OTAGO ENCYCLOPAEDIA

of

GENDER & MEDIA STUDIES

An open-access encyclopaedia collectively written by Gender & Media students at the University of Otago, New Zealand

Otago Encyclopaedia of Gender and Media Studies

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Gender & Media students at the University of Otago, New Zealand

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Foreword

John Wei

Each year, students in my Gender and the Media course at the University of Otago are assigned to write encyclopaedia entries to share their understandings of gender and the media, which constitute the *Otago Encyclopaedia of Gender and Media Studies* (OEGMS).

This project aims to achieve the following goals:

First, the OEGMS will help showcase student work to highlight the voices of the young generation who grew up in significantly different times compared to their lecturers and professors.

Second, the OEGMS serves as a vehicle for pedagogical innovation to explore new possibilities in academic learning and knowledge transmission, through which students not only learn but create and share their knowledge with others.

Third, the OEGMS is released under a Creative Comments license in a non-profit and open-access model, through which the students are able to engage in public-interest scholarship for knowledge creation.

Finally, the OEGMS may serve as a model of open education for other learners and educators in the community and across the world to transform teaching and learning in tertiary and public education.

The 2021 edition is the first release of the OEGMS. The aim is not to benchmark encyclopaedias written and released by professional researchers and publishers, but to highlight student voices and views in their own words that reflect the interests of the current student cohort.

I would like to thank my colleagues for their support and my students who completed the entries in this encyclopaedia during a nationwide lockdown triggered by the Delta variant of Covid-19. Their resilience is impressive and highly commendable.

Last, I hope this project can lead to further endeavour in teaching innovation and student assessment, as well as other initiatives that can help showcase student work in post-pandemic tertiary education.

Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Assistants and Gender Bias

Taylor Doyle

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is defined as intelligence demonstrated by machines and where technological systems are used to perform tasks which humans normally would (Adams, 2019). Machine learning is a branch of AI with a focus on the use of data and algorithms which imitate human learning and improve accuracy of the machine (IBM Cloud Education, 2020). Machine learning is used in majority of AI machines. Intelligent virtual assistants (IVA's) are one particular form of AI that are embedded either in portable devices or online services (Costa & Ribas, 2019). Virtual assistants handle personal information, and carry out tasks related to peoples private lives (Costa & Ribas, 2019). It is the most commonly used form of AI by society today. AI and machine learning have potential to present machine bias. Machine bias is where "trained statistical models unbeknownst to their creators grow to reflect controversial societal asymmetries" (Prates, Avelar, & Lamb, 2020). Gender bias is one form of bias that can be recognised within AI and machine learning processes. Gender bias constitutes a prejudice against or an inclination towards one gender (Oxford Languages, n.d.).

AI has become extremely common in people's day to day activities. This is attributed to increasing accessibility of digital technologies, and the growing trend of smart devices, for example, phones, computers, watches or speakers. Over 84% of teenagers in the US use an iPhone, and close to half of the US population use some form of virtual assistant (Sutko, 2020). Virtual assistants not only are programmed to complete daily tasks, but anthropomorphization sees virtual assistants increasingly acting as friendly companions, and given human-like traits and features (Costa & Ribas, 2019). AI and machine learning have been proven to be embedded with bias, inheriting different biases from humans (Domnich & Anbarjafari, 2021). It has been recognised that societal values which are biased against women are found within AI systems, with machine learning algorithms based off outdated ideologies and discourses (Leavy, 2018). There has been well-documented research on the detrimental effects of bias in AI and machine learning (Leavy, O'Sullivan, & Siapera, 2020).

Virtual assistants including Siri (Apple), Alexa (Amazon), Cortana (Microsoft) and Google Assistant are at the "cutting edge of marketable artificial intelligence" (Adams, 2019). But there is an inherent gender bias within these AI technologies, and this is highlighted through the feminization of these virtual assistants. All virtual assistants which are on the market are feminised either through their voice, their tasks or their social interaction (Costa & Ribas, 2018). The voice of virtual assistants is what first conditions gender attribution to these AI machines (Costa & Ribas, 2018). Virtual assistants have a default female voice (Adams, 2019). Companies often use artificially intelligent chatbots for customer service interactions. These chatbots also present gender bias, with chatbots given female names and avatars (Feine, Gnewuch, Morana, & Maedche, 2020). A 2019 UNESCO report highlights the negative impacts of these feminized AI machines, stating that they are designed to be "female exclusively or female by default" (Feine, Gnewuch,

Morana, & Maedche, 2020, p 80). Further, the names of some of these virtual assistants also highlight a gender bias. Siri can be translated into Nordic meaning “the beautiful woman that leads you to victory”, while the name Cortana originates from the video game ‘Halo’ in which Cortana was an artificially intelligent, highly sexualised, female character. Regarding their tasks and social interactions, virtual assistants are programmed to follow orders on day-to-day tasks such as setting alarms, answering questions, setting up phone calls, or scheduling appointments. It is evident that these mimic tasks which have historically been deemed as female jobs or responsibilities.

The feminization of virtual assistants magnifies and perpetuates existing gender biases and inequalities (Cirillo, Catuara-Solarz, Morey, Guney, Subirats, Mellino, Gigante, Valencia, Rementeria, Chadha, & Mavridis, 2020). The trend of feminization of AI sees virtual assistants acting in accordance with deeply engrained gendered stereotypes (Costa & Ribas, 2018). Gendered stereotypes see males portrayed as the dominant gender, and female stereotypes as portraying submissive, motherly or caring behaviours (Costa & Ribas, 2018). Feminization of virtual assistants can be seen through the social interactions of Samsung’s virtual assistant, Bixby. Bixby has been shown to answer suggestive questions in a stereotypically feminized way. When users suggest “let’s talk dirty”, Bixby replies “I don’t want to end up on Santa’s naughty list” (Adams, 2019). On the other hand, if the user changes Bixby’s voice to a male voice, the answer to the above suggestion is “I’ve read that soil erosion is a real dirt problem” (Adams, 2019). Siri has proven to answer suggestive questions in a sexualised manner.

Ultimately, there is a clear gender bias in AI technologies and machine learning algorithms. These biases are a result of deeply rooted discriminatory gender stereotypes, and are harmful to the efforts of decades gender equality progression (Leavy, 2018). Women are mostly marginalized from the field of science and technology (Montiel, 2018). AI creators are predominantly male with an evident over-representation of males in AI design and development. This provides an explanation as to the evident gender bias in AI technologies and machine learning. Addressing issues of gender diversity in the AI industry will avoid gender bias in AI and machine learning systems (Leavy, 2018).

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Audiences, Gender, and Horror

Lulu Tennent

‘Horror’ is a genre that encompasses numerous art forms and media (Carroll, 1990). The label ‘horror’, which crystalized roughly around the publication of Frankenstein (1818), has been applied to literature, opera/ballets, comic books, pulp magazines, artworks, tv shows, and films (Carroll, 1990). The horror genre is most commonly associated with the latter art form. Noël Carroll suggests that the identifying mark of horror is the particular affect it promotes, that from which it takes its name (1990). Relatedly, in her influential article on gender in the slasher film, Carol Clover coined the term ‘body genres’ to describe genres, like the horror genre, that are essentially linked with certain bodily sensations (2015). She claims that products of the horror genre exist solely to horrify (Clover, 2015). Their success depends on their ability to do so- on their ability to induce shivers, chills, the tensing of muscles, or the tingling of spines: they ‘prove themselves upon our pulses’ (Clover, 2015). Even though negative emotions are likely to be experienced, spectators continue to consume products of the horror genre for enjoyment (Bartsch, Appel, Storch, 2010). The scholarship that surrounds this seemingly paradoxical enjoyment of horror entertainment has typically focussed on gender (Bartsch, Appel, Storch, 2010). More specifically, this scholarship has considered the horror genre and spectatorship in relation to gender-specific needs and viewing motivations, gender stereotypes, and gender performativity.

Many scholarly accounts on the topic of audiences, gender, and horror cast the typical horror spectator as a sadistic man with aggressive tendencies (Berenstein, 2015). In these accounts which, according to film scholar Berenstein, comprise the ‘traditional model of film and horror spectatorship’ - the presence of women in the audience is underestimated or assumed to be non-existent (2015). Following a study carried out in 1986, Zillmann, et al. reported that men enjoyed the experience of watching a graphic horror film more than women (1986). The same study revealed that most men enjoy viewing horror films most in the company of distressed women and least in the company of ‘mastering’ women (Zillmann et al., 1986). Conversely, most women reportedly enjoy a horror film most in the company of a ‘mastering’ man (Zillmann et al., 1986). Zillmann et al. argue that men and women exhibit gendered responses to horror films due to the ‘internalization of the gender role socialization' during their formative years (1986). According to Zillmann et al., the male spectator’s enjoyment of the horror film can be traced to assumed ‘masculine traits’ such as the desire to ‘play protector’ and a ‘callousness’ which allows him to remain largely undisturbed by the horror that he sees on screen (Zillmann et al., 1986). In contrast, it was believed that so-called ‘feminine traits’ such as empathy and sensitivity made it unlikely that women would enjoy viewing horror content (Zillmann et al., 1986).

In *Dread of Difference* (2015) Berenstein recognizes the same pattern of gendered assumptions in the marketing and critical reception of 1930s horror content. Berenstein references film critic, James E. Mitchell, who, like in the traditional model of horror spectatorship, casts men as the brave protectors,

while women cower in their seats and clutch their dates ‘for dear life’ (2015). Berenstein suggests that this model of horror spectatorship involved a high degree of gender performativity (Berenstein, 2015). Women spectators were encouraged to display conventionally feminine behavior to appeal to any male companions, while the male viewer was expected to disguise his terror behind a socially prescribed behavior - appearing brave- to appeal to any female companions (Berenstein, 2015). Berenstein recognises that many writings on horror spectatorship in the 1930s were imbued with gender assumptions, however, she also acknowledges that the majority of critics at the time appeared to be unconcerned by the supposed differences in male and female horror spectatorship (2015). The audiences of horror were generally treated as a genderless mass (Berenstein, 2015). Berenstein suggests that the lack of gender polarization in reviews/scholarly accounts on horror spectatorship at this time varies greatly from the more recent scholarship on horror cinema (2015). Like Berenstein, many other contemporary scholars attempt to highlight the precariousness of the genre’s supposed spectator demographic.

In their article on TV series with horror content, authors Lin and Xu draw out the complexities of horror spectatorship by considering the relationship between gender and cognitive involvement, affective involvement, and viewing enjoyment (2017). Lin and Xu found that while gender is a significant predictor of cognitive involvement and neutral affect (male gender predicts a stronger level of cognitive involvement and neutral affect than female gender) when it comes to horror spectatorship gender is not a significant predictor of enjoyment (2017). These findings contradict previous studies that highlight the importance of gender-role socialization (Lin & Xu, 2017). According to Lin and Xu their findings also indicate that while their greater cognitive involvement can lead to more positive and negative affect, male spectators may also depersonalise their response to horror to maintain a more neutral emotional state (2017). In contrast, female spectators are likely to experience greater empathy towards the characters presented in horror programs (Lin & Xu, 2017). Film Scholar, Linda Williams suggests that this is because women horror spectators are almost always asked to bear witness to their powerlessness in the face of rape, mutilation, and murder (Williams, 2015). Women spectators not only empathise with the women victims on screen but also empathise, according to Williams, with the ‘monster’. While the female spectator often shares the male spectator's fear of the monster's freakishness, she also recognises the sense in which the freakishness of the monster is similar to her own difference (Williams, 2015). She too has been made into an ‘exhibitionist object’ by the male gaze (Williams, 2015). Williams suggests that there is little difference between an object of desire and an object of horror as far as the male gaze is concerned (Williams, 2015).

To summarise, in what is considered the classic era of the horror genre- the 1930s- the majority of critics were not overly concerned with questions of gender and horror spectatorship. Gradually, however, the horror genre became the subject of fairly rigid, gendered assumptions about spectatorship. The scholarly accounts that comprise the ‘traditional model of horror spectatorship’, emphasise the importance of gender-role socialization. Current scholarship on ‘audiences, gender, and horror’ tends to focus on challenging the rigid, outdated gender assumptions that surround horror spectatorship.

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Bisexual Representations in Film

Isabella Daly

In Western films, there has been an increase in the number of films featuring characters identifying as LGBTQI+ in recent years. However, few of these films present bisexual characters, with only 14% of films containing representations of bisexuality in 2019 (GLAAD, 2020). Within a binary understanding of gender identity in which a person identifies as either 'female' or 'male, 'bisexual' refers to an individual who expresses attraction to both women and men, regardless of the individual's own gender identity (Hair, 2020: 1). Conversely, 'heterosexual' refers to an individual who is attracted to someone who identifies as the opposite gender, while 'homosexual' refers to an individual who is attracted to someone of the same gender identity. Bisexuality in Western films is often overlooked in favour of both heterosexual and homosexual representations, and is rarely explicitly referenced (Hair, 2020: 1). Instead, it is frequently erased, denied, vilified or stereotyped.

The absence of bisexual representation in Western film largely stems from bisexual erasure, wherein the existence of a character's bisexuality is denied. Here, bisexual characters are not named as being bisexual (Richter, 2013: 274). Instead, a character who demonstrates or alludes to attraction to both men and women is rendered heterosexual or homosexual depending on their romantic partner in a given instance (Barker et al., 2008: 157; Farrimond, 2012: 143; Lannutti, 2007: 237). Indeed, films that ultimately portray a character as homosexual exhibit what James (1996: 228) deems "appropriation without representation", as behaviourally bisexual characters are denied a bisexual identity when they are eventually labelled 'gay' or 'lesbian' (Richter, 2013: 274). For example, whilst the film *Brokeback Mountain* is largely considered to be a film portraying homosexuality between two men, bisexual theorists emphasise its implicit exploration of bisexuality (Watson, 2008: 98). Here, Watson (2008: 98) argues, the film's protagonists Jack and Ennis form a sexual bond that does not invalidate their respective romantic bonds with their female partners. Consequently, Watson (2008) argues, the predominant interpretation of the film as purely homosexual denies the existence of a bisexual representation.

Further, a character's bisexuality is often depicted as a 'phase' that can be outgrown as one ultimately realises their true sexuality: heterosexual or homosexual (Hair, 2020: 1; Richter, 2013: 278; Roberts, 2011: 337). Yoshino (2000: 406) argues that this ultimate erasure of bisexuality from a film aligns with a societally normative view of bisexuality as a transitionary and temporary position located between heterosexuality and homosexuality. Such representations of bisexuality inhibit its recognition as a valid sexuality itself and thus erase its existence from a given film (Watson, 2008: 99).

In instances where bisexuality is included in a film, it is often portrayed through the character of the 'femme fatale'. This 'femme fatale' stems from classical Hollywood noir cinema and refers to a female character who is typically sexually aggressive and hypersexual, untrustworthy and deceitful (Farrimond, 2012: 139; Farrimond, 2017: 2). In Western film, these characteristics are frequently exhibited in scenes and storylines which depict or allude to the character's bisexuality. This is particularly evident in the genre

of queer vampire films. Here, a female vampire typically serves as the femme fatale figure whose bisexuality is alluded to as she engages in sexual relationships with both members of a heterosexual couple (Richter, 2013: 275). Her engagement in such relationships, in conjunction with her status as a vampire, thus presents her as excessively sexual and duplicitous (Farrimond, 2017: 135). In this genre of film, the storyline frequently involves the female vampire killing at least one member of the heterosexual couple (Richter, 2013: 275). Consequently, bisexuality comes to be represented as dangerous, deviant, promiscuous and eventually deadly (Farrimond, 2012: 139; San Filippo, 2013: 130). Farrimond (2012: 139) and Hair (2020: 2) argue that this depiction reflects stereotypical, conservative social norms which posit those who identify as bisexual as hypersexual and unable to be monogamous.

Moreover, Farrimond (2012) argues, the bisexuality of the femme fatale in Western film is often alluded to as an appeal to the heterosexual male gaze. The femme fatale figure is often depicted as conventionally attractive and, despite sexual relationships with women, often remains predominantly attracted to men (Farrimond, 2012: 140). Johnson (2016: 381) asserts that this depiction of the femme fatale is rooted in patriarchal ideas of women's sexuality as subservient to men's, and thus female bisexuality merely serves as a cinematic tool employed to excite the heterosexual male fantasies of the viewer (Alexander, 2007: 117; Vicari, 2011: 4). This consequently contributes to both the vilification of bisexual women as deceitful, and the erasure of truly bisexual women in Western film (Johnson, 2016: 381).

Furthermore, when bisexuality is depicted or implied in Western film, it is typically female bisexuality. Conversely, representations of male bisexuality are disproportionately infrequent (Johnson, 2016: 385; Vicari, 2011: 1). When such representations are made, the sexuality of the male is predominantly centred as the defining aspect of their character (Johnson, 2016: 385). Indeed, male bisexuality is frequently included in film to present a character as sinister or perverse (Alexander, 2007: 117). This is evidenced in the film *Blue Velvet*, as male character Frank's bisexuality is only revealed to present him as ominous and thus evoke discomfort from the audience; it does not contribute to the overall storyline (Alexander, 2007: 117). Vicari (2011) argues that this depiction of male bisexuality as perverse stems from a patriarchal societal rejection of male bisexuality overall. Here, patriarchy derives power and authority from its ties to heterosexuality and consequent dominance over women. Male bisexuality, Vicari (2011) highlights, is therefore seen as a challenge to the existence of patriarchy itself and is thus ridiculed and belittled to preserve patriarchy's power.

Representations of bisexuality in Western film are infrequent, and when present, are often ultimately erased, vilified or perverted. Indeed, bisexual representation also remains limited in queer cinema in comparison to portrayals of lesbian and gay characters (Pramaggiore, 2001: 245). However, representations of bisexuality within this genre of film are increasing, with a focus particularly shifting to the application of bisexual theory to films in order to more frequently, explicitly and accurately articulate and represent bisexuality on-screen (Wilde, 2015: 415).

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Bromance

Isaak Reid

Bromance has become a general term used to describe Men or boys who have a solid emotional connection, creating an almost obsession with one another in everyday life.

Male friendships have always been seen as emotionless and known for giving individuals hate for expressing themselves about certain things that happen in their lives. In recent years, the stigma around men having emotional connections with other men has been seen as usual and allowed throughout society without sexual intimacy in a homosexual way. Society no longer categorises male friendships with emotional attachments as homosexual but as a heterosexual thing, known as Bromance.

It was the early 2000s to 2010s where the term 'Bromance' became famous for all ages. The term can be seen as the early 90s where it was believed to be used for the first time in a magazine by a man named David Carnie. The article was called Big Brother, where David Carnie was the primary editor during the early 1990s, as stated by (Hamad, 2020) cited (DeAngelis, 2014). It was said Carnie created the term to describe the close bond of the skaters who had non-sexual relations with one another, yet all gained an emotional connection with each other creating a solid friendship.

From an academic perspective, the true origins of the concept of Bromance come from eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. "Bromance as a discourse of masculinity come from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's foundational and now canonical theorisation of "homosociality" and what she refers to as "male homosocial desire" (Hamad, 2020). This statement helps explain the true meaning behind Bromance and that men in society have always wanted a homosocial relationship with another male, where they can express themselves without being judged or deemed homosexual.

Bromance correlates with gender studies in a way that helps students get a complete understanding of gender and gender in the media. The concept of Bromance covers aspects of the relationship of men and their sexual identity throughout gender and the media. For instance, "The growing obsolescence of traditional constructions of masculine identity in popular romantic comedies by proposing an approach that combines gender and genre theory to examine the ongoing radical reconstruction of gender roles in films". (Alberti, 2013) what this shows is the effect Bromance has on society. When it comes to men, it allows them to express themselves to their male friends without being judged, along with being able to show emotion on another level, rather than pushing their feelings deep down. Bromance also helps researchers in Gender Studies to study heterosexual men and how they communicate their feelings in the modern era.

The term Bromance didn't truly kick off until organisations like Hollywood and U.S media took on the term to describe close friends throughout the media and in film and production, and even looking back at film

and media to before the term was first used. For instance, Luke Skywalker and Han Solo from Star Wars, the characters Benny Rodriguez and Scott Smalls from the sandlot, etc. (Baggett, 2016).

The term Bromance then slowly started to make its way onto film titles for film genres that involved leading male characters with an unbreakable, emotional bond with non-sexual feelings or sexual tension towards one another. For example, films such as I love you, man and the Hangover series. (Dir, John Hamburg, 2009) as cited by (Hamad, 2020).

With Hollywood giving Bromance a substantial use, men throughout society could finally start to put a term to their desires for a solid male companion. This has started to get rid of the toxic masculinity throughout cultures and stop men thinking to be the most masculine male is to show zero emotion and no empathy towards their significant others and their male friends to be seen as tough and dominant. The uprise of the concept of Bromance also has created a more calm and not so toxic upbringing for all young boys growing up in the early 2000s- present. Young boys were now able to start expressing their true selves to their families and friends from a young age without being ridiculed; this meant no more 'crying is for girls' and showing emotion means weakness'. For instance, "men are told that crying in front of other people will threaten their masculinity". (Dekin, 2020) expressing how the old saying was for men to be tough without feelings. With that being said, Hollywood using the concept more and making films based on two characters with a homosocial relationship is shown as an easy thing to do in the eyes of the audience; for example, "Bromance is much more than simply teasing and horseplay with a close friend. Bromance is also about having someone or people you can confide in when things get tough. Compared to women, men have fewer important friendship bonds". (Galla, 2021). Bonds created by hard work from each friend can give men in society healthy benefits; for example, "A bromance is a stress buster". (Galla, 2021) according to studies, having a bromance can lower stress levels and helps with a man's mental health, which causes fewer suicides.

With the increasing use of Bromance being seen as normal, media provides many examples for people to become aware and normalise the concept, but with that came the white phenomenon as the concept of Bromance was seen across Hollywood being played by all white men. Rare occasions such as Kanye and Mr Hudson were one of the first interracial Bromances seen throughout the media, for instance, "The occasional instance of high profile interracial bromance such as the one touted between pop music artist's Kanye West and Mr Hudson at the time of their collaboration on the duet Supernova in 2009". (Hamad, 2020). The statement by Hamad correlates with how Bromance slowly became popular, and with the concept trending, so did the interracial Bromances too.

In conclusion, the concept of Bromance is a beneficial and trending concept for Gender Studies; throughout contemporary media. It is seen as excellent to have a bromance and have a close bond with a male friend, or same-sex friendship, which is seen as standard, also men being able to express their feelings without being judged by society, which creates toxic-free masculinity for young kids growing up among other positive benefits.

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Camgirls

Nico Penny

Camgirls (compound noun, plural, informal) contraction of webcam model and slang for sex worker. ‘Camming’ (verb) is the act of performing as a Camgirl.

Camgirls is a term popularised in the early 2000s to describe females who perform acts, often erotic or sexual in nature, for an online audience of single or multiple viewers (Lexico, 2021). This is a monetised relationship. In popular culture in the second half of 2021, Camgirls are an established social phenomenon. Their online presence, viewer relationships and performance identities allow real-time connections to be made in the online adult-entertainment world. With different performance niches and audience engagement Camgirls are a diverse range of performers.

Camgirls receive income through virtual tokens that represent money (The site Chaturbate offers packages where US$10.99 equals 100 tokens (Chaturbate, n.d.). Payments can also be made on credit cards (though in late 2021 this avenue of earning became more difficult with major credit card companies wanting to withdraw their services from camming sites such as OnlyFans (Robertson, 2021). Performer’s live cams can be housed on different adult entertainment/pornography websites or services such as Skype (Drolet, 2020). In the digital age, Camgirls are becoming more popular – in the times of Covid-19 when both real-life relationships and other forms of sex work are harder to establish.

The word ‘Camgirls’ has many meanings. The ruling definition is: ‘Camgirls’ – a group of women who pose in front of web cameras and perform acts that are often sexual in nature for live-streams that reach paying client audience (Collins Dictionary, 2019).

Whilst accurate, arguably this definition of Camgirls can be understood as binary, as all kinds of performers act and earn under the title of ‘Camgirls’. Increasingly there is more diversity in the Camgirls and the acts that they perform on their channels (Breslin, 2015). Additionally, more youth are picking up camming as way to earn extra income or to pay for tertiary education (Peacock, 2018).

The history of the term Camgirls is also in flux, as it has been historically used to define tech-savvy women (Sadowski, 2020). In recent years it is largely used in reference to the aforementioned meaning.

It is important to note that this definition is primarily a Western-world one. Camgirls and their social/political contexts vary across cultures – this is a Western definition for the term that is largely under researched as a form of sex work.

Camming has become a steady form of online adult entertainment since the early 2000s in accordance with the increase of digital media performance and technology outreach. Credited as one of the first Camgirls is American Jenny Ringely, who in 1996 set up a camera in her dorm room that over five years

earned her a living from her ‘premium uploads’ (Maguire, 2018). Ringley went on to create Jennicam, which became an expression of mass-mediated digitally broadcast intimacy, marking her as a frontrunner of the now multibillion dollar camming industry (Breslin, 2015).

Now, with thousands of Camgirls, they make up a significant group of online performers, and some have found great financial success and celebrity status. Within the group there are many subgenres with varieties of niche performance styles and categories that engage different audiences. Some of these categories include ‘extreme’ cam modelling when performers go to extreme lengths to gain views and revenue. A ‘standard’ Camgirl performance could include stripping, masturbation or sexual innuendos combined with viewer engagement either through live or video chat options (Cam Girl Wiki, 2016).

The cammer is in control of their performance, and it is up to them as to what they perform. Some perform nude, some use sex toys. Some use personal talents, some speak, and some don’t – there is variety. Camgirls cater to a diverse range of fantasies.

Camgirls differ from porn stars stylistically. Camgirls are mostly paid on a one-on-one paid subscription basis or by subscriber membership. Camgirls interact live/real time with their audiences whilst porn stars are normally pre-recorded and paid through streaming services and agencies. Camgirls tend to be more in control of their image/output whereas porn actors are more likely to be under the ‘control’ of a director (this excludes amateur pornography) and their acts are conducted in front of a film crew, with less intimacy or privacy than a Camgirl (Breslin, 2015).

The delivery of Camgirls varies across different platforms. In 2020 platforms streaming camming shows included; Jerkmate, Chaturbate, LiveJasmin, myfreecams, candsoda; amongst others (Pleasure Seeker, 2020). The services provided also vary. For example Jerkmate offers personalised preferences for users to match with their ideal cam models. Access to live streams can also be accessed on less specialised platforms such as Skype and Discord, allowing choice for Camgirls. The majority of official cam sites offer three to four basic types of show/chat (Cam Girl Wiki, 2016). The levels of performer/audience interaction range in exclusivity – the more ‘private’ the viewing, the higher the cost for the viewer

The economics of the camming industry varies. Camgirls provide their services to paying viewers. The online tokens earnt equate to money, creating a currency of exchange. Camgirls have the ability to further sell or auction items related to their ‘online personas’.

Marketing and self-branding for Camgirls also establishes the performer’s ‘brand’, making camming entrepreneurial in nature as well as entertainment based. Payment and income earned by Camgirls varies depending on hours worked, audience outreach and engagement. It is up to the performer to decide how much they want to push their online professional sexual engagement as they can deny requests or escalate them – some performers make $20,000 a month (Breslin, 2015). Prices are set by the streaming services, and site owners take success-based fees or commissions. Some Camgirls may only recoup 30% of their ‘fee’ after the site takes its share, others as much as 80% (Box, 2020).

The number of adult performers in the camming industry is steadily increasing. Numbers have grown since the arrival of Covid-19 as sex workers have chosen to take their work online to generate income during the pandemic (Box, 2020). However, the increase of performers and viewers in the past year has not seen a corresponding rise in tipping. This has been due to several sites having their own financial difficulties.

Coinciding with the rise of the 'Camgirl' has been the establishment of the platform OnlyFans. The site promises rewarding content for paying viewers, and safe sharing options for Camgirls. The site claims that, 'anyone can earn' (OnlyFans, 2021). Content is marketed as 'exclusive', which generates a mutual rewards cycle for performers and their paying audiences (OnlyFans, 2021). However, as of the second half of 2021, OnlyFans is facing controversy with their proposed bans on 'explicit and adult content' which when implemented will eliminate the platform as one where Camgirls can work (Robertson, 2021).

Camming as a field of sex work is under researched. The recent news surrounding OnlyFans has potential to lead to a surge of academic and social interest in this subset of the sex work industry. The constantly evolving status of OnlyFans is an example of the dynamic social thought that surrounds the camming industry and the workers within it. Noteworthy is the safety of Camgirls in this industry, as online harassment is observed to be a key issue faced by Camgirls (Barrett-Ibarria, 2020). As the definition of Camgirls changes, academic and social perspectives are expected to change too.

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Camp Television

Bunty Bou

Camp TV is the way in which Camp aesthetics—or 'Campiness'—are incorporated and ulitised on television. The word "Camp" was brought into attention by American writer, Susan Sontag, in her essay, *Notes on Camp*, in the 1960s. Sontag (1964) defines Camp as a mode of expression that is "unmistakably modern" and "a variant of sophistication," and a taste rooted in artifice and exaggeration (p.515). It "combines a number of techniques, most notably: theatricality, irony, exaggeration, articiality, and humor" (Malinowska, 2020, p.1). While Sontag's publication acknowledges the direct link between camp and queer subcultures, she does not recognise "that homosexuals have been Camp's vanguard and most articulate audience" (Schottmiller, 2017, p.40). Queer studies scholars and cultural workers have been continuously contesting Sontag's account. Drag superstar and Fulbright scholar, Sasha Velour, explains that Camp is:

"the code for the type of behaviour that gay people exhibited that marks us as being different or extravagant or not being able to fit in with the mainstream tastes, and so [Sontag] tried to extend that idea … to describe a whole phenomenon. But ultimately, it kind of takes away the queerness of it … you can't subscribe to a system of beauty that has no place for you, … so you create an alternate system that evaluates taste that's based on extravagance, and effort, and ambition, and passion, instead of beauty, or respectability" (WWD, 2019).

Historically, television programs that subsume Camp aesthetics are commonly in the forms of sitcom, music video, drama series/serial, and reality show. Before television, Camp visuals grew in cinema as an aesthetic genre or mode that "[exploits] the slippery space between a 'posture' and an 'imposture,' between 'resembling' and 'dissembling" (Cohan, 2005, p.1). Certain actors—such as Divine, Marlene Dietrich, Mae West, Judy Garland, and Tallulah Bankhead—are associated with Camp mode of acting, while directors—including Andy Warhol and John Waters—are masters of encoding Campiness. Some props accentuate "camp effect (e.g., feather boa, fishnet stockings, sequins)" (Malinowska, 2020, p.2). Elements of Camp made its way into television medium in 1960s.

In the 60s and 70s, Campiness was encapsulated in the acts of male sitcom stars. "In their play of male stereotypes from butch to swish," these characters "alluded to another way of life" and "challenged the fringe of good taste and classic masculinity" (Holland, 2010, p.232). Although their queer identities were usually concealed, their performance of masculinity had a tongue-in-cheek sensibility because "playfulness is key here to … the sense of camp and irony, theatricality and humor which pervades much of these performer's acts" (Holland, 2010, p.234). Paul Lynde, Charles Nelson Reilly, Truman Capote, and Liberace were some of the big names in sitcom TV, and they were well-known for their Campy characteristics. Their gay identity, however, was a hindrance in their career because of the homophobic climate in Hollywood during that time (Holland, 2010; Schottmiller, 2017). Any cultural text "would not receive circulation if the queer identity was too overt," so queer producers and artists had to "'de-gay'

themselves in order to have value within dominant heterosexual capitalism" by hiding "Camp codes within 'straight' commodities" (Schottmiller, 2017, p.132). Camp codes gained traction in other TV terrains in the 80s.

The emergence of MTV in the 1980s set forth a new playground for Pop stars and their Campy music videos. Although Camp stylisation in music videos can be traced back to 1960s-70s with a number of Pop sensations (e.g. Dusty Springfield, David Bowie, Donna Summer, and Diana Ross), the 80s are the era that get the most credits for Campy music videos (Malinowska, 2020). MTV's Video Music Awards started then, and it demanded artists to create high-budget over-the-top video productions. Musical icons—such as Grace Jones, Madonna, Kiss, Michael Jackson, and Queen—are known to "[provide] an incentive for queer experimentation in music videos" (Malinowska, 2020, p.2). This televised musical era has a long-lasting impact, and momentous Pop singers—including Lady Gaga, Katy Perry, Nicki Minaj, Beyoncé, Janelle Monáe, and Doja Cat—are testaments to that. "They highlight camp's engagement and role in liberating femininity from representational oppression and sexual constraints" in their acts (Malinowska, 2020, p3). New tropes—such as vulgar femininity, sexual liberation, physical autonomy, fairy-tales-like fantasy, and femme monstrosity—have been associated with femininity through their videos; thus pushing the boundaries of female representations. Therefore, Camp is a catalyst that proliferates feminist agendas (Malinowska, 2020; Geczy & Karaminas, 2017; Schottmiller, 2017; Holland, 2010). This impact can also be seen in TV series/serial.

The manifestation of Camp in TV series is arguably the most prominent in TV discourse. In the series/serial format, Camp "finds itself in style, gesture and performance, which all coalesce into fashion, dress and appearance" (Geczy & Karaminas, 2017). TV shows, such as *Dynasty* (1981-1989), have strong dependency on Camp aesthetics and narratives (Malinowska, 2020). "Camp effect spreads in the show by means of Alexis (Joan Collins). Her outrageous bitchiness, being in contrast with the well-behaved heroines, has reinvented the indecent for femininity" the same way that Pop stars have (Malinowska, 2020, p.3). Another element that made Alexis a Camp icon was her glamourous repertoire of extravagance. TV series with Camp aesthetics reached new heights in the 90s with shows, such as *Xena: Warrior Princess* (1995–2001) and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1996–2003). More importantly, the 80s and 90s saw a new introduction of Camp aestheticism through the proliferation of underground ballroom culture, and it was introduced to mainstream audiences by Jennie Livingston in her 1990 landmark documentary, *Paris is Burning*. The introduction problematizes the notion of who gets to represent Camp. The power dynamics have only been shifted recently so transgender and queer BIPOC communities are included and acknowledged as fundamental formers of the contemporary Camp culture. Shows—such as *Pose* (2018-2021), *Veneno* (2020-), and *Legendary* (2020-)—provides cultural resignifications of televisual Camp, and ultimately tap into what Velour previously mentioned as the system that validates categories of queer glamor—"a new form of taste set against unconventional and fluid gender relations" (Geczy & Karaminas, 2017). This reposition of Camp through television representations intrinsically links to how the language around Camp has progressed over time, and adherently contributes to the current queer activism.

While Camp's televisual presence provides opportunities for queerness to grow, this phenomenon has become paradoxical. It is important to acknowledge that shows—namely *RuPaul's Drag Race* (2009-)—have liberated queer performers; for instance, drag artists now can be a full-time profession, and more

stars are now comfortable to parade their queer identities in Hollywood. However, many scholars claim that, “assimilated in popular culture, camp has lost its original spirit of transgression, and is now responsible for the promotion of the oppressive beauty myth” (Malinowska, 2020, p.4). In other words, Camp’s televisual impacts are now degressive; Camp has become an agent that police queer tastes. *RuPaul’s Drag Race (RPDR)* is an active force that has been championing certain Campy drag aesthetics instead of the others. As a case in point, drag kings are rarely credited for their contribution to Camp aestheticism, and “the art form remains on the margins of conventional drag culture, which, thanks to *Drag Race*, has sashayed squarely into the mainstream” (Kuga, 2019). *RPDR* is now an empire with multiple international renditions and spin-offs. By policing Camp through glossing over certain aspects of it, Camp has become “a marketing strategy” (Schottmiller, 2017, p.133). Appropriating Camp into the capitalist mode of TV production means the denial of prior diversified Camp effects; it erases a substantial portion of queer experiences (Schottmiller, 2017; Malinowska, 2020).

Camp’s televised influence means the proliferation of queer bodies, parodic posing, and artifice. As observed by scholars and cultural critics, Camp’s engagement in televisual texts should be studied and contextualised further to bring attention to its recent capitalist footprints. Camp scholarship suggests audiences to immerse into alternative genres of shows—e.g. *The Boulet Brothers' Dragula* (2016-), *NightGowns* (2020-)…—that have a hard time breaking into the mainstream, to amplify trans and queer voices outside the Hollywood circuit, and to acknowledge the ever-changing nature of Camp.

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Children, Young People, and Online Sexual Content

Jessica Seal

With the ever-growing use of the internet and media there is also a sizeable increase of young people having access to devices connected to the internet. From this there is a vast amount of research surrounding young people and online sexual content. This is no surprise with 'sex' being the most searched topic on the internet according to Braun-Courville & Rojas (2009). Online sexual content refers to any type of material showcasing sexual behaviour. This can scale from implicit content such as sexual language use in movies and tv shows to explicit exposure to pornographic content. The internet and media can cause a different range of positive and negative experiences as well as for educational purposes which will be explored further below. Coinciding with what (Tsaliki & Chronaki, 2020) refers to, this literature is predominately associated with the internet such as tv, movies and pornography (as mentioned above), over other forms of online sexual content such as sexting on instant messaging platforms.

A consensus on all literature researched is that the exposure of online sexual content is extremely influential due to young people's impressionable attitudes. According to Owens et al. (2012) as cited by Horvath et al. (2013) expectations and perceptions of sexual encounters are largely altered after exposure to online sexual content. A study conducted by Tsitsika (2009) found that participants who were exposed to sexually explicit content were more at risk of developing unrealistic attitudes about sex and had a more dissociative frame of mind going into relationships. This is consistent with a study conducted by Braun-Crouville & Rojas (2009) who found a corelation between sexually permissive behaviours, greater acceptance of multiple sexual partners and the exposure of online sexual content.

Lesser experienced (not just in sexual behaviours but life) young people are a lot more impressionable when viewing things they might think will be helpful. For example, if children and young people believe explicit online content is realistic they may use this in their real world experiences (Peter & Valkenburg, 2008). Young children exposed to explicit online content are more likely to have fewer affectionate relationships, less likely to enforce condom use and have a higher chance of contracting a sexually transmitted disease (Peter & Valkenburg, 2008; Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009; Bleakley, et al., 2011)

To better understand the mechanisms through which sexual content influences young people's understanding of sex, 'The Integrative Model of Behavioural Prediction' is used in a range of research. Bleakley, et al., (2011) describes this as a psychological model that uses the basis from social cognitive theory. The focus being 'the intention to perform a specific behaviour', although this behaviour may not always be applicable (Bleakley, et al., 2011).

Be it accidental or intentional, young people will stumble across sexual content online and along with this is peer associated conversations. This then influences attitudes and pressure in young people to begin searching and understanding sexual activities (Bleakley, et al., 2010). Therefore, young people

intentionally go to view online sexual content to stay involved and have a sense of belonging within a peer group. The accidental exposure becomes the intended exposure due to peers, pressure, and curiosity (Bleakley, et al., 2010).

Like most products in this world, pornography is more often than not, targeted and made for the male consumer (Rogala & Tyden, 2003). Realistic bodies, images and ideas of sexual health has been distorted and impacted the way women, especially young, think and feel about sexual encounters (Rogala & Tyden, 2003). Rogala & Tyden (2003) conducted a study with 1000 Sweden women aged 14-24. The data found that 19% gave positive examples of how pornography has influenced them, while 66% gave negative examples. These women viewed pornography as a distorted picture of reality, a demand on performance and quite demeaning towards women (Rogala & Tyden, 2003).

Online sexual content can be scary and majority of women from research studies find it to be distasteful and degrading (Horvath, et al., 2013). Although there are many types of online sexual content out there, some young girls may have intrusive thoughts about body image and sex. Women portrayed in online sexual content can often showcase unrealistic beauty standards which negatively impact young girls' views on themselves or thoughts on how they think they should look (Peter & Valkenburg, 2009). This can also have impacts on young males however, this is more prominent in young girls. It is important to also acknowledge young people apart of the LGBT+ community who may be using online sexual content as a way to explore their identities but are less represented.

On the other side of the spectrum is the positive influences that online sexual content can have on young people; educational, pleasure, entertainment, and curiosity. Young people's experiences with sexual content online can allow for engagement with representations of sexuality as well as the ability to talk in their own terms about sex more broadly due to a growth in agency (Buckingham & Bragg, 2004). Young people tend to value media and the internet as a source of information compared to school facilities and parents. This is not surprising when talking about sex as it can sometimes feel like a 'taboo' topic for young people. School often barely scrapes the bare minimum of sexual education, keeping things on a 'need to know' basis. Asking and talking to parents can also be awkward and uncomfortable which is highlighted in Buckingham & Bragg's (2004) 'Young People, Sex and the Media'. Young people can find comfort in searching things they are curious about and here we can see online sexual content be an educational tool.

The media and internet are very influential agencies in society as explored in the discussion above. Children are becoming exposed to sexualised content at an earlier age, forcing them to mature and figure out that the opposite sex do not in fact have 'cooties'. However, more research does need to be conducted in order to be more definitive in understanding young people and online sexual content. Areas that could be explored in more depth are personal characteristics as well as the developmental or pubertal stages of young people and how this impacts their exposure to sexual content online. It would also be interesting to research more recent longitudinal studies with young people of different ethnicities and be able to compare similarities and/ or differences in their experiences with exposure to online sexual content. Young people and online sexual content is an area that needs to be constantly researched due to the influences it holds. Maybe doing this will keep young people younger, for longer.

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Contemporary Women's Films

Samara Marks

The definition of contemporary women's films is contested as to whether it addresses films *for* or *by* women, or both. Women's films have long been understood as 'chick flicks', romances, and 'rom coms' featuring women for female audiences, but in the contemporary era, this understanding expands to include feminist films made by women, for women. There is debate as to whether women's work should even be labeled as 'Women's films' as a genre, for fear of women being isolated within a patriarchal industry that is already difficult for them to break into.

The chick-flick remains a key aspect of contemporary women's films, but these films often confirm patriarchal structures (Hammond, 2006), and are held in separate regard to academically acclaimed cinema (Reynders, 2019). The criticism that women's films uphold sexist values such as the idea that a women's purpose is to find a man, actually in itself upholds gendered discourse that female spectators are passive towards the 'fantasies' presented to them, but a critical female eye can view the tropes of the chick-flick as a way to 'demystify the patriarchy' (Margolis, 1989). For a chick-flick to have positive reviews by film critics, they are often distanced from the genre as it is viewed as a 'low brow' form of entertainment and has derogatory connotations of pre-feminist female characters and passive consumerism (Reynders, 2019, p. 16). To put it simply, these contemporary women's films are not taken seriously. Despite these criticisms, the chick-flick provides female subjectivity (Margolis, 1989), and it remains a genre much more accessible to women in the film industry in comparison to male dominated genres such as crime or science fiction films (Reynders, 2019).

With the prominence of the chick-flick in women's film and its criticism in mind, it is important to address whether or not contemporary women's films should be feminist works. First of all, even women's films that appear anti-feminist at the surface, still carry female subjectivity and female gaze which in themselves carry great weight in a male dominated industry (Reynders, 2019). Women's films like chick-flicks can be feminist simply in the fact that they are 'diagnostic of women's restricted roles in society and outlets for their frustrations with those restrictions' (White, 2020, p.3). Feminism, however, is not a requirement of contemporary women's films (Reynders, 2019). Many women's films are melodramatic in the sense that they explore emotionally driven female characters, and through this melodrama, affective gendered discourses of a women's place in public/private, masculine/feminine, and everyday/historical can be brought to light (Tolentino, 2009, p. 428). Emotionally driven discourses such as these offer a heartfelt exploration of the condition of women in society. Unfortunately, endings to emotionally driven women's films are often unsubstantial, and temporal. You can't tie up all of that emotional baggage within the melodrama structure of neat happy endings, without diminishing its multi-generational weight, and unwon feminist fights that women continue to carry (Tolentino, 2009). The question of feminism in women's films shift to: can a truly feminist contemporary women's film authentically offer us a happy ending without it seeming like sticking a band aid on a bullet wound?

Contemporary women's films made by women move away from chick-flick themes of relationships, marriage, and domesticity, to address homosocial relationships between women, particularly of mothers and daughters, sisters, and the coming of age of young women. They include active rather than passive female protagonists, that aim to change and write their own destinies in a male dominated world (Margolis, 1989). Production of these films is seen as an opportunity for female creators to collaborate and network, making for space for women creators in the industry (Wilson, 2005). Greta Gerwig's adaptation of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, is a key example in its adaptation, production, cast, and content (White, 2020). Gerwig's adaptation of Alcott's novel models women supporting women, and female collaboration in contemporary women's films. Its protagonist -Jo March, played by Saoirse Ronan- is a young woman who lives with her three sisters and mother, aspiring to be an author facing many challenges due to her gender. Gerwig had also previously starred Ronan in her mother-daughter film, *Ladybird* (White, 2020). When the filmmakers are women, not only do we get female subjectivity and perspective from the female characters, but in every camera angle, every cut and edit; these films are worlds made by women (Reynders, 2019). These worlds are a place where women are allowed and encouraged to take up space. This encouragement to take up space naturally moves from behind the camera, to in front of it, as seen in girls' coming of age films by women, through newfound freedom shown in tracking shots and long takes that depict girls moving through 'vast' landscapes (Franco, 2018, p. 18).

There is debate surrounding contemporary women's films in regard to categorizing them as just that; 'women's films', as it endorses gender binaries and others women within the industry. There are women in the industry that feel by being labeled as 'women' alongside their occupation, that 'the burden of womanhood [may] weight down their directorial objectives' (Jackson & Jaehne, 1987-88, p. 38). The counter argument to this concern, is that if we weren't to identify these creators and their works as 'women's', we'd be denying the oppression, hardships, and pushback they face in their careers due to their gender (Jackson & Jaehne, 1987-88). At a 'Women in Film' event, Pearl Gluck, an American female filmmaker posed the question "When is it that 'separate but equal' is going to become equal?" (Beckman, 2015, p. 1). Her comment suggests that presenting women's films as a separate category to all other films, is not good enough in the fight for equality for women in film. The prevailing solution to these contentions is to discuss women in film as individuals, with use of auteur theory to highlight the importance of their work as women without bunching them together in a way that essentializes women's films (Reynders, 2019).

Finally, we cannot understand the importance of contemporary women's films without acknowledging the male dominated industry from which they emerge. Not only were women predominantly excluded from the filmmaking industry up to the 1980s, but leadership traits associated with directors are generally masculine, as the industry had 'already crystalized' before women could enter it (Reynders, 2019, p. 4). This is propped up by the contemporary neoliberal economy in which the male entrepreneur is favoured for success as an individualist (Rogan, 2015). Many women working in the film industry have to structure their lives around their career, and have to make sacrifices to make it into the field, leaving little space for raising a family (Rogan, 2015). Though some women happily choose not to have children, others have to compromise their feminine traits of motherhood, softness, and nurture to make it in this masculine industry. Women in film therefore get caught in this paradox of having to compromise their femininity to

succeed in the industry, but experience 'negative consequences' of defying their expected gender roles (Reynders, 2019, p. 4).

Contemporary women's films range from chick-flicks made for female audiences, to films that emphasize homosocial female relationships and growth made by female directors and production teams. While a film doesn't have to be explicitly feminist to fit into this category, the power of female representation and subjectivity extends to all contemporary women's films. Because these films emerge from an extremely male dominated industry, in labelling them women's films, we have to acknowledge both the othering of women when setting their films apart from their male counterparts, and the gendered obstacles and limitations they face in furthering their careers and in creating contemporary women's films.

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Crime Dramas

Vzynn Loke

Enter the realm of crime drama, where moral order is consistently restored and justice prevails exactly at the end of each episode. This genre has been a staple of primetime US and UK television for decades, reaching the popularity of hundreds of millions across the globe. Crime dramas tend to heavily rely on a formulaic narrative with three primary elements: a crime – often violent in nature – occurs, sleuths work to apprehend the offender, and good ultimately triumphs over evil (Britto et al., 2007). Distinguished from the other protagonists of the story, which are the victim and the criminal, the focus always remains on the investigator and their investigative prowess (Moorti, 2020). Although there have been major innovations to the genre, the roles within these narratives have been dominated by white men, which in turn, brings into question notions surrounding gender and criminality.

The literary genre of crime fiction can be traced all the way back to the 19th century, where it played a role in alleviating panics surrounding socioeconomic and political changes within the period (Thomas, 1999). Fundamentally, crime dramas delineate hegemonic discourses on crime, disorder, and morality in our society, while the media form also has an immense capacity to shape or reshape ideological viewpoints of criminality, victimhood, and control through its own medium. Scholars argue that the public's conceptualisation of law and order procedurals has been predominantly modelled after the proliferation of infallible forensic imagery in 21st century crime dramas, leading jurors to have the expectation of scientific evidence for all criminal apprehension called the *Crime Scene Investigation* (CSI) effect (Kompare, 2010). Kirby (2003) argues that the necessity for the show to be able to generate scientific inquiry and interest supersedes the accuracy of the fictioned depiction of science in the show. The author states that "[w]hether surface of Mars matches the 'real' Mars or not does not matter if the film is ale to inspire people about the possibility of Mars exploration" (2003, p. 275). *CSI* has framed understandings of crime, criminality, and gender through a sensationalised, high-tech scientific language which reasons the unreasonable.

The fictional world of crime dramas provides an outlet for narratives in which characters fulfil or perpetuate traditional gender norms, in which it has mostly worked against the favour of women (Parrott & Parrott, 2015). From the autoptic view of corpses to the portrayal of the investigator and the perpetrator, the appearances of women in roles of crime dramas have often come in hand with gendering processes. In examining the necrophilic gaze in CSI, Tait (2006) contends that female bodies are often subject to visual pleasure through carnographic and sexualised imagery in the name of science. While victims in crime dramas have been frequently played by women, the genre started introducing female protagonists following the wave of women's movement for workplace reforms in the US and UK (Moorti, 2020), in still a rather nuanced fashion. *The Fall's* (2013-2016), Stella Gibson (played by Gillian Anderson) is presented as a self-possessed, tenacious, stylish, and aspirational female detective, though critics considered as a postfeminist-inflected character trope that discounts gendered violence (Ford & Boyle, 2021). The proliferation of the confident and capable female detective on contemporary TV crime dramas

is emblematic of the lack of care surrounding the violence, trauma, and abuse experience by female victims (Jermyn, 2017).

In contrast to Stella Gibson, *Jessica Jones* (2015-2019; played by Krysten Ritter) is the titular private investigator: an alcoholic with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that consistently endangers herself trying to protect other young women from further abuse. Physically and psychologically tied in with their work, Ford and Boyle (2021) coined these types of TV female detectives as *the emotional detective*. The juxtaposition of Stella Gibson and Jessica Jones highlights the confinements of traditional judicial and police systems in response to the trauma of gendered violence affecting both female victims and investigators (Ford & Boyle, 2021). The emotional detective, however, is not an immediate answer to gendered ends. She ends up taking on emotion as a necessity, being responsible for her own performance of care work. The emotional detective more than often still partially fits into the dark sleuth which is characteristic of the crisis of masculinity (Moorti, 2020).

When it comes to female criminals, they tend to be represented in a much more benign manner compared to stereotypical male criminals that possess a much more readily acceptable 'inherent violence'. Although female offenders are usually depicted as violent, their behaviour is linked to notions of femininity such as love and motherhood (Cecil, 2007). As a result of atypical motivations, the responsibility for their crimes is not as easily absolved and punishment is then seen as deserving. Critically-acclaimed TV series *Luther* (2010-2019) and *Killing Eve* (2018-) share the mutual focus of female psychopaths as their protagonists. These shows are among the few non-traditional crime dramas that have romanticised the notion of criminal psychopathy, allowing audiences to be in favour for the detective protagonist to be enamoured with the psychopathic murderer. Their superficial charm and romantic focus on the protagonist acts as a foreground for their relentless manipulation of others and lack of remorse, to which viewers empathise with rather than seeing them as punishable for their crimes. The character of the female psychopath has been written in such a way that their inner voidness, egocentricity, and yearn for emotional attachment personally relates back to the audience themselves.

Crime dramas are not just another 'cruel' form of entertainment, rather it has in some ways become another medium for performative display of the systemic and gendered inequalities that exist to be rationalised. Although there has been an increased portrayal of women in positions of power within the genre, there is yet a lot more that needs to be repurposed in order to reappropriate common understandings of crime without its typical commodified and gendered spectacle.

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DIVA Magazine

Matilda Macandrew

The magazine, DIVA is a best-selling European magazine, by, for and featuring LGBTQ+ women and non-binary people. It explores a range of subjects in its pages, including political and cultural developments that affect the queer community. The gay publishing company, Millivres Prowler Ltd first printed the magazine in March 1994, when lesbian visibility was at an all-time high, and since then DIVA has changed and shifted to reflect the lesbian community, celebrating achievements.

The 1990s was a difficult political climate for the LGBTQ+ community. Margaret Thatcher had been in power for over a decade and in that time had used her voice for the oppression of homosexuality. On the 24th of May 1988, Thatcher enacted Section 28, which outlawed the “promotion of homosexuality” in Britain (and the law was only repealed in 2000 for Scotland and 2003 for England and Wales. As a result, queer support groups were forced to close, organisations became affronted with censorship, and British lesbians (as well as gay men) felt completely isolated. Cue, DIVA Magazine’s 1994 debut, striving to celebrate lesbian diversity “from an authentically lesbian perspective” (Turner, 2020), fight the political power structures, and keep a community that felt like it was falling apart, together.

Up until 2017, the editor of DIVA was Jane Czyzselska, who took over from Gillian Rodgerson in 2004. Speaking to the Guardian about DIVA, Czyzselska said, “Previously we had been the object that had been written about, and now we were the subjects. We were reporting on our own lives” (2013). She went on to talk about the diversity among the readership, the different “types” of lesbians, the LGBTQ+ community as a whole, and the “lively debate” she is so grateful to be a part of. She believes that people want to be represented properly (and accepted for it) and that DIVA has the power to change people’s lives, offering these ideals in its pages. Czyzselska went on to discuss how confusing it is for a teenage in the midst of discovering their sexual identity, and that having an outlet of support is crucial. She stated, “I remember when I first thought I might be gay, I prayed that I wasn't, because I thought it was just the worst thing you could be. Not the worst, but pretty bad” (2013). DIVA gives people a sense of belonging and might even push them to make choices to further self-acceptance. When Czyzselska took on this role, DIVA could be found in select stores, such as WH Smith and Waterstones, but since this time, it has become much more accessible, now stocked at one’s local supermarket. Turner writes, “in order to protect its place on shelves in newsagents and supermarkets, which made it visible outside of specifically queer cultural spaces, DIVA has also had to contend with the power of distributors”3. However, the partial nudity sometimes seen on the cover was met with backlash from consumers.

In Queer Girls and Popular Culture: Reading, Resisting, and Creating Media, Susan Driver interviewers many young women about their sexualities and the media they consume. One girl said, “as one of the few bona fide items of queer (pop) culture available to me, DIVA has a great influence on how I see myself and others. The contents are truly relevant to me, and it is something of an outlet” (2007). The book goes on to point out how the market of magazines is a complex one, which markets off the vulnerabilities of, more often than not, females. This, in turn, creates competition, when girls start seeing celebrities pitted against each other and, either consciously or sub-consciously, will engage in self-comparison. DIVA seems to actively fight this slippery slope, replacing competition with unity.

By many, the magazine was and is seen as a political statement, especially when viewed next to all of the other magazines on the shelf, usually featuring thin women, pushing some sort of heteronormative agenda. On the 28th March 2019, DIVA released an opinion piece called Fat bodies deserve love, attention and some god damn applause, written by Mathilda Gregory, which sums up what DIVA is doing differently from its competition: “It’s hard to have a fat body in a world that tell you fat bodies are flawed, a problem that needs to be fixed” (Gregory, 2019). Firstly, they do not promote diet culture. Secondly, they celebrate all women (of all ages, body types, gender/sexual identity, etc). Czyzselska states, “we're one magazine for an entire community, or communities, and we have to cater to all of them, so it's really important for us to represent positive images of older women, for example. Also, obviously, a lot of women's magazines do fetishise femininity, but we represent a really wide spectrum of gender presentation, and celebrate masculine women” (2013). As the magazine became more recognised, it continually aimed to use its consumerism for good, its advertising revenue often coming from “gay-run businesses ... promoting community by enabling readers to patronize stores, venues, and accommodation run by/for women-loving women” (Turner, 2020)7. Despite the oppressive legislation, the early 1990s was met with a surge of gay culture in the media. Admittedly, it was one warped and commodified by the heterosexual gaze. In previous decades the mere idea of the lesbian was met with images of loud and masculine caricatures of women (popularised by the media). This new image of the lesbian was quite the opposite, hyperfeminine one might say, and far less “offensive”. It was polished, and unrealistic for many. Basically, the media had taken a community and objectied it, denying it of truthful representation. Dissatisfaction with these mainstream images did mean, however, that lesbians were inspired to take advantage of the publicity and to go about making change.

The truthful gay magazines of the early 1990s, “as opposed to the elisions and omissions of the contemporaneous mainstream objectification of lesbians, popularly known as ‘lesbian chic’” (Turner)8, included DIVA, Lip, Shebang, and Lesbian London. These publifications were, however, depleted of advertisers to work with and, thus, staff were underpaid for their efforts. DIVA started off with a team of three who all worked for other publications (Gay Times, for example), but their gallant efforts to keep at it made DIVA the only magazine out of these truthful few that made it out the other side and into the next decade. The early 2000s saw the American television series The L Word (revolving around a group of lesbians and bisexual women in Los Angeles) become acclaimed. This really got the ball rolling for DIVA, as they welcomed a new wave of celebrities to interview and feature on the cover. This, in turn, was met with a higher number in sales. DIVA continues to keep its team small, allowing them to work full-time.

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Drag Performance on Screen

Sophearith Dareth

Drag resists simplistic classifications. Drag can be an artform, a performance of femininity and masculinity, the embodiment of queerness, an act of defiance against gender binary, or the artful rendition of queering what is conventionally 'normal'. RuPaul, the "self-proclaimed *supermodel of the world*" concisely offers the definition of drag as "We're all born naked and the rest is drag" (Kornstein, 2020:p.1). In *VYM*, a drag magazine, Leake (2015) says "Drag is a place, and drag is a moment. […] Drag is […] all dependent on an ever-shifting cultural context. Drag exists whenever and wherever we try to define the boundaries of the boundless" (p.57). RuPaul and Leake both capture the essence of queering the act of 'defining', playfully contradicting "the attempts to define an underground art form with diverse lineages, aesthetics, and practitioners that resist simple classification" (Kornstein, 2020:p.1). Thus, drag cannot be defined and rendered to simple definitions. Drag encompasses the satirical and embodied presentation of bodies through performances—which cannot be detached from queerness and trans culture.

Literatures and academia surrounding drag performance centres analysis of gender. Renowned queer theorists including José Esteban Muñoz (2009; 1997), Jack/Judith Halberstam (2005), and Judith Butler (2002) have commented on the artform of drag. Muñoz discussed queer temporalities in drag (2009) and how the 'terrorist drag' and punk artist, Vaginal Davis, emerged as an anti-normative drag performer who defies the "whitewashing and heteronormative protocols" (1997:p.82). However, Halberstam (2005) argues that drag's underground subculture has been absorbed and capitalised by the force of the mainstream and with "voyeuristic and predatory" intent for profit (p.156-157). For Butler (2002), drag defies gender norms and highlights the "naturalized knowledge of gender" which "operates as a preemptive and violent circumscription of reality"—meaning the reality of gender is not fixed (p.xxiii). More recent literatures have focused on the broadcasting and digital movement of drag in mainstream media.

Since the introduction of the reality competition show *RuPaul's Drag Race* (RPDR) in 2009, drag—specifically drag queens—transitioned to a new era. Drag queens—who are mostly cisgender gay men—have since dominated the global drag scene. The reality show has become an epicentre and main cultural reference for drag performance—though it has only allowed drag queens contestants to compete in.

There have been several Hollywood films featuring drag performers though scholars have argued—like Halberstam's critique (2005)—that these films "signified a selling out, sanitizing, or appropriation of queer culture which ultimately did little to end homo- or transphobic violence or advance genuinely queer culture" (Kornstein, 2020:p.3). Nevertheless, these films made by queer directors/artists—from Andy Warhol's *Chelsea Girls* (1966) to Jim Sharman's *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975)— have gathered cult followings. *Pink Flamingos* (1972), directed by John Waters is considered an influential cult-classic featuring the 'iconic' Divine—a drag personality who became a cultural phenomenon drag performance (Whitworth, 2017). Some of the most influential films were actually documentaries that offer audience a

glimpse into the lives of the queer underground communities. *The Queen* (dir. Frank Simon, 1968) featured the infamous Crystal Labeija, a 'legendary' figure of the drag and ballroom subculture.

Then, in 1990, Jennie Levingston released the landmark observational/performative documentary *Paris is Burning*—a central cultural text that many literatures, television shows, and contemporary discussions of drag and ballroom keep referring to. The film features trans and queer people of colour, their lives in the underground scene, and their struggles living in the white heteronormative America. The documentary introduces the term 'realness' to the world which scholars such as Judith Butler and bell hooks have interrogated its relationship with whiteness, class, and gender performativity (Kornstein, 2020). It has paved the way for television shows like *Pose* (dir. Ryan Murphy, 2018-2021) and reality competition series *Legendary* (2020-) and *My House* (2018).

These television series are proceeding towards a different trend compared to the films. This is because of the "different modes and costs of production as well as limited opportunities for targeting niche markets" (Kornstein, 2020:p.4). Moreover, the introduction of streaming platforms and social media has significantly transformed the trajectory for drag performance on screen. Arguably, the main force pushing drag beyond the subcultural/underground is *RuPaul's Drag Race*.

Contemporary drag performance on screen is inexplicably linked to the empire RuPaul has created with his drag competition show to find 'America's Next Drag Superstar' with the 'Charisma, Uniqueness, Nerve, and Talent'. The show draws many inspirations from *Paris is Burning*. This film is what makes RPDR what it is now (Brennan & Gudelunas, 2017). The documentary itself is a "repository of expressions to borrow from and transform in order to carry drag culture's originating traditions out of counter-culture and into popular culture" (Ferrante, 2017:p.155). From early scholarship of the show (Edgar, 2011) to more recently (Egner & Maloney, 2016; Brennan & Gudelunas, 2017; Kornstein, 2020), scholars have argued that the show has continuously defied and conformed to heteronormative power structures. By allowing only queens to compete, the show "deploys stereotypical notions of femininity through performances of gendered norms" (Edgar, 2011:p.133) which excludes the counter-hegemonic performance drag kings could potentially offer (Rupp, Taylor, & Shapiro, 2010). However, the show still prevails in its counter-normative representation of gender, and continues to be successful through its online platform and spin-offs.

RPDR franchise has branched out to 10 international versions—from Thailand, Brazil, the UK, Canada, Holland, Spain, Italy, Chile, The Philippines, and Down Under (Australia and New Zealand). The show has also given a rise to many spin-offs, official and unofficial web-series, review shows, and recap shows—most of which are hosted by the Drag Race alumnus. The show "employs many successful elements or strategies used by other shows from the reality television repertoire" from dramatic fights/cattiness to emotional confessionals (Edgar, 2011). By this time of writing, the show has 13 regular seasons, 6 All-Stars seasons, and 5 official spin-offs. In September 2021, All Stars 6 crowned the show's first trans woman contestant in its 12 years run—an indication that it continues to defy the cisgender heteronormativity. Besides RPDR, other non-mainstream reality competitions such as *The Boulet Brothers' Dragula* (2016) have aired for three seasons and its reason winner was a drag king. The show is imbued with punk and grotesque aesthetics, freak show elements; it defies the mainstream reality TV norms beyond RPDR.

Drag performers have made social media an essential platform for their careers. Major drag performers have continued to use their large followings to promote themselves and change for the LGBTQIA+ community. Scholars critiqued RPDR's "media empire and its social media footprint" as demonstrating "that the celebrification of drag is today girdled by neoliberal imperatives and commercialised online platforms" (Hakim & Feldman, 2020). The show's social media followings continue to influence how fans interact with each other and the performers (Sandoval, 2018).

Drag performance defies simple definitions. Despite marginalisation, drag has its way of impact through films and TV series. Drag scholarship indicates that its presence on-screen has been influential in shaping how society views queerness and continues to empower LGBTQ+ people while conforming to neoliberal capitalist structures—especially for shows like RPDR. Drag's contextualisation in digital media should be studied more to acknowledge the ever-changing aesthetics and politics of drag performance.

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Fan Girls

Julia Clince

The term ‘fangirl’ as a noun can be understood to be a form of cultural consumption that is deemed to be excessive and is typically associated with young girls. As a verb, the term ‘fangirl’ can be understood to be an act of performative consumption. A fangirl, or someone who is fangirling is perceived by most people to a form of obsession with cultural media products, such as books, films, TV shows, and musicians. It has also been described as a type of guilty pleasure (Cann 2015). Although fan culture has been seen across all genders, races, and classes, girls are becoming the more dominant consumers of popular culture. While the participation of fangirling takes place online in more recent years, it has had a history of existing even before the internet. Devoted female audiences have been known to have created fan clubs, written letters to their idols, collected merchandise, and memorabilia, travelled to concerts and screenings, and even written fan publications long before the internet existed (Hannel 2020).

The history of fangirls dates right back to the late 1800s and 1910s. Practices of female fans in this time have helped shaped understandings of more recent fangirl cultures because of how they have always been considered to be such devoted fans. Along with the mass production of radios, records, and jukeboxes in the 1930s, fangirls started to make an even bigger presence in fan culture and society. In the post-war period of the 1950s, the fangirl culture escalated due to music idols such as James Dean, Elvis Presley, and The Beatles. In more recent years, the phenomenon of boybands has been the focal point of many fangirls. When boybands such as the Back Street Boys and Take That of the late 1980s and early 1990s emerged, an influx of fangirls came with them. This happened again in the 21st-century when boybands such as One Direction and The Jonas Brothers. This pattern of fangirls hasn’t been confined to idolising just musicians however, they come with all kinds of different contemporary media formats such as film and TV franchises, YouTube channels, and even social media influencers (Hannel 2020).

A notable aspect of fangirl behaviour is the trend of fan fiction. Fan fiction is material written by fans who construct made-up narratives of those they idolise and publish it online. Fan fiction has become a type of community where fans extend what they know about celebrities and characters to construct and further narrative identities. After the British boyband, One Direction was formed in 2010, a large amount of fan fiction was created during their peak of fame. Fans would use the knowledge they knew of the band members to then create their own stories about the band. One Direction themed fan fiction became incredibly popular with some of the stories being read by thousands and even millions of other fans (Lovelock 2017).

Fangirls are often stereotyped, profiled, and criticised by others, for example, critics. For example, in 2013 the GQ Magazine published an article by a female critic who described the famous British boy band One Direction’s audience. In the article, she stereotyped the One Direction fangirls to have fascinations that were hysterical and sexually driven. This article received a lot of publicity and online backlash. This response not only came from young female One Direction fans, but also from adult feminists who were

not necessarily large fans of the band themselves. GQ Magazine became the target of much frustration, controversy, and media attention from those who disagreed with the ongoing stereotyping (Dougher & Pecknold 2016).

Although fangirls haven't been widely studied by scholars, the research that has been done on them particularly through feminist cultural studies and youth studies shows a pattern of stereotyping they have been subject to over a large period. These stereotypes that have been researched typically present fangirls in a way that reinforces a patriarchal dismissal of female media cultures and variations of cultural consumption. These stereotypes have been challenged through the work of feminist and youth studies to instead highlight the community of fangirls to be a place for acts such as public expression, identity discovery, friendship, and cultural creativity (Hannel 2020). Although it is important to note that although some stereotypes do have some elements of truth in them, the overall generalization and misinterpretation of them is what makes them an issue. An example of this issue is how fangirls are often perceived to be immature, just because of the fact the majority of them are young girls (Duffet 2013).

Stereotyping isn't a recent activity in terms of female fan engagement. Concepts similar to the recent terminology of the 'fangirl' are traced right back to the 1910s. In the 1910s, enthusiastic female film fans were known as 'screen struck girls'. In American fan magazines, they were represented as unstable pathological consumers, whereas in their autobiographical content and letters to the newspapers they spoke of themselves proudly as actresses in the making. The comparison between what such fans were called against what they thought of themselves shows how female audiences and fans have been stereotypes right back to the beginning of the twentieth century (Anselmo-Sequeria 2015).

Fangirls have been recorded to exist from the late 1800s right up until now, however the amount of scholarly research on them isn't extensive. The work that has been done on them however shows that these young and devoted fans have faced being misrepresented due to stereotypes in the media.

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Fashion Media

Amelia Willis

Fashion is not simply the clothes or accessories we wear on our bodies, but an individualistic expression of our personalities and activities. As Ronald Barthes says, fashion presents itself in two ways, either as an activity itself or "*by its circumstances of time and place: (If you want to signify what you are doing here, dress like this…"* or *"if you want to be this, you must dress like this*)." (R. Barthes, 1990). Our fashion choices are closely related to our self-image or the image we try to portray to the public and the media uses this to its advantage when advertising, successfully but potentially not always so favourably.

Fashion and the way in which it is presented in the media has changed throughout the decades, due to societal standards adapting and technology advancing to become the main source of advertising. For many years, fashion advertising was predominantly magazines targeted towards women that used 'idealistic body' imagery to convince people to buy their products. From corsets in the 16th century to the 'heroin chic' idealised body of the 2000's, the fashion industry and societal 'ideal' body, in western culture has rarely expanded passed tall, thin, white women. Bill Clinton said, *"The glorification of heroin is not creative, it's destructive… This is not about art, it's about life and death. Glorifying death is not good for any society… You do not need to glamorize addiction to sell clothes."* (R. Arnold, 1999). This was met with an array of reactions from the public and fashion industry, some believing it was fearmongering while others had a more 'too little too late' approach.

In the 1920's, the introduction of photography rather than drawings in magazines was when the idealistic form really took shape, as people could now see actual people to aspire to look like. The idealistic images used in the 1920's were very thin models in loose shapeless, flapper style dresses. This encouraged the use of corsets, chest binding and dieting by women to attain the 'perfect' figure. (S. Pedersen, 2010).

The arrival of the second World War caused many changes across the world, including in the fashion industry. The metal materials once used in clothing were now being used in the war, creating a need for synthetic materials and new innovative designs in fashion. The absence of men at home also caused women to have to fill the more masculine roles. This resulted in a new idealistic narrative to be promoted in the media, one of practicality and strength, that encouraged women to wear trousers and become more toned. (M. Mason, 2011). This was also when weightlifting gained popularity among women.

In the 1950s, Hollywood actresses became the centre of fashion and idealistic bodies, most prominently, Marilyn Monroe who is still adored by people today. Her curvy, hourglass figure helped to shift the body standard to a more 'womanly' body ideal, as women were being encouraged by the media and societal expectations, to return to a more domestic-orientate lifestyle than during the war. (S. Pedersen, 2010). This more voluptuous idealistic figure was however short lived, as by the 1960's English model, Twiggy's, extremely thin, tall, androgenous style quickly became an idolised figure. (S. Pedersen, 2010). This idealism to be skinny continued without much adaptation into the 2000's. Industries hired tall, thin

models to promote their brands and ‘societal ideals’ in photoshoots and runway shows, such as “The Prefect Body” promotion by Victoria Secret lingerie, showing 10 models all with similarly slim physics. (T. Smith, 2021). Extremely thin celebrities such as Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie also perpetuated this image, due to being such a prominent public figure at the time for young impressionable people.

The introduction of technology and social media caused the way in which fashion is advertised to change forever, both dramatically and rapidly. Fashion and idealistic imagery are now available at our fingertips and can be advertised to anyone with a phone. The invention of airbrushing and photoshopping and their use in fashion media has come under criticism. Photoshopping allows brands to edit models (and clothes) to an unrealistic and beyond-human standard that is unattainable for consumers. This causes their self-esteem to decrease, encouraging people to buy products to make them closer to this ‘ideal’ that cannot be reached.

Social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have become a place to advertise our ‘ideal self’ and this idea is perpetuated by celebrities, such as Kim Kardashian who photoshop their images to live up to a beauty standard to then sell their products. (T. Smith, 2021). This is a particularly prominent approach in the fashion industry, as fashion is so intertwined into our body-image. Kim Kardashian’s shapewear/clothing brand, Skims, heavily relies on her perfect image being upheld, to keep the illusion that if you buy her shapewear, you can get her curves.

A trend that has become popular on social media in recent years is called, “Is it an outfit or is she just skinny?” This is where ‘regular’ people recreate the ‘casual’ outfits of models and celebrities, such as Bella, Gigi Hadid and Kendall Jenner, to decide if they are idealised due to their actual clothing choices or if their slender body is the real accessory.

Women tend to be the centre of the fashion industry and beauty standards, but men are not exempt from idealistic body imagery in the fashion industry. The term ‘toxic masculinity’ is an idea to represent traditional masculine features or behaviours that have been idealised, but ultimately have a negative impact on men’s wellbeing. (M. Salam, 2019). In fashion media, male models are often tall and toned with defined facial features. Men consume fashion for similar reasons to women, largely being for self-expression or to make an impression, yet for many years, ‘fashion’ for men often meant a suit, rarely promoting anything outside the confines of a shirt and trousers. (B. Barry, 2015). Public figures, particularly in the music industry, such as David Bowie and Prince, have encouraged more acceptance towards a fluid and feminine style for men, even among big fashion brands. Harry Styles for example was the first man to wear a dress on the cover of Vouge. This helps to break the traditional masculine norms of men so often present in fashion media, particularly as it comes from such a prominent fashion brand. (A. van Leeuwen, 2021).

Instagram is still largely known for showing altered images and body ideals that align with the bodies of celebrities, such as the Kardashians. However, recently there has been an influx of body positivity and embracing our ‘flaws’ and differences. As society progresses, we are becoming more accepting and positive of all variation of humans such as their sexuality, gender identify, body proportions and fashion choices. Consumers are now favouring brands that show non-photoshopped images with size inclusive

and gender fluid models, to help better represent the diversity of society, rather than one ideal that everyone must fit in. The lines between the professional fashion industry and more amateur-type 'Instagram influencers' selling fashion online are starting to blur to create competition for traditional fashion brands. (K. de Perthuis & R. Findlay, 2019). The consumption of fashion and ideals are changing, and the fashion industry must keep up in order to stay relevant and desirable.

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Gamergate

Isaac Myron

The #Gamergate movement otherwise known as the #Gamergate controversy was an online movement beginning in 2014 advocating for ethics within games journalism and the games industry at large. The conversation quickly devolved into sexual, sexist, and homophobic attacks against many women within the industry (Braithwaite, 2016). Many online Gamergaters claim that 'social justice warriors' or SJWs are colluding with critics and the industry to politicise and inject video games with their progressive views in an attempt to destroy the gamer culture (Salter, 2017).

What is #Gamergate?

To understand the conflict of #Gamergate it is important to understand gaming as a counter-culture first. The video game industry, although close to 50 years old, has only recently become the subject of being discussed as a real art form. Prior to this a lot of discourse in the mainstream surrounding video games positioned them as nothing more than moral panics questioning their side effects and links to real-world violence, as Faltin Karlsen (2013) states "digital games are not universally accepted. At best, gaming is viewed as a childish waste, at worst the topic of media panics." Gaming culture derives greatly from geek culture where the likely middle-class, likely white, likely male demographic (Shaw, 2011) are cast and stereotyped as socially awkward outcasts within the social hegemony who then attach these pastimes as part of their own identity. To many of these people gaming and other traditional geek mediums are the hobbies that are still created for them in society that is becoming evermore inclusive and diverse. As video games has grown so has the audience of people who play, write, create, and discuss them, something that is seen as a threat to the traditionally white, middle-class young men who attach themselves to the 'Gamer' identity.

"Gamer is thus a protective barrier. For Gamergaters, more diverse and inclusive games can only come at the expense of their own sense of identity. This feels less like an industry's evolution and more like an attack." (Braithwaite, 2016)

#Gamergate began in August 2014 following a harassment campaign that targeted independent games developer Zoe Quin after her previous boyfriend Eron Gjoni had accused her of cheating on him with several men in the gaming industry. One of the men she was accused of having relations with Nathan Grayson; a journalist for popular gaming news site Kotaku, who Gjoni alleged she had done so for a positive review for her game Depression quest (Lee, 2014). Both Quinn and Grayson denied the relationship and the review Gjoni alleged never happened. The conflict of interest that was alleged against Grayson and Quinn led to a movement in online communities such as Reddit, 4chan, 8chan, and Twitter calling for the need to protect ethics in the games industry. This quickly turned into an attack on Quinn where she reportedly "began receiving emails encouraging her to kill herself, as well as sexually harassing phone calls and rape threats delivered to her home address." (Kotzer, 2014) The harassment against

Quinn and her family was so bad Quinn had to leave her home and lived in hiding for the entirety of autumn 2014 (Stuart, 2014). Several more female figureheads were also targeted; notably Brianna Wu, another video game developer, and Anita Sarkeesian, a feminist media critic who gained notoriety online for her *Tropes vs. Women in Video Games* Youtube series.

#Gamergate harassment campaign

An online movement for ethics in games journalism is needed and required especially in a media form that is as young and inherently non-traditional like video games. Video games are significantly more expensive than other mediums, a newly released video game without any bonus content will typically cost around $100 NZD with some next generation releases going all the way up to $150. This has placed a major emphasis on the importance of games journalism for the consumer to understand the mechanics, graphics, music, and overall quality of the product they are spending their money on. This has led to growing concerns of conflicts of interest between the relationships of major publishers and major publications. Rather than targeting what is considered real ethics in games journalism, #Gamergate chose to instead focus on the 'culture war' of creating meaningful roles for women and the LGBTQ community within video games and the industry. The theory of "technological rationality" adopted by Herbert Marcuse suggests that it is not the technology, or the user as the sole origin of abuse, rather the interaction "is mediated by the dominative and instrumental rationality that characterizes the technological base" (Salter, 2017).

Online harassment and abuse can become so prevalent in the online space because a lack of meaningful social interaction meets the technology that detaches the user far from those who they interact with and allows harassment and abuse be met with little to no consequences.

"'Games culture' is a petri dish of people who know so little about how human social interaction and professional life works that they can concoct online 'wars' about social justice or 'game journalism ethics,' straight-faced, and cause genuine human consequences. Because of video games." (Alexander, 2014)

In their book *Mediating Misogyny* Vickery and Everbach (2018) detail that women are often accused of being too sensitive about online harassment and their complaints are often downplayed and dismissed. This online harassment reflects the systemic sex discrimination that women and gendered minorities face in their own day to day lives, that gendered power relations characterise their experiences. (Chadha, 2021)

#Gamergate began as an online movement advocating for ethics in games journalism, however, seven years on is remembered as nothing more than a harassment campaign reinforcing the toxic masculinity present in online games and online media. The "us versus them" culture war created by Gamergaters against the social justice warriors and 'politically correct' culture still persists today. The 2020 release of *The Last of Us Part 2* was met with controversy after the main antagonist Abby did not fit in the male gaze of what a female character should look like, leading to ongoing harassment towards the developers even one year on from the release. As the video game industry continues to grow and expand its audience, gendered discrimination continues to hold it back. The harassment that figureheads like Zoe Quinn and

Anita Sarkeesian faced is unforgivable and emphasises how harassment can become rampant in online spaces, alongside the intersectionality between gaming as a counter-culture and toxic masculinity.

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Games and Players

Elle Munro

An interactive interface based on a story, through which one plays with some variant of controller, for the purposes of roleplaying and stimulation for the brain. Video games have become increasingly popular over the last couple of decades, beginning with games such as Pac Man, Donkey Kong, and others. As technology has moved forward, so have graphics cards, computers, so on and so forth; creating more realistic and compelling games. These have created a platform for game developers to create and design a world to their making. It has brought forward successful game companies and boosted their profits significantly. This includes both game developers and the console industry. Consoles are a device which is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as being “a piece of electronic equipment for playing games on.”, with the two most common being Playstation and Xbox (Cambridge Dictionary 2020). One issue remains consistent throughout many of the most successful games in the industry today, and that is the stigma around women and LGBTQ+ representation within games, as well as these two groups playing certain types of video games.

Women’s representation within video games has changed somewhat over the years, for example in Dill and Thill’s article on how female gender is represented in video games, they identified a common theme of female characters wearing little clothing; with an “abnormally small waist and hips” (Dill, K. E.,&Thill, K. P. 2007, pp. 852). They are commonly portrayed as straight, and these character choices were often made for the young male demographic, who were at the time the target audience. Games such as Grand Theft Auto (GTA) has little to no female characters and the little representation that it does have portrays women as strippers or prostitutes, while focusing on men as the main violent characters (Dill, K. E.,&Thill, K. P. 2007). There is plenty of studies from a feminist perspective that look into these themes, taking into account the high likelihood that a women will be sexualised within the media (Kondrat, Xeniya. 2015). Such representations often cover the idea of the ‘femme fatale’, commonly NPC (non-playable character) missions cover these, but it perpetuates the ideology and stereotype surrounding ‘weak’ women in video games (Malkowski, J.,&Russworm, T. M. 2017). This theme is very common, and is still apart of some game media, although some major changes have been made over the last decade. Characters in games, such as RPGs (an abbreviation for role-play games) have become customisable, giving players the ability to ensure their character is one that suits them, often being able to customise gender and clothing (Sims 4). A great example of LGBTQ+ and female representation being Dragon Age: Inquisition, where each of the romance interests have their own sexualities and preferences, and the main character can be highly customised. Kondrat brings up the point that there is an increasing percentage of women playing video games, and thus such games as previously noted, have become targeted for both women and men – a large step from a decade ago (Kondrat, Xeniya 2015). Obviously these issues are still relevant within both the games themselves and the culture surrounding them, but small changes are being made. Another issue of this patriarchal culture is the issues women face in the game developing workplace, as well as during online multiplayer games (Malkowski, J.,&Russworm, T. M. 2017). It’s likely that women who play these games will suffer from a torrent of verbal abuse and threats from their male counterparts, who feel as though

they are intruding on their gaming space. This continues to LGBTQ+ players who play MMOs (massively multiplayer online game), suffering from homophobic and transphobic slurs (Malkowski, J.,&Russworm, T. M. 2017). Players are not held accountable due to anonymity and often many share the same sentiments.

Key issues to consider are the violent nature of many video games and the male portrayal within them. The issue of gender stereotypes within games extends beyond woman and LGBTQ+ as the men in video games are often seen as violent or aggressive. Dietz discusses how children are socialised into performing their gender from a young age, bringing forth the issue of young children, specifically young boys, playing games where men are depicted as aggressive towards women and are generally disruptive to society. They also talk about the issue of the portrayal of women in media, and how that may go onto affect young boy's expectations and ideologies around them, and again, how they may treat women (Dietz, T. L. 1998). Of course, this doesn't always occur, however there are games such as Grand Theft Auto that continue these themes. However, it can happen and often results in anti-social behaviour or aggressive outbursts (Dietz, T. L. 1998). It's recognised in Ogletree and Drake's research into women and men's experiences in playing video games aren't extremely different, some areas have key differences, and recognises that each gender may choose if they want to play video games and if they wish not to, then they won't (Ogletree, M. S.,&Drake, R. 2007). Again, men are often the target audience, however women have been consistently active in the gaming community and have been over the decade, regardless they are commonly treated otherwise and were often not considered in the audiences of certain games (Malkowski, J.,&Russworm, T. M. 2017).

However, after the events of Gamergate; a situation in which there was a complete backlash against feminist movements and progressive ideologies surrounding video games, games involving women and LGBTQ+ themes became far more popular than before (Carbone, M.B. and Ivănescu, A. 2020). Thus, as video games move forward, so do the 'norms' surrounding it. Games are becoming a space for women, LGBTQ+, people of colour, and a place for topics to be explored in depth rather than playing by patriarchal norms that originally dominated this industry (Carbone, M.B. and Ivănescu, A. 2020). Although, this does not invalidate the issues that still plague games (such as first person shooters) today, with aggression or stereotypes surrounding women who play them, or the expectations of how they should act. What was once considered the target demographic for games is changing.

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Gay Representations in US Television

Abbie George

Gay representations in US television have seen great advances in the last few decades. Prior to the late 1990's, it was a rarity to engage in television shows which viewed LGBTQ+ individuals through a positive and accurate lens. Gay characters were often misrepresented through damaging stereotypes and framed in such a way that further contributed to prejudices and homophobic perspectives. Recently, new media representations have rearranged the once detrimental constructions of gay individuals, asserting a beneficial change in our social tapestry. However, this is not to say that there are no longer damaging misrepresentations which persist in US television today which acts to further marginalize same-sex couples.

"Media representations of identities are dominantly constructed through a heteronormative lens, with traditional gender roles defining how one can or should be masculine or feminine" (Poole, 2013). In following from this, historic representations of the gay community in US television have not been forthcoming, which has meant that those who identify as LGBTQ+ have suffered turbulence when attempting to relate to popular media. As highlighted by Hart "AIDS in the 1980s literally and figuratively put homosexual groups in an even more disadvantaged position" as it was "...socially constructed as a "gay plague" by the media" (Hart, 2004). The media therefore played to this stereotype further marginalizing the gay community. Another example in an episode of Friends sees Ross stereotyping a male nanny, asking him whether he is gay ("The One With The Male Nanny, 2002). This is due to the ingrained and sexist view that women are best suited for the role as nanny. Following this the character is punished by Ross presenting himself in an, "alpha-male posture which reeks of hostility." (Bateman, 2017). Evidently, media has a large influence on our lives, and therefore, "television and other media sources offer a smorgasbord of so-called alternate lifestyle identities where one can absorb behaviours, values, and attitudes that should be associated with particular identities'" (Poole, 2013). This episode serves as an example of where homophobic propensities are naturalised by being included in prime time US television and this episode was aired even after developments began in 1998. This is detrimental for such advocacy surrounding the bid for more accurate representations of marginalised groups in the media, in order to change what has become such a systemic and degrading view of same-sex couples and the gay community in general, the media needs to present more accurate depictions that do not categorize and label all gay individuals as the stereotype.

Developments began to stir in 1998, where director James Burrows released the television show Will and Grace. President Joe Biden proclaimed that the show has done "more to educate the American public than almost anything anybody has done so far" (Borden, 2017). The series followed Will, the first gay-male protagonist seen on TV and his best friend Grace on their travels through New York City. Gordon Allport through his research found that "contact between minority groups and majority groups can reduce

prejudice in the latter'' (Borden, 2017) which the directors of Will and Grace insisted applied to mass media as well, calling it the ‘Parasocial Contact Hypothesis’ (Borden, 2017). These advances, as well as exterior movements outside of the media, created great movements in US television. In following this, shows such as Modern Family which was first released in 2009 saw two leading characters Cameron and Mitchell tucker, a gay couple living in American suburbia, grappling with day-to-day issues and tackling related civil rights issues faced by minority groups. At the time, the show was a great success especially given 3% of characters on primetime series were LGBTQ+ characters at the time it was first aired (Dry, 2020). Slowly, there was an emergence of television shows which included minority groups in such a way that did not frame the LGBTQ+ community through a pejorative lens. There have been recent studies which note that the “greater diversity of characters has been present, and such variation may help lead to stereotype change and more positive attitudes'' (Calzo and Ward, 2009). Therefore, the media was beginning to help to shape reality and aspects of reality were shaping the media.

In 2015 an even bigger civil rights breakthrough was made. The United States saw a highly anticipated surge in the need to champion gay rights and to positively recognize same sex couples in a legal and social setting. Finally, in 2015, in the case of Obergefell v. Hodges, the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage in America, which was symbolic of positive changes in the social arena and in the media. As the United States is one of the biggest media moguls, this societal progression acted as a landmark for more inclusive and accurately represented television shows. In the present day in 2021 with the rise of online streaming platforms such as Netflix and Hulu, it was highlighted that 26% of the top 300 shows represented the LGBTQ+ community (Neilson, 2020). This is imperative given that 4.5% of adults identify as LGBTQ+ and 8.2% of millennials and therefore the demand for more accurate representations of the cultural landscape is more relevant than ever (Fitzsimons, 2020). Online streaming platforms provide content that is consumed at high frequencies and social media allows for people to personally review and criticize shows that are contrary to a now more accepting world that we reside in.

Following this in 2021, social media and online streaming platforms are also allowing for change to occur on screen. Instagram provides a medium whereby petitions and commentary on civil rights issues can occur and raise awareness on how some old US television shows which are still accessible today, harmfully misrepresent the LGTBQ+ community. Such as the treatment of the male nanny in Friends, it is important to note that representations such as these have detrimental and hackneyed stereotypes and references peppered throughout the script. Seeing as Instagram has over one billion monthly active users (Statista, 2021), the ability to have platforms that allow for individuals to share their own views, analysis and experiences on such matters to such an expansive audience has allowed for better education on gay representations in the media to educate the uneducated on such issues. In turn, this has provided an avenue to change attitudes and systemically ingrained perspectives on the LGBTQ+ community and representations. While there is always progress that can be made, US television has seen some beneficial steps in the right direction toward being more inclusive and conscious of how the LGBTQ+ community are represented on screen.

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Gender and the News

Poppy Davis

Gender and the news has throughout history been a complex topic. This is a topic which shows clear signs of gender inequalities. These inequalities are accentuated through the strong gender bias within the news industry, this bias shows how males receive privilege based purely upon their gender. These biases have perpetuated throughout history and are reflected throughout the news industry. Our society thrives on these gender inequalities and have overtime became the societal norm. Everyday we observe these inequalities through the media and news displayed to us. (Bachmann, 2020)

This topic has had an immense amount of research based primarily on the existing relationship of women to news, this being the relationship in the news industry and by the news industry to women. Although we can understand that there is such a wide variety of lenses to be put on this from, discussions on gender inclusion and sensitivity in news production to the importance of the perceptions the trans community holds of the news industry and how trans people engage with the industry. Therefore, analysation of certain gender ideologies and these dynamics in both the news industry and it's content may be divided into four main areas: gender representation within the news industry and content, gendering of the content of the news, women's involvement in news and the impact of these previous areas, resulting in the gender gaps portrayed through the audience. This entry will address each of these four areas below.

The representation of females in the news through both, within the industry and through the content of the news highlights a very specific message about women's lives and also what is seen as a women's place in society. According to research by the GMMP - the Global Media Monitoring Project, in 2015 the figure of people seen, heard or read about in print and broadcast news media was 24% of 45,402 people interviewed or as subjects from 22,136 stories from a vast 114 countries. Studies show that women are least visible in news topics such as politics, government and the economy and rather are shown to more commonly report on news topics of science and health. (Macharia, 2020) Through the news we tend to observe a very specific set of categories that women can fall into. These being, homemakers, wives, victims and mums, contrasted to men being portrayed through the news as, businessmen, politicians, athletes and professionals. Highlighting the importance the news has on our society, reflections of these topics and who's reporting them help in moulding these gendered ideologies and stereotypes dominant within our society today.

The news industries highlights the problem of workplace gender inequalities. This is reflected through the categorisation of 'expert' reporting, of which around 80% are males. Globally the news is very male-centric, denying women the authority, legitimacy and representation that the news reflects. (Shine, 2021)

There is an undoubtable gender bias within the news industries culture, as males make up majority of the decision maker roles resulting in the gendered substructures, such as the choice of topic selection and who fills the 'expert' roles. This is shown through males in most countries covering sports, politics, crime and war are topics men seem cover. (de Bruin, 2012)

Traditionally journalism and the news industry was understood as a males profession. Women entered the news industry establishing a place for "women's news" a reporting of what women deemed important. A study by GMMP found that female reporters wrote on average 37% of the stories while their male counterparts wrote 63% of stories. Also finding that women present 49% of stories by radio and television while men present 51%. Women presenting 57% of stories on television, and 41% of stories via radio, which seems great although the higher percentage of stories presented by women on television is very often attributed to the strong focus on a women's appearance on television. Women are commonly found to be presenting on topics such as health and wellness, compared to males who tend to cover topics that are deemed more important and are more likely to lead in promotions. (Geertsema-Sligh, 2018).

Research highlights that the exclusion and under representation of women from the news industry, as both sources and subjects in the news relates to the historic ideologies of excluding women from the public sphere. Women hold less authority positions resulting in less female coverage. (Bachmann, 2020) Through all of this data it is understandable women have this lack of involvement in news industries due to the results of holding high positions.

The divides and social gaps within audiences for news media show that men and women use technology differently and in doing so consume information differently. This also links with the interest in certain topics being different between gender, political news is shown to be less interesting for females. This may be the result of many different impacts. (Benesch, 2012) These divides are known to be important resulting in political participation. There are strong audience gaps as research highlights that men are more interested in news than women globally. Female audience gaps in the news being a key result of women not visually seeing themselves in the news. (Bachmann, 2020).

Lastly, journalism and the news industry was an industry created and distinguished primarily by males. To this day the industry still maintains gender bias through male privilege, with a heavy male dominance in authority roles. Efforts have been made by some major news industries, an influential movement is the 50:50 gender representation project by the BBC, aiming to improve gender equalities within the industry, proving that positive change can come when the tools are put in place to lessen the gap. (Rattan, A., et al, 2019) It is understandable that the news reflects into our global society, the reflection of women continuously being underrepresented and shown covering certain topics furthermore imprints our society with a particular stereotype of what a women is and where a women's place is. Highlighting the

importance that this industry needs to transform. It seems now more than ever it is essential to showcase female journalism and in return create a greater industry.

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Gender in Advertising

Olivia Seymour

The basis of advertising is to work parallel with ideological representations of the self as an appeal to audiences that are often encompassed by stereotypical representations of gender. Gender is key to part of the social structure and psychology of advertising as it generates a response to how we engage with the advertisement and helps us decide what we consume (Barthel, 1988, p. 6). Stereotypical gender role portrayal entails a belief that certain attributes are associated with being either masculine or feminine, including physical characteristics, occupational status or role behaviours (Eisend, 2019, p. 72). That being the case, this relationship has proven detrimental to the way that representations of gender are internalised by audiences that identify to a specific gender by reinforcing essentialist ideologies of gender roles. Advertisers take advantage of exploiting idealised physicality and characteristics of a gender for capital gain by selling the consumer an identity attached to a commodity; thus, consumers will buy the product in the hope they will embody the gendered identity associated with it.

Since its birth, advertising has harvested negative representations of women's place in society through their sexist portrayal in the media in comparison to their male counterparts. The advertising industry has long been in a two-way relationship with gender-related developments in society, questioning whether advertisements show social stereotypes, which in turn, reinforce stereotypical values and societal behaviour; or if they are simply reflecting what already exists (Eisend, 2009, p. 419). Even with considerable social progress in the reckoning of gender representation today, advertising clings on to a hegemonic discourse of gender that continues to propagate phallocentrism and situates women as secondary. The study of gender role stereotypes in advertising has continued for over five decades and has consistently found that advertisements depict women as negative or sexist, however, even in contemporary advertising, moving beyond the 'happy-housewife' stereotype, female stereotypes persist even if they take different forms and exhibit different patterns (Zotos and Tsichla, 2014, p. 446). Women are now subjected to a role in advertising that is overly sexualised and exotic, appealing to exclusivist identities that are often masculine.

Scholars have examined whether advertisements portray gender role representations in a manner that affects societal behaviour and values, or if they merely represent society and its values; theorised as the ‘mirror vs. mold’ debate (Grau and Zotos, 2016, p. 762). According to Grau and Zotos (2016), the 'mirror' refers to advertising as a reflection of society that is not seen as significant and instead is seen as an extrapolated picture of a social phenomenon. Conversely, the ‘mold’ point of view states that people’s perceptions of reality are shaped by the media by incorporating portrayed stereotypes into their own system of values; thus, creating their gendered identity through the stereotyped iconography of their gender (Schroeder and Zwick, 2004). The socially constructed nature of gender emphasises advertising’s role in its influence on societal behaviour as tokens of prescribed knowledge to how we should behave according to the portrayed stereotypes. Scholars have argued that this debate is instead one of continuum

that should be understood as advertising being regarded as a system of representation that generates meaning within the framework of culture and contributes to it (Grau and Zotos, 2016, p. 762).

Grau and Zotos (2016) indicated in their research that gender stereotypes, particularly of women, persist in contemporary advertising but manifest themselves in other forms and trends that steer away from traditional gender role portrayal of the 'happy house-wife' and instead places women as sexual and/or decorative objects within advertisements. Due to the fact that advertising continues to produce gender role stereotypes in the wake of women's liberation from the household and burgeoning gender equality movements, this cements its role in perpetuating stereotypes as a means for capital gain and to reify power dynamic (Eisend, 2009, p. 420). The culture lag between developing societal views and advertising is evident, and its purpose is that of a blurred line; it is possible that as a result of cultural influences, it continues to reinforce hierarchical patterns between men and women, or because advertisers consciously portray women as sexual objects in order to satisfy the male gaze (Zotos and Tsichla, 2014, p. 447).

As a part of the patriarchal capitalist regime, the notoriously sexist nature of advertising caters to the identities of those in power. Under scrutiny of the culture lag in a 'post-feminist' era, the portrayal of women in advertisements has had to manifest itself in other forms to continue the reinforcement of the power dynamic between men and women. Advertising today nurtures a prominent 'male gaze' that objectifies and sexualises women by catering to the appeal of heterosexual men. In order to adjust to societies gender-development, advertisers have had to take subtle and cunning approaches in the depiction of women that grants them agency and liberation while retaining their place as passive among men by capitalising off their sexual agency.

The idea that 'sex sells' is a prominent discourse in modern advertising that harness's female sexual agency as a form of degradation and objectification, often done so by placing women as decorative and/or passive objects draped around often a male subject or a commodity. Women are often the primary focus in sexualised advertising both historically and contemporarily (Blair, J.D., Stephenson, 2006, p. 109). Advertisers capitalise off of the notion of an assumed heterosexual consumer desire to consume products marketed as exotic and sexual, laced in connotations of sex as an ideology to buy into that gratify men and consequently, exploit women. Advertisements that are targeted at male audiences often are encompassed by phallocentrism, placing male subjects central to the advertisement as desirable and worthy of female gratification; while advertising targeted at women shows depictions of idealised female beauty and agency of sexuality as a consumable identity. Messages are encoded in advertisements for consumers to receive about how they should understand themselves based on their embodiment of the portrayed stereotypes that foster negative implications on actual gendered behaviour in society, such as male ideals of their domination over women and feelings of insecurity among women based on unrealistic body image (Patterson and O'Malley, 2009, p. 16).

The patriarchal nature of advertising remains a stronghold by those in power in the realm of capitalism to produce gendered stereotypes in the media to reify power dynamics between men and women. Despite significant social movements of women's liberation and a push for agency, advertising has clung on to sexist portrayals that favour men and minimise female empowerment; done so through tactical

adjustments of representation to minimise its lag of culture but continuing by emanating itself through new trends and patterns.

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Gender in *Doctor Who*

Zoe Goom

Science fiction shows can give something unique in terms of gender representation and create fresh and new archetypes that are not characterized in gendered terms; they can also be liberated from the traditional stereotypes associated with gender. However, not all science fiction shows can develop this potential. Doctor Who is the BBC's longest-running science fiction show from 1963-89, 2005-present (Jowett, 2014). It follows the escapades of the Doctor, a human-looking extraterrestrial Time Lord from the planet Gallifrey, and his often-human companions, who arbitrarily travels through time and space in the TARDIS (Time And Relative Dimensions In Space) (Coile, 2013). The TARDIS always appears as a blue, 1960s London police box and is seen to demonstrate sentience and is bigger on the inside.

Each episode centers around the Doctor and his companion(s) traveling through time and space, where he encounters a problem that threatens the universe's existence and saves the day. One trait of being a Time Lord is the ability to regenerate, which is achieved when the Doctor is fatally wounded. When he regenerates, his body is transformed into a new one, with the same history and experiences but a new physical appearance and personality (Barewell, 2016). The newly regenerated 11th Doctor states, "I'm a girl! No! No! I'm not a girl" (The End of Time part 2, 2009). This suggests that the Doctor's change of appearance could include switching genders upon their regenerations. These regeneration instances are beneficial to Doctor Who writers since they allow a new actor or possible actress to play the Doctor's role, adding creative value to the long-running show that can reflect the changes in the views of gender and their stereotypes represented in the media.

As a science fiction show as long-running as Doctor Who, it needs to address the representation of gender, especially female characters and their associated stereotypes.

Doctor Who has an equal representation of speaking female and male characters (Pelusi, 2014); however, it has had very few female directors and fewer female writers with none since 2010 (Jowett, 2014); therefore, leading to unconscious gender bias and reinforce harmful gender stereotypes. Since the 2005 reboot, the Doctor has almost had all exclusively female companions (Jowett, 2014), who often fill the roles of nurturer, love interest (Stuller, 2010), and "eye candy" (Chapman, 2006), for the male hero and viewers. They also tend to be emotional, passive, or dependent so the Doctor can function as their rescuer (Jowett, 2014), which leaves limited scope for character development (Wallace, 2010). This could imply to viewers that females are perceived as having a lower status and are less equipped to defend themselves, and that a man is always needed to save the day. Alternatively, strong female characters are often portrayed as complex, cold, and aggressive villains (Wood, 1994). Unfortunately, these gendered stereotypes are enforced in Doctor Who, as we see fin two female characters River Song and Missy.

Professor River Song is a female companion and later wife to the Doctor, who had regeneration abilities, like the Doctor. She was confident in even the most dangerous situations (Coile, 2013), and had

intelligence that rivaled the Doctor. Nevertheless, she relinquishes her regenerative powers for love (Coile, 2013), transferring them to the Doctor, which ultimately kills her, but saves the Doctor, who is hailed the hero and acts as the ultimate masculine protector (Coile, 2013). However, it is River Song's sacrifice that ultimately saved the day, and she is seldom mentioned again.

Moreover, another Time Lord, Missy, who after regenerating has switched from male to female, also matches the Doctor's skills and intelligence with the power of regeneration. Like River, she is a female character that is equally matched with the Doctor. However, unlike the Doctor, Missy is power-hungry and wants to control the universe; Missy's storyline is set to always conflict with the Doctor. In science fiction, female characters with power and rival the male hero are often positioned as evil (Jowett, 2017). Female power is frequently portrayed in this negative light of being the villain. It can negatively impact viewers' ideas of women (Collins, 2011), as the villain represents negative values and counterexamples to socially accepted behaviors (Kokorski, 2011). However, the Doctor,

presented as male, is portrayed as a wise, all-knowing authoritative figure (Eeken, 2021) and naturally superior (Britton, 2011), which are stereotypes often associated with being a male.

However, Doctor Who is reflecting societies demand for strong and robust female hero characters, as after almost 55 years and 12 male actors having played the quintessential role of the Doctor, actress Jodie Whittaker was announced to play the first female Doctor (Yodovich, 2020) in 2017. Though Doctor Who has an equal representation of male and female characters, the stereotypes associated with gender still pose an issue, especially for women. However, the new female Doctor represents a significant step towards gender equality and the acceptance of women into what was once considered a man's role of being the hero.

Doctor Who also challenges the stereotypes of the traditional hero male hero, as the Doctor is not a hero in the conventional, masculine sense. The traditional male hero is portrayed as rugged, challenging, and masculine (Baker, 2007), who often relies on and uses weapons (Rauch, 2012). However, the Doctor strives to resolve conflict and save the day through his ingenuity, intelligence, and persuasion rather than brute strength and superior firepower (Jowett, 2017). His only weapon is a sonic screwdriver, a universal and versatile tool that does not kill but opens locked doors (Eeken, 2021). Unlike traditional male hero figures, he does not hide his emotions (Pelusi, 2014). The Doctor encapsulates feminine traits such as persuasion to save the day. Doctor Who has worked hard to dismantle the traditional male hero stereotype, and we see this being demonstrated through the Doctor himself (Pelusi, 2014).

Doctor Who is redefining the male hero stereotype but enforcing the stereotypical roles of females as the caregivers and mediators who serve the male hero; we see this through the companion's relationship with the Doctor. For all the good that he strives for, the Doctor is still a flawed character with a dark side, derived from his alien perspective (Jowett, 2017). He rarely travels alone, and his need to travel with a companion is needed to keep him level and stop him from doing something terrible (Pelusi, 2014) and keeping him 'safe' (Jowett, 2017). The role of the companion is to be the Doctor's caretaker by giving him a new, more human perspective that grounds him and prevents him from mistreating his Time Lord knowledge and abilities, maintaining his humanity and making him more compassionate (Pelusi, 2014).

This reinforces “the idea that behind every great man, there is a great woman” (Stuller, 2010), and often only the Doctor is credited to saving the day, with little to no mention of help from his female companions.

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Gender in Quentin Tarantino’s Films

Becky McEwan

Born on March 27th, 1963, *Quentin Tarantino* is an American film director, screenwriter, producer, author, film critic, and actor. Quentin Tarantino is regarded widely as a master film director and pioneer of modern cinematic tropes. His career began as an independent filmmaker with the release of *'Reservoir Dogs'* in 1992, and his films have since garnered commercial success and a cult following. Tarantino's filmography now sprawls over three decades, starting with work that was key to shaping the tone of 1990s indie cinema and stretching to the 2019 hit 'Once Upon a Time in Hollywood'. His films are often characterized by nonlinear storylines, dark humour, stylized violence, and extended dialogue: critical components of the postmodern aesthetic. This adoption of the postmodern aesthetic has been criticized for being fraught with problems, including the feature of high levels of violence, derogatory and often abusive treatment of women, and tokenism in his filmography. Critics have measured their concern for Tarantino's films, specifically how they affect the representation of women and other marginalized groups. These critical concerns are measured using Laura Mulvey's male gaze theory and 'the Bechdel test' created by Alison Bechdel.

Over the last three decades, Quentin Tarantino has built an empire of eclectic films in their style. This is a direct consequence of Tarantino's adoption of the postmodern aesthetic—first coined by Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975) it refers to Western society in the last quarter of the 19th century. (Willette, 2013). Through the medium of cinema, specifically Quentin Tarantino's cinematic universe, postmodernism breaks down the cultural divide between high and low art (Bisbey, 2019). Fredric Jameson defines the adoption of the postmodern aesthetic as an idea that upends typical portrayals of gender, race, class, genre, and time to create something that does not abide by traditional narrative expression (Jameson, 1989). Thus, examining the role of the postmodern aesthetic in cinema is vital in understanding the influence of Quentin Tarantino filmography and the filmography that influenced his creative path. Postmodernism is often focused on the destruction of hierarchies and boundaries (Bisbey, 2019) which critics find ironic for Quentin Tarantino often upholds outdated gender values in his films. Multiple scholars, most notably Marc R. Fedderman, believe that artists such as Quentin Tarantino are simply products of Hollywood's gendered ideology. Film production communities are cultural expressions that involve all the symbolic processes and collaborative practices that cultures use to gain and reinforce identity. The gendering of Hollywood has become institutionalized (Fedderman, 2009) due to the communities who shape and control the system have perpetuated themselves and their interests to forge a clear ideology. Scholars agree that this ideology of Hollywood production is heavily patriarchal and is a reason for numerous critics of Quentin Tarantino's filmography being considered patriarchal. It is the institution he exists within.

Nevertheless, critics disregard this excuse by scholars and hold onto their main critique that the trajectory of Tarantino's character and the influence of the gaze upon them (Fedderman, 2009). Critics of Quentin Tarantino often quote Laura Mulvey's theory of the 'male gaze' as it gives credit to their claim that Tarantino's films appeal primarily to men. John Berger first detailed the gendered assumptions audiences

internalize in the form of classical Western painting. He defined the clear delineation between the male and female presence as "those who do and those who have done to them" (Fedderman, 2009). In simple terms, the men in the art 'act' usually in a painter or spectator role, and the women 'appear' (Berger, 1972). Renowned feminist Laura Mulvey supported John Berger's theory with her groundbreaking essay 'Visual and Other Pleasures' (1986) that linked his ideas to the cinema of Mulvey's era. Although John Berger first theorized it, the term the 'male gaze' was coined by Laura Mulvey. The 'male gaze' is the act of depicting women "from a masculine, heterosexual perspective that presents and represents women as sexual objects for the pleasure of the heterosexual male viewer" (Eaton, 2008).

Attempts to investigate these ideas in terms of Quentin Tarantino's cinematic universe and the level of empowerment and disempowerment of his films are usually about 'Pulp Fiction'; his 1994 cult classic film and the gendered classification. Pulp Fiction has been defined as a classic example of 'Tarantinian' ethos: a term coined in 2006 to describe Quentin Tarantino's unique style, including themes and plot points (Peckham, 2006). In classic Tarantino form, many critics utilize the gendering of characters in Pulp Fiction (1994) to represent Quentin Tarantino's disregard for the feminist ideal of the male gaze. Approaches to gender in Pulp Fiction are that men are shown to rule and control through violence. Furthermore, critics investigate Pulp Fiction's unwavering and nonchalant manliness through how the only female character Mia is often utilized as a mere plot point. Tarantino did not attempt to drive her story but instead employed her story to drive the male character's story as Tarantino's biggest critique is that his films are worlds "of men for men" (Han, 2019).

Despite challenging these stereotypes in Kill Bill. Vol One and Two (2003-4), this feminist text expands on Tarantino's typical filmic vocabulary, and critics often cite it as his most feminist as it passes the Bechdel test. Alison Bechdel's raises a point that critics often link to Laura Mulvey theory of the 'Male Gaze'. The Bechdel Test, initially inspired by a 1985 instalment of Alison Bechdel's comic Dykes to Watch Out For, features a character with three basic requirements for a movie: it must "have at least two named women in it, they have to talk to each other, and they have to discuss something besides a man" (Liao, 2017). It is important to note that the Bechdel test is not an accurate expression of whether a film should be considered a feminist story. Relatively, it measures the level of depth female characters stories often lack. In the Kill Bill films, Quentin Tarantino explicitly challenged the traditional notions of what women were capable of by having The Bride, played by Uma Thurman, gradually take possession of the gaze. However, the Kill Bill franchise still comes to undertreat as critics point out that despite this challenge of gendered ideals, the female characters speak and act under a powerful man's direction.

Quentin Tarantino has created a compelling portfolio of work that has attracted an immense cult following. Despite his popularity among contemporary Hollywood, critics believe that his self-professed bouts of masculine pride find a clear resonance in his work, damaging to the portrayal of gendered character within his work. From hyper-masculine portrayals of macho-men who only express themselves through violence to the silent female character often used as a plot point. Tarantino's filmic universe is full of characters often fraught with stereotypical and sometimes even confusing gendered portrayals. His postmodern aesthetic adoption allows him often to feature abusive treatment of the women in his films. This treatment is often critiqued using the lens of Laura Mulvey's 'male gaze' theory and Alison Bechdel's 'Bechdel test' as they are cited by scholars and critics alike as being the leading way to measure gender in

films. This study is limited to the work of a single director and in no way represent a comprehensive analysis of how gender functions in postmodern, twenty-first century Hollywood. While continuing to note the generally misogynistic assumptions of mainstream popular film, it is incumbent upon critics and theorists to just study one director: Quentin Tarantino when his cinematic universe and the social consequence of how he positions his characters on screen are simply a product of the contemporary Hollywood industry he thrives within.

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Gender-Positive Advertising

Greer McLean

Advertising can be viewed as a contentious term that opens up a wide range of possibilities for examining gender and addressing gender stereotypes within the advertising industry. The way commercials have been shaped in today's ever-changing society might be considered as a reflection of how our society runs. According to Althusser one of the most potent mechanisms of perpetuating dominant ideas is through the media (Stuart, 2009). It's a crucial aspect of supporting patriarchal views and maintaining our society's social norms. In today's modern and capitalist society, advertising can be viewed as one of the most powerful socialisation institutions (Murphy, 2020). Advertising's power can lead to misrepresentations of who we should be and what we should buy in order to improve ourselves. Advertisements inspire people to buy new things as a way of promoting themselves and expressing their identities (Rhianne, 2015). This can lead to ideological advertising traps, as well as misrepresentations of how men and women are portrayed in the world we live in today.

Stereotyping refers to targeting groups based on their representative types, they focus on the differences between groups and create certain beliefs or ideologies around each particular group. Stereotypes cover the belief distortions we as a culture generate and retain, as well as specific images of women and advertising representations of women (Bordalo, et al., 2016). Because of preconceived notions that men are the dominating and authoritative figure, while women are soft and subservient. These preconceptions are represented in the media and marketing; for example, males acting as CEOs are dependent on females acting as assistants. We produce unrealistic misrepresentations of the female gender as a result of these stereotypical female depictions in our marketing (Shinoda, et al., 2021). These advertisements are shaped by the media and can influence how women should act and behave in social situations. This can have detrimental consequences for women of all ages and ethnicities, as well as harm their self-esteem. The priming of gender stereotypes in one environment can have long-term consequences in other situations and parts of one's life, and it demonstrates how the mainstream media can be biased towards men and women.

According to studies, women are more likely to be depicted as the submissive gender in advertisements, both on television and in print. These women can be depicted in the stereotypical manner of catching the male gaze (Drake, 2017). The goal of these commercials could be to draw attention to the male's reaction and make him the bearer of meaning, while the female exists merely to be gazed at. Advertisements have developed a domesticated vision of how women should act, and these portrayals can be passed down to future generations. This can lead to certain deceptions of women and the creation of an unrealistic idea of how they should act and look. Highlighting how social advertising can create implications within our society and categorises those stereotypes in an inferior manner. Positive advertising discourses have emerged in recent years, assisting in the promotion of change within our advertising stereotypes. Because of female empowerment movements, gender friendly advertising is critical for transformation in our culture. When it comes to advertising and promoting new products,

marketers have forced to reconsider certain marketing methods based on gender norms (Drake, 2017). In today's society, there has been a surge in consumers breaking through traditional standards and setting new expectations for how we should regard females in commercials. This includes breaking apart from gender stereotypes such as females being the submissive genders and men being the dominating ones.

Feminism's rise in the 1960s progressively began to question gender norms and sought equal opportunities and structures for women (Landreth & Zotos, 2016). Both the roles of women and men in advertising have shifted in recent years, both in print and online. Men are often regarded as taking on softer, caring roles, which could be owing to the changing positions that the two genders historically had. Fowler and Thomas discovered that over the course of a five-year period, fewer men were assigned the lead role and an increase in males being portrayed as fathers (Landreth & Zotos, 2016). Females are now able to generate equal chances in their homes and in the world as a result of altering role structures. The decorative roles that women once constantly held can now be spread over a wide range of roles. This could be due to the fact women are now seen to hold a higher occupational status and can mean they are more receptive to the marketing that represents their desires and needs as consumers. In today's society, women wield more political and economic influence than in previous decades, allowing them to advocate for change.

Femvertising is a type of female empowerment movement that attempts to bring about positive and significant change in our society. Femvertising is a popular topic in the media that encourages buyers to purchase from brands who advocate female empowerment in their ads (Drake, 2017). These commercials have been praised for defying gender stereotyping in advertising and raising awareness about these topics that are rarely discussed. Marketers have had to adapt their commercials to stay up with the times due to shifting demographics and the empowerment of women in our culture. Meaning that the shift in advertisements has meant we have seen a recent change in the way women are portrayed not only in advertisements but also the media. Femvertising targets ads with female empowerment themes and creates a variety of advertisements in hopes to break the negative stigmas and stereotypical roles around females.

The dove beauty campaign, for example, caused women to feel more at ease in their own skin and to identify with others who promoted dove goods. This was owing to the fact that Dove advertised the female in everyday and current ways in order to empower women and girls to feel confident in their own skin. This highlights the female empowerment movement and encourages women of all ages to take charge of their own skin and the decisions they make in the world. With a positive increase in femvertising and female empowerment in the advertising world marketers are having to make this change in order to keep up with the times (Chan, et al., 2012). This emotional form of marketing causes consumers to have a positive brand image and spread positive word of mouth and strengthens the brand awareness between the brand and consumer. While these brands feature female empowerment themes, it is clear that they are being utilised as an emotional leverage tactic to question the shift society believes to have made around female empowerment within advertising. In relation to business, the Dove campaign has reported multibillion-dollar earnings since its launch. This smart marketing form raises questions about female empowerment and challenges society's gender stereotyping. It can create questions around why a brand has introduced female empowerment into their own advertisements.

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Gender Roles in Dating App Usage

Olivia Trass

Dating apps, according to Comunello and Parisi (2020) are “internet-based mobile applications that people use for arranging intimate interactions with potential partners.” They are the most common way for couples to meet - for both heterosexual and homosexual couples (Comunello & Parisi, 2020) - though motivations for their use vary widely between users, from seeking hookups to long-term romantic relationships, and sometimes even platonic relationships.

Tinder is the current most popular dating app according to Statista (2021), with over 6.5 million downloads in May 2021 alone. Launched in 2012, Tinder is centred on meeting people in your area by anonymously expressing interest in others by swiping right on their profiles - or left to reject them - with mutual right-swipes forming a ‘match’. Only once matched can users send messages to each other. Because of its large user base, most research uses Tinder as its primary case, so this entry will follow this trend. However, Tinder should not be taken as representative of all dating apps or any category there within.

Comunello and Parisi (2020) establish three phases of dating app usage: profile creation and self-presentation, partner selection, and interaction with potential partners. These stages are all gender-dependent and exist on a baseline of socially dominant gender scripts, both in heterosexual contexts and queer ones.

Profile creation and self-presentation

Because dating apps remove many of the physical and behavioural cues people use to judge others in a partner-seeking context, and because the opportunity for an interaction relies on expressing interest in profiles alone, profiles play a crucial role (Comunello & Parisi, 2020). MacLeod and McArthur (2018) view profiles as a performance to an audience, explaining that we judge new people based on the limited information they initially present. In a dating app context, users can only include limited information in their profiles, and what is not included may as well not exist. Members of a group - here, app users - use shared understandings and expectations to understand what a person’s ‘performance’ says about them. The context of the ‘performance’ is crucial to its meaning, here meaning knowledge of the app, including what information it requires of profiles and how it encourages users to behave, informs how users interpret others’ profiles.

A core factor in self-presentation on dating apps is its limitations. Firstly, the app itself: for example, dating apps commonly present gender as a binary - users must choose whether they are male or female, and where other options are provided, users must select whether they want to be shown to people seeking men or women, essentially obscuring any gender outside the binary and any attraction beyond masculine and/or feminine (MacLeod & McArthur, 2018). Secondly, social: users present so as to be right-swiped by others (MacLeod & McArthur, 2018). Comunello, Parisi, and Ieracitano (2020) explain that the acceptable

behaviour that leads to right-swipes, as well as undesirable behaviour that encourages rejection, is determined by gendered scripts from wider society. Adhering to gender norms in profiles is therefore integral to success on dating apps.

Users put their best selves forward, which can involve deception, though on location-based apps which encourage in-person meetups, authenticity dominates (Ranzini & Lutz, 2016), especially given Belk's (2016) idea that one's online behaviour is an extension of their real self. Following heteronormative gender scripts, any deception from women tends to be about their attractiveness, youthfulness, and weight - largely visual factors - while men's concerns their relationship goals, which tend towards sex and short-term relationships compared to women's tendencies towards emotional connections (Ranzini & Lutz, 2016).

Partner selection

Complementary to profile creation, users screen potential partners based on limited cues (MacLeod & McArthur, 2018). There are two gendered aspects to heterosexual partner selection: first, men tend to have more judgemental criteria, which reflects the gendered script of women being objects of men's desire, while women seek emotional connections which cannot be determined through profiles (Comunello, Parisi & Ieracitano, 2020). Secondly, women tend to be more selective with their right-swipes, using them to represent real interest, while men tend to swipe right on most profiles and let the woman's choice determine the outcome (Comunello, Parisi & Ieracitano, 2020). While this may contradict the findings that men are more judgemental, it also reflects the stereotype of men being more forward, while women must reject many men's advances to find a meaningful connection.

Interaction with potential partners

Location-based dating apps exist to encourage real-life meetups, but this relies on in-app chat (Ranzini & Lutz, 2016). As discussed earlier, appropriate behaviour on dating apps, including in interactions, is informed by wider gender norms (Comunello, Parisi & Ieracitano, 2020). This assigns the initiative role and women the reactive one in a heterosexual context and positions the man as seeking sex while the woman seeks more 'serious' emotional relationships (Comunello, Parisi & Ieracitano, 2020; Ranzini & Lutz, 2016; Weiser, 2004). These are almost always the case, with men typically initiating conversations post-match and women using opening messages as a gauge of a man's character to consequently decide whether to reject him (Comunello, Parisi & Ieracitano, 2020; Comunello and Parisi, 2020). Where a conversation continues, it also adheres to gender norms: men tend to send more unsolicited explicit messages and be more forward, while women continually seek grounds to reject the man (Comunello, Parisi & Ieracitano, 2020). Women who adopt the masculine role in dating app interactions are frequently deemed 'crazy' and this behaviour often leads to rejection (Comunello, Parisi & Ieracitano, 2020).

Research finds that interaction on dating apps reflects offline partner-seeking behaviour (Comunello, Parisi & Ieracitano, 2020) and that online behaviour in general reflects offline gendered behaviour (Weiser, 2004; Dittmar, Long & Meek, 2004). Some dating app users seek to actively subvert gendered expectations because, while they are prominent, they are not required of the medium, however,

subversion still uses gendered expectations as a benchmark for divergent behaviour (Comunello, Parisi & Ieracitano, 2020).

Bumble as an intended challenger

Bumble is a supposedly feminist alternative to other major dating apps, aiming to challenge gender roles and free women of the harassment they face from men post-match. It functions similarly to Tinder, but the woman in a heterosexual match must send the first message, and the match expires if she does not do so within 24 hours. In same-sex matches, either person can initiate the conversation. Despite its intentions, gender roles persist everywhere but the first message, including in profiles, motivations for use, continued conversations, and in-person meetups (MacLeod & McArthur, 2018; Bivens and Hoque, 2018). MacLeod and McArthur (2018) suggest that while Bumble does not eliminate sexism and gender roles from interactions, it does offers opportunities to criticise them when they arise.

Not only does Bumble not eliminate gender roles, it is built on them: it relies on a heterosexual match, and it ties the idea of safety to stereotypes of men being stereotypically masculine, being the harassers, and targeting women, while women are feminine and the victim (Bivens & Hoque, 2018). Where the woman carries the masculine traits or the masculine man is attracted to men, Bumble fails in its goals. Bumble also ignores intersectionality, which positions women of colour as aggressive and sees rampant harassment towards LGBTQ+ people (Bivens & Hoque, 2018). Ultimately, Bumble believes itself to be a technological solution to a social problem, which neglects to consider that technology reflects the existing social world and cannot independently solve social issues, essentially meaning it cannot create the outcome it claims to have achieved (Bivens & Hoque, 2018).

Differences in same-sex dating app usage

Researchers acknowledge there is insufficient research on LGBTQ+ dating app usage (Ranzini & Lutz, 2016), but the limited research suggests that LGBTQ+ people are a major user base of major dating apps. Comunello and Parisi (2020) find that LGBTQ+ people tend to be early adopters of dating apps and are more likely than heterosexual users to initiate offline romantic relationships following a dating app match, perhaps due to the ease of finding same-sex-attracted partners online compared to offline.

Comunello, Parisi, and Ieracitano (2020) find that some heterosexual patterns of behaviour play out in same-sex interactions, but they also deviate - for example, women seeking women tend to mirror heterosexual women's behaviour when seeking, but not when being sought.

Conclusions

To conclude, dating apps are a highly gendered environment, following gendered scripts originating in offline dating behaviour as well as patterns in the relationship between general offline and online behaviour. These observations apply across all three of Comunello and Parisi's (2020) stages of dating app usage. While some users and apps seek to subvert gender norms on dating apps, those norms remain the

benchmark for behaviour regardless of users' or app creators' intentions. These findings bear some relevance to LGBTQ+ dating app usage, though research here is too limited to draw strong conclusions.

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The Girl Child in Popular Culture

Morgan Grellet-Hale

At first, it seems difficult to identify a girl child in popular culture due an uncertainty of what a girl child is; however, after reflecting on the work of Dafna Lemish and other gender and media scholars, it becomes apparent that some of the most popular teenage icons built their careers off of the girl child image. The girl child image can be explained as the perfect stereotypical teenage girl: beautiful, petite, virginal, flirtatious, and naïve. Through different media outlets such as television, the music industry, and film, we can investigate how this particular portrayal of girlhood, created global fan bases for celebrities such as Miley Cyrus, Britney Spears, and Kristen Stewart.

Dafna Lemish in her research, describes the girl child in popular culture, as a pre-pubescent girl that has been sexualized throughout culture, media, genres, and ages (Lemish, 2020, 1-8). What makes the girl child image so prevalent in popular culture, is that the concept is molded around the stereotypical tween aged "girly girl" that we see in television, the music industry, and film (Lemish, 2020, 1-8). According to Lemish, the first indication of the girl child image across media, is the appearance of the individual: over accentuated eyelashes, rosebud lips, long hair, and a petite figure. The second indication is the mannerisms of the individual: innocent, flirtatious, and emotional (Lemish, 2020, 1-8). Across the globe, cultural cues are used to create segregation between genders from childhood; female characters on television wear pink, whereas male characters wear blue, girls listen to princess pop music, whereas boys listen to songs that are loud and upbeat (Lemish, 2020, 1-8). The undercurrent of gender distinction in popular culture, has created expectations for how boys and girls should present themselves, particularly young girls as they transition into teenage hood (Lemish, 2020, 1-8). Girls' media culture is based around the concepts of femininity, materialism, and most importantly, image.

One of the core concepts that explains why the image of the girl child is so romanticized, is the 'lolita effect' (Durham, MG., 2009, 1-69). The 'lolita effect,' is the result of popular culture encouraging girls that sex makes people desirable. Girls' media culture romanticizes sex during youth, sexual violence, and the male gaze (Durham, MG., 2009, 1-69). According to M. Gigi Durham, in her novel '*The Lolita Effect'* one in nine teenage television shows include a sex scene or a scene where the idea of sex is strongly implied (Durham, MG., 2009, 1-69). We see this in the teen hit television show, *'Gossip Girl'* as characters engage in casual hook ups with one another and are regarded as the popular kids at school (Durham, MG., 2009, 1-69). The concept of the male gaze and the lolita effect are interlinked, due to men sexualizing young teenage girls' innocence and virginity in television, the music industry, and film (Durham, MG., 2009, 1-69). Liz Perle, vice president of *'Common Sense Media'* spoke in Durham's novel about how research has shown, that middle school aged children believe the way to get male attention, is through sexual experimentation (Durham, MG., 2009, 1-69). Perle goes onto note that this stereotypical response is caused by male responses to media broadcasting (Durham, MG., 2009, 1-69).

Western culture television giant, Disney, has been highlighted in research on the girl child image due to their female protagonists; one of their most powerful protagonists is the character of '*Hannah Montana'* (Northup, T., Liebler, C.M., 2010, 265-282). The image of *'Hannah Montana'* was extremely profitable in the late 2000s, and soon became a global phenomenon, due to the television show's storyline, that an ordinary schoolgirl named Miley Cyrus, could transform into a slender blonde superstar called Hannah Montana (Northup, T., Liebler, C.M., 2010, 265-282). The television show gained such popularity, that *'Hannah Montana'* became a franchise with a movie, novels, CDs, and worldwide tours (Northup, T., Liebler, C.M., 2010, 265-282). *'Hannah Montana'* embodied the girl child image; the protagonist was a fourteen-year-old popstar and the storyline of the show resonated with ordinary pre-teenage girls around the globe (Northup, T., Liebler, C.M., 2010, 265-282).

The pop music industry is largely associated with the girl child image, and the idea that sex sells (Jackson, S., Vares, T., 2015, 480-498). The aesthetic behind the pop music industry has been described by Jackson and Vares in their collaborative article, *'Too many bad role models for us girls': Girls, female pop celebrities and 'sexualization'* as hyper-femininity and hyper sexuality morphed into one (Jackson, S., Vares, T., 2015, 480-498). Pop icon Britney Spears is one of the most famous examples of the girl child image in the music industry and was able to successfully combine sexuality with innocence (Jackson, S., Vares, T., 2015, 480-498). Spears hit single *'...Baby One More Time'* was released when she was sixteen years old; in the music video we see Spears dressed in a sexy schoolgirl outfit, singing emotionally about her loneliness after a breakup with a boyfriend (Jackson, S., Vares, T., 2015, 480-498). The music video for *'…Baby One More Time'* branded Spears as a popstar who had the perfect amount of girlhood and resulted in her being seen as sex symbol of the early 2000s (Jackson, S., Vares, T., 2015, 480-498).

Catherine Hardwicke's screen adaption of Stephenie Meyer's novel *'Twilight'* gained global popularity with tweens, in particular, young girls. *'Twilight'* introduces us to the protagonist, Bella Swan, a seventeen-year-old girl who falls in love with Edward Cullen, a vampire who is one hundred-and eight-years-old living in a teenager's body (Bode, L. 2010, 707-719). Bode inserted a quote in her journal article from a film critique which says, "*Twilight* sparkles for its intended audience of indiscriminate adolescent females. However it will only be deemed as a softened, hackneyed horror show of synthetic affection for the rest of us." (Bode, L. 2010, 707-719). *'Twilight'* romanticizes sexual violence, toxic relationships, and infatuation. The protagonist Bella Swan is depicted as a shy and naïve teenager, who puts herself in life threatening situations only for Edward to save her (Bode, L. 2010, 707-719). '*Twilight*' was able to sell the pretty and innocent image of Bella Swan, to create a teenage love story based off of violence and horror (Bode, L. 2010, 707-719).

Reflecting on the research conducted, we can confirm that the concept of the girl child relies on two aspects: the correct image and the correct mannerisms in the media—the connection that ties both aspects together, is feminity and sexuality. The findings from different gender and media scholars, highlight a clear pattern explaining why different celebrities in the media industry were able to successfully build global fan bases off of the girl child image. The success of the girl child image requires individuals to balance the perfect amount of emotion and innocence, with curiosity and sexual imaging.

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Girls Media Cultures

Aaliyah Rogan

The media is an important element of cultural studies as a lot of our modern culture is disseminated by the mass media via mass communication. Culture has a great presence in any given society and plays a central role in influencing our values and ethics, as well as how we choose to think and act. Thus, media has a momentous force in constructing modern culture. There has been a considerable amount of research conducted by scholars to understand girl's media culture. Girls' media culture seeks to understand how girls use and interpret media, how girl's media culture is produced and circulated within society, girl's representations within the media, and how the role of the media shapes and constructs girl's social identities. Additionally, it is important to recognise that girl's media culture has evolved immensely over the years, just as media and culture have.

The evolution and growth of media technology today have completely transformed the way girls use media. There is a diverse range of media platforms girls can use to consume media. However, due to the evolution and growth of media technology, girls are now considered active users instead of passive viewers, who are not only consuming media content but creating it (Montogomery, 2015). Girl's use of media allows them to express themselves freely through creating content such as music, images, videos, and stories. This is seen through girls creating specific identities on their social media profiles and even the houses and characters they design and create on games such as Sims.

Researchers have discovered that girls choose media content that resonates with themselves and "is more about who they are in relation to others" (Calvert & Wilson, 2008, p.103). In Kearney's (2014) research, she found that in previous eras, girls were interested in many manners of creative expression, however, their interests have guided recent generation's engagements in media production. Girls of the nineteenth and twentieth century appeared to be interested in similar media productions girls are today such as recording their experiences, creatively expressing themselves, and exploring their identities (Kearney, 2014). We see this occurring within the media today, where girls are creating content on various media platforms. An example is one of the most famous TikTok stars, Charli D'Amelio, who is seen mostly creating viral dancing videos as a form of creative expression.

Girls and boys are seen to live in different worlds when it comes to what they are immersed with in the media. Roberts and his colleagues (2004) conducted a study that discovered gender was the driven factor behind adolescents' television show choices (Calvert & Wilson, 2008). It was found that girl's choices were primarily family orientated, romance or comedy television shows (Calvert & Wilson, 2008). In another study, a large national survey of more than a thousand celebrities, girls choose both female and male celebrities as their favourite celebrity, whereas boys only chose male celebrities (Calvert & Wilson, 2008). It is assumed that these findings are due to it being "less culturally sanctioned for males" to display feminine qualities compared to females displaying masculine qualities (Calvert & Wilson, 2008, p.101). It

is also assumed that these findings can be because since females are likely to mature quicker compared to males and their choices may be established by physical and/or sexual attraction.

A lot of the advertisements we see today that involve females create the idea that women are generally seen as objects of sex. Bale (2011) acknowledges that sexually explicit content such as The Daily Sport tabloid newspaper is seen as encouraging "young men to regard women merely as sex objects" (p.304). Girls are interpellated to be desirable subjects as well as being the pleasure for males. In gender-specific magazines, men are seen as strong and intricate, but women are presented as sexual fantasies.

The disturbing increase in "sexualised images and products targeted at young girls, is seen to encourage girls to grow up too fast and come too sexy too soon" (Vares, Jackson & Gill, 2011, p.140). There is a great deal of evidence that shows children are getting older a lot quicker than they used to. Young people's sexual knowledge and consent have decreased over the years, as well as the age young people are learning about drugs, and alcohol (Poyntz & Hoechsmann, 2011). Bale (2011) interviewed 21 young people aged 16-19 and found their initial claims that all young people are having sexual intercourse earlier and earlier. One participant said "things you hear … that people are having sex at like 12 and stud. I can remember when I was 12 and everyone wasn't doing it (Bale, 2011, p.306).

Girls receive messages in the media that glamourises sex, drugs, and alcohol among many other things that encourage girls to emulate what they are exposed to, especially if it's portrayed by an admired celebrity. Scholars such as Mazzarella & Pecora (2007) have argued that much of what is reflected in the media relating to females have an enormous negative effect on young girls, specifically when it comes to body image and self-esteem. The common use of very thin and attractive models in the media, emphasises the idea that to be beautiful you must be thin. Whereas females with heavier body types are illustrated in the media, their weight is commonly part of their role, or the storyline and their character is derided (Calvert & Wilson, 2008). It is prominently seen that the media concentrates it focus on the significance of beauty, romance, fashion and drama in relation to girls. In turn, this creates an underlying assumption that girls are consumed with different messages imposing hegemonic ideals to which they should aim for (Mazzarella & Pecora, 2007).

The uses and gratifications theory is an approach to understand why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy specific needs. Calvert & Wilson (2008) suggests that girls choose media content with the goal to self-evaluate and compare themselves to other people of the same gender. Girls who are constantly exposing themselves to images and videos of the ideal body type and other beauty standards leads to constant comparison and have been assumed to cause negative psychological effects onto young girls as they may adopt eating disorders such as bulimia. Walton (2018) shares a recent study that discovered a connection between children's social media use and their psychological well-being. It was detected that girls use social media more than boys, and at the age of ten, girls had lower levels of happiness and noted more social and emotional problems as they become older in comparison to boys (Walton, 2018).

What has become clear throughout this entry is that girl's media culture is particularly based around the representation of females and its impact on young girls and the idea that girls enjoy exploring their own

identities and making sense of the world around them in the media. Females in the media are generally focused on their physical and sexual attractiveness. It is suggested that girls are a lot more inclined to compare themselves to others in the media, compared to boys are. Young girls are learning and are conforming to these stereotypes set by the media. Even though the new digital age we live in today offers many opportunities for different forms of expression and exploration of identities, it is important to highlight that the media can create a distortion of reality and infrequently is portraying the various characteristics females display in the real world. This builds upon a small-minded perspective which threatens the admirations and expectations of girls who are seeking to explore their own identities. However, as girls change over different periods of time, the same will occur in the media and culture.

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Hegemonic Masculinity in Advertising

Peta McKay

Images generated by advertising circulate throughout society, highlighting what we allegedly require in order to achieve and maintain contentment. Advertisers do this by instilling pictures of "the good life" in our minds and then explaining how we may get the "good life" (Rutledge & Shields 1997).

Advertising is an important socialisation institution, perpetuating preconceptions about gender relations and roles (Rutledge & Shields 1997). In the last 20-25 years, there has been a great deal of feminist study and interest in gender and advertising, particularly in the representation of women and their femininity yet lacking in research on masculinity.

However, research shows a shifting discourse on masculinity over three decades of advertisements, but underlying traditional masculine stereotypes still seem to shine through dominating subordination to women, as well as other marginalised forms of masculinity, such as racial men and the LGBT spectrum.

Despite the fact that the majority of studies have focused primarily on the depiction of women in advertising, it also gives insight into the representation of masculinity. Insights into women's bodies being viewed as sexual objects help us comprehend not only femininity, but also masculinity. Masculinity in this context may be understood through Mulvey's (1975) idea of the male gaze and how it fantasises the female from an active standpoint. Women are gazed at and depicted in such a way that the active male gaze has a visual and sexual influence on them (Mulvey 1975). According to Connel (2005), masculinity exists solely in relation to femininity, and there are several types of masculinity and femininity. She proposed the idea of hegemonic masculinity to theorise the prevailing type of masculinity within society, based on Gramsci's (1971) theory of masculinity (Yang 2020). According to Connell (1995), "white, heterosexual, competitive, individualist, and aggressive" male images have traditionally dominated society (Connell 1995, cited in Feasy 2009, pp. 358). Hegemonic masculinity works in subjugation of women, but it also works in subjection of other marginalised masculinities with parallels to femininity, such as homosexual men or inferior class and ethnic masculinities (Yang 2020).

Since the 1970s, feminist analysis has tried to explore the underlying messages within media portrayals of women, eventually concluding that how women are portrayed is crucial in influencing how both women and men live (Rutledge & Shield 1997). Gender codes in advertising have been criticised for representing binary gender roles in which women and men have perceived codes, with masculinity likely to be depicted as dominant than feminine codes (Niss 1997).

According to Ervin Goffman (1979), the continual repeating of messages around gender presentations creates a reality that may be regarded as genuine in existence (Rutledge & Shields 1997). This idea has been utilized to build results on gender and ads, particularly for renowned feminist academics such as

Jean Kilbourne, and it is consistent with Fejes' (1992) findings (Rutledge & Shields). Thus, according to Rohlinger (2002), the masculine gender role model is preoccupied with power in all parts of reality where products are juxtapositioned with this power.

Products geared at male customers are advertised differently from feminine products intended at female consumers (Niss 1997). Pepsico aired a television commercial for their new Diet Pepsi aimed towards males in 1994. The advertisement featured men kayaking over waterfalls and parachuting across mountains to represent the ‘tough' and ‘adventurous' man (Niss 1997). This example demonstrates how advertisers use the appropriate gender codes to target their intended male or female audience. Strate (1992) goes on to explain how the beer industry relies on masculinity to market beer. Beer commercials, according to Strate (1992), serve as “a roadmap for becoming a man, a rule book for proper male behaviour, in short, a guidebook on masculinity” (Strate 1992:78).

As per Connell (1995), certain masculinities are always culturally preferred above others. Fejes (1992), Craig (1992), Wernick (1991), and Niss (1997) all claimed that the idealised masculinity presented in advertising has changed through time.

According to Craig (1992), the first form of masculinity was serious, rigid, and blatantly neglected family duty. The Industrial Revolution, however, caused a crisis for masculinity in the nineteenth century, since the male physique was no longer necessary for hard labour (Craig 1992). Now that men and women were not separated into separate job sectors, the ‘Strong Man' developed from the late 1800s through the 1920s (Craig 1992). Masculinity was defined in the 1940s and 1950s as having fun in the manner of a playboy. The hippie movement then encouraged men to make love, not war, during the 1960s and 1970s (Craig 1992).

Male vanity became popular in the 1970s with the introduction of aftershave products to the market, which were the first major products to take into account the male body, as fragrance may be connotative when it comes to masculinity (Niss 1997). Niss (1997) attributes this milestone to the 'Old Spice' brand, which produced items depicting a man swimming and then another ad depicting a surfer. This portrayal of masculinity appealed more to male vanity, while simultaneously implying that this attraction was an inherent feature of masculinity (Niss 1997).

After 'Old Spice,' came 'Brut Man,' with the major distinction being that Brut aftershave was promoted to make men smell good (Niss 1997). According to Niss (1997), aftershave was about having a desirable manly physique at that moment, and alongside Kevin Keegan flashing his biceps and saying the Brut tagline, beauty and power suddenly united for masculinity (Niss 1997).

Then there was 'The Active Passive Man,' a sex object who was passive to the female gaze, and Niss (1997) cited the example of a tobacco commercial that featured a man smoking with a hovering woman who wouldn't leave him alone.

The 1980s witnessed a transition away from ‘The Active Passive Man,' who was reluctant to expose his body, to a decade of individuality that was free of the fear of criticism from other males (Niss 1997). According to Niss (1997), the ‘The Levi's Man' was unafraid to display his body; in a laundrette commercial, he was seen in his white boxer shorts while doing laundry, indicating a significant shift in men's gender roles.

In the 1980s, there was also a push for success and competitiveness, and the ‘Yuppie Man' was closely related to the ‘Active Passive Man,' narcissistic and in command of his prized physique (Niss 1997).

However, as the 1980s drew to a conclusion, the ‘New Man' was motivated to combine the characteristics of the ‘Yuppie Man' with family duties. Brands such as Gillette and Levi's integrated the lonesome, narcissistic male who was finally joined by a woman to retain the feminine gaze and reaffirm that a man still needs a woman (Niss 1997).

The era of the 'New Man' came to an end, however, with a series of advertisements in the 1990s advertising items alongside men with their tops off, further objectifying the male form. This idealised masculinity has been referred to as the "Erotic Man" by Basset (2009) and the "Torso Man" by Niss (1992). Men began to fill gender responsibilities previously held by women, yet this objectification resonated with both liberated women and the new male (Basset 2009). Advertisers were placing their products into new target markets in this post-industrial world.

Today, masculinity is still eroticized and glorified for both sexes' gaze. Basset (2009) observes a conflict between the embodiment of the ‘New Man' as devoid of any feminine resemblance and now an ‘Erotic Man' with inner femininity features exposed to the gaze of both sexes. In addition, he is often white, and African Americans are frequently marketed in sports, but Asian males are seen as asexual (Basset 2009). It is also important to note the absence of the portrayal of masculinity as a component of the LGBT spectrum (Nölke 2018).

Advertisers tend to assume that transexual portrayals are male to female, presuming that trans-women try to fit into conventional feminity (Nölke 2018).

Advertisers have eventually altered the notion of masculinity in advertising, as seen by the societal transition from the ‘New Man' to the ‘Erotic/Torso Man.' Advertisers have not only emphasised the importance of the male physique and its care, but they have also linked male vanity with narcissism (Niss 1997). According to Niss (1997), this allows males to follow in the footsteps of women by obsessing about their appearance, but it also allows men and women to "maximise their worth as circulating symbols of exchange" (Wernick 1991, cited in Niss 1997, pp. 24). Thus, corresponding to Richardson and Wearing (2014), the naked male physique varies from that of the female, indicating strength and power rather than submissiveness. While it is obvious that there is an ongoing societal change in hegemonic forms of masculinity, it is also clear that it is extremely similar to conventional masculine ideals. It is obvious that masculinity gender roles are dynamic and constantly shifting, but other forms of masculinity, such as racial groups and LGBT communities, are rarely represented in new, innovative ways, implying that there is still an underlying foundation of traditional masculine gender roles and representations are occurring in what

are supposably challenging stereotypical gender roles and treating women and men as interchangeable (Niss 1992; Basset 2009; Richardson & Wearing 2014; Nölke 2018).

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INCELS and Men’s Rights Activism Online

Kate Yule

Beginning in the 1970s, following the mass publicity and reaction regarding the women's liberation movement, the men's rights movement began in retaliation. The origins of this movement came from two key perspectives - those who frame themselves as 'Pro-men', and those identifying as 'Anti-feminist'. The two emerge from the need to reassert male dominance, relying on typically misogynistic ideals that position men as the primary victims of sexism and discrimination, debating on whether 'male privilege' exists. The entire movement of men's rights is reactionary to efforts of second-wave feminism (McDonald, 2019). Some 'pro-men' aligners intended this to be more ideologically synced with that of the true message of feminism, which is the equality of all genders. However, the latter side of the movement that looks to debunk feminism entirely has led to massive growth with the rise of globalisation. With the ability to share opinions anonymously through the internet since the late 1990s, sub-groups of this initial reaction have spawned across the internet and in real communities around the world, leading to different identifiers in true internet fashion, such as Incels (Involuntarily Celibates), MGTOW (Men Going Their Own Way) and MRA (Men's Rights Activist).

These groups are primarily contemporary-far-right, however their values no longer a "result of their wider political outlook but rather a central pillar to their ideology" (McDonald, 2019). This meaning, that rather than serving a greater political purpose, these groups are primarily driven by anti-feminist ideologies and subsequently have given focus to male-supremacy. Rather than support the notion of gender equality, these groups look to target women as perpetrators of social violence, believing that they are steering an ideology that looks to oppress men and ultimately create more barriers to restrict men and benefit women exclusively. This belief, that feminism can only operate at the expense of men, is their biggest perceived argument. The movement responds primarily to liberal feminism, making the claim that it is this focus on anti-racism and LGBTQ+ rights are used a means to take away rights from men (McDonald, 2019).

Today, decades later, the efforts of supporters for this male-centric movement is almost entirely online. Their fight has become digitised, effectively sharing their ideology with people worldwide through different media platforms and mediums, becoming an infamous cultural phenomenon. In the case of Incels, private groups were created in reaction to many of their users being banned from sites due to regular reporting of their posts on popular sites such as Twitter, YouTube, Reddit and 4Chan.

They have formed an identity and entire vocabulary around their belief system. For example, the term 'Femoid' is the most neutral they must describe women, conjugating Female and Droid to infer women are less than human. More commonly, however, is the use of more known misogynistic terms such as 'Bitches', 'Sluts', and 'Whores', all conveying their resentment through the mode of female sexuality. Their vocabulary exists to represent the world as they see it. This has led to more crude terms such as 'Roasties' which are women who have 'mutilated' their vaginas through having penetrative intercourse. As well as

this are trending topics, where collected lists of posts share hashtags such as 'rape guides' for those looking to take their violence out on women in real life, looking for advice on how to do so effectively.

Regarding men, once again their vocabulary is steered by sexuality. Mankind is divided into 'Chads', the typical patriarchal portrayal of the 'ideal male specimen', who has good bone structure, and the incels, who because of a lack of bone structure, has led them to a life that lacks meaning - as no one will have sex with them. This is not their only reason but have an entire set list of jargon to describe and justify their circumstances. For example, mentalcels are those who cannot attract women because of mental illness or disability, or wristcels who cannot attract women because of their delicate wrists or heightcels, who cannot because of their physical height. Although self-identified incels are traditionally white, straight men, there are still different attributions for those who don't fall into those traits, leading to racist and demeaning terms such as blackcels (Black incels), ricecels (Asian incels), and currycells (Indian incels).

Beyond this, however, is how the ideology applies to your life and mindset. In the incel community, there are different metaphorical 'pills' one can take, intended to represent a worldview. The Red pill is a social theory that asserts women as hypergamous in nature, which refers to forming relationships exclusively with individuals who can advance one's social status either through power, attractiveness, or wealth. The Black pill, in addition, is the realization that it is genetically determined whether you will be an incel or not, enforcing a dogmatic lack of hope towards relationships and life.

This has led to much debate online about the principles of this mindset, and what purpose this ideology serves. A common rebuttal to these theories is that it infers far too much to be remotely accurate. It takes previous experiences of rejection and isolation of the individual, something most people may experience to some extent throughout their lives, and infer those women did this to you and were empowered to do it through feminism to put down men in an intentional and malignant plan.

Not all incels identify with this specific 'pilled' mindset, but significant portion do. In fact, many believe in this so sincerely it has sparked another trend in this community, labelled 'Sui-fuel' (Suicide Fuel). In the same application as their rape 'advice', this can be tracked through hashtags and compiled in master lists for those interested in viewing that content. The internet has provided the uncensored means to spread this ideology and normalize this treatment of others on this superficial based sociological theory. As these opinions are radical, and labelled as hate-speech by many, this digital platform has created a greater sense of community, bringing these people who share these beliefs closer together as these insular forums and sites normalize their behavior. However, in the last few years as this online community has grown, we have witnessed increasing offline actions seen in the Proud Boys protests, and extreme acts of violence in the case of Alek Minassain (2018) and Elliot Rodgers (2014), both deliberately committing terrorist acts targeting women and people of color. Both used their incel identity in their defense. Not all incels are necessarily as violent or extreme, however the fact we see a growing number of perpetrators identifying with this ideology highlights that this is a worrying theme that should not be ignored (McDonald, 2019).

This digital era of interaction has allowed people to meet and discuss with those likeminded, regardless of factors like geography previously isolating them. Companies like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram are

utilizing algorithms that choose content based on previous online behaviour. This encourages prolonged use of the site, which coincidentally happens to target the discussion of people and their lives. This is done through recommendations of who to follow, what to watch or read, or what 'hashtags' you may want to read through. People follow the content that the website has deemed as an accurate reflection of their own thoughts, beliefs, and values, as for the computer behind the website, this is interchangeable with the users likes and dislikes. Algorithms are useful in less political spaces, where it can help the user find related content. However, when it comes to opinions, these algorithms have no ethical responsibility around platforming ideologies, and this is where these algorithms become increasingly detrimental to individuals.

As people come together for shared beliefs, they simultaneously are pushed away by others who oppose those beliefs. This phenomenon is the 'echo-chamber' effect. People, online specifically, may become victim to locking themselves into an insular communication place.

The implications of this trend can be incredibly detrimental. People can become defensive as they come into conflict, especially as the anonymity the internet provides allows for individuals to say anything they want with little to no consequence. As they come into disagreement and begin to only see the world in one specific way, significant barriers can form that prevent productive critical discourse. The groups bonds over their shared experiences, and connect through ego-boosting one another, by putting others down. The growing community of the current 40,000 users on the forum site, Incels.me, have controversially shaped the minds of many, to the point where it's entering the public consciousness and mainstream media.

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Intersectionality in Sports Reporting

Greta Bauer

The intersectionality in sports reporting shapes how society sees and understands sport. Intersectionality is the overlapping of different unequal situations where these differences form intersections that lead to multiple levels of discrimination (Dorer and Marschik 2020, p1). The media (including sports reporting) has made sport and supported the institution from the beginning (Dorer and Marschik 2020, p1). This sport-media complex is characterised by intersectionality where strategies of exclusion (black and lower-class athletes) and marginalisation (women and black athletes) are prominent, however, are slowly improving (Dorer and Marschik 2020, p1). The intersectionality in sports reporting is extremely obvious with reporters giving much more attention to men's sports than it does to women's sports (Billings and Eastman 2000, p192), along with altering the linguistic choices, visual representation, and focus of reporting women's sport (Dorer and Marschik 2020, p4). Further, this applies to an even greater extent to black, minority, female athletes, thus emphasising the intersectionality within sports reporting (Dorer and Marschik 2020, p4).

Sport media and reporting are the centre of public attention on an international, national, and regional basis with the consumption of sport being significant for much of the population (Hendenborg and Pfister 2015, p131). However, sports reporting is gendered, thus meaning that what society consumes is the sporting beliefs of the dominant class, such as disseminating heterosexuality (Dorer and Marschik 2020, p11), and these beliefs become habituated realities (Hendenborg and Pfister 2015, p131). This is further emphasised by Ponterotto (2012), who states that sports reporting supports the ideology of male privilege and superiority and is one of the primary sites that reinforces this (p26).

Through my research, I have found three key themes that were consistent within the topic of intersectionality in sports reporting. 1) The media holds significant power and control in society, 2) The language used in sports reporting differs by gender and race, and 3) Sports reporting changes as society changes and evolves. All three themes are linked together, reinforce each other, and contribute to the intersectionality in sports reporting.

As already stated, the reporting of sport that society consumes is what the media decides to show (Hendenborg and Pfister 2015, p131). This is explained well by Hendenborg and Pfister (2015), who state that sports reporters have their own agenda, address specific groups of their choice, and select topics carefully that ensure the interest of the audience (p131). Sports reporting, therefore, constructs societal values and norms around sport (Dorer and Marschik 2020, p1). From this, we can see just how much control and power sport media (and reporters) have over what sporting content society consumes as well as how society understands sport.

This is problematic as the sports content shown is (mostly) in support of patriarchal ideology and therefore shaping societal norms and values around sport on the basis of discrimination and inequality (Ponterotto

2012, p26). For example, through their ability to choose what they report, the process becomes gendered and racialized as white males are at the forefront of their ideology, thus resulting in male-dominated sports getting greater attention (Dorer and Marschik 2020, p6). In other words, sports reporting reflects and reinforces gender and racial relations and hierarchies among athletes (Hendenborg and Pfister 2015, p132). Furthermore, sports media and reporting often serve the interest of those in with power in society, therefore, white males, which again reveals controversy within sports reporting and reinforces the discrimination against women and women and men of colour as sports content is not set out to favour them (Hendenborg and Pfister 2015, p134).

Overall, the power of sports reporting has significant but also subtle impacts on society's view of sport and athletes. The gendered and racialized content they choose to produce contributes to the intersectionality in sports reporting. Linked to this is the language they chose to report sports.

Within much of my research on this topic, the language used in sports reporting obviously differs by gender and race, thus contributing to the intersectionality in sports reporting. Connected to theme one, the language used in sports reporting also helps them maintain power (Dorer and Marschik 2020, p2).

Sports reporters use framing and labelling to construct gender differences and reproduce gender stereotypes in sport (Hendenborg and Pfister 2015, p134). For example, appearance still plays a significant role in the reporting of women's sport but men's sport is reported in a way that celebrates hegemonic masculinities (Hendenborg and Pfister 2015, p131). This differentiation is explained well by Blecha et al (2012) who state that the reporting of men's sport focuses on ability, strength, and skill, while female sports reporting emphasises beauty, grace, agility, and the athlete's body (p459). Race-based differences also occur with reporters addressing black athletes in terms of their physicality and natural ability, compared to white athletes who are described in relation to their intelligence and strong work ethic (Blecha et al. 2012, p459).

An important and frequent aspect of this theme is the sexualisation of female athletes (Ponterotto 2012, p16). Sports reporters construct a stereotype that female athletes must be young, attractive, and objects for male (audience) pleasure where instead of focusing on their expertise and sporting success the main focus is on their feminine beauty and sexual appeal (Ponterotto 2012, p16). The result of this sexualisation is that sports performances become gendered performances, reinforcing heterosexuality and fixed norms of masculinity/femininity that favour white male dominance (Ponterotto 2012, p26). This is further reinforced by Sport NZ (2021), who states that New Zealand female athletes were three times more likely to have their appearance commented on than male athletes (p11). Here we can see the link between the language sports reporters use and the maintenance of their power and control.

The third theme that was recurring in my research was that sports reporting of athletes change as societal norms and values change. Since the beginning of sport in the Western world in the 1900s, sports reporting has massively changed, however just over the last twenty years, sports reporting has altered its values as societal norms have evolved (Dorer and Marschik 2020, p4). In other words, sports reporting must keep up with societal interest to maintain their audience and therefore their power and control.

A good example of this is female athletes; prior to the 1980s female athletes were ignored and discriminated against but they are now accepted and their struggle for equality is appreciated within sports reporting (Dorer and Marschik 2020, p4). The reporting and representation of female athletes have been softened through an increase in diverse representations which presents female athletes in a new and powerful way (Dorer and Marschik 2020, p15). Dorer and Marschik (2020) further reinforce this by stating that strategies of media reporting have changed since the 2000s with negative stereotypes occurring less (p10). This change can be explained through society building acceptance of and interest in female athlete's success as well as the normalisation of black and homosexual athletes in society. Sports media altered their reporting to cater for these changes by either not mentioning female, homosexual, and/or black athletes (to prevent negativity) or if they were particularly successful reporters would highlight their success only to provide their audience with what they wanted (Dorer and Marschik 2020, p10). Here we can see that the value of sports reporting still lies with patriarchal ideologies and to serve in the interests of maintaining their power and control (not that they suddenly care about the success of female, black, and/or homosexual athletes), this reinforcing and contributing to the intersectionality in sports reporting.

The intersectionality in sports reporting is a commonly talked about topic in the academic world and all seem to relate back to the three themes mentioned. Although gender and racial equality are improving slowly in society and therefore in sports reporting, it is still not good enough. According to the report by Sport NZ (2021), women's sports reporting only increased 4% from 2011 to 2020 (p3). While we must acknowledge this improvement we also must do more to eliminate the intersectionality in sports reporting.

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The Iron Lady: Margaret Thatcher

Eileen Corcoran

As Britain's first female Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher remains a key figure in political history, even over thirty years after her term ended and close to a decade after her death. A member of the Conservative Party, Thatcher was polarising as Prime Minister, bringing in the reforms of neoliberalism (Albertson & Stepney, 2019). Thatcher's gender has been a key aspect of her depiction in the media, both in support of her and in more disparaging ways.

Early Career and Prime Ministerial Term

Thatcher's gender played a significant role in her political career. She first entered politics in the 1950's, when doing so was incredibly uncommon for a woman; furthermore, as a Conservative, she had to appeal to traditionalist voters (Ribberink, 2010). She crafted a political and personal image which emphasised a middle-class upbringing, an intelligent and studious mindset, and a traditional nuclear family of her own (Ribberink, 2010). Even so, she faced much sexism from within her party; Thatcher's daughter, Carol, writes of her mother's 1975 election as leader of the Conservative Party:

"*The grandees of the party couldn't bear the thought of being led by a woman, especially a "suburban housewife" brought up above a grocer's shop…"* (Thatcher, 1996).

Of course, it must be noted that Thatcher was no wholly accepted role model for British women. Thatcher's term is nearly synonymous with the introduction of neoliberalism to Britain, and subsequently, inequality increased dramatically during her term (Albertson & Stepney, 2019). As such, few working-class women have ever viewed Thatcher as empowering or feminist. Her conservative stances on key feminist issues, such as sex education, also alienated many feminists (Bashevkin, 1996). Names such as "Maggie Thatcher, School Milk Snatcher," regardless of the accuracy of their content, have been criticised as sexist due to the patronising nature of the nickname - particularly in comparison to the nickname 'Cindy,' given to New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern (Vance, 2020).

Thatcher used her gender intentionally in her carefully selected dealings with the media. She regularly gave interviews to women's magazines, and radio shows known to have an audience prominently consisting of housewives (Magnus, 2019). However, the single most influential aspect of her media portrayal is the figure of the 'Iron Lady.' The label was first given by a Soviet newspaper, *Krasnaya Zvevda* (Fisher, 2013). Though initially given in a pejorative sense, this nickname was quickly adopted by Thatcher and the right-wing media outlets which supported her, using it to craft the image of a leader who was strong and anti-communist, but undeniably a woman (Fisher, 2013).

1990-2013: Post-Prime Ministerial Term

Thatcher remained a famous - perhaps infamous - figure after her resignation as Prime Minister in 1990 until her death in 2013. She has been characterised and referenced in countless films, television shows, songs and plays. Insofar as film and television, perhaps the most famous example is 2011's *The Iron Lady,* a biographical dramatisation of Thatcher's life starring Meryl Streep in the eponymous role. Reception of this film was mixed; while even left leaning critics and columnists generally reviewed it well, the reactions of Thatcher's comrades in the Conservative Party ranged from dismissal to contempt at her portrayal (Screen International, 2011). A common thread in the reviews of the film, particularly those written by women, was their surprise at the sympathy elicited by Streep's portrayal of Thatcher (Screen International, 2011). Similar reactions were given to Gillian Anderson's portrayal of Thatcher in the fourth season of *The Crown* (Power, 2020).

Comparisons to Theresa May

Thatcher's continued prevalence in the media was not limited to film and television - journalists and columnists have continued to focus on her. Perhaps the most marked way in which this focus shows the role of gender in media coverage of Thatcher is the comparisons drawn between her and Theresa May. As Britain's second female Prime Minister, elected over 35 years after Thatcher became the first woman to hold the role and 3 years after Thatcher's death, May was constantly compared to Thatcher (Goodlad, 2018). Both were stern, conservative women, in power during times of tumultuous domestic and foreign politics; upon May's election, fellow Conservative Party MP and competitor Kenneth Clarke commented that he had worked for a 'bloody difficult woman' before (Goodlad, 2018). However, commentators and academics have cautioned that these comparisons may be too simplistic (Goodlad, 2018).

***Ding-Dong! The Witch Is Dead* - Reception to Death**

Thatcher's death in 2013 triggered a variety of media responses, many of which related directly or inadvertently to her gender. Thatcher was as polarising in death as she had been in life. Whilst right-wing newspapers such as the *Daily Mail* focused on her achievements, more left leaning publications like *The Guardian* were more inclined to focus on the failures and ongoing impact of her government (Bale, 2015). Her being as the first female Prime Minister meant obituaries focused on her gender far more than one might expect a politician's obituary too; opinions on this focus vary, but it was nevertheless present (Bale, 2015).

Though Thatcher's ministerial term occurred before most people had computers in their homes, her death occurred in the Internet Age, and social media played a key role in the reactions to her death. A campaign across Twitter to push the song *Ding-Dong! The Witch Is Dead,* from 1939's *The Wizard of Oz* to the top of the UK Singles Chart was widely popular, with the song reaching number one on the Scottish Singles Chart and number two on the UK Singles Chart (BBC, 2013). Unsurprisingly, this was met with controversy, with some labelling it disrespectful; for those in support of the campaign, Thatcher's death marked the passing of someone who had remarkably lowered the quality of life achievable in their communities (Bale, 2015). Key, however, is the specific choice of song - the comparison between Thatcher and the *Witch* is inarguably gendered.

Conclusion

As the first female Prime Minister of Great Britain, the relationship between Margaret Thatcher, her gender, and the media is unique. From her portrayal of herself and carefully planned engagement with specific outlets, to her characterisation in dramas such as *The Crown* and *The Iron Lady,* to the charting of *Ding-Dong! The Witch is Dead* upon her death, this controversial politician has been specifically constructed and portrayed in ways relating to her gender, both by those who supported her and her critics.

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Male Stereotypes, Gender Roles and Fathering

Courtney Martin

In order to better understand gender stereotypes that currently exist, it is necessary to begin with an analysis of where stereotypes began and how they have evolved from here. This entry will focus on male stereotypes specifically and how they have adapted over time to fit more of an equal model for both men and women. This adaptation does not come without its consequences, however, as we are seeing a clash of ideals that can be both empowering for males but also damaging, specifically for males as fathers.

Gender roles are highly dictatorial, in that they dictate the way that men and women are supposed to behave in society and the qualities that they are expected to yield. They are the "qualities that women and men are supposed to have by virtue of their gender" (Carranza & Prentice, 2002). For example, men are seen as having traits such as being a leader and being ambitious and are thus seen as having roles such as being the CEO of a company or the money-maker of the family. Women are seen as having traits such as being affectionate and being tender, and are thus seen to best function in society as mothers or as operating solely within the domestic realm.

In the mid to late 1900s, different forms of media i.e. movies, television shows, and advertising tended to portray men within these traditional roles as "provider, protector and saviour of the family" (Feasey, 2020). This then reinforced these stereotypes and roles within society. We can see these roles portrayed in situation comedies such as *Father Knows Best* (debuted in 1954) and *Leave it to Beaver* (debuted in 1957). These sit-coms carry a main theme of the man and father being all-knowing, dominant and superior to his wife (Feasey, 2020).

Change began from these traditional gender roles and stereotypes during the feminist movement of the 1970s, which saw more women getting into the workplace, which thus made it more acceptable for men to be within the domestic realm (Erzinger, Hagen Meyer & Reichle, 2014). This also made it more socially acceptable for men to yield typically feminine traits, such as being caring and nurturing.

The media has played a crucial role in making this acceptable and desirable, with the image of the "sensitive new age man" prevalent through many different forms of media (Smith, 2020). This sensitive new age man image meant the media was often portraying men in fatherly and nurturing roles. For example, Tony Blair, a former UK Prime Minister became a fatherly icon in the media. He was the first British prime minister for 150 years to become a father while in office, and was portrayed in the media as the "juxtaposition of ultimate political power and childcare duties" (Smith, 2020). We can also see this in film media, through films such as *Finding Nemo* (2003) and *The Pursuit of Happiness* (2006), which depict a nurturing father and son relationship.

There was also a gender shift in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, which saw the traditional "male gaze" on women shift to a gaze towards men. The icon for this was the 'The Chippendales', a strip tease

dance group which was essentially an objectification of the male body for the women's eyes. This also led to the popularisation of gym culture (Smith, 2020). Whilst traditional gender roles were developing to include men in the domestic sphere, this idea of the "hunk" was emerging, namely, the man with the 'ideal' body - protruding abdominals, biceps and all.

There has been a clash between these two ideas which has created a new gender role upon men - the "sexy dad" or colloquially referred to in pop culture as the "DILF". This encompasses the idea of the "new man", who is seen within the domestic sphere, cares for children and is soft and nurturing. This new man is still linked with traditional ideas of dominance and "macho masculinity" which stems from the emergence of gym culture in the late 1900s (Smith, 2020). The linking of these ideas has become a site of sexual desirability and has caused the emergence of a new gender role, which is reinforced through different media platforms.

The media is a powerful tool through which gender roles and stereotypes are constructed or reinforced (Smith; Litosseliti 2002). We can lend the emergence of this "new man" ideal to the media, where men are now portrayed in roles traditionally seen as 'feminine' or with traits typically attributed to women. However, this has given the media an opportunity to reinforce a new ideal or stereotype, in that if a man is in a traditionally feminine role, such as parenting, he must also be 'sexy'. Some see this as problematic, while others see it as an opportunity for men to flex their bodies whilst holding their children (Smith, 2017).

A symbol for the beginning of this was one of the biggest selling posters in Britain, 'Man and Baby', which showed a shirtless and muscular male model cradling a baby. The poster "embodied the notion of the 'handsome hunk'" while still portraying a sensitive side (Smith, 2020). Here, the idea of the "sexy dad" was emerging, but it wasn't until around 2011 when the term "DILF" was coined (Smith, 2020). The term was then popularised as conventionally attractive male celebrities continued to post photos of themselves holding their children. Icons for this are actors such as Chris Hemsworth and Jamie Dornan, and also football player David Beckham. These men can often be seen through social media and mainstream media with their muscular bodies, juxtaposed with them holding their children.

All in all, we can see many factors which have led to the emergence of the "DILF", such as the rise of feminism and gym culture. (Smith, 2017). (Smith, 2017) also mentions that the rise in the number of female journalists in the last 20 years is likely to have also been a factor, as female authors tend to use themes which engage female readers.

It is clear that the media's portrayal of gender can be both empowering, as it challenges existing gender roles, but can also be problematic, as it forces people to fit into a mould. The media has challenged traditional gender stereotypes, by allowing men to feel comfortable in nurturing roles and comfortable showing off their softer side. However, it has constructed a new stereotype in that one must only do so if they are considered conventionally attractive.

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Masculinities in American Television

Brianna Roe

Introduction

Masculinities vary across history and culture, hence the representation of men fluctuates in the media. Although American television provides its viewers with a widespread range of male characters, there is a dominant discourse on masculinity that runs through popular shows. Pilcher and Whelehan (2017) define masculinity as the 'set of social practices and cultural representations associated with being a man' (p.90). Within American television, this set of practices and representations often conform to 'hegemonic masculinity'. Hegemonic masculinity is the topmost position in the gender hierarchy in western society. It is the culturally superior masculinity that is essentially unattainable (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2017:p.91). This illustration of men is often found in America's most popular genres of television; situation comedies and reality shows.

Theorising Masculinities

To understand why situation comedies and reality shows depict this form of masculinity, theories of masculinity must be discussed. As mentioned in the introduction, gender can be viewed as a hierarchy with hegemonic masculinity situated at the top of the pyramid. Coined by theorist Rawyen Connell, she further defines this masculinity as being centered around physical strength, authority, heterosexuality, and emotional unavailability (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2017:p.91). However, little to no men live up to these societal standards but many benefit from them. Thus below hegemonic masculinity according to Connell is 'complicit masculinity' (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2017:p.91). This is followed by 'subordinated masculinities', this masculinity does not fit into the others and opposes traditional male values; an example of subordinate is gay masculinity (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2017: p.91)

Masculinities in Situation Comedies

Situation comedies (Sitcoms) first appeared in America in the 1920s in radio form and have remained popular since transferring to television in the late 1940s (Feasey, 2008:p.20). Early forms of sitcoms revolved around family dynamics, while later versions branched out to friend groups and workplace drama (Zimdars, 2018). Sitcoms are littered with sexism and create contraindications with their male characters by illustrating a softer, more sensitive side (Zimdars, 2018:p.278). Melissa Zimdars speculates that male characters embody hegemonic/hypermasculinity but also embrace a sensitive side for their own gain (Zimdars, 2018:p.278). Zimdars labels this as 'juvenile post-feminist masculinity' (p.277), this masculinity resembles complicit. However, it has a greater focus on how male characters can 'have it both ways' (p.280) by being openly sexist and sensitive.

The sensitive man first made an appearance on American television in the 1980s and 90s, showcasing a family man that cherished both his wife and children (Zimdars, 2018:p.280). Examples of these shows are Thirtysomething (1987-1991) and The Cosby Show (1984-1992). The rise in the sensitive man can be pinpointed along with the rise of gay representations during the 1990s according to Ron Becker (2006), (Zimdars, 2018:p.280). Although it is also important to note that this version of the sensitive man was matched with hegemonic masculinity (Zimdars, 2018:p.280). Zimdar explores juvenile post-feminist masculinity in relation to the sitcom Two and a Half Men (2003-2015). Two and a Half Men revolves around two men, Charlie who relishes a hypermasculine lifestyle, and Alan who depicts the new sensitive man (p.238). During the beginning of the show, Alan is disgusted by Charlie's sexist and hypermasculine behaviour. However, Alan eventually realises as a man he is allowed to have sex with multiple women. In turn, Charlie chooses to reveal his sensitive side, but only to lure women in, thus embodying both sides of juvenile post-feminism masculinity (p.284).

In addition to the sensitive man trope, sitcoms are also known for incompetent and idiotic fathers, along with sexual harassment and dominance by male characters (Blackburn & Scharrer, 2018:p.154). On Modern Family (2009-2020), lead father, Phil Dunphy, aligns with this content analysis. Throughout the show he is portrayed as the ‘goofy’, sensitive dad and is often emasculated in comparison to his father-in-law Jay. Jay embodies hegemonic masculinity by being emotionally unavailable and finds comfort in physical activities and sports. Phil attempts to bond with Jay through these activities such as watching football and playing golf. However, Jay never views Phil as a ‘real man’ due to his sensitive and idiotic personality. Phil also sexually harasses Jay's wife, Gloria, on several accounts by inappropriately touching her. However, within the show, this is never viewed as a serious matter and acts as comedic relief to the viewers. Thus like Two and a Half Men, Phil illustrates juvenile post-feminist masculinity by being both sensitive and sexualises female characters.

Masculinities in Reality TV

Masculinity is forever changing in America and the country has seen several cultural shifts when it comes to gender roles. Thus men seek comfort in the familiar, traditional notions of masculinity; reality TV provides this comfort (Tragos, 2009). On Monster Garage (2002-) men are faced with fixing up old cars in 7 days and nights. The show ranked number 2 on the discovery channel (Tragos, 2009:p.549), and is essentially a ‘battle for manhood’ (Tragos, 2009:p.549). Monster Garage represents hegemonic masculinity because of the hands-on values and how the host reinforces that the garage is a man's domain (Tragos, 2009). Due to the evolving gender roles rising in the early 2000s and higher representations of gay men in television (Queer Eye surfaced the same year as Monster Garage), shows like Monster Garage act as an oasis to men and reassure America that there still are ‘manly men’ out there.

Alexander & Woods (2019) argue that reality tv displays a ‘new form of hegemonic American masculinity, namely, hyperauthentic masculinity’ (p.149). They state that this masculinity is balanced in fundamental male traits, however, it is a meditative activity that allows white male viewers to imagine a white male utopia where they have the supremacy (p.149). Their research shows that although relativity TV with all-male casts is varied, they gravitate towards illustrating men in stereotypical masculine tasks such as fishing and car restoration (p.161).

Conclusion

To summarise, sitcoms and reality tv demonstrate predominantly hegemonic masculinity. Although it is essentially unattainable, it provides its male viewers with comfort and exhibits traditional masculinity in ways that are becoming lost in today's evolving society. Sitcoms differ from reality TV discussed,] because of the sensitive man trope that runs through the genre. While reality TV portrays unrealistic men in masculine environments that present the audience with feelings of nostalgia.

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Masculinities in Men's Lifestyle Magazines

Sophie Armstrong

Men’s lifestyle magazines are a medium of the media that use advertising, images and articles to persuade readers to internalise the norms and ideals that are enclosed, surrounding wider views of masculinity and gendered power structures. These magazines became popular in the late 1980s and provided men with a “conceptual map for navigating safely through their contemporary gender anxieties, whether in relation to their health, their careers, their sexual relationships or their place in ‘consumer culture’ more generally” (Ricciardelli et al, 2010, p. 67). In the early stages, many were sceptical of whether men’s lifestyle magazines would be successful, as traditionally these types of magazines carried feminine connotations (Benwell 2004, p. 4). However, within the first ten years, men’s lifestyle magazines increased to become the largest part of the British magazine market (Jackson et al 1999). In conjunction with traditional aspects of lifestyle magazines such as fashion, products, health advice and more, there was the reinforcement of what Connell notes as hegemonic masculinity. He points out that “hegemonic masculinity signifies culturally normative and influential ideals of masculinity. As such, masculine hegemony can be viewed as a role, status set, perspective, behaviour or personal characteristic” (Ricciardelli et al, 2010, p. 64). Hence it is evident how influential lifestyle magazines are on men, as they highlight the norm of how men should physically appear, their assertive behaviour, occupation and sexuality.

Men are able to visually see through lifestyle magazines the hegemonic ideal of how masculinity should be performed. The success of these magazines is then able to be narrowed down to their ability to signify the polarized difference of masculine and feminine values, behaviours and styles, and that such differences, whether emotional, linguistic or lifestyle, are entirely natural and essential” (Benwell 2003, p. 17). Therefore, men’s lifestyle magazines found success through their presentation of masculinity in a time period which saw gendered confusion for men due to the second wave of feminism which began in the 1970s. Women were setting themselves apart as people who could achieve anything and were no longer restricted to the domestic sphere. Thus men found themselves confused in their masculinity as traditional gendered power structures were being broken. Men’s lifestyle magazines gave men a space to idealise hegemonic masculinity in its new form.

The success of men’s lifestyle magazines has made it clear that “we consume gender identity with our eyes, bodies and minds” (Schroeder & Zwick 2004, p. 34). Thus the importance of how we appear has become more significant and in the 1980s metrosexuality emerged. A metrosexual man is someone who with “the increasing availability of male grooming products and fashions” puts effort into their physical appearance and interactions with others (Ricciardelli et al, 2010, p. 65). However, men’s lifestyle magazines, whilst promoting metrosexuality, still highlighted that these men are heterosexual, thus fitting in with the hegemonic ideal. The creation of neoliberalism in a capitalist society was the catalyst for the success of lifestyle magazines as male audiences were unlocked as potential consumers in sectors that

had previously not been explored. Women in a traditional gendered structure were the audience for consumption. They were “housewives and mothers [which] implicitly included the task of consumption. From groceries to beauty products, women were the consumers and men the producers” (Alexander 2003, p. 536). Therefore, there is a distinction in how men’s lifestyle magazines promoted masculine ideals to men instead of women. Hence the creation of the metrosexual man, promote the consumption of goods, whilst maintaining links to hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, in a time of contention of gendered politics due to the second-wave feminist movement, men were able to utilise lifestyle magazines as an anchor in finding out what hegemonic masculinity was and the products and steps men needed to carry out to achieve it.

In response to the new metrosexual man, some men’s lifestyle magazines such as FHM, Stuff, and Maxim began to portray a rougher, more traditional expression of masculinity which was coined as Laddism. Lad culture is grown from a critique of metrosexuality and thus presents masculinity in a way that still promotes consumerism but through different types of products. This is because it “indulges in stereotypically masculine interests, such as sports, cars and video games, as well as more risky health behaviours, such as binge drinking, drugs, and promiscuous sexual practices (Ricciardelli et al, 2010, p. 65). The representation of men in these magazines diverges significantly from metrosexual magazines and they are “notable for their almost entire absence of women's voices or of discussion of women as anything other than objects of desire” (Benwell 2003, p. 20). Images of women that can be considered as ‘soft-porn were common features on these pages and it became clear that lad culture is a “reactionary return to sexist attitudes and a binary and polarized conception of gender (Benwell 2004, p. 3).

These two different expressions of masculinity both met the perception of hegemonic masculinity as they each possess aspects of the ideal form. Hence why investigations into the way that the male body is discursively constructed in these magazines find that gendered power structures in the contemporary system of power have men dominating women. It is clear that both metrosexual and lad culture men’s lifestyle magazines depict female domination. For example, in lad culture magazines men are positioned in fashion pages where clothes are being advertised as sexually dominating the female model. In association, metrosexual magazines also show male domination, however, it is portrayed through men in a position of power and control to seduce the women. The “implied message is that these men were at the top of the hierarchy and by achieving the right look, the reader can be too (Ricciardelli et al, 2010, p. 76). Consequently, masculinity is expressed in men’s lifestyle magazines in multiple ways, each has factors that can be attributed to hegemonic masculinity, and so men strive to achieve these ideals when they see them in the magazines.

Judith Butler describes gender as performative, she sees it as something that we do and therefore it is clear that “masculinity and male bodies are sustained by a continuously negotiated performance and display, hence they are something that has to be achieved, produced and reproduced” (Boni 2002, p. 467). This negotiated performance is altered by lifestyle magazines representations which show men what is

the ideal masculine presentation they should strive for. Masculine performance in lifestyle magazines promote a Western construction of masculinity. Ethnicity is rarely addressed, and the invisibility of this kind of male representation appears to define non-western identity through exclusion (Benwell 2003). The future of men's lifestyle magazines is one that will be entering a social media age, where images are easily broadcast internationally, and thus masculine representation will need to become more inclusive if it is to stay relevant for all its possible consumers.

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Means Girls

Bethany Cook

Means Girls is a character trope used in films, television and literature which depicts a powerful, popular girl or clique of girls that are mean without physical aggression. The most notable entry of this trope is *Mean Girls* (2004), written by Tina Fey. Although this trope has been evident in media for many decades, it gained popularity in the early 2000s as the rhetoric began to change around the transition from girlhood to womanhood. The trope, along with the film, is a prevalent popular culture reference to this day.

Mean Girls (2004) follows Cady (Lindsay Lohan) as she experiences high school for the first time and the inevitable struggle for identity and social status that comes with it. She joins the school after being home-schooled in Africa for her entire life, having no experience with American culture and high school antics. She accidentally infiltrates the popular clique as school, The Plastics; headed by Regina George (Rachel McAdams), Gretchen Wieners (Lacey Chabert) and Karen Smith (Amanda Seyfried). Cady is at first apprehensive of joining the group, only convinced by the "Art Freaks" who want Cady to spy on The Plastics and then report back with all the vapid stuff they said. Cady later becomes personally invested in dethroning Regina's popularity status after learning that she is not as nice as she thought. Cady falls further into the trap of popularity and high social status, sacrificing her grades and morals for boys and backstabbing. After ruining friendships, she must search for a redemption of her former self.

An increasing amount of research was carried out regarding aggression in girls in the 1990's. Currie, Kelly & Pomerantz (2007) note that feminist academics used to view girlhood as relatively unproblematic, "a transition that mandates passivity and compliance" (p. 23). The interest in the way girls bully each other became more popular years after female aggression was first enlightened by Bjorkvist and Nimela (1992) as cited by Cecil (2008). Soon after, Crick and Grotpeter (1996) coined the term "Relational Aggression" to describe non-violent yet harmful behaviours in friendships to hurt the victim's social status. Behaviours include the silent treatment, talking behind one's back and spreading rumours. This led to a large phenomenon of parenting books that warned young girls and parents of the social hierarchy in girl world. Notably, Rosalind Wiseman's *Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends, and Other Realities of Adolescence* (2002), which inspired Tina Fey's *Mean Girls* (2004). This niche genre of books defined a Queen Bee as an intersection between popularity and aggression, also outlining the Bystander and Target as social positions (Day, 2017). Coyne and Archer (2004) as cited by Cecil (2008) found that indirect aggression is very prevalent in teen media and usually finds girls to be the perpetrators. The Mean Girls trope became a norm in teen entertainment and thusly, the teenage experience in the 2000s.

Although it was heavily reported and regarded in the 2000s, the mean girl archetype has been commonly used in earlier entertainment to depict aspects of girlhood. Day (2017) explains that the prototype has been prevalent since the post-World War II "bad girl" archetype. Later on, the character was less of a delinquent like Rizzo from *Grease*, and more of an upper-class, high-achieving version of the "bad girl"

seen in Heather Chandler of *Heathers (1989)*. Oppliger (2013) as cited by Ralph (2020) found that most mean girls in the past four decades use aggression insidiously and are very clever. This means they often are not found out for their tactics, which cannot be said for physical aggression. Cecil (2008) notes that the teen films like *Mean Girls* focus on the "white, middle-class representations of femininity" rather than a physically aggressive, masculine girl. These girls are generally privileged, and their bad behaviour goes unnoticed or uninhibited as they prey on people with less power than them. In *Mean Girls* (2004), Cady finds girl culture to have the same "survival of the fittest" attitude as the African animal kingdom. In most depictions of the mean girl in media, they are overthrown as a resolution after a power struggle with a former mean girl or victim (Day, 2017). Walderzak (2019) names *Mean Girls* as a revisionist film, as it became a cultural zeitgeist for the era and encompasses the teenage girl film genre. This trope has been employed for many decades and continues to present itself in media today. This includes adaptations of the popular exemplars such as *Mean Girls: The Musical (2017)* and *Heathers: The Musical* (2010), showing that the trope has not yet become extinct.

The rise of this trope sparked conversation amongst feminist literature regarding the representation of girls and the media. Currie, Kelly & Pomerantz (2007) found that the relational aggression exhibited in the teenage years is a result of a lack of agency in the greater world. They resort to creating social status through cliques and are influenced by a "hetero-sexist gender hierarchy and the sexual competition of mainstream culture" (p. 33). The Take (2019) explains that girls are expected to achieve in the sense that boys do, yet it is not socially acceptable for them to exhibit the same competitiveness, so they must resort to covert aggression. This is supported by Lipkin's (2009) research that the social cliques are a result of trying to succeed under the patriarchy that favours men (Renner, 2019). There are no other outlets for power that are acceptable for girls to desire except popularity. The general discourse is that Relational Aggression is a compensatory mechanism for a lack of agency and opportunity to succeed in women.

Ringrose (2006) claims "the universal mean girl is distinctly postfeminist and works to re-establish the bounds of femininity disrupted by feminism" (p. 419). She explains that meanness is accused of being a result of the feminist agenda to become equal with men. The supposedly misguided 'girl-power' messages encouraging women to fight for what they want, resulted in an unhelpful women-against-women competition. She mainly criticises the simplistic solution to this aggression, that is sisterhood and discussion. This ignores individuality and meanness outside of the white, upper-class framework. Kelly and Pomerantz (2009) also point out that the media seems to implicate girls as the perpetrators of their oppressed reputation. This relinquishes the roles of the patriarchy and compulsory heterosexuality in creating a toxic atmosphere for young women. The feminist discourse can agree that the representation of girls in the media should be more inquisitive and equipped to critique the world around them (Kelly and Pomerantz, 2009). *Mean Girls: The Musical (2017)* exhibits an awareness of the social structures around their world and their characters, an aspect that was not prevalent in the original film (Renner, 2019). Looking beyond the 2000s, there has been progress in intersectionality and the representation of girls in the media.

In conclusion, the Mean Girl trope that exhibits relational aggression gained popularity in the 2000s. This was due to a rising interest in girlhood and relational aggression, resulting in literature and entertainment that reflected this. *Mean Girls* (2004) became a central reference to the representation of girls in the

media, sparking feminist discourse around the penultimate Mean Girl. They pathologized that mean girls resulted from a lack of agency in adolescence and a need for success that they could not gain outside of social status. The hope for feminism is that the Mean Girl trope will be developed to include a greater social awareness of the power structures that drive them.

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Menstruation in Arts and Visual Culture

Eveline Stargard

> "Menstruation is a biological process, but its meaning is gendered. And because it's largely a woman's experience, it's devalued."
>
> - Chris Bobel, author of *New Blood: Third Wave Feminism and the Politics of Menstruation* (Martinĉiĉ, 2016)

Cultural taboos of menstruation are near universal. From biblical references to women's immorality or sacred nature during their menses (Green-Cole, 2020), to separation of boys and girls during sexual education in schools (Røstvik, 2019), to global experiences of "period poverty" that deprives women of essential sanitary equipment (*Period: End of Sentence*, 2018), advertising schemes, media, and art have significant influence in defining experiences of menses as shameful and disgusting (Luke, 1997; Green-Cole, 2020).

Menstruation, also known as *menses* or *periods*, is cyclic bleeding that comes from monthly shedding of the uterine lining, related to reproduction by regulatory sex steroids, such as progesterone and estrogen, preparing female bodies for pregnancy. When pregnancy does not occur, progesterone levels drop, and bleeding occurs. Duration and volume is controlled by hormones and other non-voluntary bodily processes. Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) is a variety of emotional and physical symptoms that may occur before menstruation starts (Critchley et al., 2020). Emotional symptoms of PMS are often mocked and denigrated in narratives associated with tropes of "irrational females" (Luke, 1997; Green-Cole, 2020).

Many representations of PMS and menstruation in visual culture reinforce negative stereotypes about menses. For example, Gaugin's *Words of the Devil* (1892; *Figure 1*) shows a woman disgraced, covering herself with white cloth, symbolic of purity. At her feet vermillion flowers symbolise blood, though it is not clear whether this is menstrual blood or bleeding from having sex for the first time, either of which could explain her disgraced status (Green-Cole, 2020). Recently, the popular television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* depicts a teen girl developing vampire-slaying abilities, sensing when vampires are nearby because she experiences cramping and PMS. However humorously, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* reinforces narratives that menstruation is monstrous and mysterious (Andreason, 2020).

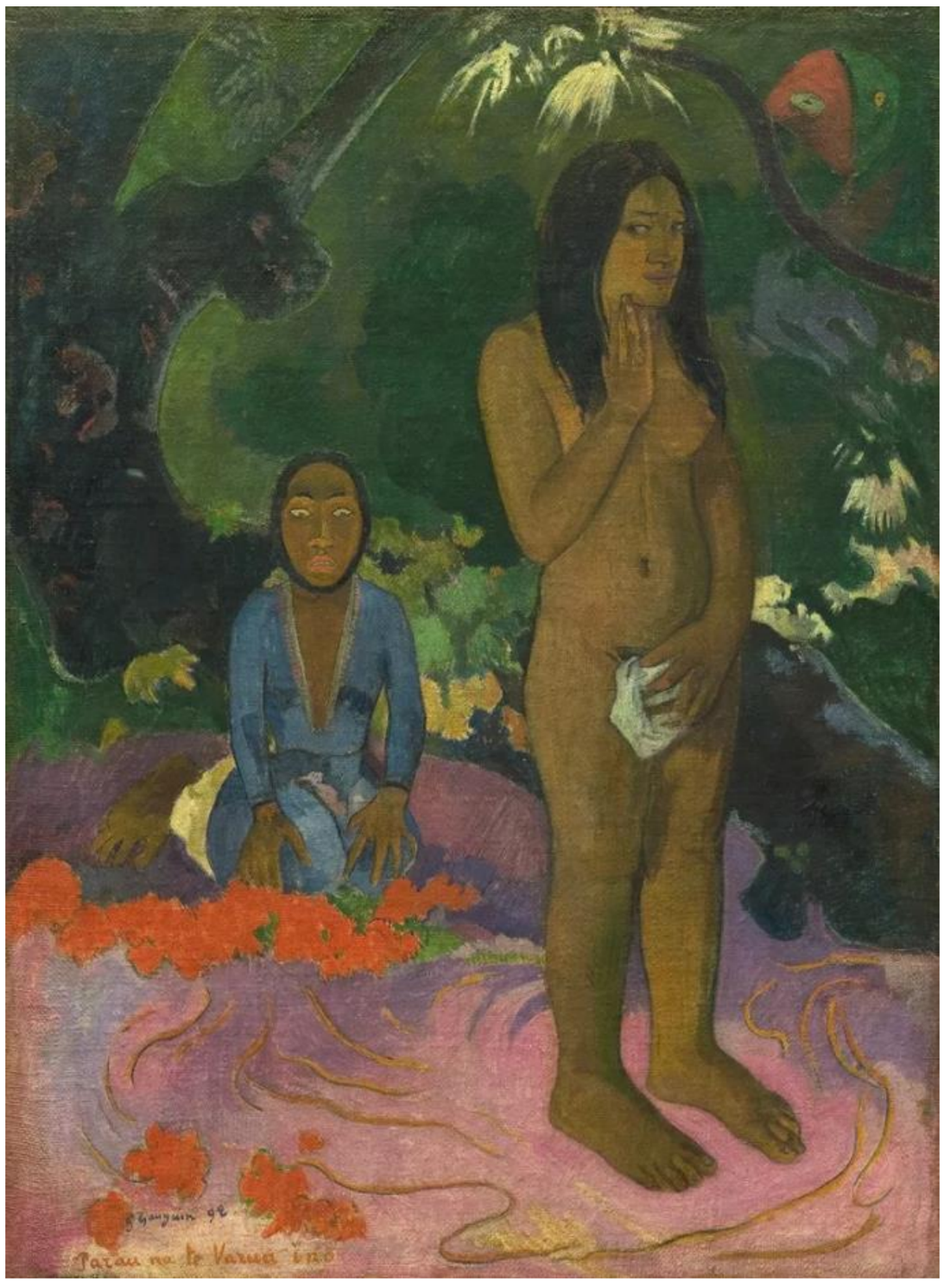

Figure 1. Paul Gaugin's *Words of the Devil* (1892)

Menstrual art, or "menstrala", a term coined by artist Vanessa Tiegs (Røstvik, 2019), uses or shows menstrual blood. Menstrala challenges what "should" or "should not" be seen by others and creates shock for onlookers, contests values associated with gendered blood, or shows menstruation in positive, ambiguous, or defiant ways (Green-Cole, 2020). Activist and artist Kiran Gandhi (2015) garnered international attention and outrage when she ran the London marathon with obvious menstrual blood on her shorts. Modern menstrala is often conflated with activist pieces, but menstrual artwork has its own place within artistic contexts, often encompassing a challenge to social ideas about women's experiences of menstruation (Røstvik, 2019).

Feminist research of menstruation began during the emergence of Second Wave Feminism (Luke, 1997; Green-Cole, 2020), and artistic expression of menstrual experiences has expanded since the release of Judy Chicago's 1971 lithograph, *Red Flag* (Røstvik, 2019; *Figure 2*). Feminist menstrala notes the binary, patriarchal menstruation narratives portraying women as weak. "The 'leaky body' [is] associated with the weaker sex and its vulnerability, lack of self-control, and natural biological state closer to base materiality is set up in contradistinction" (Green-Cole, 2020). Gendered implications of blood and menstruation narratives continue to be topics of interest for feminist theory and art.

Figure 2. Judy Chicago's *Red Flag* (1971)

With the exception of menstrual blood, Western cultures embrace and glorify depictions of blood. Action films are filled with images of blood and gore, symbolising strength, heroism, and macho violence. Conversely, there are near complete absences of fluids related to menstruation or fertility in art and visual culture (Luke, 1997). Invisibility of menstruation makes one message clear: men's blood is heroic, and women's blood is shameful and dirty.

Early Christian artwork depicts Christ's blood and its qualities as pure and divine. By contrast, early menstrala show women's bodily fluids as impure, immoral, or cursed (Green-Cole, 2020). Blood has been used as paint throughout history, such as in Kubota's 1965 *Vaginal Painting*, which was presented as both a performance and painting. Kubota painted as if drawing blood directly from her vagina, with intent to draw similarities between vaginas as pathways for creation of both life and art (Green-Cole, 2020). Despite blood's clear depiction of womanhood and the agony of women in menstruation and labour, little discussion about gendered symbolism of blood in visual culture existed until Chicago's *Red Flag* (Røstvik, 2019).

Taboo on depictions of blood are so complete that even advertisements for menstrual products do not show blood. Instead, green or blue liquids are poured on absorbent materials to demonstrate absorbency, because those colours seem more "hygenic" (Luke, 1997). Concealment of fluids related to menstruation, womanhood, and fertility create the idea that leaky bodies are not "natural." Menstrual care should be attended to quietly and privately, leaving no trace, and women who cannot hide their bleeding are expected to hide away themselves, regardless of the impact on their education or careers (Green-Cole, 2020). Invisibility of menstrual care extends the preparation of women's bodies for male gaze,

underscoring the requirement that a woman be perceived as “pure” (Luke, 1997). “Freshness” is marketed by advertisers to convince women to hide menstruation, underscoring old taboos, and views of menstruation as dirty - though the bleeding is normal and healthy.

Taboos about menstrual blood are deeply ingrained in women. When Tampax designed the original tampon in the 1970s, consumer research showed women wanted to avoid touching their own blood. Tampax designed tampons with a cardboard applicator, marketing it as more “hygienic”. *Red Flag* is a feminist transgression to this taboo, depicting a bloodied tampon in a woman’s hand (Røstvik, 2019)

Reinforcement of the taboo appears across a range of media. When the Duchess of Sussex stepped out for the first images of the royal baby, the press applauded her “bravery” for wearing a white dress (Stechyson, 2019). Lochial blood, bleeding after birth, is stigmatized alongside menstrual blood. Implicit, suggested worry of blood showing on Markle’s white dress underscores pervasiveness of “[the] iconography of blood on white fabric [which] recalls an old trope that has become synonymous with ‘menstrual shame’” (Green-Cole, 2020). Women’s worries about the possibility of menstrual blood ever being seen in public demonstrates internalised shame and self-hatred of menses.

Sarah Maple, a British artist and menstrual activist, uses herself to demonstrate gendering of blood (*Figure 3*). She shows herself “leaking” in a white dress, with onlookers judging her with disgust, empathy, pity, and surprise, challenging ideas that women should be ashamed as she stands with a raised fist, symbolic of resistance and unity for women (Green-Cole, 2020).

Figure 3. Sarah Maple’s *Menstruate With Pride* (2010)

Invisibility and silence of women’s health in general, and menstruation in particular, demonstrate damaging attitudes toward women, and it perpetuates them. Binary separation of boys and girls for sexual education ostensible for “privacy” enforces the shame and invisibility of this aspect of femininity (Røstvik,

2019); conversely, this permits ignorance of basic female biology for boys. When Chicago released her *Red Flag*, she openly dismissed some interpretations of her work as a phallic representation and responded to men's experiences of confusion and curiosity, which she said were a result of lack of education on topics of menstruation (Green-Cole, 2020; Røstvik, 2019). Beyond curiosity and confusion, men's ignorance extends to a profound misunderstanding of the most basic aspects of menstruation, for example, that women can control menstrual flow; this ignorance in turn affects debates on public policies such as provision of period products and the presence of menstruating women in public (Glanfield, 2016). What does this say about the dangers of "menstrual etiquette"? Invisibility of menstruation adds to an environment of sexism and patriarchy.

Most women opt for disposable feminine products or manipulate birth control pills to stop periods (Røstvik, 2019). These practices present known dangers to the environment and to women's health (Bridle & Kirkpatrick, 2005; Jenkins & O'Doherty, 2021), and further damage to women's health, education, and place in public spheres:

"taboo was so strong that girls with severe pain and bleeding (who may indeed have had endometriosis in a time where menstrual pain was considered medically unimportant) stayed home from school in fear of bleeding publically" (Røstvik, 2019).

The covert nature of periods and their censorship is harmful to society. When issues are conveyed as insignificant, they are neglected socially and politically. Menstruation affects almost a quarter of young women's lives, yet is absent from public portrayal.

Some attitudes are changing. Increased attention to menstrala means increased attention to menstrual issues such as provision of facilities and products to support menstruators, eliminating taboos that result in exclusion of menstruators from public life and healthcare. Artists and menstrual activists like Rupi Kaur continue to make menstrual issues visible (Dewey, 2015). Making menstruation visible is a great first step, but much is left to be addressed by artists, activists, public health coordinators, human rights influencers, and policy makers, but impactful work continues to offer hope for women that their health needs are recognised and important.

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The #MeToo Movement

Rosa Macdonald

The #MeToo movement is a social movement formed to reveal and combat sexual assault and harrasment. It is widely acknowledged to be a landmark moment in modern feminism, gender relations and popular culture. The original slogan “Me Too” was coined by US activist Tarana Burke in 2006 (Alaggia & Wang) and was transformed into a viral hashtag on social media in late 2017 following international media coverage of high-profile workplace sexual harassment cases. These cases involved influential figures in the entertainment industries and politics, including film producer and co-owner of Miramax entertainment Harvey Weinstein, and then-US presidential candidate Donald Trump (Mckinney, 2019). The resulting public discussion about sexual misconduct led to US actress Alyssa Milano posting to social media platform Twitter: “If you’ve been sexually harassed or assaulted write ‘me too’ as a reply to this tweet.” (Mckinney, 2019). The tweet gained huge attention almost immediately due to other celebrities sharing their own experiences of sexual assault, including film stars Jennifer Lawrence and Angelina Jolie and musician Lady Gaga, among many others, who ultimately became the faces of the movement (Abrams, Rutenberg & Ryzik, 2017). The seven months following Milano’s tweet saw over four million people around the world share their own experiences of sexual misconduct, assault, harassment and abuse online (Alaggia & Wang, 2020). For many it was the first time they had publicly disclosed waht had happened to them (Alaggia & Wang, 2020). This in turn led to hundreds of men facing allegations of, being charged with, or being convicted of a sex-related crime.

The fame or notoriety of some of the individuals involved was central to the global attention the #MeToo movement gained. Most notably, it eventually led to the convictions of Weinstein and wealthy financier Jeffery Epstein (now deceased). However, despite the visibility of celebrities in the movement, it was ordinary people who became the driving force behind it as they revealed everyday examples of previosuly secret or uninvestigated sexual assault. The World Health Organisation (2021) estimates that around one in three women have been subjected to sexual violence in their lifetime. Prior to the #MeToo movement, the majority of these assaults went unreported or unnoticed (Gibson, et al., 2019). Since the movement went viral in 2017, mainstream online spaces such as Twitter, Snapchat and Facebook have been used as places of refuge for sexual assault survivors to share their stories with those who have endured the same experiences. This use of social media as a “safe space” for sexual assault survivors is largely attributed to the movement (Gibson, et al., 2019). Many researchers argue the #MeToo movement has completely changed the means by which women now vocalise, understand and deal with the repercussions of sexual assault (Boyle, 2019). The movement has led to major social change, not only in the entertainment industries but in normal workplaces, places of learning and domestic settings. In some cases it has led to legislative change (Durham, 2021).

The #MeToo movement has been perceived by media commentators and researchers as a catalyst for bringing widespread public and media attention to an issue that had previously not been as visible. One of the major impacts claimed for the movement is that it has raised mass awareness of what actually

constitutes sexual harassment and abuse (Palmer, et al., 2021). The movement has sparked an international conversation about the definitions of victimisation, coercion, harassment and abuse, with many survivors recognising that until this point they too had been unaware of the seriousness of their own experiences. Researchers have acknowledged that although the #MeToo hashtag did not directly cause systematic legal or political changes, it has improved the climate in which these issues are now raised and discussed (Palmer, et al., 2021). This has largely been attributed to the wide reach and accessibility of social media, and to some extent the influence of the well-known and powerful figures involved (Gibson, et al., 2019). The high-profile cases are seen as pivotal in officially recognising the need for structural change in a wide range of industries, and a form of legal validation for women who have been subjected to sexual harassment, and often silenced by powerful men (Durham, 2021).

There have been a series of legal and political outcomes as a result of the movement. These are predominantly in workplace practises and public sector employment conditions. In some US states, including New York, Washington and Tennessee, laws governing mandatory arbitration and non-disclosure agreements in workplace sexual misconduct cases have been modified, and in some cases these practices have been made illegal (Gibson, et al., 2019). Prior to the movement, it is believed these kinds of agreements played a central role in discouraging victims from coming forward. However, some analysts have criticised claims the movement has been responsible for legal progress, arguing that beyond the high-profile celebrity convictions (such as Weinstein's), it is more difficult for marginalised people, especially people of colour and members of the LGBTQIA+ community, to obtain the similar legal support or attention for their own cases (Durham, 2021).

Other criticisms of the #MeToo movement include that it is largely centered around cis-gender white woman, that it has adopted a radical feminst anti-men agenda, and that women are pushing a "victim" narrative without taking responsibility for their own sexual agency (Durham, 2021). However, these criticisms have been subject to criticism themselves, with Karen Boyle (2019) arguing that such claims enable "mainstream media to define what feminism is, and misses an opportunity to hold them accountable". However other researchers, such as Meenakshi Gigi Durham (2021), have argued criticism of the #MeToo movement still ultimately has a positive impact due to its role in revealing widespread societal anxieties about "a powerful movement, that like the suffrage movement, upends the gender norms and sexual hierarchies we've taken for granted, revealing painful truths about sex, power and violence".

The #MeToo movement is still evolving. Many commentators say it is too early to assess its historical or long-term impacts, and assert there is still a long way to go to until society achieves a state in which the #MeToo movement is no longer required (Palmer et al., 2021). However, studies have suggested that sexual assault and abuse survivors are finding validation through online communitites (Alaggia & Wang), which appears to be a significant legacy of the #MeToo movement. The broader changes in society are most likely to be incremental and cumulative, with changes already being seen in the places #MeToo arose from first, such as the entertainment industry, schools and tertiary education institutions, and general workplaces (Durham, 2021).

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Online Abuse and Harassment

Augusta Cameron

Online abuse and harassment, commonly known as cyberbullying can be defined as the harmful activity directed at an individual or group on the internet in a pervasive or threatening nature (Pen America, 2021). As we have seen the advancement of technology develop into faster and more portable multifunctional devices, the number of internet users across the globe has grown exponentially, leading to a new environment of abuse and harassment online. Similarly, evidence reveals that gender influences the types of online harassment and abuse that one could face.

Whilst technological advancements have created new social opportunities and break throughs around the world, it has also had a negative impact on how certain people use various platforms on the internet, resulting in online abuse and harassment.

Before the internet, bullying, abuse, and harassment ended when the victim withdrew themselves from the setting they were in, however, the environment of the internet allows for a new form of abuse and bullying that did not exist before (Konnikova, 2015). Because the internet has become a common day tool, the notion of online abuse and harassment is difficult to contain and forget about because the perpetrator can engage in oppressive behaviour at any given time from anywhere in the world, for a wider audience to see (Keith & Martin, 2005, p. 224). According to Pew Research Center (2017, p.11), “Users increasingly see the internet as a place that facilitates anonymity.” Along with anonymity, trolling behaviour does not witness the results of their actions in the same way one would in first person. As a result, the expression of harassment and abuse online loses key human markers, such as someone’s facial expressions or tone of voice, it encourages a lack of empathy and therefore can have damaging effects.

Harassment and abuse online can take many forms, including, image-based abuse, rape and death threats, cyber stalking, online identity theft and bullying. These extreme embodiments have harmful and destructive lifelong consequences for victims who are subjected to such behaviour.

The prevalence of online harassment and abuse has risen dramatically; according to statistics, New Zealand is the third most affected country in the world when it comes to cyberbullying (Scoop Independent News Culture, 2018).

Growing evidence suggests that historical ideologies implying that men are the dominant gender in society make women more vulnerable to online abuse and harassment (Nadim & Fladmoe, 2021, P.246). Consequently, as historically males have held social privilege and power over females, male prejudices utilized against females in the online world, often in the form of sexual objectification have the tendency to both harm and reinforce the difference between the genders. As Poland, B. (2016, p.4) states "online harassment is rooted in offline beliefs, and those offline beliefs are supported and reinforced by the prevalence of sexist behaviors online." Conversely, statistics highlight the severity of sexual harassment

online, with females three times more likely than males to experience online sexual harassment (Jagannathan, 2021).

It is perhaps unsurprising that the distribution of digital images of bodies across the internet perpetuates gender disparities in a society where we are constantly connected with one another at the press of a button and bombarded with information and images of 'beauty' via online platforms. As Salter (2016, p.2724) states' "the exposed feminine body online thus becomes the focal point for pejorative ascriptions of sexual promiscuity and aberration, while the exposed masculine body serves a range of purposes, including its deployment in sexual harassment intimidation." This sense of sexual degradation and stigmatization of females on the internet for engaging in behaviour judged to be promiscuous or sexually provocative is becoming an increasingly common gender-based tool used for hurt on the internet. In fact, a report conducted in New Zealand by company, Netsafe (2021) whose aim is to improve the safety of online users found that as of July 2021, there has been a "24 percent increase in harmful digital communication reports compared to the same timeframe the previous year." Despite the fact that this report does not directly include online sexual harassment of women, it does reveal the worrisome reality of increased rates of online abuse and harassment.

Although women are predominantly represented in the group of people who are sexually harassed and abused online, political, and racial rhetoric online is also becoming a significant concern that affects both men and women. As computers have become more accessible and easier to use, making them an increasingly common tool in households, the use of internet platforms to distribute propaganda has proliferated. As Banks (2010, p.234) states, "The internet has become the 'new frontier' for spreading hate, as millions can be reached through an inexpensive and unencumbered social network that has enabled previously diverse and fragmented groups to connect, engendering a collective identity and sense of community." As such, the internet is a space where it is difficult to distinguish between what constitutes freedom of speech and what constitutes hate speech. However, the law has now been established to cover and protect victims of online digital harassment in New Zealand, detailing an act that aims to prevent and hold people accountable for engaging in harmful digital communication.

Technology is now an integral part of life, although it has many positive effects on society, in many cases, it has also seen the civilization of society move down a dark narrow path where online abuse and harassment is becoming a growing issue for both males and females. The first step to preventing online abuse and harassment is to educate the youth and adolescents from a young age about cyber safety and the effects it has on individuals across the globe.

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Queer Representation in Cinema

Caitlin Duff

The state of queer representation in the cinema of the early 20th century was very different from what we see in films today. This difference comes largely from the fact that homosexuality itself was understood differently, and queer representation in early cinema reflects these older theories. Queer representation was also informed by the lower levels of tolerance in the early twentieth centuries, which meant any explicitly queer imagery or characters would be cut or censored out of the film. If filmmakers wanted to have queer characters in their films, they would have to be hidden under layers of code that disguised them from the average viewer. Despite this, some films from this era did tell explicitly queer stories, and the narratives and public receptions of these films reflect how homosexuality was treated during this period.

Before examining early queer cinema itself, it is important to know how queerness and homosexuality were understood during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Several theories informed this understanding. Karl Heinrich Ulrichs' 'third sex' theory, which originated in the 1860s, remained popular into the early twentieth century thanks to the work of Magnus Hirschfeld, who helped maintain the relevance of the theory. Third sex theory, also known as intermediate sex theory, stipulates that "a man was a heterosexual man, a woman was a heterosexual woman, and those that were gay and lesbian were therefore something in between" (Brown 2020, 5-6). The strong connection between sex and gender in third sex theory is also reflected in another popular understanding of homosexuality, the highly popular inversion theory, which argued that "homosexual men wanted to be women, and homosexual women wanted to be men" (Benshoff and Griffin 2005, 26). Both third sex and inversion theory reflect the popular idea that sex and gender were closely interconnected, something which we have since disproven through a greater understanding of gender and sexual identity. These theories were not actively hostile towards homosexuals, but a negative stigma surrounding them nevertheless thrived. The British sexologist Havelock Ellis put forward the hostile yet popular idea that homosexuals (particularly lesbians), were indistinguishable from heterosexuals and therefore dangerous due to their supposedly corrupting influence (Weiss 1992, 8). When studying queer early cinema of the early twentieth century, it is crucial to keep these theories and ideas in mind, as applications of modern gender and queer theory may lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

Third sex and inversion theory, as well as Ellis' ideas of danger and perversion, heavily informed how gay men and lesbians were represented in the cinema. Typically, gay men and lesbians were represented in early twentieth-century films as men and women who expressed themselves as if they were a member of the opposite sex. However, because of the predominant stigma surrounding homosexuals, they were no more than stock figures, denied the depth of their well-rounded cast members and only identifiable as gay if the viewer understood this gender-bent code. Gay men were represented as the 'pansy' stock character, also known as the sissy. These men were often weak, simpering, effeminate, and limp-wristed, but they also possessed a great wit that made them popular in comedies. They embodied the

characteristics typically associated with women and femininity of the time, and they were "a comment on masculinity, or, rather, a lack of it" (Brown 2020, 2). As for lesbians, they were represented by two different types of stock characters – the mannish woman or the "aging Lady in Lavender" (Weiss 1992, 11). The mannish woman was the binary opposite of the sissy – they were women who dressed in men's clothing and engaged in traditionally male activities, like smoking cigars. The aging Lady in Lavender was a much more sinister figure, falling in line with Ellis' ideas about lesbians – she was an older woman who "preyed upon the innocence of young girls, teaching them to fear men and their own sexual impulses" (Smith-Rosenberg 1985, 282), and was often found in all-female environments like schools and boarding houses. It is important to note, however, that these stock characters seldom actually engaged in homosexual romance or flirting, so their queerness was reduced to simple aesthetic expression. However, some films moved past this culture of coding and disguise and into the realm of explicit homosexual romance.

Two key films of early queer cinema are the German productions *Anders als die Andern* (1919) and *Mädchen in Uniform* (1931). Both films present a sympathetic depiction of gay and lesbian relationships, a rarity of the period due to the aforementioned restrictions and stereotypes. *Anders als die Andern* is largely considered one of the first films to depict an earnest, romantic relationship between two men, and was made as part of a campaign to change the laws against homosexuality in Germany. Magnus Hirschfeld, a champion of the third sex theory and gay rights in Germany, was heavily involved in the film's production, and even makes an appearance within the narrative (Brown 2020, 6). *Mädchen in Uniform* appeared in cinemas over a decade later, when a distinct homosexual subculture was flourishing in Germany. Centering around lesbian romance in an all-girls school, the film was distinctive in that it depicted the outside, heterosexual world as dangerous, and the interior, homosexual world of the school as a haven. However, while these films were revolutionary in their positive, non-coded depiction of homosexuality, contemporary reaction to them was hostile. *Mädchen in Uniform* was heavily censored when it was screened in America, removing most if not all explicit lesbian content, setting the standard that "lesbianism could be tolerated as subtext, but any spoken pronouncement of desire... was 'expressly forbidden'" (Weiss 1992, 11). Both films suffered under the Nazi regime – almost all copies of *Anders als die Andern* were burned, and *Mädchen in Uniform* was banned outright. These are only two of many queer films of the early twentieth century, but as they are both well-documented examples of sympathetic queer films that suffered under censorship and intolerance, they are a good starting point for those who wish to study early queer cinema.

There are many further directions to take when studying early queer cinema. This entry covers the depiction of gay men and lesbians from the 1900s to the 1930s, and queer cinema and the context it was created in continued to evolve from this point onwards. To gain a full understanding of early queer cinema, studying this evolution is crucial. If the 1900s-1930s queer cinema is to be better understood, reviewing a wider range of contemporary theories around gender would also be useful in understanding the differences between early and modern queer cinema. Third sex and inversion theory are only two of many theories of gender and sexuality from this period. Lastly, a continued exploration of early queer cinema would benefit from a study of sexualities beyond homosexuality. Representations of transgender and gender non-conforming people were plentiful in early gay cinema (especially with inversion theory in

mind), but a revisionist study of bisexual, asexual, and pansexual representations – sexualities that were only named and identified in the mid-twentieth century – would also be fruitful.

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Queer TV in the West

Ashleigh Beales

Introduction

Queer is an umbrella term used by some to refer to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual community (often shortened to LGBT+). Since television became a household staple, the queer community has fought for onscreen representation. Early TV programs upheld the ideals of heteronormativity; rigid gender roles, and the nuclear family (Parsemain, 2019). Early representation of queer people on TV was often limited and harmful (Horvat, 2020). TV in the 1980s and 1990s included more queer characters, although negative portrayals still occurred, neutral and positive representations of the queer community became more frequent (Franklin, 2014). Some shows included openly queer main characters, and queer storylines. However, this caused backlash, with many seeing this inclusion as an unacceptable 'promotion' of homosexuality. This resulted in the Thatcherian 'Section 28' law which prevented people from 'promoting homosexuality', restricting many positive queer narratives on TV (Jenner, 2014). Section 28 was repealed in the early 2000s and was followed by a greater diversity of queer TV. Many queer storylines were expanded past tired stereotypes and limited representations. These representations of the queer community reflect and contribute to the public perception of the queer community and the issues it faces (Sarkissian, 2014).

TV provided a space for the public to explore queer issues for both queer people, and non-queer people alike. Many queer people find solidarity and identity through representation, while non-queer people are exposed to different identities which can influence their attitudes towards the queer community offscreen (Parsemain, 2019). This entry will use examples to summaries the history and the impact of queer TV on society.

1940s – 1960s: The Nuclear Family on the Small Screen

Since its arrival in Western households in the late 1940s, TV has provided viewers with entertainment, news, education, and distraction. Narratives on TV programs allowed viewers to explore issues and experience a variety of stories both similar and different to their own. Behind the screens, TV programs and narratives were created based on what generated revenue, meaning networks funded programs that people were most likely to watch. Thus, TV programs and shows reflected the popular views in Western society and culture. In the 1950s and '60s, shows were based on traditional gender roles, heterosexual marriage, the nuclear family, and suburban living (Parsemain, 2019). TV depictions of homosexuality were often conflated with "deviancy, monstrosity, perversion, or crime" (Parsemain, 2019, p2) which reflected the attitudes of many people at that time.

1970s – 1980s: Destabilizing the Nuclear Family & Section 28

The 70s and early 80s saw increased representation of the queer community on TV. However, these representations were limited, harmful stereotypes persisted, and although neutral and positive portrayals emerged, these characters were exclusively gay or lesbian, (no other queer identities). These characters were usually played by conventionally attractive, cisgender, white men and women. The stories of these characters were limited to one-off appearances or side characters that were often killed off quickly (TVTropes, n.d.).

In 1983, the documentary film *Framed Youth – The Revenge of the Teenage Perverts* was produced by the London Lesbian and Gay Youth Video project (Franklin, 2014). *Framed Youth* was a compilation of interviews about people's views on homosexuality, coming out, love, and sex, interspliced with movie clips, zany edits, and music (Franklin, 2014). It gained huge popularity both within the queer scene, but also in the public, making its TV debut on Channel 4 in 1986. This marked a turning point in queer TV, this show was produced *by* the queer community, rather than by others speaking *for* them (Franklin, 2014). This queer representation showed that queer TV could honestly investigate the issues, realities, hostilities, and politics that effect queer people and queer communities.

However, many saw this new kind of queer TV and specifically *Framed Youth,* as a direct threat to their heterosexual lifestyle. Queer TV and positive queer representation directly challenged the established heteronormativity of previous decades, and thus, some groups (religious, political, and public) saw this as an unacceptable departure from traditional norms and an agenda' to 'force people into a homosexual lifestyle' (Day, 2019). This resulted in the creation of the 'Section 28' law in 1988 under Thatcher's government in the United Kingdom (Day, 2019). Section 28 'prohibited the promotion of homosexuality' (Franklin, 2014) which saw the closure of many LGBT support groups, limit activities, or self-censor. Section 28 also endeavored to restrict the showing of queer TV shows that positively portrayed the queer community as that was also considered 'promoting homosexuality'.

1990s: TV's Gay Golden Age

By the 1990s, queer representation was more frequent on TV shows both in the United Kingdom (in defiance of Section 28) and the United States (Jenner, 2014). Queer characters were given richer narratives, reoccurring, and sometimes even main roles. This is exemplified by Ellen DeGeneres who played the titular character on the TV show *Ellen*, whose character publicly came out in an episode aired on ABC in 1997 (Jenner, 2014). This represented a triumph in queer representation, but the show was canceled in 1998 due to backlash both against the show, and against DeGeneres herself who also came out publicly as a lesbian (Parsemain, 2019). *Ellen* had broken new ground in terms of portraying an openly lesbian protagonist on a serial TV show, and other shows followed suit (Jenner, 2014). TV studios realized there was a lucrative and untapped market interested in alternative and queer programming.

Representation was not perfect, stereotypes such as the 'effeminate gay man' persisted, which were harmful and not representative of the spectrum of identities within the queer communities (Parsemain, 2019). Also, many of these representations were based on 'acceptable' queerness, only emphasizing queer narratives similar to heterosexual and cisgender narratives. This was demonstrated by queer storylines only including those who were "gender-conforming, conventionally attractive, desexualized and

depoliticized" (Parsemain, 2019, p11). These narratives presented the idea that queerness was unremarkable, that queer people could and should assimilate into the heteronormative framework.

2000s-2010s: The End of Section 28 & The Growth of Queer TV

Section 28 was repealed in Scotland in 2000 and by the United Kingdom in 2003. This was followed by a resurgence of queer TV programs. However, the sentiment behind Section 28 remained in many Western countries, including the UK and the US. While representation increased in the early 2000s, depictions of queer love and sex was still deemed by many networks as too explicit as it risked alienating mainstream audiences and advertisers (Parsemain, 2019). The result was queer representation that presented queer characters as largely similar to their heterosexual counterparts, and these narratives generally avoided politics. Queer characters were often typecast into tropes like 'the gay best friend' (TVTropes, n.d.), which although is technically queer representation, the lives of queer characters were often secondary to the heterosexual lead.

In 2009, US TV series *Glee* debuted on FOX and ushered in a new age of queer TV. No longer relegated to the sidelines, there were several queer main characters on *Glee*. The narrative arc of these queer characters was not defined by their journeys out of the closet, rather they were integral to the central plotline of the show. *Glee* also featured reoccurring bisexual, transgender, and Black queer characters. These queer characters had narratives of love, dating, and sex, which had previously been avoided by many other shows. Although queer representations on Western TV remained imperfect, these representations still served to normalize the presence of queer people into mainstream Western culture (Parsemain, 2019).

Streaming platforms like Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon gained massive popularity in the 2010s. Opening a world of viewing possibilities, audiences were no longer limited to what was shown on TV. Audiences had more power to choose, and broadcasters and networks followed, creating more queer, often original, content. This generated huge revenue and expanded the definition and scope of queer TV (Parsemain, 2019). Netflix Original shows like *Queer Eye* and *Orange is the New Black* have created and foregrounded complex queer narratives, featuring rich, diverse, and nuanced queer characters.

Conclusion

Since the inception of queer TV, queer narratives and portrayals of queer characters have become more inclusive, more diverse, and hugely popular. Although some stereotypes and tropes remain, shows like *Glee, Queer Eye*, and *Orange is the New Black*, work to overcome this with the inclusion of a diverse cast of queer characters. Queer TV provides space for viewers to explore a variety of queer narratives and experiences, for queer and non-queer viewers alike. Queer TV functions to reject heteronormativity, celebrate queer diversity, and normalize queer existence in Western society.

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Rape fantasies

Tiana Jorgensen

Rape fantasies have been identified as a common sexual fantasy, with 62% of women admitting having fantasised about being forced into sexual intercourse (Bivona & Critelli, 2009). Online forums, such as Reddit and Tumblr, provide an avenue for people with shared interests to come together, including those with specific sexual fantasies (Tembo, 2020). Rape fantasy blogs on these forums raise awareness of the topic and romanticise rape in a way many people may not have considered before (Tembo, 2020). Differences can be seen between erotic rape fantasies as featured in Reddit blogs, and the realities of rape, which include injuries and trauma (Bivona & Critelli, 2009). This entry will discuss the similarities and differences of rape fantasies, such as those in online fantasy blogs, and real-life rape situations.

Rape, as defined by the United States Government, is "the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with anybody part of object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without consent of the victim" (The United States Department of Justice Archives, 2012). Rape victims often experience physical injuries caused by force and long-term emotional trauma because of the offence (Bivona & Critelli, 2009).

This is inconsistent with the content of many rape fantasies featured online, which often include attractive perpetrators; a clear gap in victim injury; and most importantly, a female orgasm (Critelli & Bivona, 2008). Many women who have rape fantasies idealise dominant 'bad boys' and find arousal in submission (Bivona & Critelli, 2009). Sexual fantasies can exist purely in one's imagination and never be experienced in real life scenarios, which is the case for most women who hold rape fantasies (Critelli & Bivona, 2008). This allows for these women to easily withhold realistic qualities of rape to maintain eroticity within their fantasies. Some authors argue that experiencing rape fantasies requires a level of disassociation, separating what is appropriate mentally and physically, and removing themselves from the moral grounds which they would usually follow (Bartels, Harkins & Beech, 2017).

Although a lack of consent can be identified as a dominant aspect of rape fantasies published online, when rape fantasies are carried out with sexual partners, an implicit consent is given through the fantasiser's expressed desire for the act (Critelli & Bivona, 2008). This is often not mentioned in sexual fantasy blogs on Tumblr and social media, and has been argued to create dangerous misconceptions, including the romanticising of rape and sexual assault (Bivona & Critelli, 2009). Conflicting views arise when considering the impact of this topic within literature: that attention to this topic may result in an increase in male sexual aggression (although rape fantasies are not exclusive to men raping women), versus the opinion that maintaining silence on rape fantasies implies that women's sexualities are to be ashamed of (Critelli & Bivona, 2008).

It is important to note that although there is a high prevalence of women who express sexual fantasies of rape, researchers have found most women respond negatively to guided imagery of realistic rape

situations and experience little or no sexual arousal (Bond & Mosher, 1986). This suggests that women who fantasise about erotic rape situations can distinguish clearly between rape fantasies and realistic rape situations that lack implicit consent beforehand. There have been ethical arguments against mixing erotic rape and realistic rape scenarios for the use of research, resulting in minimal studies investigating the topic. Further research would be necessary to better understand women's ability to distinguish between erotic and realistic rape scenarios.

Men are also known to have sexual rape fantasies, with 68% of undergraduate men admitting to having fantasised about committing sexual assault (Bartels, Harkins & Beech, 2017). These men expressed an interest in the themes of dominance, control, and in some cases aggression. There is an under representation of male rape fantasies online, and therefore, rape fantasy blogs from the perspective of a male rapist are difficult to find. Research does show that rape fantasies are being experienced by a large cohort of men offline, but a lack of online presence makes it difficult to compare similarities between online rape fantasies by men and realistic rape situations (Bartels, Harkins & Beech, 2017).

Both men and women using online forums have expressed gaining a sense of thrill from fantasising about situations that induce feelings of helplessness, to either themselves or others (Icy-future-6839, 2021). Often these individuals seek online forums, such as Tumblr and Reddit, to seek solace about their normality for these fantasies and find comfort in relating with others who share their sexual desires. Online forums allow anonymity whilst providing a place where individuals' rape fantasies can be put into words, allowing a more in-depth visualisation experience, which can be shared with others (Icy-future-6839, 2021). Many of the users online acknowledged the differences between their rape fantasies and realistic situations, with many men and women clarifying in their blogs or forums that they would not want to experience a real-life rape scenario (Icy-future-6839, 2021).

Some argue that the sexual encounters described in rape fantasies, as published in online forums, differ from realistic rape situations so greatly that they should instead be described as a sexual desire for domination (Icy-future-6839, 2021). Sexual fantasies of domination could fall under the category of BDSM (bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, sadism, and masochism) or consensual non-consent, which are both legal and more achievable in real life situations. These labels more appropriately reflect the individual's desire for holding a physical attraction to the perpetrator and achieving orgasm. Some Reddit users argue, however, that rape fantasies describe a more intense level of submission and spontaneity of the act that is difficult to achieve through BDSM. Within online Reddit forums, users admit that their inability to experience rape fantasies safely in the BDSM community is why their fantasies remain mental and will not be experienced in realistic situations (InaGala, 2021).

Although some Reddit users have admitted to placing themselves in real life rape situations to fulfill their rape fantasies, this is not the case for most individuals with this fantasy. Both researchers and individuals with rape fantasies can identify key differences in sexual experiences described in fantasies and realistic rape situations (Bond & Mosher, 1986). These include attractive perpetrators, female orgasm, and a lack of short or long term negative physical or mental implications featured within the fantasies published online (Critelli & Bivona, 2008). Because of these differences, many Reddit users view these fantasies as a

sexual desire for thrill and domination rather than rape, a label that has been argued as dangerous and potentially misleading (Icy-future-6839, 2021).

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Representations of Pregnancy Loss

Tessa Timms

Pregnancy loss is a health issue that is shrouded in stigma. The issue of pregnancy loss has traditionally been controlled by patriarchal cultural norms idealising how women should respond. Consequently, suffering tends to be done in silence and solitude with a lack of resources, understanding, support and medical attention. Modern-day media platforms have enabled the conversation around pregnancy loss to become more visible. However, these representations are riddled with political implications that further warp societies current understanding of pregnancy loss as a health issue. Pregnancy loss is used to project the pro-life political rhetoric resulting in the maintenance of power. By framing pregnancy loss as a political issue erodes the legitimacy of women's reproductive rights, thus threatening the principle of female autonomy.

Pregnancy ought to be understood as a health issue. Historically, females have disproportionately suffered because the associated loss is invisible and deeply private. Jelen-Sanchez explains the stigma of pregnancy loss is rooted in two concepts also steeped in stigma: sex and death (Jelen- Sanchez, 2020). Because of this, the associated consequences of mental health and trauma are more difficult for society to address. This meant reducing the extent of suffering from pregnancy loss was not prioritised by those in power. Nor were women encouraged to discuss it. It was an issue that has traditionally been 'swept under the rug.' The point here is to answer how our understanding of pregnancy loss has been riddled with stigma. The hegemonic discourse, reinforced by institutions reflects and strengthens the position of the ruling class (Hall, 1985:17). The decisions made by male leaders have affected how women understand and respond to pregnancy loss. Media and the politicisation of pregnancy loss have dominated how the issue is understood. This is a result of males holding significant positions of power across politics and media outlets, as institutional power significantly impacts how society understands social issues. Institutions produce ideologies and discourses that create meaning. To radically change this social narrative requires the current hegemonic discourse to be challenged.

Modern media platforms possess the power to frame pregnancy loss. This means the language they use, whose story is being told, and how the story is portrayed shapes how consumers of media understand pregnancy loss as a social issue. Generally, media trivialise women's health issues (Geertsema-Sligh, 2019). Geertsema-Sligh (2019) also finds "the function of women in news stories is most often to provide a personal experience" as opposed to being recognised as the expert. This is evident with reportage on pregnancy loss. Recounts of personal experiences dominates the narrative of pregnancy loss (Jelen-Sanchez, 2020). This creates two issues; whose narrative is being told and how the narrative is being told.

Firstly, the women recounting their experiences with pregnancy loss tend to be white, old or famous. This creates issues around diversity, delay in publication and success stories. Pregnancy loss is perceived as a white women's issue when in fact, women of colour are twice as likely to suffer the loss of a foetus compared with caucasian women (Jelen-Sanchez, 2020). This devalues the suffering of, black, Hispanic, Arab, indigenous, as well as queer and trans women whose voices are not being represented by the media's dominant discourse. The current framing of the issue through narrow personal experiences reproduces the cultural framework and discursive standards that create a lens for society to gain understanding through (Jelen-Sanchez, 2020). If you are not represented in the narrative, it creates the perception of the 'other' by invalidating emotion by exclusion. This can be harmful and isolating for women already suffering pregnancy loss related trauma.

The narratives told tend to be dominated by women who have suffered from pregnancy loss but finished their journey with success. This is quite often framed by media as 'the miracle child' (Jelen-Sanchez, 2020). Those who have not conceived a miracle child, or have settled with a childless life, are outcasted. This reinforces that a miracle child or success story is a prerequisite to speak out. Although the intention of this framing may be to generate hope, it simultaneously intensifies the trauma of women who have failed to do so. The extent of suffering from pregnancy loss can be attributed to how long it can take for women to speak about it. Due to the trauma, older women's narratives also dominate media coverage of this issue (Jelen-Sanchez, 2020). While some dialogue is better than none, women who are currently suffering do so by being reassured 'it will all be ok,' which lacks any scientific basis.

Credible scientific advice regarding pregnancy loss is largely unreported by mass media (Jelen- Sanchez, 2020). A scientific rhetoric reproduced by the media would generate legitimacy around this societal issue. This would occur by reproducing the idea of pregnancy loss as a health issue, directly linking it to health resources and normalising consequences of pregnancy loss as expected (Silverman, 2015). Additionally, it would seek to balance the gender bias.

Women's reproductive rights are inherently politicised. Pregnancy loss is deeply intertwined with politics as its stigma is a product of institutionalised power (Humphreys, 2014). Intentional abortion has dominated the political debate around women's reproductive rights as confining legislation reduces women autonomy. Historically, and in the state of Texas, removing autonomy from females is done by white males and is justified by the pro-life rhetoric. This political tension can warp the realities of pregnancy loss and how it is understood. Understanding the political implications of pregnancy loss requires analysing the language used in the political realm to frame the issue while simultaneously questioning who benefits from the particular rhetoric.

An example of this is seen by the United Kingdom National Health System (NHS) who altered the terminology used to describe pregnancy loss events, be this an unwanted miscarriage or intentional

abortion. Instead of referring to the loss of a foetus, it now is stated pregnancy loss is defined as an unwanted loss of a baby (Jelen-Sanchez, 2020). This change in language humanises potential life. The pro-life stance fuels the stigma associated with abortion, thus underpinning abortion guilt is that they have acted contrary to the hegemonic discourse. Although minor, such definitions contribute to how society understands pregnancy loss. This political debate goes full circle and questions at what point of gestation should the foetus be regarded as a human entitled to rights that are prioritised over the mothers. This entry does not seek to assert the correct ideological position but simply demonstrate how politics complicates the issue of pregnancy loss as a social issue.

Today, it is evident the hegemonic discourse is slowly shifting. Modern media has allowed certain resources to become far more accessible. A google search allows access to information, medical professionals and support groups. Additionally, 59% of women of reproductive age live in countries that broadly allow abortion (Jelen-Sanchez, 2020). New Zealand has several organisations offering bereavement counselling through the Ministry of Health. This is an example of the New Zealand government recognising the effects of pregnancy loss as a health issue, causing the Ministry of Health to increase its funding. Although pregnancy loss is largely a women's issue, to value the equality of both genders is to acknowledge the mental effects of pregnancy loss for males while simultaneously acknowledging this area is largely under-resourced and has disproportionately affected women for generations.

Media shapes how society understands pregnancy loss. This means the way we view the issue is largely shaped by the media we consume. Consequently, the framing of the issue is integral to its destigmatisation. Additionally, the politicisation of the issue demonstrates how power is inherently intertwined with pregnancy loss because of its association with female autonomy.

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Sexbots

Amy Baker

To simply define sex robots, they are mechanical objects that resemble humans and have corresponding features such as genitalia to function for sexual interaction. The creation and continuously evolving landscape of sex-bots originates from the technologically coded bots of computer games such as Softporn Adventure of 1981 and Bachelor Party of 1982 as well as dating apps such as Girls Garden of 1984 and magical date of 1996. (Malinowksa, 2020) These technological advancements in the late 20th century, paved the way for simulated virtual sex to emerge into the artificial intelligence (AI) obsessed technological landscape of today. With the rise of social media sites and handheld personal devices, simulated virtual companionship began to grow in popularity, particularly in Asian countries like Japan and South Korea where subcultures of the Otaku culture, experience sexual attraction to gaming and television animated characters. (Malinowksa, 2020) Humanoid sex bots are the result of fantasy and converging technologies and may even be the future of how humans experience and enjoy sex.

Today, in a climate where human pornography is significantly normalized and viewed by millions daily, the concept of robotic sex is not overwhelmingly surprising. Coded bots, have been a vital element of the popularity of the chatroom format of pornography, with one pornography chatting site having been exposed to code over 5 million female bots, whilst there was only 12,000 real female profiles on the site. (Malinowksa, 2020) Taking this notion of sexual bots a step further, the creation of human-like 3D figures able to perform in physical sexual activity is a wildly growing global industry. Whilst in most cases, hyper-realistic sex bots are still largely unavailable to purchase for the general public, there are multiple bot-brothels scattered around Asia, where humanoid sex robots and are available for rent by the hour, with some able to perform acts of oral sex, and others with vibrating genitalia. There are also reports of a robotic sex-café having been recently opened in London, where the robot waitresses serve coffee and pastries, then offer complementary sexual experiences. (Johnson & Verdicchio, 2019)

David Levy's 2007 book *Love and Sex With Robots*, argues for and predicts that with the ongoing development of sex bots, there will be human/robot marriage by the year 2050. (Johnson & Verdicchio, 2019) Statistics also that show that the robot pleasure industry is a multi-billion dollar market, which exemplifies that the demand for sexual robotic dolls is constantly growing, and as such, there are now hundreds of places to purchase semi-realistic functioning sexual dolls online. SexDollGenie for example, has a range of over 1300 dolls varying in capabilities and realistic human qualities. With a price range of $1000 to over $10,000 for one doll. However, one major company that is aspiring to deliver the most realistic and high performing AI sex-bot to their budding audience is Realbotix. Realbotix flaunted their first prototype, Harmony a functioning female sex robot that could hold a conversation and had realistic facial expressions such as smiling, blinking and frowning in 2017. Since then, Harmony has been developed to increase the pleasure of a customer's sexual experience, by having self-lubricating genitalia, an increased vocabulary for dialogue (including COVID information) and virtual control capabilities through

an app. Harmony, now in it's third prototype stage is worth over $20,000 and is pushing the boundaries of AI and human sexual experience.

Undoubtedly, there are various ethical and social issues surrounding the creation and production of robotic sex companions. Replicating an intimate human experience with a lifeless AI, has caused an uproar in various communities around the world. Whilst some scholars like McKenzie (2018) as cited in Malinowksa (2020) view the notion of sex bots as 'an exciting opportunity to explore possibilities for alternate subjectivities, as well as to design compatible intimate partners for humans.' However, the biggest push-back against sex bots arises from the global organization 'Campaign Against Sex Robots' which was founded by Richardson and Brilling in 2015. It highlights the problems that sex bots may cause for appropriating and exacerbating sexual abuse against women and children as well as the issues that follows the 'dehumanization' of sex. A main focus of the campaign, is to raise awareness surrounding possible issues of sex bots entering mainstream society. Richardson (2015) states that his campaign will 'challenge the view that the development of adult and child sex robots will have a positive benefit to society, but instead further reinforce power relations of inequality and violence,' referring to paedophiles, sadists and sexual abusers who could easily procure a life like robotic doll as an outlet for their methods of exploitation.

Furthermore, the role in which gender plays leads to further issues of misogyny, consent and sexualized femininity. The industry of sex bots is extremely discriminatory towards women, as the market is heavily saturated with female sex bots compared to their male counterparts. Furthermore the construction of said female sex bots is based on tediously stereotyped versions of a gender, with customizable breasts and sexual organs that further sexualizes and objectifies the female body, reducing it to mechanical parts for the sole purpose of increasing a man's sexual pleasure. (Malinowksa, 2020) Due to the realistic human features of many available sex dolls, there is an apparent blurring of the lines between technological artefact and human-likeness. The human likeness of sex bots distinguishes them from other sexual artefacts that are currently accessible in the market as the possibility of sexual interaction between human and bot without even the slight possibility of consent as the doll is entirely controlled by an owners desires, entrenches harassment as a social norm. (Cranny-Francis, 2016) In an environment where gender inequality among humans continues to be a significant global injustice, the ethical conduct of sexual interaction between bot and human seems to be an issue for another millennia. However McMullen (the founder of Harmony from Realbotix) as cited by Kaufman (2018) comments that the issue of consent is trivial as he 'could just as easily ask you is it ethically dubious to force my toaster to make my toast.'

To conclude, the industry of sex bots is a relatively new yet fast paced growing market opportunity that converges the developing AI technology of the 21st century with human's understanding of sexual interaction. There are multiple social issues of gender and ethics that continue to develop and progress, however as the technology also progresses these issues become more distorted. The future of sexual robots is uncertain, however one thing is clear, that that these robots are impacting the way in which humans interact with sex and challenging our future consciousness.

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Sexual Violence in Popular Media

Jemima Dowle

Popular media holds an important role of being capable of shaping public perception through how it chooses to portray sexual violence. Examining how sexual violence tends to be portrayed and represented in the most popular forms of media allows us to better understand why certain stigmas and opinions can be born.

Sexual violence is a key social problem that is of "wide prevalence" (HELP Auckland, n.d.). It holds the devastating ability to impact everyone – regardless of race, gender, sexuality or age. The wider term of 'sexual violence' is all-encompassing due to the fact that it covers a range of crimes. This is further supported by Kelly (1998, cited in Harrison and Webster, 2020) who ascertains that sexual violence should be discussed as a "continuum" rather than a "single event". More specifically, however, it tends to refer to situations of sexual assault, rape and sexual abuse. Sexual violence can be further defined as being the application of "threat" or "manipulation" to force victims to participate in unwanted sexual activity that they did not consent to (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2010). It is crucial to note that the term of sexual violence is often not fully enveloped within the explicit depictions of rape often displayed in media products like film, rather, it can include non-physical threats of violence, including "obscene phone calls" (Kelly, 1988, cited in Harrison and Webster, 2020).

For the purpose of this entry, the broad term of popular media will be used interchangeably with 'mass media' – essentially, encompassing any form of communication content that intends to be consumed by many, including film, television, news and social media (Leverage EDU, 2021).

As media technology has evolved over time, it is understood to continue to play a crucial role in the development of adolescents – specifically, altering their perceptions around sex (Wilson and Linz, 1992). Radecki (1990, cited in Wilson and Linz, 1992) asserts that usage of sex and violence within popular media products including film and television is alarmingly common – with one in eight Hollywood films depicting a rape. Early findings have determined that exposure to such material has become increasingly common within younger age groups, with a 1987 Greenberg et. al study finding that "up to 77% of 14 and 15 year olds [reporting] that they had viewed several R-rated films" (cited in Wilson and Linz, 1992). Linz and Donnerstein (1990) argue that the emphasis on violence throughout presentations of sexual assault in film and television dangerously encourages a culture of "acceptability" of violence and cruelty in public attitudes – particularly in adolescents. Frequently presenting situations of sexual violence as normal, or expected, in popular media products were found to have negative impacts, with "young college men who viewed even short film segments depicting sexual violence expressed greater acceptance of rape myths than those young men who watched non-violent films of women" (Linz and Donnerstein, 1990).

Yet, situations surrounding sexual violence are often framed in a far from explicit nature, with Harrison and Webster (2020) discussing the historical lack of asking for consent within film and television,

explaining that dialogues involving nonconsensual kissing regularly being framed as being “romantic” or “comedic”. The “stolen kiss” remains as a common discourse within popular media products, with a generalized lack of further discussion around whether consent was given (Harrison and Webster, 2020). The recent recognition towards non-consensual behaviour has highlighted previously innocuously perceived films including *Sleeping Beauty* as harmful (Harrison and Webster, 2020).

It is crucial to discuss gender and sexuality within popular media framings of sexual violence. Harrison and Webster (2020) present the overarching idea of the construction of “hegemonic masculinity” particularly throughout early depictions of sexual violence within film and television, describing a “basic rape formula”. Whilst Harrison and Webster acknowledge a more recent feminist shaping of rapist identities throughout the 1980s, the formula pertains a situation of a male stranger and female victim, where then another male protagonist sets out to avenge the crime (2020). This tired formula continues to press the narrative of a weak female experiencing sexual violence at the hands of a dominant male. More recently, situations of sexual violence on television and film have evolved through feminist influence to include more than ‘stranger’ perpetrators – the concept that sexual violence can be at the hands of someone who is known to the victim. This depiction better reflects the reality of sexual violence, with 93% of victims of sexual abuse, in cases reported to law enforcement, knowing the perpetrator (RAINN, 2000). Changing the perpetrators of sexual violence to better mirror real life has also moved to alter how the violence itself is presented visually to audiences, attempting to sway from the “arousal of sexual pleasure” through depiction of “violent victimization” (Cuklanz, 2020). Yet, even with breakthroughs that have changed the way in which sexual violence is being displayed, Harrison and Webster (2020) argue that the acknowledgement of male rape, or sexual violence involving all sexualities, remains low within film and television. Further, stigmas surrounding male rape are amplified through harmful narratives like joking about the apparent ‘inevitability’ of prison rape (Harrison and Webster, 2020).

In 2017, the #MeToo movement - which emerged out of a singular ‘tweet’ encouraging women to speak up - helped to shape the dialogue surrounding how incidents of sexual violence through giving voice to survivors by enabling them to acknowledge their experiences through a digital platform. This digital movement helped to shed light upon the way in which sexual violence can be portrayed in another crucial form of popular media – the news. Findings from The Opportunity Agenda in 2017 demonstrated a “clear correlation” between news coverage of situations of sexual violence and the “increased discussion of #MeToo”. Increased mainstream news coverage surrounding sexual violence, including conversations around the Hollywood industry, demonstrates the #MeToo movement as being influential in changing the stigmatized narrative around sexual violence survivors. Matters that were once considered “private” by news outlets, including sexual assault, were brought to the forefront, reflecting the ability for social media to alter the shaping of narratives around sexual violence.

Whilst it has stood as a prevalent issue within society for decades, sexual violence has been misunderstood by many through its often harshly unfair reflection in popular media products like film and television. The usage of social media as a site of encouraging the voices of the marginalised encourages the idea that the framing of sexual violence continues to be ever-changing.

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Slash Fanfiction

Rosie Mimms

Fan culture today is essentially a response to authorial gatekeeping by cooperations. Specifically, the rigidity of existing interpretations of ideas, cultures, and characters. Fans who identify with certain texts see them as a vehicle through which they can attach their own ideas, social commitments, and cultural interests to. Fanfiction is one such manifestation of this form of resistance, referring to texts which reimagine existing characters and plot points in accordance with their personal interests. Mass cultural products are often used to enforce hegemonic societal practices, fanfiction writers seek to undermine hegemony and reframe stories through the lens of marginalization (Jenkins, 2014, p. 7-29). An example of this is the fanfiction subgenre 'slash', which refers to stories depicting same-sex relationships between heterosexual male characters and celebrities, typically those which do not exist in the source material. Slash is a colloquial term originating from the symbol placed between two characters names to indicate a romantic pairing. In recent years, the definition of slash has widened to include same-sex relationships between female characters. However, this genre is usually referred to as 'femslash' and is far less popular (Busse, 2020).

Slash has a lengthy history within fan communities and traces its origins back to the decades before the internet was invented. Slash was common within the *Star Trek* and *Starsky & Hutch* fandoms throughout the 1970's. Independently produced fan magazines or 'zines' would often depict romantic relationships between Captain Kirk and Spock, for example. Slash, along with most fandom activity, moved online in the 1990's (Salmon & Symons, 2004). Societal attitudes towards homosexuality began to change, and the production and dissemination of slash fiction gradually became widespread. Internet anonymity provided people with the ability to engage with fanfiction without the fear of judgement. This boom was additionally aided by the cultural enormity of certain literature, such as the widely successful *Harry Potter* series – with the slash pairings of 'Drarry' (Harry/Draco) and 'Wolfstar' (Remus/Sirius) being extremely popular online. Slash is arguably the most popular and prolific genre of fanfiction. In 2021, fanfiction website Archive of Our Own reported that the twenty most popular romantic pairings on their platform were slash. Certain slash pairings, such as Sherlock/John Watson (*Sherlock*) and Harry/Louis (*One Direction*) have received mainstream attention (Busse, 2020). In 2019, popular HBO series *Euphoria* included a subplot surrounding one of the character's foray into writing One Direction fanfiction on popular blogging site Tumblr. Furthermore, the viral success of sleeper hit *Heat Waves* by UK band Glass Animals in late 2020 can partially be attributed to its association with a fanfiction of the same name. *Heat Waves* was published on Archive of Our Own by user tbhyourelame and became vastly popular. It depicts the budding romance between Minecraft Youtubers Dream and GeorgeNotFound (Savage, 2020). Although slash – along with fanfiction in general – has traditionally been subject to mainstream ridicule, it has propelled writers to success in recent years. Cassandra Clare, bestselling author of *The Mortal Instruments* was originally a fanfiction author. She wrote *Harry Potter* slash, including the incredibly popular *Draco Trilogy* throughout the early 2000s. This story is noteworthy for its homoerotic elements, many of which were later interpolated into her series.

As a result of this widespread popularity, slash has received significant scholarly attention since the 1990s, specifically from the fields of queer and cultural studies. Many scholars deem slash noteworthy for its transgressive potential, considering it to be subversive of the dominant patriarchal tropes present within society. for many, slash plays a significant role in 'queering' mainstream culture (Booth, 2004). Alexander Doty argues that 'the more queerness in and of mass culture is explored, the notion of what is mass or popular is therefore straight, will become questionable' (p. 132). Overall, the existence of slash serves as a critique of the heteronormativity present in popular media. Slash also serves to undermine existing narratives surrounding masculinity, especially those reproduced by popular media. Beyond this, a noteworthy element of slash is that it is almost entirely authored by women, making it an outlier across media genres. Scholars argue that there is a feminist theme underpinning slash, in that it subverts heteronormative ideas. Furthermore, many argue that the appeal of slash allows women to identify with a romantic relationship which exists without the power imbalance present in a heterosexual one (McClellan, 2018). This aligns with Laura Mulvey's theory of the gaze, which discusses the pleasures of voyeurism, and how they lead to identification. Slash is generally considered to be controversial because it seemingly violates traditional ideas surrounding both female and male sexuality, being that women are relatively sexually ignorant, and that male homosexuality should be kept a secret (p. 95). In recent years, there has been significant interest surrounding the increase in mainstream representations of queer relationships. Critically acclaimed films such as *Call Me by Your Name, Moonlight,* and *Blue is the Warmest Colour* depict same-sex relationships. Growth in representation calls into question the importance of slash fanfiction in the future, and whether or not it remains subversive against popular media forms.

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Superhero Films

Amelia Edgson

This encyclopaedia entry will focus on gender roles in superhero films. It will define how superhero films became popular, it will provide a background of superhero films, from when they started to emerge and became critically acclaimed. After this, the entry will touch on the sexualization of women superhero figures and how income works from different gendered superhero films and how the main corporations (Marvel and DC) represent gender. This will be followed by a research study of the female character Black Widow, who appears in The Avengers films and recently in 2021 has her own feature film Black Widow. This encyclopaedia entry will give information already known about the gender imbalance in superhero films.

In the history of film, superhero films are a more recent genre. The first superhero storyline to come out as a major feature film in cinematic history was Superman in 1978 (Koole, et al., 2013). Superhero films only got critically acclaimed and started to become high demand around the 1990s with the Batman series (Koole, et al., 2013). However, in recent years we have seen the peak of the superhero film in the twenty first century. For example, films such as Spiderman, X-men and The Avengers have spiked millions of viewers worldwide and created a fan-based love for these types of films (Koole, et al., 2013). Now, the superhero film genre has evolved and turned into one of the largest successful genres within cinematic history (Koole, et al., 2013). The superhero character was evolved from 1930/40s comic book creators (Koole, et al., 2013). For example, Stan Lee who created the Marvel Superhero Comics. Stan Lee made the current Marvel films possible with his creations from the 40s. 2 Majority of superhero films have a lead male role as the superhero. For example, Iron man, Spiderman, Superman, Batman and so on. While in present times there are a few more lead female superheros, there is a long history of female sexualization and objectification in superhero films. The female is present in many superhero films, but their main purpose in majority films is subjected to Laura Mulvey's theory the male gaze. The male gaze is a theory used to identify spectators to assume to want to see what the heterosexual male would, which is viewing women in an objectifying way (King, 2020). Mulvey points out the fact that men in film are seen as active, whereas their female counterparts are seen as passive and are in the film to serve the male's love interest (King, 2020). In superhero films, the male gaze is identified generously. The gender role is found stereotypical, and women are characterized as the victim, where the male superhero as seen as her protector (Majhi, 2017), which is like being the damsel in distress. This is an ongoing process of the male gaze being at work in multiple different Male lead superhero films. Although, in more recent years female superhero films have been made and are starting to take a feminist outlook on superhero films. For example, Wonder Women 2017, Captain Marvel 2019, and Black Widow 2021 (IMDb: Ratings, Reviews, and Where to Watch the Best Movies & TV Shows, 2021). Although there is women as leading roles in superhero films in present times, progressive movement forward, social media and ultra-fans of superhero films don't always see eye to eye. For example when Captain Marvel was announced to be a female role actress Brie Larson instead of previous comic book character as a male ultra-fans and marvel

enthusiasts didn't see the need for a female lead. For example, some fan pages have explained this gender issue, with headlines like

- "Why Are (Some) Men So Angry About Captain Marvel?"

- "Why some MCU fans don't like Captain Marvel"

To further illustrate, I have collected the data from the website IMDB on the 'budget' and 'gross worldwide' each film made, comparing female superhero leads to male superhero leads. I selected both female leads and male leads for two different large superhero corporation's DC and Marvel. Firstly, for DC we have Aquaman (2018) and Wonder Women (2017). Secondly, I chose the new Marvel film Black Widow (2021) and Spider-man: Far from Home (2019). I chose these films as they are the closest in time to each other to create better accuracy.

Female superhero film income compared to male superhero film income

DC	***Wonder Woman***	***Aquaman***
Budget	$149,000,000	$160,000,000
Gross WW	$822,824,522	$1,148,485,886
Marvel	***Black Widow***	***Spiderman***
Budget	$200,000,000	$160,000,000
Gross WW	$369,811,043	$1,131,927,996

Information from: (IMDb: Ratings, Reviews, and Where to Watch the Best Movies & TV Shows, 2021).

With this data, we can see the large income/profit difference between leading female role superhero films and leading male role superhero films. With both male superhero protagonist films reaching over 1 billion dollars. We can see Wonder Woman, Aquaman and Spiderman all have relatively similar budgets, yet both the male superhero films perform far better on a worldwide financial scale. Black Widow has a very large budget, however the gross worldwide does not compete with the male superhero films. This data shows that male dominant 4 superhero films do better worldwide and box office wise as people would rather watch a male superhero protagonist rather than a female superhero protagonist.

Superhero films have come a long way since the first critically acclaimed Superhero in 1978 (Koole, et al., 2013) although there has been some positive reinforcement for female superhero roles. For example Black Widows character started off very sexualised in the first Avengers film of 2012. As we were introduced to her character without a previous backstory the others avengers had in their stand-alone films like Iron Man (2008), The Incredible Hulk (2008) and Thor (2011) (IMDb: Ratings, Reviews, and Where to Watch the Best Movies & TV Shows, 2021). Scarlett Johannsen's character 'Black Widow' is the lonesome female in the masculine Avengers team, she is the only character to be found crying on the screen, has a love interest with Bruce Banner (The Hulk) and we are introduced to her as a prostitute in tight revealing attire (Majhi, 2017). To compare from 2012 to 2021 advertising film posters there is a large difference between the two. An almost 10 year difference from photo left 2012, to photo right 2021 the sexualisation of the character has been limited and Black Widows 2021 poster is starting to resemble some of the other stand-alone male superhero film posters.

(IMDb: Ratings, Reviews, and Where to Watch the Best Movies & TV Shows, 2021

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Vlogging

Harriet McElroy

A vlogger is defined as an individual who self produces films called ‘vlogs’ (video blogs). These vlogs often follow the narrative of the vloggers' day to day activities, sharing insight into their “real” lives (Berryman, 2020).

Vlogs are a form of computer-mediated communication and typically feature a single person speaking directly to the camera (Frobenius, 2014). The direct address to the camera, being the main camera operator and first person storytelling are key features represented in most online vlogs (Sanchez, 2021). The videos claim to represent the vloggers in their authentic environment. Vlog’s allow for audiences to better understand an individual's thoughts and feelings through facial expression and voice tone/pitch; a quality that is harder to achieve via blog.

The origins of vlogging can be traced back to Adam Kontras in 2000 (Sanchez, 2021). He created short videos which he shared with his family and friends about his journey to Los Angeles. Filmmaker Luuk Bouwman is also attributed to being one of the first recorded ‘vlogger’s’ (Seenan, 2004). He created his own video sharing platform, tropisms.org - which allowed Bouwman and other creators to share their videos collectively on a platform. While there are a large number of platforms available today to share and watch videos, Youtube is most heavily affiliated with vloggers and vlogging videos (Berryman, 2020).

It is difficult to discuss vlogs without acknowledging the platform Youtube. Youtube was created in 2005 and the act of vlogging has only increased in popularity since then (Thomas, 2014). Youtube is a video sharing platform where audiences can leave comments on the video, like or dislike a video and subscribe to specific creators and follow along with each video.

Vlogging allows for conversations to be had about popular hegemonies and discourses on gender, sex, class and race (Berryman, 2020). Vloggers provide audiences with documentation of a large proportion of their personal lives. It is not uncommon for vloggers to record their pregnancies, surgeries and weddings, with nothing being too private for their respective audiences. Viewers are often referred to as a community, some vloggers even adopt special names for their fans i.e Jake Pauls, Jake Paulers (Lange, 2007). Interaction with their audiences is important to a creator's success. The fixed phrase leave a like down below, comment and subscribe is often featured at the start or end of a traditional vlog on youtube (Frobenius, 2014). Fanbases are often heavily influenced by their favourite vloggers opinion, style and lifestyle choices (Hsu, 2020).

Oversharing often becomes a problem with popular youtubers and vloggers oversharing for views or content. This can often lead to vloggers being ‘cancelled’. Cancel culture is a modern take on ostracism where celebrities are excluded from all of their professional and social circles. One famous example can be seen with vlogger Logan Paul. Paul was cancelled by fans in 2018 after he vlogged his trip to Japan’s Aokigahara forest (suicide forest). He published a vlog of himself discovering a dead man hanging from a tree and proceeded to make jokes about suicide (BBC News).

In a 2008 survey of a random sample of vlogs, it was discovered that men posted more vlogs than women 58% to 33% while 9% of surveyed vloggers' gender could not be determined (Molyneaux, O’Donnell, Gibson and Singer).

There is a massive gender divide between men and women video creators on the platform Youtube. In 2013 only 6 out of the 100 most subscribed youtube channels featured a singular female content creator (Szostak, 2013). A 2013 documentary labelled girls on youtube creates an open conversation on the gender gap between female and male vloggers (Cook). The argument is made that to be a successful female on youtube you need to fit into a category. A beauty vlogger, fashion blogger or travel vlogger are a few of the popular discourse that female vloggers identify themselves with. There is a large pressure on females in our multi mediated society to look and behave a certain way. Thus pressuring females to follow dominant hegemonies that society has articulated for women (Berryman, 2020). This can be seen in the success of female channels being themed around traditional gender associations of fashion, beauty and lifestyle.

PewDiePie who currently has 110 million subscribers is considered the most successful youtube vlogger of all time. His videos allow subscribers to watch him play popular adventure and action games online. Audiences can even sometimes play against him and ‘meet’ him in these virtual worlds. PewDiePie takes up his gender stereotype by displaying more masculine activities on his channel. The gaming vlogging genre makes up the largest category of videos represented on youtube (Berryman, 2020). The gender disparities within this genre continue to discourage the participation of women.

Sexism can also be acknowledged in the usually female dominated categories of fashion and beauty as well. Two men, James Charles and Jefree Star both rank in the top 2 creators of this category (Statista, 2021).

While vlogging provides a voice to women it isn’t necessarily received the same way as mens videos. Laura Mulvey discusses how “women are simultaneously looked at and displayed,” through the male gaze. In a 2013 study, Szostak, found that female YouTubers are given more criticism for their physical appearance

rather than the videos content. Thus making it unsurprisingly hard for females to gain as much success in vlogging as their male counterparts.

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Women and Cinematography

Taylor O'Leary

Cinematography is an art form. It is the combination of camerawork and photography skills that help produce films. Cinematography comes from the Greek roots meaning "writing with motion" (Brown, 2016). Like all forms of art, women and men have both thrived in creating masterpieces that will forever be a part of history. There is no one person or time when cinema and cinematography originated from. However, in 1891 the Edison Company created a Kinetoscope that allowed one person viewing to view moving pictures, and that was the beginning of an art (Belknap, 2021). It is said that cinema started with the first projected moving pictures that we're able to play to a live audience of more than one person from pioneers of film, the Lumiére brothers (Belknap, 2021). They played their short film Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat and broadcasted it to an audience in January 1896 (Sharf, 2020).

The first woman Cinematographer was French-born Alice Guy Blaché (McMahan, 2003). Guy pioneered film not only as an icon for female filmmakers but for cinema and cinematography as a whole. Born on the 1st of July 1873 and died on March 24th 1968 (McMahan, 2003). Her film career started in 1894 when she was hired by Léon Gaumont as "second-in-command" for Felix Richards still-photography company. After the company was forced to stop, Guy went on to work for a new company Gaumont had created (McMahan, 2003). This friendship led her to be invited by the Lumiére brothers themselves to witness their cinematic breakthrough right after the invention in March 1895 (McMahan, 2003). Being the work-driven and pioneer type of person she was, Guy was estimated to film over 1000 films throughout her career and was one of the first people ever to make a narrative fiction film (McMahan, 2003).

Although Guy was a pioneer of cinematography, it did not favour women in helping achieve equality through the industry. Like most jobs, there were fewer opportunities for women with prejudiced gender pay gaps and denied job applications. Cinematography requires a combination of art and technique for optimal execution. Since these call for technical skills - handling and operating camera and lighting equipment - and also an artistic approach, traditionally men have monopolized the field of cinematography (Cortés-Selva, 2020). "Smith, Pieper, and Chouetti (2017)" (Cortés-Selva, 2020) conducted a study of 1000 of the top-grossing North American films in the past ten years and found that only 35 of the films had female directors working on them (Cortés-Selva, 2020). To put this in perspective Brianne Murphy, another outstanding female Cinematographer, was the first woman to be invited to join the ASC (American Society of Cinematographers) in 1980 where she remained the only woman for the next 15 years (Cortés-Selva, 2020). That is 86 years after Alice Guy Blaché started her cinematography career and 61 years after the ASC was founded (Lighthill, n.d.). When practising cinematography as a woman it is said that you need "both self confidence and ease working among men" because it is necessary to succeed in the industry (Margolis, Krasilovsky & Stein, 2015). These discriminations also occurred in New Zealand with Margeret Moth, the Gisbourne born camera operator for CNN in 1974

(Margolis, Krasilovsky & Stein, 2015). Moth remembers a fellow employee stating that “I don't want to have to work with a woman” (Margolis, Krasilovsky & Stein, 2015) because he has to go home to his wife every night. Many female cinematographers have stated that men have come up with excuses for not wanting to work with them which all follow the lines of, It can be awkward, they can't lift stuff, they won't be able to handle the stress, and that woman would have to sacrifice family and boyfriends for their career - because men don't have to do that (Margolis, Krasilovsky & Stein, 2015).

Another New Zealand Cinematographer who has revolutionised cinematography for women is Wellington born screenwriter, producer and director Jane Campion (McHugh, 2007). A point needing to be made is that a director does not literally hold the camera or boom mic’s etc, a director has moved on from those jobs however it is not easier because now they are in control of not just their area of expertise such as lighting, they are in charge of everything and managing the crew as a whole (Brown, 2016). Therefore for Campion, a director herself, she directed her Academy Award winning film for best original screenplay (Rubin, n.d.) The Piano (1993). The film swept the globe and is still argued to be one of the best films directed by a woman (Rubin, n.d.). The 66th annual Academy Awards was when the film helped win Campion the award but it also helped win Holly Hunter the Best Actress in a leading role and Anna Paquin Best Actress in a supporting role (Rubin, n.d.). This was when Campion became a household name not only in New Zealand but around the world (McHugh, 2007).

Nowadays women are coming through and dominating cinematography. For the first time, two women have been nominated for the 93rd Academy Awards Best Director, Emerald Fennell for her film Promising Young Women and the winner of the award Chloe Zhao for her film Nomadland (Whitton, 2021). The significance of this is shown by the fact that in the 93 years of running the awards, only five other women have been recognized for this award (Whitton, 2021). These women consist of Lina Wertmüller, Jane Campion, Sofia Coppola, Kathryn Bigelow , and Greta Gerwig (Rubin, n.d.). The first woman to win this award was Kathryn Bigelow for her film The Hurt Locker in the 82nd Academy Awards in 2010 (Whitton, 2021). Women in the field of cinematography have never been an easy fight, with prejudice against women and gender stereotypes about relationships. However, there is a positive incline in women cinematography nowadays with 16% of the 100 highest-grossing films in 2020 being directed by women according to a report from San Diego University’s study of women in Television and Film at San Diego University (Whitton, 2021). From Alice Guy Blaché pioneering cinematography to Chloe Zhao dominating the field, women are actively fighting to become the best directors in the world even when the field does not encourage or help them. Women are revolutionizing cinematography, and they are good at it.

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Women in the Advertising Industry

Madi Devereux

The advertising industry creates and manages the connection between companies, products and consumers to stimulate purchasing and increase sales (Rotfeld, 2003). In 2020, 52.5% of employees in the advertising industry were women (Statista, 2020). However, men dominate high-level positions in the industry with only 14.6% of creative advertising departments being led by women (Grow & Deng, 2014). Women face many challenges in this industry dominated by men, with strong horizontal and vertical segregation making it difficult to succeed. Hegemonic masculinity in the form of a 'boys' club', the pink ghetto, glass ceilings and sticky floors are all various ways that women are held back in the advertising industry, especially in the creative departments.

The underrepresentation of women in positions of power in the advertising industry is a distinctive issue. Status inequalities have an impact on the creation of cultural messages that are socially constructed through discourse and produced in advertising. Culture influences advertising messages and advertising also influences culture, which is why it is important for equal representation of men and women in the industry. Women's voices have been prevented from having an influence through the oppressive behaviours found in the advertising agency, negatively impacting gender equality in the workplace. Encouraging equal representation of female voices in creative departments of the advertising industry will allow companies to reach their target market more effectively and reduce the creation of sexist advertising with stereotypical images of women (Kurultay, 2020).

Advertising differs from other occupational structures because of the considerable horizontal segregation that results in the feminisation and masculinization of particular departments, which causes inequality due to disparities in promotion, compensation and prestige opportunities. Men dominate the creative divisions in the advertising industry with only 14.6% of creative advertising departments being led by women (Grow & Deng, 2014). This is because men are thought to be more self-assured and ambitious, which helps them advance in the field more than women, who are thought to be more cautious and sensitive (Kurultay, 2020).

A reason for this horizontal segregation is due to the highly masculine environments that create a 'boys' club'. Creative departments are largely staffed by males, these gender disparities were developed and maintained through male homosociality over a long period, which created a 'boys' club'. This can limit women's access to top-level positions, notable accounts and their ability to succeed as they perform based on a gender-specific paradigm. This patriarchal culture, which is embedded in the advertising industry, oppresses women and generates inequality in the organisation's structure, resulting in pay gaps,

discrimination against mothers and hegemonic masculinity in which women are not valued as much as men. Topić (2020) found that women face sexism and find it difficult to succeed in creative departments as it was established by masculine values. Masculine norms have been ingrained in organisational structures, requiring women to adopt masculine characteristics and relate to the 'boys' club'. Women fit in by removing their feminity and developing a knowledge of sports to behave and think in ways more commonly associated with men. As creative sides of advertising have been predominantly made up of men, this creates a distinctly male perspective and a lack of female voices, constituting the reproduction of sexist advertising with stereotypes. Giving women more power in creative departments would benefit the advertising industry by improving advertising messaging and creating a more pleasant work atmosphere (Broyles & Grow, 2008).

Another form of horizontal segregation that women in the advertising industry face is the pink ghetto. This is a term used in advertising to refer to women who are allocated work on female accounts such as cleaning, sanitary and cosmetic products that do not receive industry recognition. This limitation of women's advancement in the industry forms a glass ceiling, restricting them from progressing to managerial positions where they can make creative decisions. This framework creates a self-fulfilling prophecy that hinders women from reaching top-level positions (Kurultay, 2020). Women in the industry have been told they can no more understand beer than a man can understand tampons in response to why women were not allowed accounts such as beer and cars, highlighting the discrimination women in the industry face through gender stereotypes (Kestin, 1998).

Vertical segregation, which refers to the unrecognised and unequal representation of men and women in the corporate hierarchy regardless of their accomplishments and skills due to the glass ceiling or sticky floor, also affects women in the advertising industry (Kurultay, 2020). The glass ceiling effect refers to an invisible, systematic barrier that prevents women from obtaining positions of power in corporations (Cotter et al, 2001). Due to gender discrimination, women face difficulties in the advertising industry when it comes to senior promotions. Women made up 52.5% of the advertising workforce in 2020, yet they are still underrepresented in managerial positions, with very few women reaching the top levels of creative departments (Statista, 2020). Sticky floor refers to the discriminatory employment pattern that locks women in low-paying and low-importance jobs. Women outnumber men in the industry however, are still paid less, have a harder time progressing in their career and frequently experience harassment (Broyles & Grow, 2008). In the advertising industry, the term pseudo-feminization is used to characterise the high level of access available to women to enter the industry, despite the fact that vertical segregation still remains, limiting women's ability to reach top-level positions (Kurultay, 2020). Salary disparities and poor career prospects for female advertisers are the main repercussions of this gendered work divide. According to reports, women in the advertising sector are paid 20 to 25% less than males, with top-level executives earning only 70% of a man's average salary (Puehoy Ayhan, 2010).

Although women make up more than half of the advertising workforce they face significant barriers to succeed in the industry, due to the masculine norms that have been ingrained in the organisational structures over time creating sex segregation. Horizontal segregation has resulted in the feminisation and masculinisation of certain departments, creating a lack of female representation in message creation, facilitating the creation of sexist advertisements. Vertical segregation is firmly existent in the advertising industry, affecting women's ability to reach high-level positions due to the sticky floor and glass ceiling effect. This impacts women in the advertising industry as they experience lower pay, difficult career progression and discrimination in the workplace.

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