Masculinities and Sexual Violence: A Study of the Hybrid Masculine Hegemonic Bloc During the #MeToo Era

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Abstract: This thesis is a feminist theoretical intervention where I, as a feminist researcher, attempt to have a "power-sensitive dialogue" (Haraway, 1988, p. 590) with the case studies of Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey and R. Kelly, to test and explore feminist and critical masculinity studies theoretical perspectives. This thesis addresses the following questions: How are hegemonic masculinities reconstructed in response to high profile allegations of sexual violence? How do case study analyses of Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey and R. Kelly expose dominant social constructions of gender and sexual violence? How do these dominant social constructions reproduce or challenge racialized heteronormative constructions of hegemonic masculinity? This work is interdisciplinary, as I use scholarship from women's studies, masculinity studies, cultural studies and critical race theory to make sense of the case studies I analyse and build on feminist theorizations of sexual violence and media. I use the case studies of Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey and R. Kelly to test and explore feminist and critical masculinity studies theoretical perspectives. I have used these case studies to understand, draw upon and reformulate existing theoretical framework, and to interrogate, analyse, and develop theorisations of masculinities. I start by testing out Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity (1995, 2015) and Demetriou's conceptualization of the hybrid hegemonic bloc (2001) to expose the strategic and defensive contradictions of men and masculinities during and post-#MeToo. I argue that structures of work and sex leave women and other marginalized genders vulnerable to sexual violence, and that men and masculinities can re-assert their power through co-opting and recycling feminist critiques of gender dominance and non-hegemonic gender practice. Considering the negotiations of the survivors in situations of victimization, I draw on Kelly's theorization of sexual violence as a continuum (1988) which I argue is a path forward to dismantling what Gavey calls the "cultural scaffolding of rape" that normalizes rape and sexual assault in Western society (2005). Additionally, I argue for a feminist, abolitionist and socialist politic that seeks to dismantle the conditions that allow the existence of rape, sexual assault and the continuum of sexual violence that is key to women's subjugation. In my view, the tendencies of hegemonic masculinity to hybridize (Demetriou, 2001) in a postfeminist cultural landscape as articulated by McRobbie (2004, 2008) indicate that we are stuck in the logic of white supremacist patriarchal capitalism (hooks, 1982). The only way out is the abolition of the current structures of oppression and a radical re-imagining of what the world could be.

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

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Introduction: From #MeToo to Prison Abolition

In October 2017, allegations of sexual violence against the movie producer Harvey Weinstein caused an eruption of rage, solidarity and demands for accountability on social media and beyond. Under the MeToo hashtag, thousands of women recounted their experience with sexual violence and institutional cover-ups. As a PhD student researching violence against women and masculinity, I quickly understood that public cases of sexual violence and their contestations can provide frameworks for more personal harms that, viewed collectively, illustrate systemic oppression of the gender hierarchy. As we move through society, we internalize norms, practices and oppressions, and social eruptions like MeToo can help us conceptualize the matrices of domination in which we exist. This thesis seeks to research and analyse contemporary sites of power struggles between genders. I have collected public cases of sexual violence in Hollywood as case studies to investigate how #MeToo media narratives allow for new and/or old ways of looking at gender as a matrix of domination. As I researched these moments of eruption and conflict that took place in Hollywood since October 2017, I found that there are historical precedents to how these eruptions take place in the public eye. From the case of Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas to Monica Lewinski and Bill Clinton, and more recently, Christine Blasey Ford and Brett Kavanaugh, public cases of gendered harm can be sites of feminist creativity, protest, and activism. David

Hesmondhalgh (2007) argues that media provides the public with recurring representations of the world that "contribute strongly to our sense of who we are" (p. 3); historically, feminist critique of media has worked to uncover rape myths and deconstruct rape culture, but the #MeToo rupture blurs the line between capitalized cultural production and the "personal" life of men who hold considerable power and influence.

One of my contentions is that public allegations of gendered violence add a new layer to feminist efforts to critique and deconstruct pop culture. Representations of masculinity in mass media have always mattered, but what happens when fictional representations of masculinity and the masculinity and oppression enacted by male actors and producers in Hollywood clash and/or intersect in real life? How can we better understand a gendered hierarchy upheld by the entertainment media with this newly provided context? If pop culture is partly to blame for the normalization of sexual violence in society, as feminists have argued in the past, what can I uncover from analysing moments of conflict between cultural producers (such as Harvey Weinstein, R. Kelly, Kevin Spacey) and the charges against them? What lessons about gender, masculinity and femininity are held by these culture makers and what does this say about contemporary negotiations of power and gender? As hyper-visible cases of sexual violence have helped feminist movements collectivize around issues of gendered harm and give names to gendered harm in the past, my research seeks to understand what these allegations and the feminist

movement that arose around it means for contemporary gender relations and constructions of masculinity specifically. There are, of course, numerous ways to approach these questions. I found that I was most interested in exploring theories of masculinity and gender through my analysis of #MeToo case studies.

While taking a break from finishing this thesis, I leafed through a recent edition of British Vogue, with Serena Williams on the cover; I could not truly relax despite the beautiful images, and my mind kept bouncing back to my research findings. In June 2020, Vogue's owner company, Condé Nast, was forced to have a racial reckoning that was triggered by the murder of George Floyd and subsequent anti-police and anti-racist protests that erupted across the USA. The Guardian (Helmore, 2020) reports that two senior editors left Condé Nast over racial insensitivity and former employees reported the Vogue workplace as fearful and rampant with discrimination. Editor-in-chief of Vogue Anna Wintour refused to step down from her position, though she attempted to quell the accusations against her magazine by admitting she made some mistakes, not doing enough to promote Black staff and designers at the magazine and not hiring enough employees of colour. Since then, Condé Nast magazines have been suspiciously outwardly diverse, with Vanity Fair spotlighting a breath-taking portrait of police violence victim Breonna Taylor and publishing an interview with Angela Davis on prison and police abolition. This sounds like a step forward, but it makes me uneasy nonetheless; much like the aftermath of #MeToo, public apologies

have been issued and short-term demonstrations of anti-racism have been conjured up, but discussions on how work and capitalism make workers especially vulnerable are few and far in between. Leafing through British Vogue with Serena Williams on the cover, I cannot help but think this is another pandering attempt to convince me—and the public—that there is liberation or justice to be had within the current capitalist system; however, my very own research findings warn against "diverse" elite formations as a solution to workplace abuse. One of my conclusions, drawing on Demetrakis Z. Demetriou's (2001) concept of a hybrid masculine hegemonic bloc, is that concepts of gender equality are being co-opted and recycled into redemption narratives for workplace abusers and other badly behaved men. This is also true of female bosses who abuse their employees racially or otherwise; a few good, diverse editions of Vanity Fair and Vogue will not fix years of racial subjugation, colonialism and white supremacy that are inherent to the publishing industry, and this is true of the rest of the system we inhabit and are forced to negotiate within.

I begin my thesis with a chapter on my methodology and epistemologies; I explain why and how I analyse my selected case studies while looking for power structures, and clarify my conceptualization of feminism and liberation, thus grounding my research in my own positionality and politics. My second chapter is a literature review, where I discuss existing and emerging literature on #MeToo, masculinities and feminist language I use throughout my thesis. In my literature review, I explore my discontent with the

masculinity studies field and how I found it lacking, which led me to look at feminist theorizations about sexual violence against women much more closely. Apart from a few key scholars in the field of masculinity—Raewyn Connell, Tristan Bridges and Demetrakis Demetriou stood out for me throughout—I ultimately found the field reproduces oppression rather than challenging it directly. I expose two main theories in masculinity studies and popular masculinity discourse—"toxic masculinity" and "crisis of masculinity"—as frameworks that hinder and obscure the task of dismantling patriarchy and masculinities. On the feminist side of the literature, I found a wealth of theorizations about sexual violence and agency, eventually settling on the difficult task of understanding sexual violence on a continuum as theorized by Liz Kelly (1988) as a tool for exposing the "cultural scaffolding" of rape as conceptualized by Nicola Gavey (2005). I argue that this framework necessitates feminist distancing from systems of criminalization that flatten, deny, and criminalize the experiences of women who suffered gendered violence, citing carceral feminism and neoliberal feminism as some of the barriers for #MeToo to harness collective power that goes beyond a narrative of victims and villains. Here, I am reminded of an interview I conducted for a report on non-carceral solutions to sexual violence, and what a restorative justice practitioner told me about how sexual violence is processed through the state: "In a carceral process, the only reason the state cares about what happened is because the person who harmed you owes the state for breaking a law. That means it's never about

you. It's never about the harm that you've experienced. It's never about the harm that your family has experienced. It's never about the punitive damages that you as a survivor might take on, albeit paying for doctors, therapists, things like that. It's solely about how the state gets repaid for having to go through this"[1] (Froio, 2020, p. [no pagination]). Additionally, in my research I found that the 'villains and victims' narrative usually ricochets onto the most marginalized populations through incarceration or the withholding of victimhood in the case of women of colour. I ultimately argue for a feminist abolitionist socialist politic that guards against the harms of institutionalization of feminism and anti-racism.

Following my two introductory chapters, I use three case studies of famous men who were accused of sexual harassment and violence to work through these conceptual arguments. My third chapter uses the initial reporting of allegations against Harvey Weinstein to work through Connell's hegemonic masculinity framework and her conceptualization of the gender regime. My fourth chapter considers how race complicates the legibility of victims of sexual violence, drawing primarily on the first series of the documentary Surviving R Kelly for examples. In the fifth chapter, I focus on the position of male victims of sexual violence in feminist theory and use two survivor-oriented reports of harassment and assault allegations against Kevin Spacey to argue that including male victims of sexual violence

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[1] In an article where I spoke to transformative justice practitioners for the website Shadowproof, I explored paths to deal with sexual violence and sexual harassment that do not seek the services of the police or the state. I believe this is essential for combatting sexual violence.

is an essential step the anti-rape movement needs to take. My sixth chapter focuses on the apologies and non-apologies of famous men who were accused of sexual violence, where I analyse some of the cyclical discourses of crisis that allow for men and masculinities to re-build in response to their power being challenged. In my conclusion, I attempt to bring my findings together and make some recommendations for a future where sexual violence has been eradicated.

When I started this thesis, I desperately wanted to find ways to keep abusers accountable. This is still the case, but I have learned through my analysis that current systems of "accountability" are not built for delivering justice or preventing sexual violence; the current systems we have do not care about survivors, and actively encourage sexual exploitation. The continuum of sexual violence that supports men's domination of women and other marginalized genders should be addressed *as a continuum,* where each case is dealt with contextually and through the centring of each individual survivor's needs. More broadly, this means that we all need to be provided for financially and that hoarding wealth—wealth that can be used to blackmail, coerce or silence survivors—should no longer be a possibility for anybody. My heart aches for a world where we do not depend on wage labour to survive, where survivors are truly engaged with and helped, and where our bodies are truly safe no matter what.

Chapter 1: Situated Knowledge and Research Methodology

Maria Lugones (2003) begins her essay *On the Logic of Pluralist Feminism* by stating that her writing comes from "a dark place" of perceiving white women as "on the other side," elucidating her affective positionality as follows:

> "To me, it makes a deep difference where I am writing
> from. It makes a profound difference whether I am writing
> from the place of our possibilities as companions in play
> or from the place 'in between,' the place of pilgrimage, of
> liminality; from the place of resistance, the place 'within,'
> or from across 'the other side,' where light and dark are
> highlighted." (Lugones, 2003, p. 63).

Lugones' essay is a passionate, angry, and pleading analysis of coalitions between women and the mistakes made by white women in not recognizing racial and ethnic differences in feminist movements (2003). While her critiques of white feminist women are ever more relevant today in the wake of #MeToo and an increasing mainstream interest in feminism, what I am interested in is how Lugones clarifies her emotions as a starting point of her essay; this is an elucidation that colours the rest of her essay and challenges traditional academic practices around knowledge production that seek to separate emotions from analysis for the sake of scientific purity. This traditionality is not

what you will find in this doctoral thesis; like Lugones, my knowledge production is guided by emotion rather than academic rigidity or the pretence of objectivity—still, it is academically rigorous. To honour Lugones' emphasis on how emotions shape our writing, I will briefly elucidate the emotions that moved me through this PhD to justify my emotional positionality.

I began this thesis with the intention of researching alt-right masculinities, but the force of the #MeToo movement in October 2017 threw me off completely; I remember feeling shocked that people cared about sexual violence while obsessively reading about the published cases. My own previous experiences with sexual violence made me curious about emerging discourses around it, particularly after the election of President Donald Trump in 2016, who has been accused of sexual assault multiple times (Nelson, 2016). At that moment in history, it seemed unlikely—perhaps even impossible—that powerful white men like Trump would ever be held accountable for their violence against women and girls; and yet, in 2017, #MeToo erupted. This apparent contradiction attracted me, and as I read about allegations against Hollywood men, I was particularly interested in structures of power exposed by statements given by survivors. In this chapter, I will explain the research path that led me to produce this thesis.

I looked for answers in the field of masculinity studies, searching for clarity on how and why powerful men abuse people who are socially

beneath them. However, I soon found myself becoming frustrated while reading some of the masculinity studies literature; the work of Michael Kimmel, for example, struck me as circular and dishonest on his perspectives on race and sexuality. Kimmel's work is often lauded as feminist and ground-breaking for his critical stance on men and masculinity. However, when I analysed his work closely, I rarely found meaningful engagement with feminist and anti-racist theorizations on masculinity. Though Kimmel positions himself as a man who is critical of masculinity and men and loyal to feminism, his theorizations are grounded in a circular logic of masculine reform and an over-emphasis on men's lack of emotions. The linking of men's emotional ineptitudes to men's violence is a thread which I believe is founded in a lack of engagement with literature produced by people who men and masculinity hurt the most. As such, I felt dissonance between my own perspective on men's domination and masculinity and the circular arguments I often found in some masculinity studies literature; I found theoretically removed approaches to male violence against women in masculinity studies extremely jarring and upsetting. Blaming men's lack of emotional health for men's violence completely sidesteps the actual structures of domination that are inherent to the hierarchy of patriarchy. Consequently, as I searched for frameworks that were more critical of men and masculinities, I gravitated towards the work of Raewyn Connell (1987, 1991, 1995), which originally drew on feminist critiques of masculinity; her conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity influenced much of my

analysis. Alongside Connell, I also read and re-read feminist theorizations about sexual violence. Stevie Jackson's work on sexual scripts (1996) was essential for my understanding of how the construct of heterosexuality is supportive of sexual assault and rape, as was the book *Just Sex?: The Cultural Scaffolding of Rape* by Nicola Gavey (2005), which helped me understand the issue of rape as a social problem, helpfully placing the current cultural moment within a feminist historical context. Lastly, Demetrakis Z. Demetriou's 2001 critique of Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity allowed me to deconstruct and analyse the adaptable aspects of men and masculinities that are not fully captured by Connell's original concept.

All these shifts in my reading, from one text to the next, were guided by feelings—mostly of anger and curiosity; I write this not to discredit myself or to affirm the political potential of anger, but rather to recognize that, while writing this thesis, instances of sexual violence all around the world were reported on, and posted on, social media, and that affected me deeply. When I look at the work I did for this thesis, it can perhaps appear fragmented or disjointed because I followed my anger and my upset to uncover power, and I rejected most traditional academic frameworks because I felt many of them reproduced power dynamics I was trying to deconstruct. A traditional academic framework would insist on the pretence of scientific objectivity, but I am more invested in exercising my own positionality and subjectivity, as I will explain in this chapter. While I have a

somewhat traditional chapter structure, I sometimes open chapters with autobiographical reflections that situate my thinking, arguments, and emotions, or I start chapters with quotes I have been thinking about deeply, or I have inserted a poem between my analysis to model the interruptions that are inherent to the studying and researching of sexual violence. Like Lugones, the emotional space I write from makes a deep difference in my work and instead of disavowing it, I am invested in foregrounding it as a guiding light and as a methodology for producing knowledge.

1. Situated Knowledges and Positionalities

Historically, social researchers have attempted to separate themselves from their subjects of research in search of objectivity; however, feminist researchers argue that this approach "denies the reality of 'the life world' with all its subjective elements" (Johnson, et al., 2004, p. 48). Donna Haraway (1988, [no pagination]) rejects the traditional search for objectivity, and the splitting of the subject and the object, suggesting that feminist objectivity is about limited locations and situated knowledge that engages in critical enquiry of positions of power; "I am arguing for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims," she writes. "(…) Situated knowledges are about communities, not about isolated individuals. The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular." I agree with both Haraway's and Johnson et

al.'s arguments about objectivity and research; the knowledge I produce comes from my specific positionality and it is futile to separate myself from research under the false pretence of objectivity. In the following paragraphs I will sketch out my positionality as a researcher and clarify my epistemologies for this thesis

I am a Brazilian-Colombian researcher, originally from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. I moved to York, in the United Kingdom, in 2015 to start a Masters in Women, Violence and Conflict at the University of York's Centre for Women's Studies. My background is in journalism, and I spent three years covering human rights issues in Rio de Janeiro; as a Brazilian, middle class, white woman, I attempted to capture the struggles of women who were not like me; I reported on fatal police violence in working class neighbourhoods, I interviewed Black working class mothers who had lost their children to the brutal force of the state, I wrote about women getting abortions and women dying because of clandestine terminations. Though I was certain my work was important, I had certain reservations about journalism as a form of telling the stories of marginalized people; I knew those stories had to be told, yet I could never claim to be an impartial storyteller when I wrote them down. I was, and always would be, an outsider of those stories, and though I empathized immensely, I understood that I had more power than the people I was writing about. My discomfort with media narratives grew as I watched feminists online deconstruct and challenge the "impartiality" of journalism and the media more generally. A cultural shift that I can pinpoint for myself is Lindy

West's *How to Make a Rape Joke* article on the website Jezebel (2012), where West challenged the long-held idea that comedy can be made about anything and everything because comedy is "supposed" to be offensive. She wrote:

> "[A] comedy club is not some sacred space. It's a guy with a microphone standing on a stage that's only one foot above the ground. And the flip-side of that awesome microphone power you have—wow, you can seriously say whatever you want!—is that audiences get to react to your words however we want. The defensive refrains currently echoing around the internet are, "You just don't get it—comedians need freedom. That's how comedy gets made. If you don't want to be offended, then stay out of comedy clubs." (Search for "comedians," "freedom," "offended," and "comedy clubs" on Twitter if you don't believe me.) You're exactly right. That is how comedy gets made. So CONSIDER THIS YOUR FUCKING FEEDBACK. Ninety percent of your rape material is not working, and you can tell it's not working because your audience is telling you that they hate those jokes. This is the feedback you asked for." (West, 2012, [no pagination]).

Though West's critique is directed at comedy writers rather than journalists, this is when I understood that the media—entertainment or otherwise—teaches us cultural messages that work to benefit the

oppressor. This became even clearer to me when I worked as an editor for the website RioOnWatch.org from 2014 to 2015, where the editorial team worked to destigmatize Brazilian communities called "favelas", which are working class communities that were built from the ground up by the people who live there, out of necessity for housing and the neglect from the state to provide it. Across the globe, favelas are often portrayed as slums or shanty towns, however, they are 80% brick and mortar communities with vivid, loving, sustainable cultures of resistance and self-sufficient economies. This experience shifted my perspective on journalism and media more generally, as I realized there were certain narratives about the Global South that are reproduced through journalistic reporting, and that the journalistic field is structurally imperialist. Consequently, when I joined the University of York's Centre for Women's Studies in 2015, I was mainly concerned with how the media and the culture we embody, as people who live in a society, are connected to each other and how that relates to power structures.

My MA thesis was entitled "The Representation of Brazilian Women in Travel Advertising from 1964 to 1985: The Role of Women's Bodies in the Cover-up of a Capitalist Dictatorship." In this thesis, I analysed travel marketing materials distributed in the United States and Europe and how it impacted or reinforced the stereotypical image of the Brazilian woman. This work was eye-opening for me in many ways, and I was able to disentangle how the image of the Brazilian woman was used to market an idyllic country to travel to, and how

this was related to imperialism, colonialism and, perhaps most importantly, the economic, social and political interest of a few white men. Though the subjects of analysis for my MA thesis were very different from the case studies I have collected for my PhD—there is a clear difference between the commercial marketing materials produced by a dictatorial government I analysed back then and the journalistic reports exposing allegations of sexual violence against powerful men I collected and analysed here—I grappled with the relationship between media, culture and structural oppression, just as I do in this thesis.

My current understanding of gender, location and structures is very similar to Haraway's position:

> "**Gender is a field of structured and structuring difference, where the tones of extreme localization, of the intimately personal and individualized body, vibrate in the same field with global high-tension emissions.** Feminist embodiment, then, is not about fixed location in a reified body, female or otherwise, but about nodes in fields, inflections in orientations, and responsibility for difference in material-semiotic fields of meaning. Embodiment is significant prosthesis; objectivity cannot be about fixed vision when what counts as an object is precisely what world history turns out to be about." (Haraway, 1988, p. 590, emphasis mine).

As a Latina feminist studying in the United Kingdom, I have no choice but to reject the idea of objectivity and embrace my subjectivity, using it as a lens to comprehend the world and its complex hierarchies. However, comprehending complex hierarchies demands a certain amount of what Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) calls "tolerance for ambiguity" where the *mestiza* understands that there are many perspectives and subjectivities within racial and gendered struggles. Anzaldúa (1987, p. 101) wrote:

> "In perceiving conflicting information and points of view, [the *mestiza*] is subjected to a swamping of her psychological borders. She has discovered that she can't hold concepts or ideas in rigid boundaries. The borders and walls that are supposed to keep the undesirable ideas out are entrenched habits and patterns of behaviour; these habits and patterns are the enemy within. Rigidity means death. Only by remaining flexible is she able to stretch the psyche horizontally and vertically."

This flexibility becomes necessary because of the ever-changing dynamics of the global gender hierarchy as a system, as described by Haraway (1988). Borderlands theory, as Norma E. Cantu and Aida Hurtado (2012) explain in their foreword to Borderlands/La Frontera, is about "the ability to hold multiple social perspectives while simultaneously maintaining a centre that revolves around fighting against concrete material forms of oppression" (p. 7). I found this

useful to understand my own positionality: in Britain I am racialized through the Western colonial gaze as "Third World woman"; yet, at the same time, I inhabit class and racial privilege that has allowed me to study in the UK. Like Anzaldúa, I often find myself between metaphorical borders, where I am constantly negotiating the cultures in which I exist; British, Brazilian, Colombian. This ever-shifting positionality leads me to the refusal of finality and rigidity in research; as Haraway puts it, "location is about vulnerability; location resists the politics of closure, finality (…). That is because feminist embodiment resists fixation and is insatiably curious about the webs of differential positioning. There is no single feminist standpoint because our maps require too many dimensions for that metaphor to ground our visions" (Haraway, 1988, p. 590). I have too many dimensions and contradictions within myself as a researcher and as a feminist to affirm that there is a single way to look at a subject of study or a single way to deal with gender inequality and women's rights; instead, I seek to embrace that I can be both the oppressed *and* the oppressor. I find this "fluid" or "flexible" approach essential for researching sexual assault and the power dynamics present in instances of sexual violence; being able to hold multiple social perspectives while keeping a centre that is inherently seeking to eradicate sexual violence is necessary because the power dynamics I am researching are *not* static and the experiences gendered sexual violence result in are *not* all the same. In short, in using Anzaldúa's borderlands theory to inform my epistemological approach, I allow

for differences of race, gender, class and so on to be observed within a structure of violence against women, girls and non-normative genders.

2. Affect as a guiding methodology

As I recognized the flexibility of my subject of study—from the mutability of power dynamics, to the differing effects of sexual violence on individual victims, to shifting positionalities of victims and survivors, nothing about the field seemed to fit into prescriptive boundaries—I also started seeking a methodology that would allow me to follow the fluid currents of the field more fully. This refusal of rigidity and finality in research thus led me to *follow my heart* when I was collecting case studies to analyse in this thesis. In this section, I will explain how affect became the guiding light of this thesis, following a long tradition of feminist research and knowledge production that has historically challenged the emotion/reason dichotomy and foregrounded the political and intellectual power of emotion power of emotion (Åhäll, 2018). As such, I view this thesis as a feminist theoretical intervention that is guided by affect, where I as a feminist researcher have attempted to have a "power-sensitive dialogue" (Haraway, 1988, p. 590) with the topic at hand. With the guidance of affect, I collected case studies from the #MeToo era that I used to test out theories that I *felt* were important to deconstruct, challenge and examine. Affect shaped every facet of this project: it guided me when I was choosing case studies, it shaped my

autobiographical reflections and it was essential in the construction of my analysis.

Theorizations of emotion and affect have traditionally been important for feminism because of how feminist politics is "suffused with feelings, passions and emotions" (Gorton, 2007, p. 345). This is true, as Gorton (2007) points out, because many feminists begin their feminist practice through personal attachments: particularly, this is what might guide us into different conclusions that are separate from academic objectivity. However, the supposed fickleness of emotion is often associated with feminized academia and women's work, and therefore used to dismiss the work of feminist scholars. Åhäll (2018), for example, draws on theorizations of affect that separate it from emotion:

> "Affect is, therefore, often described as nonconscious, nonsubjective or prepersonal, and is contrasted with personal, conscious, emotional experiences often identified as "feelings." Thus, while emotion is here understood as capturing conscious thoughts, subjective experiences and normative judgements belonging to the individual, affect refers to a completely different order activity." (Åhäll, 2018, p. 39)

However, these definitions of affect as *separate* from emotion reinforces "a binary, gendered logic between a mobile, impersonal, masculinized affect and a contained, feminized, personal emotion" (Åhäll, 2018, p. 40). The focus on affect as something that is

"prepersonal", Åhäll argues, has a universalizing but also masculinizing effect. As both Åhäll (2018) and Haraway (1988) argue, feminist theory challenges knowledge as objective and most feminists harbor an interest in how gender functions as a politics of bodies in personal. As Åhäll (2018, p. 41) suggests, "the political logic of gender is personally felt" and producing feminist knowledge requires tapping into the emotions we are feeling personally. Feminists are "affectively moved to identify as feminists in order to change a particular politics" (Åhäll, 2018, p. 41). As such, I do not define "affect" as separate from "emotion": these are intertwined, inseparable and shape my research intuition, and in this thesis, I will often describe why and how I followed a thread of research through what I *felt* was important.

In *Living a Feminist Life*, Sara Ahmed theorizes that feminism "often begins with intensity" (2017, p. 22). The feminist subject, according to Ahmed, registers "something in the sharpness of an impression," there is a feeling that "things don't seem right," and thus the feminist subject starts to identify "what happens to me, happens to others" and begins to "identify patterns and regularities" (p. 27). Feminism itself is an "affective inheritance" where our own feminist consciousness is a part of a larger history of feminist struggles, "a struggle to be, to make sense of being" (p. 20). When I started this thesis, my research aims were not always clear, but I began this inquiry with intensity, following the currents of narratives that did not seem quite right, to start identifying that what happens to me, happens to others. As

Ahmed clarifies and I evidence through this research, this process is not smooth or linear: perhaps maddeningly to my supervisors, I described the first phase of case study collection as a walk in a dark room, where I only picked up objects that helped me make sense of the room itself. I followed what *felt important* to me as a feminist researcher, which often centre on the tensions described in the media reports of instances of sexual violence and how they seemed to expose the famously invisible practice of masculinity as dominance. This was my phase of "reading around the topic," and using reflexivity as a tool to find possible trajectories of research (Johnson, et al., 2004). As I worked through the complex theoretical positions around masculinity with which this thesis is concerned, I kept coming back to the reporting of these high-profile cases about famous men who were publicly exposed for abusing their positions of power to perpetrate sexual violence.

I followed "the sensations that began at the back of [my] mind" (Ahmed, 2017) when reading these reports, trying to hone into what did not feel right and what I wanted to look into further. Those sensations were calls for further investigation, as Ahmed explains: "I turned to emotions as they help me to explain not only how we are affected in this way or that, by this or that, but also how those judgements then hold or become agreed as shared perceptions" (2017, p. 208). The emotions I experienced while reading about potential case studies guided me in the choosing of the cases I included here. For example, I felt that including the initial reports about Harvey

Weinstein which were the catalyst for the #MeToo eruption on social media was essential not just because of the high profile, pivotal nature of the case but also because of how I personally felt appalled and disgusted by the case. These reports provided an example of the theory I was engaging with and allowed me to work through questions around how masculinity and the workplace "conspired" to construct spaces that were hospitable and accepting to sexual harassment and violence. My gut feeling caused me to ask questions: what is it about this case that caused such a social media eruption? How did Weinstein exercise such absolute power for so long? These were not questions I would necessarily answer with my research, but they sparked *feelings of curiosity* that I was eager to follow. This curiosity led to some of my wider research questions on how hegemonic masculinities attempted to reconstruct themselves in response to high profile allegations of sexual violence. As I tracked the case against Weinstein, I was observing how hegemonic masculinities were re-constructed and re-asserted in response to public admonishment. In this way, #MeToo case studies were exposing dominant social constructions of gender and sexual violence and I was curious as to what was being exposed, and how these constructions drew upon, reproduced, or challenged racialized heteronormative constructions of hegemonic masculinity.

During this period of research where I was exploring contextual literatures, Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1991) concept of intersectionality was also a guiding light to my process of choosing case studies.

Crenshaw's writing about the different intersections of rape survivors and how class and race affect victim legibility and can even result in the incarceration of rape and/or domestic violence survivors was and continues to be profoundly influential on how I think about and research gendered harm (Crenshaw, 1991). I used Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality—the idea that people who are part of two or more marginalised groups are affected by the intersection of the oppression of those categorizations—to search for case studies that went beyond my own perspective and my own intersections (Crenshaw, 1991). In this case, Crenshaw's work incited a profound feeling of solidarity with racialized sexual violence survivors. Following this feeling of solidarity, I was very deliberate about the case studies I chose because I did not want my research to represent a single type of sexual violence. This deliberate choosing of case studies was also the product of speaking to other survivors of sexual violence and from tracking the MeToo hashtag on Twitter; this clarified to me that experiences of survivors vary from one to the next, not just because of intersectional oppressions, but also because of a variety of personalities, cultural backgrounds, lived experiences, positionalities and whatever else could play a part in survivors' understandings of the violence they suffered and themselves. As Liz Kelly (1988) points out in her foundational text *Surviving Sexual Violence*, though most women have experienced a range of sexual violence in their lives, these experiences are usually separated from one another in feminist campaigning and research. I had a gut feeling that bringing these

experiences together, or at least attempting to analyse a range of experiences was important to show that gendered harm exists on a spectrum and to emphasize that, though experiences might differ, they are all connected to a larger system of domination. While discovering these theoretical perspectives, I realized I could use case studies of highly visible #MeToo allegations to test out the theoretical frameworks I was reading about. In this way, my feelings of solidarity and love for women and other genders with different experiences than mine solidly guided me in choosing particular case studies. As Kim TallBear (2014) suggests as a mode of feminist methodology, I tried to inquire not at a distance but in "standing with" the subjects I was researching.

After following the cases that were reported after the Weinstein allegations were exposed, I was ready to pick my case studies following the aforementioned gut feelings, curiosity and affect. It seemed essential to me to include the initial reports of allegations against Harvey Weinstein because of how these reports triggered a domino effect of reports of allegations against famous men, so these initial reports became my first case study (Case Study 1). Following feelings of solidarity and a desire to deliberately examine the intersections of race, gender and class, reports of allegations against R. Kelly became Case Study 2. In attempting to answer questions about an expanding notion of who suffers sexual violence and the growing recognition that other genders, not only women, are victims of sexual violence, I decided to explore some of the reports of

allegations against Kevin Spacey became Case Study 3. I hoped that these case studies would help me deconstruct and connect the issue of sexual violence as a system of domination. Though all these cases were about individual men who harmed people in their professional and personal lives, I was interested in how an exploration of some the reporting of these allegations could expose structures of gender, sexuality, race and class.

For each case study, I collected a varied combination of different types of media reports: some are newspaper articles that broke the allegations, others are full-length books about the reporting, and in the case against R. Kelly, I use a six-hour documentary about decades of allegations, and, in some cases[2], I use tweets posted by the alleged abusers themselves. This collection of mixed media seems incongruent, and indeed I do classify my methods of collection as "queer"; Jack Halberstam describes queer methodologies as "a scavenger methodology that uses different methods to collect and produce information" (Halberstam, 1988, p. 13, as cited in Waithe, 2015). As Waithe explains in her essay about queer feminist knowledge production, scavenging as methodology can value contradiction, or "what we might call messiness, fragmentation, or even confusion" (p. 51); scavenging as a methodology can disrupt traditional approaches to knowledge which is what feminist

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[2] My use of abusers' social media posts was dependent on whether they apologized or not. In my chapter about apologies and lack of apologies, I used social media posts (when available) to demonstrate reputational management and deconstruct the public apology as a part of the cycle of public gendered violence that constitutes these cases.

scholarship urges researchers to do (Waithe, 2015). For me, disrupting usual narratives around sexual violence through scavenger methodology has been incredibly valuable, particularly because this topic contains a constant thread of a 'villains and heroes' narrative that becomes a barrier to the eradication of sexual violence as a spectrum. A scavenger methodology also helped me understand the fragments of experiences that I was collecting, as I purposefully sought to complicate my case studies to produce a holistic and intersectional approach to my topic. For example, Demetriou (2001) theorizes that flexible conceptions of masculinity can be employed as strategic performances of gender. Such strategic performances of gender can be observed in the case of Kevin Spacey, which challenges the notion that sexual violence is something that happens solely between a man and a woman, and that men are solely oppressors or complicit with oppression within the framework of hegemonic masculinity.

In this way, I accepted Waithe's invitation to "look for more contradictions, more confusion to generate more questions, more dynamic interplay, more reaching for comets outside our solar system" (2015, p.66); I want to "think beyond whatever our current patterns and systems of thought allow, or beyond whatever prescriptions might have been constructed for us as we learned to think and write critically" (Waithe, 2015, p. 67). Indeed, as I analysed the media artefacts I had collected, I found that the theme of public apologies by the accused men kept coming up, so it felt important to

also examine those apologies and to think further about the act of apology in this context. These apologies and, conversely, the *lack* of apology of some of the accused men became one of my chapters; this is an example of how following the thinking of Waithe, Anzaldúa and Haraway helped me conceptualize different aspects of this research that were not completely obvious when I started collecting and analysing my case studies. In conducting this research, I often relied on, as Ahmed (2017) suggests, following what *didn't* feel right to me or, as Lorde (1978) suggests, what *does* feel right to me.

Åhäll (2018) argues that the policing of gender norms is a subtle process that is performed through unconscious structures that are mediated as common sense. This process is communicated through a politics of emotion that takes place in everyday contexts, as affective judgments (Åhäll, 2018). As such, when I started picking my case studies, I knew I wanted to explore theoretical questions through my analysis of media examples of hypervisible cases of sexual violence. Once I had collected the case studies and done my preliminary analysis, I was able to formulate my research questions, which are as follows:

-       How are hegemonic masculinities reconstructed in response to high profile allegations of sexual violence?

-       To what extent, and in what ways, are hegemonic masculinities re-constructed and re-asserted in response to allegations of sexual violence and in response to the #MeToo movement?

- How do case study analyses of Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey and R. Kelly further help us theorise sexual violence as a structure of domination?

- How do these dominant social constructions draw upon, reproduce or challenge racialized heteronormative constructions of hegemonic masculinity?

In the tradition of feminist scholarship that tends to centre an analytical focus on gender and political change (Åhäll, 2018), I am using these case studies to examine the wider discourses and structures in which they are embedded. This project is not an examination of the men themselves. As I will make clear in later chapters, I am not invested in the rehabilitation of specific abusers, but in abolition of systems of oppression. However, I do use the collected case studies to interrogate theoretical frameworks of masculinity, feminist theory and critical race theory.

3. Using case studies to interrogate theory

As a feminist pop culture critic who has been featured in a myriad of feminist and otherwise publications, I have often used case studies from pop culture to examine and reformulate the power dynamics exposed or tested by those case studies (Froio, 2020). As a scholar with a journalism background and an unapologetic love for pop culture, I have attempted to do this work to make theory and deconstructions of power dynamics as accessible as possible to a

wider public outside of the academy. I took a similar approach when researching case studies and writing up this thesis.

While I initially was "reading texts for dominance" (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 165), I soon realized that I was looking at case studies that could be used to "test out" the theories I was engaging with, both in the academy and in my feminist activism. I have used these case studies to understand, draw upon and reformulate existing theoretical frameworks. I used theoretical frameworks to interrogate, analyse, and develop theorisations of masculinities. I start by "testing out" Connell's hegemonic masculinity theory through analysis of the Weinstein case study. When doing this work, I introduce other theoretical frameworks that I think might bolster Connell's theory, drawing on Silvia Federici (1975), Liz Kelly (1988), Stevi Jackson (1996). As such, I am "testing out" frameworks and further developing them in my analytical scope. I classify the work presented here as a theoretical analysis of masculinities and sexual violence, where I have used case studies to examine already existing theories on the subject, and further answer questions raised by the gaps in already existing theories. This approach provided me with the intellectual resources to construct my own theories out of what I had tested and interrogated in each case studies, and it gave me a theoretical foundation to reformulate or further develop theories that already existed but did not quite fit into the power dynamics I was researching.

After collecting media texts relating to the case studies as explained in the previous section, I read each text as a whole "to get a view of its movement, pattern and themes" (Johnson, et al., 2004, p. 179). In each case study, I read the articles, watched the videos and read the tweets I had collected to get a sense of what the case was about more generally, and if there were patterns or themes that jumped out, and made a note of them as they emerged. Once I had made note of the themes in each text, I went back to the theoretical frameworks I was looking to explore to compare notes. For example, when I was reading the texts I collected for the case of Harvey Weinstein and had noted the patterns of coercion in the workplace he exercised, I went back to Connell's theorization of hegemonic masculinity and identified the axes of domination (class, gender, and race) I found were salient in the texts. In this process, I was looking specifically for how dominance works, how masculinity was functioning in my case studies and how femininity was responding to it. However, I was also using affect and how my feelings of solidarity and instinct related to the theories I was engaging with. For example, when the Weinstein case was still very much a big part of the news cycle, I noted that the media was overly interested in the plight of Weinstein's more famous victims. As a way of responding to this perception, I decided to focus my theoretical interrogation on the power dynamics exercised over Weinstein's more vulnerable and lesser known victims. In short, I was using Weinstein's case study, informed by affective responses to the case and its reporting, to interrogate Connell's concept of hegemonic

masculinity. The method of research of using a case study from popular culture to contextualize and interrogate power dynamics of gender is not new—this is largely how bell hooks (1992, 2004), for example, has conducted her own research and essay writing. hooks draws on pop culture examples of representation or thought and uses that analysis to deconstruct and theorize about what norms that piece of pop culture teaches. In *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, hooks (1992) uses this methodology to theorize the concept of "black female subjectivity," drawing on contemporary representations of Black women like Toni Morrison's *Sula* and Toni Cade Bambara's *The Salteaters.* By taking an artefact of pop culture and looking at it closely, questioning it and what norms it reproduces, hooks is able to develop a complex, flexible and non-essentialist conceptualization of "black female subjectivity," thus demonstrating how pop culture can be a useful tool for feminist theorizing.

I found that looking at previous discussions of sexual violence in academia and in popular culture enriched my analysis of the #MeToo moment and the men implicated in it. By doing this, I am not colouring within the lines, I am pulling ideas from feminist scholarship and feminist popular culture and integrating them with theories of masculinity; I understand this might be a jarring and non-traditional approach to this kind of work. As I explained in the section about positionalities, I do not seek to operate within rigid boundaries; in some parts of this thesis, I use dialogues from a TV series, in others, I use memoirs about child sexual assault to frame my

arguments. To me, these are ways of contextualizing my case studies, of thinking through my arguments, and I refuse to limit myself to academic scholarship despite the theoretical thrust of this work. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (1993) argues that the hierarchy between academic and non-academic writing is needlessly limiting and only serves structures of power that serve the oppressors. This hierarchy, he writes, is not rooted in reality as it assumes the student knows nothing and the teacher knows everything, negating education and knowledge as processes of inquiry (Freire, 1993). This hierarchy minimizes or cancels students' creative power, thus benefiting the oppressors (Freire, 1993). Though Freire (1993) writes specifically about hierarchies in the classroom, his ideas can also be applied to justify my reasoning in using non-academic literature to contextualize some of my research. Like Freire, I want these hierarchies to collapse. It is naïve, myopic and colonial to believe that the only knowledge production that is worthwhile exists in academia alone.

In terms of theoretical frameworks I wanted to test, I started by using the case of Harvey Weinstein to interrogate and test Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity as a framework of power and dominance. I found that this theory, while useful and certainly illuminating, soon became insufficient and did not account for recent defensive adaptations adopted by men that sought to maintain the gendered hierarchy intact. Moving forward, I also used Demetriou's (2014) concept of the hybrid masculine bloc, that begins with a critique of

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Connell's original hegemonic masculinity theory and accounts for the variations in modern modes of masculinity I observed in my case studies. Through my theoretical "testing," I determined that Demetriou's hegemonic bloc theory can be extended to understand sexual violence, and, more broadly, gendered violence as well.

In summary, this thesis is a theoretical analysis of masculinities and sexual violence, where I have drawn upon media case studies of #MeToo eruptions and exposures to "test out" already existing theories on the subject. My guiding lights in this project were my positionality and my reflexivity, which helped me find my case studies, voice and the theories I wanted to interrogate. In this thesis, I use existing theoretical frameworks, historical contextualizations of the case studies and my own intuition and affect to analyse, deconstruct and reframe hyper visible cases of sexual harassment and violence with the objective of re-thinking how we can theorise the interconnections between sexual violence, masculinities and feminism. Through this process I have also deliberately included theoretical frameworks that are not traditionally academic like memoirs and dialogues from TV shows. Including these non-traditional theories allowed me to make sense of some of the case studies I was looking at as I also sought to collapse the hierarchy between academia and what I call popular knowledge production.

Chapter 2: Understanding Shifting Masculinities and the Continuum of Sexual Violence

The aim of this chapter is to explore existing literature on masculinity and sexual violence and to explain how I conceptually engage with the issue of sexual violence against women by drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives. I start by giving a historical account of masculinity studies to situate it as a response to feminist critiques of men and masculinities. Then, I critique elements of Michael Kimmel's work as an example of masculinity studies' tendency to create circular arguments which then act to justify male violence and to emphasize the exclusionary citational practices of the field. My frustrations with the field led me to Connell's work, whose theorizations draw from feminist and critical race theory scholarships; with this, it is my contention that studying masculinity necessarily demands critiques from both fields of scholarship. Following this directive, I introduce Demetriou's theorizations on the hybrid masculine hegemonic bloc as a strategy for the study of masculinity, as it emphasizes the changes men and masculinities employ to adapt to the "specificities of new historical conjunctures," drawing from counter-hegemonic and progressive cultures to reproduce and maintain patriarchy (Demetriou, 2001, p. 348). In order to further explore the circularity of hegemonic masculinity in some masculinity studies and in contemporary discourses about men's violence, I also consider two common explanations for men's domination: "toxic

masculinity" and "crisis of masculinity." I argue that these concepts work as barriers to the dismantling of patriarchy, as they tend to re-centre men and masculinities. This re-centring of men and masculinities takes away the focus from the harms patriarchy and masculinity cause, thus constructing a circular logic that is invested in ignoring the material realities of male violence. Lastly, I engage with feminist literature that contextualizes #MeToo historically, by drawing on the feminist tradition of challenging and destabilizing the public/private dichotomy, and discuss the feminist language debates on the survivor/victim dichotomy. In this thesis, I am concerned with how hegemonic masculinities are reconstructed in response to high profile allegations of sexual violence. Overall, this chapter outlines my conceptual framework in which I explore a range of theoretical perspectives pertinent to my analysis.

1. Theorising Men and Masculinities

Edwards categorizes critical studies of masculinity in three phases or 'waves': the first, sex role theory, was born out of challenging biological determinism with regards to gender and gender expression (Edwards, 2006). Sex role theory, for the first time, presented the possibility that gender is a process of socialization rather than inherently biological; however, this gendered socialization was generally regarded in a positive light, where sex roles functioned to keep society at large harmonious (Connell, 1995). The second wave of critical studies of masculinity arose specifically to challenge this

harmonious sex role theory, which was dubious due to its flattening of gender power dynamics and its lack of examination of race, sexuality and class (Edwards, 2006). For example, Connell's conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity sought to challenge the lack of power analysis in sex role theory (Connell, 1987, 1995; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). This shift in the field was critical, as from then on, masculinity (or the male sex role, as it used to be called), could no longer be accepted as a wholly benign force in gender relations. Edwards characterizes this third wave as a part of the post-structural theory canon and marked by how it relates to wider questions of change and the historical roots of masculinities (Edwards, 2006). As originally conceptualized by Connell, hegemonic masculinity is a pattern of practice that allows men's dominance over women to continue; this practice is born out of aspirational models of masculinity, what is understood popularly as the most honourable and respected way to "be a man" which requires men to position themselves in relation to the aspiration (Connell, 1987, 1995; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell emphasizes that hegemony does not mean the obliteration of alternatives, but ascendancy based on a balance of forces; hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to—and sometimes in direct opposition to—subordinate masculinities and women, and Connell is careful to emphasize that these standards can change over time and are not immutable, and that hegemony itself is contextual and dependent on location (Connell, 1987). Men who do not ascribe to hegemonic masculinity but benefit from patriarchy

embody complicit masculinities, and emphasized femininity is organized as an adaptation to men's power and dominance practices (Connell, 1987). As such, Connell's theory simplifies how the gender order is organized through interpersonal practices of domination: hegemonic masculinity at the top, complicit masculinities in a similar but lower position, and subordinate masculinities in an even lower position and women at the bottom (Connell, 1987).

Connell's conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity resulted in a boom of academic literature utilizing the concept as a framework for the study of men and masculinities, as well as many critiques (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). In 2005, Connell and Messerschmidt assessed these critiques, re-conceptualizing the theory where appropriate, and constructing a solid, updated reformulation of the concept. Connell and Messerschmidt argue that many critiques of the concept over the years stem from misunderstandings of the theory itself (2005). I find the misapplications, misunderstandings and dismissals of Connell's original concept—one born out of feminist critiques of sex role theory and men's domination of women—particularly curious in a field that is dominated by men (Bridges, 2019). For example, Martin (1998) suggests that the concept of hegemonic masculinity has led to inconsistent applications, while Whitehead suggests there is some confusion as to who actually is a hegemonically masculine man —"Is it John Wayne or Leonardo DiCaprio; Mike Tyson or Pelé? Or maybe, at different times, all of them?" (Whitehead, 1998, as cited in Connell and Messerschmidt, p.

37). Connell has consistently grounded her work on hegemonic masculinity in feminist theory and the prevalence of male patriarchal domination, but many critiques of her conceptualization seem to stem from intellectual nit-picking—why must hegemonic masculinity have a specific, singular face to make sense, if Connell's conceptualization is a tool for the analysis of domination and structural oppression? Indeed, Connell and Messerschmidt note that the framework changes as it is used by different researchers and scholars, and while this has yielded fruitful research on men's health, media representation, and criminology, they also note that it has also resulted in a watering down of the domination aspect of the framework (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

This unstable and uncomfortable relationship between the concept of hegemonic masculinity and the field of masculinity studies might be explained by the male monopolization of the scholarship; in a scathing critique of masculinity studies, Tristan Bridges (2019) notes the exclusionary citational practices of the field, pointing out that most gender studies journals publishing masculinities scholarship are monopolized by men, most of whom are white, emphasising that the inherent whiteness and maleness of the field reproduce societal power dynamics instead of challenging them. This dynamic is what produces defensive critiques such as Collier's, who laments the lack of positive traits in the original conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity as a crucial defect of the theory (Collier, 1998), failing to consider whether the "positive" aspects of masculinity are even relevant or constructive

in the conceptualization of a theory that deconstructs male domination and patriarchy.

While I cannot indict a whole field of study as inherently defensive, there is a tendency in masculinity studies to de-politicize the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, drawing on McMahon's (1993) analysis of the psychologism present in much of men and masculinity literature, Connell and Messerschmidt caution against the reification of men's behaviour through circular arguments that explain away and excuse men's bad behaviour (2005). This circularity can be seen in discussions of men's health and boys' education, under the banner of "crisis in masculinity" (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). This is a line of argument that reads hegemonic masculinity as singularly practiced by domineering, sexist, "macho" man (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005), thus addressing the concept as a "fixed character type, a list of characteristics we can point to and identify, and sometimes, as a historically specific set of gender relations" (Bridges, 2019). Bridges (2019) warns that this application of hegemonic masculinity grossly misunderstands gender inequality's most harmful aspect: its elasticity. Additionally, this misreading of the theory contributes to obscuring what hegemonic masculinity accomplishes—the legitimation of patriarchy—with how it looks (Bridges, 2019). Connell and Messerschmidt also warn against how hegemonic masculinity is often used to analyse the activities of men, ignoring the relational practices of women (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

There are indications that this de-politicization of masculinity is a larger trend in the fields beyond the misapplication of Connell's concept. McMahon historically accused masculinity scholars of selectively appropriating forms of feminism "whose accounts of gender relations de-emphasize key issues of sexual politics" (McMahon, 1993). Drawing on Ahmed's work on citational practices as reproductive technology, Bridges similarly notes that masculinity and men's studies tend to centre work by a small number of people (mostly white men), leaving out important work that could help scholars make sense of their research questions (2019). Jalna Hanmer put forth a similar argument three decades ago; she argues that too many men's studies books mention feminism without citation, and "move on in the usual way to cite another man whose work is as intellectually derivative of these origins as his own" (Hanmer, 1990, p. 444). Hanmer (1990) also notes that these practices are in line with the ideological project of male domination, which seeks to make women invisible and construct men as the default. This erasure of women and feminism from masculinity scholarship presents obstacles for those of us who are eager to deconstruct masculinity as a feminist project or intervention. Hanmer's article articulates my frustrations with some masculinity studies literature perfectly; men "write self-serving apologia, do not recognise feminist scholarship, restrict their questions, use inadequate theoretical perspectives, try to split feminist academics and theory by accepting some and rejecting the rest" (Hanmer, 1990, p. 453). Connell and Messerschmidt suggest that

research on hegemonic masculinities needs to pay closer attention to women and the historical interplay of femininities and masculinities, since in practical usages of the theory in research on men and masculinities, this relationship is no longer in focus. This calls for a more holistic view of the gender hierarchy, where recognizing the agency of subordinate groups as well as the power of dominant groups and the mutual conditioning of gender dynamics (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). I would argue this is a recalibration that should be installed in the whole field of masculinity studies and that dismantling men's domination of women should be the central project of this field of study; this would make it impossible to ignore the presence of women and femininities in the study of men and masculinities because it defines this work as necessarily relational.

This recalibration, however, cannot happen without self-reflexive practices; as I have noted, there is a common misreading of the concept of hegemonic masculinity as singularly practiced by domineering, sexist, "macho" man (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005), rather than a relational, elastic and contextual practice that is often specific to location. The most persuasive aspect of this reading is that it allows masculinity researchers to position themselves in opposition to a villainous image of men and masculinities, as the benevolent male ally. This is also a thread that I have identified in this thesis more generally; the construction of men and masculinities often happens within the lines of villains and heroes, and this is a trend present in some masculinity studies literature. Perhaps the best

example I can give of this dynamic is the case of Michael Kimmel. I became acquainted with Kimmel's work through his book *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era*, which has a very promising premise: explaining the phenomena of male white anger by looking at white supremacist violence, domestic violence, mass murder and the outright domination of women and non-hegemonic men. Unfortunately, Kimmel fails to draw on the work of feminists and critical race theorists; he simply mentions his alleged commitment to feminism and moves on to his own theorization without delving into the history of white supremacist violence in the United States, a topic that has been widely explored by decolonial feminists and critical race theorists.

In 1990, Hanmer used Kimmel's work on pornography as an example of the male liberationist "thrust" of men and masculinity studies, describing his work as "positivist in orientation methodologically and conceptually", and too concerned with treating men as a class (p. 446). This analysis is still relevant with regards to Kimmel's recent work, which, I argue, superficially recognizes the impact of feminist critiques of men but fails to truly engage with them or cite them. There is also an investment in Kimmel's book to construct the subjects of his study as the villains, which implicitly positions Kimmel as the hero attempting to deconstruct them while he still engages in exclusionary citational practices that erase the very people he implies he is trying to save. This is, interestingly, an aspect of hegemonic masculinity; the dominance of hegemonic men is partly

constructed in opposition to "bad" men and the protection of (white) women. Indeed, Kimmel has been lauded as one of the top scholars in the field of masculinity studies, and in some instances, was even elevated as an expert on men to mainstream audiences through the language of gender equality (Kimmel, 2015; *The Guardian*, 2018). However, Kimmel's benevolent male ally image recently came crashing down when he was accused of sexual harassment in August of 2018, and later of sexist, transphobic and homophobic practices in academia by ex-students (The Guardian, 2018); reports about his misconducts described him as a women's rights campaigner and a mentor for the betterment of men. While I am not suggesting that all male masculinity scholars are like Kimmel, I do find his work and the subsequent allegations against him a good example of how masculinity can adapt to "new" social norms, while simultaneously inhabiting the position of the socially dominant and reproducing social hierarchies; as Bridges notes, masculinity is no longer invisible, which has not "undone" masculinity, but "redone" it and resulted in backlashes that delegitimate or silence feminist critique (Bridges, 2019). Kimmel's career and branding as a feminist male ally exemplifies how the binary of heroes and villains plagues the subject of masculinity and male violence, and how that relates to a fixed reading of the concept of hegemonic masculinity.

On the other hand, the reformulation of hegemonic masculinity provided by Connell and Messerschmidt in their 2005 essay responding to critiques of the concept reiterates the flexibility aspect

of the theory, explicitly rejecting usages of hegemonic masculinity as fixed character type or an assemblage of toxic traits (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). This reminder of hegemonic masculinity's elasticity is crucial at a time where women are loudly and publicly challenging male power; some of my research findings indicate that this elasticity is one of the key defences employed by men and masculinities in attempts to maintain the gender hierarchy intact.

This adaptability is noted by Demetriou in his critique of hegemonic masculinity; drawing on Stuart Hall's assertion that "the global expansion of late capitalism is based on the development of identity-specific forms of marketing that can reflect every difference and reach even the smallest and more marginal group of individuals" (2001, p. 350), Demetriou argues that gay visibility needs to be understood as "part of a strategy, in other words, for the reproduction of capitalism, not for the liberation of homosexuals" (2001, p. 350). Additionally, Demetriou emphasizes that incorporating non-normative masculinity practices into the mainstream is also a strategy for "the legitimation and reproduction of patriarchy" (2001, p. 350). Moreover, the visibility of gay culture in capitalism, for example, makes it possible for men to "appropriate bits and pieces of this alternative culture and produce new, hybrid configurations of gender practice that enable them to reproduce their dominance over women in historically novel ways" (2001, p. 351). Demetriou's critique exposes a dualism that is inherent to Connell's original theory; noting that hegemonic masculinity is defined through its negation of subordinate elements

rather than by its ability to subordinate women, Demetriou argues that Connell's conceptualization depends on a binary between hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities (2001) As Demetriou explains, conceptualizing hegemonic masculinity solely as oppositional to non-hegemonic masculinity and justifying any non-hegemonic practices or traits as "contradictory" undermines "the coherence and dynamic of hegemonic masculinity" (Demetriou, 2001); drawing David Sarvan's assertion that a new hegemonic masculinity was formed in the 1970s in response to feminist and gay and lesbian liberation movements, Demetriou argues that hegemonic masculinity had to strategically hybridize into more feminized and blackened hybrids to negotiate critique and not lose power. As such, he concludes that "the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position at a given historical moment is a hybrid bloc that incorporates diverse and apparently oppositional elements" (Demetriou, 2001, p. 349).

Additionally, this inherent dualism conceptually excludes the experiences of women of colour with the reproduction and affirmation of patriarchy in "non-hegemonic" communities; Collins writes that "gender norms that privilege men typically play out within racial/ethnic and/or social class groups as well as between such groups" (2004, p. 187); Collins theorizes hegemonic masculinity as a fundamentally dynamic and relational construct that reflects the hierarchical power relations of a "racialized system of sexism that frames the multiple expressions of masculinity and femininity available to African American men and women, as well as all other

groups" (2004, p. 187). In other words, a Black man will have to negotiate white hegemony at work but might also perform Black hegemonic masculinity at home where he expects dominance over the Black women and girls in his life; the systemic oppression of black men, however, does not negate that "violence against women remains a major problem within African American communities" (Collins, 2004, p. 212). Collins also theorizes, similarly to Demetriou, that white men are not exclusively at the top of the gender hierarchy; other men who are just below white men retain a lot of power too but are still marginalized (Collins, 2004). This membership at the top is dependent on other categories inhabited by non-hegemonic men; for example, a white-passing wealthy Latino man would have some amount of power, but still be forced to negotiate it within the limits of white hegemony (Collins, 2004). The dualism and inherent oppositional dynamic of Connell's theory then, as emphasised by Demetriou and supported by Collins' analysis of the concept, also makes invisible how hegemonic masculinity plays out in specific communities and locations; Demetriou's hybrid hegemonic bloc recognizes the instrumentality of non-hegemonic masculinity practices, and Collins' critiques point towards more complex hierarchical structures that are shaped by intersections like race, class, and sexuality.

As some of my analysis will show, the membership at the top that is achieved by men who are not considered traditionally hegemonic (ie. Kevin Spacey as a gay man and R. Kelly as a Black man) is

ultimately supportive of patriarchy and capitalism. The non-hegemonic aspects of these men, consequently, means they can camouflage their bad behaviour through narratives of victimhood and crisis through invocations of historical oppression of non-hegemonic men, to the detriment of their victims. Indeed, in an examination of Demetriou's masculine hegemonic bloc theory, Bridges and Pascoe (2014) suggest that straight white men are not the only ones who create hybrid masculinities, as marginalized men also employ hybridity strategically for different reasons and with varying consequences. As Demetriou argues, seeing masculine power as "a closed, coherent, and unified totality that embraces no otherness, no contradiction" is an illusion that must be extinguished because it is "precisely through its hybrid and apparently contradictory content that hegemonic masculinity reproduces itself" (2001, p. 353).

Though Demetriou concentrates on how hegemonic masculinity appropriates non-hegemonic practices or aesthetics, there is some evidence in my analysis of the cases of Kevin Spacey and R. Kelly, to suggest that the membership of non-hegemonic men at the top of the gender hierarchy, however undercut that might be by other intersections, also reproduces patriarchy and capitalism. In short, a "diverse" elite of hegemonic men, perhaps once seen as a mark of progress by liberal commentators and scholars, ultimately works as a reproduction of already existing hierarchies and a validation of the status quo. Furthermore, drawing on research by Messner (1997), Bridges and Pascoe demonstrate that hybrid masculinities, by

employing more "inclusive" practices that create the illusion of progress, can further marginalize men of colour, working class men, immigrant men and other non-hegemonic men as regressive (Bridges and Pascoe, 2014). This is why, though this thesis begins with an application of Connell's hegemonic masculinity concept to analyse the case against Harvey Weinstein, my case study concerning Spacey and Kelly necessitated the recognition of what Demetriou terms "dialectical pragmatism," which articulates the "constant, mutual dialectical interaction [of the fundamental class] with allied groups," thus producing a pragmatic appropriation that is "useful and constructive for the project of domination at a particular historical moment" (2001, p. 345). In short, men and masculinities have the ability to adapt to more "inclusive" formations of the elite class of men which validates meritocracy and capitalism; ultimately, the (implied) alliance in escaping accountability between, for example, Weinstein and Spacey represents the class interests of a few men in keeping the status quo unchanged.

In conclusion, this project is invested in understanding how men and masculinities adapt to the growing feminist movement that demands their deconstruction and the abolition of gender as a category of subjugation. I began my journey in trying to understand this through the theorizations of Connell which soon proved insufficient to understand other archetypes of abusers that came up in my research and has been supplemented by the work of Demetriou (2001) in particular. Additionally, this project is invested in viewing the harm

done by men and masculinities as a central product of gendered subjugation and the violence that delivers it.

2. Rape as a social problem: Understanding men's domination as a continuum

Understanding men and masculinities through Demetriou's concept of the hybrid hegemonic bloc necessitates an understanding of gendered violence and the domination and social control of women and other marginalized genders as a continuum. Sexual violence against women and other marginalized genders is a key mode of domination and subjugation in Western society, and viewing instances of sexual violence on a continuum can "enable women to make sense of their own experiences by showing how 'typical' and 'aberrant' male behaviour shade into one another" (Kelly, 1988, p. 75). In this section, I will engage with feminist literature that identifies and theorizes rape as a social problem, focusing on the problems that lie in viewing heterosexuality as immutable or inherently oppressive. I argue that viewing sexual violence as a continuum as argued by Liz Kelly (1988) can clarify what Nicola Gavey (2005) terms the "cultural scaffolding" of sexual violence in Western society and open paths for discussions of instances of sexual violence that have been normalized as part of everyday life.

The subject of rape as a gendered problem in society has drastically shifted in the last 50 years; Gavey notes, though there have always been instances of rape that have been considered serious crimes,

"rapes we more often silenced, denied, minimized or condoned", but in just over 30 years, though rape is still in many ways tolerated in society, fierce contestation on multiple fronts are present (Gavey, 2005, p. 17). Citing Maria Bevacqua, Gavey (2005) credits this cultural and social shift to grassroots feminist activism in the 1970s, which also directly influenced a boom in feminist social research on the topic of sexual assault; radical feminists in the 1970s demanded that rape be considered violence, challenging the common rape myths that often placed the blame on the victims. Bevacqua suggests that consciousness raising groups where women shared their experiences of sexual victimization were key to this shift in mainstream perceptions of sexual violence and in the development of the radical feminist position that "the personal is the political" (cited in Gavey, 2005); as a result of this solidarity-building on common experiences of sexual violence, rape was no longer seen as an unfortunate individual incident, but as part of a larger issue of women's rights and systemic oppression (Gavey, 2005). The anti-rape movement in the US sought to educate the public about sexual violence and demand services to survivors of sexual violence (Bevacqua, 2000, as cited in Gavey, 2005), which resulted in increased interest in academia about the subject of sexual violence, where before the social sciences had been largely silent about the issue; this shift produced a substantive amount of literature on different aspects of rape as a social problem (Gavey, 2005). Much of this literature, however, was premised on the claim that heterosexuality, and by extension, heterosexual sex, is

inherently oppressive and violating (McKinnon, 1981). Though Gavey characterizes McKinnon's work and that of many other radical feminist and lesbian academics as "a brave and revolutionary attack on the masculinist discourses of sex and rape that worked for long to support rape," noting that the extremism of the critique was meant to make rape and sexual violence visible in the structure of heterosexuality (Gavey, 2005, p. 34), viewing women who date men as inherently oppressed and repeatedly violated by heterosexual sex denies the recognition of women's agency and the fluidity of sexuality and gender. As Stevi Jackson notes, to argue that the power hierarchy of gender is structural does not mean that it is "exercised uniformly and evenly at the level of sexual relations" nor does it mean that heterosexual women's experiences are wholly shaped by patriarchal structures and ideologies (Jackson, 1996, p. 29). Jackson suggests that there is some space for agency within heterosexuality, and that to deny this is to deny agency to heterosexual women and to "see us doomed to submit to men's desires, whether as unwilling victims or misguided dupes" (Jackson, 1996, p. 29). Jackson writes:

> "Heterosexual feminists, here as elsewhere in their lives, have struggled against men's dominance. We have asserted our right to define our own pleasure, questioned phallocentric models of sexuality, tried to deprioritize penetration or reconceptualize it in many ways which did not position us as passive objects (Campbell, 1980; S. Jackson, 1982b; Robinson, 1993). More recently some

have admitted—cautiously or defiantly—that even penetrative sex with men can be enjoyable and that its pleasure is not merely eroticized submission (Hollway, 1993; Rowland, 1993; Segal, 1994)." (Jackson, 1996, p. 29)

Jackson accepts that much of heterosexual penetration is coercive, but rejects the suggestion that penetration has a singular negative value; this immutably sex-negative position, she suggests, assumes that sexuality is static and denies the experience of heterosexual women whose sexuality changes over time (Jackson, 1996). Jackson (1996) suggests that heterosexuality as an *institution* shapes women's identities, desires and interactions with men; the *practice* of heterosexuality, however, is not homogenous or determining and varies on the individual level. Additionally, Jackson argues that there are other fields of heterosexuality beyond sex that shape women's subjugation and to an overfocus on sex and sexual practice occludes the overall? structure of gender power dynamics (Jackson, 1996). To dismiss all heterosexual sex as inherently coercive is to erase the ways women who date men negotiate pleasure and safety in heterosexual sex. This position also views men and masculinities as immutable and fixed, rather than adaptable, diverse and strategically seeking to maintain patriarchy.

Conversely to this perspective of heterosexuality as totalizing and inherently coercive, Gavey warns that the 'libertarian' shifts of

feminist movements in the 60s, 70s, and 80s, have meant that women lost the right to expect traditional forms of exchange for sex and the "morally based" grounds to refuse sex (Weis and Borges, 1973, as cited in Gavey, 2005). This permissive turn ushered in by the sexual revolutionoften goes unquestioned in terms of the socially constituted nature of sexuality and the gendered operation of power; this new rhetoric of libertarian sexuality has not erased the old model of sexual difference and inequality, rather the libertarian ethic has joined the old conservative one, producing a powerful regulatory double-standard that informs and shapes women's sexuality, more often than not, in favour of men's sexual desires (Gavey, 2005). Indeed, in Maxine Eichner's charting of feminist theorizations on sexual citizenship in the 1980s, she notes an ideological split between "dominance feminism" and the "sex radicals" (Eichner, 2009). Though Eichner, like Gavey, recognizes that "dominance feminism" theorizations on sex such as McKinnon's "significantly advance[d] the theorization of power's effects on citizens," she notes that these theorizations failed to take race, class, and sexual orientation into account, thus missing how "these oppressive norms of sexual citizenship are neither monolithic nor all-powerful and the ways that they are, in fact, contested in citizens' daily lives" (Eichner, 2009, p. 2). As for the "sex radicals," which is a split in feminist theory that later became known as queer theory, Eichner notes that while sex-positive theorizations recognize the power differences in sex itself, by inherently defining sex as positive, "queer theory sacrifices

poststructuralism's promise of yielding more nuanced, textured analyses of sexuality that grapple with the complexities of power in this area" (Eichner, 2009, p. 10). By conceding that both camps are partly correct, Eichner takes a flexible position that recognizes the agency of women and the hierarchy still inherent to mainstream heterosexual sexual scripts; while women can and do have access to alternative sexual scripts and sex can be practiced as resistance, Eichner is quick to note, as does Jackson, that individual sexual practice is not inherently liberatory (Eichner, 2009).

Gavey offers an analysis that bridges the gap between these two perspectives; she argues that "everyday taken-for-granted normative forms of heterosexuality work as a cultural scaffolding for rape," with the caveat that these normative forms of sex are not always rape or the same as rape. Gavey identifies the cultural scaffolding of rape as "the discourses of sex and gender that produce forms of heterosex that set up the preconditions for rape–women's passive, acquiescing (a)sexuality and men's forthright, urgent pursuit of sexual 'release'" which script a relational dynamic that "arguably authorizes sexual encounters that are not always clearly distinguishable from rape" (Gavey, 2005, p. 22). These rape-supportive cultural norms are learned through various sources of knowledge that in their majority disseminate male sexual drive discourse, which emphasizes men's need for sex and downplays or suppresses information about women's desires and sexual drive (Gavey, 2005); these discourses, as well as other male-centric narratives, often appear in my case studies, and

Gavey's argument was key in making them visible as violence. This dynamic results in cultural imperatives that a) severely impair the agency of women who have sex with men and b) provides a cultural scaffolding for rape and sexual assault (Gavey, 2005). An important part of feminist work has been to tear away that scaffolding and make rape and sexual violence, when normalized as social practice, more visible (Boyle, 2019); crucially, Kelly's conceptualization of sexual violence on a continuum arguably can "enable women to make sense of their own experiences by showing how 'typical' and 'aberrant' male behaviour shade into one another" (Kelly, 1988, p. 75). These "shades" of harm, or the view of sexual violence as a continuum, are faithful to Demetriou's hybrid masculine bloc, as it exposes normalized masculine practices as violence or at least as practices of gendered dominance. In line with this argument, to produce a textured analysis of sexual violence, this thesis recognizes the gendered structure of sex as inherently hierarchized but also considers the possibilities of agency and autonomy women have created for themselves; this flexible conceptualization of heterosexuality and sex can work in tandem with Kelly's conceptualization of sexual violence on a continuum that is not "a linear straight line connecting many different events or experiences" nor does it imply a hierarchy of harm, which in turn can help uncover the cultural scaffolding of rape, as articulated by Gavey.

As Boyle (2019) notes in her examination and further theorization of Kelly's continuum of sexual violence within the context of #MeToo,

expanding and de-hierarchizing the concept of sexual violence allows women to "establish a common character between different experiences and to understand the continuous nature of women's experiences of sexual violation in patriarchal culture." However Boyle (2019) also notes that this continuum, originally intended as a way to listen to survivors and get fuller understandings of sexual violence and its normalization, has been distorted and misused in mainstream media and in social media precisely because it is such a radical understanding of sex and sexual violence. Boyle suggests the distortion lies in how survivors of sexual violence and feminists more broadly are portrayed as incapable of telling the difference between rape and other less violent instances of misogyny and sexual harassment. Boyle argues that there is a myriad of reasons for this mis/characterization of the feminist approach to sexual violence, citing social media decontextualization, a himpathetic culture and the tendency of perceptions of sexual violation being embedded in discourses of crime. While critics of #MeToo claim the "flattening" of sexual violence is detrimental to men because linking normal and aberrant male behaviour positions male behaviour as "crime," Boyle points out that this distortion recentres the issue of sexual violence around men's feelings. I agree with Boyle's rebuttals to these distortions, particularly when it comes to the absurd claim that #MeToo is criminalizing "normal" male behaviour. Additionally, abolitionist feminist approaches to sexual violence have shown that it would be beneficial for the dismantling of patriarchy to continue to

view and treat sexual violence on a continuum and move away from criminalization; as Kelly (1988) herself has argued, many incidents that women experience as abusive are not legally defined as crimes. Black feminist positions on how criminality and prison reproduce rape culture (Collins, 2004; Davis; 2003) as well as the continuous criminalization of survivors of colour (Survived and Punished, 2017) indicate that feminist analysis should increasingly move away from legal definitions of rape and sexual assault which tend to be binary—along the lines of rape/not rape or guilty/not guilty—and generally counter to thinking of sexual violence as a continuum and removing the cultural scaffolding of rape.

In this section, I have presented a tentative framework for researching and producing knowledge about masculinity and men alongside feminist literature about sexual violence. Using Gavey (2005) and Boyle (2019), I have demonstrated that de-hierarchizing sexual violence and viewing it as a spectrum could fit well with Demetriou's (2001) theorization of hybrid masculinities, as this moves research and knowledge production away from circular and totalizing perspective on masculinity, sexual violence and gendered hierarchies. In summary, this approach could result in textured feminist analyses of masculinity and sexual violence that move away from legal definitions of rape and sexual assault which tend to be binary. This approach allows me to understand sexual violence as constitutive of the gendered hierarchy, rather than an extreme manifestation of it. Understanding sexual violence and masculinities on a spectrum is a

possible path for removing the cultural scaffolding of rape and sexual violence (Gavey, 2005).

3. The public/private dichotomy: Reviving old feminist questions through #MeToo

The dichotomy between the private and the public has been a central feminist issue for almost two centuries (Pateman, 1989). This division has become particularly charged during the #MeToo era, as private harms were made public and a feminist consciousness-raising effort swept through public social media networks, creating what Brunner and Partlow-Lefevre term a rhizomatically networked collective that expanded audiences (2020). In this section, while exploring the historical importance of breaking away from the public/private distinction that has naturalized the subjugation of women and how this is modelled by #MeToo, I argue that while "hashtag feminism" has been an essential consciousness-raising tool to create "affective solidarity" between women that has transformative potential (Hemmings, 2012, as cited in Mendes, et al., 2019), the rise of neoliberal feminism that privileges individual choice over collective feminisms (Rottenberg, 2014) in a postfeminist society where feminism is invoked in order to be dismissed as articulated by McRobbie (2004, 2008), along with a growing trend of corporate, state and peer surveillance on social media networks (Gill, 2019) and subsequent strategic co-optation of social movements calls for a return to materialist feminism(s) that radically re-imagines society and

addresses the material conditions of women's subjugation. Drawing on Silvia Federici (1975), whose concept of labour power contends that the private and domestic nature of women's labour occludes its true value as a pillar of the reproduction of capitalism, I argue that (some) women's entrance into public life via the workforce has not resulted in liberation but in further blurring of boundaries between work, sex and power; additionally, drawing on emerging scholarship on abolitionist feminism (Davis, 2017; Eisenstein, 2019), I argue that future and present feminism(s) should seek to abolish current systems of exploitation rather than be de-politicised by institutionalization and neo-liberalisation.

Second-wave feminist critiques of the private/public division and how it structures the subjugation of women focused on how the lack of rights of some women was fundamentally based upon the naturalization of women's domestic (private) work and the resulting isolation and lack of participation in civil society that structured women's lives (Pateman, 1989). As Pateman suggests, this private/public separation contains an underlying belief that women are naturally submissive to men and belong to the private, domestic sphere, while men belong to the civil, public society (1989); second-wave feminism sought to politicise the realm of the personal and the private as it was associated with the conviction that it would be 'unnatural' to extend the rights of autonomous personhood to women (Rogan and Budgeon, 2018). Feminist approaches to this division have been one of the most "fertile conceptual tools in understanding

women's inequality and gender difference" (Coole, 2000, p. 339); this analysis illuminated that gender inequality depends on denying the political importance of aspects of every day life, and as such second-wave feminism brought issues like sexuality or the body to the political realm (Rogan and Budgeon, 2018). Much of this politicization was done through consciousness-raising groups that were foundational to the theorization of women's subjugation, as Carol Hanisch (1969) wrote in her essay entitled *The Personal is the Political*: "One of the first things we discover in these [consciousness-raising] groups is that personal problems are political problems. There are no personal solutions at this time. There is only collective action for a collective solution" (2006 [1969], [no pagination]).

Interestingly, in a 2006 digital re-issue of her original essay, Hanisch notes that the phrase "The personal is the political" has been revised and misused, "ripped off or even stood on their head and used against their original, radical intent" (2006 [1969], [no pagination]); indeed, the rise of neoliberal feminism (Rottenberg, 2014) and a postfeminist cultural landscape (McRobbie, 2004, 2009) has ensured that once radical feminist perspectives are de-politicized as they enter the public sphere in Western societies. In this sense, #MeToo can be seen as a case study of feminist activism from inception to co-optation. Though hashtag activism has transformative and politicizing potentials, much like the consciousness-raising groups of the 70s and 80s, as demonstrated by emerging scholarship on feminist digital activism and its impact young women (Rogan and Budgeon, 2018; Mendes, et

al., 2019), and certainly, part of the #MeToo movement was guided by the feminist tradition of speaking out and consciousness-raising (Boyle, 2019), the discussion in my analysis chapters shows, however, that co-optations of the movement and its language occur when accused men are attempting to re-build their reputation.

Much like consciousness-raising of the past, #MeToo also destabilizes the public/private dichotomy through the sharing of women's private experiences in a public sphere as a form of feminist political participation; however, as Rogan and Budgeon (2019) emphasize, digital feminist activism can also serve to reinforce and reproduce oppressive gender structures. The impact of peer and corporate surveillance of social movements has been emphasized by Gill (2019) as a feminist issue, and in this thesis, I demonstrate how the accessibility of feminist language and concepts can be co-opted by men seeking to repair their damaged reputations via constructing public apologies and "supporting" women's issues through large monetary donations.

Left-wing feminist critiques point out that the majority of #MeToo discourses focus on the actions of the individual rather than social relations of power that allowed men to abuse women without consequences (Berg, 2020); this is corroborated by much of my analysis and my observations of what has become part of mainstream #MeToo discussions since the first virality of the hashtag. As Berg (2020) puts it, "for a movement centred on workplace abuse, #MeToo

has precious little to say about how capitalist wage relations produce vulnerability" (p. 263). This strikes me as an incisive and necessary critique of the movement because (even though I found in some of my analysis of media texts that clerical assistants were also harassed and pushed out of Hollywood in the case of Weinstein, and that Black working class girls and women were the main victims of R. Kelly) the mainstream media spotlight often falls on white, able-bodied, wealthy victims like Rose McGowan, rather than on victims who were preyed upon specifically because they depend on wage labour to survive or who do not have an income. Berg (2020) attributes these preferred narratives to what she terms "bourgeois feminism" that centres the experiences of professional, media and pink-collar office work, strategically divorcing sexual harassment from anti-capitalist critiques in order to protect the class interests of white, working women.

Drawing on Claudia Jones's work on the horrors of performing domestic labour as a Black working-class woman, Berg (2020) notes that these gender-first narratives require that the topic of sexual harassment be divorced from where it happens the most: in the selling and performing of domestic labour. Noting that sexual harassment is rife in the service industry, Judith Levine (2018) emphasizes that individual lawsuits and imprisonment of harassers and abusers might "temporarily shift money around" but "does not redistribute power," suggesting that #MeToo should stop framing abusers as "men who do bad things to women" and start framing them as "embodiments of capital."

I trace back the issue of workplace harassment back to liberal feminist theorizing on the public/private division that resulted in the demand of women's right to work outside the home, which Pateman emphasises heavily affects working class women who work in low-paying, low-status, non-supervisory jobs, and then are expected to also perform domestic tasks in the home precisely because of this shift (Pateman, 1989). Arguably, socialist feminist Silvia Federici predicted this negative shift in 1985 when she argued that women's entrance in the workforce was akin to women getting a second job that will not only "increase our exploitation, but simply reproduce our role in different forms" (Federici, [1985] 2012, p. 59). For Federici, the organization of the public/private division lies in the recognition of waged, public work (at the time, usually performed by men) as work, and how it "hides the extent to which our family and social relations have been subordinated to the relations of production so that every moment of our lives functions for the accumulation of capital" (2012 [1975], p. 37). The power relation between men and women, Federici argues, was built on the naturalization of women's domesticity and wageless housework which leaves most women with "no alternative but to depend on men for their economic survival and submit to the discipline that comes with this dependence" (2012 [1980], p. 51). The isolation created by domestic work that results in women's exclusion from civil, public life was not, for Federici, a reason to demand participation in the workforce; rather, it was a hinderance to women's political organizing efforts (2012 [1975]).

As Tithi Bhattacharya writes, the power that lies at the heart of #MeToo is bosses' ability to abuse, surveil and control their workers (Bhattacharya, 2018); my research corroborates this claim particularly with the Weinstein case study. Furthermore, while much has been written about Weinstein's wealth and how he wielded it to silence and sue his victims (Farrow, 2017, 2019; Kantor and Twohey, 2017, 2019), it seems to me that, this has been treated more generally as a *misuse* of wealth rather than an ethical indictment of wealth accumulation and its power, and how it becomes entangled with the sexual desire to abuse. Weinstein is one abuser who used his wealth as a weapon to protect himself, but he is not the only one to do so because the hierarchical structure of labour is based on exploitation and depends on abusive practices to function. As Berg (2020) puts it, #MeToo's disengagement with worker organizing is particularly striking considering the broader trends in the precarization of work and general decline in workers' collective power.

Additionally, there is evidence to support that even at the level of pink collars workers, as theorized by Federici, jobs allocated to women are very specifically gendered; a study done in 2015 by San Diego State's Centre for the Study of Women in Television and Film concluded that the allocation of types of work for men and women in Hollywood is gendered, with men holding large swathes of jobs that control the content of the film industry, and women being put in supporting roles that take direction from men (Lauzen, 2018). In the entertainment industry, as Federici argues is true of the rest of society, women are

often positioned as support workers rather than creators or directors (Federici, [1975] 2012); diverging even from socialist feminists who argued that women's joining the workforce would allow them to join the working class struggle, Federici's Wages for Housework perspective demanded a radical re-imagination of society along anti-capitalist and feminist abolitionist lines of organization rather than advocating for the institutionalization of feminism and women. I am, as Federici was and continues to be, interested in "building a society in which creativity is a mass condition and not a gift reserved to the happy few, even if half of them are women" (2012 [1984], p. 60).

Black feminist scholars have also explored the public/private dichotomy in the context of race and gender. Crenshaw (1991) uses the historical sexual harassment case of Anita Hill against Clarence Thomas during his Supreme Court confirmation as an example of how social categories operate to the disadvantage of those with more than one intersecting category. This case study reveals the tension between the social narratives of, as Collins theorized (2004), the *public* lynching of Clarence Thomas as a Black man and how this was used politically to discredit his victim, and the *private* act of sexual violence against a Black woman, at a time when rape narratives were almost exclusively about white women. In this example, multiple levels of tension between the private and the public are being mediated by social power, and the publicizing of Thomas's harm towards Hill ends up erasing her blackness as Thomas utilized anti-racism narratives of Black masculinity in crisis (Collins, 2004).

The question that hounds the public/private dichotomy then, is about "feminist" participation in capitalism, and whether women's subjugation can be solved with more women in charge, or a generally more "diverse" constitution of capitalism. As Berg emphasizes, this necessitates a view of sexual harassment in the workplace as especially horrific in comparison to other types of abuse and the inherent exploitation of capitalism, where feminist slogans like "the personal is the political" are co-opted by capitalist ventures for profit.

As my thesis will show, this co-optation—one that exists in the postfeminist cultural landscape—discursively allows men to treat gendered harm as a marketing crisis rather than a coherent system of subjugation and broadly allows for white middle class working women to benefit from capitalist wealth accumulation while Black and Brown women are exploited and unprotected in their places of work and incarcerated for trying to survive. While experiencing and studying #MeToo felt like a wave of change and new possibilities, it is evident to me that much of this movement hearkens to unfinished feminist questions of the past on how to end women's subjugation. Unlike Federici and the Wages for Housework movement in the 1970s and 1980s, contemporary feminists have a wealth of evidence that "feminist" participation in capitalism and the institutionalization of feminism into structures like the prison industrial complex, is not a productive path for the liberation of all women. What Federici's analysis suggests is that contemporary feminist activism should create frameworks and spaces that will not be co-opted by racial capitalism

through the adoption of an anti-capitalist, abolitionist socialist feminist politic.

To be clear, this is not to say that #MeToo should be dismissed. Despite its co-optation, many women learned a lot from the movement (Mendes, et al., 2019) and unions were able advocate for better sexual harassment policies with the momentum of the conversation (Berg, 2020). Rather it is that its collective power should be harnessed to build a world where sexual violence and workplace harassment (sexual or not) does not exist; this would require potentially a complete new world, where nobody is dependent on wage labour, where each instance of sexual violence is dealt with differently and contextually, and where incarceration and policing are not the only "solutions" to men's violence against women.

4. Notes on language: Victims or survivors?

Feminist work on the issue of sexual violence has largely concentrated in bringing it to the public eye, naming the problem and challenging a stigmatizing view of being a "victim", which led to the use of the term "survivor" (Kelly, et al., 1988). In *Surviving Sexual Violence*, Liz Kelly argues that calling women affected by sexual violence "victims" erases the active and positive ways in which women resist, cope and survive before, during and after sexual violence takes place (Kelly, 1988). Without a perspective of survival, Kelly continues, women are considered inherently vulnerable to victimization and inevitably "passive victims" (1988). Kathleen

Barry, in *Female Sexual Slavery,* writes that feminist work in bringing attention to rape as a political crime committed against women and demanding recognition of women's victimization, along with the lack of support for women in society, created a new dehumanizing status—the victim (1979). Rather than an identity chosen by the woman who was sexually attacked or abused, being a "victim" is thrust upon her, and Barry ascribes the word "survivors" to show women's "will, action, [and] initiative" in their own survival (Barry, 1979, p. 44). In the next few paragraphs, I will discuss the limitations of both "victim" and "survivor" for describing and referring to women and other marginalized genders' experiences of sexual violence.

If we identify femininity as an implication of probable submission, a gender expression that is perceived as weakness that might be pliable to assault and/or harassment, Kelly and Barry's contentions that the word "victim" implies passivity becomes problematic. Firstly because passivity is already read as a feminine trait, a type of "weakness" that accepts the violence that occurs without reaction. When Kelly and Barry argue for the word "survivor" over "victim", there is a certain rejection of the feminine values of survival some women might cling to. It's important to ask if rejecting the word "victim" altogether plays into age-old hatred of the feminine and of feminine reactions to violence, and if this is detrimental to the cause as it mirrors misogyny. When a person is sexually attacked, it is imperative to remember that that person's vulnerability and passivity is not to be blamed for that violence; the fault should fall on the perpetrator alone. Kelly does

recognize this unhelpful dichotomy at a later date, writing that victimization is what happens when someone is sexually assaulted, and surviving is what people attempt to do after the fact, thus acknowledging that this is not only a false dichotomy, but a roadblock to conceptualizing an alternative term to encapsulate the whole experience (Kelly, et al., 1996). Kelly also recognizes that this dichotomy produces an unhelpful view of passivity as oppositional to resistance, when the ways women and young people resist sexual assault and abuse are varied and might include passivity. Kelly, writing with Sheila Burton and Linda Regan, argues that:

> The notion of phases or stages positions individuals as either 'victim' or 'survivor'. This misrepresents both material and emotional reality. All sexual violence involves an experience of victimization, and if individuals do not die as a consequence they have physically survived. The conceptual separation over time produces and understanding which focuses on an either/or positioning of individuals, and prevents an alternative conceptualization where the two concepts refer to different aspects of experience: being victimized is what was done--a statements of historical fact; survival is what individuals who are victimized achieve in relation to, and often in spite of, that historical reality. It is also important to remember that not all who are victimized do survive: women and children are killed in the course of assaults,

and some take their own lives when the pain and distress becomes unbearable.

(…)

The opposition between 'victim' and 'survivor' leaves little room for exploring the complexity of coping/survival skills; for example, that necessary defences are developed at the time of abuse, which are maintained over time, particularly if the child/young person/woman does not have access to others who believe and support them are the time. (Kelly, et al., 1996, p. 91, 92, 93)

Victimization happens whether we use the word "survivor" or "victim"; a person needs to be victimized in order to become a survivor. Kelly suggests that positioning both words as opposing identities, instead of challenging the stigma of the word "victim", has resulted in reinforcing the negative meaning of the word, where the only alternative word for identification is "survivor" (Kelly, et al., 1996). As Schneider points out, what she calls the victimization/agency dichotomy is not adequate or accurate in portraying the full scope of women's experiences (Schneider, 1993). Schneider emphasizes, for battered women, the "survivor" narrative tends to exclusively focus on the exit from the relationship rather than considering the complexity of the physical, emotional, and economic barriers of leaving an abusive relationship. Finally, Schneider rejects the notion that victimization and agency are two oppositional

extremes, conceptualizing them as interrelated dimensions of women's experiences.

Another issue with the "survivor" narrative is what Kelly notes as the growth of therapeutic responses to sexual trauma, linking self-help feminist literature with marketable feminism that focuses on individual growth rather than collective responses to gendered violence (Kelly, et al., 1996). The marketable journey of "victim" to "survivor" offer "a false hope that experiences of abuse can be understood and responded to in a similar way to illness," which in turn can produce a lifetime of resentment and despair (Kelly, et al., 1996, p. 94). Additionally, Kelly warns that 'to-be-paid-for' therapy and self-help books for women and children who suffered sexual violence have by-passed the existing network of feminist organizations that attempt to provide free support to all women (Kelly, et al., 1996). In this sense, survivorship is fragmented by capitalism, which displaces a collective political struggle into an individual therapeutic journey that is not widely accessible to all women; only some people might be able to pay for mental health care, while others will not receive the care they need. Some people might have access to a feminist community that will help them heal collectively, and other might not have the time to find such a community because they are too busy living paycheck to paycheck. This leaves us with an unequal "survivor" identity and a fracturing of our collective struggle for justice across class, race and ability.

Angela P. Harris charges feminist legal theory with race essentialism (1990). Critiquing the work of Catherine McKinnon and Robin West for flattening the experience of womanhood into that of white women, Harris (1990) points out that, legally, the experience of rape did not exist for black women for a very long time. The illegibility of Black women as victims continues to be a sore spot in feminist movements and discourses (Boyle, 2019). The enslavement of Black women meant that the rape of Black people was not legally considered a crime even after the Civil War; "rape laws were seldom used to protect Black women against either white or Black men, since Black women were considered promiscuous by nature" (Harris, 1990). In other words, the status of "rape victim" was always unequally distributed, just as womanhood was a status reserved only for white women. While the social and legal benefits of being a victim are not completely positive, being given victim status can mean that the violation of your bodily autonomy is recognized in some way, as is your humanity. Especially when conducting research in the area of masculinity, it is also important to recognize that white women's victimhood has been historically used to criminalize and stereotype Black men and other men of colour, which in turn has forced Black women who are sexually abused and assaulted to remain silent to protect their community from societal racism (Collins, 2004). As Collins writes, "Black women are demanded to 'take the position' to be abused and protect the community--within this logic, a black woman's ability to absorb abuse becomes a measure of strength"

(Collins, 2004, p. 226). In this context, survivorship itself is imposed onto Black women by both their community and society's racialized pressure on their community, their strength to absorb abuse in silence and survive is fetishized, similarly to how victimhood has been historically impose onto white women. Though Kelly's discussion of the survivor/victim dichotomy is exhaustive, a thorough discussion of race is not present, which is quite a glaring gap in the discussion.

In a similar vein, Kelly and Barry's arguments also fail to recognize survivors or victims who are not women. Sexual violence against women used to be invisible, and feminist movements pushed it into visibility to demand justice and equality, but as we move forward in discussions of sexual violence perpetrated by men, it is important to emphasize that not all people who suffer sexual violence are women. Many people might have been assigned female at birth and suffered sexual violence because of this, but do not identify with the gender category of "women",[3] and many men who do not possess or practice dominant masculinity traits might be victims of sexual violence at the hands of other men. The broadening of a category of survivors—that is, if we will continue to use this term to refer to people who suffered sexual violence—is crucial for understanding the order of gender relations. Broadening the scope of how we look at sexual violence

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[3] Society is still grappling with the limitations of language when it comes to genders that fall outside or between the gender binary, and I am including their experiences here deliberately. People who are assigned female at birth but come out as non-binary or as trans men later in life have varying experiences with misogyny, sexual violence and gendered abuse, and it is important to note that these experiences are within the universe of what we should consider "survivors" of gendered harm.

perpetrated by men and who it happens to can lead us to better conclusions with regards to how hegemonic masculinity functions as a structure and as a practice. Edwards argues that there is a correlation between sexist, racist and homophobic violence, emphasizing that "soft" types of masculinity can invite violence from more dominant types of men (2006); by broadening the scope of "victims" or "survivors" to include men and other genders, while still emphasizing that women are a subordinated gender, maybe we can consider that femininity—and the softness, vulnerability and submission implied within it as a facet of gender expression—is one (of many) reasons why sexual violence occurs to the groups outlined above.

The victim/survivor dichotomy and the debates that arise around it are a demonstration of the limitations of language to fully describe the experience of sexual assault and gendered violence; Boyle (2019, p. 15) uses the term "victim/survivor" to "acknowledge the experiences of victimisation and survival are dynamic and contextual," and while I think this solves many of the dichotomy's limitations, I still find this term limiting and somewhat race blind. Particularly, when writing about R. Kelly's victims, it was difficult to ignore how Black women and girls are routinely denied the status of victims and how that denial, often mediated through constructions of race and criminality, has material consequences. Like Schneider, I reject the notion that victimization and agency are two oppositional extremes, and I aim to conceptualize them as interrelated dimensions of women's experiences. Specifically, from the point of view of writing about

abusers, I sometimes feel using the word "survivor" plays down the harm caused—it sometimes reads as if I am erasing the enforced victimization, as if focusing on survival somehow makes women a more powerful category by extension. Always using the word "survivor", in my view and specifically when discussing masculinity and its harms, can linguistically make a leap that is not completely accurate. As Kelly emphasizes (Kelly, et al., 1996), it is best to look at survivorship and victimhood as complexly co-existent and that working through painful experiences is a process that lasts a lifetime.

To sum up this section, the feminist work of pushing for the term "survivor" to de-stigmatize the concept of being a "victim" was necessary and important in the 1970s and 80s. Contemporarily, as sexual violence perpetrated by men comes to light more and more, and as the "survivor or victim" debate has become more mainstream, the conversation has become a false dichotomy that continues to stigmatize the victimization that occurs when a person is sexually assaulted. The derision of the feminized nature of the concept of "being a victim" is harmful for women who suffered sexual assault and people of other genders who suffered the same violence. Furthermore, capitalism turns survival into an individualistic pursuit when the original feminist intention was collective and political survival that demanded justice for all people harmed by sexual violence and the gender power structure. For these reasons, in this thesis I have chosen to use both "victim" and "survivor" where I feel is appropriate. I am explicitly not using the term "victim/survivor" as

I think it is important to preserve the meaning of both identities. My intention here is to use them interchangeably as equally valid identities and experiences, and to emphasize that the victimization of people who suffer sexual violence is an extremely significant part of that violence and what happens after the fact.

5. Victim/survivor narratives and the circular logic of masculinity discourses

The tendency to view hegemonic masculinity as a fixed set of traits goes beyond scholarly engagements with the concept; this tendency can be observed in mainstream feminist discourses about gendered sexual violence through the concept of "toxic masculinity" (Harrington, 2021). Similarly, the concept of "crisis in masculinity" is often invoked to justify bad male behaviour. Although these two concepts are discursively invoked in different contexts, it is my contention that they both obscure a spectrum of bad behaviour and domination by focusing on fixed male traits and/or over focusing on the alleged psychological and social effects of the new visibility of masculinity and men as a problem. In this section, I will demonstrate how these concepts stall conversations about male violence against women and patriarchy more generally, both through invoking fixed traits that seem unfixable and by reproducing circular arguments of male socialization that construct men as the victims of their own violence. I suggest that paying close attention to victim and survivor

narratives might be useful to find an exit from the circular logic of the study of masculinity and male socialization.

Terry A. Kupers, a scholar of psychology, deployed the term 'toxic masculinity' in 2005 when writing about mental blocks to seeking help for mental illness in incarcerated men. According to Kupers, 'toxic masculinity' is "the constellation of socially regressive male traits that serve to foster domination, the devaluation of women, homophobia and wanton violence" (Kupers, 2005, p. 714). Drawing from Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity, Kupers argues that 'toxic masculinity' is a useful term because it specifically delineates the socially destructive aspects of Connell's hegemonic masculinity. Kupers heavily relates toxic masculinity to incarcerated men's necessity to be respected, and cites Gerzon (1982) in pinpointing the aforementioned destructive traits: "tough-guy posture, outbursts of temper, and the tendency to act out troubling impulses rather than to be introspect about their meanings and ramifications" (Gerzon, 1982; as cited in Kupers, 2005, p. 717). Arguing that incarcerated men are disrespected in all areas of their lives—at work, at leisure time, by the police and the prison guards—Kupers explains that toxic masculinity is a way for men to seek respect; "the man who feels he cannot get respect in any other way is the one who feels a strong urge to dominate others" (2005, p. 717). Though Kupers' theory might be useful in his work with incarcerated men, his conceptualization of "toxic masculinity" sometimes reads like a reworked theory of emasculation which has been used to explain and justify the

domination and violence of women perpetrated by subordinate men since Fanon's study of Black masculinity in 1970 (Edwards, 2006). Some Black feminists have challenged this theory, arguing that the Black man's emasculation is a reaction to how Black men have never been able to fully enjoy the benefits and privileges of (white) patriarchy (hooks, 1982).

Similarly to Kupers, Patricia Hill Collins theorizes that the source of men's physical dominance in Black communities lies in "in ideas about Black masculinity that in turn is situated within a larger context of hegemonic masculinity" (2004, p. 210) and that to re-think Black gender ideology requires changing these gender-specific practices; relating misogyny and homophobia to the amount of pressure Black men find themselves in to avoid being classified as "weak". Hill Collins seems to agree with Kupers that this is a driving factor in the mass incarceration of Black men (Collins, 2004). By noting how societal expectations of Black masculinity also result in the reproduction of rape culture in prisons, Collins argues that male rape in prison is a form of sexual dominance that constructs the masculine pecking order and has "tremendous implications for African American male prisoners, their perceptions of Black masculinity, and the gendered relationships among all African Americans" (2004, p. 239). Where Hill Collins differs from Kupers, however, is her unwavering attention to how this negatively affects Black women; citing the case of Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas. Collins writes that "Black leaders have been unable to help either Black women or Black

men deal with the structural violence of the new racism because such leaders typically fail to question prevailing Black gender ideology," and calls for "a new Black sexual politics dedicated to a more expansive notion of social justice" (Collins, 2004, p. 245). While Edwards argues that generally, the emasculation theory remains unproven as a justification for black male violence against women (2006), my issue with the "toxic masculinity" concept and the emasculation it evokes is that it creates an implicitly oppositional binary; if there is a toxic kind of masculinity, it stands to reason that there are positive or alternative ways to perform masculinity that are not harmful, thus creating a dichotomy that does not recognize the adaptable tendencies of men and masculinities even within non-hegemonic subcultures.

In the same article about toxic masculinity and incarcerated men, Kupers, citing Messner, notes that young men across class and race categories construct their masculinity through crime to gain the approval of their peers, but that only working class, racialized men are incarcerated for this display of masculinity; while middle class white young men take part in illegal activities and can move on to more "socially accepted" pursuits. Kupers points out that working class youth and youth of colour are more likely to get trapped in a criminal life and incarceration (2005). Indeed, this point is essential to deconstruct the spectrum of practices and structures that constitutes men's domination that the concept of "toxic masculinity" occludes; there are many socially accepted ways that men with class and racial

privilege are allowed, and even encouraged, to dominate women and non-hegemonic men that do not result in the incarceration. As Connell originally argued, there are many aspects of masculinity that are overtly violent, but the gender order is not *only* maintained through violence or force (Connell, 1995). Michael Salter argues that "toxic masculinity" flattens the causes of male violence, ignoring the material realities that produce men and masculinities; citing Connell, Salter points out that the intersections of men's material realities matter to how and why they dominate (Salter, 2019). Similarly to my point on how "toxic masculinity" is an insufficient term to characterize men's domination because not all domination is backed by force, he emphasizes that "[w]hile themes of violence, entitlement, and sexism recur across communities, they show up differently in different places" and that universal solutions do not exist (Salter, 2019, [no pagination]). My own encounters with the concept of "toxic masculinity" in feminist spaces—both online and physical—have left me sceptical of the term's usefulness; though it has been a politically effective way to name negative masculine traits and practices. Perhaps filling a gap in language to refer to an undesirable pattern of male behaviour, it has also produced a binary of fixed traits that does not fully illustrate the strategic adaptability of hegemonic masculinity and the dynamic borrowing of non-hegemonic traits that ensures the longevity of the current gender order. To some degree, I view "toxic masculinity" as a convenient contemporary construction that refers to the most obvious and visible aspects of hegemonic masculinity—its

inattention to hegemony's contextuality and adaptability, however, make the concept a convenient villain that omits the pervasive and extensive spectrum of male domination.

If "toxic masculinity" constitutes the construction of a villain in contemporary discourses about men and masculinities, popular discourse that identifies a "crisis of masculinity" constructs male domination as the result of maladaptive, emotionally repressed male tendencies, thus constructing men as the victims of their own domination. Noting the prevalence of claims of "masculinity in crisis" both in academia and in popular media, Edwards (2006) identifies two types of alleged crisis; the crisis from *without*, which has been documented with empirical evidence that appears to support the claim that men as a class are being left behind in a variety of areas of society such as health, education, work, representation and other social institutions, and the crisis from *within*, which is "less easily documented" and centred on a "perceived shift in men's *experiences* of their position *as* men, their maleness and what it means" (2006, p. 8, emphasis his). Edwards dismisses the crisis from *without*, noting that is at once "so pervasive and yet so unsubstantiated," and, when considering the crisis from *within,* he suggests that "there is very little evidence to endorse any overall masculinity in crisis thesis other than to say that masculinity is perhaps partially constituted *as* crisis" (Edwards, 2006, p. 24). Despite this lack of evidence, claims of masculinity in crisis continue to be a pervasive topic in mainstream media across the political spectrum. While writing this thesis, I noted

the continued emergence of this claim in newspapers like The Guardian, the far-right blog Breitbart and The New York Times. "American boys are broken," wrote comedian and writer Michael Ian Black for The New York Times, in response to the Marjory Stoneman Douglas shooting in February of 2018. "[…] The brokenness of the country's boys stands in contrast to its girls, who still face an abundance of obstacles but go into the world increasingly well equipped to take them on" (Black, 2018). Emerging literature reveals that the "growth in cultural ideologies concerned with men and masculinities in contemporary American society has recently emerged" can be linked to the creation of men's rights activist (MRA) groups online which emphasize the crisis of masculinity despite men's privileged societal status (Schmitz and Kazyak, 2016, p. 1). Schmitz and Kazyak (2016) write that MRAs seek to establish resources for men to utilize in "maintaining their elevated position in society in relation to women and other social minorities," as a form of backlash against feminism. Tracing MRA groups to narratives of masculinity in crisis first disseminated by the mythopoetic men's movement, Schmitz and Kazyak (2016) note that these groups strategically construct men as not only being in crisis in terms of health but also as being ignored by mainstream society, thus laying the foundation for constructing men as victims of "a societal-wide prejudice against men that resulted from feminism" (p. 16). Schmitz and Kazyak (2016) attribute this anti-feminist movement to "a wider social movement enacted by conduits such as popular media and

conservative policymakers that promote negative stereotypes of feminists and label it as nothing more than misandry" (p. 11).

This construction of victimhood through claims of masculinity in crisis was forewarned by Sally Robinson (2000) in her book *Marked Men: White Masculinity in Crisis*. Robinson defines masculinity in crisis as post-sixties masculinity backlash to feminist and civil rights movements, characterizing the performance and claim of crisis as a post-liberationist[4] reaction. Crucially, Robinson is less concerned with the veracity of the crisis, and more focused on its strategic performance in a social landscape where hegemonic masculinity has been threatened by feminist and civil rights movements:

> "Announcements of a crisis in white masculinity, and a widely evidenced interest in wounded white men, themselves perform the cultural work of recentering white masculinity by decentering it. In other words, in order for white masculinity to negotiate its position within the field of identity politics, white men must claim a symbolic disenfranchisement, must compete with various others for cultural authority bestowed upon the authentically disempowered, the visibly wounded. The strategies

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[4] Robinson defines "post-liberationist" as "[W]hat I take to be the major social upheavals of the post-sixties era and their cultural and literary consequences: the gradual shift from a politicized notion of liberation to a personal one; the critique of normativity and the proliferation of marked identities produced by that critique; the rise of popular culture and the diffusion of cultural authority among multiple audiences and forms" (2000, p. 55)

through which this is accomplished are neither entirely

deliberative nor entirely innocent" (Robinson, 2000, p.55)

Like Robinson, I am interested in how narratives of crisis are called

upon to justify or even instigate male violence,[5] and how masculinity

can be represented as a victimized category as a defence strategy

when male power is being challenged. Robinson's book illustrates

how contemporary representations of white masculinity in crisis

linger on ponderings of the wounds of white and male privilege,

arguing that white masculinity can convincingly represent itself as

victimized, drawing on an identity politics of the dominant (Robinson,

2000). Noting that the gender order has not changed in its essence,

Robinson recognizes that queer and feminist civil rights movements

produced social shifts that are threatening to hegemonic masculinity.

By decentralising the claim that the crisis of masculinity is a societal

problem to be solved, Robinson frames the concept as an aspect *of*

masculinity that legitimizes patriarchy even within men's liberation

literature (Robinson, 2000). This approach to the question of crisis of

masculinity avoids falling into the narrative of male victimhood,

which is a common trapping of discussions of crisis even when

critiques of male power might seek to respond and work in tandem

with feminist critiques (Robinson, 2000). Indeed, I believe this is one

of the causes behind what Connell and Messerschmidt term the

circular arguments of socialization that justify men's domination in

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[5] The case of Elliot Rodger, who was the perpetrator of the Isla Vista school shooting, for example, has been argued to have been a result of "a crisis of masculinity and feelings of aggrieved entitlement wherein he directs his anger at racial minorities and women" (Vito, et al., 2018, p. 87).

the subject of masculinity studies (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Robinson argues that men's liberationist perspectives, as well as more traditional depictions of wounded white masculinity, concern themselves with equating liberation to release, rather than moving towards the dismantling of patriarchy itself; though Robinson recognizes men's liberation texts as progressive, she also emphasizes that these texts fall into the trap of depicting white men as victims of their own patriarchal power, instead of forging a link between women's oppression and the dismantling of patriarchy (Robinson, 2000). Quoting Tania Modleski, Robinson warns that "however much male subjectivity may currently be 'in crisis,' as certain optimistic feminists are now declaring, we need to consider the extent to which male power is actually consolidated through cycles of crisis and resolution, whereby men ultimately deal with the threat of female power by incorporating it" (Modleski as quoted in Robinson, 2000, p. 9). Similarly, Aneta Stepien (2017, [no pagination]) defines the crisis as "men's anxieties about their changing social roles", arguing that speaking about the crisis detracts our attention from the real issue of "our failure to reform the way we think about masculinity and how unfit it is for the culture in which we now live"; the crisis narrative, Stepien points out, can easily become an excuse for inaction or a justification for some men's violent and abusive behaviour. Like Robinson, Modleski and Stepien, I think concerns with the existence of crisis of masculinity are the result of the centring of men's issues in masculinity studies and in society more broadly. This construction of

victimhood through narratives of crisis of masculinity builds on what Kate Manne identifies as a "himpathetic culture," where excessive sympathy is shown towards male perpetrators of gendered violence; himpathy is usually extended "to men who are white, nondisabled, and otherwise privileged 'golden boys'" (Manne, 2017, p. 197). Consequently, considerations of a crisis of masculinity must understand how himpathetic Western society is, and how the circularity of the crisis might reproduce patriarchal structures. The construction of crisis in conversations, literature and academic research about men and masculinities offers an easy means for men to intervene in gender politics without much structural change or relinquishing of power.

In this thesis, I offer evidence that "crisis" is often invoked by men accused of sexual violence in an attempt at image-management where a narrative of progress and rehabilitation is constructed after the accusations create a "crisis" where the accused man is forced to confront the harm he caused. This "crisis", though it often acknowledges men's domination of women and shifting gendered moral codes, tends to construct the accused man as the biggest victim of his own violence, thus recentring the narrative on his wounded masculinity.

"Toxic masculinity" and "crisis of masculinity" exemplify two prevailing discourses that make masculinity visible as a "problem" but ultimately obscure a spectrum of men and masculinities that

benefit from and strategically maintain patriarchy in Western capitalist societies. By creating a villain out of "toxic masculinity" and creating narratives of victimhood through an alleged "crisis of masculinity," these discourses create a victim/villain dichotomy. This dichotomy aids the strategic hybridization of the hegemonic masculine bloc, as it omits or distracts from the adaptability of men and masculinities in their legitimation and reproduction of patriarchy. The victim/villain dichotomy appears repeatedly in the accounts of male violence discussed in this thesis. I argue this dichotomy occludes the structures of capitalist exploitation and white heteropatriarchy that are the basis of Western society. The extremity of these discourses and their inherent circularity work as scaffolding for the material conditions that construct the subjugation of women and other marginalized genders in the UK and the US, and how these structures are maintained through the adaptability of dominant modes of gender practice and the co-opting of feminist and civil rights language as "moral codes" shift.

How can we, as feminists interested in the end of violence against women and other genders, exit the circular logic of gender that is posited by the question of masculinity? I want to suggest that utilizing victim and survivor narratives about gendered violence that has been perpetrated by men can clarify the effects and consequences of masculinity and male socialization without defaulting to the wounds men cause themselves by hurting women and other genders. Understanding victim and survivor narratives and their complexities

alongside understandings of men's violence as a feature of a system of domination can displace the circular logic of masculinity studies as I have described it in this section.

Personal stories about rape and sexual violence have been foundational to the anti-rape movement (Serisier, 2018). Tania Serisier (2018) argues that feminist anti-rape politics is founded on the belief that producing and disseminating a genre of personal experiential narratives can end sexual violence. Drawing on Brownmiller's *Against Our Will* and the author's history of changing her mind about rape and sexual violence through hearing personal narratives, Serisier (2018) demonstrates the force of "speaking out" about sexual violence and how this act of speech constructed new understandings of rape through practices of collective listening. Collective storytelling about sexual violence revealed that it is not simply a crime some women are victims of, but a kind of harm that is constitutive of a larger system of gendered domination. Particularly in the 1970s, this kind of speech "found new collective and political practices of listening that made their speech meaningful in new ways" (Serisier, 2018, p. 6). Serisier's work is centred on problematizing the feminist investment in storytelling as a response to rape and sexual violence, and indeed the politics around rape and storytelling have become fraught in the age of #MeToo. Elsewhere, I have written about how #MeToo can sometimes create an imperative for survivors to tell their stories (Froio, 2021) and argued that survivors have no obligation to speak out if they do not want to (Froio, 2021). However,

I still contend that naming what we experience and marking it as violence, particularly in the context of a thesis about masculinity where the larger academic tendency is to leave women's and other genders' perspectives and experiences fall away (Bridges, 2019), is a valuable approach to deconstructing and analysing masculinities.

With this in mind, in this thesis I honour the experiences of survivor/victims through analysing their narratives as well as media narratives about harmful men. I use, for example, excerpts of Wendy C. Ortiz's *Excavation* (2014) to make sense of the experience of the queer exile as articulated by Kadji Amin (2017). I also use the testimonies that were reported in the media to make sense of structures of domination like hegemonic masculinity and how it dominates within interpersonal relationships and interactions. The narratives of victim/survivors are useful because they reveal the pressures and difficulties of domination, both physical and political, and how that domination occurs within the perspective of the victim/survivor. This approach also helped me not lose sight of the effects of men's domination and thus allowed me to escape the circular logic of toxic masculinity and masculinity in crisis. Using victim/survivor narratives reminds me that the effects of this domination are material, mental and physical; as such, defaulting to reformist and circular logics similar to Kimmel's work was almost impossible (2013, 2015).

6. Conclusion:

In this chapter, I discussed the theoretical frameworks I will test through my analysis of the case studies I collected. In summary, this thesis is invested in viewing both masculinities and sexual violence as spectrums of domination to avoid the pitfalls of circular logics and male centring of masculinity studies. To accomplish this, I deliberately centre feminist perspectives in this thesis alongside masculinity studies literature, hoping to achieve balance between the two through my analysis of the case studies. This includes using the words "survivor" and "victim" interchangeably, drawing from survivor's narratives of victimization and broadening the category of survivorship and sexual harm to more expansive understandings. I have also critiqued the villain/hero dichotomy that often comes up in masculinity and feminist literatures alike, arguing for a more textured and expansive understanding of masculinity as a social construction that is varied, hybrid and adaptable, as put forth by Demetriou (2001).

The next chapter is my first analytical chapter, where I will use the initial reports of allegations against Harvey Weinstein to explore the usefulness of Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity and gender. Drawing on two key newspaper articles detailing the alleged violence Weinstein perpetrated against his victims, I analyse Weinstein's practice of hegemonic masculinity within the structures of gender relations as conceptualized by Connell (Connell, 1987; Connell and Pearse, 2014); labour, power, emotional relations (cathexis) and symbolism. My analysis indicates that sexual violence in the workplace is a struggle for power within the structures of labour, sex,

and symbolism, where relations of power are re-consolidated through patterns of social practice by the abuser.

Chapter 3: The Case Against Harvey Weinstein

As I write this chapter, I am reflecting on the social function of women's fear and the image of the "monstrous rapist" in contemporary pop culture. I write this auto-biographical reflection in June 2020, and there is an uprising for Black lives taking place, in response to the murder of George Floyd by police and countless other Black lives destroyed by policing and incarceration, and I am thinking about the ways in which feminism has upheld criminal justice systems that incarcerated marginalized populations globally, and blocked a direct, defensive, deconstructive, transformative community-based approach(es) to sexual violence. This month, a Black woman named Oluwatoyin "Toyin" Salau was murdered after being kidnapped and brutalized by a Black man for days. Toyin was also a victim of familial abuse and previous sexual violence, including an incident that took place during the Black Lives Matter protest she went to on the day she was kidnapped by her murderer. Toyin was 19 and a community activist who had nowhere to take a shower and sleep after attending a protest against police brutality that she helped organize. As a later chapter on the case against R. Kelly will show, Toyin's story is extremely common; Black women and girls are extremely vulnerable to sexual violence due to misogynoir (Bailey, 2010; Trudy, 2014).

What if Toyin had had a safe place to sleep and take a shower and did not need to resort to going to a stranger's house to rest? What if

Toyin's life had been considered valuable and worthy of protection and autonomy, and she had been given safe housing, food and economic security and independence? What if women's fear was not used as a justification for increased policing and incarceration (Kern, 2020), taking away much needed investment in social housing, education, and welfare? What if women's fear was taken seriously and treated at the root, systemically, through a redistribution of wealth and land, socialized services, and preventative sexual education?

What happened to Toyin, and what happens to thousands of girls and women every day, is monstrous, but there is a system that creates and sustains that monster. I have written about carceral feminism before in the context of #MeToo, and how it sustains a system that harms survivors (Froio, 2018). In that piece, I drew on the historical work of feminist prison abolitionists (Davis, 2003; Corrigan, 2006; Wheatcroft, et al., 2009; Law, 2014; Women in Prison Org, 2017; INCITE, n/a) to guide my reasoning and recommendations. What was missing from that piece is how punitive criminal justice systems are a direct barrier to ending sexual violence; by relying on a system that simply punishes the rapist (the monster) rather than addressing the roots of rape as a social problem (the system who created the monster), we leave women and girls at the mercy of a misogynistic and violent society. This is partly the motivation for this work—while of course rape is about an individual who rapes, it is also essential to ask: what are the systemic conditions that allowed Weinstein to rape?

What cultural and social conditions created and/or accommodated his violent acts of gendered domination? What are the roots of gendered hierarchy and how can we develop strategies to diffuse it, destroy it, abolish it?

My feminist foremothers waged a war against the mythology of the stranger who rapes because they rightly observed that rape and sexual assault usually happens between people who know each other (Kelly, 1988; Jackson, 1995). The rapist in the alley, the stranger predator; these images obfuscated the reality of date rape, marital rape, incest, and acquaintance rape. While I do think it may be too early to offer a (full) conclusion on the #MeToo movement and the men who were exposed by it, there is some evidence that Weinstein has been typified into a monster because he is not traditionally attractive and is old by Hollywood industry standards (Boyle, 2019; Manne, 2018) Fatphobia, ageism, and ableism make him an easy kind of scapegoat—not because he didn't commit the violence that was alleged, but because his monstrosity is obfuscating the system in which he operated in, a system that continues to be violent and/or continues to create violence. As Leslie J. Owen (2015) notes, fat bodies delineate the boundaries between good and bad citizenship, and his monstrous actions coupled with his monstrous body ends up justifying his violence; his "ugliness" makes an exploitative system easier to ignore. Additionally, his construction as a rapist of white women specifically—the allegations of Black actress Lupita Nyong'o were the only ones he responded directly to deny, which raises

questions around who is legible as a victim in instances of interracial violence against women—neatly falls into a narrative of protecting white women from sexual aggression from a monstrous rapist other, rather than call attention to the culture of normalized gendered abuse in the entertainment industry.

As I write this reflection, allegations of rape and underage grooming against 26-year-old actor Ansel Elgort have been posted by survivors on social media. Elgort is everything Weinstein is not in terms of aesthetics and usefulness to patriarchy; he is young, good-looking, thin, and charming. The harm he caused does not easily correspond to what he looks like, and this has resulted in extremely unhelpful responses on social media: because he is good-looking and young, people are commenting that he "doesn't need to rape" or, perhaps most horrifyingly, that they would "let him rape" them because he is so good looking. Yet, his approach to grooming his young fans is identical to what I have observed in the cases of R. Kelly and Kevin Spacey; he leverages his fame and looks to force trust from the girls he messages, making them feel special and desired, and once he has their trust, he rapes them. Elgort's actions are just as monstrous as Weinstein's, yet his traditionally good looks seem to confuse the public. While wading through this minefield in social media and editing this chapter, I must admit I have often centred Weinstein as a monstrous rapist in my writing, thus obfuscating the very system I want to uncover and destroy. He is, of course, a monstrous rapist, but for a while I centred him and whether he would be punished, instead

of focusing on what made him monstrous in the first place; instead of identifying what might make survivors safer in the future. For years, I have been tracking Weinstein's case and I celebrated when he was arrested despite being a prison abolitionist (I recognize and honour the contradiction here; I am not made of steel despite my beliefs); but what good is Weinstein's arrest if the systems I identify in this very chapter continue to go unaddressed? Punishing one abuser will never overhaul or fix the system; instead, I think the punishment of one man ends up being a barrier to treating the problem at the root because it masquerades as a solution when it simply occludes the problem(s). While there was extensive coverage of Weinstein's trial and arrest, I have not been able to find any articles attesting to systemic change to Hollywood recruitment practices that circumvent or discard the "casting couch" phenomenon described in this chapter. As allegations against Elgort attest to, sexual violence is still perpetuated by rich, privileged men in Hollywood. I mention all of this to say that as long as we rely on a punitive criminal system that is easily manipulated by the most privileged men and incarcerates less privileged men and locks them away without addressing the problem of social, cultural and systemic misogyny and misogynoir (Bailey, 2010; Trudy, 2014), we will fail to eradicate the social problem of sexual violence. The wider consequences of this are tragic cases like Toyin's; instead of protecting women while they are alive, instead of supporting them so they can thrive in safety, love, and care, we are

now at a place where we are demanding justice for her loss of life and the horrors she went through.

On October 5, 2017, The New York Times published an investigation on decades-old allegations against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein entitled "Harvey Weinstein Paid Off Sexual Harassment Accusers for Decades." The article, written by journalists Jodi Kantor and Meghan Twohey, features interviews and statements from several women in Hollywood, dozens of Miramax employees and ex-employees, and Weinstein's lawyers. In 3,600 words, the piece of investigative journalism described Weinstein's violence against women in the movie industry and subsequent cover-up attempts, with actors as big as Ashley Judd providing statements and anonymous company officials asserting that at least eight settlements were reached to keep Weinstein's 'indiscretions' out of the public eye. About a week after this article came out, another in-depth investigation was published in The New Yorker magazine on October 10, 2017, entitled "From Aggressive Overtures to Sexual Assault: Weinstein's Accusers Tell Their Stories." This investigation, written by investigative journalist Ronan Farrow, contains 10 sections and 7,700 words that build from the original The New York Times article into the exposure of "far more serious claims" supported by a nine-month investigation, multiple interviews with thirteen women and recordings provided by the New York Police Department. Weinstein was removed from the board of his company as allegations from multiple women kept being published in the mainstream press, and as

famous men like Matt Damon, Quentin Tarantino and Ben Affleck confessed to the press that they knew about Weinstein's behaviour. On February 11th, 2018, after a four-month investigation, New York state prosecutors announced they have filed a lawsuit against the Weinstein Company on the basis the studio failed to protect employees from his alleged harassment and abuse. On May 25th, 2018, Weinstein turned himself in to New York police on sexual misconduct charges. He is charged with rape and several other counts of sexual abuse against two women. On February 24th, 2020, after five days of deliberation, the jury finds Weinstein guilty of a criminal sexual act in the first degree and third-degree rape. On March 11th, 2020, Weinstein is sentenced to 23 years in prison for rape and sexual assault.

While the case against Weinstein kickstarted a movement against sexual violence online, Boyle (2019) warns that "feminists should be cautious about the wider implications of the Weinstein case for survivors seeking recognition and/or justice as it suggests a fairly narrow range of circumstances in which abuse (and abusers) can be recognised as such" (p. 194). As Boyle (2019) notes, Weinstein "does not conform to hegemonic notions of masculinity," (p. 194) and as such the allegations against him were much more likely to be believed by the public at large. Therefore, Boyle (2019) asks whether other men who are not immediately recognizable as monsters will be held accountable for the harm they caused. Allison Phipps (2019) points out that the immediate condemnation of Weinstein's behaviour could

be due to the race of his victims, noting how whiteness shapes public feminisms around sexual violence. According to Phipps, decentring whiteness in discussions about sexual violence is not simply about diversifying narratives; rather, feminists must examine "how sexual violence is experienced and politicized in the nexus of patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism" (2019, p. 2).

In this chapter, I explore the usefulness of Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity and gender regimes to understand the case against Harvey Weinstein. Drawing on two key newspaper articles detailing the alleged violence Weinstein perpetrated against his victims, I analyse Weinstein's practice of hegemonic masculinity within the structures of gender relations as conceptualized by Connell (Connell, 1987; Connell and Pearse, 2014); labour, power, emotional relations (cathexis) and symbolism. While I do not draw directly from Ronan Farrow's *Catch and Kill* (2019) and Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey's *She Said* (2019), I have read both books as background literature to understand the case study better. These two books reveal how Farrow (2019) and Kantor and Twohey (2019) reported on the Weinstein case, often demonstrating the pitfalls and obstacles of reporting on stories about sexual violence. However, I limited my analysis and engagement with this case study to the initial articles written by Farrow (2017) and Kantor and Twohey (2017), opting to read the books to understand the wider context of the original reports. The two key news articles that exposed his abuse are: "Harvey Weinstein Paid Off Sexual Harassment Accusers for Decades,"

published in The New York Times on October 5th, 2017, written by Kantor and Twohey, and another in-depth investigation published in the New Yorker on October 10, 2017, entitled "From Aggressive Overtures to Sexual Assault: Weinstein's Accusers Tell Their Stories," written by Farrow.

I am approaching the initial reporting of the allegations against Weinstein through a materialist feminist lens, as explained by Jackson (2001) as "a method of analysing relations between men and women as social rather than natural" (p. 284), still accounting for subjectivity and agency and the extent to which "social structures are themselves perpetuated through human practices" (Jackson, 2001, p. 287). My analysis indicates that sexual violence in the workplace is a struggle for power within the structures of labour, sex, and symbolism, where relations of power are re-consolidated through patterns of social practice of the abuser. The gendered structures of labour, cathexis, and symbolism then, create the cultural, economic and social conditions for rape and sexual assault to take place, where hegemonic masculinity is the practice of winning that power struggle, consequently maintaining the current gendered hierarchy more broadly. I will show how sexual harassment and the system that creates and sustains it works as a barrier to women's career growth and success, therefore re-asserting women's position in the labour structure of Hollywood and beyond, feeding into the wider symbolism of women's place in society.

1. Hollywood's Gender Regime

Connell developed the framework of hegemonic masculinity in response to a necessity for a better framework for the social analysis of gender (1987). Hegemonic masculinity is defined as "social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces that extends beyond contests of brute power into the organization of private life and cultural processes" (Connell, 1987, p. 300). Hegemonic masculinity is both a set of practices that maintains the institutional dominance of men over women and an unrealistic ideal of masculinity to be achieved (Connell, 1987). Connell asserts that hegemonic masculinity as a practice and ideal might change depending on social context and what is considered social capital in a particular location, but that the concept always maintains men's dominance over women (Connell, 1987). She conceptualizes that hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to emphasized femininity and subordinate masculinities, where emphasized femininity is concerned with accommodating the interests and desires of men, and other femininities are defined by modes of resistance and non-compliance (Connell, 1987). Connell further argues that hegemonic masculinity as a system of domination maintains itself through four social institutions that structure gender relations: labour, production, cathexis, and symbolism (Connell and Pearse, 2015). These four axes are what orders gender in contemporary society and maintains the dominance of hegemonic men over women and subordinate masculinities (Connell, 1987). The case against Weinstein demonstrates how labour, cathexis, and

symbolism as structures of power create the conditions for sexual abuse in Hollywood. In the next few paragraphs, I will sketch out the structures of power Weinstein was negotiating within.

Connell posits that the gendered division of labour is an allocation of certain types of work to specific categories of people (Connell, 1987). Silvia Federici (1975) traces the subjugation of women to the division of paid and unpaid work: the waged worker is forced to work for their survival, and therefore exploited by the social contract of waged work, while women's work, or more specifically, unpaid housework has been transformed into a natural cultural attribute of women, thus creating a gulf of economic inequality between men and women, where women's work is made invisible and disempowered. This gendered division of labour, Federici contends, is what structures the subjugation of women within and without the home; even outside the home, women are still expected to fill roles that are related to housework like secretaries, nurses, care workers, etc. Additionally, when women have a second job, not only does it "increase our exploitation, but simply reproduces our role in different forms" (Federici, [1975] 2012, p. x). Federici's framework of unpaid housework and the subjugation of women can be extrapolated to other areas of society beyond the economic consequences of working two jobs and unpaid housework; in Hollywood, despite outward claims of diversity in the entertainment industry, there are very specific jobs that are allocated to women. A study done in 2015 by San Diego State's Centre for the Study of Women in Television and Film can

provide us with some context about how these allocations take place in Hollywood. The study concluded that, of 250 domestic grossing films in the USA, only 27% of producers and 21% of executive producers were women (Lauzen, 2015). This study demonstrated that, in 20 years, opportunities for women to work in behind-the-scenes roles had scarcely improved. In 2017, the number of opportunities improved by 1 percent: "(…) women accounted for 11 percent, of directors, 11 percent of writers, 19 percent of executive producers, 25 percent of producers, 16 percent of editors, and 4 percent of cinematographers" (Lauzen, 2018). According to a recent study, 2019 saw the highest percentage of women directors producing top films at 10 percent—meaning therefore that 90 percent of directors are still men. The allocation of types of work for men and women in Hollywood is gendered, with men holding large swathes of jobs that control the content of the film industry, and women being put in supporting roles that take direction from men (Lauzen, 2018). In the entertainment industry, as Federici argues is true of the rest of society, women are often positioned as support workers rather than creators or directors (Federici, [1975] 2012,). Additionally, Weinstein was the founder of two major production companies, Miramax and the Weinstein Company which allowed him to leverage his position to take advantage of women in a range of roles such as actors, assistants, and secretaries.

On the axis of cathexis, or emotional relations, Connell theorizes that the practices that shape and realize desire are aspects of the gender

order, emphasizing that feminist theorizations about sex and emotional relations have asked sharp questions on connection between heterosexuality and men's domination (Connell, 1995). Citing Hochschild, Connell also suggests that these emotional attachments—positive or negative—also exist in the workplace and can be central to professional performance (Hochschild, 1983, as cited in Pearse and Connell, 2015). In my case study, I detected the prevalent sexual scripts as theorized by Stevie Jackson in the initial reports on the allegations against Weinstein. Drawing on the original conceptualizations of sexual scripts theory by Simon and Gagnon (1986), Jackson argues that the sexual scripts followed by heterosexual men and women provide the motivational and interactional basis of rape; she theorizes men as active sexual beings and women as passive sexual beings, where the women are in charge of stopping unwanted sexual interactions gently enough not to hurt the man's ego, and men are in charge of convincing women to have sex with them (1995). From this, Jackson writes that it is this dynamic between masculinity and femininity attributes that provide the rapist with the vocabulary to justify his own violence towards women (1995). She notes: "Sexual conquest becomes and acceptable way of validating masculinity, of demonstrating dominance of and superiority over women" (Jackson, 1995, p. 19). This theory fits well with Connell's hegemonic masculinity framework as it exposes the scripts that structure sex and emotional relations.

Connell and Pearse also delineate the axes of symbolism, which are the understandings, implications, overtones, and allusions about gender that have "accumulated through our cultural history"; gender symbolism operates in "dress, makeup, gesture, in photography and film, and in more impersonal forms of culture such as the built environment" (Connell and Pearse, 2014, p. 78). As Demetriou puts it, "the structural dominance of men over women provides the essential foundation on which forms of masculinity and femininity are differentiated and hierarchically ordered" (Demetriou, 2001, p. 343). In my case studies, the hierarchy of gender is reflected and reproduced by gender symbolism that is based on the hierarchies of labour and cathexis/emotional relations structures outlined above, as "no division of labour could long be sustained without symbolic categories" (Connell and Pearse, 2014, p. 79). Federici (1975) and Jackson (1995)'s theories on labour and sex give me clearer frameworks with which to analyse my case studies and understand the gendered structures Weinstein negotiated within, and gender symbolism elucidates how these structures codified women as submissive objects to be dominated, symbolically and materially asserting and re-asserting the gender hierarchy (patriarchy) through practice; this aspect is also helped by the background of gendered hierarchy inherent in the cultural production in Hollywood and entertainment media more widely. Connell and Pearse also write that these dimensions are "tools for thinking" that are not "separate institutions," and are "interwoven with other social structures" such as

race, class, sexuality, and disability (2015, p. 79). As my analysis will show, hegemonic masculinity wins dominance when these structures are "correctly" negotiated, put force upon, taken advantage of or manipulated to shift accountability; however, these structures are not totalizing—as argued by Connell and Pearse—and are highly adaptable to new social norms.

However, the adaptability of hegemonic masculinity outlined by Connell does not capture the historical moment of co-optation and appropriation of progressive masculinities that has emerged in these case studies; as suggested by Demetriou (2001), Connell's framework creates a duality between hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities and views the existence of non-white or non-heterosexual elements in hegemonic masculinity as a sign of contradiction and weakness. Re-conceptualizing hegemonic masculinity as a hegemonic bloc, Demetriou (2001) argues that it is hegemonic masculinity's "internally diversified and hybrid nature that makes the hegemonic bloc dynamic and flexible"; its constant hybridization, appropriation of diverse elements from various masculinities make the hegemonic bloc "capable of reconfiguring itself and adapting to the specificities of new historical conjunctures" (p. 348). The hybrid hegemonic masculine block then is not purely heterosexual or white, but a bloc that "unites practices from diverse masculinities in order to ensure the reproduction of patriarchy" (p. 337), as will be unpacked in further case studies about R. Kelly and Kevin Spacey. In the case against Weinstein, the hegemonic bloc

manifests itself as a defence to feminist contestations of his power—notably, Weinstein using a cane to court is arguably an attempt to soften his public image—and it explains why the variations in his identity—Weinstein is, at the risk of being blunt, ugly by conventional standards and fat, miles away from Connell's ideal image of hegemonic masculinity—did not stop him from acquiring power in Hollywood.

2. Hegemonic masculinity and power struggle

In this section, I will use the frameworks previously discussed to analyse moments of power struggle between Weinstein and his victims, as described in two news articles exposing his harmful patterns of behaviour. My analysis uncovers structural issues that created the conditions for Weinstein's harm and continuous cover-ups, demonstrates how he was able to keep abusing people subordinate to him, and how the systems of domination that support him can become barriers to women's professional growth. In this section, I will analyse two key news articles that exposed his abuse: "Harvey Weinstein Paid Off Sexual Harassment Accusers for Decades," published in The New York Times on October 5th, 2017, written by journalists Jodi Kantor and Meghan Twohey, and another in-depth investigation published in the New Yorker on October 10 2017, entitled "From Aggressive Overtures to Sexual Assault: Weinstein's Accusers Tell Their Stories," written by investigative journalist Ronan Farrow.

Both articles analysed in this chapter frame Weinstein's position of power as what gave him the ability to create meetings with his victims that were difficult to escape physically, and it heavily implies—when not outright stated by Weinstein to his victims—that directly rejecting him would have consequences for the victims' career. This position of power is explained as follows:

> Since the establishment of the first studios, a century ago, there have been few movie executives as **dominant, or as domineering**, as Harvey Weinstein. He co-founded the production-and-distribution companies Miramax and the Weinstein Company, helping to reinvent the model for independent films with movies including "Sex, Lies, and Videotape," "The Crying Game," "Pulp Fiction," "The English Patient," "Shakespeare in Love," and "The King's Speech." (Kantor and Twohey, 2017, [no pagination], emphasis mine).

As I have established, Weinstein's ability to produce and distribute movies depends on the gendered division of labour in Hollywood. This division grants Weinstein the position of creator of entertainment media, and it is also maintained by his "dominant" and "domineering" character, which backs his position of power by force as suggested by Connell. However, as Boyle points out, Weinstein, and other men accused of sexual violence, were able to abuse in plain sight because the refusal to hear "no" has "become mythologized in many competitive contexts" – including Hollywood (Boyle, 2019, p. 89).

By drawing on the cases of Kevin Spacey and Jimmy Savile, Boyle emphasises that some of the abuse perpetrated by these celebrity men was already public knowledge prior to the surfacing of more serious and egregious allegations, suggesting that there is a cultural value to abuse (Boyle, 2019). Weinstein's domineering and dominant social practices then, are not only tolerated in Hollywood, but valued and rewarded; I view Weinstein's more egregious violence as an extension of these social practices, where they maintain the gender regime interpersonally, and re-asserts gendered structures institutionally and interpersonally.

A remarkable aspect of Weinstein's modus operandi is its pre-meditation and seemingly clear-headed abuses of power. Weinstein had the ability to schedule meetings with his victims in locations that were difficult to escape physically, with the implication that careers could be ruined if he was rejected sexually. In creating this physically restrictive space, Weinstein reinforces his sexually dominant position as described by Jackson (1995) and is able to exploit heterosexual scripts where women are expected to gently stop unwanted sexual interactions from men, who are socially understood as the "takers" of sex. These two structures, of sex and labour, are being reinforced by each other in the power struggle Weinstein created when sexually attacking his victims. This reinforcement can be seen in the following excerpts:

There are other examples of Weinstein's using the same modus operandi. Jessica Barth, an actress who met him at a Golden Globes party in January 2011, told me that he invited her to a business meeting at the Peninsula. When she arrived, he asked her over the phone to go up to his room. **Weinstein assured her it was "no big deal"—because of his high profile, he simply wanted privacy to "talk career stuff."** In the room, she found that Weinstein had ordered champagne and sushi.

Barth said that, in the conversation that followed, **Weinstein alternated between offering to cast her in a film and demanding a naked massage in bed**. "So, what would happen if, say, we're having some champagne and I take my clothes off and you give me a massage?" she recalled him asking. "And I'm, like, 'That's not going to happen.'"

When she moved toward the door to leave, **Weinstein lashed out, saying that she needed to lose weight "to compete with Mila Kunis," and then, apparently in an effort to mollify her, promising a meeting with one of his female executives.** "He gave me her number, and I walked out and I started bawling," Barth told me. (Immediately after the incident, she spoke with two people; they confirmed to me that she had described her experience to them at the time.) Barth said that the promised meeting at Weinstein's office seemed to be purely a formality. "I just knew it was bullshit," she said. (The executive

she met with did not respond to requests for comment.) –
(Farrow, 2017, [no pagination], emphasis mine).

While this is one of the least explicitly violent allegations against Weinstein, it exemplifies how the structures of sex and labour—where Weinstein is the boss and the sexually dominant gender—reinforce each other and reflect a culture where the exercise of power is in itself sexually pleasurable and socially beneficial to the dominant party. Weinstein's mixture of sex and work in how he exercised his violence points to a Western culture where, as Amin (2019) puts it, "for many men a) reciprocity is not necessary for satisfying sex; and b) non-consent can itself be a turn-on" (p.97); as Amin emphasizes, contrary to the current feminist #MeToo mantra of "sexual violence is not about sex, it's about power," there is something sexy about power and the act of abusing it (Amin, 2019, p. 98). Additionally, this pleasure in abusing has a function of domination; the discursive power struggle cited above re-asserts the victim's position in the structure of labour, drawing on her symbolic sexual value—as a guardian of sexual interaction and an object for sexual pleasure—and her precarious standing in the industry.

Many of Weinstein's victims claimed the circumstances of his violence were "streamlined" through professional channels in addition to be carefully orchestrated to physically trap the victim. That a process of "streamlining" sexual violence was able to operate in Hollywood for decades indicates how much the entertainment

industry is not at odds with the violence perpetrated by Weinstein; rather, the current gender regime is supportive of his violence as it maintains the structure of domination. Indeed, it is notable that after Weinstein was exposed, he became the archetype of the monstrous rapist; the problem became Weinstein's actions as a sole bad actor, rather than a culture that values and rewards domination (Boyle, 2019). Exposing abuse as abuse rather than being normalized as a part of cursory industry dynamics was an essential part of #MeToo (Boyle, 2019), and this exposure has blown open the hierarchies that are re-asserted through normalized masculinity practices in Hollywood and Western society more widely. Additionally, the framework of hunter/prey of sexual scripts, which as Jackson suggests, are the mainstream and dominant scripts that tend to define sexual and emotional exchanges between men and women, helped this normalization, as can be seen in the following excerpts:

> [Lucia Evans] told me that the entire sequence of events had a routine quality. **"It feels like a very streamlined process,"** she said. "Female casting director, Harvey wants to meet. Everything was designed to make me feel comfortable before it happened. And then the shame in what happened was also designed to keep me quiet."

> Evans said that, after the incident, "I just put it in a part of my brain and closed the door." **She continued to blame herself for**

> **not fighting harder. "It was always my fault for not stopping him," she said.** (Farrow, 2017, [no pagination], emphasis mine).

Evans' testimony points to how sexual scripts work to place the onus of stopping sexual interaction on the victim, rather than recognizing how Weinstein used his power to trap the victim and diminish her agency. The normative scripts for the practice of sex define who does what to who and how (Gavey, 2005), and in this instance, the heaviness of "failing" to guard her sexuality weighs on the victim.

These scripts are helped by aspects of the industry that are still premised on a hunter/prey dynamic. For example, the tradition of the casting couch is a clear manifestation of the hierarchy of labour and sex in Hollywood; as Ben Zimmer explains in a brief history of the phrase, the casting couch is "where, as the story goes, aspiring actresses had to trade sexual favors in order to win roles" (Zimmer, 2017, [no pagination]). Over time, Zimmer explains, the phrase has become "emblematic of the way that sexual aggression has been normalized in an industry dominated by powerful men" (2017, [no pagination]). Women in the industry know and recognize the sexually aggressive dynamic of the casting couch as something to guard themselves against, as evidenced by the following excerpts:

> In interviews, eight women described varying behavior by Mr. Weinstein: appearing nearly or fully naked in front of them, requiring them to be present while he bathed or repeatedly asking for a massage or initiating one himself. **The women,**

typically in their early or middle 20s and hoping to get a toehold in the film industry, said he could switch course quickly — meetings and clipboards one moment, intimate comments the next. One woman advised a peer to wear a parka when summoned for duty as a layer of protection against unwelcome advances. Laura Madden, a former employee who said Mr. Weinstein prodded her for massages at hotels in Dublin and London beginning in 1991, said he had a way of making anyone who objected feel like an outlier. "It was so manipulative," she said in an interview. "You constantly question yourself — am I the one who is the problem?" – (Kantor and Twohey, 2017, [no pagination], emphasis mine).

That the recognition of the casting couch as a space where the heterosexual dynamics of hunter/prey play out results in defensive strategies for women in Hollywood, as Boyle suggests, indicates that the "in plain sight" narrative of #MeToo abuses points to how "sexual and sexualized abuse has not only been tolerated in the industry, but has been consistent with the stories the Hollywood industry wants to tell about itself" (Boyle, 2019, p. 81). Citing the mythologized casting couch and narratives of gendered labour that links women to decadence and sexual scandal (Zimmer, 2017; Hutchinson, 2017; McKenna, 2011; as cited in Boyle, 2019), Boyle suggests that the subjugation of women is baked into the structure of the entertainment industry. This is consistent with statements given by Weinstein's victims, where the "open secret" of the casting couch does not appear

as an indictment of the sexual violence that takes place in the entertainment industry, but as something women must protect themselves from if they want to succeed in the industry. This open knowledge and the normalization of defensive strategies indicate that the industry comfortably reproduces hunter/prey dynamics and that such dynamics are tightly tied up with the ability to survive in Hollywood, beyond Weinstein as a single bad actor. Sexualizing women's ambition, Boyle suggests, makes it difficult for men's behaviour to be seen as abuse as the focus is on women's choices and morality in a context of always-sexualised labour (2019, p. 82). As Weiss and Borges (1973) have argued, rape and the fear of rape function as a form of social control; sexual violence at work is an example of how this social control plays out, from women's choice of clothes to dissuade sexual aggression to making sure a woman is present in a meeting with a man—these are actions that indicate women are aware of their position in the entertainment industry, and have little recourse to change the status quo beyond self-preservation. The intertwining of labour and sex structures, particularly for gendered bodies, is a part of how sexual violence against women and marginalized genders works as form of social control.

Federici's theory that women entering the workforce would result in a reproduction of women's gender roles in the home at work (Federici, [1975] 2012) is supported by Weinstein's violence and its transactional dynamics that mirror sexual scripts. Here, Jackson's concept of "barter and theft" in sexual scripts is useful to deconstruct

the "casting couch" phenomenon and more general recruitment practices in Hollywood: "Sexuality for men is a means of validating their masculinity as well as being a source of pleasure. For women it is also a means to other ends, in particular a way of earning the love, support and protection of a man" (Jackson, 1995, p. 22); in other words, sex can be a transactional affair between a man and a woman where sex is exchanged for love and affection. In the workplace, this transactional dynamic is contextually transformed; Weinstein was in a position to make or break women's careers, and accepting or tolerating his sexual advances was the price he set for fame and success. The exchange of sexual acts for professional gain act as validation of masculinity, and how it relates to and reinforces the economic and gendered dominance of the abuser; as Jackson argues, the scripts are built around roles that are predefined as "subordinate and superordinate", which necessarily require the exercise of power, manifested through sex or otherwise, offering a framework to excuse or justify sexual assault (Jackson, 1995). This transactional dynamic is clear in Ashley Judd's account of her experience with Weinstein, as described in a section of a The New York Times' article entitled "Coercive Bargaining":

> Mr. Weinstein soon issued invitation after invitation, she said. Could he give her a massage? When she refused, he suggested a shoulder rub. She rejected that too, she recalled. He steered her toward a closet, asking her to help pick out his clothing for the

day, and then toward the bathroom. Would she watch him take a shower? she remembered him saying.

"I said no, a lot of ways, a lot of times, and he always came back at me with some new ask," Ms. Judd said. "**It was all this bargaining, this coercive bargaining.**"

To get out of the room, she said, she quipped that if Mr. Weinstein wanted to touch her, she would first have to win an Oscar in one of his movies. She recalled feeling "panicky, trapped," she said in the interview. "There's a lot on the line, the cachet that came with Miramax." – (Kantor and Twohey, 2017, [no pagination], emphasis mine).

Judd is forced to respond to Weinstein's coercive scripts in terms he will accept to dissuade him from violence; the structures of labour and sex mutually reinforce each other, disempowering the victim and re-asserting Weinstein's power. It is also important to note how Weinstein has the power to force the "subordinate and superordinate" dynamics of work and sex and how this is a practice of hegemonic masculinity that ultimately maintains the hierarchy of gender (Connell and Pearse, 2014).

The above excerpt also illustrates how systems of power can limit a person's agency through repeated boundary breaking or pushing by someone who is powerful. Jen Pylypa's work on Foucault's concept of biopower illustrates this negotiated agency: biopower, Pylypa

(1998) writes, operates in our very bodies through self-disciplinary practices that lead to self-regulation in issues of hygiene, health, and sexuality. Pylypa provides examples to do with fat and fatness, femininity, and the regulation of women's reproductive system, concluding that Foucault's concept of biopower is still relevant contemporarily, but that it is only partially a model of power and that it "must be understood as complementary to, and not a substitute for, understandings of power which focus on the domination of the powerful over subordinate groups" (Pylypa, 1998, p. 22). The allegations of Italian actress Asia Argento are particularly relevant here; Argento's testimony exemplifies how biopower can work to diminish agency after a violent encounter:

> What complicates the story, Argento readily allowed, is that she eventually **yielded** to Weinstein's further advances and even grew close to him. Weinstein dined with her and introduced her to his mother. Argento told me, "He made it sound like he was my friend and he really appreciated me." **She said that she had consensual sexual relations with him multiple times over the course of the next five years, though she described the encounters as one-sided and "onanistic."** The first occasion, several months after the alleged assault, came before the release of "B. Monkey." "I felt I had to," she said. "Because I had the movie coming out and I didn't want to anger him." – (Farrow, 2017, [no pagination], emphasis mine)

When Argento describes her actions as a response to how Weinstein left her feeling after the initial assault, she is describing embodying a subordinate position as a defensive strategy. Emotions can shape the 'surfaces' of individual and collective bodies; "(…) to be touched in a certain way, or to be moved in a certain way by an encounter in another, may involve reading not only of the encounter but of the other that is encountered as having certain characteristics. If we feel another hurts us, then that feeling may convert quickly into a reading of the other, such that it becomes hurtful, or is read as the impression of the negative" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 28); emotions like fear, wariness and pain then can limit a person's agency and manifest through self-disciplinary practices—emotions in reaction to domination are part of how society is constructed and how marginalized genders might negotiate their agency when forced into a subordinate position. The violence suffered by Argento and Weinstein's subsequent implicit threats to her career and her physical wellbeing—as Ahmed puts it in a blog about the word "no"—took away Argento's ability to decline further sexual and romantic interactions: "The experience of being subordinate – deemed lower or of a lower rank – could be understood as being deprived of no. To be deprived of no is to be determined by another's will; "[…W]hen obedience is a necessary part of fulfilling a function, no is not an option, although in some ways neither is yes, because what happens does not require your agreement; perhaps you are yes whether or not you say yes, yes sir, yes sir; which means that yes when said is not willed." (Ahmed, 2017, [no pagination]). The

language Argento uses to describe her relationship with Weinstein is revelatory of boundary breakdown; "eventually yielded", "one-sided and 'onanistic'", "I felt I had to", all indicate that she was not completely willing, she yielded to avoid physical or emotional violence. Once Weinstein violated her bodily autonomy, her agency over her own body was corroded; the possibility of saying "yes" or "no" was non-existent, there was only Weinstein's power, backed by the force of the first assault and the labour structure that could come crashing down on Argento if she did not comply. Connell defines "power" as both a practice and a position, and Ahmed's and Pylyppa's theorizations on agency and reactions can help underline how power functions as a practice to control, coerce and subjugate women through internalized structures of power.

On the other side of women's responses to Weinstein's sexual violence, survivor Mira Sorvino's account of the consequences that followed her rejection of Weinstein can exemplify why sexual coercion along the lines of labour and sex structures functions so efficiently in re-asserting the gendered hierarchy—and it can illustrate what could have happened to Argento if she had complied. After describing two instances where Weinstein attempted to coerce her into a sexual relationship with him, Sorvino describes the consequences of firmly saying "no" to a powerful man:

> Sorvino said that **she felt afraid and intimidated, and that the incidents had a significant impact on her**. When she told a

female employee at Miramax about the harassment, the woman's reaction "was shock and horror that I had mentioned it." Sorvino appeared in a few more of Weinstein's films afterward, but felt that saying no to Weinstein and reporting the harassment had ultimately hurt her career. She said, "There may have been other factors, but **I definitely felt iced out** and that my rejection of Harvey had something to do with it. – (Farrow, 2017, [no pagination], emphasis mine)

The consequences of Sorvino's rejection directly impacted her livelihood as an actress, while Argento was coerced to consent because she feared losing her livelihood as an actress. When these two cases are seen side-by-side, it is possible to identify the power struggle that takes place in the context of sexual harassment and violence at work; women and marginalized genders are forced to choose between their bodily autonomy and their employment. This is a direct result of how work and sex are hierarchically structured, and how the symbolism of women as sexual objects operates within those structures. The initial assaults of Weinstein victims assert his power over them, and the subsequent consequences re-assert women's position in the structure of work, thus further solidifying the current hierarchy of power relations. The stories of Emily Nestor and Rosanna Arquette also exemplify what was at stake for women who were attacked by Weinstein, and what they lost:

Though no assault occurred, and Nestor left after completing her temporary placement [at Miramax], she was profoundly affected by the experience. **"I was definitely traumatized for a while, in terms of feeling so harassed and frightened,"** she said. **"It made me feel incredibly discouraged that this could be something that happens on a regular basis. I actually decided not to go into entertainment because of this incident."**

[…]

[Rosanna] Arquette said that after she rejected Weinstein her career suffered. In one case, she believes, she lost a role because of it. "He made things very difficult for me for years," she told me. She did appear in one subsequent Weinstein film—"Pulp Fiction." Arquette believes that she only got that role because of its small size and Weinstein's deference to the filmmaker, Quentin Tarantino. (Disputes later arose over her entitlement to payment out of the film's proceeds.) **Arquette said that her silence was the result of Weinstein's power and reputation for vindictiveness.** "He's going to be working very hard to track people down and silence people," she explained. "To hurt people. That's what he does." –(Farrow, 2017, [no pagination], emphasis mine).

Hurt, trauma and fear of retribution lead women to stay silent or exit the entertainment industry altogether; sexual violence in the

workplace then, is a barrier to redistribution of power and to women's success in the entertainment industry, and in society more broadly. While this case study is very specifically focused on the entertainment industry, these are consequences that can be extrapolated into other areas; sexual harassment has been identified as one of the most damaging barriers to career success and satisfaction for women (Fitzgerald, et al., 1988).

3. Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed two media articles that recounted power struggles between Weinstein and his victims in order to explore further the applicability of Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity. Through Connell's framework of the gender regime, I identified the axis of work, sex and symbolism as sites that support, reproduce, and maintain the current gender hierarchy in Hollywood. Rather than exposing Weinstein further as an abuser, my analysis demonstrated that the spaces in which he operated encourage and reward the violence he perpetrated, in line with Boyle's conclusions in her 2019 book about #MeToo and Weinstein. My analysis also showed how practices of hegemonic masculinity can impact the career of women through internalized structures of power, which ultimately work to maintain the gender hierarchy more broadly. The structures of labour and cathexis then, create the cultural, economic, and social conditions for rape and sexual assault to take place, where hegemonic masculinity is the practice of winning that power struggle,

and consequently maintaining the current gendered hierarchy. While Weinstein is the individual who harmed the women mentioned in this chapter, it is important to note that power is unequally distributed in the workplace across society; as Federici argued in 1975, to simply introduce women to the workplace and not to address the roots of women's subjugation (the devaluation and subsequent sexualization of women as non-waged workers) will only result in the reproduction of gender roles in the workplace, overwork and sexual violence.

Chapter 4: The Case Against R. Kelly

This weekend (August 9th 2020), despite attempts not to, it was difficult to not think about sexual violence. The trouble with writing about and engaging with this topic is that people ask you questions about their beloved artists, and whether I think they hurt women and girls or not. My answers are never satisfactory.

Caetano Veloso is a Brazilian musician who is beloved across Brazil. He recently livestreamed a concert that was watched by 3.8 million people. The same weekend of this successful livestream another item popped up about him; that he had sex with his current wife Paula Lavigne when he was 40 years old and she was 13. This has been public knowledge since 1998, and it's a subject that comes up every now and then, and this weekend I came across, directly and indirectly, a myriad of defences of Veloso and his legacy. I was told that his wife did not feel violated by the encounter, and so that it was a silly discussion to be had. I came across this fact, that she wasn't affected, that she is now a grown woman at 51 years old, a successful one who loves her husband, several times. The quickness and readiness of the defence was characteristic of an old conversation, a conversation where the feminist killjoy (Ahmed, 2017) is received as a moralizing, hysterical figure attempting to kill the fun people were having admiring this man's music and talent. This discussion raised two points I am going to disentangle in the next few paragraphs.

The first argument I saw across my timeline on Twitter was that to talk about what Veloso did was to make him into a monster since his wife is now grown and unaffected by the encounter, and that this kind of sexual encounter was normal in the 1980s. As such, the left-wing man tweeting this was arguing that the debate centres around a scarecrow rather than an actual violation, and that this is a part of a 'monstrification' of paedophilia. Firstly, the idea that Veloso is being turned into a monster because people are shocked by his past actions is completely devoid of reality; this has been public knowledge since 1998, if people treated him like a monster, he wouldn't be so famous, successful and rich today. Secondly, the notion that sex with minors was normal in the 1980s is something abusers have historically used to defend themselves (this is something I discuss in a later chapter), ignoring that a huge part of feminist work around sexual violence is re-framing normalized violence as violence in the first place. The fact Veloso's wife did not feel violated is pure luck and plays into mythologies of rape that normalize child sexual assault. In my view, it is not difficult to understand that what Veloso did was violent regardless of what the victim continues to say about it; he was the adult and she was the child in that situation. My takeaway from this (after unfollowing this person's account) is that men—even men who believe there's something wrong with masculinity, even men who call themselves left-wing and pay attention to gendered issues—are incredibly quick to defend other men from allegations of gendered harm, and that this is when a victim's voice matters most; when the

accused can be exonerated. Furthermore, while I do not believe the idea of the monster is useful for combatting sexual violence, as it heavily generalizes interpersonal harm and blocks our ability to deal with specific kinds of violence on a case-by-case basis, this is an example of prison abolitionist discourse being used to exonerate a famous man. The idea that Veloso is in any way 'cancelled' after years of this being public knowledge is simply not evidenced by his extensive wealth, reach and fame. A progressive, left-wing stance becomes a tool to dismiss a "moralizing" feminist reading of the situation.

The second argument was brought to me directly by a friend who self-identifies as a feminist. After days of posting about the livestream and making clear that Veloso is one of her idols, my friend felt upset people were focusing on an ugly part of his past. She said to me that the victim didn't feel violated, and that people who brought up his past just wanted to taint his legacy of greatness. She was insistent that she could not think about what he did or whether he hurt women because she grew up with his music, he brought the world to Rio de Janeiro, her beloved city, and vice-versa. Perhaps I was unkind to her, as I don't have the same affective relationship with Veloso or his music, but I don't think it is unreasonable to think of idols as fallible people who can hurt others. Doing this PhD has taught me about the power of celebrity, the social capital of being famous—and after thinking about it for three years, I think the cultural importance of famous men has worn off for me, the fantasy of the celebrity does not

reach me like it used to. The cultural production of men has ceased to be persuasive to me, or to have any significance in my life. So maybe I was unkind and unfeeling, and too quick to say she was wrong. Still, she was wrong and her inability to admit that, to understand that Veloso is only a man, not an infallible entity, not the saviour of our country, was shocking. It really demonstrated something that I have encountered several times while doing this work; how much people are affectively attached to celebrities and/or their art, how they refuse to see that the people they admire are not giants or gods, but humans who are (just like everyone) a product of our society. I now question, after writing about monsters in my opening reflection of the Weinstein chapter, if the only possibilities for celebrities who are accused of harm against women and girls are to be 'infallible saviours' who are being smeared or 'despicable monsters'.

What became clear from the situations above is that successful cultural production creates a kind of power that is related to but not fully dependent on capital; as Connell theorizes about hegemonic masculinity, the gender regime is partly held up by emotional relations (Connell and Pearse, 2014) *and I think there is evidence to suggest that this is also true about culture and the people who create culture. At the centre of the #MeToo discussion, is the question of auteur apologism which hinges on the argument that 'the value of the art produced by the abuser outweighs the importance of the abuse'* (Boyle, 2019, p. 77). *The question that is asked all the time (and I have been asked countless times) is: can we separate the art from the*

artist? This question is not interesting to me because I do not see the world contained within hard boundaries; I have never perceived art as separate from the artist and it confuses me that people do. Feminists have historically critiqued culture, often arguing that mainstream culture and entertainment is supportive of rape culture (McKinnon, 1993; Gavey, 2005). *As Boyle (2019) argues, there is a cultural value ascribed to sexual abuse; many #MeToo stories are dependent on stories that were already in the public eye and were re-framed as abuse or as a part of a pattern of abuse later on. But up until that reframing, society did not collectively see those parts of culture as violence, we saw them as a normal part of art and how women are treated—and as such, that art means we value abuse of women as a part of our culture. What changed with #MeToo is that our consumption of entertainment media was implicated* (Boyle, 2019). *Like Boyle does in her book, here I want to invoke Ahmed's image of the feminist killjoy and how feminist interventions are understood as moralizing (Ahmed, 2017); as Boyle (2019) suggests, these conversations about the abuse of powerful men often become about giving up art and media we have affective relationships with and "giving something (pleasurable) up"* (Boyle, 2019, p. 94) *but giving up some artists can be harder than others. Indeed, this becomes obvious in this chapter when I write about R. Kelly's influence and success in the Black community in the United States, and how the history of enslavement and racism can be used to support the status quo, re-assert male power and silence dissenters, to the*

detriment of the lives of Black women. I don't know all the answers.
Should we permanently divest from 'problematic' art? Should we
watch with a guilty feeling in our guts? I am still thinking about it.

R. Kelly's public history of hurting Black women and girls starts in
1994, when he married the late singer Aalyiah when he was 28 and
she was 15 (Savage, 2019). *Vibe Magazine* discovered Kelly had
falsified documents that said Aalyiah was 18, and consequently the
marriage was annulled in 1995 (Savage, 2019). Significantly, Kelly's
violence has always gone hand in hand with his production of culture;
the most obvious example of this is Kelly's production of Aalyiah's
song and video 'Age Ain't Nothing But a Number' around the same
time he married her. From 1996 to 2004, Kelly was sued for
"emotional distress" by Tiffany Hawkins, accused of grooming a 17-
year-old intern, and charged for making the now-infamous child
pornography tape that was pirated and distributed to the public
(Savage, 2019; Surviving R. Kelly, 2019). Though the charges were
dropped eventually in 2004, in December of 2000, the *Chicago Sun
Times* published the first story about Kelly's sex crimes which
kickstarted journalist Jim DeRogatis's decades-long reporting about
the R'n'B star's violence against women and girls that would
culminate in a detailed 2017 *Buzzfeed News* report alleging that Kelly
sexually abused and trafficked young women and girls around the
USA. DeRogatis also wrote a comprehensive book about Kelly, *The
Case Against R. Kelly*, published in 2019, which details his reporting
on the subject over the years and the movement of Black women who

have been fighting for the safety of the survivors Kelly continued to harm over the years (DeRogatis, 2019). As one *New York Times* report details, Kelly has 20 years of women's allegations against him, ranging from child pornography, grooming, and sexual assault and abuse, to domestic violence and verbal assault (Fortin, 2018). In February of 2019, after significant campaigning by Black women and sustained press coverage of Kelly's criminal activity, a grand jury in Cook County, Illinois, indicted Kelly on 10 counts of aggravated criminal sexual abuse involving four alleged victims. The indictment accuses Kelly of sexual acts with three children older than 13 but younger than 17. The singer pleaded not guilty. Since mid-August 2021, Kelly's trial has been ongoing.

In this chapter, I use the allegations against R. Kelly to investigate Demetriou's theory on the hybrid masculine bloc, Patricia Hill Collin's theories of Black sexual politics and Sara Ahmed's theorization on happiness. My objects of analysis consist of excerpts of the six-part docu-series 'Surviving R. Kelly'[6], excerpts of the book *Soulless: The Case Against R. Kelly* by Jim DeRogatis (DeRogatis, 2019), excerpts of an original *Chicago Sun Times* newspaper report

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[6] The docu-series 'Surviving R. Kelly', a six-part Lifetime Channel production that investigates and exposes allegations of sexual abuse, domestic violence and underage grooming against R. Kelly, starts its narrative by localizing the cultural power of the R'n'B singer songwriter within society at large and within the Black American community (Surviving R. Kelly, 2019). Musician John Legend, one of the few people in the music industry willing to speak about the allegations, said R. Kelly's 'songs were a huge part of the soundtrack of our lives', while other interviewees call him 'the king of R'n'b', 'part of that superstar milieu', and "a hero" (Surviving R. Kelly, 2019). A list of famous collaborators in the music industry is read out, transposed with photos of them with R. Kelly: Snoop Dog, Celine Dion, Michael Jackson, Jay-Z, Whitney Houston and Lady Gaga, are all charged with publicly supporting the singer songwriter (Surviving R. Kelly, 2019). The docu-series expertly weaves Kelly's cultural production, the influence he gained with it and the allegations as told by the survivors in a series of interviews.

from 2000 (DeRogatis and Pallasch, 2000), and an interview with Andrea Kelly published by *Essence Magazine* in December 2009. I start my analysis by locating Kelly's masculinity within Demetriou's hybrid masculine bloc, weaving in Black feminist perspectives on misogynoir (Bailey, 2010; Trudy, 2014) in hip-hop and society in general. I then turn to the case of Andrea Kelly and Collins' theory about the Strong Black Woman (Collins, 2004), connecting what Connell and Pearse (2014) terms cathexis or emotional relations, power, labour division and symbolism, to the subjugation of Black women. In my third and final section, I tackle how this structure of heterosexuality and sexual scripts was employed by Kelly to groom Black girls and women. In this chapter, I will attempt to address the following research questions: How does this case study analysis expose dominant social constructions of gender and sexual violence? How do these dominant social constructions draw upon, reproduce or challenge racialized heteronormative constructions of hegemonic masculinity? How are hegemonic masculinities reconstructed in response to high profile allegations of sexual violence?

1. Black Masculinity and the Masculine Hegemonic Bloc

Similarly to Weinstein's case, Kelly's crimes were an open secret in Chicago since allegations of underage grooming and sexual abuse against him were published in *The Chicago Sun Times* in 2000 (DeRogatis and Pallasch, 2000). Much like the Weinstein case, it has taken almost twenty years, pilling allegations from other survivors, a

child pornography tape, and sustained activism by Black women for these allegations to become unignorable. The case of Kelly, then, is also symbolic of a systemic disregard for Black women and girls at the face of cultural, patriarchal and economic power. With regards to Kelly himself and the masculinity he ascribes to, it's important to locate his positionality as a wealthy, famous, Black cisgender man before moving on to the analysis in this chapter. This is what I will be tackling in this section.

Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity defines it as both an ideal model of a dominant man and a set of practices that maintains the structure of gender relations (Connell, 1987); she argues that successful performance of hegemonic masculinity can lead to 'social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces that extends beyond contests of brute power into the organization of private life and cultural processes' (1987, p. 184). Connell suggests that hegemonic masculinity as a practice and ideal might change depending on social context and what is considered social capital in a particular location, but that the concept always maintains men's dominance over women and also theorizes that hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to emphasized femininity and subordinate masculinities (Connell, 1987). Put in simple terms, the categories that define hegemonic masculinity are class, gender, race and sexuality; as such the ideal model of a dominant man in US society is a white, straight, wealthy man (Connell, 1987). In a critique of Connell's theorization of hegemonic masculinity, Demetriou emphasizes her original theory

does not match historical accounts of masculinity and power; Connell's conceptualization depends on a hegemonic/non-hegemonic masculinity duality that is infinitely more complex in real life (Demetriou, 2001). Connell's assertion that hegemonic masculinities only relate to non-hegemonic masculinities to subordinate and marginalize them underplays the potential non-hegemonic masculinity has in constructing domination (Demetriou, 2001). Demetriou re-conceptualizes hegemonic masculinity as a 'hybrid bloc that unites various and diverse practices in order to construct the best possible strategy for the reproduction of patriarchy', where non-hegemonic practices are appropriated and reproduced to make the domination of women less overt and appear more progressive (Demetriou, 2001, p. 348).

This re-conceptualization, unlike Connell's original theory, allows for the subjugation of Black women by Black men to become more visible. Connell's focus on white, straight, and rich white men's masculinity, albeit useful for when hegemonic men fit those categories, is at odds with theorisations of Black masculinity developed by Black women. As such, challenging this duality in Connell's theory is essential for understanding cases like R. Kelly's, despite Connell's assertion that women can be oppressed by subordinate masculinities *and* that hegemonic masculinity is dependent on the social context of a specific location (Connell, 1987); this note by Connell, I argue, is not sufficiently broad nor does it recognize non-hegemonic practices and histories as a strategy for

maintaining power. Indeed, this is what Patricia Hill Collins argues in her critiques of Connell's hegemonic masculinity framework; Collins' work simultaneously identifies the hardships of Black men in engaging with and performing masculinities that are rooted in white hegemony and strongly emphasizes the harm Black men can cause Black women. Collins is more explicit in identifying the interconnections of race and gender than Connell, classifying hegemonic masculinity as a fundamentally dynamic and relational construct that reflects the hierarchical power relations of a "racialized system of sexism that frames the multiple expressions of masculinity and femininity available to African American men and women, as well as all other groups" (Collins, 2004, p. 187). Hegemonic masculinity then, is constructed in opposition to "women, boys, poor and working class men of all races and ethnicities, gay men, and Black men" (Collins, 2004, p. 187) and has the necessity of opposing categories and practices to exist and dominate (Collins, 2004). White men are at the top of the gender hierarchy, but not exclusively so; other men who are just below white men retain a lot of power too but are still marginalized (Collins, 2004). Membership at the top is dependent on categories; for example, a white-passing wealthy Latino man would have some amount of power, but still be forced to negotiate it within the limits of white hegemony (Collins, 2004). As Demetriou (2001) emphasizes, the ethnic ambiguity of a white-passing Latino can be used to construct a narrative of progressiveness that aids the strategic scaffolding of domination. Collins explains that

hegemonic masculinity is a set of prescriptive social norms that operate as a crucial part of daily, routine activities, and that its construction is dependent on social class, racial/ethnic groups, ages and religions (Collins, 2004). As such, she concludes that white men will aspire to white hegemonic masculinity—an unattainable ideal of how a white man should be and act—and Black men will aspire to Black hegemonic masculinity (Collins, 2004). Though this societal gender hierarchy determines 'dominant' types of masculinity practices, Collins also writes that 'gender norms that privilege men typically play out *within* racial/ethnic and/or social class groups as well as *between* such groups' (2004, p. 187). In other words, a Black man will have to negotiate white hegemony at work but might perform Black hegemonic masculinity at home where he expects dominance over the Black women and girls in his life, a dynamic that is modelled after the white hegemonic family (Collins, 2004). Collins emphasizes that the systemic oppression of Black men in society does not negate that 'violence against women remains a major problem within African American communities', but that Black organisations fail to deal with this problem (2004, p. 212). Collins therefore defines Black men as simultaneously disempowered *and* capable of dominating and oppressing Black women through performances of hegemonic masculinity.

But if, as Collins argues, according to white hegemony and white hegemonic masculinity, Black men can never be 'real men' because blackness excludes Black men from participating fully in hegemonic

masculinity, then what allowed R. Kelly to have partial membership to hegemonic masculinity and reap some of the privileges of hegemonic men? Collins explains that ticking other boxes like wealth, expressing aggression in socially sanctioned fields, and avoiding homosexual relationships can earn Black men a space in hegemonic culture and society (Collins, 2004, p. 189, 193). The hip hop genre is, as music journalist Taylor Crumpton (2020) has argued, 'one of the few spaces where Black men can emulate the power ideals of whiteness', where Black men have been 'provided a space […] to build empires and legacies'. Though Kelly's blackness ultimately places him at odds with white hegemony, the violence against women present in his music and videos in the sub-culture of hip-hop is broadly sanctioned by white hegemony. Additionally, Kelly's standing as a wealthy Black man places him within the cultural mythology of the Black elite as the saviour of Black people in the United States, a mythology that tasks Black elites with 'a historical mission of leading and advancing the condition of blacks in America' and the belief that 'this elite is the primary engine for achieving that goal' (Chrisman, 2013, p. 65). This mythology dates back to W.E.B DuBois's 1903 essay 'The Talented Tenth', where he theorized that the Black intellectual elite would lead the liberation of all Black people (DuBois, 1903). Though DuBois changed his mind on the subject of the Black elite later in his career, 'Washington's elite came to form a buffer class that mediated with the white establishment for the interests of the black masses and which often used that power to become gatekeepers of the black community,

determining who would advance and who would not' (Chrisman, 2013, p. 65) and arguably this power relationship continues to this day through contemporary Black celebrities and Black wealth accumulation. The position of saviour thrives on the masculinity of the 'protector', with an implied kinship between Black elites and the Black working classes; Collins notes that a mark of African American progress has historically been protecting Black women from predatory white men, adding that this means that Black women are more vulnerable to sexual assault and harassment by Black men (Collins, 2004). Consequently, Mark Anthony Neal argues that '[i]t has often been easier for some in Black communities to believe [allegations of violence against famous Black men were] the product of some larger conspiracy to undermine the stature of strong Black men, than to admit that these men might have been engaged in behaviours that deserved closer scrutiny or even punishment' (Neal, 2013, p.118). The protection of Black hegemonic masculinity, especially if the man who practices it is a visible, successful and wealthy Black man who embodies cultural mythologies of Black capitalist success, becomes connected with racial liberation, while the Black woman is either ignored, mocked or abused for speaking out. There is, therefore, a kind of affective relationship between the public and a famous person's accumulation of capital and success; as Neal argues in his analysis of R. Kelly's twenty-two-chapter episodic music video series *Trapped in a Closet* released in several parts during 2005 and 2007, 'the collective silence, adulation, and even protection of R. Kelly

(thirty-five years too late [if speculations about his status as a victim of child sexual violence are true][7]) is the by-product of collective desires to render the shame of such abuse in our communities as the personal province of individual demons and victims, but never in the collective essential Black body' (Neal, 2013, p. 41).

The dichotomy of 'villains and victims', of monster and prey, arises several times in this thesis—not only in the reception of the Black community to the crimes of Kelly, but also in the general public's unwillingness of addressing sexual violence as a collective, social problem in the case of Weinstein—and the legibility of these positions hinge on social categories of race, gender, and class. This monster and prey dichotomy widely positioned Black girls and women who accused Kelly as the monsters for trying to destroy the success of a strong Black man; the positioning of moral superiority of the Black elite hurts Black women and girls because it makes them illegible as victims and forces them to be abused in silence for the greater good of the community (Collins, 2004). An extension of this dynamic, ultimately, is the maintenance of male domination and white supremacy. This power relation also has harsher implications for Black women and girls who are working class, as lower class status is

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[7] R. Kelly has said in interviews and in his autobiography that he was molested as a child by a family member and a man called "Mr. Henry" (DeRogatis, 2019). DeRogatis writes about this in his book, where he ponders on the possibility of the abused becoming the abuser, reporting his conversations with mental health specialists that stated Kelly 'exhibits many of the common symptoms of childhood victims' (DeRogatis, 2019, p. 18). Indeed, DeRogatis writes, specialists have told him sometimes the abused can become the abuser, but that 'there are many people who have been victimized in that way—more than we would like to know or hear about—who don't act like that' (DeRogatis, 2019, p. 19). By his own account, Kelly reports becoming 'more hornier' after suffering the multiple assaults against him, but to simply put Kelly's abuse of women down to his experiences as a child sexual assault survivor is an incomplete picture that risks delivering redemption too easily.

generally seen as less 'moral' than being part of the elite; indeed, Angela Davis argues that white wealthy men's 'license to rape [Black women] derived from and facilitated the ruthless economic domination that was the gruesome hallmark of slavery', thus typifying Black women as 'chronically promiscuous', and making them illegible as victims (Davis, 1981, p. 42).

Collins demonstrates there are historical precedents of these dynamics within the Black community by drawing on the sexual harassment case of Anita Hill against Clarence Thomas. To frame this example, Collins explores the differences and similarities between the lynching of Black men and the rape of Black women; both are tools of white supremacist control and dehumanisation, but in nature, lynching is public and rape is private and thus less recognised as a method of control (Collins, 2004). Collins argues that Thomas weaponised the racialised history of lynching to his advantage, successfully pitting lynching of Black men and the rape of Black women against one another 'for his gain and to the detriment of African Americans as a group' (Collins, 2004, p. 223). This historical precedent of racist violence against Black men can force Black women to 'take the position' to be abused and protect the community from further stigmatization of Black men in a white hegemonic society (Collins, 2006). This contributes to the illegibility of Black women as victims, and this power dynamic is likely amplified in hyper visible cases of gendered harm, where the harm perpetuated by a Black man is exposed to a white hegemonic public. In 2020, the illegibility of

Black women as victims of gendered violence is still true; in a piece about misogynoir (Bailey, 2010; Trudy, 2014) in hip hop following the shooting of Megan Thee Stallion by rapper Tory Lanez, and the subsequent jokes and memes made at Thee Stallion's expense after an obviously traumatic event, Crumpton points to the double standards of the music industry; '[Thee Stallion] has accomplished world-wide success and renown for her explicit lyrics that put women in power, catering to their satisfaction and fulfilment as she raps about her "player ways" and "skimpy clothes"' but that 'through a patriarchal lens, men in hip-hop seek to reconstruct her lyrics of empowerment as justification for objectifying her body as a holding place of male desire, rage, and violence' (Crumpton, 2020). The cases of Thee Stallion, Anita Hill and Kelly's victims demonstrate the vulnerability of Black women and girls under a system of capitalist white supremacist hetero-patriarchy, and, as Demetriou argues and Collins demonstrates, the potential for constructing domination that is available to non-hegemonic men. As such, Black hegemonic masculinity emerges here as a tool of power consolidation that seeks to trap Black women in a subservient position.

2. Andrea Kelly and Collins' Strong Black Woman

In the previous section I briefly discussed Collins' theory of Black women being forced to 'take the position' to be abused in the context of Kelly's victims. In this section, I will engage with this theory further, to demonstrate the dynamic and relational constructs of Black

masculinity and Black femininity as argued by Collins through the case study of the relationship between R. Kelly and his ex-wife and survivor of domestic abuse Andrea Kelly. The couple were married from 1996 to 2009, and Andrea stood by Kelly through his child pornography trial (Surviving R. Kelly, 2019). Collins's theory of the Strong Black Woman is useful here to make sense of Andrea's very public statements about her now ex-husband from two sources: an interview given to *Essence Magazine* in December 2009 and her statements given ten years later to the 2019 docu-series 'Surviving R. Kelly'.

Collins' conceptualization of the Strong Black Woman (SBW) is as follows: she argues that, because Black men are emasculated by a white supremacist society, Black women are pressured into putting Black men and families in front of their own needs and desires (Collins, 2004). A white supremacist society that emasculates Black men and a Black community that does not recognise violence against Black women as a problem leaves Black women to internalise the idea that they alone must uplift their community and their families no matter the hardships they might suffer (Collins, 2004). Indeed, this is what Megan Thee Stallion tweeted after she was shot: "Black women are so unprotected [and] we hold so many things in to protect the feelings of others [without] considering our own [feelings]" (Stallion, 2020). Exposing abuses by Black men, speaking about gender inequality within the Black community, emphasising the unequal labour division in their families would make the Black community

vulnerable to racism and stereotyping, so the Strong Black Woman takes on all of the battles, all of the hardships (Collins, 2004). As Collins explains it: 'Whether granting sexual favors, ignoring Black male abuse, or caring for children with little help from their "baby's daddy," Black women have learned to become the Strong Black Woman (SBW). Being a SBW often means enduring abuse, namely, physical, emotional, and sexual harassment. Moreover, for many Black women, the institution of motherhood has become a primary site where the SBW representation holds sway' (Collins, 2004, p. 208). Consequently, it becomes the Black woman's duty to defend the Black man from the white public and white hegemony; the "monstrification" of the Black man as a sexual aggressor becomes the reason for Black women's silence about their own experience of gendered abuse and violence.

This dynamic can be seen in Andrea Kelly's interview to *Essence Magazine* in 2009, where she adamantly defends her husband[8] R.Kelly who was facing 14 charges of underage pornography at the time (Moore, 2009). Despite the obvious public humiliation Andrea was put through due to her husband's actions, Andrea was visibly resentful of the reporter's questions throughout the interview, expressing concern for her children and emphasising her strength in dealing with her husband's alleged crimes:

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[8] In the article containing this interview from December 2009, Andrea refers to R. Kelly as her husband. According to most sources I found, their divorce was finalized in 2009 (Charles & Grimm, 2019).

Andrea, or Baby Girl, as she is called by those in the dance world, has shunned her husband's larger-than-life spotlight. She says her priorities during her 11-year marriage have been shielding her three young children-two girls, 9 and 7, and a 5-year-old boy-from the fray and finding serenity even amid overwhelming controversy.

"Despite the rumors and allegations about her husband's encounters with young girls, she refuses to play the role of the poor, downtrodden wife: "**Some people in my position would probably be very broken right now, and they would probably be saying 'woe is me.' But I'm just not that person**" (Moore, 2009, [no pagination], emphasis mine).

Discursively, Andrea attempts to distance herself from the image of a victim, opting to emphasise the strength of enduring the situation she is in; as Collins theorises, Andrea's position as a mother is the primary site for the construction of her Strong Black Woman image. Andrea believes that she must be strong for her children, and that expressing anything but strength publicly will affect her family negatively. This is something that comes up in this interview repeatedly, as shown in the excerpt below:

Andrea was pregnant with their son when the news [of her husband's crimes] broke. Instead of breaking down, she blocked everything out. **She said the couple worked hard**

to protect the family from the outside world, and the accusations forced her to become "a lioness" for her children and to live by adages she knows sound cliché but resonate nonetheless. While she smiles, she's cautious and each answer seems carefully constructed.

"**What doesn't break you makes you stronger, and I'm living proof**," she reflects. "After I went through that storm, look at me. I can still wake up and smile every day, and I'm still going on with my company and I'm living my life" (Moore, 2009, [no pagination], emphasis mine).

Here, the family unit appears as a being under attack by allegations of child pornography against Kelly, and Andrea's resilience and strength become a protective force of that unit. As such, I consider the work of protecting her children and maintaining the image of the family for the good of the Black community an extra dimension of housework for Andrea, adding to her burden and humiliation. The toll of the abuse and the subsequent cover-up Andrea took part in due to being abused only became clear ten years later in her interview for the 'Surviving R. Kelly' docu-series. Andrea reveals that she was so mentally unwell because of the abuse Kelly put her through that she had suicidal ideation, openly classifying what her ex-husband did to her as domestic violence:

ANDREA: He denied it for the longest time. Like, "Drea, it's not what you think. They're lying on me, somebody set

me up." I finally realized it doesn't get better. It gets worse. I had small children. They were already dealing with their father in the news, having a court case that deals with paedophilia and children.

And I remember going out on the balcony and climbing up on the ledge. Like, "God, I can't take another day. I can't do this anymore." He had taken me to a place that I was willing to leave my babies. So I just prayed and asked God for a sign. And something said to get my laptop, and I went to the National Domestic Violence Awareness Hotline. And there's 17 questions. There was only two things on that list that Robert hadn't done to me.

And that's when it became real to me, like "Drea, you're being abused" (Moore, 2009).

This shift in Andrea's narrative is remarkable; while she mentions her children and the hardships their father made them go through, there is an emphasis on her own needs when she says 'I can't do this anymore', and when she seeks knowledge about her situation. This moment signifies a breakage in the power relation between Andrea and her abuser; it signifies resistance against patriarchy and white hegemony. As Collins puts it, 'Black women are demanded to "take the position" to be abused and protect the community—within this logic, a Black woman's ability to absorb abuse becomes a measure of strength' (Collins, 2004); as such, Andrea previously 'held things in',

as Thee Stallion tweeted about herself and the violence she experienced, to protect her family unit and, by extension, her own community. In the 2009 *Essence* interview, Andrea discursively constructs her Strong Black Woman image: she is a 'a lioness', whose resilience to overcome '[made her] stronger', and she can now 'still wake up and smile every day' (Moore, 2009). Resilience becomes a willingness to take on pain, a willingness to prioritize your community before your own abuse, and the blame is displaced into the victims (in)capability to take abuse. In breaking free from this position, leaving her abuser and speaking out about what was done to her, Andrea is disrupting the Strong Black Woman dynamic and refusing to be abused for the sake of her community and her family unit.

This is a disruption that takes herculean efforts to achieve, as Andrea is breaking her affective relationship with her abuser, separating the heteropatriarchal family unit that keeps her subservient to her husband and defying her community's convention of protecting Black men over Black women. Additionally, it is alleged that Kelly physically restrained her (Surviving R. Kelly, 2019). It is clear from her 2019 interview that the process of leaving and publicly naming what Kelly did to her was emotional, gruelling and remains unfinished, as shown in the excerpt below:

> INTERVIEWER: Did he lock you up? 'Cause we've heard stories where you were locked up. Is that true?

ANDREA: There are certain things that Robert has done to me that, that I'm not willing to talk about today because the pain, the disbelief, still. And the darkness of it. (Moore, 2009).

Andrea's inability to name what her abuser put her through is indicative of the amount of pain and humiliation Black women are taught to endure; the shift from defensive, strong wife to outspoken survivor is an overcoming of internal and external hierarchical structures. It is possible to observe here how internal and external structures of the gender regime as theorised by Connell (Connell and Pearse, 2014)—the symbolism of being a Black woman protecting her family, Andrea's emotional relations with Kelly, the power accumulated by Kelly's success and the labour of being a wife and protecting her husband's legacy—become a barrier to Andrea's wellbeing and freedom. As DeRogatis notes several times in his book, the current attention being given to Kelly's victims is the culmination of nearly two decades of activism by Black women who have written about, boycotted and called out Kelly and his accomplices when nobody else did (DeRogatis, 2019). This demonstrates the strength in numbers provided by movements such as #MuteRKelly and #MeToo, and the importance of feminist resistance and contestations against serial abusers, particularly for Black women.

It is important to note that while narratives of violence against Black women have not been prioritised in mainstream news, Black feminists

have often used social media to amplify them (Williams, 2021). Williams points to #MuteRKelly, a hashtag started in 2017 by Kenyette Tisha Barnes and Oronike Odeleye who created the hashtag to bring awareness to the R&B singer's decades of sexual abuse, exploitation and manipulation of young Black women and girls (Mary Mitchell, 2019 cited in Williams, 2021). An example of the generalised dismissal of violence against Black women is the momentum that was achieved by the MeToo hashtag when it was used by famous white women in 2017, after 11 years of receiving very little mainstream media attention since its founding by Black feminist Tarana Burke (Leung and Williams, 2019). According to Catherine Knight Steele (2021), digital Black feminism centralises agency and demands others recognise Black women's need to prioritise themselves, insisting that Black women's lives must matter. While some scholars argue that the MeToo movement and the mainstream media have worked towards a 'a prominent and rapid evolution in the #MeToo through the perspective of intersectionality' (Leung and Williams, 2019, p. 367), others note the continuous necessity of Black feminist interventions to make violence against Black women visible (Williams, 2021; Steele, 2021). Indeed, it is impossible to imagine a world where R. Kelly would be held accountable for his actions without the interventions of Black feminists who insisted on stopping the violence he was perpetrating against Black girls and women through a year long campaign that included digital interventions as well as physical protests.

In this section, I have analysed two interviews with R. Kelly's ex-wife Andrea Kelly, published ten years apart, to show the constraints of Black femininity imposed by Black hegemonic masculinity and the wider capitalist white supremacist society. As suggested by Collins (2004, p. 208), the embodiment of the Strong Black Woman has forced Black women to 'endur[e] abuse, namely, physical, emotional, and sexual harassment', and much of the force exercised by Black hegemonic men negotiates within societal boundaries of gender and race. Andrea's subjugation is also negotiated through emotional relations, labour division, power and symbolism, as theorized by Connell and Pearse (2014). As such, this section of my analysis indicates that, as theorized by Demetriou, men who wield non-hegemonic masculinities have the capability to reproduce racialized heteronormative power relations, thus maintaining the gender and race hierarchy.

Uma pequena interrupção / A brief interruption[9]

I am tired / estou cansada

I am angry / tenho raiva

They took away her soul, they hollowed her out

Violência após violência, mais vazia ela ficava

(I do not understand how you can hurt a child this way, repeatedly. It

makes me want to scream, cut myself out of this skin, out of this place

where children's bodies are violated for pleasure and power, out of

this

world)

She holds the stuffed frog,
She cries quietly,

She was robbed of

Autonomy

Repeatedly

Still they broke into the hospital and

Harassed a rape victim

To give up her life, her fragmented choice,

To carry the violence that solidified in her womb

To term at ten years old

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[9] This poem, (written by me)? is based on the case of a ten-year-old Black girl in Brazil who was raped repeatedly by the male members of her family since she was six. The case became famous in Brazil because she was granted the right to have an abortion and a group of religious fundamentalists tried to invade the hospital to stop her from getting the procedure, even though the girl began to cry every time pregnancy and birth was explained to her. Right-wing doctors managed to get access to the hospital to harass the girl into carrying the baby to term. (UOL.com.br, 2020)

Shaking, I want to scream,

She is not property

She is not a vessel

She is a child of ten years old

who was raped repeatedly

by her male family members

Aqui, eles odeiam mulheres e meninas

Over here, they hate women and girls

Ali, eles odeiam mulheres e meninas

Over there, they hate women and girls

4. Symbolism, class, and the legibility of Black women and girls as victims

In this section, I will further unpack the ways Kelly wielded his masculinity to groom Black girls and women into sexual and romantic abusive relationships with him. The case study analysed here shows that Kelly actively used his positioning as a famous and successful Black man to manipulate girls and their families to trust him, and how the hyper-sexualisation of Black and brown girls makes them illegible as victims. In addition to Kelly's positioning as the Black elite, there are cultural symbolisms around Black women's sexuality, dating back to their enslavement in the United States, 'that presuppose[s] that all sexual intercouse [is] welcomed' (Hartman, 1997) that complicate this case study further. On the one hand, we have a Black man whose status as a successful hip-hop and RnB artist somewhat protects him from being held accountable, as argued by Collins; on the other, we have a vulnerable population that has been historically forced to suffer gendered and racialised violence without recognition of victimhood. I argue that this is part of what Gavey (2005) terms 'the cultural scaffolding' of rape, where she suggests that 'the normative matrix of heterosexuality provides scaffolding for rape – that its norms and scripts with "complementary" active and passive roles for men and women shapes and guides patterns of identity, behavior and interaction that arguably authorize "sexual encounters that are not always clearly distinguishable from rape" (Gavey, 2005, p. 3, 239). This case study also indicates that girls and young women are

particularly vulnerable to this 'scaffolding', as they do not have the knowledge of alternative sexual scripts that might provide them with more agency in situations of victimisation; for this argument, I use Ahmed's affect theory (2010) to demonstrate how difficult it is to escape social scripts. The text analysis is from media reports of R. Kelly's abuse dated as early as 2000 and from the 2019 documentary 'Surviving R. Kelly'.

Kelly's practice and modelling of Black hegemonic masculinity to meet and groom underage girls is clear from the earliest reports of allegations against the artist. The following excerpts were published in 2000 in the *Chicago Sun Times*, and his abuse of power is stated plainly:

> 'Chicago singer and songwriter R. Kelly used his position of fame and influence as a pop superstar to meet girls as young as 15 and have sex with them, according to court records and interviews'.

> '…One of the girls sued the three-time Grammy award winner for $10 million in 1996, saying he started having sex with her when he was 24 and she was 15'.

> '…In a more publicized case, Kelly married his 15-year-old protege, Aaliyah, in 1994 shortly after producing her debut album, "Age Ain't Nothing But A Number." She quickly ended the marriage once her family and the public

found out' (DeRogatis and Pallasch, 2000, [no pagination], emphasis mine).

I want to further unpack the power Kelly wields to clarify how white hegemony and patriarchy work to make Black women illegible as victims of gendered abuse. The social mythology around Kelly's social standing positions him as a saviour in the Black community; his success might discursively signify the success of the Black community, and as such scrutiny and accountability becomes shorthand for racial bias. Kelly's victimisation by an anti-black society ends up shielding him from the consequences of his actions; like Clarence Thomas before him, Kelly embodies the possibility of social mobility and liberation for Black people, so tainting his image necessarily means to taint that possibility and that community.

Further complicating Kelly's modelling and practice of Black hegemonic masculinity is his capability to create influential art that affirms this status quo and becomes affectively intertwined within the public's memory. In this way, Kelly and other abusers who are involved in cultural production are directly influencing and constructing the scaffolding Gavey tasks with the normalisation of sexual violence through heteronormative culture and norms. The song 'Age Ain't Nothing But A Number' by 15-year-old Aalyiah released in the album of the same name, produced and written by Kelly, exemplifies how art might be inseparable from the artist and the violence they perpetrate; though the song was well-received by

reviewers when it was released in 1994, it later became common knowledge that Kelly was not just a mentor and friend to Aaliyah, but had married her illegally when she was a minor, during the period of time Kelly was producing her album. The website The Boombox describes 'Age Ain't Nothing But A Number' as one of Aaliyah's best songs, a 'soulful ballad had the teen RandB singer crooning of longing for an older lover' (The Boombox, 2011). The production of the song 'Age Ain't Nothing But a Number' within the context of Kelly's relationship with Aaliyah is one instance of Kelly hiding his obsession with young girls in plain sight through cultural production; this is an example of what Boyle (2019) calls the cultural value of abuse, where she argues that Spacey, Weinstein and Savile had transgressive personas in the media until there was a re-reading of that representation through the #MeToo movement. In the hit song, Aaliyah sings about love, passion and pleasure towards an older lover, thus constructing her consent to Kelly's desires through cultural production. Davis traces the tradition of producing music about the sexual lives of Black Americans to the decades following the abolition of slavery, when cultural production shifted from collective calls for freedom and emancipation from slavery to 'the new social and sexual realities encountered by African Americans as free women and men' (Davis, 1998, p. 141); sexual violence, Davis argues, was an 'essential dimension to the social relations between slavemaster and slave. […] the right claimed by slave owners and their agents over the bodies of female slaves was a direct expression of their presumed

property rights over Black people in general' (Davis, 1981, p. 40). Therefore, Davis argues that '[s]overeignty in sexual matters marked an important divide between life during slavery and life after emancipation' (1998, p. 4); there is a liberatory and progressive history embedded in the music Kelly produced that celebrates the bodily autonomy granted to Black Americans after emancipation. However, unlike Davis's characterisation of the body of work of Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey in the 1920s where the women are 'clearly in control of their sexuality in ways that exploit neither their partners nor themselves' (1998, p. 14), Kelly's authorship and production of Aalyiah's hit song and his subsequent illegal marriage positions 'Age Ain't Nothing But a Number' as a co-optation of discourses of sexual liberation and autonomy, a scaffolding of sexual abuse of a minor in plain sight, a reappropriation of a liberatory framework that reproduces and re-affirms the cultural value of the abuse of Black girls and women through traditions of the marginalized.

This 'moulding' of culture mirrors (and likely justifies) Kelly's approach to the girls and women he abused. As I have argued previously, the sexual desire of young girls can be manipulated by older men due to a lack of knowledge about sex and relationships and there is evidence that Kelly was not only conscious of this possibility, but also verbally admitted to how beneficial this unequal power relation is for him, as shown in the following excerpts:

Michella believes she knows why Kelly chose [one of Kelly's victims] Lizette. "He seemed to look for girls who didn't believe in themselves or had dad issues. Lizette had daddy issues." Another member of Kelly's inner circle at that time put it like this: Night after night, the studio or the green room backstage might fill with twenty beautiful women. Nineteen could be twenty-one-year-olds, but Kelly consistently focused on the self-conscious teen standing alone in the corner, staring at her feet, too shy to talk. **"He likes the babies, and that's the sickness," Demetrius Smith confirmed. "He can control her, and she don't know no better"**(DeRogatis, 2019, p. 82, emphasis mine).

If Kelly had previously been unaware of Jerhonda's age, she said she told him for certain that she was sixteen on July 17 [year]. "I gave him my state ID," the real one. She recalled Kelly saying it was fine, but she should tell anyone who asked she was nineteen, and act like she was twenty-five**. "I asked him, like, 'Do you like your girls younger?' He said, 'Of course I do, because I can train them.' He said, 'Older women, they have too much knowledge. When they're young, I can train them and I can mould them to be who I want them to be"** (DeRogatis, 2019, p. 215, emphasis mine).

"[R. Kelly] has to stop," Sparkle said when she caught her breath. "There have been too many to count. They definitely had to be young. **His whole MO, he stated this to me long ago, he likes them when they are ripe and young because he can mould them into what he wants them to be, and control their minds and make them do what women 'should' do.** That's what he thinks, you know, be a servant, be the 'yes.' She's on [the tape] calling him Daddy! What kind of daddy would do this to their daughter?" (DeRogatis, 2019, p. 119, emphasis mine).

As I argued previously, Kelly's cultural production serves to 'hide in plain sight' that he grooms young girls, but there's something more egregious happening when we observe the tension between what Kelly has said about young girls and the production of the song 'Age Ain't Nothing But a Number', which directly contradicts his private notions and actions around sex and age. Here, I have found it useful to think about what Maxine Eichner notes as a split between what she calls dominance feminism and sex radicals in theorizations about sexual citizenship (Eichner, 2009). Eichner charts feminist theorisations on sexual citizenship in the 1980s, emphasizing that they 'significantly advance[d] the theorization of power's effects on citizens', but failed to take race, class, and sexual orientation into account, thus missing how "these that oppressive norms of sexual citizenship are neither monolithic nor all-powerful and the ways that they are, in fact, contested in citizens" daily lives' (Eichner, 2009). In

short, Eichner (2009) is critical of MacKinnon's (1989) dominance feminist view of sex, pointing out that it leaves no space for resistance or subversion of sex as a practice. Yet, Eichner is also critical of the split in feminist theory that later became known as queer theory; she points out that while sex-positive positions recognize the power differences in sex itself, by inherently defining sex as positive, 'queer theory sacrifices poststructuralism's promise of yielding more nuanced, textured analyses of sexuality that grapple with the complexities of power in this area' (Eichner, 2009, p. 10). Eichner concludes that both camps are partly correct; mainstream heterosexual sexual scripts still exist and a submissive role is the easiest for women to take part in, but women can and do have access to alternative scripts, and sex can be practiced as resistance but is not inherently liberatory (Eichner, 2009). This 'middle-road' position reveals how sexual scripts can be used to dominate when girls and young women lack knowledge, experience and, crucially, access to alternative scripts that could disrupt dominant power relations; this lack of access and experience is something Kelly utilises to his advantage, and Eichner's arguments point to the conditional and relational nature of the agency of women and girls. Kelly created a song that occludes the complex vulnerability of girls and young women, packaged it through Aaliyah's voice, face and potential sexual desires, within a framework of culture that has historically been considered as emancipatory for Black people in America. In this tension between allegations against Kelly and the culture he created, sexual liberation and sexual

objectification and subjugation become intertwined and difficult to discern from one another—as Gavey (2005) argues, this is the cultural scaffolding of gender-based violence.

However, as Boyle (2019) argues, there is clearly a cultural value to abuse in Hollywood and the general entertainment media that can be observed in this tension as well. Kelly was seen as a sex symbol for the majority of his career, producing music videos and performances that were explicitly sexual—in addition to 'Age Ain't Nothing But a Number', Kelly made a name for himself with songs like 'Bump N' Grind', 'It Seems Like You're Ready', 'Sex Me (Parts IandII)', 'I Like the Crotch on You', and many others (DeRogatis, 2019). When the first allegations were published in the *Chicago Sun Times* in 2000, Kelly's status as a 'desirable' man and the fact the victims were Black girls provided an easy way out even for those who believed in the story: 'the girls and young women were easily framed as "fast," gold diggers, or consenting parties' (Lindsey, 2019)—in other words, the girls Kelly abused were not easily seen as victims due to their racial and socio-economical positionalities. As Boyle posits, many of the #MeToo allegations consist of re-reading incidents that are public knowledge *as* violence, thus peeling back the cultural scaffolding (Gavey, 2005). The intersections working class Black women and girls inhabit make this kind of re-reading even more fraught than their white counterparts as Black women's racialisation mythologises them as inherently hypersexual, which makes their legibility as victims more difficult (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins, 2004) and, as suggested by

Lindsey (2019) Kelly's victims' economic positioning often provided a convenient framework to classify them as 'gold diggers' trying to exploit a successful Black man. Here, anti-black victim-blaming narratives converge with mythologies of the liberatory potential of the Black male elite, making Black girls illegible as victims and adding cultural value to the abuse they suffered. The effect of this cultural scaffolding of abuse were still observable as late as 2019, when DeRogatis reported on Kelly's alleged sex cult for *Buzzfeed* provoked the following tweets:

> 'When a white man has multiple women he's polyamorous or polygamous. R Kelly? He's evil. Whatever!' - @EliasBenAvraham, March 7th, 2019.

> 'R. Kelly is in a polyamorous, dom/sub relationship with multiple consenting adult women. This is alarming why?' - @ENBrown, July 17th, 2017.

> 'This r. Kelly cult story is hilarious. Pretty sure it's just a polyamorous situation going on...not a hostage cult...we know r. Kelly is odd' - @MsKittyPretty, July 18th 2017.

In these tweets from some of Kelly's defenders, his image as a sex symbol is extrapolated into sex-positive discourses of polyamory, where the reasoning behind the allegations against Kelly is the criminalization of Black male sexuality versus white male sexuality. The race of his victims, who are almost all Black, only matters insofar as to repeat the rape myth that his victims were consenting adults; the

line between being a sexual *subject* and *object* is blurred, to the benefit of the abuser. This kind of argument, especially the fact people see him as 'odd' and how that matches the perceived eccentricity of the rich and famous also comes up in DeRogatis' book, as a reason for not reporting the allegations against Kelly:

> The first journalistic colleague I approached after my earliest conversations with the Savages looked at my quizzically. She didn't see a story. Tim and J's eldest daughter, Joycelyn (who goes by Joy) was twenty-one, over the age of consent in both Georgia and Illinois. **Pop star kinks and polyamorous behaviour weren't new and weren't news, and people chose to live in a lot of alternative or nonconventional arrangements. "Have you heard of *Fifty Shades of Grey?*" my colleague asked**" (DeRogatis, 2019, p, 239, emphasis mine).

Once again, the idea that these relationships are consensual omit the abuse and manipulation of the abuser. Notably, these excuses are shaped by discourses of sex positivity, BDSM and 'nonconventional arrangements', which are progressive discourses around sex and sexuality. The discursive shift from dismissing Black victims as 'gold diggers' to manufacturing their consent through a narrative of 'consensual multiple partners' is notable, though it still hinges on constructions of Black women and girls as hypersexual. The appearance of a 'progressive' sexuality occludes the gendered

violence taking place in Kelly's relationships with girls and young women, and it provides him with a positive reputation of a sexually prolific Black man—curiously, one of the accepted types of Black masculinity that is welcomed in American white supremacist society (Collins, 2004). While sex-positive discourse and movements in the 1980s opened possibilities for women (Hanmer, 1990), queer people and non-monogamous folks to negotiate sexual encounters on their own terms, Eichner's warnings against the dangers of a wholly positive view of sexual citizenship ring especially true here; sex-positive narratives are being co-opted, constructing a cultural scaffolding that that omits and valorises the abuse of girls and women. As suggested by Demetriou, this could be a result of a hybridisation of hegemonic masculinity, where various and diverse practices—with the aid of cultural scaffolding that is already produced and reproduced in the day to day, sometimes by the abusers themselves—are united 'in order to construct the best possible strategy for the reproduction of patriarchy', where non-hegemonic practices are appropriated and reproduced to make the domination of women less overt and appear more progressive (Demetriou, 2001, p. 348).

The conflation of sexual objectification with sexual liberation is a complex topic, but much of it is premised on the idea of individual choice *as* liberation and a lack of nuance around the limited agency of girls and women in a hetero-patriarchal society. It is remarkable to note how discourses of women's sexual liberation have been co-opted

and distorted by the entertainment industry in comparison to other past feminist causes—Wages for Housework, for example, will probably never receive such attention or co-optation, as it is neither male-centric nor sexy enough to be commodified. A good example of how these concepts are distorted is the response to the feminist critique of the 2013 song 'Blurred Lines' by Robin Thicke, Pharrell Williams and T.I. The song caused controversy because of its lyrics and video, which has an R-rated version where naked women dance with the men performing the song. The lyrics 'I know you want it / You're a good girl / Can't let it get past me / You're far from plastic / Talk about getting blasted / I hate these blurred lines' were widely read by feminists as contributing to rape culture (Romano, 2013) and the song was banned in at least six universities across the United Kingdom (The Bolton News, 2013). Despite pushback from feminist groups across the UK and the US, the creators of the song were able to frame the song within a warped kind of feminist discourse, with Pharrell stating: 'I think it's very clear. There's nothing misogynistic about it. It takes the power from whatever "man" — if you're looking at the lyrics, the power is right there in the woman's hand. That man — me as a human being, me as a man, I'm not your maker, I can't tell you what to do' (National Public Radio, 2013). Once again, the idea of consensual sex as inherently liberatory and empowering emerges, and more nuanced conversations around women's limited agency— which could perhaps spark conversations on how to make alternative sexual scripts more accessible—simply disappear. Conversely,

Pharrell's collaborator Robin Thicke said quite the opposite about the song a few months earlier when he was interviewed in GQ: 'People say, "Hey, do you think this is degrading to women?" I'm like, "Of course it is. What a pleasure it is to degrade a woman. I've never gotten to do that before. I've always respected women' (GQ, 2013).[10]The conversations sparked by 'Blurred Lines' illustrate how sexual subjugation and objectification can be presented as sexual liberation; Pharrell's assertion that he cannot tell women what to do is a denial of how limited women's sexuality and agency is in a hetero-patriarchal society. This conflation or scaffolding becomes a part of what limits girls and young women's access to alternative sexual scripts; the inherent sexual role of women to be submissive is being reproduced but masquerading as liberatory.

This cultural messaging is complicated by what Sara Ahmed calls 'happiness scripts', which she argues are taught through socialisation. Following these scripts means being oriented towards certain objects (Ahmed, 2010). For example, for many women, happiness scripts are grounded in the heterosexual family; meeting and marrying a man, having kids, a career and a family. This theory can explain the vulnerability of young girls who are usually exposed to heterosexual representations of happiness, and are too young to find or

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[10] Interestingly, Pharrell has expressed embarrassment over the lyrics of the song and the ensuing feminist response it caused years after it was released. He told GQ in 2019: '…I realised that there are men who use that same language when taking advantage of a woman, and it doesn't matter that that's not my behaviour. Or the way I think about things. It just matters how it affects women. And I was like, "Got it. I get it. Cool". My mind opened up to what was actually being said in the song and how it could make someone feel. Even though it wasn't the majority, it didn't matter' (GQ.com, 2019).

conceptualize alternative scripts; if a girl is promised happiness—in this case, love, success, a heterosexual relationship with a wealthy man—she will not immediately question the parts that make her uncomfortable (Ahmed, 2010). A lack of experience with happiness can cause unhappiness; happiness scripts must be challenged, but as Ahmed puts it, 'Girls who speak out are bold and thankless' (Ahmed, 2010, p. 61). When the majority of representations of women's sexuality is male-centric and reinforces gendered subjugation, the desires and dreams of girls and young women are ripe to be exploited. That being desired by a man in a very specifically heterosexual way is what girls and women are taught to aspire to, and Kelly's positionality as a successful Black man—who could theoretically provide his victims with fame, fortune, and the social capital of being in a relationship with a famous man—limits girls and women's access to agency. As stated by witnesses of his abuse, this lack of agency coupled with desire for happiness—and what 'happiness scripts' are taught in society—are known by Kelly and used for grooming, as can be observed in the following excerpt of DeRogatis's book:

> The Los Angeles girl told me she continued talking to Kelly, and when they engaged in phone sex, he said they were "soul mates." She believed he loved her, and after he sent her a plane ticket to visit Chicago on her eighteenth birthday, she had sex with him for the first time in August 1999" DeRogatis, 2019, pp. 71-72, emphasis mine).

Backstage at the Fantasy Springs Resort Casino in Indio, California, on May 23, 2015, J. was thrilled that **her 19-year-old daughter's music career was going to make a major leap forward** from recording demos and performing at talent shows to the chance of stardom — **thanks to the help of an RandB superstar** (DeRogatis, 2017, [no pagination], emphasis mine).

Kelly told both teenagers, "I'm going to make you a star," the Kenwood classmate said, but he added that if they were serious about music, **"You gonna have to be at the recording studio and not at school, because school ain't gonna make you a millionaire."** Both she and Tiffany dropped out of Kenwood, and when we talked, Tiffany's classmate regretted taking R. Kelly's advice. "That was the biggest hurt to me, and to this day, I feel I could be something else if I stayed in school (DeRogatis, 2019, p. 62, emphasis mine).

Kelly is a particularly convincing patriarchal agent because of his membership at the top of society's hierarchy; the forced kinship between the Black elite and Black Americans who are lower in the class hierarchy implies both that Kelly can be trusted and that trusting him could pay off in terms of upward class mobility. As I noted earlier in this chapter, the idea that a few members at the top of society will save the Black community contributes to Kelly's

patriarchal power—the affective relationship the Black community has with his success and geniality work to stop any criticism or allegation against him to be credible. As a result, Kelly's victims were not seen *as* victims for decades, but as women attempting to sabotage a successful Black man or they were forced to take the position of the Strong Black Woman (Collins, 2006) to protect him from consequences for his actions.

The lack of legibility of Black girls and women as victims of gendered violence has been historically noted by Black feminists (Davis, 1981; Crenshaw, 1991; Hartman, 1997; Collins, 2006; Cottom, 2017; Crumpton, 2020). As Crenshaw's foundational 1991 essay on intersectionality argues, Black women who are victims of gendered violence are impacted by how 'race and gender converge so that the concerns of minority women fall into the void between concerns about women's issues and concerns about racism' and to fail to acknowledge this intersection strengthens the power relations that need to be deconstructed and dismantled (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1282). Crenshaw points out that African-American women who are victims of rape and/or sexual assault are less likely to be believed in court. Crenshaw attributes this to historically sexualised images of African Americans which intersect with norms of women's sexuality that categorize women as 'madonnas or whores' (Crenshaw, 1991). As such, the social mythology is that black women's rape is less important or believable because they are too sexual for their abuse to matter (Crenshaw, 1991). Furthermore, Crenshaw points out that from

an anti-racist perspective, racial solidarity is rarely afforded to black women who are victims of sexual assault—instead, this solidarity is given to black men who are accused of rape because of a history of false accusations being levelled against black men (Crenshaw, 1991). In this paragraph I will unpack what Black girls and women's illegibility as victims means more widely, and how racist, sexist and misogynoirist notions of victimhood and criminality have historically disrupted this demographic's struggles for justice and safety by drawing on Victoria Law's 2014 essay 'Against Carceral Feminism', which explains why and how carceral feminist approaches to violence against women can result in more violence against women (Law, 2014). Carceral feminism—similarly to what Crenshaw described was the problem of the anti-rape movement in 1991—ignores the ways in which race, class, gender identity, and immigration status leave certain women more vulnerable to violence and that greater criminalization often places these same women at risk of state violence (Law, 2014).Within the context of domestic violence, Law also points out that emphasizing policing and punishment for abusers as policy can take away funding from resources that provide safety and support to survivors such as shelters, public housing and welfare (Law, 2014). More specifically in the context of sexual assault, the criminal justice system both in the US and the UK have processes that re-victimise rape survivors (Wheatcroft, et al., 2009). In the UK, a 2009 study found that mythologies around rape and sexual assault are still 'prevalent and strong and are used to further destroy already

fragile victims' (Wheatcroft, et al., 2009). In the US context, a legal and political dissection of existing sexual predators' laws showed that current legislation 'justifies apolitical, individualized, state-centred explanations for and responses to gendered violence' (Corrigan, 2006). In other words, current laws against sexual violence are used to 'consolidate state power rather than create social change' and feminist reforms that squarely critique gender, culture, or the family are dismissed (Corrigan, 2006). In short, current laws and processes in place to protect sexual assault survivors place too much emphasis on punitive approaches and policing, and not enough emphasis on changing culture, keeping survivors mentally and physically safe and independent from their aggressors, and supporting survivors after the assault. A comparative study between five countries (Australia, Canada, England, Wales and Scotland and the United States) revealed that only 6.5% of sexual violence cases end in conviction (Daly and Bouhours, 2010). The current criminal justice system routinely disbelieves survivors, re-traumatizes them, does not deliver justice and does not protect them. Carceral feminist approaches to violence against women can also end up criminalising survivors—particularly those who are racialised. According to the organisation Women in Prison, 53% of women in prison in the UK report having experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse during childhood while 46% of them report having suffered domestic violence (Women in Prison, 2017). According to Law, in New York state '67 percent of women sent to prison for killing someone close to them had been abused by

that person', while in California a prison study found that 93 percent of the women who had killed their significant others had been abused by them. Sixty-seven percent of those women reported that they had been attempting to protect themselves or their children." (Law, 2014). As Angela Davis argued in 'Are Prisons Obsolete?', prisons reflect and further entrench the deeply gendered structure of the larger society (Davis, 2003). The lack of legibility of Black women and girls as victims means they do not receive the support they need and that the very act of seeking for help in a situation of gendered violence can end up in incarceration or death at the hands of police. There is a binary of victim/perpetrator embedded in how justice for survivors of gendered violence works that does not allow for nuances, intersections and the specificities of gendered violence in specific communities—even worse, studies point to the phenomenon that racialized women are often seen as the perpetrators and punished when they ask for help. This was already clear in Crenshaw's 1991 essay, where she discussed the specific hurdles Black and immigrant women face when deciding whether to call the police; for example, a black working class woman might have to consider the possibility of police violence when reporting her partner for domestic violence; or, an immigrant woman might not be able to report a sexual assault because she lives in the US illegally. An unyieldingly binary application of the law (and the cultural mythologies around sexual and domestic abuse) can result in the criminalisation of women who need the most support in society.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have used the case against R. Kelly as a case study to explore the following questions: How does this case study analysis expose dominant social constructions of gender and sexual violence? How do these dominant social constructions draw upon, reproduce or challenge racialized heteronormative constructions of hegemonic masculinity? I have also used this case study to further interrogate what such high-profile sexual abuse cases such as the R Kelly case offer to the theoretical analysis of constructions of hegemonic masculinity.

What my analysis has shown is that the case against Kelly reveals a co-optation of a 'progressive' view of sexuality that makes Black women and girls illegible as victims, as well as the dynamics and consequences of minority membership in the hybrid masculine hegemonic bloc as theorised by Demetriou (2001). This hybridity makes use of existing cultural scaffolding around gendered violence, sometimes with the abuser himself reproducing cultural material that occludes gendered violence. This cultural scaffolding thrives on a dichotomous relationship between the concepts of victim and perpetrator, which does not demand a critical engagement with how culture hypersexualises women and girls or how girls are taught heterosexual sexual scripts that reinforce their subjugation, but reproduces mythologies that gendered violence is a clear-cut, binary relationship between victim and perpetrator. Through my analysis of

the R Kelly case, it is evident that the binary is further complicated by the protection of Black hegemonic masculinity through discourses of Black male success; in a capitalist white supremacist society, famous successful Black men embody mythologies of Black capitalist emancipation, connecting individual wealth accumulation to racial liberation. In turn, Black women who denounce instances of gendered harm are perceived as threats to Black male success whose association with racial liberation forces Black women who are victims of gendered harm to take the position of the Strong Black Woman (Collins, 2004); here, I also noted the affective relationship between a marginalised public and a famous man's accumulation of capital and success and how this is mediated through categories of race, gender, and perhaps most importantly, class. These mediations are especially harmful to Black women and girls who are criminalised and incarcerated through what the Human Project for Girls now calls the 'sexual abuse to prison pipeline'; 'in a perverse twist of justice, many girls who experience sexual abuse are routed into the juvenile justice system because of their victimization' (2015, p. 5).

Chapter 5: The Case Against Kevin Spacey

Writing this chapter was an enormous challenge because queer communities still feel the brunt of the conflation between paedophilia and homosexuality, to the point where conversations about age difference and queer romantic and sexual relationships have become a taboo. As a queer woman myself, I understand the impulse to deflect responsibility and distance my community from abusive and exploitative behaviour in our necessary fight for rights, but in doing this research I noted the huge gaps in literature about same-sex sexual violence and how a reluctance to apply power-conscious analyses to queer social relations was occluding sexual violence as a tool for domination. In an attempt to counter the silences I found, I read two books that shaped this chapter and helped me think through the issues raised by the harm committed by Kevin Spacey. The first book, Disturbing Attachments *by Kadji Amin, is cited at length in the chapter below as it helped me produce a critique of same-sex relationships that can be easily included into the feminist tradition of critiquing sex as a structure. The second book,* Consent *by Vanessa Springora (2020), is not cited in the body of the chapter but it pushed me to be critical of the sexual revolution in the 1970s and 1980s, and recognizing there are strands of thought born in this period that are complicit to the sexual violence we are reckoning with today.*

Springora's short memoir accuses a French intellectual, Gabriel Matzneff, of having an abusive sexual relationship with her when he

was 50 and she was 14. Springora is rageful in remembering how open and visible her relationship with Matzneff was, and how it was generally approved of by the intellectual class at the time, who saw Matzneff's autobiographical works that depicted relationships between children and adults as pushing sexual boundaries. This connection between the sexual revolution and current reckoning with sexual violence has been lost or occluded, but Springora's memoir (much like Amin's work on Genet) restores this connection and charges it with the violence and trauma she experienced. This uncomfortable restoration reveals how much oppressive violence has been omitted by myths of exceptionality and fetishized transgression; and that sexual liberation efforts must have power-conscious analyses that do not essentialize transgression as liberation. Boyle (2019) has noted how much abuse can be folded back into existing narratives of masculine success and exceptionality; there is, she argues, a cultural value in abuse, and Springora's book makes that clear (2020). Matzneff was celebrated for 'pushing' sexual and romantic boundaries in broad daylight, which is similar to how Spacey's allure as a performer was due to his House of Cards character's ambiguous morality (Boyle, 2019). As both Amin (2019) and Boyle (2019) point out, that Spacey was constructed as a monstrous paedophile by the media—swiftly going from heroically sexually ambiguous to villainous predator—omits the cultural norms that allowed Spacey to operate in plain sight.

However, the question of who gets to be 'transgressive' without attracting the label of 'sexual predato' is still essential. The 'predator' that is contemporarily most commonly associated with the queer community is the fictional, predatory trans woman, who has been scapegoated as a cisgender man in a dress who infiltrates women-only spaces, even though statistics suggest trans people are more likely to be survivors of sexual violence rather than perpetrators of it (The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2010). This dynamic between being scapegoated as a predator and being a survivor of sexual violence is what complicates queer survivors' positionalities in society and in queer communities. In the following chapter, I disentangle this dynamic while also considering defensive, hybridizing strategies that are employed by men and masculinities as conceptualized by Demetriou (2001). I conclude that including male survivors in the feminist imaginary of survivor/victims is essential, but that considering previous defensive hybridising strategies deployed by abusers is also important.

On October 29th, 2017, the actor Anthony Rapp, inspired by the wave of support for survivors after #MeToo took off on social media, alleged that Kevin Spacey made a sexual advance towards him when Rapp was 14 and Spacey was 26 (Vary, 2017). In response to the allegation, Spacey posted a statement on his social media accounts[11] where he wrote he did not remember the alleged event, but that it

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[11] I discuss this apology comprehensively in Chapter 6.

encouraged him to come out and 'live as a gay man' (Spacey, 2017). After Rapp's interview with *Buzzfeed*, fifteen other people came forward with allegations against Spacey (USA Today, 2019). The *Guardian* reported that they received statements from 'a number of people' alleging Spacey engaged in inappropriate behaviour with young men when he worked as artistic director at the Old Vic; a week later, the Old Vic confirmed they had received 20 complaints against Spacey that were under investigation (BBC News, 2017). Following the allegations, Spacey was dropped from Netflix's *House of Cards* series, which was due to end in 2018, and Netflix stopped production and distribution of a Gore Vidal biopic in which he was due to appear, thus severing all ties with the actor. Spacey was also cut out of the movie *All the Money in the World*, which was re-shot with another actor and his Emmy International Founders 2017 Award was revoked. In April 2018, the Los Angeles District Attorney's office announced they were investigating a sexual assault allegation against Spacey and in July 2018, Scotland Yard announced they were investigating six cases against the actor. In September 2018, Spacey was sued by an unnamed massage therapist in California who alleges they were sexually assaulted by Spacey in October 2016. On December 24th 2018, Spacey was charged with sexually assaulting a teenager at a bar in Massachusetts in 2016. In response, the actor posted a video in which he appears to deny any wrongdoing while in character as Frank Underwood from House of Cards. On July 17th 2019, the charges were dropped. As of August 2021, Spacey was spotted filming his

first post-#MeToo allegations movie in California (Kevin Spacey Filming New Movie, First Look on Set, 2021).

The allegations against Spacey are extensive, and span across both the UK and the US. When collecting texts for this chapter, I attempted to find comprehensive statements about what happened between Spacey and his victims, with the intention to pull apart how masculinity is functioning in these cases. The texts I found were markedly different from my other two case studies; reports had little to no discussion of power abuse, almost as if most of the alleged violations did not need to be explained or exposed *as violations* as much as allegations coming from women. Unlike the Weinstein or the Kelly statements from victims, most of these reports were not descriptive or reflective, except for the two articles I use in this chapter. The first article I am drawing from is the initial *Buzzfeed News* article about the Rapp allegations against Spacey. I chose this article because Rapp talks about the complexities of being a gay man who was assaulted by another gay man, and the contradictions this created for him as a survivor. The second article I chose for this chapter is an interview with an anonymous survivor who had a sexual relationship with Spacey when the actor was 24 and the interviewee was 14. Like the Rapp article, the anonymous survivor discusses what the alleged abuse meant to him as a gay man, and how it affected his life and his desires. Unlike the reports I had read and collected about allegations against Spacey, these two articles point towards queerness as a complicating factor of Spacey's violence.

This chapter will focus on the allegations against Kevin Spacey as a case study, with the intention to pull apart dominant constructions of gender and sexual violence in cases of male sexual violence against men. My analysis is concerned with how dominant social constructions draw upon, reproduce or challenge racialized heteronormative constructions of hegemonic masculinity. As emphasized by Justin J. Rudnick (2018, p.69) the Spacey case study 'provides yet another example of the immense power afforded to affluent cisgender white men—and the many ways they flex that power to maintain it', as Spacey 'effectively appropriates the historical victimization of other queer persons to eschew the guilt and blame directed at him' (p. 69). I start the chapter by outlining the allegations against Spacey and summarizing the texts I collected. In a subsequent section, I discuss the issues of male sexual assault, queerness and age gap, as well as the difference(s) between queer masculinities and hegemonic masculinities, ultimately making a case for the inclusion of male sexual assault survivors in feminist movements that are concerned with sexual violence as a collective societal issue. However, as I will argue, the Spacey case study has revealed that this inclusion must be done with caution and attention to complexities around how gender, sexuality and sexual violence intersect, and how the hegemonic masculine block might hybridise in defence of masculine power (Demetriou, 2001). Drawing on Karen's Boyle's work (2019, 2020) on #MeToo and on this case study, I argue that masculinities can and often will appropriate progressive language

and concepts as defensive mechanisms from attempts at justice and accountability for sexual violence. In this case, a recognition of queerness becomes a defence for abuse, which comes with loaded histories of discrimination and allegations of predatory behaviour, which I attempt to disentangle by using Kadji Amin's concept of pederastic kinship and his analysis of the Spacey case (2017, 2019). While feminist theorizations on sexual violence have not historically been inclusive of male survivors, I conclude this chapter by noting that sex and power are not separable, even in the case of same-sex relationships.

1. Queerness, Masculinity, and Male Rape

The case against Kevin Spacey and how it was reported on by the media is complicated by the fact that both the alleged abuser and the victims are men. A central concern of this chapter is to argue that including male survivors of sexual assault in feminist demands for the end of sexual violence will strengthen the movement and (positively) complicate responses to male violence. By first contextualising the issues of consent and age difference in the construction of male homosexuality and noting some marked differences in the reports of allegations against Spacey versus other case studies, I argue that while conflations of homosexuality and paedophilia were present in media reports about Spacey, the current constructions of homosexuality in opposition to paedophilia occludes the normative ways youth is eroticised in wider society, drawing from Amin's work on modern

pederasty in Western society (Amin, 2017, 2019) and Boyle (2019)'s work on male survivors to argue that including male victims into the victim/survivor collective is essential to the eradication of sexual violence. I then critique the emerging literature on male sexual assault, arguing that discourse about violated male bodies is often premised on ideas of emasculated masculinities that reassert the gender binary and exclude queer masculinities. Drawing on Graham's (2006) work on research about male rape, I argue that separating male rape and female rape creates an unhelpful dichotomy within feminist and masculinity scholarships that results in the reproduction of the gender binary rather than resistance to patriarchy. Additionally, Graham (2006) suggests that scholars attempting to write about and research male rape should not discard feminist scholarship, cautioning for male rape scholars not to repeat the same mistakes feminist scholars have made, and instead to engage and collaborate with each other. This is crucial to a holistic understanding of sexual violence as a system of domination rather than individual instances of violence that happen to affect men.

Modern constructions of homosexuality were partly driven by anxieties about interactions between children or teenagers and older men; age difference and the sexuality of children and teenagers were central to many culturally prominent eighteenth- and nineteenth-century understandings of same-sex desire, which led some sexual scientists to pull apart the associations between same-sex relationships and age difference (Fisher and Funke, 2019). The assumption that

'same-sex relations were violations of youth fundamentally shaped sexual scientific investigations of same-sex desire and informed intersections explorations of childhood and adolescent sexual development' (Fisher and Funke, 2019, p. 267). In opposition to this assumption, the modern conceptualisation of homosexuality, where it is described as inborn attraction between consenting adults, was developed (Fisher and Funke, 2019). In the UK, sex between two male partners was illegal until 1967—the act was considered 'gross indecency' and was punishable by two years in prison (Hyde, 1970)—when the age of consent became 21 (Stonewall UK, n/a). In 1994, the legal age of consent for sex between men was lowered to 18, and it was only brought down to 16—the same as heterosexual age of consent—in 2000 (Ellis, et al., 2002). The decriminalisation of sex between men and bringing down the age of consent to match its heterosexual counterpart required considerable activism from gay and lesbian liberation groups (Ellis, et al., 2002). In a study on discourses opposing the lowering of the age of consent for sex between men, 'rhetoric around young (adolescent) men as vulnerable and in need of being protected by society was also frequently employed to deny gay men equality with heterosexuals' (Ellis, et al., 2002, p. 173). The behaviour of gay men was presented as 'necessarily predatory', and it was often argued that equalising the age of consent with that of heterosexual people would result in the abuse of teenage boys by older homosexual men (Ellis, et al., 2002, p. 173). These concerns were also built around the construction of young men as 'helpless and

vulnerable children' who are 'open to corruption' in contrast to girls who 'are more mature than boys' (Ellis, et al., 2002, p. 173). These claims about gender difference were advanced specifically to draw a discriminatory position against homosexual relationships where paedophilia and same-sex attraction were equated (Ellis, et al., 2002), but they also reveal a support for heterosexual relationships and the position girls and women retain within them. Consequently, histories where homosexuality and paedophilia are equated or blurred together can work as cultural scaffolding for exploitative and inappropriate relationships between children and adults.

This context is necessary to comprehend the response to allegations against Spacey, how these stories were framed by the media and how I sorted through the collected the texts I analysed. As Boyle points out, that the allegations against Spacey involved multiple boy children rather than girl children seems to be a significant factor for the construction of Spacey as a monstrous homosexual paedophilic other (Boyle, 2019). As I wrote previously about the reports on Spacey's harmdoing, the allegations against him required much less explanatory or expository material from his victims; I point this out because while Spacey clearly caused harm, his predatory behaviour also fits a narrative that has been prominent in society and fought against by LGBTQ rights activists for generations (Ellis, et al., 2002). The alignment between Spacey's harm and the stereotype of the predatory older homosexual who is primarily interested in relationships with children or adolescents helped the legibility of his

victims as victims in the public eye. In Spacey's apology, which I analyse in-depth in a later chapter, this alignment is exploited and the difference between homosexuality and paedophilia is blurred. As Boyle (2019) argues, both the victims and the perpetrators of #MeToo are shaped by race, gender and sexuality in media mediations of the movement and the allegations; that Spacey's harm fit into pre-existing narratives about predation and grooming explains why sexual violations between men do not need to be explicated in the ways Weinstein's violations were explicated. However, this alignment between stereotype and real harm creates contradictions and barriers for Spacey's victims, particularly the ones who grew up to be queer men. This context is important to why I chose to analyse articles that had comprehensive survivor statements with regards to how Spacey acted—in this way, I hope my analysis will convey the complexity of sexuality and sexual violence as it is characterised by survivors, hopefully elucidating current issues around queer male survivors and constructions of homosexuality.

In an examination of the queer community's reactions to the allegations against Spacey, queer theorist Amin remarks on the 'paranoid readings' of Western lesbians and gays who were eager to distance homosexuality from Spacey's 'monstrous paedophilia' and how the modern construction of Western homosexuality depends on this distance (Amin, 2019). This distance, Amin posits, occludes how normalised the eroticisation of youth as a disempowered category is in society, and it pre-emptively shields the LGBTQ community from

any kind of reckoning with the sexual social order (Amin, 2019). Using the concept of modern pederasty to challenge the notion of a liberal Western society that distances itself from "premodern, illiberal, and hierarchically stratified social orders," Amin posits that modern pederasty, as 'perhaps the form of sexuality most conspicuously animated by social inequality' in fact reveals the 'pervasiveness and normalcy of the entanglement of sex and power across Euro-North America' (Amin, 2019, p. 98). Amin draws this critique, one that elucidates how the normalization of the 'sexiness' of social inequalities in sexual relationships is inherent in Western cultures, from his earlier book *Disturbing Attachments: Genet, Modern Pederasty, and Queer History*, where the theorist provocatively delves into unsavoury and offensive truths about the author Jean Genet that are canonically ignored by queer theorists in turns that both idealize Western queerness and leave power abuses in queer spaces unchecked (Amin, 2017). Amin's book is elucidating, as it seeks to destabilise many of queer theory's vices of idealisation of queer modes of social relations (Amin, 2017) that I think create silences and complicity around racialised and gendered violences in an effort to "earn" rights and sexual citizenship in a heteronormative society. Amin does to Genet what many feminists have historically done to popular art and culture; he re-reads Genet's actions through a lens that reveals hierarchies rather than a queer utopia. 'The subcultural valorization and public affirmation of queer kinship are contingent on desexualizing intergenerational kinship and blotting out the historical

memory of pederastic kinship', Amin (2017, p. 114) writes, provocatively suggesting that the genealogy between pederasty and homosexuality is not a homophobic lie, but a legitimate leftist and queer strand of thought that has been left unacknowledged through idealization and suppressed for the sake of gay rights movements seeking sexual citizenship. I read Amin's provocations as an invitation to dismantle the scaffolding of sexual violence and domination inherent in broader society that might be reproduced in queer communities; I will draw from Amin's theorisations on pederastic kinship and chosen families later in this chapter to make sense of the unique vulnerability produced by the tension between heteronormativity and teenage queerness. For this section in particular, I am interested Amin's recognition of Spacey's harassment and violence within a larger pattern of eroticised social hierarchies in Euro-North American cultures, as it links to a larger project of including men's violence against men in the feminist imaginary of survivors of sexual violence. Amin's argument of modern pederasty can unsettle the binaries that emerge within male sexual violence literature. If we accept, as posited by Amin, that Euro-North American erotic life is animated by 'the complexities of a modern social order riven with inequalities', the inclusion of male survivors of sexual violence becomes not only urgent but essential for the project of eradicating sexual violence.

However, this project is somewhat hindered by emerging scholarship on male rape that is bogged down by its insistent oppositional

positionality to feminist scholarship on female rape; indeed, it seems that writing about male rape necessitates emphasising the scarcity of literature about male rape in comparison to female rape (Owen, 1995; Allen, 2002; Davies, 2002; Javaid, 2015; Clark, 2014). Owen (1995), for example, argues that researching female rape is in itself problematic because it erases male rape victims, and Javaid asserts that while 'male rape' is an invisible social phenomenon that is hardly taken seriously while at least 'female rape' is 'dealt with' (2015). This oppositional trend in male rape scholarship is seldom accompanied by larger views of gender as a system of domination. Clark (2014), for example, writes that the suffering of a majority female population of rape victims should not overshadow other victims—but the context of the social sciences' focus on sexual violence against women is not only explained by numbers; it is explained by historical oppression and feminist critiques of a normatively sexually violent and misogynistic culture. In short, much of the literature about male rape does not appropriately situate the reasons behind a scarcity of male rape literature, and instead, scholars point towards feminist scholarship of female rape as decontextualised comparison tool. This positioning of the issue of 'male rape' versus 'female rape' creates a dichotomy of harm and attention that reproduces the gender binary.

The discussion of *why* including male rape into feminist scholarship is a contentious subject should not be avoided because it can elucidate the contradictions inherent to ending sexual violence. Anecdotally, since I started this work, I have met more survivors than I ever had in

my entire life, and most of these survivors are women, women-aligned or non-binary people whose vulnerability is located exactly in not being a man or not performing hegemonic masculinity if they were assigned male at birth. Many survivors end up doing work around sexual assault because they are survivors themselves, and most of these survivors are not men. Some of these survivors might find it difficult to work with or around men precisely because their trauma (sometimes accumulated over the years through multiple assaults) was caused by men. In an article about discrimination against male rape victims in rape crisis centres written in 1996, a feminist crisis worker 'pointed out that if male rape were acknowledged as a problem, then men would "co-opt" the publicity and resources needed for women, just as had almost happened in the early days of the movement against woman battering' (Donnelly and Kenyon, 1996, p. 477). This is, of course, not a good enough reason to further marginalise under-served survivors of sexual violence, but it does provide context to why male rape as a subject might be perceived as suspicious in feminist spaces. As I will argue later in this chapter, a defence mechanism of hegemonic masculinities is the co-optation of victimisation narratives; Kate Manne (2017) argues that '[i]n the case of male dominance, we sympathize with him first, effectively making him into the victim of his own crimes' (p. 199), and this aspect of male power is precisely what complicates a feminist inclusion of male rape survivors in sexual violence research and activism. As Boyle has demonstrated with her analysis of the #HimToo hashtag—originally a hashtag created to

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include male victims of sexual violence into the wider #MeToo movement (O' Neil 2018)—that was used to support Donald Trump's nominee to the Supreme Court Bret Kavanaugh when he was accused of attempted rape by Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, the co-optation of feminist attempts to include male rape victims is not an uncommon defence strategy (Boyle, 2019). Drawing on Manne, Boyle argues that the hashtag was co-opted by conservative defenders (many of them women) of Kavanaugh in a blatant display of what Manne calls 'himpathy'; 'the inappropriate and disproportionate sympathy powerful men often enjoy in cases of sexual assault, homicide and other misogynistic behavior' (Manne, 2018, [no pagination]). As Boyle argues, the himpathy showed towards Kavanaugh matters because the most powerful can often be re-cast as the most vulnerable precisely because they have so much to lose. Furthermore, the himpathetic view of the Kavanaugh hearings shows how the structure of sympathy usually places white, heterosexual, cisgendered men at its centre (Boyle, 2019; Manne, 2018). I am introducing these arguments not to cast male rape victims aside, but to expose the contradictions of including male rape victims into a feminist framework within a himpathetic world. Ultimately, the inclusion of male survivors is not negotiable, but to simply cast feminist scholarship on rape as exclusionary without historical context is counterproductive and ahistorical.

The inclusion of male rape survivors in the feminist imaginary of the survivor/victim collective also raises issues of (re)producing

hierarchies of harm. As Graham (2006) argues, the emerging topic of male rape in the social sciences often privileges *heterosexual* understandings of male rape which has problematic consequences for victims who are not heterosexual. Indeed, a frustrating aspect of literature about male rape victims is that the category of 'men' is not really understood as gendered until there is a violation against the male body that approximates instances of violence against the female body. For example, Javaid notes that male rape complicates the construction of hegemonic masculinity because of how it constructs men as dominant and inherently sexual; thus, when men are raped, the violation puts their masculinity in question because men are not supposed to be vulnerable to violation like women are, and to be treated like someone who can be or was violated is "emasculating" (Javaid, 2015), which begs the question of where queer men who accept penetration consensually fit within this particular analysis. While 'emasculation' might be an explanation for the reaction of many heterosexual men to being survivors of sexual violence, this is an example of how heterosexual understandings of male rape can be counterproductive; as Javaid fails to point out, it is not just nonconsensual sexual violations that are perceived as 'emasculating' in society at large, but *any* kind of consensual homosexual relationship defines a man as feminised and emasculated (Graham, 2006). While research indicates that male rape happens similarly to female rape in that they happen in dating situations or between people who know each other (Davies, 2002) and that the rape myths male

survivors have to deal with stem from traditional views of masculinity that dictate men are strong, dominant, assertive and women are passive and subordinate (Davies, 2002), there are no conclusions as to what that actually means more broadly, with regards to sexual violence as a *structure* of violence. Often in this literature, there is a preoccupation with how sexual violation creates emasculation in men and how that makes "the stigma for men […] even greater . . . in a society which expects its male members to be self-sufficient physically and psychologically" (Mezey and King, 1992, p. 10). While the preoccupation with emasculation is important, to position this as worse than what women survivors experience is to obscure sexual violence as a structure of domination. Graham (2006, p.202) warns that this approach to male rape produces 'a hierarchy of harm that privileges the sexual autonomy of some bodies over that of others, and in understanding the meaning of bodily violation for different sorts of victims', which he cautions against. Feminist theorisations on rape and sexual violence have uncovered the extent of violence against women by men and created frameworks for understanding hegemonic masculinity, and this context needs to be taken into account even in literature about male rape as it appropriately complicates the social position of male rape victims themselves (Graham, 2006). Harm is not something that should be (or arguably, that can be) quantified or organised by hierarchy; it is fully possible for scholars to recognise that masculinity is incongruent with sexual violation, and that it produces an internal struggle in male

survivors, without relying on unhelpful and unquantifiable comparisons of harm between genders that usually result in the exclusion of marginalised masculinities.

Another conclusion that is often present in the male rape literature is that male rape is worse than female rape because men do not expect to be victims of sexual violence (Garnets, et al., 1990). In this argument, we once again see a gendering of the male body after violation, albeit through imprecise and doubtful methods of quantification of harm. What is worse, this argument seems to ask, to expect to be raped and finally being raped or never expecting to be raped and being raped? Instead, male rape scholars should be asking how this fits within existing sexual violence literature, even if it pertains to women specifically. Some examples of questions that might be asked are: What does it mean that the male body becomes gendered *after* nonconsensual violation in much of this literature? How does this inform sexual violence under a patriarchal structure? How can we understand 'emasculation' as a part of a system of domination, rather than a psychological response to being feminized or a quantification of harm? If being "dominated" through rape means a man is "feminized," what does that mean for people who are already perceived as feminine, as performing femininity or as queer? As Boyle (2019) notes, male rape victims' credibility is still based on how they occupy gender norms, and that means that homosexual and gender non-conforming victims in general could be more vulnerable to victim-blaming than victims who perform hegemonic masculinity.

Boyle also notes that the feminist analysis that violence is gendered does not depend on *female* victimisation, but rather on an understanding of how violence is enacted and understood in relation to gender in a patriarchal context (Boyle, 2019). Or, as Amin puts it in his analysis of the Spacey case and queer paranoid readings, there is a sexual order that 'gives rise to serial institutionally sanctioned assault and abuse' as well as kinky and responsible consensual sex; the challenge is recognize this sexual order without totalizing it, to be critical of it without essentializing it (Amin, 2019). This is how I am attempting to understand the text I collected for this chapter: as my analysis will indicate, both of the male survivors I am drawing from were gendered as queer, which is exactly what made them vulnerable *as men* to violence by another man.

In this section I contextualised the history of queerness, the age of consent and conflations between homosexuality and paedophilia. I suggested that recent provocations in queer theory point to how sexuality is structured through hierarchies which demands the inclusion of male survivors into the survivor/victims imaginary. I then provided a brief review of emerging literature on male rape, emphasising some of it gaps and tendencies to reproduce dichotomous thinking on the subject of sexual violence more broadly. My central issue with current male rape literature, despite being eager to include male victims into the feminist imaginary, is that it does not sufficiently bridge the gap between 'male rape' and 'female rape' beyond facile comparisons of the amount of literature that is

available, neither does it provide holistic discussions of why male rape victims complicate existing literature on sexual violence in general, and thus fails to see male rape within a universe of sexual violence as domination. I argue that looking at the reasons behind this disparity in literature is essential to the inclusion of men as victims and survivors of sexual violence, as well as recognising common defence mechanisms of hegemonic masculinities when being confronted with allegations of sexual assault, as the Spacey case demonstrates. As Graham suggests, collaboration between scholars who write on "male rape" and feminist scholars that write on violence against women can be one solution to the gaps pointed out here.

2. Queer Orphans: The vulnerabilities of idealization

My analysis in this section has revealed two central issues that are revealed by the statements given by Spacey's victims: firstly, my analysis demonstrates how queerness is marginalised materially in society through the imposition of heteronormative standards of masculinity and sexuality; and secondly, that this marginalisation and the resulting shame of being queer can lead to unequal relationships between older queer people and younger queer people. In an effort to understand this, I use Amin's (2017) work on 'modern pederastic kinship' as he positions it as an 'uncomfortable genealogy attachment of gay and lesbian "chosen" and nuclear family that restores power and inequality to overly idealized imaginaries of queer kinship,/ to frame the problem of age difference, power and queerness, thus

demonstrating the dynamics of being in the closet and being a survivor of child sexual abuse or violence. As Connell (2005) argues, queer masculinities are subordinate to hegemonic masculinities, which puts queer men at a significant risk of violence. This is, however, an underdeveloped aspect of Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity—specifically, Connell does not theorise *how* hegemonic masculinity marginalises queer men and their experiences. The analysis in this next section provides some answers to under-theorised aspects of Connell's theories on queer masculinities, and it builds on literature about male sexual assault and queerness by theorising on the taboo issue of age difference.

Adolescence is a complicated period of a person's life, and for gay and lesbian youth, this period is even more complicated due to dealing with having a socially stigmatised identity (Hetrick and Martin, 1987). Studies have indicated that sexual minority children still experience more school victimisation and violence than their heterosexual counterparts (Hein, et al., 2018), and at home, isolation resulting from parental rejection is a major issue for queer youth that can result in health issues, both mentally and physically (Ryan, et al., 2010). As my analysis will show, this parental isolation and/or fear of rejection from society creates queer exiles as they are excluded from traditional familial kinship, which in turn 'generates a powerful longing for return' and 'incites idealization' of some form of belonging (Amin, 2017, p. 112-113). Additionally, the lack of knowledge from parents and children alike resulting from a

heteronormative society further isolates and leaves queer male survivors and their parents without recourse or language to understand abuse, or, as Boyle (2019) puts it, unable to name abuse *as* abuse. Furthermore, the shame of being gay prevents survivors from disclosing instances of sexual violence, particularly before they come out as gay to their families. The main allegations I am interested in here are by Anthony Rapp and an anonymous Spacey victim who gave an interview to *Vulture*.

The pathos of exile that creates chosen families, Amin explains, magnetizes 'diverse and intense affective energies' that 'ensure that a chosen family remains highly idealized as at once free from the contradictions of conventional kinship and uniquely capable of fulfilling the yearnings for love, care, and belonging that the romance of "family" generates' (Amin, 2017, p. 113); in short, chosen family emerges as a protective, defensive and highly idealised strategy/space that stands in opposition to the heterosexual family and the oppression it signifies to queer people. However, the search for belonging outside of the heterosexual family need not be constrained to queer subjects exclusively, as is demonstrated by Wendy C. Ortiz's memoir about her own sexual and romantic relationship with a teacher that started when she was 13 and he was 28. Ortiz's own exile and her subsequent relationship with an older man is similar to how Amin theorises the queer family as an idealised opposition to the heterosexual family: Ortiz's neglectful family life and lack of self-esteem leads Ortiz to seek for belonging in a much older man, her teacher Jeff, who takes

advantage of her position as rejected exile. As Ortiz excavates her memory of what happened to her as a survivor of child sexual assault, it becomes clear that she was a willing participant in the relationship as it was happening, which complicates narratives around sexual relationships between adults and children beyond framing perpetrators as monsters and children as sexless. It is quite obvious from Ortiz's narrative that her younger self sought belonging, care and love in her relationship with Jeff because she was denied this at home, and that the disparities in knowledge and experience Jeff exploited were contingent on her isolation from her family. As such, I read Ortiz's experiences as that of a queer exile who idealises her experiences outside of her broken home in search for belonging. It is not a coincidence, then, that Ortiz's experiences of being a queer exile are very similar to how Spacey's anonymous victim describes his experiences of vulnerability and isolation and how that shaped his relationship with Spacey when the actor was 24 and the victim was 14:

> I felt like I'd won the lottery. A little drunk with it and very delighted with the attention. I was like a cute, plump little kid who went through puberty really fast and came out the other side as somebody that grown-ups were looking at and saying was beautiful. If your father has never rubbed your head or patted you, and if you have suspected your whole life that he is actually repulsed by you or just bored by you [laughs], you're hungry. And I

had gone through puberty at 11. I had to make this happen. And I was terrified to do that with a boy of my own age. You could be beat up" (Jung, 2017, [no pagination]).

Here, the victim or queer exile searches for kinship and care after parental rejection and social isolation, as a refuge from the consequences of the social stigma surrounding his sexuality. The anonymous victim paints a picture of a broken home life: his parents did not know how to deal with his queerness and he was in an abusive sexual relationship with his 25-year-old cousin. Like Ortiz does in her memoir, the queer exile admits to attraction and pleasure at being in a relationship with Spacey; these positive feelings are, as suggested by Amin, framed as oppositional to the victim's heterosexual family and highly idealized. The point of breakage for both Ortiz and this anonymous victim—where the idealization came to an end—was new knowledge that allowed them to name what they experienced as abuse. The capability to discern between a healthy relationship and an abusive one is described by the victim in the following excerpt:

Oh my God. I'm sexually so compelled with this one man [Spacey]. With my cousin, I'm beginning to perceive his mental illness and his endless need for me at that time. I was part of a troupe of kids working with the director and writer Liz Swados, and that winter, Liz and I got together and she recognized that I was in a lot of psychic distress. She pursued it to the point where I confessed to her that I

was trapped in this relationship with my cousin and wanted to get out, but felt like he would fall apart if I left him. She helped me get out. She gave me the words and explained to me also that 25-year-olds don't have sex with 14- and 15-year-olds, that that's wrong, that I was not the guilty party and I could leave (Jung, 2017, [no pagination]) interview.

The victim's lack of knowledge and experience—a direct consequence of being a queer exile and oppositional idealisation of queer relationships—was exploited by his abusers, but the abuse becomes untenable once new language that names the abuse is learned. This lack of knowledge and experience is expansive due to the queer exile's young age; knowledge about consent, about same-sex relationships, about how age differences in sexual relationships—all of these are factors that allow for victimisation, along with the victim's desires for belonging. To be clear, I am not suggesting that the victim's desires are to blame for victimisation, rather I am arguing that sexual and romantic curiosity in young people and feelings of exile overlap and produce opportunity for abuse. These feelings of sexual and romantic curiosity, however, also complicate the issue of consent; like Ortiz, the anonymous victim struggles to speak on the topic of (lack of) consent, recognising he did consent to both relationships, mixing up pleasure, shame and violation, as is demonstrated by the following excerpt:

Interviewer: Does the question of consent feel complicated to you?

Yeah. Sexual abuse is complicated. It's like when you're a kid, right, and somebody accidentally touched your penis with a towel, it feels nice. You can't help that. Like rubbing up against the bed, it feels nice. So if you're little and somebody touches your penis, it's terrifying and shameful. At the same time, neurologically, it's pleasurable. You're left with that forever. You can't help it. Teenagers have to be protected from themselves. **Children have to be protected from themselves.** That's what adults do. They protect them and they create spaces for them like training wheels where they can begin to get ready. In an ideal world. This is not an ideal world (Jung, 2017, [no pagination], emphasis mine).

The issue of consent is complicated because of the positionality of the young queer exile; what this victim and Ortiz confess to is that while they 'consented', they had constricted agency due to their marginal positioning with regards to their abusers. The sentence 'Teenagers have to be protected from themselves' points towards a fallacy in viewing consent as purely a matter of bodily autonomy, and how the idea of the sexless victim/monster paedophile is inherent to current constructions of sexual violence. Unlike mainstream representations of victims of child sexual abuse where the sexless, helpless victim is

invoked, the child in question *did* have the desire to explore his sexuality—as did Ortiz—and this is not in itself exploitative or wrong. Rather, the dichotomy of the sexless victim/monstrous paedophile occludes the ways in which inequalities operate in these abusive relationships, and how sexual and romantic curiosity is harnessed against the queer exile. As Ortiz argues in her memoir, mainstream constructions of child sexual abuse are incomplete; sexual desire, combined with insecurity and lack of knowledge and experience, are precisely what might make child sexual abuse survivors vulnerable to being abused in the first place.[12] Specifically, for queer men and boys, this is risky because their sexuality exists in the margins, particularly in their youth, which results in a lack of parental support, guidance and belonging.

The impact of rape myth acceptance and stigmatizing views of homosexuality on the queer exile should also be considered at this juncture. For example, when the anonymous victim recounts that his parents knew about his relationship with his older cousin, there are speculations we can make about how queer masculinity was perceived; their lack of intervention indicates these parents did not comprehend the victim's relationships with older men as harmful. This lack of comprehension, the invisibility of the queer exile as a victim, could be rooted in the rape myth that men cannot be sexually

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[12] It is important not to generalise this aspect of child sexual abuse, as this is not true for a lot of survivors. However, the experiences of survivors who *did* have sexual desire for their abuser are still significant and go a long way to argue for holistic and age-appropriate sex education that includes queer sex and same-sex attraction from a young age.

abused due to their naturally hypersexual tendencies (Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson, 1992), or an overall perception that queerness mitigates or erases sexual violence suffered by the queer exile, while the rape and violation of heterosexual men is considered 'worse' than the rape of women and gay men (Doherty and Anderson, 2004). This mythology is premised on a hierarchy of harm that reproduces heterosexuality and erases sexual violence against queer men through lingering homophobic social stigma; it is as if all penetrative sex between queer boys and men is considered consensual because of the inherent 'deviance' of homosexuality and the perceived 'emasculation' of the consensually penetrated male body. This social stigma, in the case of the anonymous victim, resulted in the non-intervention of his parents, and for Anthony Rapp, it kept him silent about the harassment he suffered at the hands of Spacey at the age of 14. When Rapp made his allegations against Spacey public, he described being unable to talk about what happened because that would mean outing himself to his family before he was ready to do so. Similarly to Spacey's anonymous victim, Rapp experiences exile when he should be receiving support or intervention, as can be noted in the following excerpt:

> In the days following the party, Rapp said he considered reaching out to Spacey to talk about what had happened. But he never did, and he has no memory of ever telling his mother about it, either. For Rapp, if he had told her right away, it would have meant a larger discussion about his

own sexual orientation at 14, and he wasn't ready to do

that (Anthony Rapp).

The process of coming out is extremely personal, and hinges on the need for protection from familial rejection and its potential consequences. The experience of being in the closet and hiding their sexuality leaves queer people without support and makes invisible the abuses they might suffer. As Kielwasser and Wolf argue in their exploratory essay about mediated heterosexism in television and textbooks, the silence around homosexuality combined with homophobia in media and culture produces self-hating gay, lesbian and bisexual people who are told, 'when told anything at all, that homosexuality is at best a joke, at worst a curse' (Kielwasser and Wolf, 1993, p. 75). This dynamic leaves young gay, lesbian and bisexual people at risk of suicide, violence, isolation and self-hatred (Kielwasser and Wolf, 1993). However, this very real social stigma and exclusion—as is theorised by Demetriou in his suggestion of a masculine hegemonic bloc—can be leveraged or co-opted by abusers to justify abuse and domination through the positionality of 'marginalized' man. This manoeuvre was employed by Spacey (and will be discussed at length in a later chapter), and this is how the anonymous victim characterises it:

[Spacey] is a pedophile. When you look at his statement, you realize also he's profoundly narcissistic. He thinks this is about being caught that he's gay. And then he is

spinning it, right? "Oh, people like gays now. So I'll throw them that. I'll say I'm gay and I will betray my whole community and do something else that conflates pedophilia with male homosexuality." That's great. Thank you for that. And that was probably the thing that made me want to talk more than anything else. How repulsive that was (Jung, 2017).

This characterisation of Spacey's co-optation of queer identity raises questions about perceptions of sexual deviancy in society and how it allows some men to abuse; as Boyle (2019) points out, Spacey had been cultivating a 'sexually deviant' persona even before allegations against him were published. Boyle (2019) argues that for some people, the pleasure of watching Spacey's performance is related to a potential pleasure of believing he assaults boys and men; his deviant persona is part of the entertainment. Furthermore, there is a mythology around refusing to hear 'no' in Hollywood; as the Weinstein case demonstrates, the fact Weinstein refused to hear 'no' for years both in situations of business and towards women gave him power (Boyle, 2019). As Boyle suggests, there is something culturally appealing about sexual transgression and sexual deviance, as long as that transgression is performed by acceptable bodies that are read as heterosexual. There is an investment in blurring abusive and exploitative behaviour towards queer children and modern constructions of homosexuality. Arguably, Spacey's manoeuvre has not been successful as he continues to be shut out from the

entertainment industry, but this could be more about the legibility of his male victims and the monstrosity of paedophilia than an actual societal reckoning about sexual violence. The hybrid hegemonic masculine block, as theorised by Demetriou (2001), is not purely heterosexual or white, but a bloc that 'unites practices from diverse masculinities in order to ensure the reproduction of patriarchy' (p. 337). Demetriou explicitly cites the commoditisation of gay visibility as a strategy of the block: 'gay visibility in commodity culture is thus a notion that links the reproduction of patriarchy and the reproduction of capitalism' (p. 351). Spacey's moment of coming out, where queerness appears as a defence to a contestation of power, is an example of how masculinity adapts to maintain dominance, and the larger structure of white supremacist heteropatriarchal capitalism.

Amin (2017) suggests that 'pederastic modernity' is 'both a symptom and a diagnostic of the relation between (post)colonial racial difference and a range of potentially less spectacular erotic inequalities—such as adult and minor, masculine and feminine, master and pupil, upper-class and working-class, boss and employee—endemic to Western modernity' (p. 43). Erotic inequalities, he puts forth, are the structure to contend with, a similar reasoning to what the anonymous victim suggests when he is asked whether a 15-year-old can have an equitable and healthy relationship with an adult:

No. What you need in a relationship, any relationship, involves a power struggle. But you have to start from some kind of equal footing. And a 15-year-old is a child. Everything is already off-kilter. You're taking from somebody to get this thing you want.

The idea of romantic and sexual relationships being structured by power is central to feminist theorisations on sexual violence (McKinnon, 1981; Jackson, 1996; Kelly, 1996; Gavey, 2005) and in-line with Connell's theorisations of power struggles between genders (2005), but theorisations about abuse in same-sex relationships are scarce. As Amin (2019) puts forth, Spacey's sexual pressuring and assault of teenagers is not different from the scores of cases of important men sexually harassing and assaulting adult subordinates; these are all relationships that are structured through power and where a visible, sometimes physically violent, power struggle occurred. At its core, Amin's concept of 'modern pederasty' is similar to Gavey's argument that every day, taken-for-granted normative forms of heterosexuality work as cultural scaffolding for rape, though Amin's concept indicts the modern West for this structuring specifically and is inclusive of abuses of power in non-heterosexual and racially fetishistic relationships. Both frameworks, and the above cited view of the anonymous victim, link power and sex as inextricable from each other, which is a pattern that has emerged in this thesis. Though there are specific aspects of the Spacey case that define the power structure of non-heterosexual sex, such as issues of queer exile,

idealisation of queer relationships, and lack of knowledge and age appropriate guidance, the dynamics discussed here are further evidence that sex and power cannot be separated, and that sex can be *both* a site of gendered abuse and a site of pleasure (Amin, 2019), for people of all genders and all sexualities. As such, a power-conscious, gender-inclusive framework for the analysis of sexual violence becomes urgent, with the consciousness that potential co-optation of victimhood and non-hegemonic masculinities as conceptualised by Demetriou as a strategy for domination.

3. Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the positionality of the male victim of sexual violence by starting with a brief analysis of the literature on sexual violence against men. While I view the inclusion of male survivors into the feminist imaginary of victim/survivors as essential to the struggle against sexual violence, I am conscious of hybrid hegemonic masculine bloc as theorised by Demetriou (2001) and the adaptability of masculinities to new social norms in the maintenance of patriarchal structures. As argued by Manne (2018) and Boyle (2019), the malleability of victimhood is often co-opted by men seeking to absolve themselves of abuse allegations, and while I emphasise that men must be included into the canon of survivor/victims, understanding these defence strategies is also urgent.

Drawing on Boyle (2019), Amin (2017, 2019) and Demetriou (2001), I also analysed two articles that disclosed allegations made against Kevin Spacey which centred victim-first narratives about the alleged assaults. I emphasised the specific power dynamics inherent to child sexual abuse and the queer exile, reaching the conclusion that sex and power are inextricable from each other, and that sexual agency is negotiated through what Amin terms sexual inequalities.

Chapter 6: The Hybrid Masculine Bloc Responds to Allegations: Apologies and Non-Apologies

"Princess Carolyn: Thank you so much for meeting me.

Vance Waggoner: Of course!

PC: The Apology Tour can be a hassle, but you've been handling it perfectly. What do you have lined up next?

VW: Well, I'm getting the lifetime achievement at the We Forgive You awards.

PC: You're getting a Forgivie? Damn, your publicist is good." – Bojack Horseman, 2018 [Netflix].

The above excerpt from Netflix's *BoJack Horseman* takes a stab at a phenomenon that has become common in Hollywood in response to #MeToo allegations; the apology tour celebrities engage in when their bad behavior is publicly exposed. The writers of BoJack Horseman hilariously summarize this phenomenon by creating an amalgam of real-life male celebrities who have either misbehaved in public or been accused of abusing power, exposing the pattern that leads to the redemption of public figures; a public apology, followed by a break in public appearances, and a redemption tour that returns the aggressor into the public eye and into entertainment industry work. This pattern, the episode depicts, allows the offending actor to get away with bad

behavior in the long term, rids the audience from the moral dilemma of whether to consume that man's art in good conscience, and provides a recyclable "bad boy" image that can be sold through fictionalized movie characters played by the actor in question.

In October 2017, the public apology became a common response to allegations of sexual violence against powerful men in Hollywood. In this chapter, I analyze public apologies and public denials of wrongdoing by powerful Hollywood men as contestations of feminist challenges to abuses of power, in an attempt to answer the following research questions: How do hegemonic masculinities react when confronted with allegations of sexual violence? To what extent, and in what ways, are hegemonic masculinities re-constructed and re-asserted in response to allegations of sexual violence and in response to the #MeToo movement? Drawing on broader literature about public apologies to analyze the statements released by Weinstein, Spacey, Louis CK and Donald Trump, I argue that public displays of remorse are a defensive strategy employed by men in an attempt to keep their reputation and power intact, rather than to repair harm—a type of hybridization of masculinity that is seeking to adapt to "new" gender norms while keeping the gender hierarchy more or less intact. A lack of apology—as I will show in my analysis of statements made by Woody Allen, R. Kelly and Bill Cosby—is more in line with Connell's more traditional framework of hegemonic masculinity that seeks to maintain the gender hierarchy without pretence or adaptation to "new" norms.

1. The potential of public apologies in cases of gendered harm

The debate around the moral potentials and limitations of the apology is an emerging field in the subject of philosophy; there is "a substantial body of work dedicated to distinguishing the conditions for a morally and politically adequate public apology, and how these relate to broader issues of historical and collective responsibility, as well as numerous articles theorizing the language, pragmatics, politics, discourse, economics, performance, cultural variation and emotions involved in publicly apologizing" (MacLachlan, 2013, p. 126). This emerging field, however, largely fails to consider gender; normative philosophical thought on the concept of apologies focus on moral-philosophical themes of responsibility, respect and moral emotion, and ignores the significance of gender dynamics, despite how gender is "deeply implicated in some of the most serious harms for which public apology is invoked as a remedy" (MacLachlan, 2013, p. 127). In turn, feminist critiques of philosophy, psychotherapy and restorative justice have exposed the significance and problematics of gender in the practice of apologizing (MacLachlan, 2013). In the next few paragraphs, I will draw on existing literature about public and private apologies and gender, to determine what historical and contemporary gender dynamics construct the practice of the public apology.

Feminist philosophical work has demonstrated how both our moral practices and subsequent philosophical reflections on those practices are implicitly gendered, often in ways that harm or undermine the agency of women (MacLachlan, 2013). The construction of morality is premised on a culture that values white heteropatriarchal practices and lifestyles, and in turn dehumanizes Black and brown women, their families and communities; drawing on examples colonial harm, MacLachlan emphasizes the vilification of indigenous mothers in Australia through colonial parameters of morality and the resulting racist, genocidal policies of family separation that led to the destruction of families and communities (MacLachlan, 2013). In this way, MacLachlan emphasizes the colonial construction of morality, suggesting there are racial, gendered and colonial power dynamics in how harm is (il)legible; indeed, the work of Hartman exposes the ways in which the intersections of Blackness, poverty and queer relations have been criminalized at the service of capitalist extraction through imprisonment (Hartman, 2019), prison abolitionist theorists have noted how the criminalization of survival has disproportionately imprisoned racialised people (Davis, 2003; Law, 2014), and Black feminist theorists have exposed how normative constructions of criminality and morality make harm against Black women and other racialised women illegible (Crenshaw, 1991). Furthermore, MacLachlan complicates the matter of gender in the performance of apologies, arguing that people of different genders are socialized to perform and react to conflict, anger and resentment differently; people

socialized as women are pressured "to be 'compassionate and giving' rather than 'angry and vindictive'" which puts women at risk of "prematurely accepting apologies [and] accepting them for problematic reasons" (2013, p. 135, 136). Most significantly, MacLachlan points out that apologies can often be used to gain control of the rhetorical space, shifting the burden of response from the offender to the victim, concluding that the moral practices employed in society to "repair" gendered harm "may reinforce rather than disrupt the asymmetries between wrongdoer and victim" (MacLachlan, 2013, p. 138).

Literature that critiques the criminal justice system in the US is also relevant for the study of the apology, particularly with regards to theorizations of restorative justice processes as alternatives to incarceration. Scholars like Braithwaite and Daly put considerable importance on the act of apology in restorative justice practices to resolve gendered harm, arguing that an apology can be "a much more powerful ceremony than punishment in affirming moral values that have been transgressed", concluding that an apology has the power to validate the victim's experience and exonerate them of any blame (Braithwaite and Daly, 1994, p. 240). Stubbs warns that Braithwaite and Daly's framing of non-carceral approaches to gendered harm as the "moral" path to justice is dangerous in the context of gendered harms such as domestic violence and sexual assault because of the inherent structure of gender and socialized expectations of women to be forgiving (Stubbs, 2007). Stubbs draws on decades of feminist

work about abusive men and gendered harm to demonstrate how unequal the construction of apologies is: citing Walker, she emphasizes that apologizing is a "well-recognized" domestic abuse tactic that is part of the cycle of violence (1989), and that because violence against women is a main pillar of women's subordination, expecting forgiveness from abused women would mean a significant burden on an already oppressed group (Hampton, 1998 as cited in Stubbs, 2007, p. 177). Finally, Stubbs writes that the needs of victims of gendered harm are substantially different from that of other types of crimes, emphasizing the necessity for safety, exposure of the offender and external validation of their right to live without violence (Stubbs, 2007). Similarly, counselor and writer Lundy Bancroft, who draws on twenty years of experience in rehabilitating male domestic abusers, argues that though most abusers are sorry for their actions, "a man's dramatic remorse shifts the attention back to him; his partner may almost forget his earlier bullying as compassion for his guilt and self-reproach washes over her" (Bancroft, 2003, p. 237). Apologies, Bancroft writes, can often be a part of the cycle of abuse, and does not necessarily mean any harm is being repaired; an apology might be made with the intention of repairing an image, a reputation, rather than with the intention of repairing a relationship or damage done to another person (2003). These problematizations of gender dynamics in apologies are essential; men apologize very rarely for the gendered harm they have caused (Schumann and Ross, 2010; Doyle, 2017b; Tannen, 1998), and when they do, public leniency and socialization

can reinforce already existing gendered oppressions (Stubbs, 2007; MacLachlan, 2013), which means that often the resolutions for gendered harms are nonexistent, lacking or performed to avoid consequences. The limitations and disparities pointed out by Stubbs (2007), MacLachlan (2013) and Bancroft (2003) in the performance of private apologies are relevant within the public sphere, as allegations and public apologies are subject to public scrutiny and, most importantly, public consumption. To be clear, the critiques I highlight here are not to dismiss alternatives to the prison industrial complex, which abolitionist theorists and activists have exposed as a force that re-traumatizes and even criminalizes survivors of sexual violence (Law, 2014; Davis, 2003), but to emphasize gender dynamics that might be reproduced by these processes and how they are premised in normative constructions of heterosexual relations.

There is some evidence that these gendered power dynamics are still relevant to apologies that are performed in the public realm, and that the intention of reputation management is amplified by the public aspect of the performance. Ashraf H.A. Rushdy's analysis of the Clinton-Lewinsky affair and Bill Clinton's subsequent public apologies as an example of a celebrity apology exposes how public apologies can be used to repair the apologizer's public image rather than repairing the harm committed (2018). Rushdy defines a celebrity apology as one given by "someone who is living in public" who caused damage that is often public, and as such, needs to be addressed publicly (2018). In analyzing the two instances where Clinton

apologized, Rushdy argues that after the first apology, the lack of public satisfaction with Clinton's apology led to a second presidential apology, showing more contrition and remorse, thus exemplifying how public apologies are a negotiation between the celebrity and the public (Rushdy, 2018). According to Rushdy, this negotiation defines what the apologizer must say to repair their reputation, exposing how public apologies are often rehearsed and intended to repair image rather than offer the offended party true closure or healing (2018). Indeed, the 2018 revelation that Clinton never apologized to Lewinsky privately despite apologizing in public twice supports Rushdy's findings; citing financial damages he took on because of the affair and his record on women's issues, Clinton said: "I've never talked to her. But I did say, publicly, on more than one occasion, that I was sorry. That's very different. The apology was public" (USA Today, 2018). It is also essential to highlight the disparities in Clinton's and Lewinsky's post-affair lives; Lewinsky has spoken quite openly about becoming a punchline for decades on end, meanwhile Clinton has largely cultivated a successful post-White House career. In a 2015 TED talk against cyberbullying, Lewinsky revealed that in 1998, she was periodically suicidal and was very close to being "humiliated to death" (Lewinsky, 2015); more recently, Lewinsky revealed she suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and wrote that she is "beginning (just beginning) to consider the implications of the power differentials that were so vast between a president and a White House intern […] [where] the idea of consent

might well be rendered moot" (Lewinsky, 2018). As suggested by Rushdy (2018), Clinton's public apology was about the president's public image rather than an attempt to repair any emotional damage he caused Lewinsky. As Rushdy points out, the negotiation of what Clinton said in his apologies indicates what the public wants to consume as an apology so that Clinton is officially redeemed (Rushdy, 2018); this dynamic of public apologies—instead of repairing the gendered harm caused—takes the focus away from the healing of the victim and the wrongdoing of the perpetrator. As such, the public consumption of allegations, apologies and potential redemption are aspects of the public sphere that must be considered when analyzing public apologies generally.

The consumption of public apologies has become ubiquitous in the age of social media, particularly coming from celebrities and corporations. Social media means that a kind of "social pulse" can be taken by PR firms and marketing companies, so image damage control can be tailored and performed quickly to minimize capital loss. A few contemporary cultural critics have already identified this trend with regards to the Me Too movement and the allegations against some powerful men in Hollywood. Kate Knibbs, writer for the website The Ringer, characterized the public apologies issued by the public offenders in 2017 as "crafted with an eye toward eventual image-rehabilitation," arguing that "even the best apology can only reframe bad behavior as shameful mistakes instead of evidence of ingrained traits" (Knibbs, 2017). The apology crafted for the

rehabilitation of the offender's image usually also comes with promises to undergo intensive therapy, donations to women's charities and assurances that the offender has always championed women (Knibbs, 2017). Characterizing sexual assault and harassment as "a few mistakes" through these image-fixing apologies further entrenches the problem; it legitimizes the gendered harm as perpetuated by an individual rather than a part of a collective culture of misogyny and sexual aggression. The public consumption of an apology can also absolve the public from being outraged or angry at what the offender did initially—it offers the public a guilt-less path of consumption, and it characterizes gendered harm as an individual problem rather than as part of a system that must be dismantled. Doyle has a similar perspective; she argues that she does not need apologies from men for committed gendered harms, she simply needs the gendered harm to stop altogether (Doyle, 2017a). The production and consumption of apologies does nothing to fix the actual problem of sexism and misogyny; apologies can only be a solution when they come in tandem with reparations, protection and material change; men's efforts to apologize, Doyle (2017a, [no pagination]) wrote, are "performative male mea culpa," arguing that "men don't have to apologize for sexism[, t]hey have to end sexism," concluding that time would be better spent listening to women that have been harmed by sexism rather than crafting apologies to save face. Additionally, as pointed out by Tannen, public apologies can be particularly problematic as they can result in litigation, which discourages any

harm doer to publicly apologize and fully name the harm they caused. As such, the public apology is not necessarily a tool for redemption or forgiveness, as it will always be weighed down by the possibility of litigation, which means the harm is almost never fully named or atoned for (Tannen, 1998).

MacLachlan's work on apologies, while critical of normative philosophy's perspectives on the apology, offers a framework for effective public apologies; she argues that apologies, even in a gendered context, can "potentially play a role in changing problematic gender dynamics and public conceptions of gender" (MacLachlan, 2013, p. 139).[13] Public apologies can be effective in addressing victims or survivors as "appropriate moral addressees," thus redressing previously private and apolitical matters as public, moral issues (MacLachlan, 2013). The potential MacLachlan describes is extensive, as gendered harm often exists within the scope of private spaces where interactions that are perceived as apolitical and personal rather than about power dynamics in society; apologies, if performed critically, can turn the apolitical into the political, transform the personal into the collective. MacLachlan qualifies this potential depending on how effective the public apology is at "getting the narrative right", emphasizing that "misrepresenting, neglecting or glossing over wrongs, and failing to acknowledge victims and their experience risks re-inflicting harms of silencing and disrespect"

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[13] It's worth noting, however, that MacLachlan is arguing within the context of post-conflict repair and with the assumption that the apology is issued by a government or institutional body rather than a celebrity.

(MacLachlan, 2013, p. 140). The apologizer must appropriately recognize their actions and the harm they caused—but even then, gender complicates how this is understood, as the burden of forgiveness and giving second chances is disproportionately placed on the women. If the victims are simply *objects* of apology and not *subjects* of apology, MacLachlan writes, the private/public dichotomy can be reinforced rather than challenged (2013); an apology can further objectify a victim, which is a central issue of gender inequality and key to sexual violence dynamics. MacLachlan also emphasizes that the wishes of victims must be taken into account, otherwise any resolution risks being paternalistic and/or harmful; *who* is giving the apology, *how* and *where* and "the extent to which the agency of the victims is prioritized in the periods leading up to and following the apology" must all be considered when evaluating apologies for gendered harm (2013). My analysis in the following pages will ask if the apology treats the victims humanely, as deeply harmed people, or as simply objects to apologize for and use further in a quest of moral cleansing. I will consider if the apologies appropriately name the harm done, treat the victims humanely as deeply harmed people, evaluate the power dynamics inherent in the narrative written or issued by the apologizer, and whether the victims' agency is prioritized and engaged with. MacLachlan also urges philosophy scholars who are apology skeptics to view apologies as a process rather than a performance, where the process may include material and political commitments (MacLachlan, 2013). I will engage with

this idea of apologies as a process towards the end of the chapter. In the following pages I will analyze the full apologies issued by Louis CK, Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey and Donald Trump, after they were accused of harassment, assault and/or violently misogynistic language. When collecting this material, I also found a lack of apologies, non-apologies and apologies that were not initially given publicly but became publicly available through other court proceedings, which I engage with later in this chapter. While coding themes for each apology, I found similarities in tone and content which I grouped into three main patterns: transformation or rehabilitation, masculinity in crisis, and appeals to humanity. Some of the themes overlap, and I also address these complexities. I have framed my analysis within existing philosophical and political debates on apologies, especially the work of MacLachlan, as she includes gender analysis in her approach. MacLachlan does not specifically write about masculinity, so this chapter will attempt to extend her framework and respond to the questions I posed earlier: How do hegemonic masculinities react when confronted with allegations of sexual violence? To what extent and in what ways are hegemonic masculinities re-constructed and re-asserted in response to allegations of sexual violence and in response to the #MeToo movement?

All apologies analysed contained a narrative of rehabilitation. Firstly, the abuser admitted to an unspecified wrongdoing, or admitted the possibility of the allegations being true. Kevin Spacey and Donald Trump refer to specific incidents—Spacey for assaulting Anthony

Rapp when he was a minor, and Trump for the Access Hollywood tape—while both Louis CK and Harvey Weinstein apologize for multiple allegations, but they do not specify which assault or assaults they are specifically apologizing for. In all apologies but that of Louis CK's, naming the harm they have caused explicitly is avoided, but it is implied or clearly admitted that some moral rule has been transgressed, as it can be observed in the following excerpts:

> "I've never said I'm a perfect person, nor pretended to be someone that I'm not. I've said and done things I regret, and the words released today on this more than a decade-old video are one of them." – Transcript of Donald Trump's apology issued on October 8th, 2016.

> "I have a lot of respect and admiration for Anthony Rapp as an actor. I'm beyond horrified to hear his story. I honestly do not remember the encounter, it would have been over 30 years ago. But if I did behave then as he describes, I owe him the sincerest apology for what would have been deeply inappropriate drunken behavior […]" – Kevin Spacey, apology issued on October 31st, 2017 on Kevin Spacey's Twitter account.

The lack of direct engagement with the actions that brought these men to issue these apologies is indicated through the language used; "The words released today" and "inappropriate drunken behavior" are two ways the apologizers allude to the allegations but do not name the

actual harm—in Spacey's case, sexual assault of a minor and in Trump's case, a misogynistic admission of a pattern of sexual assault.[14] Trump's apology does not engage with the "words released", while Spacey refers to Rapp's allegations as "his story". While an admission is offered, it's unclear what these men are admitting to as their alleged actions are misrepresented and/or glossed over, and there is no specific naming of the harm they caused. In the case of Weinstein there are multiple allegations against him, of varying degrees of harm and from several different women, but his apology does not reflect the variety of harm he caused—the multiple allegations against him are flattened into a general statement of harm committed against people he worked with:

> "I came of age in the 60's and 70's, when all the rules about behavior and workplaces were different. That was the culture then.
>
> I have since learned it's not an excuse, in the office – or out of it. To anyone.
>
> I realized some time ago that I needed to be a better person and my interactions with the people I work with have changed.

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[14] In footage released on October 8th 2016 in The Washington Post, and originally recorded in 2005, Trump says to Billy Bush: "You know, I'm automatically attracted to beautiful [women] — I just start kissing them. It's like a magnet. Just kiss. I don't even wait. And when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything. […] Grab 'em by the pussy. You can do anything."

I appreciate the way I've behaved with colleagues in the past has caused a lot of pain, and I sincerely apologize for it." - Harvey Weinstein, apology issued on October 5th, 2017 to *The New York Times*.

Again, the apologizer uses neutral language to refer to his harmful actions: "interactions", "[different] rules", "culture", "the way I've behaved". Weinstein does not mention the words "sexual assault" or "sexual harassment," even though these are the allegations against him. Instances of violent harassment, assault and verbal abuse by Weinstein are characterized as "boys' club" behavior that used to be acceptable but is no longer considered ethical; he also fails to mention the cover-ups of his behavior, and the alleged consequences his victims suffered when they attempted to speak up. By blaming the culture and denying his own agency, Weinstein co-opts a narrative of victimhood as a strategy for clearing his reputation; he relates "the way he behaved" to "culture", which deprives him and his victims of agency, normalizing sexual assault and harassment as behavior that depends *solely* on culture rather than both culture and interpersonal practices. While there is a hierarchical system of gender at play in how Hollywood currently functions and functioned in the past, as I discussed in previous chapters, it is patterns of interpersonal practices that partly uphold this system; Weinstein's apology, while not explicitly, draws on feminist critiques of masculinity and uses them to absolve himself. As Manne suggests in her theorization of

"himpathy," the structure of sympathy usually places men at its centre and portrays the abuser as the victim of his own harm (Manne, 2017).

This pattern of using feminist critiques of masculinity to justify harm was also made clear by mentions of a past where this kind of harm was accepted. The implications are as follows: firstly, that by that past's standards, the apologizer was morally upstanding, and secondly, that the harm was such a long time ago that it has been forgotten and has no real consequences in the present. In Spacey's apology, he mentions when the assault allegedly happened twice but still does not name exactly what his victim alleges happened, using qualifying language like "would have been" rather than affirming what happened:

> "I have a lot of respect and admiration for Anthony Rapp as an actor. I'm beyond horrified to hear his story. I honestly do not remember the encounter, **it would have been over 30 years ago**. But if I did behave then as he describes, I owe him the sincerest apology for what **would have been deeply inappropriate drunken behavior**, and I am sorry for the feelings he describes having carried with him **all these years**." – emphasis mine.

Similarly, Trump and Weinstein mention the time period of when their actions took place to justify their actions. In mentioning culture and time, these men are utilizing a narrative of gendered progress that is generally accepted contemporarily: firstly, that culturally sexual

assault and harassment used to be more accepted and secondly, that a culture of hegemonic masculinity is to blame for their actions as men. Therefore, hegemonic masculinity as *inherent culture,* rather than a complex system of socialization, interpersonal practices and macro- and micro- systems, is used as justification for gendered harm, a crisis in masculinity is confronted through the recognition of hegemonic masculinity, and a narrative of progress and rehabilitation is created. The mainstreaming of the feminist movement, the popularity of the phrase "toxic masculinity", and a general societal recognition that gender inequality is something men must reckon with, has been harnessed as a marketable narrative of rehabilitation for sexually violent public men; but this narrative generally focuses on men overcoming hegemonic masculinity (popularly known as "toxic masculinity") without relinquishing any power or suffering consequences for their actions. In these apologies, harm done to women is characterized as a part of struggling with masculinity, thus explaining the abuse of power with the argument of socialization—the argument of "he could not help himself" here does not focus on the survivor's dress or body, but on the idea that men's socialization *forces* them to abuse women as a rule. As feminist discourse became more accessible, and popularly marketable (Zeisler, 2016), powerful men were able to co-opt feminist perspectives on "toxic masculinity" to negotiate their public apologies for gendered harm they have caused. Where before negotiations were not (or did not appear to be) visibly about gender (eg. Bill Clinton's apology negotiation with the

public), the #MeToo movement has squarely focused on gender power dynamics, which has resulted in a hybridization of masculinity through public apologies and allusions of "progressive" masculinities. In some apologies, enlisting the help of feminist women is part of this hybridity, or the apologizer mentions his track record on women's issues generally to indicate he empathizes with gender inequality issues, as can be seen below:

> "Though I'm trying to do better, I know I have a long way to go. That is my commitment. My journey now will be to learn about myself and conquer my demons. **Over the last year I've asked Lisa Bloom to tutor me and she's put together a team of people.** I've brought on therapists and I plan to take a leave of absence from my company and to deal with this issue head on. **I so respect all women and regret what happened.** I hope that my actions will speak louder than words and that one day we will all be able to earn their trust and sit down together with Lisa to learn more. **Jay Z wrote in 4:44 "I'm not the man I thought I was and I better be that man for my children." The same is true for me. I want a second chance in the community but I know I've got work to do to earn it.** I have goals that are now priorities. Trust me, this isn't an overnight process. **I've been trying to do this for 10 years and this is a wake-up call. I cannot be more**

remorseful about the people I hurt and I plan to do right by all of them." – Weinstein

"**Anyone who knows me knows these words don't reflect who I am**. I said it, I was wrong, and I apologize. I've traveled the country talking about change for America, but my travels have also changed me. **I've spent time with grieving mothers who've lost their children, laid-off workers whose jobs have gone to other countries, and people from all walks of life who just want a better future.** I have gotten to know the great people of our country, and I've been humbled by the faith they've placed in me. **I pledge to be a better man tomorrow and will never, ever let you down**." – Trump

"There is nothing about this that I forgive myself for. **And I have to reconcile it with who I am.** Which is nothing compared to the task I left [my victims] with. I wish I had reacted to their admiration of me by being a good example to them as a man and given them some guidance as a comedian, including **because I admired their work.** […]I have spent my long and lucky career talking and saying anything I want. **I will now step back and take a long time to listen.**" – Louis CK

Weinstein enlists Lisa Bloom, the daughter of women's rights lawyer Gloria Allred, to tutor him in his quest to be a better man; Trump

notes that observing and meeting less privileged people than himself has taught him how to be better; CK assures that he admires his victims' work and will take a long time to listen. It is essential to note how feminism and women are being objectified through a perspective of feminism as *moralizing*; when feminism is understood as moralizing, as a force where the only intention is to shame others, it can be easily dismissed; "[the offending party] can feel bad as a way of doing nothing, and we [engage in feminist critique] because we want something to be done" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 151). This perception of feminism as moralizing (shaming) rather than a call for action, a call for accountability, or even a movement that demands the dismantling of social relations as we know them, helps powerful men and those complicit in their harm to do nothing, objectifying and co-opting feminist critiques to clear their reputations.

In this section, I analyzed public apologies issued by Harvey Weinstein, Donald Trump, Kevin Spacey and Louis CK, showing how public apologies released by men accused of sexual violence are drawing on feminist critiques of masculinity and culture to appear more progressive. In these performances of public apologies, a narrative of progress and rehabilitation is created, based on the assurance that a crisis is taking place because moral codes around gender have changed overtime. The apologizers mentioned in this section issued apologies after accusations against them were made public in the media, which indicates the motivation for the apology was not that they experienced remorse at harming a person (or

persons), but that their harm was made public and they needed to manage or clear their reputation. This indicates that hegemonic modes of masculinity are adapting to new "feminist" standards of gendered morality and is supportive of Demetriou's masculine hegemonic bloc theory.

2. Non-apologies: Masculine Rationality and Discrediting Accusers Through Rational Dominance

In this section I engage with the *absence* of apology from famous men accused of sexual violence by analyzing statements made by R. Kelly, Bill Cosby and Woody Allen. I engage with some of the narratives that are employed to deny wrongdoing and ask how these narratives construct or maintain hegemonic masculinity. Rather than collecting all responses—in Woody Allen's case, for example, the accusation against him was filed and made public in 1992, so there are almost three decades of statements or lack of statements to sort through—I focused on the most contemporary pieces of text I could find, preferably ones that responded to the accusations directly; I am using an open letter published in *The New York Times* on February 7th, 2014, as a response to his adoptive daughter Dylan Farrow's open letter published in the same publication a week before. In the case of R. Kelly, a comprehensive response was issued in a 19-minute song called "I Admit It" that was released on July 23rd 2018, after two decades of media reports of his abuse towards girls and young women, and a new accusation of keeping his most recent victims in a

sex cult that was published on Buzzfeed.com on July 17th 2017. In the case of Bill Cosby, coming across usable texts has been difficult because he has continuously refused to publicly acknowledge allegations against him until 30 accusers and repeated calls for justice forced him to respond in a 2015 interview on ABC News, which I have transcribed and used in my analysis. I have also collected other shorter statements given over the years in interviews, a statement issued by his wife, Camille Cosby, in December 2014, and another response issued by his publicist Andrew Wyatt after Cosby was sentenced to three years in prison in September 2018. In all of the cases analyzed here, the men accused were forced to make statements after decades of allegations and feminist pressure; in 2018, R. Kelly's songs were withdrawn from all of Spotify's public playlists, in 2014 a public letter written by his daughter and victim Dylan Farrow forced a number of Woody Allen contributors to apologize for ever working with him, and in 2018 Bill Cosby was convicted for three counts of sexual assault, forcing his publicist to finally address the accusations publicly.

Ahmed (2010) writes about the refusal to apologize in the context of slavery and colonialism, using the 2001 UN conference on racism where representatives from African countries demanded an apology from Europe and America for their part in the transatlantic slave trade, which was refused by European countries. In the final resolution, European countries avoided the words "apology" and "sorry," opting for, as Ahmed puts it, "*words that did less*" (emphasis hers) to avoid a

class action in the courts of law (2014, p.). Ahmed emphasizes that this refusal repeats the violence of already existing structures of oppression that demanded the apology in the first place, cutting off the speakers and their nations from horrific histories that shape the present (Ahmed, 2014). Ahmed theorizes that refusals are "brick walls, institutional walls; those hardening of histories into barriers in the present, barriers that we experience as physical" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 135). Within the context of her experiences of being a diversity worker in academia, Ahmed also writes that brick walls are what stops us from moving, and we can witness their hardness by coming up against them; coming up against a wall can scratch its surface, but the wall still keeps its place and you become sore; you can feel the "materiality of resistance to transformation" as if it were a physical barrier (Ahmed, 2017). In the cases I analyze here, there is an *absence* of apology that, in accordance with Ahmed's theorizations, I read as a *refusal* of apology; the refusal to apologize here is also a repetition of the violence committed, but the discourses used to *not* apologize are *words that do more*, rather than less, as in Ahmed's analysis. Rather than asserting the innocence of the accused men, the discourses employed in the refusals of apology frame the alleged abuser as the real victims of the situation, often making use of rape myths and misogynistic tropes to construct victimhood; these refusals are walls that come up as barriers to justice in cases of gendered harm. As Ahmed describes them, these walls are hardenings of histories (histories of the accused and histories of women's bodies and rape

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myths) into barriers in the present (they come up when attempting to get justice for harm that was done when they're brought up in the present) that we experience as physical (where can we go after harm is declared inexistent? How can we go around a refusal?); "to bring someone to account is to come up against not just an individual but histories, histories that have hardened, that stop those who are trying to stop what is happening from happening" (2017, p. 140).

The first discursive "wall" found in this case study is the bringing up of past histories to discredit the accuser's credibility; this wall transfers blame to the accuser and refuses acknowledgement of harm. In a "rape-supportive culture," Anderson and Doherty argue that heterosexual norms provide "discursive building blocks from which to construct a denial of rape victim status" (Anderson and Doherty, 2008, p. 7). Victim discrediting strategies work to normalize the violence of rape (Anderson and Doherty, 2008). These victim discrediting strategies can be seen in the following excerpts:

> "I pause here for a quick word on the Ronan situation**. Is he my son or, as Mia suggests, Frank Sinatra's**? Granted, he looks a lot like Frank with the blue eyes and facial features, but if so what does this say? That all during the custody hearing Mia lied under oath and falsely represented Ronan as our son? **Even if he is not Frank's, the possibility she raises that he could be, indicates she was secretly intimate with him during our years.** Not to

mention all the money I paid for child support. **Was I supporting Frank's son? Again, I want to call attention to the integrity and honesty of a person who conducts her life like that**." – Woody Allen Speaks Out, The New York Times, emphasis mine.

"Now I don't like to brag when it comes to me, but I've given back to the community (comes to me, community)

From the non-profit to the charities, but of course, you never hear that about me (charities, about me)

To them n****s that drink my liquor and smoke my stogies

How come you ain't on Facebook pickin' up for me

While you round me most of the day, when you know I'm a good brother

Always got your hands out, it ain't no doubt that y'all n****s ain't nothing but blood suckas (yeah)

Plus, y'all ain't bringing nothing to the table (no, no)

Yeah n****, and you know it's real talk (real talk)

Taking pictures with me for your Instagram but when I need you, you quick to get lost (can't find you)" – R. Kelly, I Admit It, emphasis mine.

"A different man has been portrayed in the media over the last two months. It is the portrait of a man I do not know. It is also a portrait painted by individuals and organizations whom many in the media have given a pass. **There appears to be no vetting of my husband's accusers before stories are published or aired.** An accusation is published, and immediately goes viral." – Statement released by Camille Cosby in 2014, emphasis mine.

The explicit tarnishing of the accusers' credibility appears in all the apologies analyzed here, often painting women as selfish and unreliable. Allen repeatedly comments on his ex-girlfriend's Mia Farrow's character, using their personal history as former spouses as proof of her bitterness; by bringing up Farrow's rumoured affair with Frank Sinatra, Allen paints his ex-girlfriend as inherently dishonest. Similarly, R. Kelly brings his accusers' morality into question by mentioning his own charity work and, though Camille Cosby is not so explicit, she does imply that her husband's accusers are unreliable narrators of their own allegations. When it comes to morality, there is a gendered double-standard; the moral failings of the accusers are discrediting, but the moral failings of the accused men are used to humanize him as an imperfect human. This can be observed in the following excerpts:

"I admit I got so many flaws (yeah)

Told so many lies to these broads (too many lies)

Blew so much money, pop so many bottles, **yeah I fucked a bitch just because (just because)**

Nigga, I had a hell of a day, but I admit I was in my own way (hell of a day, in my own way)

I admit I had my mama cryin' over me, what else can a nigga say (uh)

I admit I can't spell for shit

I admit that all I hear is hits (ohh)

I admit that I couldn't read the teleprompter

When the Grammy's asked me to present (yeah)" – I Admit It, R. Kelly, emphasis mine.

"But we did know because it had been determined and there was no equivocation about the fact that no abuse had taken place. **Justice Wilk was quite rough on me and never approved of my relationship with Soon-Yi, Mia's adopted daughter, who was then in her early 20s. He thought of me as an older man exploiting a much younger woman, which outraged Mia as improper despite the fact she had dated a much older Frank Sinatra when she was 19.** In fairness to Justice Wilk, the public felt the same dismay over Soon-Yi and myself, but despite what it looked like our feelings were authentic and

we've been happily married for 16 years with two great kids, both adopted. (Incidentally, coming on the heels of the media circus and false accusations, **Soon-Yi and I were extra carefully scrutinized by both the adoption agency and adoption courts, and everyone blessed our adoptions.**)" – Woody Allen Speaks Out, The New York Times, emphasis mine.

The mistakes of men are used to humanize them and bring them closer to the reader; the mistakes of women are used to discredit them. Allen's controversial affair with Soon-Yi is presented as benign, and Farrow's sexual history is once again brought up, painting her as a bitter, jilted ex-wife; Burt classifies this strategy as a rape myth: "women 'cry rape' only when they've been jilted or have something to cover up" (Burt, 1980). In the case of R. Kelly, he "admits" to having flaws and committing "minor" immoralities, while his accusers are attention- or money-seeking liars, which is a common rape-supportive discursive strategy (Burt, 1980; Frohmann, 1995; Anderson and Doherty, 2008). Kelly's "minor" immoralities are also representative of what Burt terms "adversarial sexual beliefs," which refers to the expectation that sexual relationships are fundamentally exploitative, that each party to them is manipulative, sly, cheating, opaque to the other's understanding, and not to be trusted" (Burt, 1980, p. 218); in short, Burt argues, if a person believes in an adversarial approach to heterosexual sex, there is a spectrum of violence that is accepted as normative sex. Kelly's mention of lying to "these broads" and

"fuck[ing] a bitch just because" fall within a spectrum of misogyny that is foundational to a rape-supportive society (Gavey, 2005). In a study of denial of sexual offenders within the context of rehabilitation, Blagden et al. write that part of the denial is an adoption of stereotypical views of sex offenders and a conscious distancing of the self from what is stereotypically considered sexually violent behaviour (Blagden, et al., 2014). Most participants in the study saw sex offenders as "sick, dirty, or perverted" which was "at odds with how they viewed themselves" (Blagden, et al., 2014, p. 1708). Blagden et al. cite "identity work" as a reason for this, where the denier can keep a positive view of the self through denial and distancing, arguing that breaking this identity could be potentially damaging to the offender. While this study does not tackle the subject of masculinity specifically, the subject of denial in sexual offenders shines some light into the non-apologies and denials analyzed in this chapter; here, hegemonic masculinity is marked by a distancing of explicitly violent sexual acts but an admission to coercive and/or manipulative sexual encounters that are deemed "acceptable" under normative heterosexual scripts and culture.

The statements I analyzed also often invoked some form of "logic" or "rationality" to support the use of gendered stereotypes and rape myths; anyone who is *rational* or *logical* can see that the accusations are false, and that the good reputation of the accused overrides the allegations. While at face-value, these statements seem harmless, Lloyd (1984) argues that the foundation of philosophical thought

associates maleness with reason and femaleness with the abandonment of reason; maleness, she argues, was aligned with "active, determinate form," while femaleness was associated with "passive indeterminate matter". The "irrationality" of femaleness can be transcended through obedience of the "male" mind (Lloyd, 1984), a dynamic that effectively places femaleness in a subordinate position to maleness. According to Bordo, the Cartesian model of knowledge is based on clarity, dispassion and detachment; an "aggressive intellectual 'flight from the feminine' rather than (simply) the confident articulation of a positive epistemological ideal" (Bordo, 1986, p. 441). The Cartesian detachment, as understood by Bordo as the masculinization of modern thought, is a separation from the emotional, the physical here and now; the true objective person according to Descartes must detach their self from the world (Bordo, 1986). As such, the mind is seen as masculine—active, in control, able to be rational and look beyond the physical world and transcend into pure objectivity—while the body is seen as feminine—passive, accepting of physicality and emotion, unruly and not in control. Bordo also argues that this Cartesian view of knowledge contrasts with the nineteenth-century celebration of feminine sensibility and morality, causing a further separation between feminine and masculine ways of knowing and solidifying a "proper domestic place" for the feminine (Bordo, 1986). Both Lloyd and Bordo see Cartesian conceptions of reason as a part of the gender hierarchy and as tool to

(re)validate women's oppression, and certainly, that is used as a strategy in the excerpts below:

> "I know people are tired of me not saying anything, **but a guy doesn't have to answer to innuendos. People should fact check**. People shouldn't have to go through that and shouldn't answer to innuendos." – Bill Cosby

> "I admit I fuck with all the ladies, that's both older and young ladies (ladies, yeah)

> But tell me how they call it pedophile because that shit is crazy (crazy)

> **You may have your opinions, entitled to your opinions** (opinions, opinions)

> But really am I supposed to go to jail or lose my career **because of your opinion**" – R. Kelly

> "I naïvely thought the accusation would be dismissed out of hand because of course, **I hadn't molested Dylan and any rational person would see the ploy for what it was. Common sense would prevail.**" – Woody Allen

Invoking rationality (re)asserts masculine dominance of what is moral and what is not; who can be flawed (the accused), and who cannot (the accuser); as a discursive practice, it is consistent with Connell's conceptualizations of hegemonic masculinity, an imposition of male

rationality that discredits the accusers and frames the men as the real victims.

The invocation of rationality and the normative constructions of morality it reasserts is closely related to constructions of the traditional family, especially in the cases of Cosby and Allen. In their denials of wrongdoing, there is an investment in demonstrating morality through discursive mentions of the heterosexual family, with the implication that the accusers are immoral homewreckers. In the case of Cosby, these constructions are intertwined with his image as a patriarch in American pop culture, where Cosby's history as TV's Black father-figure persona through the character of Dr. Huxtable is invoked along with the actor's work on civil rights:

> "Dr. Cosby has been one of the greatest civil rights leaders in the United States for over the last 50 years. **He has also been one of the greatest educators of men and boys over the last 50 years**. This was not pointed out to the jury or allowed in court because the racist and sexist mass media was attacking and denouncing Dr. Cosby whenever his lawyers even hinted there was racism and sexism present." – Bill Cosby's lawyer, emphasis mine.

> "I met my husband, Bill Cosby, in 1963, and we were married in 1964. The man I met, and fell in love with, and whom I continue to love, is the man you all knew through his work. He is a kind man, a generous man, a funny man,

and a **wonderful husband, father and friend**. He is the man you thought you knew." – Bill Cosby's wife Camille Cosby, emphasis mine.

In theorizing Black role models for masculinity in America media, Collins argues that Cosby's Huxtable appears in contrast to more obviously stigmatized images of Black working-class masculinity, and as a social script for African American men looking for acceptance in a desegregating America (Collins, 2006). Collins argues that Cosby's positionality as a non-threatening Black patriarch figure is supportive of a hierarchy of social relations where Black men must "submit to white male authority in order to learn how to become a man." (2006, p. 154). While Cosby's past as a civil rights activist is called upon to construct racial kinship and draw support from his community, Collins reminds us that middle-class Black men in the public eye "increasingly fail to defend African American interests because they fail to defy White male power" and "they tolerate and in many cases collude in reproducing the conditions in the inner city" (2006, p. 154); indeed, though Cosby presents his civil rights activism as an evidence of goodness, his racial politics have been criticized as integrationist, rather than liberatory or radical (Henderson, 2014). Notably, most of Cosby's rebuttals to accusations have come from other people rather than Cosby himself; Camille Cosby's defence plays into existing mythologies and social narratives that are supportive of the heterosexual family and white hegemony by reaffirming her husband's unthreatening and respectable Black

masculinity. Ideologically, families socialize their members within a hierarchy that exists within the framework of the family and that sets up and reinforces the societal hierarchy; "individuals typically learn their assigned place in hierarchies of race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, nation, and social class in their families of origin" (Collins, 1998, p. 64); as such, "the family" serves to naturalize the hierarchies present in American society, and this happens through silence and the privileging of male pain within communities (Collins, 1998).

The idea of family is also extremely present in Allen's statement to the press in 2014; eager to dispel any negative perceptions of his long-term romantic relationship Soon-Yi, who the public perceived as his stepdaughter though she was never formally adopted by him (nor was he married to Mia Farrow), Allen cites the length of his marriage to Soon-Yi and his adopted children. Allen also states that he was "carefully scrutinized" by the authorities during the adoption process, implying his family structure—and consequently, his morality as a man—has been thoroughly vetted and approved by official authorities, as can be seen in the following excerpt:

> "In fairness to Justice Wilk, the public felt the same dismay over Soon-Yi and myself, but despite what it looked like our feelings were authentic and we've been happily married for 16 years with two great kids, both adopted. (Incidentally, coming on the heels of the media circus and false accusations, **Soon-Yi and I were extra**

carefully scrutinized by both the adoption agency and adoption courts, and everyone blessed our adoptions.)"

– Woody Allen, emphasis mine.

While Allen frames the scrutiny he suffered as a consequence of false allegations against him, understandings of social institutions and social policies in the United States are "often constructed through family rhetoric" and are generally beneficial to the patriarch (Collins, 1998, p. 63). Indeed, Allen often draws on the benefits of his heterosexual family to re-assert his morality and frame his accusers as bitter and jealous, particularly using his relationship with Soon-Yi as evidence of his normativity. Both Allen and Soon-Yi tend to frame their relationship as one that suffered persecution because they met and fell in love when Allen was still in a relationship with Farrow, who is Soon-Yi's adopted mother. In 1992, Soon-Yi stated: "I'm not a retarded little underage flower who was raped, molested, and spoiled by some evil stepfather — not by a long shot," (Soon-Yi Speaks: 'Let's Not Get Hysterical', 1992, [no pagination]) and has continued to re-assert her own agency in her relationship with Allen over the years. Despite this, it is essential to note how her assertions of agency play into dichotomous views of sexual violence where the abuser is monstrously sexual (an "evil stepfather") and the victim is sexless and easily manipulated (a "retarded little underage girl"). The reality, as Soon-Yi's continued relationship with Allen seems to indicate, is much murkier and complicated; Soon-Yi and Allen both deny any wrongdoing or abuse within the framework of "consent or lack of

consent" or "rape or not rape", which Gavey argues is a binary distinction that overlooks a whole range of sexual experiences that fall "uncomfortably into the cracks between these two possibilities" (Gavey, 2005). This framework is useful for the re-assertion of hegemonic masculinity as it ossifies monsters versus victim norms that are barriers to understanding sexual violence as systemic and on a spectrum of harm—and is premised on the idea of normative heterosexuality as inherently moral. Farrow's destruction of Allen's family, for example, is referenced several times, as can be seen in the following excerpts:

> "[After the charges were cleared] **Mia took custody of the children and we went our separate ways.**

> "**I was heartbroken**. Moses was angry with me. Ronan I didn't know well because Mia would never let me get close to him from the moment he was born and Dylan, whom I adored and was very close to and about whom Mia called my sister in a rage and said, "He took my daughter, now I'll take his." I never saw her again nor was I able to speak with her no matter how hard I tried. I still loved her deeply, and felt guilty that by falling in love with Soon-Yi I had put her in the position of being used as a pawn for revenge. Soon-Yi and I made countless attempts to see Dylan but Mia blocked them all, **spitefully knowing how much we both loved her but totally indifferent to the**

pain and damage she was causing the little girl merely to appease her own vindictiveness.” – Woody Allen, emphasis mine.

Farrow's lack of morality is premised on old sexist tropes of deviant women destroying the family; this framing directly draws on the white hegemony of the family that organizes the gender hierarchy and patriarchal supremacy. The concept of family, contrasted with Mia's spitefulness and vindictiveness, once again evokes a binary model of morality where the patriarch is the victim of the allegations against him.

If Cosby and Allen draw on traditional constructions of the family to deny wrongdoing, the case of R. Kelly's refusal of apology demonstrates how flexible constructions of hegemonic masculinities can be when male power is challenged. While Kelly still discursively imposes morality through male rationality like Cosby and Allen do, the construction of his victimhood hinges on his image of a progressive, sexually liberated Black man. In an article about black masculinity and hip-hop, Jonathan Gray discusses the formation of a "coherent masculine identity" for young black men through hip-hop's Platinum Age, from 1995 to 2006; Gray argues that Platinum Age hip hop encouraged a less overtly political Black masculinity that feels more authentic but can only be heterosexual and urban, and that a close reading of these rap lyrics can reveal the contradictory messages about masculine identity internalized by some young black men

(Gray, 2010). Through analyzing Jay-Z lyrics, Gray emphasizes the contradictions in hip-hop, where the matriarch is seen as untouchable, and other women are subjected to degradation, misogyny and purely transactional—never sentimental—relationships with the rapper (Gray, 2010). As such, this masculinity is oppositional to mainstream, traditional Black masculinity that is the "respectable" way to live and present oneself in the white hegemonic culture (Gray, 2010)—Kelly's masculinity then, exists in opposition to Cosby's more traditional hegemonic masculine practices. Within this context, hip-hop is positioned in contrast to a general puritanical and "respectable" American culture, and hip-hop's sexual expressivity is presented as sexual freedom; this has resulted in further stereotyping of young black women as both hypersexual and easily accessible, "torn between the politics of respectability and a bizarre version of 'sexual liberation'" (Sharpley-Whiting, 2007, p. 65).[15] In Kelly's refusals of apology, he draws on this oppositional Black masculinity that is neither monogamous or premised on white hegemony; these non-hegemonic practices are appropriated by Kelly to make his domination of women less overt and appear more progressive, as suggested by Demetriou. An example of this strategy can be read in the excerpt below:

"I admit it, I admit it I did (yeah)

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[15] It is important to emphasize here that this is not a unique feature of hip-hop as a genre and subculture.

I done fucked with a couple of fans (fans)

I admit that I'm a gift and a curse (gift and a curse)

I admit that I don't go to church (no, no)"

Kelly's explicit rejections of respectable blackness constructs him as a progressive man whose only immorality is lack of respectability ("I don't go to church") and his uncaring and objectifying attitude towards women ("I done fucked with a couple of fans"); because these aspects of Kelly exist outside a more traditional Black masculinity, the transgressiveness of his masculinity can masquerade as a defiance to the status quo rather than a reconfiguration of it. When Kelly does mention his family, through invoking his kids and their suffering because of the allegations against him, he makes a direct connection to the oppression of black people in America:

"**Robert, Jay, and Joanne, my kids**

What you hearin' out here about dad, guys I'm sorry for this (sorry)

I'm so sorry, I can't imagine what y'all must be goin' through (oh, through)

Every day it's somethin' about me, my god, it must be killin' you (killin' you)

(…)

Daddy just need y'all to trust, and believe in me (trust, in

me)

I admit that I've told the truth (told the truth)

And still not free (not free)

Still wanna hate me (yeah)

Still wanna stone me (stone me, yeah)

Still wanna chain me (chain me, yeah)

I think they wanna kill me"

As I have previously discussed in the R. Kelly chapter by drawing on Collins, the idea of racial kinship can often be used to force survivors of gendered harm into silence; as Crenshaw has pointed out, racial solidarity is rarely afforded to Black women who are victims of sexual assault—instead, this solidarity is given to Black men who are accused of rape because of a history of false accusations being levelled against Black men to justify their lynching (Crenshaw, 1991). The invocation of racial victimhood and the family position the category of race against gender, similarly to how Clarence Thomas successfully reframed Anitta Hill's allegations against him in 1954; as Collins incisively argues, male anti-racist leaders have continuously believed that "Black women's suffering under racism would be eliminated by encouraging versions of Black masculinity whereby Black men had the same powers that White men had long enjoyed" (2006, p. 217).

3. Conclusion

In this chapter, I analyzed apologies and non-apologies issued by famous men after their power was challenged by public allegations of gendered harm. I explored the following research questions: How do hegemonic masculinities react when confronted with allegations of sexual violence? In the cases of public apologies, I noted how the public apologies issued by Harvey Weinstein, Donald Trump, Kevin Spacey and Louis CK, draw on feminist critiques of masculinity and culture to appear more progressive; in an attempt of image-management, a narrative of progress and rehabilitation is created, based on the assurance that a crisis is taking place because moral codes around gender have now shifted. This re-construction positions the apologizer as the victim of his own domination and gendered harm; I concluded that this indicates that hegemonic modes of masculinity are adapting to new "feminist" standards of gendered morality. My analysis demonstrates the usefulness of Demetriou's (2001) theorisation of the masculine hegemonic bloc, as in the exploration of apologies it is evident that the act of admitting fault and apologizing are strategically adopted by men in an attempt to maintain their power intact. My analysis also demonstrates that apologies can be a part of how hegemonic masculinities react and are re-constructed when confronted with allegations of sexual violence.

Conversely, the lack of apologies I draw on misogynistic rape myths and a re-assertion of male morality through discourses of the family.

In the cases of Woody Allen and Bill Cosby, appeals to the respectability of the accused in contrast with the immorality of the accuser came up often, seemingly in direct challenge of feminist critiques creating new social moralities around gender and gendered harm. The non-apology released by R. Kelly was the outlier of this section as his Black masculinity is constructed in opposition to respectable Black masculinity; however, I concluded that Kelly's lack of apology still supports the gendered hierarchy and seeks to maintain his reputation through calls of racial kinship and victimization. Kelly and Cosby's race and difference in approaches demonstrates how hegemonic masculinity can be flexible depending on culture, generation, class, and—notably for this thesis—challenge of masculine power. My conclusions on the lack of apologies of Cosby, Kelly and Allen are also supportive of Demetriou's masculine hegemonic bloc, demonstrating the adaptability of men and masculinities in different locations and subcultures in American society. Within these apologies, there is also a construction of victimhood, sometimes through the language of liberation and anti-racism as is the case for Cosby and Kelly; in these instances, histories of oppression are invoked to construct victimhood, thus erasing the actual victimization of the people they harmed and making them illegible as victims. These findings, particularly where the victims are Black women and girls, support the theories of Crenshaw (1991) and Collins (2004) on the intersections of race, gender and legibility of

Black women as victims and their subsequent criminalization by the state.

Conclusion: Continuum Thinking, Hybridity and Abolition

In this section I will summarize my research purpose, my findings and where my research stands within a wider scope of my research field. I will also discuss the limitations of my project and formulate recommendations to match my findings. Additionally, I will recommend some solutions for feminist movement(s) seeking to respond to hybridization of masculinities through the incorporation of feminist language and non-hegemonic masculine practices as a defence strategy employed by abusers. I demonstrate in this thesis how the hybrid hegemonic bloc as theorized by Demetriou (2001) appears as a response to challenges to masculine power, attempting to re-assert power by controlling the public narrative and I will attempt to sketch out what this means for future research and for abolitionist feminisms seeking to build transformative processes of accountability outside of the carceral system. I will then reflect on what this project has taught me and possible avenues for future research.

1. Recapitulation of purpose and findings

In this thesis, I investigated the construction of hegemonic masculinity in high profile cases of alleged sexual violence in Hollywood. My research questions were concerned with how three case studies of famous men—Harvey Weinstein, R. Kelly and Kevin Spacey—being accused of sexual violence exposed dominant social

constructions of gender and sexual violence, and how hegemonic masculinities re-assert themselves when challenged after the allegations are made public. In the next few paragraphs, I will summarize my findings in each of the case studies.

My research questions are:

- How do hegemonic masculinities react when confronted with allegations of sexual violence?

- How do case study analyses of Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey and R. Kelly expose dominant social constructions of gender and sexual violence?

- How do these dominant social constructions draw upon, reproduce or challenge racialized heteronormative constructions of hegemonic masculinity?

What I have demonstrated overall is the usefulness of Demetriou's concept of the hybrid hegemonic masculine bloc in unpicking the mechanisms by which hegemonic masculinities react and are reconstructed when confronted with allegations of sexual violence.

In Chapter 3, I analysed the case against Harvey Weinstein, as presented in the two articles that "broke" the story. This is the case that moved so many survivors to speak out under the MeToo hashtag. I found that Weinstein's case was in line with Connell's theorizations on hegemonic masculinity as a practice of social relations within a system of gender hierarchies. Connell theorized four structures as

major elements of the gender order—labour, power, cathexis, symbolism—and I found that the initial reporting of the case suggested Weinstein exploited all these axes when perpetrating sexual violence and covering up his violence. My analysis of Weinstein's embodiment of hegemonic masculinity within these structures exposes how they are interlinked and maintained through relational practice. We might read Weinstein, as Levine (2018) suggests, as an "embodiment of capital" who uses its power against "women as workers" and ultimately, all women and all workers; hegemonic masculinity is employed to maintain the structure of heteropatriarchal white hegemonic capitalism. I found that the structures of cathexis and symbolism, as suggested by Gavey (2005), serves as "cultural scaffolding" for a continuum of sexual violence (Kelly, 1988). My analysis showed how personal practices that maintain hegemonic masculinity can impact the career of women through external and internal structures of power; the inherent vulnerabilities created by capitalist wage relations make women a target for sexual violence, which in turn stratifies women's positions in society. I also noted how Weinstein went on to become the figure of a "monstrous rapist" in media coverage of sexual violence, despite his violence being widely understood as an open secret in Hollywood, which I have argued omits the structures that allowed him to operate and cover up his violence for so long; this matches my theory of masculinity being perceived through a dichotomy of victims and villains, rather than understanding it as a constructed category of power and exploitation.

In Chapter 4, I analysed the case against R. Kelly—as presented primarily in the documentary series Surviving R Kelly—to ask the following questions: How does this case study analysis expose dominant social constructions of gender and sexual violence? How do these dominant social constructions draw upon, reproduce or challenge racialized heteronormative constructions of hegemonic masculinity? By introducing Demetriou's concept of the hybrid hegemonic bloc, I noted how non-hegemonic masculinities have the potential to enforce domination. I argued that Kelly's potential for domination is tightly bound up with myths of Black capitalism that create affective relationships between marginalized public and the success of individual men; in turn, Black women are illegible as victims due to a history of hypersexualization through enslavement and the pressure to protect the success of individual Black men who historically constructed as connected to racial liberation. It is also essential to note that Kelly's Black hegemonic masculinity is largely sanctioned by white hegemony, and I identify his membership in the hybrid hegemonic bloc as a strategic construction of a "diverse" elite of men that appears to be progressive but does not reconfigure the hierarchy of power. Additionally, Black hegemonic men are also able to draw on histories of oppression to further construct victimhood when dodging accountability; similarly to the Clarence Thomas vs. Anita Hill case, Kelly and his supporters discursively construct calls for accountability as a part of the United States' violent history of racial lynchings, thus conflating justice for Kelly's survivors with

anti-black racism. More broadly, these contemporary constructions of Black male success, the pressure to protect it and the illegibility of Black women's victimization have violent consequences for Black survivors of sexual abuse; the criminalization and subsequent incarceration of survivors is noted and warned against by abolitionist feminists (Law, 2014).

In Chapter 5, I analysed the case against Kevin Spacey to examine discourses around men's violence against men, concluding that the vulnerability of queer men and boys goes beyond gender presentation and sexuality, as there are material conditions that define a queer boy's positionality in society; these include lack of knowledge, low self-esteem, the consequences of having a stigmatized social identity and fear of social rejection. These material conditions are shaped by the structures of power and sexuality, as having a non-normative sexuality results in marginalization and lack of resources. While I view the inclusion of male survivors into the feminist imaginary of victim/survivors as essential to a unified struggle against sexual violence, I am conscious of hybrid hegemonic masculine bloc as theorized by Demetriou and the adaptability of masculinities to new social norms in the maintenance of patriarchal structures. As argued by Manne (2018) and Boyle (2019, 2020), the malleability of victimhood is often co-opted by men seeking to absolve themselves of abuse allegations, and while I emphasize that men must be included into the canon of survivor/victims, understanding these defence strategies is also urgent. In analysing two articles that disclosed

allegations made against Kevin Spacey which centred victim-first narratives about the alleged assaults and drawing on Boyle (2019), Amin (2017, 2019) and Demetriou (2001), I emphasized the specific power dynamics inherent to child sexual abuse and the queer exile, concluding that sex and power are inextricable from each other.

In Chapter 6, I analyzed two mechanisms of defense public men use when accused of sexual violence; public apologies and nonapologies. My analysis showed how the public performance of remorse and apology serves to re-construct and re-assert dominance when men's power is being challenged. I argue that this is a mechanism of hybridization that draws on the dichotomy of villains and victims, where the accused men are constructed as the biggest victims of their own violence; I identified this tactic as a strategic hybridization of masculinity, where the accused man admits wrongdoing to dodge accountability. Conversely, a lack of apology is another tool used in defense of male power, and I found this strategy to be more in line with the original conceptualization of Connell's hegemonic masculinity theory. Similar to public apologies, public non-apologies also hinge on the construction of victimhood, drawing on the morality of the accused through discourses of family and respectability and implying the immorality and lack of respectability of the accusers through misogynistic and racist rape myths. The nonapology released by R. Kelly was the outlier of my analysis, as his Black masculinity is constructed in opposition to respectable Black masculinity; however, I concluded that Kelly's lack of apology still supports the gendered

hierarchy and seeks to maintain his reputation through calls of racial kinship and victimization. Kelly and Cosby's blackness and the different approaches in responding to accusationg demonstrates how flexible masculinity can be, depending on culture, generation, class, and—notably for this thesis—challenge of masculine power. My conclusions on the nonapologies of Cosby, Kelly and Allen are also supportive of Demetriou's masculine hegemonic bloc, demonstrating the adaptability of men and masculinities in different locations and subcultures in American society.

My overall findings indicate that sexual violence takes place along the axis of the gender hierarchy as theorized by Connell and Pearse (2015); power, labour, cathexis and symbolism are all exploited and manipulated by abusers, and the current hierarchies allow for sexual violence to take place. This hierarchy and the vulnerabilities it creates are scaffolded through cultural constructions, as theorized by Gavey (2005), and I suggest that way of exposing this cultural scaffolding is viewing sexual violence in a continuum as theorized by Kelly (1988) which might "enable women to make sense of their own experiences by showing how 'typical' and 'aberrant' male behaviour shade into one another" (Kelly, 1988, p. 75). Viewing sexual violence as a continuum is also essential for exposing the flexibilities and strategic adoptions of non-hegemonic practices that are inherent to the hybrid masculine bloc as theorized by Demetriou (2001). My analysis demonstrated how the hybrid hegemonic bloc attempts to maintain power through reputational management, claims of victimhood and

invocations of racist and misogynistic rape myths, which are mediated through categories of gender, class, race and sexuality. My research has shown that when challenged, men and masculinities tend to adapt and strategize to re-assert dominance and maintain the status quo through more palatable and "progressive" displays of masculinity; I argue that this takes place within a dichotomy of villains and victims, where men distance themselves from the "real" toxic villains and position themselves as victims of their own violence, thus recentring the conversation on men's feelings and struggles. As Gill and Orgad (2018, p. 1320) point out, #MeToo's overfocus on individual abusers occludes how the "monstrous capitalist, patriarchal and sexist system that has produced, sustained and rewarded these 'bad apples' over decades"; I would argue that sexual violence itself thrives on discourses of villains and victims that is mediated through class, gender, race and sexuality.

2. Relationship with previous research

I view my research as a part of emerging literature on #MeToo and within existing feminist literature on gendered harm and sexual violence. In particular my focus has been to analyse through the case studies of Weinstein, Spacey and Kelly, how a discussion of the sexual violence perpetrated by these high profile, celebrity abusers adds to our theoretical understandings of hegemonic masculine practices and the interconnections between sexual violence and hegemonic masculinity. Throughout this thesis, I am largely in

conversation with Boyle's book on Weinstein, #MeToo and feminism; Boyle writes that that #MeToo as a discourse is "fundamentally about gender relations and contemporary understandings of feminism," but that mainstream mediations of the movement "remain profoundly contradictory and ambivalent" (Boyle, 2019, p. 120), cautioning that conclusions about the movement must be understood historically and contextually. In my work, I attempted to address the issues raised by #MeToo masculinities contextually and historically to better understand the question of sexual violence in Western society. Also on the subject of #MeToo, scholars have argued that #MeToo still lacks an intersectional lens when it comes to race and gender (Onwuachi-Willig, 2018; Adetiba and Burke; 2018), that the issues of women of colour are still largely invisible in mainstream feminism (Davis, 2018), that #MeToo has attracted auteur apologism and that this must be tackled by feminist media scholars (Marghitu, 2018), and that #MeToo raises questions about the precarity of work and the importance of centring survivors who are gender non-conforming (Cobb and Horeck, 2018; Berg, 2020). Though I often draw on masculinity studies scholarship, my power-conscious analysis and my perspective of sexual violence as a struggle for power is most in line with abolitionist and socialist feminisms, drawing on Angela Y. Davis (2003) and Silvia Federici (2012). My engagement with masculinity studies was undercut by what Hanmer (1990) characterises as the vices of the field: male scholars in the field of masculinity "write self-serving apologia, do not recognise feminist

scholarship, restrict their questions, use inadequate theoretical perspectives, try to split feminist academics and theory by accepting some and rejecting the rest" (Hanmer, 1990, p. 453). Consequently, my work here can also be seen as a response to the field of masculinities, with the intention to continue the politicization of masculinities and oppose the exclusionary and self-serving practices that Hanmer describes.

3. Limitations of my research

My research is an experimental analysis of public reports of public allegations against very powerful men where I sought to "test" theories of gender and masculinity. While I tried to design my project in a way that considered various intersections of oppression, there are many intersections my project was not able to delve into. Though I dealt with some aspects of class, gender and race, there are many other vulnerable workers in society that are vulnerable due to the gendered division of labour that is not tackled here. A few examples are field laborers, healthcare professionals, retail workers, cleaners, childminders, civil servants, and many other professionals I did not discuss in this thesis. Further research on how the gendered division of labour can make people vulnerable to sexual harassment is recommended, but way beyond the scope of this thesis. Additionally, my methodology raises a few limitations; testing out theory is an interpretation-based method of analysis that is influenced by my situated knowledge as a feminist researcher from the global south.

Therefore, my analysis is heavily impacted by my unique world view and positionality, and there might be millions of other interpretations of these case studies.

4. Implications of Findings and Subsequent Recommendations

1. Broadening the scope of who we consider "survivors of sexual violence" is essential to understanding how sexual violence happens in society; my recommendation is that, when we say "survivors" or "victims", we do not assume gender and include a gender-inclusive praxis. This means survivors can be women, men and non-normative genders.

2. The gendered division of labour and the coercive relationship all workers have with wage labour are conducive to sexual violence and more general abuses of power. Abolishing this division in all sectors of society and advocating for policies that increase financial independence for everyone, but especially women and gender non-conforming people is a good place to start. Collective modes of work and ownership would could be a solution; while unions have worked hard to address sexual harassment issues historically, I believe the abolition of work and the gendered division of work would significantly diminish cases of sexual harassment and violence, as well as other kinds of workplace violence that workers are forced to tolerate in silence because they need a wage to survive.

3. Sexual education on consent and agency that is inclusive of LGBTQ experiences and conscious of class, race, ability and gender would equip young people with knowledge and alternative scripts that might mitigate or stop abuse. The way we talk about agency needs to tackle the constraints of patriarchy, capitalism, heteronormativity and colonialism, as these are systems that curtail our agency and ability to consent.

4. As a prison abolitionist, I believe the challenge in dealing with sexual violence outside of a carceral framework is to create methods of accountability do not reproduce the sanctioning and excusing of violence that abusers already receive from society. When developing transformative justice approaches to sexual violence, it is essential to note that apologies are often a part of the cycle of violence that seeks to reassert masculine dominance over the victim; addtionally, my findings on the hybrid hegemonic bloc indicate that activists seeking to create these processes need to guard against the strategic hybridizations of dominant men. Consequently, I recommend survivor-centred approaches to justice, where the physical removal of the accused from communities is a possibility and where the survivability and well-being of the survivor is the utmost priority; this includes financial support for survivors and creating a world where their body autonomy will always be safe.

5. Concepts such as "emasculation" and "crisis in masculinity" within masculinity studies need to be researched from the perspective of who

they harm the most. My research indicates that these are responses to challenge to power rather than material crises, and a change in focus in masculinity studies with regards to these concepts is urgent. Specifically on masculinity studies, I want to echo Bridges (2019) and Hanmer (1990) in pointing out that the field of masculinity studies often reproduces axes of oppression and conducts research in extraordinarily exclusive ways. As Bridges suggests, this needs to change as soon as possible.

6. Approaching hegemonic masculinity as a hybrid masculine bloc, as suggested by Demetriou (2001), reveals how men and masculinities negotiate shifting gender norms to maintain dominance. Demetriou's framework could be a solution for what Connell and Messerschmidt term the circular argument of hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, the hybridity of the masculine hegemonic bloc must be taken into consideration when researching men and masculinities; the framework of hybridity reminds us that masculinity can look progressive and still oppress, and I think this is a lacking aspect of masculinity literature.

7. One of the responses of men who rape is to relocate the violence in personal terms, while victim/survivors are forced to collectivize simply to be believed. This discursive move dislocates gendered violence from a collective societal issue to one of individual socialization, thus harming victims. The therapization of sexual assault in a postfeminist cultural landscape (McRobbie, 2004, 2008)

for example, has de-collectivized gendered violence into an individual issue of personal healing; returning to collective modes of viewing sexual violence is an urgent task for any movements that seek to honour the needs of survivors.

8. My main focus has been on power and why people who have it abuse others with less power than them. My problem with power is that we expect people to use it well, and then blame individuals for abusing a system that is built on abuse and exploitation; while I recognize this recommendation is incredibly utopic in nature, I recommend that power be decentralized and/or abolished wherever possible.

5. Autobiographical reflection

For quite some time, I have been reluctant to name exactly what this thesis is; an examination of sexual violence that ultimately argues for the abolition of current systems of hierarchy. This reluctance has been mostly about how utopic or impossible my conclusion appears to other people, and how readers might take it; they might ask, "So your conclusion is that nothing works and we have to start from scratch? Would it not be easier to reform what we have currently?" I believe these are good and necessary questions, and I am not politically against working within the current systems we have to make them as survivable as possible. However, in this thesis I have demonstrated how men's domination of women and other marginalized groups happens through cycles of backlash and re-building of power through

strategic adoption of "updated" gender norms, and how this process tends to further marginalize survivors as a group. This partly happens because of the current postfeminist cultural landscape that privileges the social mobility and the voices of a few privileged survivors over other less legible victims under the banner of feminism and women's liberation. In a way, this postfeminist landscape is being matched by the hybrid hegemonic bloc; both sociological phenomena recognize gender inequality as a problem as a way of doing nothing (Ahmed, 2017), naming and recognizing problems to appear to be doing something, to appear progressive, but still arriving at the same stratified, hierarchical, capitalist conclusions. This cycle cannot be broken with diversity and inclusion committees, or through the punishing of individual abusers, or through fake accountability processes that stop at individual apologies and office reshuffles; this cycle calls for a complete re-imagination of society that would truly reorder gendered, raced and classed hierarchies.

As a socialist feminist who is deeply committed to social justice, the epiphany of how "changing things from the inside" is a fool's task came to me several times throughout the years I was working on this thesis. It came to me when my colleagues and I were forced to strike for better working conditions; it came to me when I could not pay my own rent despite having two part-time jobs in a prestigious university; it came to me when a star masculinity scholar was accused of sexual harassment after years of capitalizing on the topic of gender equality; it came to me when I was publicly harassed by a white colleague. If

we want to battle gendered harm, precarity needs to end; everyone should have free housing, a universal basic income, and the freedom to leave dangerous situations without the risk of being incarcerated. The coercive relationship workers have with waged labour specifically stood out as a huge vulnerability throughout my writing of this thesis; the precarity of work, the gendered division of labour, and the growing crisis of poverty are intertwined, and only through policies that seek to truly disrupt these relations of power can these problems be solved. This thesis has solidified my belief that the abolition or redistribution of power is necessary and urgent; collective modes of living, working and organizing are key to achieving women's liberation. When sexual violence is decontextualized into individualized perspectives of empowerment, the fight against gendered violence is weakened. In the last few years, I have tended to believe that a broad feminist anti-capitalist political coalition that seeks to create new futures for all of us rather than reform the current system for a few privileged few is the solution for the problems I tackle in this thesis. As I finish my writing, I cannot think of any other solution to the gender question; either all of us are free, or none of us are.

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