had the benefit of being questioned by opposing counsel, lawyers paid to find fault with my analysis. Developing a science of mobbing requires writing and speaking at the level of general theory, and one often illustrates a point by citing historical examples. Audience feedback tends to be gentle. Most

people are willing to accept in principle that mobbing happens and that its effects are generally negative: that it's too bad Socrates was found guilty or that Galileo was forced to recant. The rubber meets the road when the example is here and now: when I claim to a university's or hospital's legal team that this specific professional whom they are trying to get rid of, this professor or doctor whose name they are dragging through the mud, has done nothing to deserve such a fate, but has instead been ganged up on wrongly and unnecessarily in an identifiable social process called *mobbing*. Opposing counsel has a duty to poke holes in my arguments, to ferret out and challenge my assumptions, and to highlight evidence I may have overlooked.

As a result, the expert-witness assignments have sharpened my thinking. Each one has required me to say exactly why I call this a mobbing case, and to specify the precise factors that led to the particular target being singled out and collectively set upon. Envy of excellence – more commonly called professional jealousy – was a key factor in most of the hospital cases I have assessed. Race, ethnicity and religion often played a role. A female Jewish surgeon in a department heavily populated by orthodox Middle Eastern Muslims, an orthodox Muslim immigrant surgeon in a part of North America where the other medical practitioners were almost all of European origin, an African surgeon in a British hospital with few African doctors – mobbing targets like these illustrate the risks of being a small minority anywhere, especially if you are really good at your job. Further, most of the academic and hospital cases I have studied since this book came out have been similar to those I studied earlier in that the target is an independent-minded professional with high standards, one who is disinclined to give career administrators as much deference as the latter want.

Expert-witness assignments for clarifying the role of scientist

Interactions with lawyers in judicial and quasi-judicial proceedings have also driven home to me the difference between a *scientist*, somebody trying to identify and explain what has happened, and an *advocate*, somebody seeking either to convict or to exonerate a person accused of some fault or wrongdoing. My identification of a professor or physician as a mobbing target is generally music to the ears of the target's lawyer, since it implies that the target does not deserve as much punishment as the institutional authority wants to impose, or maybe no punishment at all. Yet sometimes the target's lawyer does not want to hear everything that I, as an expert and scientist, feel obliged to say. Not infrequently I have begun to answer some pertinent, intelligent question from opposing counsel, only to be stopped abruptly by the target's lawyer's command, "Don't answer that." Targets' lawyers have sometimes sought to harden

my opinions, to take away nuance and qualifiers, to make my analysis more one-sided than, in my view, evidence permits. In one case, when the lawyer rewrote my assessment to better serve his purpose, I withdrew altogether. Lawyers have winning on their minds. That is how the adversarial system works, and it conflicts sometimes with a scientific view of things.

A striking example arose two years ago. A lawyer I knew and respected from a previous case asked me to make a preliminary review of documentation on the ouster of a med-school professor. The case was on its way to court. The evidence of mobbing was unmistakable. The professor was a top performer among scarce specialists, a successful grantsman, well-published and well-liked. Administrators had recruited him from abroad a few years earlier but then suddenly turned on him and launched a whispering campaign to discredit him. A few students accused the man of sexual harassment, but the accusations were fuzzy and imprecise, with much innuendo and little substance, strange twisting of words and gestures. The students seemed to have been coached. Nonetheless, on so flimsy a basis, the university had precipitously suspended the professor, banned him from campus and hospital, with no semblance of due process.

This 180-degree turnabout was a puzzle. Why had it occurred? Might ethnic prejudice explain it? The mobbing target was identifiably an immigrant and spoke with a foreign accent, yet colleagues of the same ethnicity were valued members of the department. Did his achievements threaten less accomplished peers? Not by my reading of the evidence. In my quest for a sound explanation, I searched online for pertinent information, as I have often done before writing an expert-witness assessment. Sometimes the evidence deemed admissible in a court or tribunal tells less than the whole story.

From online searches I learned that at his previous institution, this professor had been credibly accused of research misconduct, fabrication of data. This news was not public when he moved to the new institution in a different country. It became public only when a tribunal at his former employer issued a detailed decision finding this man and some colleagues guilty. The matter then became a major scandal. From this decision I also learned that gossip about the accusations and the adjudicatory process had circulated for years. Prompted by this new information, I looked again at the documents the lawyer had sent me, now with an eye to the timeline of events.

The most plausible explanation I could think of for why this quick and dirty mobbing had occurred went like this. An administrator got wind of the previous university's ongoing investigation of this professor for research fraud, and learned that at any moment the news of his fabrication of data might hit front pages far and wide. This would severely damage

the reputation and credibility of the university where the man worked now. My hypothesis was that, fearing a public-relations disaster, the administrators went into a bit of a panic and fabricated a sexual-harassment case against him, to get him removed from campus as quickly and terminally as possible. Accusations of sexual misconduct, even flimsy ones, served well in the then current climate of #MeToo. If need be, the university could reach a confidential financial settlement with the ousted professor later on.

Given the facts at hand, I think my take on the case was accurate, but there is always room for doubt. The point here is that in this instance my honest scientific assessment, the whole truth as I saw it, might do the lawyer's client more harm than good. In the course of debunking the baseless charges of sexual misconduct, I would inevitably call a judge's or jury's attention to the substantiated charges of research misconduct – muddy the waters, so to speak. The lawyer and I agreed that I had best stay out of the court proceeding. The lawyer carried on. An advocate's duty is different from a scientist's.

What has been learned so far about causes

Researchers build a science not only by defining the subject matter operationally and describing examples that show its varied types and manifestations, but also by testing hypotheses about what leads to it (its causes, sources, antecedents) and what follows from it (its effects, sequelae, consequences). I intended *The Envy of Excellence*, as I intend also this update, to serve all these purposes, while at the same time providing readers with an engaging, free-flowing narrative, an engaging, enjoyable piece of prose as opposed to a technical manual. In the main, I have left to others the important task of systematic codification of the hypotheses about causes and effects for which I and others have found empirical support.

The closest I have come to listing causes of mobbing was in a 2006 article in *Academic Matters*, where I identified ten factors that increase the likelihood of a professor being mobbed. Three were characteristics of the workplace:

1. A discipline with ambiguous standards and objectives, especially those (like music or literature) most affected by postmodern scholarship;
2. A supervisor – president, dean, department chair – in whom, as Nietzsche put it, “the impulse to punish is powerful”; and
3. An actual or contrived financial crunch in the academic unit (according to an African proverb, when the watering hole gets smaller, the animals get meaner).

The remaining seven factors on my list of vulnerabilities were characteristics of the target:

4. Foreign birth and upbringing, especially as signaled by a foreign accent;
5. Being different from most colleagues in an elemental way (by sex, for instance, sexual orientation, skin color, ethnicity, class origin, or credentials);
6. Having opposed the candidate who ends up winning appointment as one's dean or chair (thereby looking stupid, wicked, or crazy in the latter's eyes);
7. Being a ratebuster, achieving so much success in teaching or research that colleagues' envy is aroused;
8. Publicly dissenting from politically correct ideas (meaning those held sacred by campus elites);
9. Defending a pariah in campus politics or the larger cultural arena;
10. Blowing the whistle on, or even having knowledge of, serious wrongdoing by locally powerful workmates.

“The upshot of available research,” I concluded, “is that no professor needs to worry much about being mobbed, even in a generally vulnerable condition, so long as he or she does not rock the local academic boat. The secret is to show deference to colleagues and administrators, to be the kind of scholar they want to keep around as a way of making themselves look good. Jung said that ‘a man’s hatred is always concentrated on that which makes him conscious of his bad qualities.’”

Almost all the factors in these lists are suggested in one way or another in this book, though it was published earlier. Even all these years later, the core of what I think causes mobbing is much the same as what I wrote on p. 163:

To calculate the odds of your being mobbed, count the ways you show your workmates up: fame, publications, teaching scores, connections, eloquence, wit, writing skills, athletic ability, computer skills, salary, family money, age, class, pedigree, looks, house, clothes, spouse, children, sex appeal. Any one of these will do. And don't forget: refusing to run with the herd, *any* herd, is reason enough for the herd to turn on you.

Other researchers have added other plausible hypotheses. Joan Friedenberg has offered one that probably explains a lot. She claims that in a university, a professor whose upbringing was working-class or relatively poor is more likely to be mobbed than one who comes from an educated family of higher socio-economic status. This hypothesis brings back a memory from many decades ago, when I was lunching with the high-born president of an elite college. I was chairing a department at the time. “A boy from a poor background,” he told me, “should never be an academic administrator, because in that position he will become aware of

how much money is wasted in higher education, and that knowledge will destroy him.” It may be that in a university, such a boy (or girl) never quite belongs.

Postmodernism, the counterculture, and Sontag’s new sensibility

I have taken an odd kind of comfort these past twenty years in the mobbing cases I have studied in hospitals, also in engineering and other STEM disciplines in universities. That is because the participants in these conflicts are educated in science. Their scientific mentality may be blinkered. It may not extend to the human side of life, least of all to workplace conflicts. Mobbers often see red, lose their good sense, when they cross paths with the target. Even so, they are generally reasoned men and women, attentive to logic and evidence. When they gang up to destroy a colleague, the explanation usually lies in old-fashioned factors like those numbered 2 through 10 in the preceding section.

By contrast, in the majority of academic mobbings I have studied, especially those in the humanities and social sciences, the first factor on the list looms large: postmodernism. By this I mean a way of thinking that ignores, plays down, or denies objective reality, what the methods of science are about, and instead treats just about everything as humanly constructed. Sex is a good example. In a scientific mentality, it is a fact, an objective, biological given: binary (with rare exceptions), male and female, independent of human design. The postmodern mentality prefers the word *gender*, to emphasize the plasticity of sexual identity, a matter of choice and invention, with more than two alternatives. Synonymous with or closely linked to postmodernism are relativism, cultural Marxism, social constructionism, critical race theory, and identity politics. A key tenet is that the truth of an idea does not depend on how well it fits real life but on who has power and privilege.

The relevance of postmodernism to academic mobbing is that once this mentality is entrenched in a department or faculty, once Enlightenment values have been dispensed with, professors become free to gang up this way or that, to target and go after a colleague simply because the gang finds him or her offensive or disagreeable, regardless of evidence that supports the target’s views or innocence. Postmodernism is a license to mob. The target stands little chance except by mobilizing a counter-mob.

I cited postmodernism in my analysis of several cases in this book (Richardson, Rushton, Hammerly, Donnelly, Neusner), but it was the factor of overriding relevance in two famous cases I wrote about later. In 2005, Lawrence Summers was run out of the Harvard presidency for having asserted in a lecture that innate aptitude for science may vary by sex. In 2007, Nobel Laureate James D. Watson, co-discoverer of DNA, was ousted as chancellor of Cold Spring Harbour Lab, for having

reluctantly acknowledged the evidence of race differences in intelligence. Summers and Watson were very big academic fish. If they could be caught and fried for giving offense, so can anyone.

On pp. 78ff of this book, I traced postmodern thinking to the cultural revolution of the 1960s and discussed it in the context of the scholarly career of Herbert Richardson, the book's main subject. I was so focussed on doing that I failed to mention my own studies of that cultural revolution while it was underway. Now, with twenty years hindsight, I have more perspective on where this book fit in the context of my own scholarly career. Today's readers will understand it better if I explain where I was coming from, intellectually, when I wrote it.

In fact, my first big research project after finishing my doctoral thesis in 1969 (on American Catholicism) was on the youth movement which was at that time convulsing culture and politics across North America and Europe. My research bore fruit in a 1972 book, *Society's Shadow: Studies in the Sociology of Countercultures*, and in related articles. Rereading them now, I see that I got one thing right. There was more to the movement than protest against the War in Vietnam and against racial and sexual prejudice. Mixed in with these political objectives was something deeper: wholesale, visceral rejection of what Weber called *rationalization*, the application of reason to life on earth. The super-idealistic, hippie variant of the youth movement was not about improving the system but smashing it, demolishing it, losing faith in the scientific mentality at the root of the capitalist, liberal democratic, urban-industrial order. John Lennon captured the temper of the time in his 1971 millenarian anthem: "Imagine there's no countries..., nothing to kill or die for, and no religion, too, all the people living life in peace."

I was wrong, however, about what this utopianism would lead to. I should not have taken Rosabeth Moss Kanter's trenchant study (1968) of intentional communities in nineteenth-century America as a clue to the future of the 1960s counterculture. I thought that like similar movements in the past, it would settle down (the Weberian word is *routinize*) into new religions and communal experiments peripheral to the mainstream order, islands of would-be paradise on the margins of an increasingly rational, efficient, prosperous, productive world. As in Kanter's database, some experiments would endure, others fail. All would serve as reminders to ordinary, more conventional citizens, including social scientists like me, that the dominant order of Western civilization, for all its wondrous achievements, is flawed. All would serve as inspiration to do better, to reshape and reform the status quo.

I drew the same mistaken lesson from Belgian sociologist Léo Moulin's insightful analysis of the place of monasteries and convents in the Catholic Church. I had taken my undergraduate degree at a college run by Benedictine monks, and had written my M.A. thesis on religious

orders. I respected these radical, communistic, often mystical enclaves within the church, and agreed with Moulin that “the world of the religious Orders is not only fertile in experiences and experiments of every kind but also provides endless safety-valves through which even the most volcanic temperaments can realize their vision without allowing the spirit of opposition to destroy the ultimate and fundamental unity of the Catholic Church” (1965, p. 49). The 1960s counterculture, I thought, would lead to similar enclaves, similar safety-valves in which the volcanic temperaments of our day would establish and maintain alternative ways of life without subverting the rational, science-based, industrial order of the Western world.

My prediction was not entirely wrong. The counterculture did indeed produce sects, cults, and communes. But it did more than spawn nonconformist enclaves. It infiltrated the mainstream order itself and undermined public culture. It fundamentally transformed major institutions, in particular education, humanities, social sciences, religion (what’s left of it), law, and politics. The counterculture served to institutionalize postmodern thought in universities, not so much in the hard sciences, math and engineering, but in humanistic fields like anthropology, sociology, literature, communications, drama, and the various “studies” (black, women’s, indigenous, gender, gay, lesbian, queer, and so on).

In her 1964 article, “Notes on Camp,” Susan Sontag was far more accurate and prescient than I was a few years later. She discerned in the then inchoate countercultural movement the direction of the Western world overall, and it was not toward science and rationality. One searches her article in vain for recognition of the natural realities of life. She quotes Oscar Wilde: “To be natural is such a difficult pose to keep up,” and “It’s absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious.” Camp, Sontag said, was a new sensibility in which style is everything and the serious is dethroned. It is a comic vision of the world, life as theater. Everything is in quotation marks. Camp celebrates androgyny, male and female fading into ambiguity or sexlessness. Sontag said homosexuals more or less invented Camp and were its vanguard – this at a time when homosexuality was still a crime in almost every American state.

I must have read Sontag’s essay in the course of my own research, but it left no impression. I probably saw it as an expression of one variant of the counterculture, a variant that would remain minor and marginal. I thought Sontag had relegated herself for keeps to the sidelines of mainstream discourse by writing in 1967 that “the white race is the cancer of human history.” It was inconceivable to me that a few decades later, an unrepentant Sontag would be described in the *New York Times* as “America’s leading intellectual.” It was also inconceivable to me,

however strong my support for decriminalizing homosexuality, that the very word would be replaced by *gay* a few decades hence and celebrated with pride parades and rainbow flags, or that marriage would be redefined to put same-sex unions on a par with the kind of unions that, by nature, reproduce our species.

Toward the end of the twentieth century, the term “political correctness” gained currency, meaning obeisance to the new sensibility Sontag identified in her 1964 article, the postmodern sensibility that gradually became dominant in most cultural elites. In the majority of the academic mobbing cases I have studied these past two decades, the targeted professor has been in some way politically incorrect, said or done something contrary to the new orthodoxy. Especially hostile collective action has often been taken against a female, nonwhite, or gay professor who, despite having an identity preferred in the postmodern sensibility, has espoused views contrary to it. Jean Cobbs, Mitsuru Shimpo, and David Rindos are respective examples discussed in this book.

Examples have multiplied ever since, inside and outside academe. In 2014, Somali-born intellectual Ayaan Hirsi Ali was invited to receive an honorary degree at Brandeis, but then disinvited after an impassioned virtual crowd accused her of Islamophobia. In this summer of 2020, feminist novelist J. K. Rowling was shamed by an online mob, so that she felt obliged to return a human-rights award, for having publicly insisted on natural, biological differences between women and men. Also this summer, conservative gay *New York* journalist Andrew Sullivan quit his job, citing “the orthodoxy in mainstream media, that any writer not actively committed to critical theory in questions of race, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity is actively, physically harming co-workers merely by existing in the same virtual space.”

It may help readers understand this book if I make more explicit now that I have never personally resonated with Sontag’s new sensibility, the postmodern way of feeling and thinking. I was not camp in the 1960s. I am not woke in the 2020s. In the eyes of the politically correct, I “just don’t get it.” I still believe in science, including a science of society. Students have generally liked my teaching, but a comment on a course evaluation from one of them has stayed with me: “Yeah, he’s a ‘nice’ [quotes in original] guy, but he’s also a dinosaur in terms of his views, smells of archaic sociology.” As the appointed discussant at a sociology conference for a paper arguing that sex is socially constructed, I remarked that “androgyny is a bad dream.” The author was angry enough to bite a nail in two. Participating in a leftist summer institute, I raised the question of who has done more for humanity, Mother Theresa or Alexander Graham Bell. The large audience recoiled, as if somebody would now have to disinfect the room.

I have found myself at odds even with some researchers of workplace mobbing, those who, in keeping with the postmodern sensibility, tend to take an alleged victim's word for what is going on. They tend to "believe the survivors," often measuring the incidence of mobbing by self-reports on surveys. In my view, this is surrender to solipsism, substitution of an individual's subjective perception for objective, intersubjectively verifiable facts, what a science is supposed to study, the hardest evidence available. I do not identify a professor as a mobber, target, bystander, or rescuer because he or she claims to be, but because that is what I myself have concluded from as complete and unbiased a study of relevant documentation and other evidence as I have been able to make.

Conclusion, Compare, Contrast

I have written this update in the summer of 2020, amidst the severest disruption of normal life in North America since World War II. Fear of covid-19 and efforts to stanch the pandemic have interrupted the everyday routine. Yet even in this hiatus, postmodernity's takeover of culture and politics has continued apace. Protests and riots by Blacks Lives Matter and Antifa have roiled American cities. Calls to do away with police forces have resounded. Hundreds of statues to heroes of the old non-woke order have been toppled or defaced. A new term has come into use, "cancel culture," referring to the public mobbing of celebrities who have somehow transgressed, even by just a word or two, the dictates of political correctness.

At the same time, pushback against postmodernity has gained strength. Two great popular uprisings against it occurred in 2016. First was Brexit, in which the majority of Britons repudiated Lennon's dream of doing away with countries and voted to harden the British border. Second was the election of a new U.S. president, Donald Trump, about as politically incorrect a politician as one can imagine. His mantra, "Make America Great Again," was a call to return to something resembling America in the 1950s, before the inversion of values in the next decade. Trump was loathed by most elites in the media and academe. By now the culture war has reached fever pitch, and a mobbing mentality has taken hold on both sides. In the electoral campaign of 2016, a popular chant at Trump rallies was, "Lock her up" – a command in the same eliminative spirit as Trump's taunt on *The Apprentice*, "You're fired!" His sensibility has been that of a dealmaker, full of bluff and braggadocio – not postmodern but not scientific either, not much concerned with facts.

Exacerbating the culture war has been the shift from newspapers and TV networks to social media like Facebook and Twitter, as sources of information and opinion. These latter played no part in the main mobbing case analyzed in this book, that of Herbert Richardson at Toronto in the

early 1990s, because they had not been invented yet. It was the three big Toronto newspapers that shaped public opinion in his disfavor. Mobbing cases in today's world play out differently, as described in my papers on virtual mobbing available online. Social media facilitate echo chambers wherein assassinations of character and pronouncements of guilt are spread and reinforced with ferocity and speed impossible in the pre-digital age.

Whatever the direction of Western societies in the decades to come, safe to say there will be no shortage of mobbing cases, academic and otherwise, for researchers of this process to analyze. I hope these researchers will be talented, well-educated, hard-working, and numerous. Scientific understanding of mobbing, as of all aspects of the human condition, is a good thing in itself, to satisfy the mind, and it is also the surest guide to reduction of unnecessary harm and suffering.

At bottom, workplace mobbing is just something that happens among humans, as also among some birds and animals. It is often overlooked. Having a name for it makes it easier to recognize and then study systematically. A good way to think of it is by comparison to something else that happens among humans, namely falling in love. This, too, is a strange, impassioned, momentous phenomenon. It, too, is rooted in instincts – sexual attraction, pair-bonding – that we humans share with some other species.

The Italian sociologist, Francesco Alberoni, has brilliantly elucidated what falling in love means empirically. His website displays a wealth of insights. So do his books. He describes this process as the arousal of intense attraction between two people, such that they form a little social movement for going through life together rather than separately.

Mobbing is also a kind of social movement, in this case rooted in shared fanatic aversion for somebody and in collective action toward humiliating this target, making the target's life a burden, cutting him or her out of the circle of respectability, and in the long run eliminating this person from the workplace.

As Alberoni has done in the case of falling in love, this book and this update are intended to illuminate a plain fact of human experience. Examples and illustrations serve this end. This update concludes with brief analyses of four cases, quite different from one another, sections similar to the compare/contrast sidebars in the book itself. My website includes many more case studies I have written since this book was first published: Marcela Carollo, Seung-Hui Cho, Tom Flanagan, Stephen Berman, Martin Fischer-Dieskau, Denis Rancourt, and more. Each one is a variation on a theme, broadening and deepening our understanding of the theme itself.

My thanks run deep to all the mobbing targets, their husbands, wives, colleagues and friends, who have shared with me the documentation on

cases all around the world. I thank all the scholars and journalists in varied fields, many of them named in this update, who have contributed to the research literature. Everybody interested in research on mobbing is indebted to Mellen Press. My deepest thanks are to Anne Westhues for talking through all this material with me and for giving me incisive comments on successive drafts of my analyses.

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Note. In this time of transition from paper to online publication, I include in the list below items only or mainly available on paper. Items available online are easily accessed by searching for author, title, or key words on Google or Bing.

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