IDENTITY, POWER, AND RITUAL "RAPE PLAY" IN THE S/M COMMUNITY

by

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ABSTRACT

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Rape play is a type of consensual, ritualistic domination and submission, developed and enacted in a sado-masochistic (S/M) sex culture, which involves the appearance of force. There are two feminist theories that can be employed in a feminist analysis of rape play: dominance/radical feminism and libertarian/"sex positive" feminism. Libertarian/"sex positive" feminism holds that S/M, including rape play, is potentially compatible with feminism because the power dynamic between a dominant/"rapist" and submissive/"victim" does not draw on either practitioners' actual social identity and the power it possesses or lacks. Dominance/radical feminism argues that gender, which is socially constructed, can best be understood as a form of sexualized domination and submission, so social identity could not be dissociated from power in S/M. My reading of guidebooks and narratives about rape play suggests that the dominance/radical feminist position is more accurate in the case of rape play, though not necessarily all of S/M culture.

IDENTITY, POWER, AND RITUAL “RAPE PLAY”

IN THE S/M COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

The words "rape" and "play" do not fit comfortably together in the average person's lexicon, to say the least. But for some consenting adults involved in a Sado-Masochistic (S/M) sex culture, the phrase "rape play" describes a type of pre-arranged, consensual sexual role-playing that involves the appearance of sexual force. The pairing of "consensual" and "force" may seem as paradoxical as the pairing of the words "rape" and "play"; to explain the relationship between such illogical pairs, I need to touch on the S/M context in which rape play was developed and is now enacted.

The symbolism and iconography associated with S/M has become increasingly mainstream and even mundane. Currently playing on every Top 40 radio station is Rhianna's song, "S&M," which includes in its chorus the chant "sticks and stones may break my bones, but chains and whips excite me." Rhianna's song, like many mainstream ideas about S/M,[1] associates it with the giving and receiving of pain. And while pain is often a part of a S/M dynamic, many sessions of S/M activity, also called "scenes," don't involve pain because "[a]t the very core of sadomasochism is not pain but the idea of control – domination and submission" (Weinberg, Kamel 19). In the S/M context, domination and submission does not mean that one person has power (the dominant) and one person does not (submissive). Instead, "S&M scenarios are *willingly*

[1] Pistachio nuts are even advertised on a TV commercial featuring a leather-clad dominatrix who, with the crack of her bullwhip, shells the nut for eating – an image that implies pain (possibly to a man's "nuts").

and cooperatively produced" (Weinberg, Kamel 19). The cooperation and consent is ensured through negotiation prior to a scene about what activities will and will not occur, how either practitioners' prior physical and emotional health may factor into the activities, how long the scene will run, etc. Willing and cooperative production also happens through the incorporation of safe words, which are words or even actions that can be used by either practitioner (but are primarily there for the submissive's benefit) to signal distress and slow or halt the activity (Brame et al. 50). These safe words are decided upon prior to the scene, during the negotiation. Negotiations and safe words, among other things, are why S/M is different than abuse and actual violence.

Because control, not pain, is at the center of the S/M dynamic, practitioners often incorporate role playing activities into the scene. Rape play is, as I said, a type of role playing that some practitioners choose to engage in. And like other S/M activities, rape play scenes are willingly and cooperatively produced through the use of negotiation and safe words. Often rape play is negotiated days, weeks, or even months prior to the activity because "victims" want to be surprised by the initiation of the scene. Though, often, there is a negotiated window of time within which the "victim" can expect the "rapist" to initiate the "rape." A negotiation will also involve consideration not just of safe words, but also any words that can be used as "codewords" to direct the activity while maintaining and even producing the appearance of force. For example, the words "no more" might be negotiated to mean "go further." When one thing is negotiated to mean another in a specific context, it is said to be "queered." So "no more" would be a "queered" word. A rape play negotiation will also likely involve some discussion of what specific sex acts will occur during the "rape." Finally, there will likely be some

discussion of how much physicality/physical force, pain, and/or bondage would be acceptable or even desirable. There is, of course, variation among practitioners about just how detailed a negotiation will be, depending on how familiar practitioners are with one another and with the type of scene, as well as the level of risk practitioners are comfortable with. Some "victims" might negotiate for their "rapist" to have a great deal of liberty with what happens during the scene. In sum, a future time frame for the scene's initiation, safe words and queered words, which sex acts will occur, and other S/M elements, such as pain and/or bondage, all constitute some basic elements of rape play negotiations.

Because there is often a degree of surprise to the scene, some queered words that may sound like protest, possibly some pronounced physicality, and/or possibly some sexual liberty for the "rapist" agreed to by the "victim," the scene appears to be forceful (it wouldn't be rape play if it didn't). But actually the scene is carefully orchestrated. If these negotiations were not respected by the "rapist," this individual would be ostracized by the S/M community they are likely affiliated with.[2] Hence, is it possible for rape play to be both consensual and "forceful."

Rape play is not necessarily a heterosexual activity; same-sex couples can and do engage in it as well. But my thesis is going to examine discourse on heterosexual rape play, specifically, using both libertarian, or what's sometimes called "sex positive" feminism, and radical/dominance feminist lenses. My specific attention to heterosexual

[2] It is noted in *Different Loving: An Exploration of the World of Sexual Dominance and Submission* that "[a]buses are rarely tolerated: Dominants who mistreat submissives will be openly criticized and ostracized" (Brame, Brame, and Jacobs 53). However, the S/M community's ability to ensure responsible behavior has been weakened. Patrick Califia notes that "[w]hen our community was smaller, we had some success with policing ourselves and ousting people who didn't play nicely….Now, the community is so large and decentralized, it's difficult to get consensus about a problem or deal with it" (http://www.skintwo.co.uk/bdsm-and-personal-limits/).

rape play is due to what I perceive as a gap in research on rape fantasies and S/M communities. Men's rape fantasies have been largely ignored in scholarly work in favor of a focus on women's rape fantasies,[3] which works to obscure and even normalize the sexist assumption that male sexuality is aggressive. And much scholarly work on S/M either focuses on queer communities,[4] or men's predilection for the submissive role.[5] Scholarly emphasis on men's interest in submission minimizes the presence in S/M communities of dominant men, some of whom are homosexual, but some of whom are heterosexual and looking for a submissive, heterosexual woman for S/M activity, including rape play – a dynamic that I know exists from my own experiences in S/M communities. Attention to the way rape play is defined and enacted in heteronormative terms will fill in gaps in scholarly research on rape fantasies and S/M.

Radical/dominance feminists contend that normative gender causes women to eroticize their own powerlessness or self-negation and causes men to frame sex as an invasion or an exercise in force in order to maintain the perception of themselves as self-contained or self-absorbed. Therefore, radical or dominance feminists would contend that even if a woman is negotiating her role as a rape "victim" and a man is negotiating his role as a "rapist," the activity is consistent with hegemonic gender because they are eroticizing themselves as powerless or all-powerful, respectively. Hence, rape play is a problem, according to dominance/radical feminists, because it confirms hegemonic gender (and other status power relations) and hegemonic gender expresses structural sexist oppression. Libertarian/"sex positive" feminists, on the other hand, hold that S/M,

[3] Critelli and Bivona
[4] Bauer
[5] Brame et al. 11; Weinberg 130

including rape play, is potentially compatible with feminism because in S/M, including rape play, power is disconnected from the status and privilege that is usually afforded to one's social identity. Therefore, the "rapist" role is just as available and desirable to a woman/the "victim" role is just as available and desirable to a man; the power of the role is unique to sadomasochism and does not draw on either practitioners' actual identities. Furthermore, libertarian perspectives suggest that in S&M meanings of words, symbols, and/or roles are "queered," which means that they take on different and often opposite meanings from their conventional usage. For example, "submissive" doesn't carry its typical connotation and actually entails a great deal of power and agency. I will evaluate discourses about rape play from these two very different feminist perspectives to evaluate the relationship (or lack thereof) between social identity and power in rape play.

My research questions are, first: how is rape fantasy and rape play defined and enacted by heterosexual men and women in an S/M community and how can this enactment of rape play be understood and critiqued from two very different feminist perspectives? And second: is it possible for rape play to escape or subvert or "queer" predominant, also called "hegemonic," gender identities, roles and power statuses? Or does rape play actually work to support and maintain male dominance and female submission?

I hypothesize that heterosexual rape play operates by way of hegemonic gender and other status power relations in which the "rapist" role is characterized by male and masculine-identified dominance and the "victim" role is characterized by female and feminine-identified submission. This is significant because hegemonic gender expresses structural sexist oppression, so heterosexual rape play, despite libertarian/"sex positive"

claims about it operating differently than conventional power/privilege relations, actually perpetuates relations that are harmful to women.

I am examining the underlying and sometimes explicit gender ideologies that inform texts produced by those who advocate and practice rape play in the S/M culture. I will examine the gender ideologies found in four published guidebooks about S/M that give explicit attention to how to safely, sanely, and consensually practice rape play and two narratives that depict the execution of a rape play scene. Gender analysis of guidebooks, or what I will be calling "public-facing discourses," and of narratives will be covered in two different chapters.

In the first chapter I detail the dominance feminist perspective (which includes some versions of radical feminism) on rape and gender in Western culture because, according to dominance feminists, rape expresses hegemonic gender and other status power relations, such as race and class. An examination of the dominance feminist perspective on rape will include attention to the way gender is socially constructed in media and other social institutions, such as family, work, religion, and law, to create boys and men as active, dominant, and aggressive, and girls and women as passive, submissive, and subordinate.[6] Furthermore, an intersectional approach, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989.[7] will account for the way race, class, and sexuality, among other things, get factored into the matrix of domination and submission, impacting individual men's and women's experiences of power and powerlessness and requiring this conversation to consider different degrees of agency among men and women.

[6] Lorber 122
[7] Crenshaw 208-38

In the second chapter I will articulate the reasons why some people – both self-proclaimed feminists and not – feel that eroticized domination and submission has libratory and even subversive potential, tenets held by libertarian/"sex positive" feminism. Then I will examine four S/M guidebooks that give some explicit attention to rape play (one book is entirely devoted to giving advice about practicing rape play) to see if, despite the libertarian/"sex positive" tenets, the guidebooks/public-facing discourses covey a pre-determined and hegemonic identity in any of the roles with regards to gender, race, sexuality, class, etc. Furthermore, the guidebooks/public-facing discourses on rape play will be evaluated to see if any expressed identity confirms, and does not subvert, hegemonic social power.

The third chapter will be analysis of two narratives about rape play. The narratives will be examined to see how their representations of power and identity correspond to libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourses about "free-floating power" and queered meanings. What this means is that I will examine these narratives to see if indeed power is not fixed to identity, or conversely, if sexism, heterosexism, racism, or classism are reflected in the way rape is being fantasized about or "played" with, i.e.: one's social identity is central to the possession or absence of power as it is according to hegemonic norms. The examination of the relationship between identity and power as it's represented in the guidebooks and narratives constitutes a discourse analysis.

Discourse, in the Foucaultian sense, "refers to self-contained systems of thought, belief, or social or political practices, governed by internally accepted regulations" (Sim 200). Foucault explains in *The History of Sexuality, V. 1* how sexuality is a discourse with different forms of speech and discretion required from different people (27). And

who is speaking or not and what is being said or silenced has significant political implications because discourses are based on power relations (Sim 200). Hence, as expressions of power relations, the current systems of thought and practices shaping sexuality are largely patriarchal. In fact, "[i]n Foucault's scheme, most discourses are repressive and deserve to be challenged, as he himself challenged the discourse of compulsory heterosexuality in Western culture in his monumental trilogy, *The History of Sexuality* (1976-84)" (Sim 200). A discourse analysis of guidebooks and narratives determines if the thoughts, beliefs or social practices described in them challenges or continues conventional patterns of speech and silence about sexuality and social identities.

While rape play does operate as an expression of sadomasochism, findings that implicate rape play in the confirmation of hegemonic social power do not necessarily extend to any and all sadomasochistic activities. The way bodies are used, personas or "archetypes" are incorporated, and will or desire is expressed are key issues in the guidebooks and narratives on rape play. And while bodies, archetypes, and will/desire may be significant to other S/M activities, they may not be – or even certainly aren't – significant in the same way that they are to rape play. The examination of heterosexual rape play will begin with the delineation of the dominance feminist perspective on rape and gender.

CHAPTER ONE: DOMINANCE/RADICAL FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND RAPE

The purpose of this chapter is to articulate a theoretical framework on gender, power, and rape that can be used to evaluate identity and power in the guidebooks, narratives, and fiction on rape play that will be examined in the coming chapters. The theoretical framework that will be delineated here is referred to as dominance feminism,[8] as epitomized by Catherine MacKinnon, but also includes some versions of radical feminism.[9]

A dominance feminist perspective on rape understands rape to be normal, not deviant, in a male-dominated society. Because rape is, in the dominance feminist view, an expression of normative gender and sexuality, it has been said by dominance/radical feminists that we are living in a "rape culture."[10]

[8] The term "dominance feminism" is employed by Elizabeth Hackett and Sally Haslanger in their book, *Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader*, to organize and differentiate approaches to their central questions: "What is sexist Oppression?" and "What ought to be done about it?" The term is taken from MacKinnon's feminist legal theory where she differentiates between the "difference" approach (aiming for different, but equal treatment) and one where the appearance of difference only expresses forms of dominance (Hackett and Haslanger xiii-xiv).

[9] Judith Lorber explains that radical feminism "expands the concept of patriarchy by defining it as a worldwide system of subordination legitimated by medicine, religion, science, law, and other social institutions. The values embedded in these major sectors of society favor men as a group over women as a group" (122). Also, central to radical feminism is the notion that "[a] prime means of control of women by men is through sexual and emotional exploitation" (Lorber 122).

[10] In *Transforming a Rape Culture*, "rape culture" is defined as a "complex of beliefs that encourages male violence and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent….A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women *as the norm*" (Buchwald, Fletcher, Roth).

In order to consider the ways the roles and distribution of power in rape play is subversive to and/or supportive of hegemonic gender and other status power relations, such as race or class, we must first examine rape in Western culture because, according to dominance feminism, rape expresses hegemonic gender and other status power relations. Andrea Dworkin goes so far as to say that "rape is, in fact, simple, straightforward heterosexual behavior in a male-dominated society" (*Intercourse* 84).

The articulation of the dominance feminist perspective on rape will include examination of: the relationship between rape and the process by which people are gendered; how rape is normalized and legitimized through social institutions and popular culture; and how race and class get factored into the matrix of domination and submission, impacting individual men's and women's experiences of power and powerlessness.

A dominance feminist understanding of rape in Western culture argues that rape is both a cause and consequence of objectification and that objectification is the process from which two classes of people emerge: men and women. Therefore, hegemonic gender is both the pre-condition and consequence of rape in a male-dominated society. Further, hegemonic gender is sustained through social institutions such as family, work, religion, law, medicine, codes of interpersonal interaction, and through such mechanisms of socialization as pornography, movies, music, and literature. In dominance feminism, there can be no free and thus meaningful "consent" to hegemonic gender and its roles. Gender must be examined, however, from the perspective that it's interdependent with

and mutually reinforcing of relationships with race and class.[11] Kimberlé Crenshaw, along with other Black feminists the 1980s,[12] developed the concept of intersectionality to critique the legal, feminist, and political misconception that subordination and disadvantage occurs along a single categorical axis. Instead, Crenshaw argues for the "multidimentionality" (208) of experience. Hence, while racism and classism work to oppress and marginalize poor men and men of color, and to compound the powerlessness of poor and/or women of color, the class status of gender remains significant. This means that while poor men and women and men and women of color experience degrees of powerlessness relative to white and/or middle/upper class men and women, women of all races and classes experience some degree of powerlessness relative to men of all races and classes in many contexts though perhaps not in all contexts due to the class status of gender. Moreover, key to the analysis is that oppression is experienced not simply additively due to various status factors, but differently.

MacKinnon argues that gender is created through objectification, so I will first explore the significance of objectification before moving on to exploring socialization and the significance of other status power relations.

[11] Gerda Lerner argues that interdependence and mutual reinforcement characterize the relationships between gender, race, and class, saying: "control over others is maintained by a complex weave of social relations among dependent groups, which offers each groups some advantages over other groups, sufficient to keep each group within the dominance system subordinate to the elite. The categories are therefore not just inter-related, they are also mutually constitutive" (*Why History Matters* 196).

[12] Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith who edited *All the Women are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave* (1982); Bonnie Thorton Dill who wrote *Across the Boundaries of Race and Class* (1994); and Kimberlé Crenshaw who wrote "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics" (2000)

The Relationship Between Rape and Gender

Men and women are created through the process of objectification, women as the objectified and men as the objectifiers. Objectification does not just create two genders, but two classes of people because objectification entails ascribing "differences" among individuals that render some individuals less human, "others" to subject selves. Hence, gender "differences" are actually forms of dominance, the result of objectification. "Difference" can be ascribed along lines of dominance and/or actual differences can be distorted and exaggerated in perception, both working to mask dominance in a guise of "difference." The centrality of actual and created differences to the process of objectification is why bodies, and the way sexuality is experienced through bodies, become significant: bodies are a site of difference among people. It is the reification of sexuality and reproduction that creates women, that creates a second class citizen.

In her germinal work, *Sexual Politics* (1970), Kate Millet cites the denial of sexual freedom and biological control over her body as "the reification of the female" (83). It is sexuality and reproduction, not "femaleness," per se, that is being objectified, but women are reduced to sex and sexuality, making them, as females, "sex objects." While "sex object" is a common way to talk about the reification of the female, it is actually a redundant phrase, as Catherine MacKinnon reminds us: "[t]o say that women are sex objects is in this way [speaking of eroticizing the act of control] redundant. Sexualized objectification is what defines women as sexual and as women under male supremacy" (259). This is to say that it is not only sexual control of women that subordinates them under patriarchy, but it is sexual control that *defines* women under patriarchy.

If a woman is defined by sexual control, then there is no "woman beneath," no "separate being," as Andrea Dworkin would say (*Intercourse* 84), apart from men's control and who is trying to "get out." A woman only experiences herself and her sexuality in terms of sexualized objectification, which is the psychological effect of objectification.

In addition to status (of womanhood) there is also, as Kate Millett theorized, a "temperament" (psychological) component to gender which is, like status, something created, or socially constructed. And "women's temperament" is, in response to class subordination, one that is masochistic and/or one that feels possession/sexual control as "deeply erotic" (Dworkin, *Intercourse* 84). Catherine MacKinnon goes so far as to say that "sexual desire in women, at least in this culture, is socially constructed as that by which we want our own self-annihilation" (260). Possession or control to the point of self-annihilation is experienced as deeply erotic because it is experienced as "proof of the man's desire to love, its awesome intensity" (Dworkin, *Intercourse* 84). With sexual control by men defining women, thereby creating a psychology that frames sexual control as validation of identity and desire, women, by definition, are robbed of the potential for the full range of human choice and are situated for invasion of their privacy.[13] Men, by definition, have the power for choice, though we must remember that the status and temperament of men is no less socially constructed than that of women.

[13] Martha Nussbaum, in *Sex and Social Justice*, theorizes that objectification entails seven components and criticizes Dworkin and MacKinnon for believing all connections (among seven components) are ubiquitous. Nussbaum argues that all seven components may not be operating in all circumstances, enabling potentially neutral or even beneficial relationships to objectification. The potential for harm or benefit is in the context of the relationship: "the difference between an objectionable and a benign use of objectification will be made by the overall context of the human relationship in question" (227).

Men are socially constructed in class and temperament and "[j]ust as women confront relative powerlessness vis-à-vis men, so men become habituated to relative power and privilege vis-à-vis women" (Chancer 5). So, just as women find possession or being sexually controlled or objectified as "deeply erotic," men find controlling or objectifying not only erotic, but the process by which they experience themselves as men. In fact, in dominance feminism, as epitomized by Catherine MacKinnon, "male" is an adjective, meaning a social, not biological phenomenon, describing the position from which one can objectify and also the one through which the male subject supposedly attains "objectivity" (MacKinnon, "Desire and Power" 259-260). That means that anyone occupying a subject position as a part of hierarchy and dominance is exercising male power. MacKinnon reminds us that a woman can exercise male power or take a male point of view, "although she remains always a woman" (260), just as if men ever try to occupy women's standpoint (which MacKinnon says they can never fully do), "they can always reclaim male power" (260). Hence, while there may be temporary deviations in the delineation of power and powerlessness, ultimately "men" and "women" remain meaningful class statuses by ascribing difference along lines of dominance and/or distorting and exaggerating actual differences.

One such created and/or exaggerated difference is, as I mentioned, among bodies. Male sexuality is created by, among other things, framing sex as an invasion of or an exercise in force over a profoundly different and "other" body. John Stoltenberg argues:

> Male sexual identity is a meaningless construct apart from institutionalized and personalized violence against women: the genital male reifies male sexual identity when he violates someone else's bodily

> integrity, when he aggresses against nonphallic flesh and treats it with contempt. For the person defined as inferior, her sexual masochism fully complements the genital male's erotic drive to actualize masculinity. (126)

What Stoltenberg is saying is that difference among bodies – exaggerated/distorted and created – enables a male sexual identity to be established around bodily violation. Certainly there is a difference between penis and a vagina, but it is how those differences are framed that is significant. With difference framed in terms of dominance, contemptible treatment would be the only way sexual partners knew who "the man" was and who "the woman" was. And if gender remains a meaningful category, women have an interest in maintaining this gendered contemptible treatment too, which Stoltenberg was keen to point out, as this is what maintains their gender identity. Although this temperament division is situated within structural inequality that benefits men, men become *habituated* to power and privilege, just as women become habituated to subordinance and submission.

bell hooks speaks to men's socialization in her article "Seduced by Violence No More" by bringing attention to the fact that:

> [T]he courageous brothers…who rethink masculinity, who reject patriarchy and rape culture, often find that they cannot get any play [sexual attention from women] – that the very same women who may critique macho male nonsense contradict themselves by making it clear that they find the 'unconscious brothers' [men who "take charge," "take care of business," and are "in control"] more appealing. (334)

This means that even though male dominance works to privilege men, it is not acquired simply and consciously out of malice or greed. Rather, male dominance is an aspect of normative gendering in the context of culture and relative to women, who are acquiring a proclivity for masochism and submission and desire for male dominance through normative gendering. Women's normative gendering reinforces men's normative gendering and vice versa in the heteronormative framework.

hooks goes on to explain that women like "unconscious brothers" because they "have not unlearned a heterosexist-based 'eroticism' that constructs desire in such a way that many of us can only respond erotically to male behavior that has already been coded as masculine within the sexist framework" (334). This means that women can only recognize themselves and their desire when being objectified and subordinated – objectification being the behavior that defines a man within a sexist framework. So how does behavior get coded? And how does coding masculinity as that which possesses power and femininity as that which lacks power impact the normalizing and legitimizing of rape? In this next section I will explore the coding of hegemonic masculinity and femininity in social institutions including the family, religion, law, work, and media. But first I must account for the challenges posed to the tenets of dominance and some versions of radical feminism by intersectionality.

The dominance feminist perspective on gender, power, and rape has so far articulated gender as a universal concept and as the predominant axis along which women are subordinated. An intersectional approach would complicate this perspective because it would point to the way a single-axis framework presupposes a dominant group

identity in one way or another.[14] That is, a framework that understood sexist oppression to be exclusively about gender domination would presuppose whiteness, whereas a framework that understood white supremacy to be about race domination would presuppose maleness. Intersectionality developed to account for the simultaneous gender, race, and class oppression experienced by people – particularly women of color – marginalized by single-axis frameworks.

The third section of this chapter delineates tensions between intersectionality and some dominance and radical feminist perspectives that see gender domination as the paramount oppression in women's lives. Ultimately I will articulate the idea that while an intersectional approach is not focusing on gender domination as the chief oppression in women's lives, as some radical or dominance feminists do, an intersectional approach is not detracting from – but is arguably further theorizing about[15] – the significance of sexist oppression. The reason intersectionality does not detract from and even helps advance understanding of sexist oppression is because gender is being theorized as inter-related to race and class. Therefore, an intersectional approach is useful and necessary in studying rape play.

The third part of this chapter concentrates on how race and class get factored into what Lerner and Collins speak of as a "matrix"[16] of domination and submission to

[14] Crenshaw 208

[15] Lerner, *Why History Matters* 131-212

[16] Patricia Hill Collins explains that "the matrix of domination refers to how these intersecting oppressions [referring to particular forms of intersecting oppressions, such as race and gender] are actually organized" (21). Gerda Lerner describes this organization in her book, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, as "a set of power relationships in which some men acquired power over other men and over all women" (75). But also that some women – the wives, daughters, and concubines – of men in power gain power over non-elite men and women, though these women's power "derives entirely from the male on whom they depend. Their influence and actual role in shaping events are real, as is their power over the men and women of

capture the complexity of intersectional oppressions. But first I'm going to show how self-negation is coded as hegemonic femininity in social institutions and popular culture and how self (and other)-absorption is coded as hegemonic masculinity in social institutions and pop culture. Status power relations other than gender will be examined in the coming sections and chapters in terms of self (and other)-absorption/self-negation dynamics as well.

How Rape is Normalized and Legitimized Through Culture

Through various forms of media, masculinity, the subject position, is coded as that which is self-absorbed or ego-satisfying[17] and femininity, the object position, is coded as that which is other-absorbed or ego-negating.[18] In a culture that defines power in terms of power over another, as ours does, the tendency to the be self-absorbed and even other-absorbing is a model of power. Accordingly, self-negation is powerlessness. Hence, through patterns of self-absorption or self-negation, masculinity is coded as that which has power and femininity is coded as that which does not.

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lower rank whom they own or control. But in matters of sexuality, they are utterly subordinate to men" (*The Creation of Patriarchy* 74).

[17] James Gilligan in his book *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic* finds a self-absorbed identity to be a key aspect of violence because it induces shame, and shame is "the primary or ultimate cause of all violence" (110). And a masculine subject experiences shame when he does not feel self-contained or self-absorbed and instead wishes to be loved and cared for by others. Masculine subjects will go so far, Gilligan claims, as to use violent means to go to prison as a way to receive care in a way that's "face-saving" (119), that is, consistent with the self-absorption of a hegemonically masculine identity.

[18] Teresa Brennan argues that the feminine party's identity is integrally related to the masculine party's through energy exchange: "identity is founded when the subject projects its own imprint onto the other, in a way that fixes the other in place, while enabling the subject to move, free of the fixity that constrains it. The one who projects this fixity is styled masculine, the one who receives it feminine. But the exchange does not end here. The feminine party also receives an identity through this exchange, but it is an identity that reinforces constructed inertia rather than alleviates it….The feminine party moreover directs living attention to the masculine one, which means he can sustain self-image without diverting too much attention to this fixed end himself" (111-2).

Gendered patterns of self-absorption and self-negation are particularly evident in sexuality, which is "the social process that creates, organizes, expresses, and directs desire" (MacKinnon, "Desire and Power" 258). Again, this conception of sexuality emerges from a heteronormative and gendered system. In other words, sexuality expresses the formative relationship between socialization and desire. Through socialization, women consent to sexual politics that are not in our interest. Or, it could be said, through socialization women develop a sexuality that is not in our interest. It could also be said that women negotiate with sexual politics in order to achieve power over others, though that power is dependent on the man they remain subordinate to.[19]

While a fully-developed analysis on how people are socialized or how women negotiate power is beyond the scope of this thesis, I can demonstrate that dynamics of self (and other)-absorption and self-negation are embedded into main social institutions: family, religion, law, work, and media. All of the aforementioned institutions work to support and reinforce one another, so it is difficult to argue that one institution may be a more influential socializer than others.

Religion expresses masculine self (and other)-absorption and feminine self-negation in that all religions, according to feminist theologian Mary Daly, aim to legitimate patriarchy, primarily through identifying divinity as completely and solely male (*Beyond God the Father*, 1973). Moreover, Daly contends:

> Patriarchy is itself the prevailing religion of the entire planet and its essential message is necrophilia. All the so-called religions legitimating patriarchy are mere sects subsumed under its vast umbrella/canopy. They

[19] Lerner, *Why History Matters* 74

> are essentially similar, despite the variations….All are erected as parts of the male's shelter against anomie. And the symbolic message of all the sects of the religion which is patriarchy is this: Women are the dreaded anomie. (39)

Women are the dreaded anomie (meaninglessness or disorder) in a necrophilic world because they could refuse to provide the energy transferred to men in the exploitative energetic exchange that defines the sexes.[20] And along with that refusal of energetic exchange, women would refuse the "state of living death" (necrophilia) (Daly, *Gyn/ecology* 59) they are subject to under patriarchy, which is legitimized by religion. One site of the energetic exchange that defines the sexes is the patriarchal family.

Two central functions of a family in a patriarchal society include socialization and reproduction. Radical feminists understand the family in a patriarchal society to be "a patriarchal unit within a patriarchal whole" (Millett 55). Hence, through the family, youth are socialized "into patriarchal ideology's prescribed attitudes toward the categories of role, temperament, and status" (Millett 58). And by insisting on legitimacy, "patriarchy decrees that the status of both child and mother is primarily or ultimately dependent upon the male" (Millett 58). Dependence and independence correlate very closely with self-absorbed and other-absorbed/self-negating identities. A dependent status supports and ensures a woman's concern with a masculine subject – that is,

[20] Iris M. Young also understands exploitative energetic exchange to be a part of sexist oppression. In her article, "Five Faces of Oppression," Young asserts that "[a]s a group…women undergo specific forms of gender exploitation in which their energies and power are expended, often unnoticed and unacknowledged, usually to benefit men by releasing them for more important and creative work, enhancing their status or the environment around them, or providing them with sexual or emotional service" (7).

supports and ensures a woman's self-negation – for the sake of legitimacy in society and often for income.

Gerda Lerner reminds us in her book, *Why History Matters*, that the "feminization of poverty" is structurally based and argues that "[i]ts foundation is the erroneous assumption that every woman should live in a male-headed household with a male breadwinner. It is this assumption which accounts for the persistent male/female wage and income gap and for the predominance of women in low-paying service jobs" (179). The assumption that underlies the "feminization of poverty" clearly links patriarchy, the family as male-headed/dominated, and women's work opportunities (or lack thereof). Furthermore, the predominance of women in low-paying service jobs resonates with the dynamics of self (and other)-absorption and self-negation that women and men are socialized into in other institutions, such as the family, because of what providing service entails.[21]

The "feminization of poverty" would, for example, escape legal remedy, according to Catherine MacKinnon, because "[t]he legal mandate of equal treatment…becomes a matter of treating likes alike and unlikes unlike; and the sexes are defined as such by their mutual unlikeness…. A built-in tension exists between this concept of equality, which presupposes sameness, and this concept of sex, which presupposes difference" (244). What MacKinnon is saying is that because of the legal definition of womanhood and equality, one cannot be both a woman and equal. The standards and definitions of both sex and equality "simply means that sex equality is conceptually designed never to be achieved" (251). The repercussions of legally

[21] An exploitative energetic exchange occurs in jobs that "involve gender-based tasks requiring sexual labor, nurturing, caring for others' bodies, or smoothing over workplace tensions" (Young 7).

mandating class subordination are manifold, with direct consequences from legal institutions themselves and indirect consequences coming from law's tacit support of male-dominated households, women's predominance in low-paying service work, and even religious observance. The manifold repercussions are due to the fact that law, like all social institutions, is interdependent and mutually reinforcing with other institutions (such as family, work, and religion). One final social institution that plays a significant role in socialization is the media.

Because media is such a ubiquitous form of socialization, attention to media elevation or derision to ways of being (or not being) male or female is key to un-learning and re-learning desire, as well as addressing rape culture.

Self (and other)-absorption is coded as masculine and self-negation is coded as feminine in most mainstream media (and some "alternative" media), from fairy tales[22] to *Time* magazine,[23] but is most explicitly coded as such in conventional pornography.[24] This coding is problematic, dominance feminists contend, in that it ultimately results in gender violence as well as the normalization and/or effacement of rape[25].

Anti-porn activist and scholar Gail Dines asserts that "porn sex assumes that women are turned on by what turns men on" (114), which often leaves men who subscribe to this ideology frustrated or unsatisfied with sexual encounters with real women who have boundaries and sexual preferences. Yet while real women do not fit the narrative of women in pornography, many women have ascribed to the ideology that their pleasure is located in men's pleasure. In doing so, women's sexual agency is

[22] Dworkin, *Woman Hating* 29-50
[23] Caputi, "The Pornography of Everyday Life" 81
[24] Dines 86; Caputi, "The Pornography of Everyday Life" 86
[25] Dworkin, *Intercourse* 42; Dines 96-7

defined as the ability to say "yes" to sex, but not "no" (Dines 100, 108), and "defined strictly in terms of committing forbidden sexual acts" (Dworkin, *Intercourse* 133). Women are socialized to accept sexist ideology and male definition – of beauty, of sex, of freedom – through pop culture. Dines reminds us that "women don't need to look at porn to be profoundly affected by it because images, representations, and messages of porn are now delivered to women via pop culture" (100). The ideology found in porn is delivered to women via *Cosmopolitan* magazine, framing "what she wants and enjoys as what he wants and enjoys….the magazine [*Cosmopolitan*] as a whole is all about 'him' and 'his' needs, wants, desires, tastes, and, most importantly, orgasm" (Dines 107). These messages about self-absorption as male and self-negation as female wouldn't be so appealing, or at least so un-notable, without consistency with the messages in a wide variety of media.

Jane Caputi discusses the consistency between pornography and other media messages in her article, "The Pornography of Everyday Life," focusing at one point on the January 1992 cover of *Time* magazine. This cover displays a feature story about the "natural" differences between men and women, complete with a picture of a boy who flexes and admires his bicep and a girl who "gazes indulgently upon him and places one hand under his elbow, signifying her support" (Caputi, "The Pornography of Everyday Life" 81). The message on the *Time* cover is the same as the one given by porn sex: "males and females are utterly different, with males being both self-absorbed and other-absorbing (as he sucks up her space and energy) the girl is sidelined, but her expression suggests that she accepts her place as a condition of his potency" (Caputi, "The Pornography of Everyday Life" 81). In other words, what she likes or wants (or at least

supports) is what he likes or wants, and that this is a gender difference that is natural and inevitable.

Hegemonic masculinity, because it is coded as self-absorbed, expresses self-containment. And hegemonic femininity, because it is coded as self-negating, expresses a lack of boundaries. The ideas that women have no boundaries/are not autonomous beings, and the idea that men are self-contained/are not connected beings, are two sides of the same coin – a coin called patriarchy. And these gendered ideas about boundaries or lack thereof are conducive to violence and the perpetuation of rape culture – both of which are inherent manifestations of patriarchy. Lynn Chancer details the construction of masculine self-containment and feminine dependence in her book, *Sadomasochism in Everyday Life*, saying:

> In general, a sadomasochistic type of interaction results when simultaneous needs for autonomy and connection to others, for dependence as well as independence, are denied. These needs may be sundered by the demands of capitalism, or of patriarchy, or of any other form of social organization that does not recognize the importance of both parts of human existence, rendering one group or class predominantly dependent and the other predominantly independent. (138-9)

Chancer is not using the term *sadomasochism* to talk about a dynamic relegated to the "play" of a particular sexual subculture; rather, she is using the term to refer to the dynamic that results from ascribing to the ideology shaping fairy tales, certain *Time* magazine stories/covers, *Cosmo*, and pornography (though she acknowledges that this dependent/independent dynamic can be found in the subculture of S/M "play"). Instead,

her use of the term *sadism* would be consistent with the idea Andrea Dworkin expresses in her book *Intercourse*, which is the idea that hegemonic men's need to be and inability to be connected to others, particularly women, results in violence. Dworkin says of hegemonic men in patriarchal culture: "He wants love, but on his terms. Unable to transcend ego, to be naked inside and out…the men use violence – capture, murder, violent revenge. Alienated because of their self-absorption, their thoughts of women are saturated with violence" (42). With the rate of rape or attempted rape of American women at 44 percent (MacKinnon, "Desire and Power" 259) – and rape is just one way this violence is expressed – we know Dworkin's statement to be true for many men, though obviously resisted by some. Yet the violent inclinations of hegemonic masculinity still seem difficult for many people to believe, and that is because violence is often wrapped in a sexual cloak, rendering it invisible as violence.

Contributing to the invisibility of violence is the portrayal of women enjoying abusive, boundary-violating sex; sexual assault is presented in porn as a consensual act rather than an act of violence (Dines 97). The depiction of women enjoying abusive, boundary-violating sex is particularly succinct and laid bare in pornography.[26] But the fusion of sex and violence is not relegated to pornography; rather, the fusion of sex and violence define what is erotic under patriarchy because "[t]he erotic is what defines sex as an inequality, hence a meaningful difference" (MacKinnon, "Desire and Power" 258). What this means is that under patriarchy what's arousing is difference when difference is really dominance. Accordingly, equality would be anti-sexual under patriarchy: "Equality in the realm of sex is an antisexual idea if sex requires dominance in order to

[26] Dines 86; Caputi, "The Pornography of Everyday Life" 86

register as sensation" (Dworkin, *Intercourse* xxxii). Hence, some level of violence is key to sexual activities' legibility as an erotic encounter to many people engaging in sex or consuming depictions of sex under patriarchy. In terms of patriarchal logic, enjoyment of this sexual violence is synonymous with enjoyment of sex. And certainly women have been socialized into this patriarchal logic.[27] In fact, many women have difficulty recognizing desire without the element of domination, which always implies the possibility of violence, as bell hooks explained.

Women's erotic response to patriarchal male sexuality implicates them in the perpetuation of rape culture. Hence, women need to, as hooks says, reconstruct themselves as heterosexuals and "learn how to be sexual with a man in a context where his pleasure and his hard-on is decentered and mutual pleasure is centered instead….By shaping our eroticism in ways that repudiate phallocentrism, we oppose rape culture" (335). By rejecting the notion that women want whatever men want through a re-constructed eroticism, women can work to change rape culture.

The fact that women are implicated in rape culture does not mean that women have been the authors of this culture. Women are, by definition, second class citizens, the object or "other" to the subject or the "one." Gender remains meaningful as a class status, but there are other status power relations, such as race and class, that further marginalize and oppress poor women and women of color relative to white and/or middle class women. Therefore, women are situated differently with regard to the amount of

[27] Andrea Dworkin argues in her book, *Intercourse*, that "[w]omen live inside this reality of being owned and being fucked: are sensate inside it; the body learning to respond to what male dominance offers as sex, as love" (83).

humanity and recognition given in media images of them[28] and experience different degrees of agency in resisting marginalization and oppression. However, while a woman may experience race or class privilege, the class status of gender remains significant. To consider differing experiences of power and powerlessness, I will now examine the way race and class gets factored into the way masculinity and femininity are coded in media images and discourses about gender, sexuality, and rape.[29]

An Intersectional Approach to Sexual Violence

Classism, white supremacy, and heteronormativity code poor people, people of color, and queer sexual and gender identities as "othered," relative to wealthy, white, and heterosexual people, among other binary and hierarchical categories. Maintaining images of someone as an "other" provides ideological justification for oppression[30] (Collins 77) on the basis of identities such as race, class, sexual orientation, and gender, among other things. And one idea that crosscuts these and other forms of oppression is defining difference in terms of opposition, which is facilitated by objectification (Collins 77). Sometimes an "othered" person is objectified as feminized and self-negating[31] to the

[28] In her exploration of racial patterns in pornography, Patricia Hills Collins explains the significance of the distinction between white women as "objects" and Black women as "animals": "As objects, White women become creations of culture – in this case, the mind of White men – using the materials of nature – in this case, uncontrolled female sexuality. In contrast, as animals, Black women receive no such redeeming dose of culture and remain open to the type of exploitation visited on nature overall" (149-150).

[29] Intersectionality: Crenshaw (2000); Collins (2000); Hull, Bell Scott, Smith (1982); Thorton Dill (1994)

[30] Collins cites Barbara Christian's idea that "'the enslaved African woman became the basis for the definition of our society's *Other*' (1985,160)" (77) and continues with the assertion that "images of U.S. Black women as the *Other* provides ideological justification for race, gender, and class oppression" (77). I am extending her idea about controlling images as the basis for oppression to additional groups because controlling images are also applied to other marginalized groups of people.

[31] Dorothy Allison describes self-negation as a lack of entitlement in her article "A Question of Class": "Why are you so afraid? my lovers and friends have asked me the many times I have suddenly seemed a

"one" and sometimes an "othered" person is objectified as hyper-masculine in brutal, "animalistic" ways.[32] Either way, the image of the objectified "other" works to further the dominant group's agenda(s) and to mask unearned privilege.[33] I refer to privilege as something possessed by different groups and dominance as a quality experienced and exercised on the basis of a variety of identities because people are not either simply privileged or simply oppressed. It would follow, then, that because they are drawing on real-world personas, the "stock characters," called "archetypes," described in public-facing discourses on rape play and the fictional characters in the narratives on rape play express intersecting identities. Therefore, the "archetypes" and fictional characters participate in the ideological framework that marginalizes and/or privileges people on the basis of gender, race, and class, among other things. Hence, to understand the relationship between identity and power in rape play, I must employ an intersectional analysis to the public-facing discourses and narratives on rape play. This means I examine each discourse operating in the definition and enactment of rape play to see if some identities (as understood through the complexity of intersectionality, taking all

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stranger, someone who…would not do the simple things like applying for a job, or a grant, or some award they were sure I could acquire easily. Entitlement, I have told them, is a matter of feeling like we rather than they….I have never been able to make clear the degree of my fear, the extent to which I feel myself denied: not only that I am queer in a world that hates queers, but that I was born poor into a world that despises the poor" (14). Robert H. Hopcke in his article "S/M and the Psychology of Gay Male Initiation: An Archetypal Perspective" claims that gay men have been placed in "boxes of immaturity and effeminacy" (71) and denied "inner masculinity" (71) by a larger/mainstream, heteronormative society.

[32] Angela Davis asserts that "the notion is accepted that black men harbor irresistible, animal-like urges" (27). Andrea Smith describes a literature genre called "captivity narratives" that depicted Native men as "savages": "These narratives were supposedly first-person narratives of white women who were abducted by 'savages' and forced to undergo untold savagery" (21).

[33] Davis asserts that imbuing Black men with irresistible, animal-like urges supported the fictional image of the black man as a rapist, which justifies the institution of lynching. And "[l]ynching…became an essential ingredient of the strategy of terror which guaranteed the over-exploitation of black labor and…the political domination of the black people as a whole" (27). Similarly, the captivity narratives "were usually written by white men who had their own agenda" (A. Smith 21). And that agenda is scapegoating Native men "for his actions so white women will see them [Natives] as the enemy, while white men remain unaccountable" (A. Smith 22-3) – and that unaccountability is for the sexual brutalization of not just white women, but Native women and other women of color as well (A. Smith 23).

factors of the identity into account) are favored over others for the "rapist" and "victim" roles, and if so, which ones? And, more importantly: what is the significance of favoring or marginalizing certain intersections of gender, race, class, etc., for the "rapist" and "victim" roles? In short, an intersectional analysis means I will be determining if domination consistently assumes the form of a masculine-gendered man and submission consistently assumes the form of a feminine-gendered woman when "masculine" and "feminine" are constructs shaped along race and class lines as much as gender lines. For example, "pure white womanhood" is made possible because of the controlling Jezebel image applied to Black women (Collins 142). If Blackness works in opposition to femininity, then favoring a feminine victim expresses hegemonic norms not just in terms of gender, but also race. An intersectional approach attends to the multidimensionality of "femininity."

Because an intersectional approach involves challenging a presupposed dominant group identity (e.g. "women") and looking at who's marginalized, I must focus as much on which intersecting social identities are not explicitly or implicitly included as a "rapist" or "victim" in the narratives and guidebooks about rape play as much as which ones are. I will further explain intersectionality in the remainder of the chapter and illustrate it with examples of the way race, gender, and class, intersect to impact the roles and statuses applied to men and women of color – particularly sexualized roles and statuses. I will employ this intersectional approach in the coming chapters – particularly as it relates to the "good girl" victim archetype that will be discussed in chapter two and the law enforcement imagery and mind/body dualism analyzed in chapter three.

Intersectionality is a concept developed by women of color[34] during the "second wave" of feminism to account for the idea that identities are multi-dimensional and these dimensions operate simultaneously. This means that, for instance, a Black woman, or a white woman, or anyone, cannot examine her life only through the lens of race or only through the lens of gender because race and gender are operating simultaneously for her (as they are for all of us). Using intersectionality works to account for the ways that people can, depending on social location, simultaneously be the objectified and the objectifier, depending on context. Moreover, some people may occupy more privileged statuses than marginalized ones and vice versa. Hence, a man may be marginalized in all ways except with regards to gender, just as a woman may be privileged in all ways except gender. And there are many combinations therein. And while we must be careful not to engage in a "race to the bottom," minimizing any individuals' experiences of powerlessness, it is possible for a woman to experience marginalization to degrees that most masculine-identified men are not able to because of gender. The level of subordination poor, queer, women of color experience is articulated in the Combahee River Collective's "A Black Feminist Statement" by declaring that "[i]f Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression" (415). While gender remains significant to Combahee River Collective's point, it is no more so than the identities of race, class, and sexuality. Maintaining race, class, and sexuality, among

[34] Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith who edited *All the Women are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave* (1982); Bonnie Thorton Dill who wrote *Across the Boundaries of Race and Class* (1994); and Kimberlé Crenshaw who wrote "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics" (2000)

other things, as potential factors in women's oppression points to the way some men could, if marginalized by race, class, sexuality, etc., potentially, experience forms of powerlessness relative to some women – a point that some radical feminists contest. Instead, some radical feminists hold that gender is paramount to systems of privilege and oppression. Kate Millett acknowledges the challenges of an intersectional approach, saying: "In a society where status is dependent upon the economic, social, and educational circumstances of class, it is possible for certain females to appear to stand higher than some males" (Millett 59). However, Millett goes on to explain through analogy why it is not possible for women to "stand higher" than some males. Her analogy goes like this:

> A black doctor or lawyer has higher social status than a poor white sharecropper. But race, itself a caste system which subsumes class, persuades the latter citizen that he belongs to a higher order of life, just as it oppresses the black professional in spirit, whatever his material success may be, In much the same manner, a truck driver or butcher has always his "manhood" to fall back on. Should this final vanity be offended, he may contemplate more violent methods. The literature of the past thirty years provides a staggering number of incidents in which the caste of virility triumphs over the social status of wealthy or even educated women. (59)

Millett is suggesting that gender subordination can or does "trump" race or class politics. An intersectional approach would complicate Millett's assertion on the basis that single-

axis frameworks leave aspects of privilege unchallenged; however, Millett does bring up key points about hegemonic masculinity through her use of the "virility" discourse.[35] It is key in navigating the tensions between some dominance or radical feminist perspectives and intersectionality to remember that gender remains significant, even and especially when examining gender as it intersects with race, class, and sexuality because "class is constructed and maintained genderically; class is constructed racially as well. The relationships are not additive, but interdependent and mutually reinforcing" (Lerner, *Why History Matters* 184). Hence, "virility," for instance, which is another way to say hegemonic masculinity, expresses an ideal form of self (and other)-absorption that does not just entail maleness, but also whiteness and wealth. Likewise, hegemonic femininity entails being self-negating or other-absorbed to the point that discourse about women's desire frames it as located within a man's desire, as noted by Gail Dines in her analysis of mainstream pornography (114). And certainly, pornography can be analyzed using an intersectional approach, which I will briefly illustrate as an example of the way race and class intersect with gender and sexuality.

In mainstream, heterosexual pornography, men and women of color have a racialized sexuality that grants women the status of dual subordination and situates men as either hypermasculine or absent all together. Racialized sexuality is used particularly in gonzo[36] pornography because "gonzo porn works only to the degree that women in it

[35] "Virility" is another way to say "hegemonic masculinity" and it has been found that "virility" is a central aspect to what Nicolas Groth calls "power rape," which is rape defined by the quest for power, mastery, and control (as opposed to what Groth calls "sadistic rape"). In "power rape," the rapist's "desperate need to reassure himself of his virility and sexual competency often results in his attributing his own wishes to his victim" (Groth 30).

[36] Gail Dines describes "gonzo" as "that genre which is all over the Internet and is today one of the biggest moneymakers for the industry – which depicts hard-core, body-punishing sex in which women are demeaned and debased" (xi)

are debased and dehumanized" (Dines 124). Not only are women of color paid less than white women for performing in porn, but class is often used in the porn scenario, such as by situating the scene "in the ghetto" to add another subordinate category because "in the world of porn, the more a woman – white or of color – is debased, the better the porn experience for the user" (Dines 136). White women are debased through interracial porn by being penetrated by what white men have defined as sexually perverse: the hypermasculine Black man. White men have objectified Black men as hyper-masculine/sexually perverse in order to, vicariously, further subordinate a white women through sex with him.[37] These images of racialized sexuality are a problem because they perpetuate a system of beliefs that justify why one group has power over another group. Racialized sexuality is communicated both by what's shown and what's not shown, denying humanity to both those shown and not shown.

While Black men and women are presented as more masculine in porn (and other pop culture images), Asian men and women are presented as more feminine in porn (and other pop culture images). Richard Fung criticizes the gay porn industry in North America because "the [porn] narratives privilege the penis while always assigning the Asian the role of the bottom; Asians and anus are conflated" (153). Fung further criticizes "the uniformity with which these narratives [of submission] appear" (157). So Fung is not criticizing anal sex or even the roles expressed in porn sex. Fung is criticizing the denigration of the anus and the uniform relegation of Asian men to

[37] This argument is also made by Charles Stember in his book *Sexual Racism* with regards to the idea that a source of white men's racial hostility is that a black man, "because the caste nature of the society places him so low on the social scale" (160), has more potential sexual pleasure than a white man because of his greater capacity for defilement. Therefore, the source of some white men's racial hostility and sexual excitement are the same one: "[t]he source of white anger exists then in the anticipated vicarious experience of the white male, a participation by proxy in the imagined delights enjoyed by the black male in interracial sex relations" (162).

denigrated or submissive roles and/or activity – that is, the feminine role. While Asian men may be stereotyped and denigrated in gay porn, they are largely absent from straight porn because of racialized sexuality that frames Asian men as feminine.

The racialized sexuality of Asian men and women results in the exploitation of Asian American women and the absence of Asian American men in the heterosexual pornography industry. Gail Dines notes that the outrage over racist stereotypes has been voiced by Asian American men, such as Darrell Hamamoto, only as far as it affects male power and privilege. Hamamoto aims to reclaim male power by making porn that frames Asian men as sex symbols, embracing the construct of power-over others that had a dehumanizing effect on Asian men in the first place. And it is Asian women that Hamamoto seeks to have power over within pornography. An intersectional approach would enable the analysis of not just intra-racial gender oppression, but the inter-racial oppression that it is intimately linked to through racialized sexuality. Racially-motivated rape is another way that racial and gender oppressions intersect to maintain a racist, sexist status quo.

Andrea Dworkin examines racially-motivated rape in a chapter from *Intercourse*, concluding that "[r]acially degraded women are specially targeted for sexual abuse and exploitation….they are, disproportionate to their numbers, forced, violated, bought and sold" (Dworkin, *Intercourse* 223). To consider the possible reasons for women of color's disproportionate amount of victimization by men's sexual violence we must look at this country's history of slavery and genocide.

The myths of the Black female "Jezebel" and/or prostitute and Black male rapist (of white women, in particular) developed shortly after slavery as ideological justification

for the lynching and rape of Black men and women. Patricia Hill Collins calls lynching and rape "two race/gender-specific forms of sexual violence" (159). In other words, lynching, as well as rape, can be understood as a form of sexual violence because of their underpinnings that draw upon racist sexual stereotypes. Ideological justifications for race/gender-specific forms of sexual violence have maintained their currency, as "[v]iolence against Black women tends to be legitimated and therefore condoned while the same acts visited on other groups may remain non-legitimated and non-excusable" (Collins 158). Myths maintain their currency because they take part in the interdependent constructions of social identity, including that of gender, race, and class. The Jezebel myth would, for instance, work to set blackness in opposition to what a "real woman" is. Because of the myth, blackness could metaphorically transform a woman into a prostitute who is therefore always and already violable. Such myths as the Jezebel and Black rapist work to circumvent any notion that makes violence against Black women - often by Black men who have internalized the controlling images applied to Black women (Collins 159-160) – or men of color deviant or unacceptable. Therefore, controlling images enable disproportionate amounts of sexual violence to be visited on Black women and men. Different, but no less controlling, images are used to objectify other men and women of color as well.

America's transformation of Native people into a "present absence"[38] in the colonial imagination, metaphorically transformed Native bodies into a pollution "of which the colonial body must constantly purify itself" (A. Smith 9). This metaphorical

[38] Kate Shanely developed the idea of "present absence" to describe the absence in the colonial imagination that "reinforces at every turn the conviction that Native peoples are indeed vanishing and that the conquest of Native lands is justified" (A. Smith 9).

transformation into a pollution impacts the rates of sexual violence for women and, presumably, men, because rape of a Native person does not count: "Because Indian bodies are 'dirty,' they are considered sexually violable and 'rapable,' and the rape of bodies that are considered inherently impure or dirty simply does not count" (A. Smith 10). Like the ideological justifications for the race/gender-specific sexual violence visited upon Black women and men, there is an ideological justification for the race/gender-specific sexual violence visited upon Native people: Native bodies are pollution/inherently impure or dirty.

Hence, there are very real consequences to the myths and racist sexual stereotypes propagated – often by people in positions of power, but sometimes by oppressed groups themselves who've internalized the message(s) – in order to maintain gender, race, class, etc. privilege. And those consequences are the disproportionate amounts of sexual violence experienced by women, but also men, of color and the concentration of men and women of color in gonzo pornography (or absence altogether except for submissive roles in gay porn if you're an Asian man).

Because of the real-world consequences of myths and stereotypes, it is important to see if and how they enter into discourses about rape play. And how they enter into the discourses will, like the absence of Asian men from mainstream, heterosexual pornography, be as much about what is not shown as what is shown. For instance, when mind/body dualism is inscribed onto the "rapist" and "victim" roles, and all the "rapists" are white, the myths of the Black man rapist and "savage" Native must be considered. Constructing white men as "mindful" is consistent with the racist, sexist idea that women are more "body" and some men of color have more "uncontrolled" or "animalistic"

sexual urges, i.e. men of color are “more bodily”/“less mindful,” too. And the image of the Black female “Jezebel” and “polluted” Native must enter into the conversation when considering the implications of the “good girl” “victim” archetype that is described in one public-facing discourse because of the ways that “good”/“pure” and “bad”/“dirty” are constructed in Western culture. Implicitly, the “good girl,” in hegemonic narratives, is a white girl.

In conclusion, the idea that women desire whatever men desire is the cornerstone of male privilege, and even something that women are socialized to and ascribe to as a matter of their own gender identity. This male privilege can and does function alongside and sometimes seemingly in the face of race, class, sexuality, and other status power relations. Yet wealth, whiteness, and heterosexuality can compound privilege, or frame one’s identity as even more “masculine” (if “masculinity” is the ability to be self (and other)-absorbing). Hence, it is useful when examining the relationship between identities and the presence and/or absence of power in heterosexual rape play to use an intersectional approach, as it will account for the way that identity has multiple aspects. Rape play and rape fantasy that expresses the pairing of (primarily) self-absorbed and (primarily)self-negating identities consistent with the pattern of dominant and submissive roles would suggest that, like pornography, the value of the practice is in the debasement of an identity that is defined by self-negation, such as ‘woman.’

CHAPTER TWO: LIBERTARIAN/"SEX POSITIVE" FEMINISM AND PUBLIC-FACING DISCOURSES

Unlike dominance feminism, which understands eroticized domination and submission to constitute gender and therefore be the central means of organizing patriarchy, libertarian or "sex positive" feminism sees eroticized domination and submission, including rape play, as potentially compatible with feminism. One reason rape play, like other expressions of ritualized, eroticized domination and submission in S&M communities, could be compatible with feminism is because it entails concerns for safety, sanity, and consent. If rape play did not express those concerns and make arrangements for safety and ensuring consent, it would be no different than legally-sanctioned sexual assault.

There are online and print resources for S/M practitioners about how to incorporate safety, sanity, and consent into their practices, and sometimes those resources will give explicit attention what "safe, sane, and consensual" looks like in rape play too. Even if rape play practitioners do not consider themselves to be part of a wider S/M community, they have, as S/M practitioner and educator Desmond Ravenstone says, "a debt to the BDSM community" (18) because "[s]afewords, aftercare, and pre-scene negotiation are all taken directly from BDSM….Other BDSM elements and practices sometimes used in ravishment are bondage, erotic power exchange, fetish attire, 'torture'

and more" (Ravenstone 18). Hence, rape play can be examined as an expression of S/M ('BDSM' is a variation of 'S/M') because of safe words, aftercare, and pre-scene negotiation.

Safe words are "code terms or signals for regulating or stopping action" (Ravenstone 17); aftercare is a period after S/M activity devoted to attending the physical impact of S/M, such as putting salve on welts, and a form of emotional decompression immediately following – and sometimes also days after – a scene;[39] and negotiation is the discussion partners have ahead of time about what will happen during a scene. A negotiation can be brief, especially if the partners know each other well, or it could be very involved and include discussion of:

> [W]ho will assume which role; whether other people may be included (and if so, who); what each person's limits are; whether or not 'safe words' are allowed or required, and if so, what they are; the health of the partners (which may limit or prohibit specific activities); what safer sex precautions are required; what activities or roles raise painful apparitions from the past and need to be avoided for now; and, more mundanely, whether one or the other has to leave for work at five the next morning. (Truscott 19)

Carol Truscott gives this description of negotiation in her article "S/M: Some Questions and a Few Answers" in the libertarian/"sex positive" feminist book, *Leatherfolk: Radical Sex, People, Politics, and Practice*. This chapter will articulate the libertarian/"sex

[39] A "scene" is "1) The SM or fetish community; or things associated with it. 2) An occurrence or session of SM play" (Miller and Devon 236). When I use the word "scene," I am referring to the second definition.

positive" feminist perspective by using it to analyze S/M guidebooks' advice about rape play in terms of power and identity. Furthermore, I will begin to bring dominance feminism into conversation with libertarian/"sex positive" feminism through guidebook analysis. The conversation between libertarian/"sex positive" and dominance feminism on matters of identity and power in rape play will be further developed in the third chapter.

For this study I only included guidebooks if they, at some point, gave explicit attention to rape play. Excluding texts that did not give explicit attention to rape play (beyond a glossary definition) left me with a surprisingly limited selection. The four guidebooks I found by the conclusion of my research were: *The Loving Dominant*, by John Warren (1994); *The Toybag Guide Playing With Taboo*, by Mollena Williams (2010); *Screw the Roses, Send me the Thorns*, by Phillip Miller and Molly Devon (1995); and *Ravishment: The Dark Side of Erotic Fantasy*, by Desmond Ravenstone (2005).

These books were written primarily to educate practitioners or potential practitioners about how to execute ritual eroticized domination and submission in a way that is, as the S/M credo goes, "safe, sane, and consensual,"[40] as well as pleasurable. As John Warren says, "[m]y primary goal is to reach novice dominants or those who feel they are dominants and help them overcome the psychological barrier to undertaking such a politically incorrect activity. I also want to show them techniques they can use to bring pleasure to their submissives and themselves" (15). Warren then explains his

[40] Staci Newmahr notes that defense of high(er)-risk S/M activity has caused some shift in the credo that describes the distinction between S/M and violence: "Emerging from related debates over the subjectivity of 'safe' and 'sane,' parts of the community have argued to adopt an alternative to SSC: RACK – Risk Aware Consensual Kink. RACK (which appears to have been posited as a half-serious, frustrated response to a heated email discussion) eliminates those more nebulous concepts, but keeps SM ensconced in the discourse of sex" (147).

secondary goal in writing his book: "In addition, I hope that some copies of this book fall into the hands of the general public….To those readers, I am 'defending my perversion'" (16). Because published, print texts on S/M may, and are intended to, "fall into the hands of the general public," I will refer to these texts as "public-facing discourses."

The purpose of my examination of pubic-facing discourses about rape play is to see if the discourses express a positive relationship between the "rapist" role, the "victim" role, and aspects of identity such as gender, race, or class, etc. And if there is a relationship, is it one that confirms hegemonic gender and other status power relations?

In the course of this chapter I will be using the words *"victim"* and *"rapist"* when talking about rape play, specifically, *dominant* and *submissive* when discussing S/M apart from rape play, and *dominant/"rapist"* and *submissive/"victim"* when discussing matters that pertain to both/either. Other words used to describe the aforementioned roles can include: sadist/masochist, ravisher/ravishee, and top/bottom.

Framing the examination of identity and power will be libertarian or "sex positive" feminist texts, primarily in the form of books and articles, that articulate the reasons why some people – feminists and non-feminists alike – feel that ritual, eroticized domination and submission has liberatory and even subversive potential. The reasons ritual practices of S/M are embraced and/or defended include: 1) that power does not attach to any person based on their existing identity; power is free-floating[41] and 2) that "dominant" and "submissive" meanings are "queered" in S&M practice to mean different

[41] Bauer 234; Califia, "Feminism and Sadomasochism" 173; Truscott 34-5; Weinberg and Kamel 21; Weinberg 121, 131

things than they do in the larger culture and it is often the submissive person that is actually in control and possesses a great deal of power.[42]

"Queering" involves changing meaning, which can be done because "no symbol has a single meaning. Meaning is derived from the context it's used" (Califia, "A Secret Side" 174). When the meaning of a symbol – or activity, role, word, or even body part – is queered, it is because practitioners using that symbol have given it a meaning that is different from, and often opposite to, the symbol's conventional usage. For instance, "[t]he dialogue in some S/M scenes may sound sexist or homophobic from the outside, but its real meaning is probably neither. A top [dominant role] can call his bottom [submissive role] a cocksucker to give him instruction (i.e. to indicate that the top wants oral stimulation); to encourage him to lose his inhibitions and perform an act he may be afraid of" (Califia, "A Secret Side" 174). In this instance, the word "cocksucker," long understood as an aspersion, is queered so that it does not connote homophobia or sexism; rather, the word becomes a form of instruction and encouragement. The meaning is based in the context in which the word is used as well as by whom it is being used. However, as I will argue in the third chapter, queering of words or phrases that have functioned to communicate homophobia and sexism in the culture can still work to ultimately maintain a framework of a self-negating/self-absorbed gender binary, which is central to hegemonic gender.

I will assess representations of power and identity in the guidebooks based on their use of language, incorporation of "archetypes," the descriptions of how the sexual activity is arranged, physically, and interest in emotional and/or psychological

[42] Brame, Brame, and Jacobs 72, 78; Califia "Feminism and Sadomasochism" 174; Farr 189; Weinberg and Kamel 19; Weinberg 129

authenticity. My examination of language will include attention to the ways personal pronouns are used or not in relation to the "rapist" and "victim" and to the discourse that choice and consent are meaningful concepts in the S/M arena. My examination of "archetypes" involves assessing the "characters" that are touted as possible models for participants' looks and behavior – particularly the "rapists." My examination of the way sexual activity is arranged, physically, will include attention to patterns or lack thereof in terms of human anatomy, domination, and submission, as well as the way clothing may be used in conjunction with these patterns. And my examination of the professed desire for emotional and/or psychological authenticity will involve attention to the mechanisms for achieving that authenticity and how those mechanisms may be impacted by normative gender. To begin with I will first examine personal pronoun usage and what the motivations are for adopting S/M roles, which include but are not limited to a "natural" proclivity for domination/"raping" or submission/being a "victim."

Guidebook Language, Social Identity, and Role Occupation

In heterosexual rape play, as well as S/M, overall, the social power usually afforded to one's identity is purportedly irrelevant to role occupation, e.g., the role of "rapist" or "victim." Instead, role occupation is attributed to many things, such as the desire to "let go" of sexual guilt and inhibitions, or to be overwhelmingly desirable – neither of which are framed in the public-facing discourses as gendered desires. Though some feminists contend that because objectification and sex negativity marks a woman's gender identity under patriarchy, the desire to "let go" of sexual guilt and inhibition, or to

be overwhelmingly desirable, has been theorized to be what women desire under patriarchy.[43] A reason regularly, even exclusively, cited in the guidebooks as the reason for role occupation is that practitioners have a pre-social, innate or what feminist call an "essentialist" [44] orientation towards domination and/or submission.[45] When role occupation is attributed to an "SM soul," meaning an essential self, the accompanying discourses of choice and consent are meaningful because there is a "self" independent of social influences to make choices and give consent. I will discuss the guidebooks' discourse of meaningful choice and consent shortly.

In the guidebooks, the language is either gender neutral or set off by a disclaimer about the writer's own S/M orientation as the reason for patterns in personal pronoun usage. For instance, in *Screw the Roses, Send me the Thorns* Phillip Miller and Molly Devon wrote: "we will be using male pronouns for dominants and female pronouns for submissives because that's the way it is in our relationship. It also makes the writing go easier. There are, however at least as many women in the dominant role and men who are submissive. There are also plenty of homosexual SM relationships" (2). Miller and Devon's intention is that whatever the gender and S/M role preference of the reader, they will be able to apply the ideas in the book, regardless of the writer's pronoun usage. Likewise, John Warren applied male pronouns for the dominant and female pronouns for the submissive, citing "his [meaning the author's] own point of view" (14) as the disclaimer that would enable a reader to apply their own dynamics. Mollena Williams

[43] Benjamin 85-132; Caplan 155; Donae; Haskell

[44] Essentialism has been used in feminist theory to describe and politicize a "woman's experience," which can also be understood as women's standpoint. However, "[t]he notion of women's standpoint – or indeed the notion that women's experience has special authority – has also been challenged by feminist theorists. It fails to take into account diversities of class and race as well as the various farms and modulations of gender" (D. Smith 176).

[45] Warren 124; Williams 50; Miller and Devon 12; Ravenstone 21-2

and Desmond Ravenstone were mostly careful to make no associations between identity and role by always phrasing roles in terms of "him or her"/"he or she." For instance, Ravenstone writes that one reason people enjoy what he calls "ravishment play" (Ravenstone overtly rejects the term "rape play" because he feels the word *rape* is too charged and might attract the wrong kind of people) is because a person wants to be irresistible: "Here it is the ravishee who seems overpowering in terms of *her or his* allure [emphasis mine], and the ravisher is the one who 'surrenders' to overwhelming passion" (23). While "irresistibility" is, in popular/conventional discourse, "incited" by a woman,[46] it is either a man or a woman who could cause a person of the other sex to "lose control" in ravishment/rape play. Hence they are not buying into hegemonic gender.

The unanimous idea behind these guidebooks' non-prescriptive role dynamics is that there are no pre-determined power relations in S/M; thus, forces other than socially assigned gender identities would be driving individuals to their chosen roles. Sociologist Robin Bauer studied what he called a "dyke/trans BDSM community," finding that practitioners felt that "it [S/M] creates a space that is perceived as devoid of pre-determined power relations in regard to gender and sexuality, if not in regard to other social power structure such as race or class" (234). The guidebooks do not pertain exclusively to a queer S/M community and similarly dismiss the influence of previously assigned gender. Hence, practitioners of all sexual orientations and gender identities agree in perceiving the S/M arena to be free of pre-determined gendered power relations. Likewise, Patrick Califia asserts that the dynamic between a top (dominant) and bottom (submissive) is different than that of a man and woman, a white person and black person,

[46] Despentes 46; Dworkin, *Intercourse* 18-20

or upper- and working-class people because society assigns privileges based on race, gender, and social class, but the S/M subculture holds that dynamics between a top and bottom are based on "sexual needs, how they feel about their particular partners, or which outfits are clean and ready to wear" (Califia, "A Secret Side" 173). Califia's assertions are reflected in the public-facing discourse – particularly her assertion about sexual need. Often sexual need is framed as a pre-social desire or a "nature."

The reasons given in public-facing discourses for why people are interested in eroticized domination and submission, including rape play, entail: intense physicality as a way to feed emotional intensity (Ravenstone 22); the ability, as a submissive/"victim," to have increased control in partner and activity selection (Ravenstone 22, Warren 38); the ability, as a submissive/"victim," to "let go" of guilt and inhibition around sex and sexuality (Devon and Miller 90, Ravenstone 23, Warren 38-9); the ability, as a submissive/"victim" to be clearly, deeply desired (Devon and Miller 90, Ravenstone 23); to facilitate resolution or healing of some past abuse or trauma (Ravenstone 23, Williams 15); and the ability as a dominant/"rapist" "to be in complete control. In today's modern world, this situation [complete control] is becoming more and more difficult to attain" (Warren 43). The one reason that all four guidebooks cited for adopting either/both roles is that domination or submission is in one's nature, soul, or primary "authentic self."

Miller and Devon describe what they call "natural submissives or dominants" as "people who have felt sadomasochistic yearnings for as long as they can remember" (12). They illustrate this concept by describing the ways Miller would, as a seven-year-old child, tie up his teddy bear. Williams would explain Miller's childhood behavior as his "authentic self" (50). If one's "authentic self" is not realized, it's because of

"programming" (Williams 50), meaning cultural imperatives. Similarly, Ravenstone believes one reason people are attracted to rape play, or ravishment play, as he calls it, is because people feel the primitive emotional drives of fear, aggression, and sexual desire, it is just that "we have simply found ways to harness and regulate them [fear, aggression, and sexual desire] so that they can be channeled with minimal harm" (21-2). Warren also asserts that sexual aggression is innate, and explains this by further claiming that "we *are* descended from men who raped. In the history of humanity, consensual sex is a relatively new invention" (124). Ravenstone is basically arguing that rape is a part of human nature, though he does not substantiate this claim, nor does he account for the way "human nature" is, by his account, historically gendered ("*men* who raped"), but now is not. Ravenstone claims, despite his association between men, rape, and human nature that anyone of any gender could and would want to play the "rapist": "Most people will think of ravishment or 'forced sex' fantasies as primarily a male ravisher penetrating a female ravishee. This is yet another [in addition to the centrality of genital penetration and orgasm] myth" (52). In the "nature"/"primitive emotion"/"authentic self" rationale, rape play is a positive thing because it is a way to both realize and "harness and regulate" an innate desire and state of being.

On the topic of constructing a rape play scene, Williams advises readers to "[c]onsider your options. It might not be possible for you to actually be abducted out of your office and ravished by the hot and sexy cleaning lady or rogue janitor, but perhaps a similar scenario can be effectively role-played in the house of a friend who has a snazzy home office set-up" (51). Here you can see that Williams does not express domination as a quality best embodied by one gender or another, or even by a person of economic

means. Janitors and cleaning ladies are typically afforded very little social power because of class, and often race. But for a rape/ravishment scene, janitors and cleaning ladies are framed as potentially powerful partners. However, because this reversal where janitors and cleaning ladies are potentially powerful is in a staged, tightly controlled scenario, this violation of the norm could actually reaffirm traditional values and power relations.

Robert Jewett and John Lawrence call such staged reversals a "rite of reversal." Rituals from our culture that express rites of reversal include Mardi Gras, Halloween, and April Fool's day because they all involve a "free pass" to do what is not normally permitted – that is, to violate norms. Jewett and Lawrence assert that "The element which confirms the presence of a rite of reversal is norm violation" (978). The reason the key element in rites of reversals is norm violation is because the rite of reversal is about maintaining the oppressive norm: "By letting off steam [violating an oppressive norm], such rituals end up reinforcing the very norms which are flaunted and then cheerfully reinstituted at the end of the prescribed festival" (Jewett and Lawrence 976). Hence, re-making a marginalized identity into a powerful one for the duration of a rape play scene does not necessarily disrupt – and may even reinforce – hegemonic gender and other status power relations.

Williams communicates the idea that the rape play arena is free of pre-determined power relations through diverse descriptions of potential scenarios and partners and Ravenstone denies the link between identity and power outright. Though Williams's description and Ravenstone's assertion still leave open the possibility that the dominant/"rapist" role could be taken on by a man and the submissive/"victim" role

could be taken on by a woman; an arena free of pre-determined power relations does not mean dynamics of dominance and submission *must* be disrupted by assigning the roles to socially marginalized and socially powerful people, respectively. Libertarian/"sex positive" feminism would still find a socially powerful dominant, such as a male "rapist," and a socially marginalized submissive, such as a female "victim," to be compatible with feminism because of queered meanings.

When meanings of words and/or roles are "queered" they take on different and often opposite meanings from their conventional usage. If dominance and submission are queered, then even if a male occupies the dominant role and a female occupies the submissive role, the arrangement cannot be understood as patriarchal because dominance and submission do not have conventional connotations. Patrick Hopkins articulates the way queered meanings result in simulated, but not replicated, patriarchal sexual activity:

> SM sexual activity does not replicate patriarchal sexual activity. It simulates it. Replication and simulation are very different. Replication implies that SM encounters merely reproduce patriarchal sexual activity in a different physical area. Simulation implies that SM selectively replays surface patriarchal behaviors onto a different contextual field. That contextual field makes a profound difference. (123)

The most profound difference that comes from the context of queered meaning in a rape play scene is that the "victim" actually has a great deal of control both before and during the scene. In fact, as Patrick Califia notes, "Tops often make nervous jokes about being slaves to the whims of their bottoms" (172). The power and influence of the submissive/"victim" is understood by libertarian/"sex positive" feminists to exemplify

the way words, roles, symbols, etc., are queered in S/M contexts. Conversely, a dominance or radical feminist perspective would frame a dominant/"rapists" who feel themselves "slaves" to the whims of their bottoms as consistent with hegemonic gender.

Andrea Dworkin asserts that "[r]eduction of humanity into being an object for sex [hegemonic femininity] carries with it the power to dominate men because men want the object and the sex" (*Intercourse* 18). This means that "[t]he woman must be reduced to being this sexual object to be pleasing to men who will then, and only then, want to fuck her; once she is made inferior in this way, she is sensual to men and attracts them to her, and a man's desire for her – to use her – is experienced by him as her power over him" (Dworkin, *Intercourse* 19-20). In other words, women are perceived by men to hold power over them through sex because under patriarchy sex becomes about possession of an object and women are that object (or else they are not perceived as sexual) and men are judged as manly or not depending upon if they have attained that object. Hence, in terms of dominance feminism, men's feelings of powerlessness actually underscore that they are the socially powerful group.

Libertarian/"sex positive" feminists would refute that submissive/"victim" control is only perceptual and actually reflects hegemonic gender. Instead, libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse articulates how submissive/"victim" power is actual: submissives/"victims" establish control through an equitable and even predominant role in pre-scene negotiation and the ability to use safe words during a scene to slow or abruptly halt the activity. While there is some debate within SM communities as to just how active the submissive/"victim" should be in the creation of a scene (Brame et al. 79) and if safe words are always called for or even appropriate (Warren 46; Newmahr 64),

most practitioners believe the submissive/"victim" should always have a very active role in the creation of a scene (Califia, "Mr. Benson" 232; Miller, Devon 33; Ravenstone 47) and the accessibility of a safe word is always a good idea (Miller, Devon 64-5; Newmahr 65; Ravenstone 46; Warren 45-6). So even if rape play appears to be violent and forceful, i.e. "surface patriarchal behavior," the physical activity is actually, purportedly, what the submissive/"victim" has requested or agreed to beforehand and continues to consent to by not using a safe word.

There are some complications with regards to the actual ability to use safe words, even if they've been agreed upon, because of a submissive's/"victim's" periodic experience of emotional and psychological "authenticity" during a scene. This means, as I will get into more later, that a submissive/"victim" periodically stops experiencing a scene as theater or fantasy and starts experiencing the scene as an actual rape, or interrogation, or kidnapping, etc., which causes some submissives to forget they have the option of a safe word. The emotional and psychological authenticity that can occur during a scene is recognized in the public-facing discourses. Emotional and psychological authenticity is accounted for through regularly asserting that the dominant/"rapist" is ultimately responsibility for the safety and success of a scene: "IMPORTANT NOTE FOR DOMINANTS: DO NOT DEPEND UPON THE SUB [sic] to say the safe word if she's reached her limits or is having a problem! As a dominant, you are responsible for knowing your submissive's condition at all times. A safe word is simply an additional safety valve" (Miller, Devon 64). While it is good the public-facing discourses articulate the importance of the dominant's/"rapist's" responsibility, the possible inability to use a safe word does seem to compromise the actuality of a

submisive's power. Despite potential complications to the use of safe words, public-facing discourses hold that the choices practitioners make about participation before and during a scene are meaningful.

Public-facing and libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourses on S/M, including rape play, frame choice and consent as meaningful defenses and justifications for S/M. Ravenstone asserts at the outset of his book: "Ravishers and ravishes, dominants and submissives, kinksters of all kinds – we are consenting adults, not children. We can make our own choices" (15). Likewise, sex therapist Peggy Kleinplatz frames patients Dana and Carol's S/M play as "a powerful tool in self discovery" (343) because "they employed the consensual power exchange of SM to recreate the childhood moments when much of Dana's inner self had been prematurely and forcefully shut down [from sexual abuse]. Their work/play together…allowed Dana to access hidden parts of her self and to reclaim them on her own terms" (343). By Klienplatz's statement, we can see that she, like her patients, believes S/M is or can be genuinely on one's "own terms," or the result of one's free choices; in this view, the S/M dynamic in no way relates to other dynamics of domination and submission exercised in the world. However, while choice remains meaningful in public-facing and libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourses, there is some recognition within them that S/M and rape play does not happen in a social vacuum.

Some guidebooks and "sex positive" feminist books and articles will touch on the way there are gender patterns in fantasies, personal histories, and society in general, some of which are inegalitarian. Ravenstone recognizes that "most reliable psychological surveys" find that more men fantasize about ravishing another person and more women

fantasize about being ravished (by whom was not made clear) (21). One study about the differences between gay and straight S/M practitioners published in a "sex positive" feminist book, *Powerful Pleasures*, found there's a higher incidence of childhood sexual abuse within S/M communities than society at large, for both gay and straight practitioners, and particularly for women (Nordling et al. 53). And Califia will concede that "society shapes sexuality…our imagination and ability to carry out those decisions are limited by the surrounding culture" (173). However, there is still in public-facing and libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourses a dynamic between a dominant and submissive, a "rapist" and a "victim," that is understood to be the unique product of choice because one's role is not related to their actual identity and one can switch positions if they so choose.

I have established that the language in public-facing discourses about rape play connotes the disruption of hegemonic gender and other status power relations by dissociating gender and class identity/social power and role occupation. Disruption is due to the fact that role preference is determined by things other than social power/privilege, including but not limited to an S/M "soul" or "natural" proclivity for domination or submission. Additionally, the meanings of "dominant" and "submissive" are queered, resulting in submissive/victim's paradoxically powerful position. Hence, the basis in an S/M "soul" or other motivation unrelated to social identity and power, along with queered meanings, means that choice and consent are meaningful and genuine in an S/M context.

However, there are ways that public-facing discourses on rape play could be understood as maintaining hegemonic gender. Public-facing discourses maintain

hegemonic gender through patterns that emerge around anatomy, sexual activity, domination, and submission and the way clothing is used in conjunction with these patterns. It remains debatable if the public-facing discourses' incorporation of archetypes maintains hegemonic gender or is, conversely, consistent with feminism.

Archetypes, Bodies, and Clothing

Archetypes were regularly present, either overtly or covertly, in the public facing discourses about S/M, including rape play. The word *archetype* is used in some public-facing and some libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourses about S/M and rape play to describe models of behavior and appearance that are adopted by a dominant/"rapist" or submissive/"victim" to suit and even affect the emotional theme of a particular scene.[47] Archetypes could also be thought of as "stock characters." For instance, partners could don the demeanor and/or clothing of a stern police man or woman and/or a criminal/delinquent to suit and influence an interrogation scene. Or perhaps partners want to "play" at being a "daddy" and "child" or "mommy" and "child" to enhance an "age play" scene.[48] The use of characters, or "archetypes," can be a part of rape play. Models of "rapist" and "victim" behavior and appearance can be as varied as either practitioners' imagination, meaning there is not a set group of archetypes that establish the only acceptable models of "rapists" and/or "victims." However, there are some recurrent archetypes, as evidenced in the public-facing discourses – particularly for "rapists." The "brute" archetype appears in three out of four guidebooks (Ravenstone 47, Warren 127,

[47] Newmahr 108-113; Ravenstone 47

[48] "Age play – A type of role play to gratify a fetish surrounding age" (Miller and Devon 226).

Williams 51), the "seducer" archetype appears in two out of four guidebooks (Ravenstone 47, Williams 51), and the "tormentor" in one guidebook (Ravenstone 47). Interestingly, "victim" archetypes were ignored in the three guidebooks that gave attention to "rapist" archetypes and touched on in the one that didn't; Miller and Devon say in their discussion of rape play that "[s]ome submissives enjoy the fantasy that they are innocent victims" (90), or what they go on to call "the 'good girl'"(90).

Libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse frames archetypes as encompassing different degrees of masculinity/self-absorption and femininity/self-negation or other-orientation, which are further complicated by the gender identity of the practitioner donning the symbolic role. That is, it would be possible to have a feminine/other-oriented "rapist," which could be embodied by either a man or woman; and it would also be possible to have a masculine/self-absorbed "victim," which could be embodied by either a man or a woman For these reasons, libertarian/"sex positive" feminists assert that archetypes cannot be understood to reinforce gender inequality.

Desmond Ravenstone says that for rape play he uses "three stock archetypal characters, each appropriate for different emotional themes" (47):

> The *Brute* is the 'grab-and-thrash' blitz attacker, fast and furious, for ravishees aroused by intense physicality. The *Tormentor* is more psychological, controlling and even sadistic; this paradigm is suited for ravishees who are excited by fear, aggression and a high level of unpredictability and paradox. For ravishees who want to surrender to pleasure and desire, the *Seducer* combines relatively subdued force with flattery, caresses and slow-paced arousal. With more complicated scenes,

> I will often combine elements of two or all three to fit the themes of the particular fantasy. (47)

Because of the intense physicality and self-absorption of the "brute" archetype, it is arguably the most masculine archetype. Guidebooks and libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse defend the archetypes, including the "brute" archetype, on the basis that it could be occupied by a person of any gender and therefore cannot be understood to be properly sexist.

Warren links "brutish" behavior and maleness with the intense physicality in terms of strength that comes into play when the brute forcibly disrobes the "victim": "Make no mistake; you will need to cut [the clothes off your "victim"]. Modern fabrics are tough and, even if you can tear them, grunting and swearing when you get to the seams won't create the image you are after of unstoppable male power" (126). Because Warren is discussing the ability make it appear as if one is effortlessly ripping and tearing tough fabrics (by cutting), the "unstoppable male power" he is talking about is a physical power. However, just because Warren is using the word "male" does not necessarily mean he intends for only male-bodied readers to don this archetype. As I said earlier, Warren is basing his book, including pronoun usage, from his own experience; so theoretically, unstoppable physicality is an archetype equally accessible to and desirable in a female form. And the very possibility of female occupation disrupts the archetype's adherence to and perpetuation of patriarchal masculinity because "male-ness" is de-naturalized. Staci Newmahr argues that hegemonic gender is disrupted not only by possible or actual female embodiment of the masculine archetypes but by the way

archetypes themselves express varying degrees of self-absorption and/or self-negation/other-orientation.

In the S/M community in Caeden, where she did her research, Newmahr found three archetypes for domination and three archetypes for submission that she said varied in their degrees of masculinity and femininity – femininity being more self-negating/other-oriented and masculinity being more about a "commitment to victory through endurance" (115). Furthermore, Newmahr found that "on a continuum of masculinity and femininity, the closer topping [domination] moves toward bottoming [submission], the lower its status, and vice versa" (115). This means the more a top caters to a bottom, which is feminizing, the lesser status the top received, and the more a bottom is committed to personally possessing toughness, strength, and endurance, which confers masculinity, the less status a bottom receives. Therefore, the "brute" archetype would garner more status than the "seducer" archetype because it is more self-absorbed and less concerned about the other's state. Because masculine dominants/"rapists" and feminine submissives/"victims" receive status, Newmahr concludes:

> There is truth in the argument that topping symbolizes (male) dominance and bottoming (female) submission….however, the complexity within SM play, and play across gender, problematizes the understanding of SM as a categorical reinforcement of gender inequality. If, at the symbolic level, some 'doings' of masculinity are more feminine than others, and both men and women are doing masculinity and femininity, alternately as well as simultaneously, then SM is not a simple patriarchal performance. (115)

Varying degrees of status doesn't mean that practitioners will necessarily gravitate toward the "highest ranking" archetypes. Although, it is noteworthy that the most hegemonically masculine archetype, the "brute," appeared in the public-facing discourses slightly more than the less hegemonically masculine "seducer" archetype. In fact, Newmahr claims that the behavior or "type" of submission involved in "rape victimization," in general, could be conflated "with a masculine commitment to victory through endurance" (115). If being a "rape victim" confers a type of masculinity, that would suggest that 1) "rape victim" is a low-status position, but taken up nonetheless and 2) that there is more variation and complexity in terms of gender coding for the "rapist" than the "victim" because the "rape victim" is more uniformly masculine. However, in *Screw the Roses, Send Me the Thorns*, Miller and Devon follow the description of the "good girl" "victim" archetype with a conflation of "victimization" and "femininity" that contradicts Newmahr's point about the masculine "rape victim."

In *Screw the Roses, Send Me the Thorns*, Miller and Devon describe the archetypal "good girl" as an appearance and behavior for the "victim" to adopt for rape play. While Miller and Devon did not say this was the only "victim" archetype, only that "*[s]ome* [emphasis mine] submissives enjoy the fantasy that they are innocent victims," or what they go on to call the "good girl" (90), they did not describe any others either. Before turning attention to Miller and Devon's attribution of femininity to "victimization," the racial implications of only naming "the good girl" as a possible "victim" archetype must be addressed.

Emphasizing "the good girl" as a desirable "victim" archetype has possible racial implications because of the way "good"/"pure"/"innocent" and the counterpart

"bad"/"dirty"/"carnal" are constructed. As Patricia Hill Collins noted, the controlling image of the Jezebel applied to Black women justified sexual assault against Black women and/or made it invisible as sexual assault (159). Similarly, equating Native bodies with pollution in an imperial imaginary made it so the rape of Native people "did not count" (A. Smith 10). Constructing women – and even men of color – as always and already violable is a key part of gender ideology that makes whiteness "pure" and "good": "[g]ender ideology…draws upon the jezebel image [and, arguably, the "polluted Native" image] – a devalued jezebel makes pure white womanhood possible" (Collins 142). Therefore, only mentioning the "good girl" as a possible "victim" archetype participates in oppressive racial politics because of the way "goodness" and therefore rape-ability has been constructed in Western culture. The absence of explicit associations between this "good girl" archetype and whiteness does not mean the association is not there. And, in fact, the invisibility of whiteness as a race is what keeps whiteness as dominant/"good."[49] Being racially un-marked and "good" are interdependent. Hence, only naming "the good girl" as a possible "victim" archetype is a way that this public-facing discourse expresses an intersection of race and gender that supports a racist gender ideology.

After describing the draw of the "good girl" archetype (which is dealing with the "archaic" notion that enjoying sex makes you a slut), "victimization" and femininity are

[49] Jackson Katz asserts in his movie, *Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the Crisis in Masculinity,* that "[o]ne of the ways dominance functions is through being unexamined…For example, when we hear the word 'race' in the United States, we tend to think: African American, Latino, Asian American, Native American, etc.…In each case [race, sexual orientation, gender] the dominant group - white people, heterosexual people, men - don't get examined. As if men don't have a gender, as if white people don' t have some racial grouping….In other words, we focus always on the subordinated group and not on the dominant group and that's one of the ways the power of dominant groups isn't questioned – by remaining invisible" (10:15-11:15).

conflated in a way that challenges the framework Newmahr describes. Miller and Devon write that "[b]eing taken reinforces the feeling of being deeply desired and supremely feminine" (90). This statement would suggest that in fact being a rape "victim" does not confer masculinity and, furthermore, may also suggest that the complexity Newmahr describes, where some 'doings' of masculinity are more feminine than others, is not experienced as such by practitioners. Or, conversely, perhaps the very possibility that a man could embody the "victim" role and feel supremely feminine means that even if it is a woman who is the "victim," her experience of "supreme femininity" does not mean that sexism is being enforced. But if a woman's experience of "supreme femininity" did express a sex and gender status quo, then it would also follow that a man's occupation of the "brute" archetype would be an expression of hegemonic masculinity. And that hegemonic masculinity would not be disrupted simply by the possibility that a woman could potentially occupy the role. Hence, libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse on archetypes is reflected in public-facing discourse – particularly when it comes to the "rapist" archetypes. However, Miller and Devon's conflation of "victimization" with "supreme femininity" compromises some of the complexity that keeps the archetypes from being read as patriarchal performances. The public-facing discourses adhere more clearly to hegemonic sex and gender norms by assigning conventional meaning to sexual activities and concomitant body parts. The patterns that emerge around anatomy and sexual activity, domination, and submission express sexism in the way rape is being fantasized about and "played" with.

The physicality of the "brute" archetype demonstrates that bodies and meanings given to bodies are a key part of public-facing discourse about rape play. In public-

facing discourse on rape play, rape is typically defined around the penetration of an orifice by a penis or dildo. Often the language assumes a penis is involved because anything that does not fall into the penis-orifice penetration framework receives elaborate definition, such as considering how women will "rape" men. Libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse is critical of the way sadomasochistic sexual activity, including rape play, employs conventional attitudes about what sexual activities and concomitant body parts connote domination and what activities connote submission. "Getting hard" – whether that is a penis or a dildo – and penetrating is still dominant whereas being penetrable and penetrated is still submissive. Libertarian/"sex positive" feminism maintains that dominant and submissive dynamics are desirable, and even inevitable, but that those dynamics can be and should be realized in a way that doesn't adhere to the meanings conventionally assigned to sex acts. And while the liberal/"sex positive" feminist interest in challenging the meaning to sexual activity and concomitant body parts is compelling, the three guidebooks that give attention to anatomy and sexual activity show that this can't be done while maintaining dynamics of domination and submission. I posit that the discord between the public-facing and libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse on anatomy, sexual activity, domination, and submission is because the liberal/"sex positive" feminist assertion that sex acts can be queered while maintaining a dominant/submissive dynamic is an abstraction; it did not grow out of practice and does not influence the way rape play is conceptualized – even for libertarian/"sex positive" feminist, Patrick Claifia, as evidenced by his narrative, which I will analyze in the next chapter.

Miller and Devon give attention to rape play as "forced" oral sex, particularly gagging blow jobs, "forced" vaginal sex, and "forced" anal sex (90). Furthermore, Miller and Devon imply that "forced" oral sex is about dominating through penetration, or "forcing the penis deeper than is easily accommodated" (90). Remember, Miller and Devon have given a disclaimer about the application of their own dynamics to the activity, so perhaps the penile penetration they include in their definition of "forced" oral sex is a matter of semantics. However, Warren makes a statement about "forced" oral sex that maintains penetration as the dominant act, even if it is a woman "forcing" oral sex, which suggests that Miller and Devon's definition is not merely a matter of semantics. Warren's directive to have "the male submissive…forced to suck the object of his defilement before being penetrated" (128) maintains hegemonic gender by, again, framing the penetrator as dominant and penetrated as submissive. This statement also makes the point that penetrating expresses dominance because penises (or in this case a fake penis/dildo) are tools for degradation. This is consistent with the idea that sex degrades women.[50] Emphasis on domination through penetration and degradation are not confined to "forced" oral sex; Miller and Devon assert that "[f]orced vaginal and anal sex is similar [to "forced" oral sex]" (90). This scant definition of "forced" vaginal and anal sex is not unlike the amount of attention Warren and Ravenstone give to defining "rape" – particularly male-on-female "rape."

[50] Gayle Rubin asserts that sex negativity is the most significant assumption about sex that inhibits the development of a radical theory of sex. Rubin connects Christianity to sex negativity: "Western cultures generally consider sex to be a dangerous, destructive, negative force. Most Christian tradition holds that sex is inherently sinful" (529). Similarly, Jane Caputi locates sex negativity within Christian doctrine. Caputi ultimately claims that the Church's sex negativity was and is responsible for the attitude and popular imagery that prostitution is gross but socially useful: "A belief in male sexual filth was a major factor underlying the attitude of the early Catholic Church fathers toward prostitution. Which they understood as gross but socially useful" (Caputi, "Take Back What Doesn't Belong to Me" 7).

Warren explicitly defines female-on-male rape, but for male-on-female rape, suggests that the reader already understands it is about "forced" penile penetration of an orifice, particularly the vagina, by stating that "[o]ne of the hottest parts [of the rape play] is the final unveiling [of a woman's genitals]. The panties have to be cut off" (126). Likewise, Ravenstone understands a "good bare-bones template" (43) for rape play to be one that resonates with the predominant cultural ideas and images about rape: a surprise attack, probably by a stranger, that involves penetration. Ravenstone explains this template as one where "[t]he ravisher grabs and restrains a thrashing ravishee, then 'forces' sex on him or her" (43). In many ways, male-on-female rape play, which is scantily defined because there's a presumed shared understanding of the activity, can best be understood by examining the advice for female-on-male rape play. Female-on-male rape play is often geared towards getting it to resemble male-on-female rape.

Warren explains to heterosexual female "rapists" that "[t]he rape of a male submissive can be done in two ways: forced genital or oral intercourse, or anal rape with a dildo" (127-8). Warren goes on to suggest a strap-on dildo for a woman over a hand-held one because the hand-held ones "somehow seem less complete" (128). What can be deducted here is that a dildo becomes increasingly meaningful the more it resembles male physiology. Likewise, male anatomy when a man is playing the "victim" becomes increasingly meaningful the more it can be understood as resembling female anatomy and that is why, while anal "rape" is not the only way female-on-male rape is constructed, anal "rape" is given disproportionate attention. Rape-play educator Minax articulates the idea that a man's anus is physiologically comparable to woman's vagina within a rape play class description: "We will primarily focus on violating male bodies, but all genders

will be covered, and anal rape will receive special attention since it equalizes us" (www.thunderinthemountains.com). Even though Minax and Warren are talking about female-on-male rape, the point is to try and make it look as much like male-on-female rape as possible through the construction of bodies and physiology of consummation.

The efforts to model "rape" on male-on-female dynamics, even when it is a female "raping" a male, point to the way homophobia and heteronormativity are at play in these scenarios. That is, the ability for anal "rape" to so successfully subordinate a "straight" man points to the dominance feminist perspective on sexist oppression, which argues that sexuality organizes society into two classes of people (which we typically know as men and women), that heterosexuality is the predominant structure of this organization, and gender its social process (MacKinnon, "Desire and Power" 258). Therefore, men can be feminized through sex acts that have been socially constructed to confer submission. The cultural aversion to men engaging in what has been socially constructed as feminine (and therefore denigrated) is typically expressed as homophobia and reinforces the heteronormativity it is based in. Even clothing can, sometimes, contribute to making female-on-male rape look more like male-on-female rape.

Warren suggests that "[f]or an added bit of excitement, a bit of forced cross-dressing fits well with the general theme of the entertainment [female-on-male rape]" (128). And likely, it would not be just any garb from a women's department, but the items that are almost uniformly donned by submissives to connote sexual availability – a cornerstone of eroticized submission: "Stiletto heels, stockings and garter belt, a short, tight skirt, and a shaved pubis are so commonly required by doms that we refer to it as the submissive uniform. This submissive slut costume is an expression of lascivious

yearnings and availability" (Miller, Devon 196). Liberal/"sex positive" feminist discourse would not frame the submissive uniform as sexist, either on a male body or female body, because:

> Even when a fetish costume exaggerates the masculine or feminine attributes of the wearer, it cannot properly be called sexist. Our society strives to make masculinity in men and femininity in women appear natural and biologically determined. Fetish costumes violate this rule by being too theatrical and deliberate. Since fetish costumes may also be used to transform the gender of the wearer, they are a further violation of sexist standards for sex-specific dress and conduct. (Califia, "A Secret Side" 176)

The implication of Califia's statement is that fetish costumes are consistent with S/M foundations of queered meanings and therefore potentially subversive to hegemonic gender. And as potentially counter-hegemonic, fetish costumes can be empowering for the wearer of any gender. However, while a man donning women's attire is counter-hegemonic, the association of women's attire with the "victim" role (even if the "victim" is a man) is not, according to dominance feminism, because "woman" is defined by powerlessness/a submissive role. Hence, the libertarian/"sex positive" feminist position on fetish costumes may be valid in many situations – even some instances of rape play – but does not account for all the implications of a statement like Warren's, especially considering Warren does not suggest the man cross dress when acting as a "rapist." Another way clothing (or lack thereof) is used to facilitate "rapist" and "victim"

dynamics is through nudity's association with submission while remaining clothed confers dominance.

An example of the nude/clothed split in public-facing discourse is Ravenstone's point that the "victim's" clothing should be "easy to remove or undo" (47), while his personal preference, as the "rapist," is "solid black [clothing] from head to toe, perhaps wearing a mask to cover facial features" (47). This nude/clothed split is not restricted to heterosexual rape play and the connotations of nudity with submission and concealing clothing with dominance hold fast in queer S/M too. In "A Secret Side of Lesbian Sexuality," an article in the "sex positive" feminist book, *Public Sex: The Culture of Radical Sex,* Califia reveals that during a scene "[a]s soon as the door is locked behind us, I order her [the submissive] to strip. In my room, there is no such thing as causal nudity. When I take away a woman's clothing, I am temporarily denying her humanity with all its privileges and responsibilities" (163). Califia clearly articulates the way a lack of clothing, like fetish wear, connotes sexual availability and is therefore a way to clearly delineate the roles and power differentials. Though unlike the theatrical fetish costumes, nudity vs. being clothed is not as conducive to queered meanings. Instead, the fusion of nudity and full cover to the "victim" and "rapist" roles is consistent with the Western dualism of mind and body and its associations with hegemonic gender.

Val Plumwood argues that dualism "results from a certain kind of denied dependency on a subordinate other….Dualism can also be seen as an alienated form of differentiation, in which power construes and constructs difference in terms of an inferior and alien real," (41-2). For example, nature and culture are a dualism in which humans, i.e. "power," construe and construct non-human life as alien, inferior, and completely

separate from human life, thereby creating both what is “nature” (non-human) and “culture” (human). So, clearly, dualistic thinking is more than difference or dichotomy. A dualism is even more than a hierarchical relationship because of the possibility for contingency in hierarchy. Instead, “[a] dualism is an intense, established and developed cultural expression of such a hierarchical relationship constructing central cultural concepts and identities so as to make equality and mutuality literally unthinkable” (Plumwood 47). The body is systematically and pervasively constructed as separate from and inferior to the mind, which it has been and continues to be in social and cultural institutions.[51] When a mind/body dualism is placed onto the dominant/“rapist” and submissive/“victim” through associations with nudity and concealment, the roles fail to express queered meanings in terms of words and roles.

In "The Limits of the S/M Relationship, or Mr. Benson Doesn't Live Here Anymore," Califia attempts to re-establish the libertarian/“sex positive” feminist ideals of queered meanings by challenging dominants/“rapists” to get in touch with their “bottom side” (232) by eliminating shame about nudity: “It’s interesting that a group of people who are so fond of challenging erotic taboos seem to be unable to break through this very basic barrier and eliminate shame about being naked and getting touched” (225). It’s curious that Califia finds tops’ reluctance to get naked “interesting” when he himself, in a different article, so clearly associated nudity with submission. Nevertheless, this article is a good effort at challenging hegemonic ideas about clothing and nudity; however, it ultimately fails because it perpetuates the idea that nudity connotes submission because Califia suggests that dominants should allow themselves a degree of submission/their

[51] Bordo 1-20; Tuana

"bottom side." Hence, libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse evidences why fetish clothing could, potentially, be compatible with feminism, but fails to do so with the nude/clothed split. Instead, nudity and clothing expresses the Western mind/body dualism.

Yet Califia is cognizant of the way hegemonic gender is perpetuated by sadomasochists, such as Miller and Devon, Ravenstone, and Warren, who consistently frame penetrating as dominant and being penetrated as submissive and challenges the S/M community to disrupt these associations. Califia writes:

> Thanks to the women's movement, we no longer believe that biology is destiny. But I sometimes wonder if we have not transferred many of our old gender patterns to the top/bottom dynamic….We still assume that being penetrated is a submissive act and sticking it in is dominant. Pleasure is still assumed to degrade and disenfranchise women….I think we should be challenging the very meanings that we assign all sexual acts. This is the truly radical potential of S/M. (230)

Certainly, challenging the meaning assigned to sex acts does have the potential to resist sex negativity and take part in what Rubin calls "the development of a radical theory of sex" (529). And implicit in Califia's statement is that a dominant/submissive dynamic is consistent with a radical theory of sex. He further suggests that a dominant/submissive dynamic is desirable and is even inevitable. The inevitability of a dominant/submissive dynamic is articulated in many libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourses on S/M.[52] Califia participates in a paradigm that assumes the inevitability of dominance and

[52] Newmahr 118; Truscott 28-32

submission; his point is that *how* sex acts come to be perceived as dominant or submissive or *which* sex acts come to express dominance and submission can and should be queered in order to disrupt hegemonic gender and sex negativity, which is the truly radical potential of S/M.

The public-facing discourses' attitudes toward bodies and "forced" sexual activity in no way showed that sexual activities, such as penetrating and/or being penetrated, could resist conventional meaning (domination and submission, respectively) and still be used in eroticized domination and submission. Public-facing discourse evidenced a transfer of "old gender patterns," albeit sometimes by female-bodied people onto male-bodied people, onto the "rapist" and "victim" roles. The "old gender patterns" in the public-facing discourses suggest that practitioners recognize dominance and submission through meanings already assigned to sex acts; if sex acts' meanings are queered, practitioners won't be able to recognize (and get off on) the dominance and submission of their practice.

Libertarian/"sex positive" feminism is critical of sadomasochistic activities that maintain the meanings conventionally assigned sex acts; instead, libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse holds that eroticized domination and submission can (and should) be developed along with the re-assignment of meaning to sexual activities and concomitant body parts. However, as I will show in the next chapter, Califia is not able to both re-assign meaning to sexual activities and body parts and produce an erotic narrative about rape play. Califia's narrative highlights the ways that, while the libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse about the re-assignment of meaning is

compelling, it does not reflect the way domination and submission is legible to practitioners, including Califia, which is through "old gender patterns."

Emotional and/or Psychological Authenticity

Public-facing discourse frequently asserts that power imbalance in rape play is contrived; rape play is theater or fantasy. Warren counters a reader's potential concerns about desiring rape play by saying "[b]esides, this is a *fantasy*" (124). And Ravenstone speaks not just for himself, but for the entire S/M community, as he claims that the second tenet of the S/M credo: "safe, sane, and consensual," *means* "knowing the difference between reality and fantasy" (13). Their points resonate with libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse on the line between fantasy and reality, which clearly articulates that S/M is fantasy, even when, paradoxically, being experienced as reality.

Newmahr claims that "[a]t its core, the link between SM participants is a quest for a sense of authenticity in experiences of power imbalance. In order to achieve this, participants must suspend belief in their own egalitarian relations for the duration of the scene. When this is successful the sense of power imbalance *feels* real" (72). In other words, when a dominant/"rapist" role or a submissive/"victim" role feels real, which is desirable, the experience is understood as "authentic." And that authentic experience of power imbalance is achieved by fantasy/the deliberate suspension of equality. Newmahr's point about authenticity is made in Williams's guidebook, *The Toybag Guide to Playing With Taboo*, where she speaks to the possibility that "[a]t some point during any intense role-playing scene, you may well encounter that moment where the 'reality'

and the 'role' seamlessly mesh. For one moment in that daddy/girl scene, you may really tap into that dark nature of the abusive parent" (14). And likewise, you may tap into the powerlessness of the girl you are playing, which is actually an aim of the submissive/victim role.

Since my aim is to explore possible relationships between power and identity in heterosexual rape play that confirm or, conversely, subvert hegemonic gender and other status power relations, the question becomes: if psychological and/or emotional authenticity is desirable, can a woman "rapist"/man "victim" dynamic achieve this "authenticity" as successfully as a man "rapist"/woman "victim"? If so, that would suggest that the relationship between power and identity does not confirm and may even subvert hegemonic gender. But if not, it would seem there is a relationship between power and identity that confirms hegemonic gender.

Gloria Brame (et al.) finds that when it comes to erotic coercion, "[i]f the dominant is convincingly stern, or if other elements – such as pain or bondage – are involved, the submissive believes, within the moment (and often long after the moment has passed), in the dominant's absolute authority" (81). Her findings would suggest that suspension of egalitarian relations does not occur through just a mindset, but through the tangible experiences of sternness, pain, and bondage, among other things. So to consider the impact of identities on authenticity, it would be appropriate to ruminate on the way the "rapist's" and "victim's" identities may impact the "rapist's" ability to be stern, administer pain, apply bondage, etc., when it comes to rape play, specifically.

Libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse describes the S/M arena as free of pre-determined power relations; neither the dominant/"rapist's" nor

submissive/"victim's" social identities impact their interests in certain moods, sensations, etc., nor their ability to either mutually realize them or have the dominant/"rapist" administer them. If a dominant/"rapist" was say, to be interested in a certain scene or activity with someone whom they perceived as a social inferior as a way to express their adherence to sexism, heterosexism, classism, racism, etc., guidebook author Mollena Williams, for one, would advise against "playing" with them. Williams calls people who combine intolerance with S/M those people who have/do "live(d) the role." Williams, a Black woman, recounts finding out that a man she was considering doing a race play[53] scene with had white supremacist tattoos. Williams decided not to do the scene because "I won't say it is a hard limit…but playing on a knife edge with someone who has actually lived the role you are playing adds a layer of complexity I am very hesitant to navigate. I would have a real splinter of doubt about his motives that would make the prospect of play a bit tricky for me" (23-4). Williams is basically saying that some practitioners have "lived the role," such as the man with white supremacist tattoos, and implying that other practitioners do not or have not "live(d) the role." Furthermore, she suggests that an authentic and therefore pleasurable experience can (and perhaps should) be had with someone to whom social identities are not influencing the desired mood, sensations, and activities.

Dominance feminists would, on the other hand, hold that social identity remains relevant to an S/M role, whether or not that appears to be the case, because the concepts of "man" and "woman" are, under patriarchy, only salient as expressions of power and

[15] Race play is "any type of play that openly embraces and explores the (either 'real' or assumed) racial identity of the players within the context of a BDSM scene. The prime motive in a 'Race Play' scene is to underscore and investigate the challenges of racial or cultural differences" (Williams 70).

powerlessness. One could not say, for instance, that they desire a woman "victim," but one who has not "lived the role" because that would render "woman" meaningless. A hegemonically feminine "victim" and a hegemonically masculine "rapist" would have both "lived the role," whether or not they considered themselves to actually be a rape victim or rapist because "rape is, in fact simple, straightforward heterosexual behavior in a male-dominated society" (Dworkin, *Intercourse* 84). So if "man" and "woman" remain intelligible and therefore relevant to S/M, what's the impact of gender identity on the ability to induce emotional and psychological authenticity? I'm going to explore that by looking at the way gender identity impacts a woman's ability to be physically assertive in the context of "forced" sexual activity.

Sharon Marcus and Virginie Despentes posit that when it comes to actual sexual violence, normative gender has negatively impacted women's ability to fight or resist. When Despentes was raped, she did not physically resist because sexual assault offers women a subject position of fear, as Marcus would say (375). Meaning:

> Defending my own body did not allow me to injure a man….Little girls are trained never to hurt men, and women are called back in line each time they don't respect the order. Aileen Wuornos's death sentence was a message to all of us. I am not furious with myself for not having dared to kill one of them [the rapist]. I am furious with a society that has educated me without ever teaching me to injure a man if he pulls my thighs apart against my will, when that same society has taught me that this is a crime from which I will never recover. (44).

The fear-based subject position women are trained to occupy would not necessarily apply to non-sexual violations. Despentes is "convinced that if they'd been trying to steal our jackets instead, my reaction would have been different" (44). The point is, it is sexual violence, specifically, where normative gender has negatively impacted women's ability to be physically assertive.

Rape and rape play are, admittedly, different things because rape play works to ensure consensuality and mutuality. But what if the line between fantasy and reality in rape play is like that described by Maria Marcus? Marcus explains that she does not want an "erotic Samaritan," meaning pure fantasy:

> A man who does that [dominate] for money or out of friendliness would certainly lack the inner glow needed for it to be serious – without it becoming too serious….Another question is whether the sadist has any use for me at all. It would be more logical if he preferred someone who hated it, rather than one who liked it. Presumably the truth lies somewhere in between, that he prefers someone who is in agreement – so at intervals he can overstep the boundaries of the agreement. (221)

Marcus wants a degree of seriousness, meaning a degree of legitimate, not contrived domination. Likewise, she believes a dominant would also like a degree of seriousness, meaning legitimate submission. An interest in a degree of legitimate domination or submission would mean that power imbalance is not entirely about the suspension of egalitarian relationships, but somewhat dependent on the each person "living the role," that is, on hegemonic gender. Marcus is not denying that S/M involves some suspension of egalitarian relations, nor is she saying that S/M is simply a manifestation of sexism,

racism, etc. She is saying that "the truth lies somewhere in between." In short, social identity does factor somewhat into developing a satisfying scene.

For rape play, because it is about sexual "force," women would be less effective administrators of the physicality that could affect the emotional and psychological authenticity that would make it satisfying. Women's physical restraint may not be so with other sorts of domination; Despentes, for one, knew that she could be physically assertive in other, non-sexual, situations. But women would make more satisfying "victims" than men because their gender identity enables the "rapist" to "overstep" without halting the scene. Women have been trained to not stop sexual violation.

Not all public-facing discourses acknowledge the desirability of authenticity, or perhaps those discourses understand authenticity to be, as Newmahr explained, completely contrived and therefore a part of fantasy. But Williams's guidebook does highlight the possibility and desirability of authentic emotional and psychological experiences. This discourse about authenticity points to a relationship between identity and power in heterosexual rape play that confirms hegemonic gender. That is, hegemonically masculine men make more effective and satisfying "rapists" to women and hegemonically feminine women make more effective and satisfying "victims" to men. When it comes to rape play, there is a positive relationship between gender identity and mechanisms for inducing emotional and psychological authenticity, which is a desirable quality to both parties.

In conclusion, the way language is used in the public-facing discourse is consistent with libertarian/"sex positive" feminist assertion that S/M, including rape play, is potentially compatible with feminism. The language is either gender neutral or, if there

are language patterns in terms of gender and role, the patterns are set off with a disclaimer by the author about their own dynamics or perspective being used in order to simplify the writing. The disclaimer enables the reader to appropriate the guidebook ideas to their own dynamics and expresses the libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse that the S/M arena is free of pre-determined power relations.

"Rapist" archetypes included in the public-facing discourses express complexity and variation in terms of how masculine/self-absorbed or feminine/self-negating they are. Libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse suggests that this same range is open to submissive/"victim" archetypes, which is neither proven nor contradicted by a guidebook that only articulates one "victim" archetype (the "good girl"), but leaves open the possibility that there are others. Furthermore, the "good girl" archetype participates in hegemonic norms in terms of race and possibly in terms of gender; the description of the archetype is immediately followed by a conflation of "victimization" with "supreme femininity" that deflates the possibility that a "victim" archetype could express masculinity. In the next chapter I will explore the incorporation of "rapist" archetypes into the narratives on rape play and ascertain the consequence of their attendant masculinity/self-absorption and/or femininity/self-negation.

The patterns that emerge in terms of anatomy, sexual activity, domination, and submission in the public-facing discourses clearly display that hegemonic gender is operative in rape play; male physiology is presented as the model "rapist" (even if it is a woman), and female physiology is presented as the model "victim" (even if it is a man). The association between penetrating and dominance and being penetrated and submission expresses a reliance on conventional notions of gender and power. Patrick Califia

criticizes this reliance and contends that eroticized domination and submission can operate outside of these "old gender patterns," though the guidebooks show no evidence of that possibility. My analysis of the narratives in the next chapter will further test the possibility that anatomy, sexual activity, domination, and submission could resist hegemonic gender/"old gender patterns."

Finally, the public-facing discourses' emphasis on emotional and psychological authenticity suggests that hegemonic gender is operative in rape play because of how authenticity is induced through sternness, pain, and bondage, among other things. Women would be less able to induce authenticity in rape play because normative gender negatively impacts women's ability to be physically assertive in the face of sexual violence. The way authenticity expresses the operation of hegemonic gender will be further illustrated in the next chapter as I examine the depiction of women's/victims' sexual desire, which is, among other things, for emotional and psychological authenticity.

CHAPTER THREE: RAPE PLAY NARRATIVES

In the last chapter I performed a discourse analysis of S/M guidebooks' advice about rape play to determine if the advice communicated a relationship between power and identity that confirmed or subverted hegemonic gender and other status power relations. In this chapter I will perform a discourse analysis of two narratives depicting a rape play scene to determine if the narratives present a relationship between power and identity that confirms or subverts hegemonic gender and other status power relations.

A discourse analysis of a "sample scene" by Desmond Ravenstone and "The Surprise Party" by Patrick Califia show that they have some key similarities to and differences from the public-facing discourse's depiction of the relationship between identity and power in heterosexual rape play. Key similarities between the narratives about rape play and S/M guidebooks' advice about rape play is that both employ attitudes toward human bodies and give meaning to sex acts that confirm hegemonic gender through mind/body dualism. A key difference between the guidebooks and the narratives lies in their discourse about archetypes. The guidebooks describe several archetypes that embody different degrees of masculinity and femininity on a scale hegemonic gender. This is further complicated by their possible adoption across genders, whereas the narratives both depict men employing what is arguably the most masculine archetype for

the "rapist." Also, in the guidebooks, the ambiguity in terms of personal pronouns or disclaimer from the author about the arbitrary nature of personal pronouns works to resist a relationship between power and identity that confers hegemonic gender. Conversely, in the narratives, personal pronouns are used in accordance with the female "victims" and male "rapists" in the stories. In other words, while readers may cross identify with characters in the narratives,[54] there is no overt, explicit effort to use language to resist a relationship between identity and power that confirms hegemonic gender. Hence, for the most part, the narratives about rape play communicate a relationship between identity and power that confirms hegemonic gender and other status power relations to a somewhat greater degree than do S/M guidebooks' advice about rape play.

As I said, the two narratives under examination are Desmond Ravenstone's "sample scene" from *Ravishment: The Dark Side of Erotic Fantasy* and Patrick Califia's short story, "The Surprise Party." Desmond Ravenstone's "sample scene" describes a "surprise home invasion" and "rape" with himself as the "rapist" and a woman he calls "Stacy" as the "victim." Ravenstone first describes aspects of the negotiation, such as the window of time they agreed that scene could occur (Stacy wanted Ravenstone to surprise her as to the exact day and time the scene would start), and the preparation measures taken, such as the satchel Ravenstone brings along that contains a vibrator, trauma shears, safer sex items, two canvas cargo straps (for restraining), and a first aid kit. Next, Ravenstone takes us through different sex acts. First, Ravenstone inserts a vibrator into

[54] In her book, *The Imaginary Domain*, Drucilla Cornell points out that "[i]n fantasy no subject can be assigned a fixed position. The fantasy structure of pornography allows the subject to participate in each one of the established positions. This explains why it is possible for powerful men to fantasize about taking up the position of a dominated Other, and for women to imagine themselves in the position of phallic agency, as the one who 'fucks' back. It explains the possible reversal" (133).

the "victim's" vagina, controlling the intensity until the "victim" orgasms. Then, Ravenstone takes a now-bound-and-naked "victim" into the kitchen where he interrogates her about the location of her (fictional) valuables as he makes himself a sandwich and then "rapes" her – vaginally, we are to presume: "I snarl, then pin her down and 'rape' her. She squirms and squeals: 'No, don't! Please don't cum in me!' 'Tell me where the money is! Tell me, or I will cum in you!' Finally, she tells me: 'It's under my bed! Please, stop, don't do this!'" (63). Ravenstone/the "rapist" then takes Stacy up to her room for some rest before the "finale," which they had negotiated would be anal "rape." During the anal "rape" Ravenstone inserts a "cock-shaped vibrator" (63) "into her vagina as I [Ravenstone] continued to fuck her anally. Stacy's orgasm made her whole body convulse" (64). After the anal "rape," one final paragraph describes that they cleaned up and that Ravenstone/the "rapist" "went downstairs to make some tea for us to drink as we cuddled and discussed what had transpired between us" (64).

"The Surprise Party" is a longer, more detailed narrative that starts with "kidnapping" the "victim," who is described as a biologically female "queer sort of queer" (282), off the street into a police car. The "victim" is then orally "raped" by Don, the "lead rapist," in the back of the squad car before they proceed to a desolate, non-descript room. In this room the two "trainees," Mike and Joe, orally "rape" her together, alternating "six strokes apiece, moving her from shaft to shaft" (299). By the end of this activity, Don is involved, masturbating Mike into the "victim's" mouth before Mike is forced by Don to eat his own ejaculate that has been captured in the condom. This oral "rape" that involved Don, Mike, and the "victim" (who remains unnamed), depicts the three-tiered hierarchy Califia has intentionally incorporated; the "victim" is subordinate

to Mike (as well as the other trainee) and Don, Mike is subordinate to Don (as is the other trainee), but in a dominant role relative to the "victim" (as is the other trainee), and Don is subordinate to nobody/in a dominant position relative to all the other characters. Next, Mike and Joe give the "victim" an enema, which turns into a sex act as "[t]hey [Mike and Joe] perched her on the toilet and….fucked her face while she shat again and again" (302). After the victim is "shoved under the shower" (303), Mike and Joe lick all the moisture off her body before arousing her for vaginal intercourse. Joe has vaginal intercourse with her first and then Mike does. The vaginal "rape" is depicted as pleasurable for the "victim" with Joe, but not Mike because Mike "was determined to make her pay for the humiliation Don had inflicted upon him in front of her [eating the ejaculate]" (309) by making the intercourse painful. Finally, the "victim" is put in a cage in order for Don to beat her butt with a belt and riding crop and anally "rape" her. The anal "rape" and both partners' subsequent orgasms constitute the pinnacle of the story, which is communicated through, among other things, the vivid description of the "victim's" orgasm as "a series of contradictions that actually pulled the clips off her tits and left her seeing exploding stars that faded into clouds of red mist" (316). Shortly after that climax, the characters fall asleep and in the morning Don brings the "victim" back to her house, which we find out he knows the location of because he is friends with the "victim" and the "victim's" girlfriend, Fran. The "rape" had been arranged by Fran as a surprise birthday present for the "victim" based her sexual fantasies, which she had told Fran. The story ends with the "victim" considering "returning the favor" and throwing Don a "surprise party" for his birthday.

Each narrative starts with the initiation of the "rape," follows the characters through several different sex acts – each one culminating in anal sex – and concludes as the characters enter into the "aftercare" of the scene. Each narrative is describing heterosexual rape play with a woman as the "victim" and a man or men as the "rapist(s)." While Califia is explicit about the characters' mutual homosexuality in his narrative, I will be arguing that the primary dynamic in the scene is a heterosexual one between the three men/"rapists" and the woman/"victim"; the expressed homosexuality does not mitigate the centrality of heterosexual sexual activity within the narrative.

I will be basing my argument on the fact that the categories of "man" and "woman" remain meaningful and are applied to the "rapists" and "victim," respectively. However, the consequence of the mutual homosexuality in a story about sexual intercourse is that the meaning of "gay" or "lesbian" is queered; homosexuality does not mean that one only has sexual relations with people of one's own sex. Because "gay" and "lesbian" are queered, characters' sex may become irrelevant to readers. I will show that this disruption to the sex/gender system is Califia's intention, but also that it is not fully realized. Still, the intention of the author and possible interpretation on the part of readers makes "The Surprise Party" a complex narrative to use in a thesis about heterosexual rape play.

One significant difference between the narratives is their purpose. Ravenstone's narrative is a part of his rape play guidebook and is still working to educate readers about how to safely, sanely, and consensually practice rape play. The instructional component of Ravenstone's narrative is evidenced in his overt descriptions of words as codes for previously agreed-upon directives. For instance, "no more" is described as a previously

agreed-upon code for "go further": "'No more!' she kept saying – again, a code to go in further each time" (Ravenstone 63). Califia's narrative, on the other hand, is part of his seminal book of lesbian, S/M erotica, *Macho Sluts*, and is, accordingly, working to titillate readers. Perhaps because authentic psychological and emotional experiences within S/M scenes are desirable to S/M practitioners,[55] Califia was playing to desire by making his narrative of rape play authentic – that is, making it a narrative of what is presented at first to the reader as a real rape.

The initial presentation of this S/M scene as an actual assault must be considered alongside the narrative's genre, erotic fiction. Because the narrative is erotic fiction, it has a more obvious and perhaps actual relationship to readers' fantasies than practitioners' enactments of rape play. That is, because this narrative is erotic fiction, unlike Ravenstone's narrative, which is still instructing to some extent, it says more about how rape play is being fantasized about than being enacted. And there might be great disparity in how "rape" is fantasized about as opposed to enacted; more research could be done on the relationship between fantasy and enactment in rape play.

Califia's narrative forgoes attention to the ways rape play scenes are mutually and consensually conceived and executed, i.e. he gives no indication of what words are codes for previously agreed-upon directives and he obscures the way the sexual activity is situated within an S/M context at all until the very end. In other words, Califia's rape play narrative appears to be a narrative of legitimate gang rape until the end when the reader finds out that the characters are familiar with each other and there was some negotiation ahead of time. However, the negotiation was between the "rapists" and the

[55] Newmahr 72; Ravenstone 62; Williams 14

"victim's" girlfriend based on what the "victim" had told her girlfriend of her sexual fantasies. Because the "victim" never partook in negotiations, the question remains, even after it is clear that the narrative is of an S/M encounter: was this really a rape?

Because of these narratives' different purposes, the depictions of power are different in ways that will engage both libertarian/"sex positive" and dominance or radical feminist discourses on matters of identity and power. That is, the rape play narratives can and will be examined in terms of the ways power is disconnected from identity and the ways words, roles, symbols, etc. are "queered" and therefore do not carry conventional meaning, which are both tenets of libertarian/"sex positive" feminism.[56] And the rape play narratives can and will be examined in terms of the way power – or lack thereof – *defines* identity according to hegemonic gender norms, which is a central tenet of dominance or radical feminist discourse.[57]

I will argue that the rape play narratives articulate overt female desire, which in and of itself resists hegemonic gender norms, but that the desire at work here is for as realistic a rape play scene as possible, which, paradoxically, recuperates women's desire within men's desire. The idea that women desire whatever men desire is a cornerstone of hegemonic gender[58] and the first of three ways that the relationship between identity and power in the rape play narratives confirms hegemonic gender. The other two ways that hegemonic gender is confirmed in the rape play narratives are: 1) archetypes maintain a

[56] Brame et al. 72, 78; Bauer 234; Califia, "Feminism and Sadomasochism" 174; Farr 189; Weinberg and Kamel 19, 21; Weinberg 121, 129, 131

[57] Dworkin, *Intercourse*; MacKinnon, "Difference and Dominance: On Sex Discrimination"

[58] Lynn Chancer in her book Sadomasochism in Everyday Life asserts that "women have been taught that their own route to power…lies along the path of winning some type of approval and sense of legitimacy from others, from men….Paradoxically, then, deference to the other's power and ability to affect one's life may become the only means for forging a vicarious, if estranged, relationship to self" (27). Consequently, patriarchy causes women to believe that exertions of the man's will are more important than her own (Chancer 57).

self-absorbed/self-negating gender binary and hegemonically masculine imagery and 2) mind/body dualism is linked with the man/woman binary and used to effect the "rapist"/"victim" dynamic. Perhaps the concerns libertarian/"sex positive" feminists – including Patrick Califia himself – have about the maintenance of hegemonic gender within S/M roles, as discussed in the last chapter, are not addressed through rape play narratives because rape cannot be conceptualized and recognized apart from hegemonic gender and other status power relations.[59] This brings us to the paradoxical position of the "victims'" desires within the rape play narratives.

Hegemonic Gender and Desire

Public-facing and libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourses recognize that S/M scenes, including rape play scenes, are mostly based on the submissive's/"victim's" fantasies.[60] But the submissive's/"victim's" sexual desires are much more legible in narrative form. The legibility of desire becomes especially significant because in both the Califia and Ravenstone narratives the "victim" is a woman and active desire subverts hegemonic femininity.

Ravenstone begins the narrative telling the reader that "[t]he ravishee in question, whom I will call 'Stacy,' had long fantasized about a masked intruder breaking into her home to overpower and take her sexually while robbing her. To add to the sense of realism, she wanted this to be done without advance warning" (62). In short, it is

[59] Sharon Marcus defines rape as "a sexualized and gendered attack which imposes sexual difference along the lines of violence" (377). Similarly, Virginie Despentes describes rape as "the very definition of femininity, 'the body that can be taken by force and must remain defenseless'" (38).

[60] Califia, "The Limits of the S/M Relationship" 232, Miller and Devon 33; Ravenstone 47; Weinberg and Kamel 19, 129

"Stacy's" desire that is directing the scene. "Stacy" has "want" – of realism and a masked intruder. The "victim" in Califia's story is also regularly described as "wanting." For instance, the "victim" is said to want her "rapist's" penises: "He pointed his cock at her. 'Want it?' he asked. She did. And she could not lie. Why bother in the face of death? 'Yes, sir.' Two words, and the whole world changed. She was now an actor, not a victim" (Califia, "The Surprise Party" 290). I will get into the nature of the characters' "want" shortly, but first I would like to consider the potential (notice I say *potential*) of women's wanting/desire.

Women can potentially resist hegemonic gender by realizing sexual desire because sexual desire is a form of will. And women's will is incongruous with social organization, such as patriarchy, that denies one group of people independence (women) and denies another group of people dependence (men).[61] Michael Bronski asserts that S/M scenes can be a way for practitioners to experience and value their wills: "when fantasy becomes reality…we experience the power we can have over our own lives" (63). And the valuation of will/power over our own lives is particularly important for women because "women traditionally have been taught to devalue their wills, to believe that they cannot achieve their will through their own power, and even to suspect that the assertion of will is evil" (Christ 216). Carol Christ credits patriarchal religion with enforcing the view that women's initiative and will are evil and dangerous and does not credit S/M with the ability to re-value will; rather, Christ believes that women must develop religious symbolism and "thealogy" congruent with their experiences. Nonetheless,

[61] Lynn Chancer asserts that "[t]hese needs [autonomy and connection, dependence and independence] may be sundered by the demands of capitalism, or of patriarchy, or of any other form of social organization that does not recognize the importance of both parts of human existence, rendering one group of class predominantly dependent and the other predominantly independent (139).

Christ explains the widespread devaluation of women's wills and articulates why it is important to resist this manifestation of patriarchy.

Jane Caputi speaks to the potential of desire in her article, "The Pornography of Everyday Life," when she rejects the notion that "modesty" or erotic reticence is the solution to what has become erotically charged in a worldview based on binaries: taboo violation. Instead "[t]he feminist challenge is to recognize the fundamental identity of the two systems [pornography and mainstream morality, which stem from and continually reinforce the binaries] and to make a different world altogether" (Caputi, "The Pornography of Everyday Life" 76). So the question becomes: does the articulation of women's desires in the narratives resist binaries that are part of a patriarchal worldview or reinforce them? Certainly expressions of women's will could break down the man/woman binary because "woman" is usually coded as self-negating (no will). But what about when a woman's will is the will to be over-powered by a man, reciprocate his sexual initiations, or establish realism in rape play? When being ineffectual in resistance or sexually responsive are expressions of women's will, do those expressions, paradoxically, subvert the potential of women's will/desire? The depictions of women's desire in pornography and mainstream morality parallel the expressions of women's desire/will in the rape play narratives, which suggests the narratives' expressions of desire do not create different world altogether, as Jane Caputi would suggest.

Carol Christ asserts that "[p]atriarchal religion has enforced the view that female initiative and will are evil through the juxtaposition of Eve and Mary. Eve caused the fall by asserting her will against the commands of God, while Mary began the new age with her response to God's initiative 'Let it be done to me according to Thy word' (Luke

1:38)" (217). In other words, Eve's will was evil because it was independent of and, incidentally, against God, who is, in the cultural imaginary, male, and Mary's will was good because it was the will to be acquiescent to a male God. Mary *does* have a will, but her will is to be "done to" and to be compliant. Similarly, "[p]orn sex assumes that women are turned on by what turns men on, so if he enjoys pounding anal sex, then she does too" (Dines 114). Porn sex (as well as rape play) has a "let it be done to me according to thy word" philosophy that would make Mary an ideal porn star. And again, this is not because the women in porn are depicted as having no will, but rather because women in porn are depicted as having the will or desire to do whatever it is the man wants to do. This is, in a sense, the will to have no will.

The depictions of desire in the Califia and Ravenstone narratives, which include the desires to be sexually overpowered and/or sexually responsive, are expressions of will, but they are expressions of the will for "Thy word." ("Thy word" being the male partners' sexual initiation and force.) Hence, the narratives do not situate the women as simply victims; they do have will. However, the narratives do not situate the women as independent actors either. Califia was wrong to assume, as he does when the "victim" responds positively to her "rapist's" initiation of "forced" oral sex, making her "an actor, not a victim" (290), that if you're not an actor, you're a victim/if you're not a victim, you're an actor. Susan Bordo claims that women who get breast augmentation are "neither dupes nor critics of sexist culture; rather, their overriding concern is their right to be desired, loved, and successful on its terms" (20). Similarly, the depictions of desire/will in the narratives situate the women as socially adept in a patriarchal society rather than as pure victims or agents of resistance. It could even be said that the

depictions of desire/will in the rape play narratives situate the women as "good" women in a patriarchal world in the same way that Mary is the "good" biblical woman. Hence, the expressions of desire/will in the Ravenstone and Califia narratives do not actualize the potential for women's will/desire to resist hegemonic gender and create a different, non-patriarchal world.

Another expression of desire/will that confirms hegemonic gender is "Stacy's" desire for "realism" in the rape play scene. A realistic rape play scene would confirm hegemonic gender because "rape is one of culture's many modes of feminizing women. A rapist chooses his target because he recognizes her to be a woman, but a rapist also strives to imprint the gender identity of 'feminine victim' on his target. A rape act thus imposes as well as presupposes misogynist inequalities" (Marcus 373). In other words, rape is one of the ways hegemonic femininity is created. Hence, "Stacy's" desire to be a "victim" in a realistic rape play scene would confirm hegemonic femininity because that desire itself actually is the product of the rape culture. The other key point of Marcus's idea is that for misogynist inequalities to be imposed, they must also be presupposed. Misogynist inequalities must be used, i.e. "presupposed," in rape play to make it realistic enough to confer hegemonic femininity. The misogynist inequalities that were used in the narratives to effect realism include: archetypes that stem from and reinforce a self-absorbed/self-negating gender binary and hegemonically masculine imagery and pervasive, rigid mind/body dualism mapped onto the "rapist" and "victim" roles.

"Rapist" Archetypes and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity

In the last chapter I established that multiple guidebooks gave attention, either overtly or covertly, to the way archetypes[62] can be incorporated into a rape play scene. I also established that libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse frames these archetypes as representative of various expressions of masculinity and femininity, which can be further complicated by the gender identity of the person embodying the archetype, which need not necessarily be male. Therefore the personas, such as the "brute," "tormentor," and "seducer," cannot be understood as simply hegemonic gender. In both narratives archetypes were clearly used by "rapists" to suit and even establish the emotional theme of the scene. In both narratives the "rapists," who are all men, adopt archetypes that express either 1) the self(and other)-absorption characteristic of hegemonic masculinity, or 2) masculine solidarity, which would suggest that sexism is being "played" with or fantasized through them.

In Ravenstone's "sample scene," the "rapist" is described as a masked intruder who "rapes" the "victim" during the home robbery. The behavior involves some brute force, which film critic Molly Haskell once claimed as the last refuge of male supremacy, a reassuring stereotype as a sort of relief from the emotional upheaval women may experience in the process of equalization (Haskell 97-98). But the "rapist's" behavior is, by and large, sadistic; he prolongs the "assault" by leaving the "victim" naked, bound, and anxious as he, for instance, goes to the kitchen to make a sandwich (which was part of the scene, rather than a break from it). This means that Ravenstone is drawing

[62] "Archetype" refers to behavior that is adopted by a dominant/"rapist" or submissive/"victim" to suit the emotional theme of a particular scene. Often the behavior or persona that is adopted is also expressed through clothing/costuming (Newmahr 108-113; Ravenstone 47).

primarily on the "tormentor" archetype. The ways that the "rapist" is catering to the "victim" during the scene, which, if explicit, would express more of the "seducer" archetype – or undermine the scene altogether – is obscured in order to maintain the more masculine archetypes of "brute" and "tormentor."

In the Ravenstone narrative, the "rapist" caters to the "victim" while maintaining a sadistic, masculine persona through the incorporation of "queered" words. As discussed in the last chapter, when a word, symbol, or role is "queered," it comes to have a different and often opposite meaning from what it does conventionally (although "queering" might not always be successful; when the "victim" role operates largely by way of hegemonic femininity, for instance, shows that the "submissive" role is, in rape play, not particularly queer). What the meaning of the word or symbol will be during the scene is decided on ahead of time by the people participating in it. The Ravenstone narrative describes two phrases that were queered to mean something different from what they conventionally would, which allows the "victim" to provide direction without disrupting the masculine archetype of her "rapist." While in the kitchen, eating a sandwich in between "assaults," Ravenstone, as the "rapist" writes: "I ask her where her valuables are. She refuses to tell me, and then asks: 'Please, let me wear a pair of panties.' This is, in fact, a previously agreed code, and I follow along: 'No, you can't.' 'Why? Why won't you let me wear some panties?' 'I'll show you!' I snarl, then pin her down and 'rape' her" (Ravenstone 63). What this passage describes is the "victim" initiating the "rape" through the phrase "please, let me wear a pair of panties," to which the "rapist" "follows along" by "raping" her.

The other phrase the "victim" uses to direct activity is "No more," which is queered to mean "go further": "'No more!' she kept saying – again, a code to go in further each time" (Ravenstone 63). By describing "no more" as a code for directing activity, Ravenstone's narrative reflects a libertarian/"sex positive" perspective on why ritual, eroticized domination and submission has libratory and even subversive potential: roles and words mean different things than they do in the larger culture and it is often the submissive person that is actually in control/possesses a great deal of power. However, the fact that the directives ("no more" meaning "go further") are also effecting the appearance of force begs consideration of how sexism is reflected in the way rape is being "played" with. The sexist assertion that when women say "no" it actually means "yes" is, after all, a long-standing rape myth.[63]

The appearance of force as a result of the victim's directives reflects sexism in the way rape is being "played" with because it maintains a framework of a self-negating/self-absorbed gender binary, which is central to hegemonic gender. That is, the directives that produce the "force" enables the brutish, tormenting "rapist" to appear as if they are in no way catering to the "victim." If the "victim" were to use the word "pineapple," for instance, to mean "go further," or even some overt expression of desire,

[63] In a *Ms. Magazine* blog, Michael Kimmel comments on the Yale's Delta Kappa Epsilon fall 2010 fraternity chant "no means yes and yes means anal," saying that this chant is designed to make the campus feel unsafe for women *and* safe for men. Kimmel historicizes the "no means yes" chant as the latest in a long line of incidents, such as the 2006 incident where Yale fraternity men chanted similar phrases outside the Women's Center and the 2008 incident where Yale fraternity men carried signs outside the Women's Center saying "We Love Yale Sluts" – the Women's Center, not-so-coincidentally, being the place where a sense of safety is paramount to the purpose. Clearly, Kimmel contends, the chant and other similar occurrences are designed to make women feel they are not safe. Furthermore, Kimmel explains that the second part of the chant, "yes means anal," is to compensate for the possibility that a woman might say "yes" to sex and diminish the sense of victory hegemonic masculinity experiences from another's "defeat"; if anal sex is demeaning and un-pleasurable, it is a site for men to regain a sense of conquest and victory. Kimmel asserts that the second part of the chant makes sex "safe" again – i.e. confirms hegemonic masculinity – for men in a society where women are finding their sexual voice. (http://msmagazine.com/blog/blog/2010/10/17/the-men-and-women-of-yale/)

the "rapist" would not appear so self-absorbed. This would disrupt the gender binary/hegemonically masculine archetypes currently enabled by the alleged queering of "no more." It is also possible that if the "victim" used the word "pineapple" or some overt expression of desire to direct activity, the scene would no longer look and feel like a rape play scene. And that is why it is questionable that rape *could* be fantasized about or "played" with outside of sexism, classism, racism, heterosexism, etc. That is, it is questionable that power *could* be unfixed from identity in heterosexual rape play. Likewise, Califia's use of archetypes fails to challenge the way sexism is being fantasized about and "played" with in rape play.

Califia fuses the imagery of leathermen[64] and law enforcement to create a hyper-masculine archetype, which he deploys as three cops: one patrolman, Don, and two trainees, Mike and Joe. Califia highlights the attributes of cops that most reflect hegemonic masculinity as the "victim's" is "ogling" them: "Admit it [the "victim" thinking to herself], you've ogled the cops all your life. The uniforms, the guns, the muscles, the power to force others to obey" (286). The police imagery also adds the power differential between the state and the individual citizen to the "rapist"/"victim" dynamic by making the "rapists" cops and the "victim" a citizen.

[64] Mark Thompson, editor of the anthology *Leatherfolk: Radical Sex, People, Politics, and Practice* describes the origins of the leatherman identity as "a loose-knit fraternity of men who recognized themselves as social outcasts and began to organize….but it was the gay leatherman of the time who really cut the archetypal mold of sexual outlaw. By 1954 the first gay motorcycle club, the Satyrs, had formed in the United States….While not everyone associated with these early clubs had an interest in sadomasochism, they provided a welcoming space for men who did. The heavy leather garb of the biker (dictated by reasons of safety as much as anything else) became synonymous with the overt masculine attributes of its wearers. It was only natural then, for S/M code and ritual to be informed by the lore of these black-jacketed riders" (xviii-xix).

The institutionalized social roles of "cop" and "citizen" are inherently defined by power, but differentiated even further for racial and ethnic minorities and queer people who are disproportionately abused and harassed by police on the basis of race,[65] ethnicity,[66] and sexual orientation.[67] Therefore, an intersectional reading of the police imagery in this narrative brings attention to the particular hostilities associated with it and the state's sanctioning of these hostilities.

Membership in a group that has been differently and unfairly vulnerable to police harassment and abuse may impact how a reader is affected by the police imagery in the narrative. Some readers from these groups may have a more adverse reaction to the narrative than they would have otherwise. Others may get erotic enjoyment – perhaps increased erotic enjoyment – out of reading a story with a "rapist" (or three) who holds a historically (and often currently) abusive social role relative to their minority and/or queer self; Califia, who is part of queer communities, seems to enjoy the police imagery he incorporated. Perhaps erotic enjoyment induced by this historically (and currently) abusive social role is because the abuse, tacitly approved of by the state, marks the power differentials between state and citizen as sizable ones. And in erotic practices based on domination and submission, power imbalance is desirable. However, that would imply that police imagery is desirable because it entails the power to wantonly abuse racial and ethnic minorities and queer people, rather than in spite of it. An intersectional approach points to the way racism and homophobia is being "played" with/used to generate eroticized domination and submission through the police imagery.

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[65] Daniels 240-251; Russell
[66] A. Smith 139-150
[67] Comstock 152-162

Califia further endows the "rapists" with hegemonic masculinity through a comparison to leathermen. It may seem paradoxical that a comparison to leathermen confers hegemonic masculinity because leathermen are, historically and by definition, social outcasts and/or gay men – a paradox I will address shortly. As I was saying, the "victim's" comparison of her "rapists" to leathermen helps develop hegemonic masculinity. When the "victim" finds out that the cops are gay, she thinks to herself: "Leathermen were sexy enough – dark knights and princes that she loved to look at, even if women weren't supposed to touch. By comparison, cops were king – fuck, emperors. In the hierarchy of sex objects, she guessed gay cops ranked right up there next to God" (Califia, "The Surprise Party" 291). Hence, uniforms, guns, muscles, and force makes a person (the text is gender neutral) admirably elevated. But if you add maleness and leather, you get a scenario of standard patriarchal power and desirability.

Some would contest the assertion that the leathermen identity contributes to the confirmation of hegemonic masculinity because "we [leathermen] have not reiterated the tired old notions of what it means to be a man, we have invented a new mode of masculinity" (Bronski 61). What Bronski is saying is that when men who are social outcasts and/or interested in sexual liberation, including gay liberation, which is who leathermen are, wear the black leather garb, it does not express hegemonic masculinity. And indeed, it is not the leather aesthetic per se that confirms the hegemonic masculinity. But in this particular narrative the leathermen identity contributes to the confirmation of hegemonic masculinity because leathermen are, in the cultural imagination and often actually, male-identified and they are "raping" a woman. It is this combination of male-identification and "rape" of a woman that resonates with hegemonic masculinity.

Virginie Despentes, a white French woman, writes about the rape of herself and her friend by three white men when they were hitchhiking around France at the age of seventeen in her book *King Kong Theory*. Despentes claims that masculinity and masculine solidarity are built around rape or the potential to rape: "Masculinity, that legendary masculine solidarity is formed in these moments and is built on this exclusion of our bodies" (32). Similarly, Monica Sjöö and Barbara Mor claim in their book *The Great Cosmic Mother: Rediscovering the Religion of the Earth*:

> [A]ll Western culture is built on ideal male homosexuality – the classic patriarchal institutions of the military, the hierarchic centralized governments, the academic, medical, and legal profession, as well as the priesthoods of the various biblically derived denominations, all being built around the male body in its relation to other males, and very explicitly to the exclusions of women's bodies, cycles, needs, and capacities. (351-2)

Despentes, Sjöö, and Mor are using the terms "masculine solidarity" and "ideal male homosexuality" not to describe men's sexual love for other men, but to describe men's shared interest in separation from and denigration of women's bodies. While Califia does depict the cops/"rapists" engaging in sexual activity with each other, the central dynamic of "The Surprise Party" is between the female "victim" and the male "rapists." Hence, the element of shared homosexuality by the male "rapists" in Califia's rape play narrative does not produce a dramatically different discourse about masculinity than the one Despentes, Sjöö, and Mor are commenting on.

Califa is trying to make the case that this narrative cannot properly be understood as heterosexual rape play or the "rape" of a woman by men. Califia is trying to establish

that the narrative is one of queer "rape" enacted by queer bodies. When Don instructs Mike and Joe to "rape" the "victim" he says "[m]aybe it will help if you don't think of her as a girl. After all, she doesn't want to be a woman. She wants to be a man. She dresses like one, talks like on, walks like one. She's a queer, like you boys. Queers have sex with other queers, right? So who wants to go first?" (305-6). Despite Califia's explicit aim at making this narrative about queer rape play, he makes distinctions between the "rapists'" male bodies and the "victim's" female body that disrupts a common queer identity and maintains the categories of "man" and "woman" as meaningful and applicable to the characters.

Califia, writing from the perspective of the "victim," says: "[t]heir [the "rapists'"] nearly-naked bodies were alien to her….They even smelled strange – had a tang about them that women did not" (303). In other words, there is a real difference between men and women, which is reflected in, among other things, two "types" of body odor. This bodily difference is articulated again in relation to the way women taste: "'How does she taste?' Don demanded. 'You two queer bastards ever done anything like this with a girl before?'" (Califia, "The Surprise Party" 303). And in both of these passages, the categories of "man" and "woman" are mapped onto the "rapists'" and "victim's" bodies: the "rapists," as men, had a distinct smell to them and the "victim" is being compared to other girls the "rapists" may have had sexual relations with before. Hence, my assertion that the male identification combined with the "rape" of a woman in the narrative mirrors the way hegemonic masculinity is constructed cannot be disrupted by the idea that this is really about the "rape" of and by queer people; Califia maintains the categories of "man"

and “woman” as significant and applies them to the “rapists” and “victim.” It is the disruption to the categories of “gay” and “lesbian” that could, potentially, queer gender.

Califia’s depiction of a lesbian who finds men sexually attractive points to the ways that resistance to heteronormative systems is a process and “lesbian” and “gay” are in on-going re-definition. Women who feel primary emotional connections and maybe sexual connections with women but also feel sexual attraction to men may be as much lesbians as women who don’t feel sexual attraction to men, but only for other women. The definition of “lesbian” and “gay” beyond same-sex attraction holds both the possibility that “man” and “woman” are irrelevant as attraction develops outside of a sex/gender system and the possibility that gays and lesbians are as invested in heteronormative relations for part of their sex life as many heterosexual people. In other words, gay and lesbian people might desire sexual encounters with someone of the “opposite sex” and are not queering the sex or gender of themselves or their partner. In that case, the categories of “man” and “woman” would remain relevant and intercourse would heterosexual (though perhaps the individuals’ identities as “gay” and “lesbian” would remain intact). The re-definition of “gay” and “lesbian” and potentially concomitant resistance to a sex/gender system would be a rich site for future study. One question could be: is this re-definition also being attempted in gay male erotica? That is, are there any examples of stories like “The Surprise Party” depicting the narrative “in reverse,” meaning depicting a gay man desiring a group of lesbians who dominate him for the night? My guess is that there are not examples of this narrative “in reverse” in gay male erotic fiction and that this has to do with the sexist assumption that sexual

arousal revolves around a hard-on (hooks 335), whether that be in lesbian erotica or gay male erotica.

Gender identity relates to archetypes, as was discussed in the last chapter, because according to libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse, the ability of woman to embody a masculine archetype or a man to embody a feminine archetype disrupts the potential sexism of archetypes.[68] It would follow then that if/when a man or men embody hegemonically masculine archetype(s) or a woman or women embody hegemonically feminine archetype(s), that archetypes could potentially be sexist.

In "The Surprise Party," the imagery of leathermen and law enforcement, embodied by three men, is hegemonically masculine. It is possible that in some or many instances a leather aesthetic resists hegemonic masculinity, as Michael Bronski claims. But in a narrative about heterosexual rape play, the leather infusion contributes to male identification and male solidarity of the ordeal, which confirms hegemonic masculinity. Male identification and solidarity in rape play confirms hegemonic masculinity because hegemonic masculinity is established through the concomitant relationship between male solidarity/identification and the denigration of women's bodies. And "The Surprise Party" is describing the "rape" of a woman by men, despite descriptions of their common queer identity. Hence, the archetype of the "Kingly" cops is a hegemonically masculine archetype being embodied by male "rapists." Therefore, the archetype and its embodiment is an expression of the way heterosexual rape play operates by way of hegemonic gender. Another way the relationship between identity and power confirm hegemonic gender is through the incorporation of mind/body dualism.

[68] Newmahr 108-113

Mind/Body Dualism

In the last chapter I explored the way the mind/body dualism is placed onto the "rapist" and "victim" roles in the guidebooks on rape play through the advice about clothing or lack thereof. The incorporation of this dualism expresses a relationship between identity and power that confirms hegemonic gender. The reason mind/body dualism could confirm hegemonic gender if placed on the "rapist" and "victim" roles is because of what Val Plumwood calls "linking postulates." Linking postulates are "assumptions normally made or implicit in the cultural background which create equivalences or mapping between the pairs. For example…the postulate that the sphere of reason [mind] is masculine map the reason/body pair on to the male/female pair" (45). What this means is that the assumption with a mind/body dualism is that it's equivalent to a man/woman dualism. So when mind/body dualism is placed onto the "rapist" and "victim," if the "rapist" is a man and "victim" is a woman, this mind/body association is confirming hegemonic gender norms.

In the narratives, like the guidebooks, mind/body dualism was incorporated and worked to establish the power of the "rapist" and the powerlessness of the "victim." Though mind/body dualism wasn't established in the narratives through clothing or lack thereof; rather, mind/body dualism was articulated through the ability or inability to control orgasms and the particular capacity of the penis, semen, and anal sex to confer submission.

In the Califia narrative there were three degrees to the dynamic of power and powerlessness. There was the "victim," who was subordinate to all three cops, Mike and Joe, the trainees, who were subordinate to Don, and Don, who was at the top of the

hierarchy. One way this hierarchy was established was through mind/body dualism, expressed as the ability to control your own orgasm. Controlling your own orgasm was a measure of mind. The inability to control your own orgasm pointed to the unbridled influence of matter/body. Accordingly, Don was in complete control of his orgasms: "he [Don] could fuck as long as he wanted to without losing control or coming" (Califia, "The Surprise Party" 315). And on the other end of the spectrum, the "victim" was unable to control her orgasm: "She [the "victim"] did not want to come with him…. Nevertheless, when he reached underneath her and began to fondle her clitoris while his penis moved in and out of her hole, she almost started to spasm. Her sexual flesh was so congested that what happened to it mattered a great deal more than what went on in her head" (Califia, "The Surprise Party" 309). The implication of this passage is that orgasms originate in mindless matter, "sexual flesh," rather than the mind, at least for a female because the man could control his body with his mind. Hence, having an orgasm wouldn't confer mindfulness, but fleshiness. And it's not that Don does not have "sexual flesh" – he does engage in "automatic moves that…lead to his [Don's] orgasm" (Califia, "The Surprise Party" 292) – it's just that he has the presence and abundance of mind to be able to decide when and if an orgasm occurs; he has control over his "sexual flesh." Conversely, the "victim" is depicted as mindless matter, orgasming against her will.

The distinction between mindful "rapist" and fleshy "victim" is consistent with the traditions in Western intellectual thought that views woman as inferior to man. Nancy Tuana traces these traditions in her book, *The Less Noble Sex: Scientific, Religious, and Philosophical Conceptions of Woman's Nature*, noting the different ways that woman "was depicted as an underdeveloped male, different not in kind, but in degree

from man. Woman's difference was defined in terms of lack: she was less rational, less moral, and less evolved" (ix). For instance, Tuana notes that Philosopher René Decartes conceived of woman as less mindful/rational because her role in reproduction made suppression of the body more difficult (60-64). Similarly, Tuana found that Austrian theorist Otto Weininger believed woman "is so controlled by her sexual desires that she is incapable of any rational thought" (Tuana 65). In other words, traditions in Western intellectual thought follow that woman is unlikely, if at all, to be able to think as rationally as a man can because of her demanding body. She is like a man, but less. And man is like a woman, but more. We can see in Califia's narrative that Don is like the "victim" in that he has "sexual flesh" and orgasms, but is more than the "victim" in that he has the mindfulness to be able to control them if he wants to. Therefore, the female "victim's" forced orgasms and the male "rapist's" control over his orgasms express a relationship between identity and power that confirms hegemonic gender.

Expressing mind/body dualism through a "rapist's" ability to control his orgasms and a "victim's" inability to control hers not only confirms hegemonic norms in terms of gender, but also race because Califia depicts all the rapists as white. Whiteness and maleness must be examined together because of the way social identities are not additive but interdependent and mutually reinforcing (Lerner, *Why History Matters* 184); hegemonic masculinity does not just entail maleness, but also whiteness and wealth. Califia describes Don, the "lead rapist" as someone with an "aristocratic nose" (read: European elite) (284) and "carefully trimmed auburn mustache" (284). Mike, one of the "trainees"/lower-status "rapists" is described as "the blond Southern boy" (284) and Joe, the other "trainee"/lower-status "rapists" is said to look Italian (285). The fact that all the

"rapists" are described as white men means that not only is the ability to control orgasms confirming hegemonic gender, but consistent with racist ideas that men of color are less evolved, less "cultured," and even more "animalistic,"[69] and, accordingly, "more body" and "less mind."

Racialized sexuality is expressed both through what's shown (white men who are in control) and what's not (men of color who are in control). Men of color stereotyped as hyper-masculine in savage or "animalistic" ways are excluded from this narrative for being too sexually "uncontrolled" or "impulsive" just as Asian men are excluded from mainstream, heterosexual porn for a racialized sexuality that feminizes them. And as I explained in the first chapter, racialized sexuality perpetuates a system of beliefs that justify why one group has power over another group. This model of power applies to gender, race, class, and sexuality, among other binary and hierarchical categories. Hence, the intersection of race, gender, and even class (with the "aristocratic" "rapist") that marks the "rapists'" identities perpetuates hegemonic gender and other status power relations because their power and control is based on binary frameworks (mind/body dualism) and they're occupying several social identities that benefit from binary frameworks.

It is interesting that Califia maintains hegemonic norms about race and gender through the "rapists'" control of orgasms because he criticizes dominant's/"rapists" reluctance to orgasm in his article, "The Limits of the S/M Relationship, or Mr. Bensons Doesn't Live Here Anymore":

[69] Collins 185; Davis 27; Dines 131-140; Tuana 44-46

> It's especially irritating to be expected to provide a genital orgasm for every person you top when the community expectation seems to be that 'real tops' don't need to come. As hot as it may be to empathize with the bottom's excitement and as wonderful as it may be to feel powerful and in control, much of the sexuality of topping remains voyeuristic. (226)

Perhaps Califia's incorporation of Don's orgasms into the narrative was his attempt to correct the strict mind/body dualism that has cemented itself as "the community expectation." However, Califia maintained the mind/body dualism as a part of the "rapist"/"victim" dynamic by giving Don the ability to control his orgasms while the "victim" remained unable. Perhaps this dualism is maintained because rape play depends on taboo violation for its erotic charge. And "taboo" is established through dualism. In this case, that which is female and fleshy needs to remain, in some form, separate from and denigrated in relation to that which is male and mindful. That which is denigrated is not supposed to meet that which is elevated and the fact that they are "not supposed to" meet makes the meeting erotic. Jane Caputi theorizes about the eroticism of taboo violation in her article "The Pornography of Everyday Life," saying:

> Pornography and mainstream morality both stem from and continually reinforce a worldview that first makes a complex of body/low/sex/dirty/deviant/female/devil and then severs these from mind/high/spirit/pure/normal/male/god. For both, sex itself is the core taboo. Moralism systematically upholds the taboo and pornography systematically violates it. In the complex that evolves from this absurdity, taboo violation itself becomes erotically charged. Evil becomes seductive

> and the good mostly boring. Without patriarchal moralism's misogyny, homophobia, demand for sexual ignorance, and sin-sex-shame equation, pornography as we know it would not exist. And, together, the two work to maintain the sex and gender status quo. (75)

The complex Caputi describes helps us interpret the maintenance of mind/body dualism in "The Surprise Party," despite Califia's own disparaging of this dualism: without a degree of dualism, there would be no eroticism in the patriarchal and rape play framework.

Mind/body dualism is also evidenced in the attitudes toward semen and penises in Califia's narrative and evidenced in the attitudes toward anal sex in both the Califia and Ravenstone narratives. In my exploration of these attitudes I will return to the complex that Caputi has explicated to see how the attitudes are participating in or subverting the eroticism of taboo violation.

The first display of sexual activity in "The Surprise Party" is Don "forcing" the "victim" to perform oral sex in the back of the cop car. Upon conclusion of the activity, Don's penis is compared to some bad coffee the "victim" is given to drink to the end that his penis, which she had to have in her mouth, was the worse of the two: "…she sat up dizzy and wet-faced. Joe handed back a thermos cup. The tall patrolman [Don] drank, then held it for her. It was black coffee. Yuck. She drank it anyway, needing the moisture. 'You've had worse things in your mouth,' he said drily. 'Recently'" (Califia, "The Surprise Party" 293). Don's statement requires some interpretation. Is Don suggesting that his penis is distasteful because it was "forced" upon the "victim" or is the reader to understand there's something inherently distasteful about penis-to-mouth

contact? Or perhaps it is *because* penis-to-mouth contact is thought of as disgusting that the "victim" was "forced" into oral sexual activity.

William Miller argues "for the importance of disgust in structuring our world and our stance toward the world" (18) in his book, *The Anatomy of Disgust*. Miller asserts that "[d]isgust must be accompanied by ideas of a particular kind of danger, the danger inherent in pollution and contamination, the danger of defilement, which ideas in turn will be associated with rather predictable cultural and social scenarios" (8). The centrality of danger is what makes disgust different than, say, nausea. Oral sex is a cultural and social scenario that carries connotations of disgust because of the polluting, contaminating potential of the genitals. And the genitals have this polluting, contaminating potential because of the emission of either menstrual blood or semen (Miller 102) – a point I will return to shortly. The question about Don's statement then becomes: if his genitals are so polluting, why isn't he the person polluted by them? Miller claims that the metaphor of penetration works as a defense against pollution: "Since penises penetrate, they, like knives, do much less damage to themselves than they do to the other. And the belief is that they clean up more easily, it being easier to clean the outside of the penetrating instrument than the inside of the penetrated 'victim'" (Miller 104). Hence, even though it is Don's penis that is "disgusting," or at least worse than bad coffee, it is the "victim" who has been polluted, contaminated, and defiled. And that pollution is primarily because of the semen emitted and the misogyny that shapes attitudes about semen.

Miller claims that semen disgusts – and is actually most revolting to men – because it is fertilizing, feminizing, and associated with a loss of control. The fertilizing

quality “makes the vagina the site of rank fecundity and generation that assimilates it to the constellation of images that makes teeming, moist, swampy ooze a source of disgust” (Miller 103). That is, fertilizing makes the vagina qualitatively similar to other sensations that are imbued with lowliness such as eating, defecation, death, rot, and regeneration. Semen also disgusts because it is feminizing, with “extraordinary powers conferred on it by patriarchy to feminize whatever it comes into contact with” (Miller 103), and “because it appears under conditions that are dignity-destroying” (Miller 104), meaning orgasm, which is invariably accompanied by loss of control. So semen disgusts because, in the context of mind/body dualism, it appears in the moments dictated by the body, not mind. This means the disgust for semen stems from the same framework, mind/body dualism, causing the control of orgasm to confer dominance.

In “The Surprise Party” the disgust for semen is particularly evident among the male “rapists.” In an expression of hierarchy among the “rapists,” Don helps Mike ejaculate into a condom during oral “rape” of the “victim” and then makes Mike, the lower status male, eat it:

> Now Don’s hands were on Mike’s cock, and he was jerking him off slowly and insistently milking his rosy shaft. “I’m going to jerk him off in your mouth,” he told her coldly.... They continued that way – Mike pulling on his own tits, Don pumping his cock, her twirling her tongue around the head of Mike’s dick – until he came, copiously, and sagged, weak in the knees….Don let go of him, grabbed the prophylactic and slid it off. “You forgot to say thank you,” he grinned. “Now git down on the floor next to her.” Mike hesitated, and his face turned red. Don shouted “I said kneel,

> you punk!" Mike obeyed him with bad grace, giving her one furious glance that wiped the smile off her face. Don took Mike's face in his big hands and forced his mouth open. "Swallow it," Don said, squeezing the contents of the used rubber onto his tongue. He did, grimacing…Mike mumbled, "Thank you, Sir," with obvious lack of sincerity, and got to his own feet while Don reached down for her and helped her up. (300)

In clearly articulating Mike's disgust for the semen, the narrative can use semen to structure a dominant and submissive relationship between Don and Mike. The incorporation of male disgust for semen into the narrative is consistent with and even explains why Don considers his penis something bad the "victim" had to have in her mouth. These negative attitudes stem from and reinforce social and cultural misogyny because the negativity is about, among other things, semen's capacity to feminize that which it touches.

Patrick Califia would contest the charges that this disgust is an expression of sexism because the story is turning disgust into something erotic and therefore creating "erotic blasphemy," not a sexist status quo. Califia writes "We [sadomasochists] select the most frightening, disgusting, or unacceptable activities and transmute them into pleasure. We make use of all the forbidden symbols and all the disowned emotions. S/M is a deliberate, premeditated, erotic blasphemy. It is a form of sexual extremism and sexual dissent" (159). To apply this statement to the above passage would more or less mean that disgust is maintained and incorporated only because Mike enjoys the subordinate position to Don and therefore doing something disgusting ultimately brings pleasure. And, moreover, this disgust-induced sexual pleasure constitutes sexual dissent.

I disagree with the idea that maintaining male disgust of semen could in any way be a form of dissent. Even if disgust can ultimately bring pleasure, it is upholding and even cementing the status quo. And actually, the fusion of disgust and pleasure *is* the status quo. According to Jane Caputi, a sexist status quo entails charging what is denigrated with seductive powers and the capacity for inducing pleasure – that pleasure becomes the impetus for denigrating something in the first place. In short, the fusion of pleasure and disgust is not a form of dissent, but rather consistent with the complex Caputi describes, which works to maintain a sexist status quo. Similarly, anal "rape" constitutes the most extreme and climactic event in both the narratives, which is based on and reinforces the ideas that what is "bad" is seductive and taboo violation is erotic.

Ravenstone actually calls anal "rape" "the finale" (63) in his narrative and Califia describes anal "rape" as a point beyond where the "victim" feels she will find pleasure, which makes it climactic and is likely why it is at the end of the narrative. After Don tells the "victim" "'…I'm going to fuck you. Guess where.' His gloved hand fondly squeezed her buttocks" (311), the narrative describes the victim's musings: "It's odd, she [the "victim"] reflected, how you can get into a scene and lose some of your inhibitions and go crazy, and while it's happening, you think you'll do anything, but of course you won't. There's always a hitch, always another barrier you don't want to cross, another step that somebody has to push you down" (311). And that barrier, that step to be "pushed down" is anal "rape."

Gayle Rubin asserts that a hierarchical system of sexual value based in Western religious traditions is the ideological formation responsible for appraising sex acts in different ways (529-30). Furthermore, she contends that it is the hierarchical value that

causes “the need to draw and maintain an imaginary line between good and bad sex” (532), such as married, reproductive heterosexuals as opposed to solitary sex/masturbation. Rubin claims the “sexual radicals,” including sadomasochists, are pursuing sexual liberation by challenging this imaginary line and along with it the systems, including Western religions, which “rationalize the well-being of the sexually privileged and the adversity of the sexual rabble” (530).

The studies of S/M communities and practitioners done by Staci Newmahr and Gloria Brame (et al.) showed that practitioners enjoy pushing past what they, personally, experience as “good sex” into what they, personally, experience as “bad sex,” which is to say physically and/or emotionally challenging sex. This effort to challenge personal lines around sexual activity is not done as a conscious political statement about sexual privilege. In fact, the enjoyment practitioners pursue depends on the maintenance of the sexual mores of Western religious tradition (which is responsible for authorizing privilege on the basis of sexuality); “pushing limits” is a common objective of S/M play (Newmahr 87) because “when they have passed a point of sometimes excruciating pain and difficulty…(‘hitting a wall'), they feel a renewed capacity for continuing the activity and a sense of extreme well-being. When they complete the activity they say they feel high, as thought they had consumed a chemical such as alcohol” (Truscott 21). Patrick Califia asserts that “[t]his transcendental experience is sometimes referred to as an ‘S/M orgasm’” (224). Hence, to achieve the objective of rape play, an “S/M orgasm,” which is more about feelings of transcendence than the sensations of a genital orgasm, the practitioners must “push the limits,” must “hit a wall” and get past it. The stated objectives and desires points to the necessity and centrality of boundaries and limits in

rape play, among other S/M activities. So what is it about anal penetration that consistently situates it as *the* limit, *the* wall, *the* "barrier you don't want to cross"? What meanings have been given to the anus and anal penetration that contribute to this situation and in what ways is rape play interacting with those meanings?

William Miller claims that the anus takes on significance because it, more than any other orifice, protects a person's inviolability and because it is the lowest-status place on the body (100). And this lowest-status place is not-so-incidentally "at the bottom, which word – bottom – serves euphemistically to refer to the area of which it is the center" (Miller 100). To consider the anus as the "bottom" highlights how "bottom" "is a relational term and thus requires that which lies above it for its own completion….The higher regions are thus conceived as beneficiaries of the lower, not only sustained by it, but requiring the presence of the low so as to enable the very possibility of highness and superiority" (Miller 100). What Miller is saying is that the anus takes on significance from, among other things, the complex Caputi describes where "low" is severed from and denigrated in relation to that which is "high." Hence, the anus, as that which is the "lowest" in this complex, is the most taboo/boundary-defining and therefore the most seductive. The narratives' description of anal "rape" as the "finale" or "barrier you don't want to cross" is, similar to their attitudes about penises and semen, participating in a complex that ultimately maintains the sex and gender status quo. And, like with feelings of disgust, situating that barrier transgression as ultimately pleasurable (an "S/M orgasm") is not sexual dissent because in a worldview shaped by dualism, eroticism is based on taboo violation.

In conclusion, the narratives give explicit attention to the women's/"victims'" sexual desire, which has the potential to validate their will and therefore resist hegemonic gender. However, this will is ultimately recuperated within hegemonic gender because the women's/"victims'" will is to be overpowered and sexually responsive. It could be said that the women's/"victims'" will is for the men's/"rapists'" wills to be actualized, which is consistent with the way women's will is depicted in systems that reinforce hegemonic gender and other status power relations: pornography and mainstream morality.

Expressions of will/desire that ultimately uphold sexist oppression do not depicted the women/"victims" as dupes of patriarchy; rather, it means the women's/"victims'" pursuit of hegemonic femininity is an attempt to be successful on patriarchal terms. The pursuit of hegemonic gender identity occurs through the archetypes and mind/body dualism in the narratives.

The archetypes in Ravenstone's narrative, the "brute" and "tormentor," work to inscribe misogynist inequalities through their self-absorption – an impression that is maintained through "queered" words. Libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse frames queered words as a part of the submissive's/"victim's" paradoxically powerful position. However, when the "victim's" directives also effect the appearance of force, the integrity of a self-absorbed/self-negating gender binary – that is, hegemonic gender – is maintained.

The archetype in Califia's narrative works to inscribe misogynist inequalities by drawing on hegemonically masculine imagery, such as uniforms, guns, muscles, and leather. The infusion of leather is significant because it carries with it the implication of

male identification and male solidarity which, when paired with the "rape" of a woman, becomes a representation of hegemonic masculinity. As Despentes, Sjöö, and Mor noted, hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal institutions are built on male solidarity through the exclusion and denigration of women's bodies. And "The Surprise Party" is describing the "rape" of a woman, despite Califia's attempts to defy gender altogether; the narrative articulates a comparison between the "victim" and girls, in general, and the "rapists" are grouped with men, in general.

Finally, a persistent mind/body dualism works to develop a relationship between identity and power that confirms hegemonic gender. This mind/body dualism is mapped onto the "rapist" and "victim" roles in "The Surprise Party" through the characters' ability or inability to control their orgasms. The woman's/"victim's" inability to control her orgasms is consistent with the traditions in Western intellectual thought that views woman as inferior to man because cannot suppress her body as easily and is controlled by sexual desire. It is possible this tradition is maintained in the narrative, even though Califia is aware of its problematic application to "rapist" and "victim" roles, because rape play must maintain binaries to maintain eroticism. That means the eroticism in rape play is based on taboo violation.

"The Surprise Party" depicts an eroticism based on taboo violation by constructing penises and semen as disgusting because of their potential to pollute/femininze and then framing the realization of that potential as erotic. Similarly, anal "rape" is, in both narratives, the "finale." Situating anal "rape" as the climax of the narratives expresses their investment in eroticism based on taboo violation. In the complex of denigration and elevation, the anus is the lowest-status place. Consequently,

it is also the most taboo and therefore erotically charged, making it an ideal pinnacle. Eroticizing taboo violation, either as oral or anal intercourse, is not sexual dissent, but rather a form of the sex and gender status quo. In short, sexism is rampant in the way rape is being fantasized about and "played" with and it remains questionable that there is any other way to "play" with rape.

CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In this section I will summarize my answers to the questions: how is rape play defined and enacted my heterosexual men and women in and S/M community and how can this be understood and critiqued from libertarian/"sex positive" and dominance/radical feminist perspectives? Is it possible for rape play to escape, subvert, or "queer" hegemonic gender identities, roles, and power statuses? Or does rape play actually work to support and maintain male dominance and female submission? I will also provide recommendations for future research based on what additional questions are generated from my findings.

After this analysis of guidebooks and narratives about heterosexual rape play I can assert that, by and large, heterosexual rape play is defined and even enacted (the narrative about Ravenstone and "Stacy" was an account of a real enactment) in a way that supports and maintains hegemonic gender roles characterized by male and masculine-identified dominance and female and feminine-identified submission. The guidebooks/public-facing discourses alone, without the data provided by the narratives, leaves open some possibility that rape play could escape, subvert, or "queer" hegemonic gender, roles, and power statuses because of gender-neutral language. But the public-facing discourses also, on other points, evidence the way heterosexual rape play operates by way of hegemonic gender and race relations. The narratives, on the other hand,

exclusively demonstrate a relationship between identity and power that confirms hegemonic gender and race relations. And while, admittedly, the two narratives were self-selected, I found no other narratives but the two to select from, so the sources are as representative of rape play narratives as they can be at this point in the research.

Specifically, rape play escapes, subverts, or "queers" hegemonic gender and other status power relations through the guidebooks' use of neutral or arbitrary personal pronouns to talk about the "rapist" and "victim" roles and through guidebook depiction of a counter-hegemonic "rapist" archetype – a possibility left open, but not described, for "victim" archetypes too. Rape play supports and maintains male dominance and female submission through: the way "rapist" archetypes play out in the narratives; patterns around anatomy, sexual activity, domination, and submission; mind/body dualism working to confer domination and submission, respectively; and the depiction of desire, including the desire for authenticity. I will now briefly go over each of these findings and the additional questions that have been raised by them, which mainly have to do with the "rapist" and "victim" archetypes and the part of my research question about enactment.

Rape play could be read as consistent with feminism through the public-facing discourse's non-prescriptive language with regard to role and identity. The neutrality in terms of personal pronouns, or disclaimers about patterns' pertinence to be only about simplifying the writing, is consistent with libertarian/"sex positive" position that the S/M arena is free of pre-determined power relations. In other words, this neutrality in terms of language exemplifies the point that power is disconnected from the status and privilege that is usually afforded one's identity.

The archetypes present in the public-facing discourses and narratives on rape play would be an ideal site for future research because there's some ambiguity with regard to if there's any recurrent "victim" archetype other than "the good girl" and if/how often/to what extent the "seducer" archetype that's described in two public-facing discourses is incorporated in rape play enactment. The fact that it's questionable that "victim" archetypes other that "the good girl" are being proliferated and that "the seducer"/overtly-catering "rapist" is being incorporated in enactments begins to point to the way archetypes confirm hegemonic gender and other status power relations.

The narratives favored the "brute" and "tormentor" archetypes, which are arguably the most hegemonically masculine in terms of looks and obvious behavior. And, as demonstrated in the narratives, it is this self-absorbed façade that becomes problematic because it requires the incorporation of sexism, such as making "no" mean "yes" (a long-standing rape myth). Libertarian/"sex positive" feminist proponents would reject the notion that the incorporation of "no" to mean "yes" is an instance of sexism on the grounds that "no" is, in the context of rape play, a queered word, which makes it different than violence and compatible with feminism. However, it must be acknowledged that "no" is not some innocuous word such as "pineapple" that is being queered; if "pineapple" were to mean "go further," it would also be an example of a "queered" word, but one that is very different than "no" because it does not resonate with actual sexism in Western culture. Hence, my findings point to the way libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse needs to account for the different ways words could be "queered" and what it means that some words could maintain hegemonic social power, at least in appearance, and others wouldn't. I am suggesting that maintaining hegemonic

social power, even as appearance/archetypes, is maintaining the structures of male dominance and female submission.

The exclusive attention in public-facing discourses to "the good girl" as a (and perhaps *the quintessential*) "victim" archetype suggests that the persona of the "victim" must be one that has no interest in sexual activity whatsoever (that's what's "good" for women in Western culture).[70] The possibility that the only "victim" persona available for rape play must be that of a woman who is decidedly against the sexual activity is significant to my research questions in that it suggests that rape play confirms hegemonic femininity to a greater extent than it does hegemonic masculinity; a male "rapist" could, theoretically, don the "seducer" archetype that is able to be somewhat overt in the way they are catering to another, which is a form of counter-hegemonic masculinity. However, the two narratives I studied did not show the "rapists" emphasizing the "seducer" archetype, which suggests rape play is being fantasized about and enacted in a way that confirms hegemonic masculinity too. So even though a "good girl" "victim" is saying "yes" (by saying "no"), which is a display of desire – constituting a notably counter-hegemonic femininity – and the "brutish" "rapist" is catering to his "victim" by responding to her "no" (which is actually a "yes"), they must don hegemonically feminine and masculine archetypes, respectively, to be a good, exciting "victim" and "rapist" (for themselves as much as for their partners). And it is the maintenance of this imagery/persona/façade that is an expression of hegemonic gender and other status power relations, such as race.

[70] See Rubin's discussion of "sex negativity" in "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality" (1989).

However, the guidebook that describes the "good girl" archetype leaves open the possibility that there are other, equally desirable "victim" archetypes, though it does not name them. Perhaps there are some "victim" archetypes that queer the conventional meanings assigned the persona. And perhaps the "victim" archetypes that resist hegemonic gender norms are why Stacy Newmahr asserts that "victimization" confers masculinity and therefore subverts to hegemonic social power. However, Miller and Devon, the authors of the guidebook forwarding "the good girl" as a possible "victim" archetype, conflate "being taken" ("rape") with "supreme femininity." This equation suggests that all "victim" archetypes confirm hegemonic gender and other status power relations, such as race; all "victimization" confers "supreme [hegemonic?] femininity." More research could be done to investigate other possible "victim" archetypes and how they may relate to Newmahr's assertion about "victims'" access to masculinity.

Also, since the "seducer" is a recurrent archetype in public-facing discourses, but not emphasized in the two narratives, research could be done on other/more narratives and/or community-facing discourses to see if/when the "seducer" is a shaping archetype in the enactment of rape play. My research was limited by my inability to use more private, community-facing discourses for data. The community-facing discourses would have been particularly pertinent to the part of my research question about enactment because preliminary investigations of S/M social-networking sites show that practitioners discussing rape play are doing so on the basis of their actual enactments of the practice. Because a substantial amount of data about enactment was inaccessible for this study, future research on the way rape play is being enacted remains a rich and worthy area of study.

The way bodies were incorporated into the public-facing discourses and narratives unequivocally confirmed hegemonic gender. In the public-facing discourses, being able to penetrate conferred domination whereas being penetrated conferred submission, regardless of the "rapist's" or "victim's" actual sex. Califia called this the transfer of "old gender patterns" into the dominant and submissive dynamic and challenged practitioners to change the very meanings assigned to sex acts. For instance, being penetrated should be able to confer dominance. The disruption of meaning was not realized in the narratives about rape play, including Califia's own, where mind/body dualism was placed onto the men/"rapists" and woman/"victim" through the ability or inability to control orgasms and attitudes towards semen and anal sex. The mapping of mind/body dualism onto the men/"rapists" and woman/"victim" in Califia's narrative not only confirmed hegemonic gender, but also hegemonic norms in terms of race because all the "rapists," who had an abundance of "mind," were white. This is consistent with the racist stereotype that some men of color have more uncontrollable, "animalistic" sexual appetites.

The maintenance of mind/body dualism and "old gender patterns" suggests that practitioners cannot recognize (and get off on) the domination and submission of the practice if the meanings of the sex acts and concomitant body parts are queered. Hence, the way bodies are incorporated into public-facing discourses and narratives suggests even more strongly than the archetypes do that heterosexual rape play must operate by way of hegemonic gender and other status power relations.

One final discourse that expresses a relationship between identity and power that confirms hegemonic gender is the desire for authenticity. When a scene temporarily

loses its theatrical quality and practitioners emotionally and/or psychologically experience it as an actual rape (or kidnapping, or interrogation, etc.), the scene is said to be "authentic." Authenticity is best induced through sternness, pain, and bondage, among other things (Brame et al. 81). Hence, the expression of "victims'" desire in the narrative to be sexually overpowered – which is particularly laid bare in the Ravenstone narrative – is part of a desire for authenticity because being "overpowered" is arguably a form of sternness and possibly even pain. And these discourses about authenticity and the desire to be sexually overpowered confirm hegemonic gender because when it comes to sexual force, normative gender has a negative impact on women's ability to be physically assertive. Libertarian/"sex positive" feminist discourse would dispute that normative gender enters into the discussion of authenticity because this perspective holds that authenticity is contrived, the product of the deliberate suspension of egalitarian relations. However, the other, related discourses about the desire/will to be sexually overpowered and sexually responsive, which are present in both narratives about rape play, when expressed by women (which both of the "victims" in the narratives are), suggests that authenticity is related to hegemonic gender in heterosexual rape play. The location of women's desire within men's desire (to initiate their preferred activity and and/or proceed with whatever amount of force/urgency they want) is a cornerstone of hegemonic gender. That is, these representations of desire express fundamental sexist politics that construct women as boundary-less and self-negating and men as autonomous and self-absorbed.

It is entirely possible – perhaps even probable – that S/M activities that do not involve blatant sexual "force" do not rely on hegemonic gender, or at least to the same extent, that heterosexual rape play does because: 1) other interactions that are not about

overtly sexual "force" may grant women more access to the physical assertion that helps induce the apparently desirable authenticity. That is, women may be more satisfying (and satisfied) dominants in other activities with less barriers to being physically assertive, which may then provide validation outside of hegemonic gender (unlike heterosexual rape play). 2) Conventional notions about the way bodies are used to dominate or submit (penetrate or be penetrated) may not be incorporated into other practices, or it may be easier to "queer" the meaning attributed to body parts and/or sexual activities' meanings. And 3) archetypes/personas/imagery may not tend toward a façade of self-absorbed/self-negating, despite actual mutuality and consenuality, because of a need to maintain "force."

Hence, even though much "pro-sex" discourse on S/M claims S/M activity, including rape play, to be subversive, particularly in the ways that it "queers" or disrupts hegemonic gender and other status power relations (e.g., race, class, and so on), which may be true of some practices, it is not true of heterosexual rape play. The inability of heterosexual rape play to convert, subvert, or "queer" hegemonic gender and other status power relations affirms the dominance feminist assertion that rape is an expression of normative gender and sexuality. There would be no rape if sexualized domination and submission was not what we understood to be gender. And the centrality of hegemonic gender and other status power relations to heterosexual rape play confirms that this is true.

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