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# Silencing and assaulting the feminine: An analysis of institutions that perpetuate a rape-supportive culture

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*Eastern Illinois University*

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Silencing and Assaulting the Feminine:

An Analysis of Institutions that Perpetuate a Rape-Supportive Culture

(TITLE)

BY

Melissa Territo

**THESIS**

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Running head: SILENCING AND ASSAULTING THE FEMININE

Silencing and Assaulting the Feminine:  
An Analysis of Institutions that Perpetuate a Rape-Supportive Culture

Melissa Territo

Eastern Illinois University

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## Table of Contents

Abstract . . . . .	4
Dedication . . . . .	5
Acknowledgements . . . . .	6
Chapter 1: Introduction . . . . .	7
Chapter 2: Performing Masculinity Behind Bars:	
A Feminist Analysis of HBO's series <i>Oz</i> . . . . .	30
Chapter 3: "Boys will be Boys":	
A Narrative Analysis of Fraternity Gang Rape . . . . .	61
Chapter 4: Discussion:	
Stopping Sexual Violence . . . . .	96
References . . . . .	109

### **Abstract**

Since 1700, rape has been a publicly discussed topic. Past research has focused on the effects that socialization practices, patriarchy, and hegemony have on sexual violence and mediated representations of gendered violence in the United States. This thesis explores two institutions, social structures, and cultures that contribute to and perpetuate a rape-supportive culture in the United States—the penal and fraternity systems. By approaching and analyzing sexual assault as socially constructed and communicated through the institutional structures of the penal and fraternity systems, we are equipped to better understand how society and media (re)create and perpetuate a patriarchal rape culture. We are also equipped to move toward change that makes the world a safer, more equal possibility for all.

To all of the men and women who have suffered from sexual violence,  
who still suffer from sexual violence,  
and to those who fight toward ending marginalization, oppression, and violence.



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## **Silencing and Assaulting the Feminine:**

### **An Analysis of Institutions that Perpetuate a Rape-Supportive Culture**

#### **Introduction**

“Rape is not a crime of irrational, impulsive, uncontrollable lust, but is a deliberate, hostile, violent act of degradation.”

Susan Browmiller, 1975 (quoted in *Against Our Will*)

The topic of rape has been publicly discussed in the United States since the 1700s (Block, 2006). During this time men and women agreed that rape was a heinous act that was worthy of serious punishment. For the women and girls who were assaulted, rape was one of the most intimate violations, “... a private trauma that often did not translate into a believable public wrong” (Block, 2006, p. 1). The public discussions of rape in the 1700s are similar to the public discussions of rape in the 2000s; unfortunately, many ideologies about patriarchy, traditional sex and gender roles, and sexual violence still have not changed. Still today, rape can be linked to the United States’ patriarchal culture. Researchers argue that we, in the United States, live in a rape-supportive culture (Block, 2006; Bourke, 2007; Sanday, 1990; 2007; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997). This system still allots men the power and privilege of sexual control (Block, 2006). It is not just men who condone this rape-supportive culture. Some women, too, condone this rape-supportive culture and believe that women should be considered sexual gatekeepers (Shwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997), which creates a culture that is supported by both men and women.

Until the women’s movement in the 1960s, rape was perceived to be a rare event; thus, it did not gain policymakers’ or academics’ attention (Travis, 2003). The topic of

violence against women was highly publicized and publicly discussed and protested against in the 1960s when women united and fought against the trivialization of sexism in the United States. This part of history is best known as the second wave of feminism. The second wave of feminism consisted mainly of middle to upper class, white women who united as one, on the basis of their identity and oppression. The women involved exposed and fought against the United States' patriarchal society and governmental system, where the only citizens who were given power and equality were white heterosexual men.

These courageous women involved in the second wave of feminism refused to play the part of the traditional sex and gender roles of women, which historically had been domestic, largely related to cleaning and nurturing family. The divisions of labor also translated to men's responsibilities. Men were responsible for providing financially as the "bread winner" for their families. Feminists knew that they were qualified for more rights and privileges and deserved to be treated as equal citizens by the government and by all citizens within the U.S. The second wave of feminism also fought for equality within the workplace, against the inequalities that the nuclear family structure promotes, and most controversially, for reproductive rights for women, which has impacted the rights for women today.

In the early 1970s, radical, counter-cultural feminists developed the anti-rape movement. Feminists critiqued the unequal power relations that were (and still are) embedded in institutional structures (Matthews, 1994). Acknowledgement of the prevalence of acquaintance rape in the mid-1970s led to the rape law reform, which attempted to equalize rape trials so that fear of false accusers and examination of a

woman's reputation would no longer play a decisive role in the court process (Travis, 2003). After witnessing marginalization and experiencing oppression, these feminists partnered with law enforcement to enact the rape reform movement. This movement led to the passage of federal and state laws to broaden the definition of rape and to alter the procedures of a rape trial (Sable, Danis, Mauzy, & Gallagher, 2006).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, men started to recognize that they, along with women, were victims of restrictive traditional sex and gender roles, gender role socialization, and sexism in the United States (O'Neil, 1981). Evidence emerged in the 1990s that sexual violence was becoming increasingly prevalent among men within the gay community (Bourke, 2007). These sparks of evidence led to more investigations to discover that men, no matter what sexual orientation, were and are victims of sexual assault. Thus, in 1994, the legal definition of rape broadened to include men as victims of rape, too. The 1994 amendment to the Public Order and Criminal Justice Act broadened the definition of rape to include anal penetration with a penis, which includes both men and women as victims (Graham, 2006). Since 1994, both men and women can be categorized as victims of rape, although the legal punishments for this crime are enacted on a state-by-state level (Scarce, 1997), and the categorization of victims differs according to their sexual orientation.

Due to socialization, traditional sex roles, and expectations for men and women, men face several barriers to even being considered a victim of sexual assault on local, state, and national levels. Both men and women fear they will not be believed, that they will lose their relationships with their friends and/or family members, and many worry that they will face public humiliation. These stereotypical assumptions of rape and the

prevalent acceptance of rape myths within our culture lead to barriers for women and especially men in reporting the crime of rape. The rape of men is not unlike the rape of women. "Both are frequently downplayed or dismissed. Both are wedded to systems of power, male dominance, and sexual culture" (Scarce, 1997, p. 10); however, rape by a same-sex perpetrator changes the meaning and experience for the victim.

Men who are raped feel intense shame and stigma (Scarce, 1997). When men are victims of rape, they feel feminized, alone, and isolated. Men and women fail to report rape for several reasons including shame, isolation, and embarrassment. Compared to women, men feel a barrier to reporting rape because it jeopardizes and threatens their masculine identity (Davies, Pollard, & Archer, 2006) and social status within their community and within the United States. Because of rape myths and gender roles within our society, men and women also feel as if they will not be taken seriously if they report the crime. Men and women feel as if they will be treated negatively, disbelieved, and/or blamed for their assault (Walker, Archer, & Davies, 2005).

Because of heteronormative social expectations, rape by a man is judged by a heteronormative society to be worse for a heterosexual man than it is for a woman or for a gay man (Doherty & Anderson, 2004). The shame that is felt by a heterosexual man is seen as being due to the way that men are feminized and forced to perform a position of the other, more marginalized, gender. Cultural expectations that dictate that men should be masculine and macho only popularize the belief that "macho" men or "real men" cannot be victims of rape (Doherty & Anderson, 2004). This hegemonic understanding of what a "real man" is lies in traditional sex roles that create an idealized subject position that each person is expected to fulfill. For men, that subject position is

hegemonic masculinity. Men assume this subject position by producing masculinity when they engage in masculine practices and perform masculinity (Schippers, 2007). For women, that subject position is an idealized femininity. Women assume this subject position by producing femininity when they engage in feminine practices and perform femininity.

During the act of rape, violence is a gendered practice that is connected to power. It is broadly the case that in societies, including the United States, power remains with men. Men remain at the highest authoritative position within a hierarchal structure; thus, power is socially gendered. There is a gender role expectation for men to not express emotions, even when they are faced with physical and/or emotional trauma, such as being victims of rape (Walker et al., 2005). Men have grown to develop a fear of femininity because of socialization and emotional reactions they learn in their childhood (Kimmel, 2004). Gender identity is socially constructed and is taught and learned from a child's family, peer(s), school system(s), and through societal values (O'Neil, 1981).

### **Rape Myths**

Historically, the identity of a rape victim has primarily been focused on women. Instead of focusing on the attack and the attacker itself, our society relates the causes of the rape to the victim. For example, some may ask questions such as, "what could the victim have done differently?" Often people want to know if the victim dressed provocatively. When people give advice to women on "how to dress to avoid rape" this advice should be rejected because it is unscientific and because of its "... assumption that women have a responsibility to act 'reasonably' and live their lives in fear of rape. This thinking is absolutely unacceptable in a democratic society" (Travis, 2003, p. 1999).

Other people will question the actions of the victim and ask, “did the victim place himself or herself in a dangerous situation (i.e. walking home alone at night)?” Unfortunately, some people do not ever consider why the victim had to walk home late at night, for reasons such as work or school. Some people simply jump to conclusions to assume that it is the victim’s fault, rather than the deliberate decision of a rapist to commit violence.

We live in a culture with a belief system that is based on massive distortions of women’s sexual availability. To insist that victims should have been more assertive in stopping the rape is not logical, because the perpetrators are entirely responsible for *their* decision to rape (Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 1993). This persistent “blame the victim” causes society to question and analyze the actions of the victim, instead of the actions of the perpetrator, which contributes to a “blame the victim” mentality. This frame of mind is influenced primarily by rape myths. Rape myths are assumptions that place blame onto the victim and vindicate the rapist’s actions (Bohner, Weisbrod, Raymond, Barzvi, & Schwarz, 1993). Although rape myths are blatantly untrue, individuals still justify their actions or the actions of others through common rape myths within our society.

In the United States, rape myths are pervasive due to the social construction of traditional sex roles and gender identity. Women are expected to be feminine, submissive, and emotional, while men are expected to be masculine, powerful, and in control. When men become victims of sexual assault, the gender roles switch and men become feminized. When the gender roles switch, some people, both men and women, are unable to accept and understand this. When people do not understand the conceptualization of rape, some choose to ignore the act and pretend that it does not exist

because they believe it does not affect them or anyone they know. By ignoring sexual assault, our society enables numerous myths and misconceptions of rape to become true.

Rape myths are detrimental for both men and women. Male rape myths that are common within our society include: (1) men are too big or too strong to be overpowered into sex; (2) men are the ones that initiate and control sexual activity; (3) men are not the targets of sexual assault; (4) men who are raped lose their manhood; (5) male sexual assault is rare; (6) male victims should be able to cope with their experience; and (7) men can only be raped in prison (Kassing, Beesley, & Frey, 2005). These rape myths encompass false beliefs about the victim, the attacker, the conceptualization and the cause of the incident. These myths are all based upon traditional sex roles and gender role expectations. Another common rape myth that affects males and females is the idea of being aroused. One rape myth is that the presence of an erection or ejaculation from the victim means that the victim is consenting to having sex (Kassing et al., 2005). This is completely false, because it is common among males and females of all ages to show physical signs of being aroused during the act (Kassing et al., 2005), but that does not mean that they are consenting to sex, nor does it mean that they are being pleased by the attacker.

Out of all of the rape myths, the most prevalent male rape myth is that men cannot be raped by women or other men. This rape myth encourages the heteronormative assumption that women are physically incapable of forcing a man to have intercourse with them. This rape myth also assumes that men always want sex (O'Neil, 1981). These cultural expectations for men to produce and perform a certain type of masculinity (hegemonic masculinity) suggest that men are never victims of rape and that men do not



rape other men. If males are faced with the possibility of being raped, they carry the qualities of femininity and are looked at as being “naïve” (Doherty & Anderson, 2004). Due to this quality, men feel responsible on the grounds that they did not act to prevent the attack (Doherty & Anderson, 2004). These rape myths affect men and women choosing to report the crime to police officers, hospitals, or treatment centers. Research has shown that men report the incident to medical services under extreme circumstances, such as being physically injured or if they are gang raped; however, they fail to receive medical checks for sexually transmitted diseases (Scarce, 1997).

Along with feeling feminized, alone, and isolated, men are more likely to react to the situation with anger, because anger is a masculine characteristic and is seen as an appropriate way for a man to deal with trauma (Walker et al., 2005). Just like women who are victims of rape, men place a large amount of blame on themselves. Victim self blame impacts some men and women who were raped to feel as if they were raped because they did something to cause the incident, or they were raped because they are a particular type of person (Walker et al., 2005). “Of all the crimes, rape seems to be one of the most tainted by people’s preconceived notions of gender roles and acceptable behaviors” (Johnson, 1999, p. 68).

### **The United States’ Rape-supportive Culture**

Although the act of rape is almost universally condemned, it is clear to see that the conception is far less agreed upon (MacKinnon, 2008). Defining rape is difficult both legally and socially. Feminists are not alone in claiming that the motives for rape are *not* sexual; rather the motives for men and women to rape consist of anger at those who

perform femininity (Macdonald, 1995). Thus, rape is an expression of power and control over the feminine.

Sexual assault is highly problematic in our culture and is one of the most under-addressed and under-reported crimes in the United States for a variety of reasons. Only 60% of incidents are actually reported to the police (RAINN: Statistics, 2008). This heinous crime and act of brutality affects some men and women within the U.S. to feel uncomfortable and turn a blind eye, ignoring the fact that this does happen to “good people.” It is not until a person puts a face to the name of the perpetrator and/or victim that this crime becomes real.

Rape is a pervasive fact of American life considering every two minutes someone is sexually assaulted within the United States (RAINN: Statistics, 2008). The United States’ transformation into a rape culture has normalized the idea of rape, and “we will continue to live in a rape culture until our society understands and chooses to eradicate the sources of sexual violence in this culture” (Buchwald et al., 1993, p. 9). The rape-supportive culture we live in today is linked to patriarchy. “The power of patriarchy is reflected in its very pervasiveness and invisibility, its capacity to represent male hegemony as the foundation of all human social interaction” (Rugg, 2007, p. 191). Patriarchy and sexual violence are not synonymous with one another, yet our society still seems to be unable to not have one without the other.

The United States’ patriarchal system (re)produces patriarchy by teaching males and females, starting at childhood, to act in accordance with their traditional sex role. Women are taught to be submissive, passive, weak, kind, compassionate, patient, accepting, and dependent (Bordo, 1999; Russell, 1975; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997).

It is not that women should not be kind or compassionate; rather these traits can contribute to women's victimization and to men's victimization if they produce and perform feminine characteristics and qualities. Women are taught to be desirable in much of the same way that men are conditioned to be sexually aggressive (Buchwald et al., 1993; Russel, 1975; Sanday, 1990; 2007). Research shows that young males learn sexual violent behaviors before they even desire sexual relations, "... and when they do, their model for lovemaking features domination and submission" (Buchwald et al., 1993, p. 411). We are taught to see women as a commodity, or object, for men's sexual desires, sexual releases, and sexual fantasies. This type of thinking is encouraged and legitimized by our culture (Bordo, 1999) and transmitted via institutional structures (Buchwald et al., 1993), especially those institutional structures that use exploitative images and terms for women and femininity in general (Sanday, 1990; 2007).

We send boys the message that we expect them to grow into men who like hard, heavy things, who compete and play to win, who armor their bodies against touch, and who secrete androgens when anxious. We train little boys to mistrust each other and to defend themselves physically against aggression. (Buchwald et al., 1993, p. 410)

The socialization process in the United States "... inculcates in boys and men a hegemonic and limiting code of masculinity that intimately links traditional male gender roles with violence..." (Hong, 2000, p. 269). Masculinity, specifically hegemonic masculinity—the ideal type of masculinity, is defined as power and dominance, while femininity is defined as weakness and subordination. Some young boys are taught to perform masculinity that centers on toughness, authority, power, dominance, eagerness to

fight, lack of empathy, and to have a callous attitude toward women (Buchwald et al., 1993; Kimmel, 2004). Boys who do not act in accordance with these expectations are perceived as being feminine, weak, and not “real men.” For as long as these values are taught to some men, “... rape will continue to be viewed by them [males] as proof that they are ‘one of the boys,’ that they are ‘real men’” (Buchwald et al., 1993, p. 155). It is not that we do not have the capacity to equally socialize and value men and women; rather, our culture is still undecided how to “...account for and understand male sexual predation and violence when it does occur” (Bordo, 1999, p. 262).

The idea of being a “real man” impacts the social structures and institutions that contribute to patriarchy and sexual violence, particularly in the penal systems and in fraternities on and off college campuses. Sexually aggressive men in U.S. studies, from convicted rapists to college males answering questions on social surveys, share an extremely similar set of attitudes that sexual aggression is: (1) normal; (2) that sexual relationships involve game playing; (3) that men should dominant women; (4) that women are responsible for rape; and (5) that relations between the sexes are adversarial and manipulative on both sides (Koss & Leonard, 1984). These sexually aggressive mindsets and behaviors are learned throughout childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (Sanday, 1990; 2007), which lead to a supportive rape culture where rape is normalized (Funk, 1993) and femininity is devalued and negated.

No matter what environment a female or male is being raped in, one of their greatest pains in life is the sense of being looked at as insignificant. When women are gang raped by a group of men, they literally embody an object for men to “play with.” By being feminized within a patriarchal society, men are categorized as helpless, and

having no real value as a person, an individual, and especially as a man (Ridea & Sinclair, 1982). Men and women who are sexually abused and raped become prisoners and slaves to power and control. Feminizing a man during the act of rape is humiliating because it forces him to submit and assume the role of a woman. In a rape situation, no matter who is involved or what environment the act is occurring in, sex and power go hand in hand (Ridea & Sinclair, 1982).

Given that the topic of rape has been publicly discussed since the 1700s and we are still living in a rape-supportive culture (Block, 2006; Buchwald et al., 1993; Matthews, 1994; Sanday, 1990; 2007; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997), it is vital to study how institutional structures contribute to and support United States' rape-supportive culture, which leads me to ask this research question:

RQ: How do institutional structures contribute to a rape-supportive culture?

This thesis explores the problems of patriarchy, traditional sex and gender roles, and sexual assault within the United States by examining institutional structures. Specifically, it addresses the problems of two particular institutions and social structures, one being the penal systems and the second being fraternities on and off campuses. These two institutions, structures, and cultures reflect socially constructed and institutionalized systems where masculinity and femininity are reconstructed and femininity is disciplined, even when there are not women physically present. This thesis argues that these two institutional structures contribute to the problems of patriarchy, hegemony, and the trivialization of traditional sex and gender roles, and the normalization of sexual assault in the United States. This critical analysis of these two institutional structures explores the construction of identity, gender role expectations and

performance, based in a hegemonic preference for the performance of masculine behaviors over feminine traits. This thesis seeks to uncover patriarchal investments in gendered differences and cultural expectations of gender role performances. This introductory chapter continues with a brief overview of hegemonic masculinity, the penal system, and the fraternity system, to justify them as sites for critical analysis, and it concludes with a brief description of the chapters to follow. At best, the penal system and fraternity system do not prevent this problem and at worst both of these structures encourage this problem. For both institutional structures and cultures, it is vital for readers and the members within the penal system and the fraternity system to recognize that rape is not just an isolated act that can be rooted out from patriarchy without ending patriarchy itself (Schultz, 1975). We are not there yet.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In order to better understand gendered violence, the theoretical framework for this thesis is primarily supported by the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity has influenced the thinking about men, gender, and social hierarchy for over two decades (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). During its development, hegemonic masculinity was distinguished from the other masculinities, because “it embodied the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832).

Connell (1995) defines hegemonic masculinity as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and

the subordination of women” (p. 77). For Connell, individuals do not possess or have masculinity; rather, individuals produce masculinity by engaging in masculine practices and perform masculinity (Schippers, 2007). Connell defines two different mechanisms of subordinated masculinities. When gay men subordinate to heterosexual men, gay men embody what Connell refers to as *subordinated masculinities* (Schippers, 2007).

Subordinated masculinities are held up against hegemonic masculinity (the ideal form of masculinity within U.S. society), because they serve as the “other” (Schippers, 2007).

The categorization of the “other” positions “... homosexual masculinities at the bottom of a gender hierarchy among men” (Connell, 1995, p. 78). When men’s practices are distinguished as subordinated masculinity, they are often conflated with femininity. The second mechanism is *marginalized masculinities*. Connell “... offers marginalization to characterize the relationship[s] among men that result as class and race intersect with gender” (Schippers, 2007, p. 88). Hegemonic masculinity is often conflated with middle-class, white, heterosexual men, and marginalized masculinities are those of the subordinated class, racial, or ethnic groups within a culture and/or society.

“The concept of hegemonic masculinity has been particularly successful in identifying the ways in which some men dominate both women and other men” (Hearn, 2004, p. 58). Due to socialization, the roles, norms, and sex and gender roles that are adopted by society (Jackson & Penrose, 2008) influence the ways people conceptualize rape. Men have grown to develop a fear of femininity because of the socialization and emotional reactions men (along with women) learn in their childhood. The cultural expectations for men to display any type of masculinity are contrary to men being defined as rape victims. If men are faced with the possibility of being a victim of rape, they are

looked at as being naïve and weak, stereotypical qualities associated with femininity. Hegemonic masculinity helps us to better understand gendered violence because during rape, violence is a gendered practice that is connected to power; thus, power is socially gendered (Sen, 1998) where men remain the most powerful in patriarchal societies.

### **The Penal System**

“Although you may think that I’m not like you, we are not so different. I want to have control over my own body and my life, just as you do. I want to choose the people with whom I get intimate, just as you do. I absolutely did not want to have sex with that man in the San Francisco Jail, but I felt powerless to refuse him.”

Cecilia Chung, 2009 (quoted in Just Detention International)

“Don’t drop the soap”—one of the most common phrases used in the United States to advise new inmates in prisons or jail systems how to “survive.” Male-on-male rape in prisons has become a common subject of humor on many late-night comedy shows, in movies, and in television commercials (Young, 2007). Joking about prison rape trivializes and dehumanizes the inmates. These dismissive attitudes are one of the major obstacles in ending sexual violence in the prison and jail systems (JDI: Truth, 2009). Prison-rape humor demonstrates that there is a widespread lack of sympathy for the victims, “... who are, after all, convicted criminals—even though rape wasn’t part of their sentence” (Young, 2007, p. 17). The idea that men who convict a crime(s) deserve punishment does not logically equalize their punishment to be sexual assault; rather, this crime is a devastating human rights violation (JDI: Truth, 2009).

When a man has sexual contact with another man, even against his will, some members within society feel more than justified to question the victim’s “manhood” and



his sexual orientation (gay or straight). By doing this our society once again falls into the blame the victim mentality. This also exemplifies how our society feels about traditional sex roles and the ways we question a male rape victim's masculinity. Research has shown that society considers a male's "manhood" and his sexual orientation as one and as the same, which is inaccurate (Scarce, 1997).

Within the jail and prison systems, those who display "manhood" and produce hegemonic masculinity are considered to be strong. The inmates who display more feminine attributes are considered to be weak. These two distinctions create a culture of hierarchy where the inmates are separated—it is the strong (i.e. masculine) versus the weak (i.e. feminine). They have reconstructed the values of our heteronormative society to redefine a hierarchy of masculinity in an all male institution. Specifically, men who rape other men do not always identify as being gay. Research has shown that the profile of a man who rapes another man tends to be a white heterosexual man in his early to mid twenties (Scarce, 1997). "Virtually every study indicates that men rape other men out of anger or an attempt to overpower, humiliate, and degrade their victims..." (Scarce, 1997, p. 17). Research studies have found that gay men are raped at a much higher rate than heterosexual men are in the United States. When a rape victim is a victim of same-sex rape, people tend to not be as sympathetic and do not recognize that the victim is actually a victim (Scarce, 1997).

Within the jail and prison system, men use verbal and physical abuse toward other men to identify their status in the culture of hierarchy. Names such as "joker" and "pitcher" are given to the men who penetrate other men. Terms such as "punks" and "kids" are given to the men who submit to other men and provide sexual services (Scarce,

1997). Common characteristics of punks and kids also include "... men of smaller build and physical stature, men who are less masculine in either appearance or behavior, and men who are gay or perceived to be gay" (Scarce, 1997, p. 38). Men who are considered punks and kids are often times labeled as "bitch" or "woman" (Funk, 1993). This labeling reinforces their role within the hierarchal system. Due to this gender role that is placed upon them, men are expected to enact the same roles as a "bitch" or a "woman" (i.e. a female) would. Through this, the punks are subordinating themselves to those in a higher position within the system. Men within this position are feminized by the act of being raped and the expectations of their appearance. Punks are forced to wear feminine clothing, grow their hair out long, shave their body hair, and adopt a female name while serving the joker and the pitcher, which is an attempt to preserve the joker's masculinity and heterosexuality. The joker and the pitcher continue to feminize these men by referring to them with feminine pronouns, such as "she" and "her" (Scarce, 1997). Within the prison and jail systems, men who produce hegemonic masculinity are at the top of the hierarchy; while the men who perform more feminine roles are at the bottom of the hierarchy. The men who are forced to submit to other men literally become slaves to sex.

Sexual abuse behind bars is a widespread human rights crisis in prisons and jails across the United States (JDI: The Basics, 2009). "Rape is both normalized in these environments and wielded as a tool for aggression, domination, and literal enslavement of others" (Scarce, 1997, p. 36). In 2007, the Bureau of Justice Statics (BJS) surveyed prisoners across the United States and found that 4.5 percent, which equals to 60,500 inmates, of more than 1.3 million inmates in federal and state prisons were sexually

abused in the previous year alone. “A BJS survey in county jails was just as troubling; nearly 25,000 jail detainees reported having been sexually abused in the past six months” (JDI: The Basics, 2009, p. 1). Unfortunately, the data that is provided by the BJS represents only a fraction of the true numbers of detainees who are victimized (JDI: The Basics, 2009). Due to prison rape usually being disbelieved, ignored, or blamed on the victims themselves by the prison population and by general society, many male victims do not report the crime (Scarce, 1997). “The predominant belief persists that prisoners have no rights whatsoever and that violence inflicted on inmates is an administration of punishment that they deserve” (Scarce, 1997, p. 37).

Each year within the U.S., the Stop Prisoner Rape organization estimates that at least 360,000 men are sexually assaulted within the prison and jail systems. Out of the 360,000 men accounted for, at least-two thirds of these men are repeatedly raped. “Repeated anal and oral sexual assaults by several prisoners are followed by threats of death if the prisoner reports the assault” (Macdonald, 1995, p. 18). Men exert power and control within the prison system, just as they do within a patriarchal society; however, men within the penal system have to work much harder to appear powerful and masculine than most men in a heteronormative society, because men within the penal system who assault are assaulting other men, not women. “These statistics expose a serious, systematic failure to protect the basic human rights of inmates” (JDI: The Basics, 2009, p. 1).

### **The Fraternity System**

“Sometimes a woman has to resist your advances to show how sincere she is. And so, sometimes you’ve gotta help them along. You know she means no the first time, but the third time she could say no all night and you know she doesn’t mean it.”

Anonymous fraternity brother, 1990 (quoted in Peggy Reeves Sanday)

Along with the penal system having evident numbers of rapes and gang rapes occurring each year, fraternities have similar practices of feminizing men within a community. “Combined with male socialization in our society and the connotations of masculinity in our culture, fraternal cultures at schools and colleges breed a propensity to abuse women [and men] sexually, along with a continuum of behaviors” (Buchwald et al., 1993, p. 25). The U.S. Bureau of Justice claims that more alleged rapes occur within property lines of Greek-letter housing than any other community location. “A legacy of sexual violence continues to be transmitted from one generation to the next through a fraternal culture [that] is compromised of rituals, songs, language, and activities grounded in tradition” (Scarce, 1997, p. 52). Thus, fraternity men on college campuses are a group who are at a particular high risk for perpetration (Foubert & Newberry, 2006). Out of all college students, fraternity members commit over half of all “gang rapes” on a college campus (O’Sullivan, 1991).

Gang rapes have been a publicly discussed phenomenon since the early 1980s. According to a report issued by the Association of American College in 1985, “pulling train” or “gang banging” as it is also called, refers to a group of men lining up like train cars to take turns raping the same woman (Ehrhart & Sandler, 1985). Fraternity men gang raping women also occurs off college campuses (Sanday, 1990; 2007). Some

fraternity members admit to being under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, along with providing their victims with alcohol and/or drugs to “loosen them up” during a gang rape (Sanday, 1990; 2007). “Members of the group not sharing enthusiasm for the project, nevertheless take part, because they lack self-confidence and fear intimidation or ridicule” (Macdonald, 1995, p. 67). This act of brutality can be linked to socialization and social roles, which contribute to group sexual aggression by men toward women and feminine men (Buchwald et al., 1993).

Generally speaking, the fraternity members who participate in this act are protected, while the victim is blamed for having placed herself “... in a compromising social situation where male adolescent hormones are known, as the saying goes, ‘to get out of hand’. For a number of reasons, people, say ‘She asked for it’” (Sanday, 1990, p. 3; 2007, p. 35). For many years in rape trials, the victim—rather than the rapist—seems to be the person on trial (Macdonald, 1995). Due to misperceptions and rape myths, many people within United States’ rape-supportive culture blame the victim and not the actual perpetrators.

Gang rape is an example of an “activity” that fraternity members participate in. Throughout some fraternities’ histories of rituals, initiation practices, and hazing, the brothers of fraternity collectively denigrate the pledges’ weaknesses (i.e. femininity) and transform the pledges through a rigorous cycle that consists of mental and physical abuse into the idealized subject position—hegemonic masculinity. These cognitive processes that occur throughout initiation and “brotherhood” give the members within the fraternity a sense of invulnerability and entitlement, as well as a disregard for nonmembers, which

makes it easier for some of the brothers to victimize women and non-brother members (Buchwald et al., 1993).

Some of these acts are kept secret, while others are publicly discussed. For example, the Delta Sigma Phi recruitment t-shirts last year at Eastern Illinois University said, "As individuals we are weak. As a chapter we are strong. As a fraternity we are powerful! We are Delta Sigma Phi." These t-shirts represent the structure and culture of a fraternity. In order to strengthen their masculinity, the brothers justify their initiation practices of whipping away the pledges femininity through verbal and physical abuse (Sanday, 1990; 2007). The fraternity becomes personified to have human characteristics and embraces hegemonic masculinity as a power statement. These t-shirts represent the steps to becoming masculine and state that individually, the brothers are weak and ultimately nothing without the fraternity. This type of group identification replaces individual ethics with group ethics, and "this process can lead people to behave more honorably as a group member than as an individual, but more commonly the result is the opposite" (Buchwald et al., 1993, p. 26).

Many people regard North American colleges as centers of higher learning, career training, friendly interpersonal socialization, liberal thought, and athletic achievement (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997). Even the shocking events that once happened at a college campus tend to be forgotten and do not disturb the overall image of college and university campuses as sunny, happy, and safe places (Schwartz & DeKeserdy, 1997). Considering college age women are four times more likely to be sexually assaulted on a college campus than women not on college campuses (RAINN: Statistics, 2008), why is

it that we rarely hear about crimes on college campuses, particularly those involving sexual assault?

Fraternities encourage hegemonic masculinity and reward hypermasculine behavior in men that falls along a continuum of sexual violence. Also, the lack of clear-cut policies in most colleges, along with the lack of enforcement, reinforces the sexist ideology that some college men have where they feel they are above the law when they rape women because too often they are (Schwartz & DeKeserdy, 1997). Like the inmates within the prison system, the male and female victims on and off college campuses reveal a serious and systematic failure that fails to protect the basic human rights of men and women in the United States.

### **Preview of Thesis**

The next section, Chapter Two, “Performing Masculinity Behind Bars: A Feminist Analysis of HBO’s series *Oz*,” analyzes the penal system. This chapter uses a feminist analysis of HBO’s series, *Oz*, to examine a structure that contributes to a rape-supportive culture. *Oz* is a particularly salient show for the investigation of male-on-male sexual violence. In order to better understand mediated representations of gendered violence, this chapter includes a feminist analysis of the first season of *Oz*, which includes eight one-hour long episodes. This chapter analyzes the production and performance of a reconstructed masculinity among inmates within the penal system, the culture of hierarchy within the penal system, the denigration of femininity among inmates, and the rewarding of hypermasculine behavior. Through *Oz*’s intersections of sexuality and gender, this chapter specifically uncovers how *Oz*, as a text, demonstrates a particular understanding of masculinity and gender.

Chapter Three, “Boys will be Boys’: A Narrative Analysis of Fraternity Gang Rape,” analyzes fraternities. The word “fraternity” in its broadest sense refers to a group of people who unite by ties of brotherhood and who have common purposes, interests, and/or goals (Sanday, 1990; 2007). This chapter analyzes the fraternity system as a structure and culture, along with the performance of masculinity, the denigration of femininity among pledges and brothers, and the rewarding of hypermasculine behavior. This chapter uses a narrative analysis of three fraternity gang rapes on college campuses. Through fraternities’ intersections of gender roles, power, and privilege, this chapter specifically uncovers how fraternities demonstrate a particular understanding of masculinity and (re)construction of a culture that is accepting of these values, attitudes, and behaviors. This chapter offers suggestions for both men and women to help socially (re)construct a culture that does not support sexual violence.

Finally, the last chapter, “Discussion: Stopping Sexual Violence,” provides a summary of these two institutions that perpetuate a rape-supportive culture. This chapter provides a narrative analysis of three fraternity gang rapes that occurred off college campuses, which demonstrates that fraternity gang rape does not only happen on college campuses. This chapter also offers suggestions for men and women to help (re)construct a socially (re)construct a culture that does not support sexual violence. This chapter also identifies the problems associated with rape prevention discourse in education programs and rape crisis centers. This chapter ends by providing suggestions for future research and programs that will get us closer to ending sexual violence in the United States.



### **Performing Masculinity Behind Bars:**

#### **A Feminist Analysis of HBO's series *Oz***

“We are living in a frank and realistic age, yet the subject of sex in prison – so provocative, so vital, so timely ... is shrouded in dead silence.”

Joseph Fishman, 1934 (quoted in Struckman-Johnson)

During the 1970s, feminist social movements directed their attention toward sexual violence and partnered with law enforcement to enact the rape reform movement (Scarce, 1997). The rape reform movement influenced the passage of federal and state laws to broaden the definition of rape and to alter the procedures of a rape trial (Sable, Danis, Mauzy, & Gallagher, 2006). During this time, a shift of social recognition occurred where men were beginning to be recognized as victims of sexual violence on a national level. Sexual violence against men occurred (and still occurs) most often within the penal system (Scarce, 1997). Each year within the U.S., the Human Rights Watch estimates that roughly 420,000 prisoners are raped in year. Out of these men, at least two-thirds of them are repeatedly raped. Men are often gang raped on a daily basis, resulting in millions of rapes that are committed and uncounted each year (Scarce, 1997). “Male rape survivors describe their experience of rape as life threatening, de-humanizing and humiliating” (Doherty & Anderson, 2004, p. 86).

Rising awareness about prison rape began in 1972 when the American Civil Liberties Union created the ACLU National Prison Project. This project focused on the issues of prison rape (Todd, 2006). On an academic level, research had predominantly been centered on a male perpetrator and a female victim, but during this time “... the development and dissemination of the idea that rape is an exercise in power began to

shed light on the rape of men... particularly in prisons and other correctional facilities” (Scarce, 1997, p. 12-13).

In 1980, Russell Dan Smith, a former inmate who suffered from sexual violence behind bars, created the “People Organized to Stop the Rape of Imprisoned Persons” (POSRIP). The group’s mission was to discuss and deal with “... the problems of rape, sexual assault, un-consensual sexual slavery, and forced prostitution in the prison context” (Just Detention International, 2008, p. 1). The organization was then renamed “Stop Prisoner Rape” (SPR). Stop Prisoner Rape still “... remains the only organization in the U.S. that is dedicated exclusively to the elimination of sexual violence in detention” (Just Detention International, 2008, p. 2).

In 1994, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled, “Being violently assaulted in prison is simply not ‘part of the penalty that criminal offenders pay for their offenses against society.’ Such treatment, as described in *Farmer v. Brennan*, constitutes, ‘cruel and unusual punishment, a violation of the Eight Amendment to the U.S. Constitution”” (Todd, 2006, p. 6). In 2003, Congress passed the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), “... which boosts federal data collection, [and] creates a commission to address the issue but does not ‘create a private right of action for prisoners...’ This law does, however, provide incentives for state and local governments to improve efforts to eliminate prison rape” (Todd, 2006, p. 6).

In 1997, HBO aired their first season of *Oz*, a dramatic prison-genre series. Until *Oz*, “... prisoner rape had barely registered on the television landscape outside of tasteless jokes on late-night TV” (Stemple, 2007, p. 168). *Oz* challenges its viewers to question how we, as a society, think about how rape is justified within the prison system

in mainstream discourse. After *Oz* aired, survivors of prison rape "... long since freed and coping with their abuse on the outside, began to write to Stop Prison Rape in record numbers, sometimes citing *OZ* (sic) [as] the spark that inspired them to disclose their abuse" (Stemple, 2007, p. 185). *Oz* "... forced memories to surface and accomplished the time-honored advocacy goal of 'raising awareness'" (Stemple, 2007, p. 185).

*Oz* is a particularly salient show to the investigation of male-on-male sexual violence, and in order to better understand mediated representations of gendered violence, I analyzed the first season of *Oz*, which includes eight one-hour long episodes. Former Executive Director of Stop Prisoner Rape, Lara Stemple, stated, "As funeral directors and White House staffers can surely attest, a single television program has the power to shape the cultural lens through which others view our work. In my case, that show was *OZ* (sic)" Stemple, 2007, p. 166). *Oz* "... is a remarkably innovative and compelling prison drama that thoroughly indicated the prison industrial complex and broke new ground in the representation of racial and sexual diversity on television" (Wlodarz, 2005, p. 59-60). *Oz* is a mediated representation that offers us insight into a more widespread understanding and expectation of gendered performance. This mediated discourse "... forces its viewers to confront the complexities of racial and sexual identity" (Wlodarz, 2005, p. 60). *Oz* frequently examines the intersections between sexuality, gender, and race, and challenges its viewers to do so as well. *Oz* also insists that viewers "... pay close attention to the complex operations of power in and out of both prisons and the prison genre" (Wlodarz, 2005, p. 66).

Through *Oz*'s intersections of sexuality and gender, the main aim of this research is to uncover how *Oz*, as a text, demonstrates a particular understanding of masculinity

and gender. “The notion of masculinity is central to understanding rape. One’s sense of masculinity is socially constructed and develops in relation to constructions of femininity” (Man & Conan, 2001, p. 148). I argue that *Oz*, as a television show, is not reinforcing hegemonic masculinity because *Oz* so vibrantly displays a reconstructed masculinity, and by doing so, they are allowing us a space to critique masculinity. As a text, the show is situated problematically because it makes viewers uncomfortable with hypermasculine behaviors; thus, the spectacle of prison rape and violence becomes a way into challenging and questioning the structure of masculinity in the United States. I argue that through the mediated representations of the intersections of sexuality and gender, this show models a particular understanding of masculinity and sexuality. “Sexuality in *Oz* (and in the prison genre in general) is often intimately connected to death and/or the disruption of subjective stability” (Wlodarz, 2005, p. 71).

In order to analyze a complex text like *Oz*, I analyze the text through the lens of critical rhetoric. I analyze not only the ways in which inmates are constituted into particular subject positions, but more specifically how they are constituted. The men who sexually assault other men have to work harder than the other men to uphold a masculinity that is still seen as powerful and dominant because they are having sexual relations with other men, not women. I argue that these men produce a reconstructed masculine gender performance that is counter to hegemonic masculinity at times.

It is vital to recognize that gender is not just a social construct; rather gender is a performance (Butler, 1988). Butler (1990) argues that gender, as an objective and natural element to one’s life, does not exist. “Gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed” (Butler, 1990, p. 278). Butler

(1988) argues that every day men and women “put a show on” through the set of signs that they wear, which can be seen as costumes or disguises. Butler (1990) argues that this performance is imposed upon us by normative heterosexuality. Since the inmates within the penal system who sexually assault other men counter hegemonic masculinity, they perform a reconstructed masculinity by feminizing other men to uphold a powerful, masculine performance.

I also analyze the ways in which the prison culture is seen as the ultramasculine world and the ways the inmates are rewarded for performing hypermasculinity by denigrating femininity and exerting sexual dominance over the feminine. Although the penal system is not a direct reflection of society, the inmates within the penal system have their own way of being socialized in a particular way where femininity is disciplined. We, as a society, must recognize the ways the penal system strips the inmates of power and literally enslaves the inmates to a life that is disciplined by the government (Foucault, 1975). We must analyze the effect this has on the inmates’ gender performance. *Oz* is a culturally significant text, because it has undertaken a dialogue

... about prisoner rape that was glaringly absent from the cultural conversation, given the scope and seriousness of the problem. It matters whether *OZ* (sic) gets it right because television shapes our understanding of this widespread crisis, influences our culture and, potentially, society’s response to the problem.

(Stemple, 2007, p. 171)

### ***Oz: Is It Just a Drama Series?***

*Oz* first premiered on July 12, 1997, as HBO’s first hour-long original dramatic series (Wlodarz, 2005). The first season of *Oz* was created, written, and co-produced by

Tom Fontana. The challenge for Fontana was "... to take people who have done horrible things and humanize them without asking for sympathy" (deGroot & Daley, 1998, p. 50). Fontana received negative reviews and complaints that *Oz* went "too far" and was "unwatchable." Fontana "... argued that people who bemoan the violence in *Oz* are simply refusing to look past it to understand that he is, in fact, condemning the violent things inmates do to one another in *Oz*" (Stemple, 2007, p. 178). Fontana designed the first season episodes "... to be individually cohesive and constructed around a central theme such as the prison routine, capital punishment, aging, religion, and drug abuse" (Wlodarz, 2005, p. 74).

The first season of *Oz* has prominent scenes of rape that exploit men's vulnerability (a common and stereotypical characteristic associated with femininity). The risk of femininity and being feminized troubles the inmates of *Oz* throughout each episode within the first season. The first season uncovers the ways in which conflicts of identity emerged within *Oz*, which usually directly leads to violence (a characteristic of hegemonic masculinity).

*Oz* takes place in "Emerald City" (often referred to as "Em City"), which is an experimental unit of Oswald State Penitentiary (HBO: *Oz*: Episode Guide: Season 1, 2009). The first season includes a racial and sexually diverse crowd of inmates who are separated into groups and "... live within a pecking order of Homeboys, Latinos, Muslims, Irish, Aryans, and Wiseguys" (HBO: Episode Guide: Season 1, p. 1). The Brotherhood "... rallies around the white supremacy mantra and always welcomes opportunities to fortify their power through the physical and psychological intimidation. Anyone wanting to stay healthy, steers clear of this group" (HBO: *The Brotherhood*,

2009, p. 1). The Homeboys function "... as enforcers and drug dealers in Em City" (HBO: The Homeboys, 2009, p. 1). The Irish are a "small but formidable group that carries out many of Ryan's nefarious plans to make money and stay alive with as little conflict as possible" (HBO: The Irish, 2009, p. 1). The Latinos, who are also known as "El Norte, move "... drugs in Em City" (HBO: The Latinos, 2009, p. 1). The Muslims are "... bound by their faith to Islam although external forces put their faith to tough tests" (HBO: The Muslims, 2009, p. 1). The Others consist of members with "... various backgrounds and beliefs. They have no real leader but Bob Rebadow is probably the oldest of the group" (HBO: The Others, 2009, p. 1).

### **Behind Bars in "Em City"**

Male rape occurs around the world: from inside prisons, to military organizations, to small-town neighborhoods, and to college campuses (Scarce, 1997). "In a 2007 survey of prisoners across the country, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) found that 4.5 percent (or 60,500) of the more than 1.3 million inmates held in federal and state prisons had been sexually abused in the previous year alone. A BJS survey in county jails was just as troubling; nearly 25,000 jail detainees reported having been sexually abused in the past six months" (Learn the Basics, 2008, p. 1). Outside of the penal system, it is reported that one in every 33 men will experience an attempted or completed rape in their lifetime (RAINN: Statistics, 2008). Within the prison system, men are often gang raped on a daily basis, which results in millions of rapes that are committed and uncounted each year (Scarce, 1997). Just like rape victims outside of the penal system, "many survivors of prisoner rape never tell anyone about their abuse, and fewer still make official reports" (Stemple, 2007, p. 170).

In and outside of the prison system, the essence of masculinity is performance. Within the prison system, as Jackson Katz (1999) argues, the essence of performance has grown increasingly violent. I argue that the narratives within *Oz* produce a reconstructed masculinity. The most powerful men within the hierarchy of the penal system are the men who assault other men. Although these men are engaging in what is deemed “gay actions,” they do not identify as being gay. These men feminize other men and because of this, they have to work harder to uphold their power and masculinity. The narratives within *Oz* that are considered to be masculine are the men that denigrate femininity, exert sexual dominance, and are rewarded for their hypermasculine behaviors.

### **The Culture of Hierarchy**

The culture of a prison is the foundation for a better understanding of who the inmates are within a particular unit within the prison. Clemmer’s (1940) book, *The Prison Community*, made a huge contribution to the research on prisons. Clemmer uncovered the structures and the functions of the prison culture. Clemmer’s dubbed the term *prisonization*, which describes the process of inmates becoming socialized into a culture of a prison. Clemmer saw the prison culture being influenced by a combination of characteristics, including the norms, values, and knowledge that are brought into the prison by the diverse group of inmates, and how the prison culture is an isolated and segregated society—just to name a few.

Each prison has a different culture, depending on a combination of factors. Out of all of the factors, all penal systems do have one thing in common and “... that is the traumatic break between life as it is lived in free society and the manner in which it must be lived in confinement” (Scacco, 1975, p. 7-8). Due to this confinement, “the chaotic,



violent atmosphere is a constant reminder of the location and circumstances of imprisonment” (Bandyopadhyay, 2006, p. 195). In the first episode of *Oz*, Augustus Hill (member of “The Others”), a black inmate who is wheelchair bound and anchors each episode, refers to Emerald City as a *concentration camp*. Hill refers to this unit within the larger prison system as having “no privacy” because “there are eyes everywhere.” This feeling of “no privacy” is an effect of Bentham’s Panopticon, which is the architectural figure in penal systems that is used as a central tower for guards to stand and watch the inmates. The major effect of the Panopticon is to induce in the inmates a state of conscious and knowing that this permanent visibility assures the automatic functioning of power within the penal systems (Foucault, 1975). For the inmates within the prison system, “the desire for privacy is the desire for obtaining freedom from noxious stimuli” (Toch, 1992, p. 36).

Although *Oz* is a fictional television show, *Oz* functions as a discourse that reveals certain aspects of prison life—the structures and the functions of a prison culture, which are ruled by a hierarchal system. A clear hierarchy and/or pecking order determine the role that each inmate must perform within the prison system (Man & Cronan, 2001). For Kenneth Burke, order and hierarchy are inseparable. As Burke (1984) observed, social

‘order’ is not just ‘regularity.’ It also involves a distribution of *authority*. And such a mutuality of rule and service, with its uncertain dividing line between loyalty and servitude, takes roughly a pyramidal or hierarchal form (or, at least, it is like a ladder with ‘up’ and ‘down’). (p. 276)

“According to Burke, the quest for order produces authority, and the distribution of authority introduces the ‘spirit’ of hierarchy that infuses most human societies” (Jasinski, 2001, p. 300). Hierarchies are constructed out of raw materials, including race, ethnicity, gender, and class (Jasinski, 2001). Within *Oz*, hierarchy can be constructed through a social thinking where prisoners rank, grade, compare, and evaluate one person’s masculinity against another person’s masculinity to determine their order within the prison culture, which “... illustrates Burke’s contention that humanity is ‘goaded’ by the spirit of hierarchy” (Jasinski, 2001, p. 300). “Once imprisoned, male offenders experience an authoritarian, punitive environment that assails their sense of competency and worth” (Robertson, 2003, p. 426). This sexualized aggression derives from men’s attempt(s) to achieve this ideal type of masculinity—hegemonic masculinity, because the hierarchy within the prison system is guided by the notion of masculinity, where only the strongest (i.e. the most masculine) men survive.

Connell’s “... theorization of masculinity lies in his understanding of masculinity(ies) as actively, and socially, constructed” (Moller, 2007, p. 264). The term “... ‘turning out’ an inmate (prison argot for raping him) assigns assailant and victim to socially constructed, hierarchical gender roles” (Robertson, 2003, p. 425). The prison culture within *Oz* “... regards the rape of a fellow inmate as one of the premier forms of masculine domination” (Robertson, 2003, p. 425).

In the U.S., especially since the 1980s, males have been exposed to narratives that promote hypermasculine stereotypes. The narratives that media and gender theorist Jackson Katz (1995) argue underlie an increase in violence against anyone who is deemed as being “weak” (i.e. feminine). The image of “masculine” and “strong” men

that reinvigorated in the 1980s presented the masculine body with “hard body” images. These images presented “real men” as being bigger, stronger, and more muscular—thus, more traditionally “masculine” (Matthew, 2004). The categorization of a “real man” is encouraged in the prison culture where men’s exertion of masculinity gains power and respect from the officers and the other inmates. Hill describes the masculinized culture of *Oz* by stating,

They call this the penal system. But it’s really the penis system. It’s about how big, it’s about how long, it’s about how hard. Life in *Oz* is all about the size of your dick and anyone who tells you different ain’t got one.

Hill’s description of *Oz* points out the “... simplistic privilege of masculinity in prison culture, reinforcing it with the ultimate jab—being dickless, or not really a man at all” (Stemple, 2007, p. 167).

The officers in *Oz* expect (and prefer) that the culture of “Em City” remain a heteronormative and heterosexual culture. In the first episode of *Oz*, Officer Diane Wittlesey, a white woman and the only female officer in *Oz*, sets up the culture of the prison system by providing the new inmates with a list of rules—one of which includes “no fucking.” The reason behind the “no sex” rule centers on society’s attitudes toward incarceration. “Domination, control, and deprivation. That’s how prisons are run,” says Brenda V. Smith, American University, Washington College of Law professor and National Prison Rape Elimination Commission member, “Prison is about deindividualizing people and in some ways, dehumanizing people. [The attitude among corrections officers towards sex is] that’s not anything a person would need to do” (Todd, 2006, p. 5). The “no fucking” rule is also a rule against what is termed as a

“homosexual” or “gay” act. The prison sexual culture and code “... works to feminize homosexuals” (Wooden & Parker, 1982, p. 145). This rule deems that heterosexual (and ultimately heteronormative) behavior is expected, which reinforces the expectations of prisoners to perform a certain type of masculinity. This expectation is inherently problematic because the narratives of men’s performance of masculinity discipline and denigrate femininity.

### **Denigrating Femininity**

Members within a hegemonic and heteronormative society believe that masculinity refers to a specific, already known set of qualities and/or attributes that certain (i.e. “real men”) carry (Schippers, 2007). The inmates within *Oz* model these qualities and/or attribute in the show’s narratives, along with reconstruct a new model of masculinity. Within *Oz*, the inmates who produce a reconstructed masculinity sexually abuse other inmates and denigrate femininity by forcing a victim to assume the role of a woman. “Sexual abuse in prisons is one of America’s oldest, darkest, and yet most open, secrets” (Man & Cronan, 2001, p. 128). When men are raped in prisons, it is an act of “... violence, politics, and an acting out of power roles” (Scacco, 1982, p. 4). Men are demasculinized during (and after) rape because sex and power go hand-in-hand.

The perpetrators within *Oz* identify as heterosexual, which is how they reconstruct their masculinity when they do engage in sexual relations with other men. Sexual predators within the prison system “... ordinarily are heterosexual, but engage in what most people would characterize as homosexual acts to achieve power in a manner that, in many ways, reflect the most abhorrent side of gender relations” (Man & Cronan, 2001, p. 149). Straight men rape gay men *and* other straight men. When straight men rape gay

men, it is usually part of a hate-motivated gay bashing (Scarce, 1997). Straight men often feel angry at the ways in which gay men go against hegemonic masculinity. Gay men do not perform hegemonic masculinity, rather they embody subordinated masculinity and are seen as being feminine; thus, they are seen as being not “real men” (Shippers, 2007) and the “other.”

In the first episode of *Oz*, Dino Ortolani (member of “The Italians”), a white inmate, assaults a gay, black male in the shower. When Ortolani meets with Tim McManus (Administrator of Emerald City), a white male, the viewers find out that this is Ortolani’s third fight that was related to a “homosexual encounter.” Ortolani tells McManus that he swung at the man because “he was being all fag-ish, choking his dick in front of me, trying to make it all hard.” Ortolani’s description of the other male’s performance of “fag-ish” signifies the other male’s inability to exert heteronormative masculinity; thus, he is physically assaulted. By describing the other male as acting like a “fag,” Ortolani is “... placing [the gay black male] in a female category through the use of language [that] connotes softness or frills which [Ortolani] identifies with femininity” (Scacco, 1975, p. 79). Gay men are not the only victims of rape inside and outside of the prison system, because straight men get raped, too. This same-sex rape occurs due to the exertion of power and control by feminizing the other man and forcing the man into a sexually submissive, receptive role of a female (Scarce, 1997).

In the first season of *Oz*, Tobias Beecher (member of “The Others”) is a white, straight, married man who is repeatedly raped by Vern Schillinger (member of “The Brotherhood”), a white supremacist who identifies as straight. During Beecher’s first night in *Oz*, he is threatened to be raped by his cellmate, Simon Adebisi, (“member of

The Homeboys”), who is a tall, muscular, black man. The next day Beecher and Schillinger talk and Schillinger offers himself as a support system to Beecher. This is a common tactic that perpetrators do to “... mislead their intended victim into believing that they are friends. This often serves to entice the victim into moving into their quarters where he more easily can be controlled” (Man & Cronan, 2001, p. 154). Later that day, Beecher ends up moving into Schillinger’s cell and they become cellmates. This tactic is “... also used as an effective means to break the victim’s spirit by reinforcing his feelings of powerlessness when they ultimate rape him” (Man & Cronan, 2001, p. 154). Beecher and Schillinger’s relationship is the spectacle of power (i.e. masculinity) versus weakness (i.e. femininity) throughout the first season.

One of the key elements within the prison system is that “... a ‘man’ cannot be forced to do anything that he does not want to –a ‘real man’ cannot be exploited” (Scacco, 1982, p. 11). Names such as “joker,” “jockey,” or “pitcher” are given to the men who penetrate other men (Scarce, 1997). Males who seek “... dominance often devalue weaker males with insults that imply some form of fragility or lack of toughness, such as ‘wimp,’ or names that tend to associate weakness with femininity or homosexuality, such as ‘pussy,’ girl,’ ‘fag,’ and ‘queer’” (Man & Cronan, 2001, p. 149). Terms such as “punks,” “kids,” or “bitches” are also given to those men who submit to other men and are forced to “provide” sexual services (Scarce, 1997). There is a pecking order within the prison where rape-slang is used to “... label men in terms of their status” (Scarce, 1997, p. 38) and perceived masculinity. Within *Oz*, the term “prag” is given to those who men who submit to the perpetrators, the “jokers” or “pitchers,” and are the “property” of another man. Hill states, “When you make a man your prag, you make a man a prag for

life... Till death do us part.” This labeling reinforces their role within the hierarchal prison system. Due to this gender role identity that is forced upon the victims, the men are expected to enact the same role as a “bitch” (i.e. a woman) would. Through this, the punks are subordinating to those in a higher position. The submission to Schillinger redefines Beecher’s identity as a female because he assumes the role of “property” of his conqueror, Schillinger, and ultimately, he becomes a sexual slave.

In the second episode, Beecher meets with Sister Peter Marie Reimondo (referred to as Sister Peter Marie) to find out if he can see his wife in a conjugal visit. When he returns to his cell, Schillinger is waiting for him and asks Beecher where he has been. Beecher tells him that he went to visit with Sister Peter Marie about seeing his wife. Schillinger responds with, “You didn’t ask my permission. When you gonna learn, prag? You belong to me. I make all of your decisions, right?” Beecher looks down at the floor and shakes his head in accordance with Schillinger’s demand, which reinforces his gender role performance and role within the hierarchy in *Oz*. Then, Schillinger demands Beecher to ask for permission to see his wife. Beecher is forced to scream at the top of my lungs, “Please sir, may I fuck my wife?” to receive permission by Schillinger. This tactic of humiliation is one way that Schillinger models a reconstructed masculinity in an attempt to uphold his own masculinity, while Beecher is the submissive one in the relationship and is seen as producing a subordinated masculinity, like a woman would subordinate to a man (Connell, 1995). This is a long-standing expectation in U.S. public culture that women are men’s property, especially considering “the U.S. Constitution failed to frame women as citizens from its establishment in 1878 to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920...” (Martin, 2005, p. 24). Although legally women are

not the property of men, through socialized sexism, traditional sex and gender roles position women as fulfilling the subservient role in society.

Prisons construct hierarchies in which the idea of a strong and hardened man versus a weak and soft man is implicit (Bandyopadhyay, 2006) and within the relationships that the inmates have. The common characteristics of punks include "... men of smaller build and physical stature, men who are less masculine in either appearance or behavior, and men who are gay or perceived to be gay" (Scarce, 1997, p. 38). Schillinger's strong body versus Beecher's weaker body reinforces Schillinger's masculinity and power over Beecher. One way that Schillinger exerts his masculinity is in the first episode when Schillinger physically makes Beecher his property within the first two minutes of being paired as new cellmates. While Beecher is getting settled in, Schillinger informs Beecher that he is going to brand him. Beecher states, "Livestock gets branded." Schillinger laughs and states, "That's what you are, my livestock... and now your ass belongs to me."

The next scene shows Beecher laying on the bed with his pants around his ankles, while Schillinger brands a Swastika into his butt. For Schillinger, he is producing hegemonic masculinity by reaffirming the power of whiteness and white supremacy. Throughout the episodes, Schillinger forces Beecher to listen to his white supremacist thoughts and at one-point forces Beecher to wear a t-shirt with a Confederate flag. "The epistemology of ignorance shapes whites to be 'cognitively impaired,' and from knowing the affects of the white supremacy they themselves have constructed" (Meiners, 2007, p. 38). Later in the first episode, after branding Beecher, Schillinger rapes Beecher and subjugates him into sexual slavery. Beecher is a sexual "conquest," which serves to "...



establish [Schillinger's] status and dominance within the convict hierarchy, as well as continuing to validate his manhood" (Wooden & Parker, 1982, p. 115).

Within *Oz*, relationships between the perpetrators and the victims do form, although they are not the "typical" heteronormative relationships that occur within society. Relationships within most correctional centers are inevitably "based on a one-to-one male relationship, sexuality being one aspect of this association" (Scacco, 1975, p. 35). Therefore a male-to-male lifestyle becomes part of the institutional way of life, whether it is overt, covert, voluntary, or forced (Scacco, 1975). In episode five, Schillinger and Beecher enter their cell and Schillinger asks Beecher for a goodnight kiss. He tells Beecher, "I'm beginning to think you don't love me anymore." Beecher responds with "I do." Schillinger demands that he say it out loud and actually mean it. Beecher responds with a stern voice, "I do mean it, sir." Schillinger tells Beecher that the romance has gone out of their relationship. Schillinger's cure for his and Beecher's "relationship" is a tube of lipstick, which he demands Beecher wears. Men, like Beecher, who are forcibly raped, are feminized by the act of being raped and by the expectation of their appearance. Punks are forced to replicate the appearance of a female by wearing feminine clothing, growing out their hair, shaving their body hair, and adopting a female name while "serving" their rapists (Scarce, 1997). In order for the perpetrators to uphold their masculinity over their victims, they work harder to feminize the other man and force the men to produce and perform femininity, which helps to preserve the perpetrator's heterosexuality.

Later in episode five, a gay male inmate confronts Beecher in the bathroom. The inmate tells Beecher that his boyfriend (Schillinger) wanted him to give Beecher a

makeover. He informs Beecher that “no” is not an answer, and the cameras turn to Schillinger’s stern face watching. When Beecher returns to his cell after the makeover, he has pink and blue hair; eye shadow, mascara, and red lipstick; and he is wearing a tight see-through white t-shirt. All of the inmates laugh at him, denigrating his feminine appearance, including Schillinger. Schillinger tells Beecher that he looks “pretty,” reinforcing his status and lack of power by describing him as having a feminine appearance. Beecher is the weaker inmate and he submits to Schillinger sexually and socially, “... and in return the dominant inmate [Schillinger] protects [Beecher] from rape and abuse at the hands of others” (Stemple, 2007, p. 172).

Schillinger continues to denigrate femininity and force Beecher to enact the physical appearance of a female throughout the first season. In episode six, *Oz* has a variety show where people perform their “talents.” Schillinger forces Beecher to perform for the inmates. When Beecher arrives on stage, his hair has mousse in it; he is wearing eye shadow, mascara, and red lipstick; and he is wearing a black, fish-hole netting body suit, with a bright red dress over it. Beecher sings Etta James’ song, “I got it Bad (and That Ain’t Good),” which is about a woman who loves a man that does not love her the way she loves him. All of the inmates laugh at him, once again denigrating his feminine appearance. *Oz* displays chilling scenarios, such as this, where, as viewers, we are “... faced [with] men who are struck with the ignorance, hatred, and violence of daily prison life” (Stemple, 2007, p. 175). Within Schillinger and Beecher’s relationship, Schillinger regularly performs his masculinity by using power and threats toward Beecher. This illustrates the power of a reconstructed masculinity within the hierarchal system and reminds Beecher the consequences of what will happen to him if he does not comply with

Schillinger's demands. Ultimately, Beecher knows that he will be feminized, humiliated, and de-masculinated if he does not follow through with Schillinger's demands.

Narratives, such as these, challenge viewers to critique popular culture's notion of the idealized type of masculinity and how this masculinity operates within the prison system and ultimately within society. By showing graphic (and possibly uncomfortable) scenes, these narratives show viewers what happens when men do and do not produce and perform a particular type of masculinity. Ultimately, this space is open for to us, as critics, to critique and contemplate the consequences of these gendered performances.

### **Exerting Sexual Dominance**

Within the prison system, "rape is both normalized and wielded as a tool for aggression, domination, and literal enslavement for others" (Scarce, 1997, p. 36). The process of *victimization* occurs on a daily basis, which Fisher (1961) defines as "a predatory practice whereby inmates of superior strength and knowledge of inmate lore prey on a weaker and less knowledgeable inmates" (p. 89). This practice is ruled by power and knowledge, which Michel Foucault argued could never be separated. "Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (Foucault, 1990, p. 93). "Power is not hierarchically located (held) but discursively present; it can be contested in a variety of settings" (Cowburn, 2005, p. 217).

Within *Oz*, power is exercised by a variety of groups in different settings. Within the prison system and within *Oz*, men exert power through victimization. The "... exertion of physical power over men resembles rape of females in that it reinforces the attacker's sense of masculinity by making him feel powerful" (Man & Cronan, 2001, p. 149). When men are victimized, "it is an act whereby one male (or group of males) seeks

testimony to what he considers is an outward validation of his masculinity” (Scacco, 1975, p. 3). However, within the prison and jail systems, victims of sexual violence are rarely identified as “victims” (Scacco, 1982). A “victim”—or what we would associate within a patriarchal society—is someone who is naïve, which is commonly associated with a female in U.S. culture. In episode six, Sister Peter Marie talks to McManus about Beecher’s drug problem. She states, “He thinks of himself as a victim [of rape], so he’s not going to get better unless he feels he can control his life.” Sister Peter Marie reminds McManus that the victim is the girl that Beecher killed in the D.U.I. accident, which is what placed him in prison. “Real men” are never considered to be victims because that is a characteristic that is commonly associated with femininity. When men are regarded as victims, they feel feminized and responsible that they did not prevent the attack themselves (Doherty & Anderson, 2004).

Masculinity in prisons “... is clearly bound up with aggression and violence as it is on the outside” (Jewkes, 2005, p. 52). The narratives within *Oz* illustrate the gendered performance of a reconstructed masculinity, which is directly linked to their performance of power, dominance, and control over other men within the prison culture. “The pursuit of power via sexual violence and the enslavement of weaker prisoners is an integral feature of imprisonment throughout the United States in both jails and prisons...” (Rideau & Wikberg, 1992, p. 75).

One way that men exert power is by controlling the other inmate’s actions. In the second episode, Beecher returns to his cell to find Schillinger lying on his bed with a picture of Beecher’s wife and his children. Schilinger tells Beecher about his two sons (ages 16 and 17) who are devoted to him and would do anything for him, including

killing someone if Schillinger asks. The power of a family reinforces the idea of a hegemonic nuclear family where the white man controls his wife and children through power. The sacred place of the home is a common place where hegemonic masculinity gets played out. Schillinger uses Beecher's family's safety as a threat to remind him that he is Schillinger's property. He tells Beecher that he might have his sons go visit his wife, or even his daughter (a possible threat of sexual assault). Schillinger uses the threat of sexual violence to demonstrate the power relations among his familial versus non-familial (i.e. Beecher). He forces Beecher to rip up the picture of his family. This example shows how a man can control another man verbally through psychological victimization, which is when the aggressor manipulates the victim into giving up material goods (Bowker, 1980). Men also exert their power by physically controlling another inmate's actions. The next scene of the episode shows Schillinger behind Beecher, raping him, with his hand on Beecher's face. This is a physical threat to Beecher of what would happen if he "disobeyed" Schillinger. The power that one man holds over another man in prison can be life threatening. "With unflinching persistence, *OZ* (sic) exposes this sad aspect of life in America and tells us something about what it means when men rape other men" (Stemple, 2007, p. 167).

"The power and status that one man holds in a prison is connected to sexual violence within the prison system" (Robinson, 2005, p. 35). In the third episode, Beecher returns from going to church. Schillinger "greet" him at the door of their cell, wearing only a towel. He tells Beecher, "Get undressed because we are taking a shower." Beecher tells Schillinger that he has already showered for the day, and Schillinger responds with, "Well that's okay, when I am done with you, you will need another."

Beecher complies and undresses. Within the prison system, Schillinger's status is higher than Beecher's, although he has to work much harder to uphold his status as a powerful, white heterosexual man.

... Status and power are based on domination and gratification. This leads to an emphasis on violence and exploitation and a de-emphasis on mutual caring and reciprocal fulfillment. (Wooden & Parker, 1982, p. 14)

Later in episode three, Schillinger "teaches Beecher a lesson" for not agreeing with his white supremacist thoughts and forces him to polish his boots in front of everyone—with his tongue. This gendered performance of masculinity reinforces the power of whiteness within U.S. society. This narrative also represents the pecking order within the prison system, in which Schillinger (the aggressive, violent-prone man) works harder to stay at the top of the hierarchy through a reconstructed masculinity, while Beecher (the soft, feminized man) remains victimized and is at the bottom of the hierarchy (Bandyopadhyay, 2006).

The gendered performance of masculinity within *Oz* manifests into an oppressive, violent, and hypermasculine culture (Toch, 1998), because men have strong desires to be seen as "real men" to their peers. In the seventh episode, Beecher has the desire to regain his "manhood" and ultimately his hegemonic masculinity. The episode shows Beecher retaliate against Schillinger for the ways in which he raped him and humiliated him in front of all of the inmates—ultimately, attacking his masculinity—through violence. In the seventh episode, Schillinger returns to Emerald City after Beecher threw a chair at the window of their cell and glass cut Schillinger's face and eye open. Schillinger asks where Beecher is. The scene then goes to Beecher, where he is naked and in "the hole."

McManus opens the door and hands Beecher clothing. He tells Beecher that Schillinger has returned to Emerald City and said that he would not harm him. McManus tells Beecher that he needs to know if he will harm Schillinger. Beecher responds, “He burned me with a Swastika into my flesh, he made me rip up pictures of my family, he made me eat the pages of a law book, he made me wear women’s make up, and he fucked me up the ass... So now I just forgive him?” McManus tells him that he would forgive him, so Beecher says, “Alright, I’ll forgive him,” shrugs his shoulders and walks away. This example demonstrates the ways in which male victims of rape are expected to “get over it.” This expectation can be traced to sex role socialization and the ways in which some male children are encouraged to conform to masculine standards. Males are taught to not express feelings of distress or vulnerability, because these feelings are equated with weakness and inadequacy; thus, these feelings are equated with femininity (Mezey & King, 2000).

Later in the seventh episode when Beecher returns to Emerald City, he gets reassigned to a new cell with Ryan O’Reily (member of “The Irish”), a white, manipulative man. The two men discuss Beecher’s retaliation and Beecher states; “I left the old bitch at home,” referring to himself. This explanation reinforces Beecher’s desire to regain his manhood by not considering himself a victim anymore. In order to perform this new identity he has created, Beecher confronts Schillinger in his cell. He threatens to start a fight with Schillinger every single time that he is up for parole—meaning that Schillinger will never get out of *Oz*. When Beecher walks out of the cell, he calls Schillinger “prag,” which strikes the threat and fear that he might now rape Schillinger in the future. Men who are victims of rape within the prison system can become rapist

themselves, "... in a desperate attempt to 'regain their manhood'" (Scacco, 1982, p. 71). In the eighth and final episode of season one, Beecher is shown sitting in his cell, recalling all of the ways in which Schillinger raped him, feminized him, humiliated him, and attacked his masculinity. The scene later shows Beecher and Schillinger working out in the gym. After practicing with a punching bag, Beecher comes after Schillinger, kicks him in the testicles, hits him in the face with a weight, ties him up on the ground, and throws a table on top of him. The other inmates are watching and chanting, "Tie that Nazi bastard up!" Meanwhile, Beecher sits on top of Schillinger's face with his pants down, pointing to his Swastika on his butt, and yells, "Hey mother fucker, remember this?" He then defecates on his face. This narrative illustrates the ways in which men regain their manhood, which is through anger and violence, which reinforces the notion that masculinity "wins" in the end.

As a text, *Oz*'s central plot functions around prisoner rape and "... creates an environment in which our darkest suspicions about life in prison are confirmed" (Stemple, 2007, p. 172), which allows us to critique hegemonic and reconstructed masculinity within U.S. culture. The narratives within *Oz* model a reconstructed masculinity by denigrating femininity and exerting sexual dominance over other men. This gender performance forces us, as viewers, to critique the gender performance of men within our everyday lives and to question the *real* difference between the narratives of the men in *Oz* and the gender performance of masculinity within hegemonic society.

### **Rewarding Hypermasculinity**

As a text, *Oz* illustrates the gender performance of masculinity through the narratives of the inmates. The men who produce a masculinized gendered performance



denigrate femininity and exert sexual dominance over other men through hypermasculine characteristics. Within *Oz*, the domination of men within the prison system creates a culture where violence and hypermasculinity is rewarded. “Hypermasculinity equals status, self-worth, and diminished risk of victimization” (Evans & Wallace, 2007, p. 488). The men that perform hypermasculinity are at the top of the hierarchal system, in terms of power and respect within the prison system. In order to be at top of the hierarchal system, men must perform violent behaviors and threaten other inmates to cause other men to be fearful of them, which many of the narratives within *Oz* illustrate. Thus, hypermasculinity “... functions as an individual level response to perceived threats or challenge’s to one’s manhood” (Seaton, 2007, p. 373).

The inmate subculture has been accused of exaggerating the Western gender norms of masculinity that the “... ideal type, ‘the real man,’ enforces hypermasculinity” (Robertson, 2003, p. 426). As critics, we need to ask ourselves if these gender norms of masculinity within *Oz* are *really* that exaggerated compared to the gender performances of masculinity within our culture every day. C. Paul Phelps, Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Correction, explains,

Deprived of the normal avenues, there are very few ways in prison for a man to show how powerful he is—and the best way to do so is for one to have a slave, another who is in total submission to him. (Scacco, 1982, p. 5)

The narratives within *Oz* portray aggression as a gendered performance, because the perpetrators use aggression to keep the inmates and victims (and possible future inmates and victims) in line (Knowles, 1999).

*Oz* is like no show before because it opens a space that exposes the very real problems of prison rape (Stemple, 2007) and provides us with a space to critique the ways in which hypermasculinity is rewarded. Throughout the first season, Schillinger's aggressive behavior toward Beecher is rewarded because Schillinger remained at the top of the prison hierarchy, until the last two episodes. In the end though, Beecher's masculinity and hypermasculine behavior is rewarded when he assaults Schilling in order to regain his "manhood."

Prisoner rapists remain at the top of the hierarchy because they maintain their dominant positions by subjugating others to submit to them. "Despite the fact that the predators are, by definition, the ones initiating these same-sex sexual contact, they remain heterosexual in their social roles and in their self-perception" (Stemple, 2007, p. 170). Because they intersect gender and sexuality, they model a reconstructed masculinity by denigrating femininity and forcing other men to perform the identity and position of a woman. Within the prison system, "homosexual behavior" is "... 'rewritten' by men in prison so that men manage to convince others that their homosexual interests are transient, highly physical and unemotional, enabling them to retain power and status. Those who are victims are assigned the label 'homosexual'" (Richmond, 1978, p. 51).

### **Discussion**

*Oz*, as a television show, is not reinforcing hegemonic masculinity because *Oz* so vibrantly displays a reconstructed masculinity, and by doing so, they are allowing us a space to critique masculinity. The perpetrators maintain their heterosexual identity within *Oz* by forcing their victims to assume the position and role of a woman; thus, producing a reconstructed masculinity. "Hegemonic masculinity has traditionally

received the most social approval and offers a man great power if he is seen by others, particularly men, to be the living embodiment of this way of being male” (Evans & Wallace, 2007, p. 485). Performing masculinity “... affects the ways individuals experience their bodies, their sense of self, and how they project that self to others” (Schippers, 2007, p. 86). Within society, and especially within the prison system, masculinity is a set of practices that are identified because they “... occur across space and over time and are taken up and enacted collectively by groups, communities, and societies” (Schippers, 2007, p. 86). Within U.S. society, a white heterosexual, middle-to-upper class male traditionally is the one to assume hegemonic masculinity. This male is seen as being the most powerful within society; however, this power is more difficult to uphold within a same-sex male prison. The men within the prison culture have to work harder than men outside of the prison culture to uphold their masculinity.

“Prisons are not multi-cultural institutions where diversity is respected; rather, race is highly polarizing” (Man & Cronan, 2001, p. 158). Within the prison system, punks tend to be men of racial or ethnic minority within the particular population of the prison (Scarce, 1997). *Oz* is comprised of 75% non-white inmates and 25% white inmates. Within the prison system, the issue of racism is a central point in victimization of other men (Scacco, 1982). There are a “... disproportionate number of black aggressors and white victims in studies of sexual assaults in jails and prisons” (Scacco, 1982, p. 91). Traditional (white) hegemonic masculinity is destabilized in *Oz*, too.

To begin with, the warden of *Oz* is Leo Glynn, who is a black male. The warden runs the prison and has the final say to every decision being made. The warden’s job duties vary throughout the prison and the entire community in which it operates. The

narrator, Augustus Hill, is also a black male. These positions of power within the prison (Glynn) and within the series in itself (Hill) can be seen as destabilizing hegemonic masculinity by intersecting race.

In the first episode, Ortolani confronts Beecher and advises him to get a weapon, in order to “protect himself.” This advice automatically positions Beecher as the lowest, in terms of power and status in the hierarchal system. When Beecher returns to his cell the first night, his cellmate is Adebisi, and “... prisoner rape presents itself as part of [the] routine” (Stemple, 2007, p. 169). Beecher’s cellmate, Adebisi, “... openly flaunts his status as a sexual predator” (Stemple, 2007, p. 169). That night, Adebisi threatens Beecher while he is in bed and tells him, “I won’t be fucking you, prag... at least not tonight.” The camera eroticizes Adebisi’s muscular body, which “... contrast[s] with Beecher’s anxiety and thus suggests both white fear of *and* with black male sexuality” (Wlodarz, 2005, p. 68).

Within the prison system, “... racism is often considered the most divisive and dominant feature of inmate life... There is an overwhelming sense that each race must stick together to protect its own” (Man & Cronan, 2001, p. 158). The widespread racism that is dominant within hegemonic culture is not just a social cliché; “this racial inequality may be the largest in any violent crime committed in the United States” (Knowles, 1999, p. 268). In the seventh episode, Jackson Vahue, a black professional NBA player, hassles inmate Eugene Dobbins, a white professional cellist and goes into his room and breaks his cello. Vahue reinforces the meaning of power within the prison system because he refuses to let white people be more powerful than blacks within *Oz*. “Many racial minorities perceive White men as responsible for preventing them from

achieving socio-economic power and often view oppression by White society as responsible for their imprisonment” (Man & Cronan, 2001, p. 158). *Oz* also destabilizes hegemonic masculinity in episode eight when a riot breaks out and all of the inmates take over the prison system. Kareem Said (member of “The Muslims”) is the first to fire the gun and yells, “Let’s get organized!” and everyone cheers for him. Said, a black man, is the unspoken leader of the prison, especially during the riot. When Glynn asks whom the officers can speak with about this riot, everyone chants, “Said, Said, Said!” His leadership destabilizes hegemonic masculinity because white men and black men are working together and dividing up the responsibilities of controlling the prison system. Later in the episode, McManus tries to talk to Said about ending the riot. Said reinforces the hegemonic (and racist) society of the U.S. by stating,

Even the best prison wouldn’t be good enough... Now I’m not saying that the men in *Oz* are not innocent, I’m saying they are not here because of the crimes they committed, but because of the color of their skin, their lack of education, the fact that they are poor... [The riot] is about taking responsibility, it’s about the whole horrid judicial system... We need better justice.

The media’s use of rape images shape the cultural understandings “... about sexual violence in ways that can be enlightening or problematic” (Stemple, 2007, p. 171). *Oz* is the first television show that has seriously and repeatedly dealt with prison rape. *Oz* draws us closer to problematizing male-on-male rape and challenges our notions of positioning the victim as being deserving—the belief that men inherently get raped because they are inherently bad.

The first season ends with Hill explaining that society ultimately ignores the prison system. Citizens within society wish to turn a blind eye to the penal system and the inmates within the penal system, just as they do to rape—with both, it is the assumption that bad things only happen to “bad people.” It is not until people put a name to a face when it becomes too personal, which is emphasized by Hill. The public’s “... generalization of ‘prisoners’ as faceless, monolithic other has dehumanized those behind bars so thoroughly that personal details are essential to bring each individual to life in the public mind” (Stemple, 2007, p. 169).

When the government takes away someone’s freedom, it has a responsibility to protect that person’s safety. All inmates have the right be treated with dignity, and no matter what crime someone has committed, sexual violence must never be part of the penalty. (Learn the Basics, 2008, p. 2)

*Oz* is a compelling television show that is not *just* a dramatic series. The depictions of rape that *Oz* has shown have the potential to challenge norms. “Right now, our society seems largely incapable of talking about prisoner rape outside of don’t-drop-the-soap jokes, so the serious treatment that *OZ* (sic) offers serves as a welcome addition. We might someday reach a point of cultural saturation after which prisoner rape stories no longer inform and only entertain, but we’re not there yet” (Stemple, 2007, p. 178). Although popular culture has dubbed the rape of a prisoner as a joke (Man & Cronan, 2001), we can see from watching *Oz* that there is nothing funny about what is happening within contemporary prisons in the U.S. (Man & Cronan, 2001). Within the prison system,

... The threat of sexual violence dominates the prison environment and structures much of the everyday interactions that [go] on among inmates. In fact, the threat of sexual victimization becomes the dominant metaphor in terms of which almost every aspect of 'prison reality' is interpreted. (Smith & Batiuk, 1989, p. 30)

Looking at the ways in which men who rape other men identify as heterosexual, along with how male rape victims are feminized, allows a particular notion of hegemonic and reconstructed masculinity to be critiqued. By analyzing the text and the ways in which men exert sexual dominance and are rewarded for their hypermasculine behavior allows for a critique of masculinity. This feminist analysis provides us with a better understanding of how prison rape is represented and justified within the narrative of the show. This feminist analysis also helps us to understand how the narratives within the show help us to better understand how we justify sexual violence at all levels (male/male). It is important to do studies of media culture because media shapes our socially (re)constructed realities, and in the end, helps us to grapple with media problems. By better understanding masculinity and cultural dominance, we will be able to come closer to ending prison rape and all forms of sexual dominance.

Although *Oz* was a dramatic series, it had a compelling plot line that inspired rape victims to tell their stories. This imperfect series told the stories of the prison culture, the inmates, and prison rape in itself. The stories were not ignored throughout the series, and "... our cultural understanding of rape behind bars is richer for it" (Stemple, 2007, p. 187).

## **“Boys will be Boys”:**

### **A Narrative Analysis of Fraternity Gang Rape**

“She can say no as long as I can say please. And, I always say please.”

Anonymous fraternity member, 1990 (quoted in Peggy Reeves Sanday)

“When I’m older and turning grey, I’ll only gang bang once a day.”

Ditty, American College Fraternity, 1983 (quoted in Peggy Reeves Sanday)

Sexual assault and rape is a serious and growing problem that is a product of patriarchy. Rape is one of the most under-addressed and under-reported crimes in the United States. Due to the sensitivity and graphic nature of this subject, some people feel uncomfortable discussing it, while others remain ignorant and pass judgment on the victim, assuming that “bad things” only happen to “bad people”—ultimately ignoring the issue itself. Research shows that 60% of rapes are still being left unreported (RAINN: Reporting Rapes, 2008). Due to the shame and stigma that is attached to both male and female victims, only six percent of rapists will ever spend one day in jail or prison for the crime they have committed; thus, 15 of 16 rapists walk free everyday (RAINN: Reporting Rapes, 2008). However, when a rape is reported, there is a 50.8% chance that the rapist(s) will be arrested (RAINN: Reporting Rates, 2008). Out of the crimes that are reported, research shows that one out of every six women in the United States have been a victim of an attempted or completed rape in their lifetime, and college age women are four times more likely to be sexually assaulted (RAINN: Who are the victims?, 2008).

Sexual assaults are occurring in colleges and universities all around the United States in larger numbers than anyone might ever imagine (Bohmer & Parrot, 1993). Men



are also victims of sexual assault, which includes some rituals and initiation practices some fraternities' employ during pledging. It is vital to recognize that there are thousands of men and women who are sexually assaulted in the United States each year who do not report the crime for various reasons, some of which stem from rape myths.

Rape myths are stereotypical assumptions about rape, rape victims and rapists (Bohner, Weisbrod, Raymond, Barzi, & Shwarz, 1993). Rape myths become socially constructed in the culture and subculture in which one lives. Rape myths are impacted by the roles that men and women are expected to fulfill within their culture and religion. Rape myths have been and are detrimental for men and women and they have an influence on a victim's decision to report the crime or not. One of the most common rape myths for female victims that prevent reporting is that after consensual sex, a woman will just change her mind in the morning because she does not want to be labeled a "slut" or a "whore." This rape myth is false; in fact, the FBI has only found that two percent of victims actually falsely report rape (Greer, 2000). One of the most common rape myths for men is that men simply cannot be victims of rape because they are "too masculine and too strong" to ever be put into a vulnerable (i.e. feminine) position. This rape myth is false. Men, just like women, can be and are raped. Men, just like women, feel a sense of shame that they did not "stop" the situation like society expects.

The United States' rape-prone and rape-supportive culture has impacted the lives of every male and female who has stepped foot and resided on a college campus. North America's transformation of a rape-prone and rape-supportive culture can be linked to our society's patriarchal system and socialization. The U.S.'s societal patriarchal system refers to the "... broader overall forces within North American society that maintain or

hold in place male domination patterns...” (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997, p. 61). The U.S.’s societal patriarchal system stems from socialization. As children, both males and females are taught to act in accordance with their sex (i.e. biological—male or female) and/or gender (i.e. socially constructed characteristics of masculine and feminine). These lessons that men and women learn in their own culture and/or subcultures are “... powerful enough to become the most important factors in determining how men and women act” (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997, p. 66).

The social construction of gender has contributed to men’s domination and women’s subordination (hooks, 2000). The expectations, rules, and norms that are taught at an early age to men and women teach men to be masculine, aggressive, and dominating toward women and other men, and teach women to be feminine, docile, and subordinate to men. When men act in accordance with their gender roles and society’s expectations, they are rewarded. When women act in accordance with their gender roles, they may be rewarded or reprimanded by both men and women. When a man dominates another woman or man, he is acting in accordance with his traditional gender role and expectation of his performance of masculinity. If a woman is placed in this same situation and she “cannot stop a man” from sexually assaulting her, she is blamed and labeled with names that denigrate her gender performance of subordination. This “blame the victim” mentality is common in our society and stems from sexist socialization (Kelly & Torres, 2006). The restrictive gender roles and the blame the victim mentality have contributed to the development of the “culture of fear” that women experience, especially women on college campuses.

Sexual violence is a large problem for college communities. The National College Women Sexual Victimization study (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000) estimates that one out of five college women experience attempted or completed rape during their college years. Thus, college women are more at risk for sexual assault than their peers who are not in college (Baynard, Moynihan, & Crossman, 2009). The culture of fear is real for every single female college student because women know that attacks against women occur on their campus, whether it is reported or not. Women know the precautions they can take "... and they know the university has a role to play in structurally making the campus safer. Despite this knowledge, what they do not know is how to keep from living in fear for their personal safety on campus" (Kelly & Torres, 2006, p. 32).

Due to our misconceptions of traditional gender roles, the most consistent predictor of attitudes that support violence against women on a college campus (or any other group for that matter) stem from our gender role attitudes (Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004). Gender role attitudes are the beliefs that a person holds about appropriate roles for men and women (McHugh & Frieze, 1997). "Positive relationships have been found between traditional sex roles attitudes and negative attitudes toward women and the acceptance of rape myths" (Berkel et al., 2004, p. 120). The acceptance of traditional sex roles and rape myths has led to the acceptance of North America's rape-supportive and patriarchal culture. This culture has intruded into the lives of college students on a college campus.

The rigid gender roles that are taught, learned, and re-taught throughout one's life have negative affects on men and women. Individuals who have accepted the traditional

gender role attitudes toward men and women share some (if not all) views of a traditional, patriarchal society and ideology (Berkel et al., 2004). Individuals who support the view of a man fulfilling the role of “the breadwinner” and the woman fulfilling the role of a “housewife,” as the property of a man, support the social and sexual inequality that exists on a national, state, and local level. Social inequality is linked to male domination, women’s subordination to men, and the use of violence as a means for men to sustain their power over women in society (Straus, 1997-1998). The constant socialization that men and women have experienced their whole life is like an elastic cord that is tied around their neck, “... tethering them to the mask of society’s expectations of them...” (Edwards & Jones, 2009, p. 221). This performance of identity is more than just an intentional performance that a man or a woman puts on (or can’t stop putting on), but instead it is a conscious and unconscious construction of identity (hooks, 2000). The culture of fear is real for women. But this culture of fear is also real—but hidden and silenced—for many men, especially those who reside in an institutional setting (i.e. in jail and prisons, in the military, in athletics, and on college campuses).

With regard to perpetration, 99% of people who commit rape are men (Rennison, 2002). Fraternity men are a group who are at a particularly high risk for perpetration (Foubert & Newberry, 2006). The study of fraternity men on a college campus is necessary, given the fact that fraternity members commit over half of all “gang rapes” on a college campus (O’Sullivan, 1991). Gang rape is an expression of men’s sexual domination and an expression of the fraternity brothers’ self-worth; based on the number of women they have sex with (Sanday, 1990). Gang rape occurs when the brothers of a fraternity take advantage of a woman who is under the influence of either drugs and/or

alcohol (Sanday, 1990; 2007). Sometimes the fraternity members help to supply alcohol and/or drugs to women to engage them and/or force them into having sexual intercourse. This denigration of femininity is not only executed toward women, but is also executed toward men who do not produce a masculine gender performance.

The Greek system is a complex structure and culture to understand.

Understanding the structure of a fraternity is enhanced by Giddens' (1984) Structuration Theory. "The central concern of structuration theory is the relationship between individuals and society" (Jones & Karsten, 2008, p. 129). A structure refers to the solid parts of an organization, which is the framework that gives the organization a shape (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2003). "The term 'structuration' refers to the conditions governing the continuity or transformation of structures and social systems, and indicates that structure—the 'codes' for social actions—and agency—the activities of individual members of the systems—exist in a recursive relationship" (Busco, 2009, p. 250). The structure of an organization includes roles, rules, and norms that are pre-specified for any given situation (Cheney et al., 2003). The agents within an organization draw on the structures within their fraternity during their processes of interaction, and by performing social activities they reproduce the actions that make these practices possible (Busco, 2009). Giddens believes that structure and agency are a mutually constitutive duality (Jones & Karsten, 2008).

The fraternity brothers and the pledges are agents within a fraternity. The fraternity brothers produce masculine gender roles, perform, and display masculinity to other brothers in the house and to the pledges to show their power and privilege within the house, which is the norm within the organization. By adhering to the masculine

idealized subject position and hypermasculine behaviors, the fraternity members are able to strongly associate themselves with their group identity (Hall & France, 2007). The pledges take on feminine gender roles and submit to the brothers in the house—further representing and supporting a patriarchal society. Human agents, like members of a fraternity, “... draw on social structures in their actions, and at the same these actions serve to produce and reproduce social structure” (Jones & Karsten, 2008, p. 129). This social structure of a fraternity gives shape to their actions over time (Cheney et al., 2003). Fraternity members’ actions and subject position(s) within the household allow the structure of a fraternity to become predictable, reliable, and even ritualistic (Cheney et al., 2003).

The disciplining and denigration of femininity is ritualistic throughout some fraternities. One way a fraternity establishes and maintains this ritualism and a pecking order of hierarchy within their house is through hazing. “Hazing is a process, based on tradition that is used by a group to discipline and to maintain hierarchy” (Inside Hazing: Definitions, p. 1). It is important to mention that the Greek system has developed more strict laws concerning hazing and sexual violence toward other men and women but these are still rampant problems that exist today—although they may not be as blatant as they were in the past.

Rarely do fraternities acknowledge that their rituals “... are in fact, hazing” (Inside Hazing: Statistics, 2009, p. 1). Some fraternities view their rituals as a way to create and maintain a particular culture of their household. “A sexist consciousness is stamped on the bodies and psyches of pledges during some initiation rituals” (Sanday, 1990, p. 18) and these rituals have serious effects. Since 1990, some fraternities’

performance of masculine gender roles have resulted in more deaths "... on college and university campuses as a result of hazing, pledging and initiation accidents, and fraternal alcohol-related incidents than all recorded history of such deaths" (Hollmann, 2002, p. 11). The prevalence of alcohol-related problems include "... engaging in unplanned sexual activity, missing class, driving after drinking, damaging property, and suffering personal injuries" (Elkins, Helms, & Pierson, 2003, p. 68).

Another way that fraternity members (both brothers and pledges) perform their masculine gender roles and create a sustainable structure and culture within the fraternity is through gang rape. "The phrase 'fraternity gang rape' refers to bonding through sex" (Sanday, 2007, p. 7). The word "fraternity" in its broadest sense refers to a group of people who unite by ties of brotherhood and who have common purposes, interests, and/or goals (Sanday, 1990; 2007). The term "gang banging" or "pulling train" "... refers to a group of men lining up like train cars to take turns having sex [i.e. raping and/or sexually assaulting] with the same woman" (Ehrhart & Sandler, 1985, p. 2). Another type of "brotherhood bonding" is through "beaching a girl." "Beaching" is a practice where a brother convinces a woman to have sex with him (Culbertson, 1991). "Beaching" occurs when a brother watches another brother have sex with a woman from a window [i.e. a vantage point] (Sanday, 1990; 2007). "The view into the windows is very clear, but it is not so easy to see the people on the beach. Thus, the girls involved do not know they are being watched" (Sanday, 2007, p. 60). The third type of way fraternity members perform masculinity and (re)create their culture is through "riffing a woman." "Riffing a woman" means that a brother views a particular woman as a potential sex object for himself or another brother (Sanday, 2007). A brother "riffs a woman" when

the brother “gets sex” from a woman through talking, dancing, and/or drinking (Sanday, 1990; 2007).

Through fraternities’ intersections of gender roles, power, and privilege, the main aim of this research is to uncover how fraternities demonstrate a particular understanding of masculinity and a (re)construction of a culture that is accepting of this. Due to fraternities being isolated, “... their sense of privilege and entitlement that spills over into interpersonal violence against outsider males or violence against female party guests... takes the form of sexual abuse” (Sanday, 2007, p. 6). The main analysis of gang rape stems from a nationally publicized case at the University of Pennsylvania that occurred in 1983. This highly publicized case was a turning point in society because it exposed the possibilities and realities of gang rape on and off of college campuses. The woman involved in this case will be given the pseudonym name “Laurel,” and according to “... various eyewitnesses and hearsay accounts, after the party [at Alpha Tau Omega] was over five or six of the brothers had sex with Laurel” (Sanday, 2007, p. 1). When this incident occurred in 1983, the reality of the horrific fascinations for those who dwell on or far away from “Frat Row” was brought to light (Lewin, 1991). I have also conducted a narrative analysis of other gang rape cases that illustrate the ways shared consciousness and group identity frame gender role performances of men and women. The rituals, initiation practices, and gang rapes illustrate socialization, structuration theory, symbolic convergence theory, and the overall transformation of a rape acceptant culture. The analysis of fraternities is vital in our patriarchal society because fraternities are an organization, a social structure, a culture, and a microstructure of our larger social structure that supports hegemony.



## Theoretical Framework

In order to better understand the structure and culture of fraternities, the members (i.e. brothers) of a fraternity, the pledges of a fraternity, and the women who attend fraternity parties, the theoretical framework for this analysis is primarily supported by symbolic convergence theory. Symbolic convergence theory shows how "... the sharing of group fantasies provides the key communication episodes that create a common social reality and accomplish sense making for the participants" (Bormann, 1983, p. 100). Symbolic convergence theory allows us to better understand how members of an organization, like a fraternity, make sense of their experiences (Bormann, 1983). From an insider and outsider perspective of the organization, symbolic convergence theory illustrates the ways in which fraternities construct their culture by relying on traditions and practices, which can include rituals, initiation, verbal and physical actions that denigrate femininity. Culture, in the communication context, refers to the "... sum total of ways of living, organizing, and communing built up in a group of human beings [men within a fraternity] and transmitted to newcomers [pledges] by means of verbal and nonverbal communication" (Bormann, 1983, p. 100). The culture of a fraternity influences and reinforces group attitudes and these cultural norms have the power to influence members' behaviors (Foubert & Newberry, 2006). Just as in any culture, membership "... comes at the cost of non-membership in all other cultures" (Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982, p. 123). A fraternity, as an organization and a culture, is able to define who they are by defining who they are not (i.e. other fraternities, non-Greek life members, and women). Some fraternity members create strong boundaries between themselves as an organization and between non-members. From these

boundaries, fraternity leaders encourage their members to associate with the fraternity and its image (Sweet, 1999). This identification of subject positions provides members of a fraternity with a sense of masculinity, brotherhood, pride, and privilege on college campuses across the United States.

Symbolic convergence theory has three parts. The first part includes the discovery and the arrangement of "... communicative forms and practices into organized and structured patterns that demonstrate the evolution of shared consciousness" (Bormann, 1983, p. 101). This shared consciousness occurs because members within a fraternity are bound emotionally to one another in the group. The fraternity brothers consider their group values and traditions to be significant guides for the behaviors of members in the house (Sanday, 1990; 2007). Within any organization, when several people co-construct the culture, "... portions of their private symbolic worlds... overlap as a result of symbolic convergence, [thus] they share a common consciousness..." (Bormann, 1983, p. 102). By sharing a common consciousness, members within a fraternity are able to have a base knowledge for communicating with one another and for creating a culture and community where they can discuss their common experiences with non-fraternity members. When this common consciousness successfully occurs within a fraternity, members within a fraternity are able to achieve a mutual understanding of each other and a group identity. A group identity forms when pledges sacrifice their selves, or some part of their selves, "... to a superior body that represents the communal identity of the house. The sacrifice acts to seal a covenant between the individual pledge and the fraternity organization" (Sanday, 2007, p. 148). The more an individual fraternity member associates with the fraternity—and ultimately the more the fraternity member

disassociates himself from other organizations and groups—the more the individual's identity is bound to the fraternity (Holtz, 1997).

Group identities construct the culture of the organization and influence the gender identity development of each member (Jones & McEwen, 2000). The members' shared consciousness and group identity consists of power and status by promising masculinity (Sanday, 1990; 2007). This common consciousness can create a social knowledge for the fraternity. Fraternity members' social knowledge influences how they perceive (or misperceive) their environment and these perceptions influence what the fraternity members believe and how they behave (Stein, 2007). A social knowledge can be used for members to explain how and why the organization operates the way it does (Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982). These explanations can be used for explaining and defending their culture to insiders (pledges and brothers) and to outsiders (the university, Greek life, non-Greek life, acquaintances, peers, friends, and family).

The second part of symbolic convergence theory deals with the description(s) of the "... dynamic tendencies within communication systems that explain why the observed practices took place" (Bormann, 1983, p. 101). Symbolic convergence theory explains the ways in which humans make sense out of their common experiences by sharing enough symbolic ground and taking part in a logical negotiation process (being a fraternity member and achieving masculinity, power, privilege and status, or not), which allows each individual to achieve coorientation. Coorientation refers "... 'to the domain of cognition' and that it occurs in ongoing 'interpersonal episodes' in which individuals who bring their unique orientations begin to coordinate their meanings" (Bormann, 1983, p. 102). Fraternity members are able to "make sense" out of their common experiences

of self-sacrifice and pledging because it is a ritual in the house that every brother has experienced. The rituals within a household can include verbal and physical abuse as a condition for membership (Sanday, 2007). In the end, if pledges are successful, they will reach their ultimate goal—membership and promised masculinity.

The third, and final part, of symbolic convergence theory consists of the "... factors that explain why people share fantasies they do when they do" (Bormann, 1983, p. 101). The sharing of group fantasies is a dynamic process where several people participate in the narrative contained in a dramatizing message (Bormann, 1983). The narrative form includes good (i.e. fraternity members) and bad (i.e. pledges and women) characters in a "... sequence of interrelated incidents. One shares the fantasy by finding one or more of the leading characters attractive" (Bormann, 1983, p. 103). It is the leaders within fraternities who socialize the new members and shape the culture of the fraternity (Elkins et al., 2003). Within fraternities, the pledges and women find the brothers as the attractive leading characters because fraternity members are seen as performing hegemonic masculinity—the ideal type of masculinity. This performance of masculinity allows some men to put a mask on and cover the aspects of their selves that do not meet society's expectations (i.e. body size, lack of attention from women, and being sensitive and/or emotional) and they are able to present to society an image that matches the expectations (Edwards & Jones, 2009) of "proper" gender roles.

Men's performance of masculinity can have negative consequences for the women in their lives, for the relationships with other men, and for themselves (Edwards & Jones, 2009). The most common way of conforming and performing to society's expectations of masculinity is to degrade, objectify, and/or demean women (Edwards &

Jones, 2009). This performance of masculinity requires men to exert certain characteristics such as being "... in control or in charge, competitive, successful, in control of emotions, aggressive, strong, tough, and willing to break the rules" (Edwards & Jones, 2009, p. 221).

When fraternity brothers share a fantasy, they achieve symbolic convergence about their common experiences by identifying their same emotions, attitudes, and interpretations of a particular experience or set of events (Bormann, 1983). Research studies have consistently supported "... the perspective that harboring rape supportive attitudes and endorsing gender role stereotypes as being associated with sexual aggression and rape" (Stein, 2007, p. 77). Members within fraternities identify their commonalities through their use of specialized vocabulary. Specialized vocabulary, often referred to as a vernacular, "... provides clues as to what are the relevant constructs, facts, and practices of organizational life" (Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982, p. 125). Members of fraternities can have specialized vocabulary (verbal and nonverbal communication) for pledges and for women who attend the parties at their house. Through fraternities' use of specialized vocabulary (i.e. vernacular), their community and social structure is constructed out of the elements of their culture (Ono & Sloop, 1995), which are implicitly hegemonic and heteronormative.

Some fraternity members also target women who attend their parties and the female gender in general and have specialized vocabulary to "explain them." Research supports freshmen women being ignorant and naïve about the fraternity culture. "... Women are raped and sexually assaulted in fraternities because they do not see fraternity parties as a potential danger – particularly in their first few months on campus"

(Culbertson, 1991, p. 1). “They may be assaulted with stares and thumbs-up or thumbs-down gestures, indicating their sexual stability” (Sanday, 2007, p. 57). Specialized vocabulary also helps to distinguish members (insiders) and non-members (outsiders). From this distinction, members are able to use “... rhetorical and symbolic boundaries to serve as guidelines for terminating rituals to force members out and for initiation and acceptance rituals for recruits...” (Bormann, 1983, p. 106).

Due to fraternities’ structures and cultures being constructed by the members themselves, the use of rituals and initiation practices help to (re)construct the culture of masculinity, power, and privilege. Initiation practices are used in a way for pledges to “prove” their masculinity and their “loyalty” to the fraternity. Initiation practices can include verbal and physical abuse. When brothers humiliate and dominate their pledges during initiation, they characterize their pledges’ weakness as being feminine (Sanday, 1990; 2007). When pledges finally do become brothers and members of an organization and a culture, their brotherhood is based on a shared sense of power and privilege that other people do not have (Sanday, 1990; 2007). Due to this power and privilege men in some fraternities have obtained through their rituals, initiation practices, and objectification of women, they feel they are entitled to exercise their power over others—particularly women and men who do not perform hegemonic masculinity.

According to the multiple accounts in interviews with fraternity members, brothers first attempt to cleanse the pledges of their weak “femininity” during their initiation rituals (Sanday, 1990; 2007). After the brothers are “cleansed” of their femininity, the brothers test the pledges loyalty to the fraternity by forcing the pledges to prove their strength to the fraternity (Culbertson, 1990). One example of “cleansing” the

pledges of their femininity is when the brothers of a fraternity forced the pledges to stand nude from waist down, while the brothers denigrated the pledges' penises and then used a basting brush to put Ben-Gay on the brothers' testicles (Sanday, 1990; 2007). Another example of forcing the brothers to show their "loyalty" to their fraternity is when the brothers in a fraternity forced the pledges to drink a mixture of sour milk, hot peppers, and rotten squid. When the pledges vomited, the brothers forced them to clean up the mess they made (Sanday, 1990; 2007). By forcing the pledges to clean up their mess, the brothers placed them in the feminine position of submitting to the brothers and ultimately to the fraternity.

The rituals and initiation practices within fraternities provide a structural framework for fraternal social dominance. First, the rituals within fraternities teach "... young men how to control [an] experience and manipulate consciousness" (Sanday, 1990, p. 150; 2007, p. 160). Rituals also provide pledges with a warped sense of what has actually happened to them. "They are made to believe that it is in the outside world that they are punished for their sensitivity, not in the fraternity, and that only within the fraternity can true love and friendship flourish without fear of abuse" (Sanday, 1990, p. 150; 2007, p. 160). Fraternity brothers are able to manipulate their pledges through the use of power and dominance (Sanday, 1990; 2007). Without the fraternity, there is no power; and "it is for this reason that brothers do not value individuality" (Sanday, 1990, p. 151; 2007, p. 161).

Sanday (1990; 2007) argues that gang rape and a fraternity's culture of disrespect for women and any feminine gender role are rooted in their initiation rituals. Fraternities' initiation rituals promote an aggressive, "macho" attitude toward sexual discourse and

identity. To be clear: it is not that men inherently seek to rape men and/or women; rather, during pledging and through the initiation rituals, pledges are conditioned to restore their own masculinity by downgrading women because the brothers within the house destroy all of the pledges' feminine traits (Sanday, 1990; 2007). It is not that all men can only celebrate their masculinity by denigrating the feminine; rather particular fraternities choose to celebrate their masculinity by denigrating femininity. This mentality, gender role expectation, and gender performance impacts the lives of every male and female a fraternity member associates with. When brothers participate in the rituals of the fraternity, their participation "... provides access for members to a particular shared sense of reality" (Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982, p. 126). Through the use of rituals, members are able to constitute parts of their organizational culture (Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982).

By sharing group fantasies, fraternity members are able to contribute to the culture of their organization and their brotherhood. From the fraternity members' (common) experiences, they create a socially constructed reality for their household. Within a household, fraternity members are able to take part in sharing a *group* fantasy, which creates a "... symbolic convergence for [that] group of people, [where] they will exhibit the *inside joke* syndrome" (Bormann, 1983, p. 109). When a member alludes to an inside joke, they are alluding to a previously shared fantasy with either a "... nonverbal signal or sign or verbal code word, slogan, label, name of hero or villain, or story summary" (Bormann, 1983, p. 109). Fraternity members' inside jokes can include having particular names for pledges and women—both of which denigrate femininity. Research has shown that brothers have marked women with colored dots at their



parties—a sign and code for the other brothers—which they call “power dots” (Sanday, 1990; 2007). One woman who experienced this at a fraternity party stated,

I think the dots helped to mark women for other men so they would know where to start. For example, if a woman had a white dot, you didn’t say really raunchy things to her when you first met her. If she had a red dot you didn’t start off by asking her what her major was. (Sanday, 1990, p. 93; 2007, p. 111)

Through these signs and codes, women’s images are always being reconstructed (Ono & Sloop, 1995) to the desired image of a fraternity member and hegemonic society where bodies become things rather than real people.

Inside jokes within a fraternity make the development of a group fantasy possible. “A fantasy type is a recurring script in the culture of a group” (Bormann, 1983, p. 110). The script within the fraternity involves a variety of stories, most of which have similar themes and actions. “They will be essentially the same narrative frame but with different characters and slightly different incidents” (Bormann, 1983, p. 110). A fantasy type can include their sexual experience(s) with a woman (or women). Members’ stories of their sexual experience(s) may not be referred to as sex; members may use words such as “banged,” “fucked,” and/or “gave it to her”—just to name a few—all of which refer to the woman (or women) as “wanting it” and/or “willing and able.”

By defining the victim as ‘wanting it,’ the men convince themselves of their heterosexual prowess and delude themselves as to the real object of their lust. If they were to admit to the real object, they would give up their position in the male status hierarchy as superior, heterosexual male. (Sanday, 1990, p. 13).

Members' stories of their sexual experiences may also differ, depending on the "type" (i.e. theme) of woman involved in a sexual experience(s). Some members may use words such as "prude," "virgin," "puritan," "easy," "slut"—just to name a few—to explain the "type" of woman. This common vocabulary helps to reinforce the gender roles within a fraternity structure and culture. These women become nameless, which has two dangerous effects: "... it fosters the sexualization of her as an object of men's desire, thus as a woman without a purpose other than to be viewed and bought for sexual pleasure; and it encourages her objectification as a... woman, as sacrificial, and inhuman" (Ono & Sloop, 1995, p. 35). Inside jokes and jargon (i.e. labels for "imperfect femininity") are also used within organizations so that outsiders cannot and will not ever understand, which only reinforces the bond of the members and creates a rhetorical community. The behavior that is deemed acceptable within this culture is not always deemed as acceptable within the larger culture of the U.S. but that does not mean that members of a fraternity should be performing as such.

Fraternity members do have the power to "... intervene when they detect risk before, during, or after an incident along the continuum of sexual violence" (Baynard et al., 2009, p. 448), but rarely do for a number of reasons. One of the main reasons fraternity brothers do not intervene is because intervening is not the norm of the culture and is not the "brotherly" thing to do as a member of their culture. Structuration Theory supports this notion because the outcome of the practices and activities the fraternity members take part in recursively organize in the duality of structure (Busco, 2009). The fundamental notion of the duality of structure helps to explain the process of structuration itself, which is conceptualized as "... a set of *rules* and *resources*, structures are

organized as properties of social systems...” (Busco, 2009, p. 250), and they “comprise the situated activities of human agents, reproduced across time and space” (Giddens, 1984, p. 25). Giddens argues that human agency is strongly voluntaristic (Jones & Karsten, 2008); thus, human agents always have the opportunity to stop the rules, norms, rituals, and/or a situation before they/it get(s) out of control. The duality of structure is problematic within a fraternity because it comprises certain rules and/or habits that tend to take on a life of their own (Cheney et al., 2003), which further supports the social construction of hegemonic structures of rules, roles, norms, and rituals within the organization. This fallacious structure perpetuates the acceptance of sexual violence and rape myths within the fraternity culture and their rhetorical community and further reproduces the “ordered” form of social life (Giddens, 1993).

A rhetorical community is so important within a culture because “members of a rhetorical community share[s] a common consciousness and can appreciate inside jokes” (Bormann, 1983, p. 115). Fraternity members have a common rhetorical vision toward the culture of the organization, along with the rules, norms, and behaviors that are expected from each member. The rules within an organization help to construct their image and define their collectivity and group identity. The norms, shared consciousness, and group fantasies in a fraternity culture enable the brothers to reinforce a group identity. This group identity becomes a symbol and serves as a vital function for the fraternity and the Greek life system as a whole.

Symbolic Convergence Theory helps to illustrate the culture of fraternities because all three factors in Symbolic Convergence Theory include “... the common psychodynamics and symbolic predispositions that individuals bring to their

communication episodes...” (Bormann, 1983, p. 101). These factors also include individuals’ current “... personal and shared group fantasies, the experiences they share as part of the group culture, and the rhetorical skill with which the speakers present the fantasies” (Bormann, 1983, p. 101). Symbolic convergence theory frames the structure and culture of fraternities because it provides “... a level of understanding... [of] what has happened and why it has happened. It explains the communicative process by which sense making is accomplished” (Bormann, 1983, p. 122). Giddens’ theory of structuration helps to explain how social systems, like a fraternity, are organized as “... regularized *social practices*, which are sustained in encounters and dispersed across time” (Busco, 2009, p. 252). These two theories help to frame this analysis of fraternities.

### **Fraternity Gang Rape at the University of Pennsylvania**

We, as a culture, cannot understand rape until we see and understand the context in which the sexual culture breeds this (acceptable) behavior (Sanday, 2007). In February 1983, a woman who will be given the pseudonym “Laurel” was allegedly gang raped at the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity house by five to six men in one night. The term “allegedly” is used because “... there was never a prosecution, and so the fact of the gang rape was never legally proved” (Sanday, 1990, p. xvi; 2007, p. 25). This groundbreaking case has been used in a variety of publications that illustrate the dangers of “pulling train” and how fraternities justify “pulling train” within the fraternity structure and culture (Sanday, 1990; 2007).

In 1983, Laurel was a student of Professor Peggy Reeves Sanday at the University of Pennsylvania. Sanday noticed that Laurel was missing from class for about two weeks (Sanday, 1990; 2007). When Laurel returned to class, she had told Sanday that she was

raped by five or six male students at the Alpha Tau Omega house after a night of partying. When Sanday heard about what had happened to Laurel, she was "... struck by how the sexual activity was not unlike the rapes in rape-prone societies in the band and tribal world in which men use rape to establish social dominance" (Sanday, 2007, p. 6). Later, Sanday found out that Laurel had taken four hits of LSD before going to the party and was drunk on beer at the party (Sanday, 1990; 2007)—clearly, Laurel was in no mindset to consent to any sexual activity with another person(s), but that did not change anyone's actions or judgments against her. In 1983, the law and the legal definition of rape was clear—if a woman does not consent and is forced to have sexual intercourse with another person, it is rape; if a woman *cannot* consent, it is rape (Sanday, 2007). Still today, many men and women on college campuses do not see, nor define, that sex with a drunken or passed-out woman is rape (Sanday, 2007).

According to the story Laurel told to a campus administrator, after the party she fell asleep in a first-floor room and when she awoke was undressed. One of the brothers dressed her and carried her upstairs, where she was raped by 'guys' she did not know but said she could identify if photographs were available. She asked a few times for the men to get off her, but to no avail. According to her account, she was barely conscious and lacked the strength to push them off. (Sanday, 1990, p. 5-6; 2007, p. 36)

Sanday and her trained interviewers interviewed people at the party. Many of the students told Sanday and the other interviewers that Laurel was acting all "high" and her behavior was distracting and drew attention to her (Sanday, 1990; 2007). This erratic behavior should have indicated to the other guests and brothers at the party that Laurel

was not able to consent to any sexual activity; instead Laurel's drinking was signaled as her desire for sex (Sanday, 2007). Laurel was nothing but a tool, an object, and "... the centerfold around which boys both test[ed] and demonstrate[d] their power and heterosexual desire by performing for one another. Her body stands in for the object of desire in porno-staged acts of sexual intercourse that boys often watch together" (Sanday, 2007, p. 7).

The brothers involved in this case claimed that Laurel had lured them into a "gang rape" or "train," which they preferred to call an "express" (Sanday, 1990; 2007). This fraternity used the victim as a scapegoat by saying that she brought the situation on herself. Scapegoating the victim is a common and necessary part of continuing the ritual in a fraternity, "... just as the efficacy of ritual sacrifice once depended on the delusion that the victim was responsible for the sins of the world. Just as in ritual sacrifice the victim was thought to embody the sins of the world, a gang rape is rationalized with the belief that the victim embodies the sexual desire of the men" (Sanday, 1990, p. 110; 2007, p. 124). By scapegoating Laurel as the victim, the members of the fraternity took zero responsibility for their lack of self-control; rather, they blamed Laurel for the whole incident.

The fraternities' actions and statements after the event occurred indicated that they considered the rape a routine part of their "little sister program," and ultimately something to be proud of (Sanday, 1990; 2007). "Reporting the party activities on a sheet posted on their bulletin board in the spot where the house minutes are usually posted, Anna [a friend of the brothers] found the following statement, which she showed to [Sanday]:

Things are looking up for the [Alpha Tau Omega] sisters program. A perspective leader for the group spent some time interviewing several [brothers] this past Thursday and Friday. Possible names for the little sisters include [Alpha Tau Omega] ‘little wenches’ and ‘The [Alpha Tau Omega] express.’ (Sanday, 1990, p. 6-7; 2007, p. 37)

The Alpha Tau Omega brothers never publicly admitted to any wrongdoing in this situation (Sanday, 1990; 2007); rather they framed this situation as being coerced into having group sex with Laurel and blamed Laurel for her own actions, and ultimately their actions, too. During in-depth interviews with Sanday and her interviewers, some fraternity members did acknowledge that many of the events described, like this one with Laurel, have occurred before (Culbertson, 1990). Later, when testimonies finally did come out from the members within the fraternity, they demonstrated the belief that “trains” are part of normal sexual behavior on and off campuses (Sanday, 1990; 2007).

It was not only men who justified this act of gang rape as acceptable, so did some women who observed Laurel at the party, which exemplifies the acceptance of hegemonic masculinity. One of the women suspected that there was a gang rape, but preferred to remain ignorant. “Like many women seeking acceptance in the fraternity culture, she needed to mask from consciousness the reality of her own and others’ inferior positions vis-à-vis the brothers” (Sanday, 1990, p. 42; 2007, p. 69). This warped state of mind and need for acceptance further perpetuates the traditional sex and gender roles for men and women. When men and women accept and adopt this sexist ideology, the cycle of sexism within the U.S. continues.

Although there was no criminal prosecution and conviction, the "... University of Pennsylvania revoked recognition of the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity for one year after investigating a report of a gang rape by members..." (AP, 1983, p. 1). Sanday's groundbreaking book, *Fraternity Gang Rape*, identifies this case as "rape" instead of "alleged rape," based on her conclusion with her talk with Laurel and the interviews with other students who had observed Laurel's behavior at the party, as well as the other evidence that is presented in the first edition and second edition book (Sanday, 1990; 2007).

The fact that the brothers involved in this case were never punished for what they did shows the type of culture that the fraternity builds and the rape acceptant culture maintained by the university, due to sexual assault and "pulling train" being interpreted as the norm. Although institutions like the University of Pennsylvania in the 1980s did not have appropriate policies against behaviors like this, some policies have been reframed in some institutions to fight against violence (Sanday, 2007). "Students are given the implicit message that acquaintance rape and sexual assault are tolerated on campuses, and that working with the criminal justice system will usually not result in a conviction" (Bohmer & Parrot, 1993, p. 183). College students need to know that sexual assault should not be tolerated, nor is it the norm anywhere. As a society we need to recognize the inadequacies of the administrations and criminal law and realize that when women and men use the civil legal structures, they can force social change (Bohmer & Parrot, 1993).



### **Fraternity Gang Rapes On Other College Campuses**

The Laurel and Alpha Tau Omega case at the University of Pennsylvania is only one example of a gang rape. Gang rapes appear throughout the U.S. but many of them go unnoticed for a variety of reasons including the victim not coming forward, the case goes through a college's jurisdiction, or the case is not tried before a judge at all. The next two cases include two women who were gang raped—one at a Midwest school and one at a large southern university. Like Laurel's case, both of these cases illustrate what happens when members of a fraternity take advantage of a woman at one of their house parties. In both cases, the women involved were blamed by other people for not "controlling" the situation, which further perpetuates the vicious cycle of traditional gender roles and sexist ideologies.

The first case is of Amy's story, a now former college student from a Midwest school. The night that Amy knew she was raped she did agree to have sex with a fraternity brother that she knew and another male of the fraternity brother's choice. Although she initially gave this fraternity brother her consent, she fell asleep in his bed later. Before passing out, she was "... dimly aware that guys were coming into the room to have intercourse with her" (Sanday, 1990, p. 92; 2007, p. 109). "When she woke up she found a brother on top of her trying to force oral intercourse. Amy pushed him off, went home, and later filed charges against the fraternity" (Sanday, 1990, p. 92; 2007, p. 109).

Amy started sleeping with one the brothers in the house about three weeks after she started going to the fraternity house (Sanday, 1990; 2007). After the brothers found out that she was sleeping with Tim (a pseudonym name), the brothers would approach

Amy and directly ask her to have sex with them. In total, she slept with six different brothers in the fraternity (Sanday, 1990; 2007). After ending her relationship with Tim, she rarely went to the fraternity house anymore; however during the summer of her sophomore year she ended up going back to the fraternity house and had sex with Tim. After having sex with Tim, Amy went to use the bathroom and when she got back into Tim's room, there was somebody else in there (Sanday, 1990; 2007). Tim told Amy to come into the room and she did, and Tim left and closed the door. Amy was alone with a fraternity brother she did not know. The unknown fraternity member started kissing Amy. When she asked where Tim had gone; he told her "you'll see" (Sanday, 1990; 2007). The door opened and then some other fraternity brothers came into the room. Amy remembers,

... I was lying on the bed without the towel and this guy was on top of me, and there was intercourse going on. Then, the other guys in the room would either come over and one would be like touching me while another was having intercourse or whatever. There was somebody leaning on me most of the time, which made me feel like I was being held down. One person sat on the bed and the other person would sit on my chest with their penis in my mouth or something. It was not like they were saying, 'You can't leave,' but I felt like that's what they were saying. (Sanday, 1990, p. 89; 2007, p. 115)

At one point Amy was being held down while someone penetrated her anally. When Amy complained that it hurt and asked them to please stop, they would say, "That doesn't hurt you, you like that. You don't want to leave now" (Sanday, 1990, p. 98;

2007, p. 115). This description is only from the first 20 minutes of Amy's rape. Amy did not return home until 3:30 in the morning (Sanday, 1990; 2007).

The second case occurred at a large southern university after a little sister rush party (Sanday, 1990; 2007). The victim was described by her roommate as being "sweet, very weak, and wouldn't want to harm anyone" (Sanday, 1990; 2007). The victim and her sorority sisters were at a fraternity house party. Around midnight, the victim was the only girl in the house (Sanday, 1990; 2007). The fraternity members joked around with her, telling her that if she did not leave soon, they would "have to take her upstairs" (Sanday, 1990; 2007). When the victim was introduced to "Rex" (which is Greek for *king*), he asked her to come upstairs with him so he could get to know her better (Sanday, 1990; 2007). When she arrived to his bedroom, there were two brothers waiting for her; they proceeded to close the door and then blocked the door by standing in front of it. The brothers told the victim that if she slept with a brother, she would be able to get a secret bid to become a little sister. The brothers also threatened her by telling her that if she left she would never be allowed to come back to the fraternity house again (Sanday, 1990; 2007). Nervous and fearful, "... she knew there was no one to stop them and she resigned herself to fate" (Sanday, 1990, p. 103; 2007, p. 118). The brothers told the victim to get on top of the loft. Afraid of what they might do to her if she did not, she proceeded to go to the top of the loft.

The only light in the room came from a digital clock. She was told to get undressed, which she did. One of the brothers started having sex with her and she then discovered that there were two brothers. When she asked about this they said to her, 'We brothers share everything.' Then a voice from a bed under the

loft said there were three brothers. The three then proceeded to sexually assault her. From then on men kept coming in and out of the room. There were never less than three with her, and sometimes more. They made her perform oral sex on them and then they penetrated her vaginally with their penises. She said that every one of the men followed this routine. This continued until two in the morning. (Sanday, 1990, p. 103; 2007, p. 118-119)

Due to the rape-supportive culture that has impacted the lives of college students, some fraternities' structures and cultures integrate male dominance and female subordination as the norm, and incorporate rape myths into their shared consciousness and group identity. The men involved in these situations believed that what they did was right and not wrong. The men felt that they could not rape women, which justified their thinking and behaviors. Rapist or not, by agreeing with this ideology that such behavior like gang rape is acceptable because the victim can never be a "true" victim, provides "... the emotional support that has allowed many people to term North America a rape-supportive culture" (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997, p. 81).

### **Discussion**

From the variety of fraternities' rituals and initiation practices discussed to the three fraternity gang rapes described, it is clear to see that the United States' sexual and rape-supportive culture influences the lives of men and women, whether one realizes it or not. The fraternity gang rape cases described are disturbing on a variety of levels. Unfortunately, out of all of the men described, none of them admitted to any wrongdoing. What is even more unfortunate and disturbing is that the sexist ideologies men have in

college do not merely fade away when they graduate because the scenery changes; rather for some men they embrace and live by these ideologies for the rest of their lives.

For some—not all—men, it is evident to see that their behaviors are more rape-prone than others, but it is important to recognize the thoughts and judgmental attitudes of men *and* women in our culture need to change. From the cases described, the victims were the ones that were blamed for the situation by some members of the fraternity, their peers, and the universities (Sanday, 1990; 2007). We, as a society, can learn from this analysis of gang rape and hazing through the use of symbolic convergence theory and structuration theory that this crime is affecting the lives of thousands of adults on college campuses and will continue to affect the lives of every college student in the future.

In order to stop this succession, we need to change our thoughts and actions of traditional sex and gender roles, and we need to change our sexist ideologies that support a patriarchal structure and culture. It is not until we change our thoughts that we can change our behaviors. If we continue to turn a blind eye to this problem, we are in many ways accepting this idea of hazing and gang rape to be the norm, which further enables the vicious cycle that needs to be stopped.

The (false) belief that traditional gender roles are true representations of male and female behavior in the U.S. is daunting. The idea of a “real man” performing his masculine gender role by exerting power and dominance over those who are weaker (i.e. the feminine) is unquestionably accepted in this culture. This acceptance of traditional gender roles leads to the sexist ideology and rape-supportive culture we live in today. This also leads to the excuses provided to explain men’s gender role performances of masculinity by equating power and dominance to biology. Specifically, the “boys will be

boys” mentality and excuse is commonly used to explain males’ thoughts and behaviors. This mentality must be removed from people’s mindsets and be replaced with the attitude that there is nothing “natural” or biological about a male hurting another person(s). The “boys will boys” mentality is culturally embedded within our society and into our traditional sex and gender roles that makes it acceptable.

These ideas are taught to young boys and young girls at a very early age. The sexual culture that we live in teaches boys to be terrified of the thought of being viewed as “... effeminate by other boys who bully them mercilessly” (Sanday, 2007, p. 11-12). In one way or another, all boys are encouraged to conform to standards of manhood (Bordo, 1999). These standards are taught to children and (re)created in our society by families, athletic coaches, teachers, peers, and the media. Boys who are intelligent, thoughtful, and caring are caught between their desires to act “like a man” and their fear of being condemned if they act in any way outside of their gender roles—performing femininity.

This “boys will be boys” mentality has allowed several rapists and sexual harassers to get away with their crime, all in the name of “boys will be boys” (Bordo, 1999). This frame of mind is commonly used within institutional settings, including in the penal system, the military, in athletics, and in fraternities.

The cruelest injustice, however, is that at the same time as the ‘winners’ may be getting away with sexual harassment and rape, the ‘nerds’ and ‘queers’ are paying the price for the bad reputation *all* boys have been tarred with. (Bordo, 1999, p. 240-241)

By teaching boys and girls how to act in accordance with their gender roles, we are also teaching them the consequences of going outside the rigid gender roles and binaries, specifically in terms of roles expected in a heterosexual relationship between a man and woman. The ever popular notion that men's forcefulness is required to "... turn on a woman's slow-heating oven..." is part of the mythology that teaches men not to take 'no' for an answer" (Bordo, 1999, p. 244). Teaching young boys to not take "no" for an answer teaches young boys and men to produce and perform their "hard-wired" maleness, which transcends into the structures and cultures of fraternities and ultimately into men's relationships with anyone feminine.

At an early age, boys who share a common consciousness and goal form a fraternity and share symbolic convergence by having certain rules, norms, and roles for each member. For example, boys who create a "no girls club" and have a place where they get together to do "boy things" creates a symbolic convergence among the male members on the basis of gender. It is not that all same-sex groups are problematic; it is those that denigrate femininity and (re)produce sexist ideologies that are problematic. Most of the rituals and/or initiation practices for a young boys' club discipline and denigrate femininity by calling other boys names if they do not do a "manly thing," such as eating an insect, jumping off of a bridge, or climbing a dangerous hill.

One example of a fraternity (i.e. a group of men who share common goals) consisted of high school boys who lived in a country club in New Jersey. Their rituals included riding around in golf carts and participating in their favorite activity, which was "voyeuring." "Voyeuring" is when one guy would "... get a girl to perform oral sex while a group of other guys watched from a closet or a hall, their presence unknown to

the girl. The practice was seen, even by others girls, as the fault of the girl herself, for having been so gullible or stupid” (Bordo, 1999, p. 238). Even at the age of 14, the males were not reprimanded for their activity; rather, the female—the victim—was reprimanded for being used as object and falsely judged for not “stopping” the situation.

Rituals, such as the ones described throughout this chapter, remind the brothers within a fraternity of their sexual dominance and power over women and femininity, and at the same time the rituals give each brother a “heterosexual stamp of approval.” It is the excuses and the attitude of “boys will be boys” that further perpetuates and trivializes the gender roles for both men and women. The “bonds of brotherhood” that are (re)created through the rituals, initiations, and social interactions need to change. In order to change the “bonds of brotherhood,” it is important to look at the core of the brotherhood that needs to change, which ultimately begins with the treatment of pledges.

In order to change this sexist ideology, pledges should not be placed in the submissive and serving role(s) to their brothers because it only perpetuates the power of expected masculinity and rewards hypermasculine behaviors of the brothers. Also, fraternity members should not fear pledges’ femininity and “wash it away” through their rituals and initiation practices, nor should the rituals and initiation practices involve hazing and sexually assaulting the pledges, in order for the pledges to prove their “loyalty” to the fraternity. The rituals, rules, and initiation practices—the “bonds of brotherhood”—denigrate femininity and reward hypermasculinity. These practices are troublesome and encourage members to treat the feminine (i.e. women and other men who fail to perform hegemonic masculinity) in a particular way and feel they have power over anyone feminine and not accept “no” as an answer. Clearly, there is much harm



occurring within fraternities that needs to change in order to *not* (re)create a sexist and rape-supportive culture.

In order to transform a fraternity into a socially responsible culture, we would need to change the fraternity culture; however, changing the culture is about as difficult as changing the drinking culture on campus (Sirhal, 2000). The administrators on college campuses need to be more involved in fighting rape and sexual assault on campus and monitoring the students, too. The goals of Greek organizations need to promote, endorse, and advance the political goals of the college administrators, "... which inevitably include the promulgation of diversity and multicultural awareness, as well as the spread of anti-sexist and anti-homophobic agit-prop—the dominant orthodoxies on most campuses across the country" (Sirhal, 2000, p. 62).

We need to step away from the ancient Greek idea of the values of men and women—"male = active = admirable; female = passive = inferior" (Bordo, 1999, p. 246). We can learn from symbolic convergence theory and structuration theory that the members of a structure and culture are the ones that have the power to (re)create the culture. It is men *and* women who need to recreate the culture and move outside of the binaries of the traditional sex and gender roles. We need to stop (re)teaching children a sexist ideology and stop using the excuse throughout our lives that "men are from Mars and women are from Venus" because really, men and women are not that much different (Bordo, 1999), and we are the ones who are framing them to be so different. When men and women frame their differences in relation to being from different planets, these dominant group interests become universalized and translated into a frame where everyone accepts the dominant interests of gender and sex roles (Clair, 1993), which is

problematic because males and females are from the same planet and they need to be treated and explained in this way. The excuses we give for male and female gender role performances are unacceptable and are contributing to the downward spiral of an unequal society we live in today. We can let "... little boys play rough-and-tumble, compete with ferocity, even knock each other to the ground, without acknowledging some 'urge to conquer' implanted in their genes" (Bordo, 1999, p. 264).

## Discussion:

### Stopping Sexual Violence

“Rape is just one of the many terrible ways in which we human beings abuse one another. You need not to be female or a feminist to deplore this particular violation of body and spirit. You only need to be a believer in that most basic of human rights, the right of every person to control the integrity and privacy of his or her own body.”

Sharon Frederick, 2001 (quoted in *Rape: Weapon of Terror*)

We are still grappling with the meaning and extent of sexual violence in the United States. Sexual violence will not end with the easy or quick fix solutions that are most popular among some politicians and crime prevention specialists (Carmody & Carrington, 2000). So why does sexual violence still happen? There are a variety of answers to this question and problem and four are as follows. The first is that much sexual violence still remains hidden and/or unrecognized; thus, sexual violence remains outside of the social infrastructures of normalization (Carmody & Carrington, 2000). The second is that sexual violence still occurs because the people who are the most vulnerable to victimization tend to be among the populations and communities with the least number of social resources when they experience victimization. Third, sexual violence still occurs because sexual violence remains relatively invisible and normalized in everyday intimate relationships. Finally, “... much misplaced hope has been invested in legislative reform as a means of preventing sexual violence by acting as a deterrent to potential offenders” (p. 344).

Clearly, the problem of sexual assault is still prevalent today, especially within institutions and structures that contribute to a rape-supportive culture in the United States.

The penal and fraternity systems are two institutions and social structures that contribute to and promote a rape-supportive culture in the United States by denigrating femininity and rewarding hegemonic masculinity and hypermasculine behaviors. As mentioned in the first chapter, the goal of this thesis is twofold: (1) to explore the problems of patriarchy, traditional sex and/or gender roles, and sexual assault within the United States; and (2) to uncover how two institutions and social structures, the penal and fraternity systems, contribute to the problems of patriarchy, hegemony, the trivialization of sex and/or gender roles, and the normalization of sexual assault in the United States. At best, the penal and fraternity systems do not prevent this problem and, at worst, these structures encourage the problem. This final chapter offers concluding thoughts on sexual violence and the institutions and structures that contribute to a rape-supportive culture.

This thesis contributes to knowledge, practice, and multiple areas of scholarship including communication, sociology, gender and women's studies. As demonstrated through the previous chapters, the penal and fraternity systems are vital to study because these institutions, structures, and cultures reinforce and reward hegemonic patriarchy in the United States and denigrate femininity, even when there is not a female present. This thesis takes a unique approach to examining sexual assault by combining a feminist analysis and a narrative analysis in the investigation of two institutions and social structures. This thesis also advances the theories of hegemonic masculinity, structuration theory, and symbolic convergence theory to better explain sexual assault in the United States.

This thesis provides a better understanding of mediated representations of gendered violence. Analyzing a media text, like *Oz*, is crucial in understanding and explaining male-on-male sexual violence. By examining media texts through the lens of critical rhetoric, we become more equipped to understand how prison rape is represented and justified within the narrative of the show. This thesis also provides an examination of fraternity rituals and initiation practices, along with three fraternity gang rape cases, which provide a better understanding of (re)created sexist ideologies of gendered violence. Analyzing narratives like the three described is fundamental toward understanding and explaining sexual violence against both men and women. Structuration theory helps to explain how social systems, like a fraternity, are organized as regularized social practices. Symbolic convergence theory helps to explain how and why men create symbolic convergences with one another and share group fantasies, such as gang raping a woman, within a fraternity. All of these analyses contribute to the (re)creation of a sexist ideology that denigrates femininity, rewards hypermasculinity, and contributes to a rape-supportive culture in the United States. By approaching and analyzing sexual assault from these angles, we are equipped to better understand how media and society (re)create and shape our socially constructed realities. By promoting better understandings of gender role performance, power, and privilege, we will be able to come closer to ending sexual assault within institutions and all forms of sexual dominance.

What we need to remember is that sexual violence does not only occur in institutions, it occurs everywhere. Men take part in activities such as “gang raping” off college campuses, too. Groups of men who share common goals are considered to be a

fraternity (Sanday, 1990; 2007). Judge Lois G. Forer tells three stories of trials she heard where females were gang raped off of college campuses. “In every instance the victim knew at least one of the rapists by name or nickname, and she knew where the crime had taken place” (Sanday, 1990, p. xv; 2007, p. 25). These cases of gang rape further illustrate the ways in which fraternities achieve symbolic convergence by sharing a group fantasy, such as raping a woman in a group, which strengthens their social bonds of “brotherhood.”

The first case was heard by a 14-year-old girl who lived in a public housing project. “She was on her first date. He was a neighborhood boy, her classmate in junior high school. She thought they were going to a party. I learned in the course of the trial that each member of the gang was obligated in turn to provide a girl for the benefits of all the gang. The boys had a clubhouse, an old shed bizarrely furnished, which was regularly used for group sex” (Sanday, 1990, p. xiv; 2007, p. 24). In another case tried before Judge Lois G. Forer, there was a group of young men—all married—who had a weekly night out. “It was their practice to go to the park. One of them would pick up a young girl and ask her to go with him for something to eat or to the movies. Instead, he would take her to a secluded area where his pals would be waiting and each would have sex with her in turn” (Sanday, 1990, p. xv; 2007, p. 24). The third case tried before Judge Lois G. Forer was about a gang rape that occurred in the back room of a supermarket. “A store guard caught a young woman shoplifting and ordered her to follow him. She did so and discovered that instead of being charged with petty larceny, she was gang raped by the guard and his pals. After a few hours she was released. She promptly went to the police, who accompanied her to the supermarket and arrested her assailants” (Sanday,

1990, p. xv; 2007, p. 24). Every single woman involved in these three gang rapes reported the incident to the police. The accused men of these cases "... were brought to trial, convicted, and sentenced to prison" (Sanday, 1990, p. xv; 2007, p. 24-25).

Just as fraternity men on college campuses do not find fault in their behavior, men who are part of fraternities off of college campuses have a similar shared consciousness. Brothers who engage in this behavior use group secrecy as part of their shared consciousness and social knowledge of norms, rules, and roles. "Silence is one of the most common ways in which fraternities perpetuate and legitimate individual and gang rapes" (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997, p. 121). The codes for silence demand that the individual and group remain loyal to their organization. Group silence is yet another way that the group's structure and culture (re)creates itself into a rape-prone and rape-supportive culture. No matter what environment gang rape occurs in, gang rapes are the result of brothers "working a no into a yes," and receiving satisfaction for both their homosexual and heterosexual desires during a gang rape (Sanday, 1990).

If we, as a society, are serious about significantly decreasing the rates of sexual violence within the United States, we must move men, and especially young boys, away from a definition of masculinity that centers on power, toughness, a lack of empathy and dominance toward anyone feminine. For as long as society and media (re)teach the values and characteristics of hegemonic masculinity as the ideal form of masculinity, sexual violence will continue to be viewed as proof that masculinity prevails and femininity submits. Masculinity must be socially reconstructed and redefined to include characteristics such as being caring, nurturing, and empathetic—characteristics that are

typically associated with femininity. Femininity must also be redefined to *not* be the enemy of masculinity.

In the United States, men are constructed as a homogeneous group that benefit from patriarchy (Carmody & Carrington, 2000). These flawed socialized gender identities are not limited to the United States only; rather, this flawed socialization permeates most, if not all, cultures in the modern world (Buchwald et al., 1993). “Most men have been taught to treat, respond, listen, and react to women from a male’s point of view” (Madhubuti, 1993, p. 167). These misinterpretations of women and femininity teach young children to view women as commodities or objects or both for men’s sexual releases and sexual desires (Madhubuti, 1993). This robs women and weaker, feminine men of any agency and/or ability to exert power, express desire, take control, resist, prevent or avoid their victimization in intimate sexual encounters with other men (Carmody & Carrington, 2000).

Stopping violence against men and women is ultimately a project that requires a change in gender relations, “... because rape, battering, incest, and other violence are rooted in the power men have over women” (Matthews, 1994, p. 149). We, both men and women, must be strong and courageous and empower each other by supporting one another and find new ways to communicate. We must offer hope to victims so that when they speak up, they will not be cut off. “There is no downside to owning our own strength. The only people who don’t like it are abusers” (Powell, 1993, p. 116).

Stopping violence requires both women and men to play a symbolic role in the process of socialization and the (re)construction of gender role identities. It is important that men reject the language that constructs women as orifices (i.e. “I stuck it into her”



and/or “I fucked her”). It is vital that when men and women hear this language, they do not condone the language or laugh along with the others. Both men and women need to reject language that stigmatizes women who find pleasure through sexuality. “The possibility of sexual intimacy without sexual assault requires that men reflect upon and unlearn the language and the myths of rape culture – that women ask for it, that if she gets raped its her fault – its all her responsibility to say ‘no’” (Weinberg & Biernbaum, 1993, p. 92). Challenging this discourse requires the reconfiguration of discourses on prevention, a shift in orientation from victims being placed with the responsibility of prevention to the responsibility being placed on the individual attacker, and to promoting a culture that is intolerant of unethical sexual practices (Carmony & Carrington, 2000; Weinberg & Biernbaum, 1993). “Developing ethical sexual practice will mean that both women and men are required to re-evaluate their cultural expectations of each other in relation to intimate relations and to take explicit responsibility for their sexual desires and practices” (Carmody & Carrington, 2000, p. 356).

In order to significantly decrease the rates of sexual violence, we must also begin to monitor young boys and girls viewing violence on television. Sexually explicit content that includes violence has been of concern as harmful to minors for more than a century now (Kotrla, 2007). “A major part of our children’s socialization now lies in the hands of the entertainment business, whose primary goal is not helping to cut down on rates of rape or other forms of violence, but maximizing profits” (Miedzian, 1993, p. 156). While some men are victimized in violent films, the main theme is usually a man’s pursuit of one or more young women (Miedzian, 1993). Seeing women being raped or threatened with rape through sexual violence desensitizes viewers, especially male viewers, and

facilitates the justification of rape (Miedzian, 1993). Even only brief exposures to violent dramatic presentations on television and in films cause an increase in youth's aggressive thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, which include being physically aggressive toward another person (Anderson, Berkowitz, Donnerstein, Huesmann, Johnson, Linz, Malamuth, & Wartella, 2003; Kotrla, 2007). Exposure to violent dramatic presentations affects men and women. Brief exposures of film violence toward women and weak, feminine men impact men and women to empathize less with real-life rape victims (Miedzian, 1993) and may produce greater rather than less acceptance of rape myths (Wilson, Linz, Donnerstein, & Stipp, 1992).

Not surprisingly feminists, both activists and scholars, have pondered most seriously the conceptualization of sexual assault and the prevention of sexual violence in the United States. Answers from feminists and critical theorists to the problems of sexual violence revolve around the ideas of socialization, patriarchy, and male dominance in the United States. As Bell (1993) has argued, "Feminism has problematized violence against women in a particular way, but is forced to enter into a discursive space where several different understandings of what violence against women is about... [are] produced" (p. 179). This discourse includes an attempt for feminists to reconfigure the power relations between men and women that are manifested in sexual violence (Carmody & Carrington, 2000).

Historically, women's social position has led to women being viewed for many centuries as objects of sexual desire for men; however, this has turned into more than just a "natural attraction." Feminine men and women's bodies are objectified in society by the media and by other men and women. This objectification has led to the

dehumanization of feminine men and women as literally objects. This dehumanization has led to the current status of a culture that demonstrates its ambivalence toward femininity in the prevalence of sexual violence and the rewarding of masculinity and patriarchy. The second wave of feminism brought the most public attention to this issue when the anti-rape movement formed. The anti-rape movement focused on changing consciousness and "... redefining women's rights to their bodily and psychological integrity" (Matthews, 1994, p. 149). This change of consciousness led to education on rape prevention, along with services for victims of rape that are available today.

Specifically, prevention programs on college campuses are targeted toward women and not men. While education programs on prevention can be effective, they hail women, as the modern subject, to the position of feminine vulnerability (Hall, 2004), positioning femininity with the responsibility of prevention. The majority of prevention programs include risk-reduction, self-defense classes, environmental change for promoting increased campus safety, and information on victim-advocacy programs (Hong, 2000). Prevention programs need to focus on men, who are far more likely to be perpetrators of all forms of sexual violence toward other men and women (Berg, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999; Berkowitz, 1994; Davis & Liddell, 2002; Hong, 2000; Koss & Cook, 1998; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). In particular, fraternities have been identified as organizations that often serve to reinforce rape-supportive attitudes and behaviors, due to their traditional views of masculinity and their endorsement of rape myths (Berkowitz, 1994; Boeringer, 1999; Boswell & Spade, 1999; Lackie & deMan, 1997; Martin & Hummer, 1998; Sanday, 1990; 2007; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997).

In order to raise awareness and teach men to not attack other human beings, colleges need to instruct counselors and encourage mentors in male organizations to raise men's awareness about the legal definition of rape, especially as those definitions that apply to alcohol and other drugs (Choate, 2003). College counselors can also help men reduce their perceived vulnerability to false rape charges. By actively challenging the acceptance of rape myths, counselors and mentors within male organizations can teach men communication skills that are needed to obtain positive consent for sexual activity (Choate, 2003). Finally, counselors and male organizations can design programs that emphasize the relevance of sexual assault and rape in men's lives (Choate, 2003). If men recognize that rape is more likely to affect them, or someone they know—male or female, they will be more receptive to hearing the information provided in the prevention programs (Choate, 2003). An effective prevention program will require that men have an increased responsibility for the prevention of sexual violence. Rape crisis centers, too, are effective in many ways but they have not yet achieved social change that places perpetrators with more responsibility and accountability, opposed to the victims.

One of the most important places with services offered to victims of abuse are rape crisis centers. As beneficial as rape crisis centers are for women, some rape crisis centers and services negate males as victims of sexual assault (Matthews, 1994; Scarce, 1997), which contributes to sexism and the myth that men cannot be victims of rape. "Most male rape survivors have conceived notions that rape crisis centers, telephone hotlines, and hospital advocacy programs will only work with women who have been assaulted" (Scarce, 1997, p. 250). If all of the resources available are female specific, male survivors may not be able to envision themselves as a recipient of that program's

services (Scarce, 1997). For male survivors to take advantage of the services provided to victims, organizations must make them available in ways that are safe and as confidential as possible (Scarce, 1997). “In addition to crisis intervention services, rape crisis centers organize and provide community education about sexual assault” (Matthews, 1994, p. xv). Community education and social action activities need to challenge both men’s individual attitudes and behaviors and the cultural responses to sexual assault in the community (Carmody & Carrington, 2000). Although the services available to some victims are beneficial since individuals learn about prevention and receive counseling, the services are *not* teaching men to *not* attack and/or prey on anyone feminine and/or weak; rather, the services are teaching women how to protect themselves, which places the *only* agency for responsibility on the victim and not the perpetrator.

“... Prevention discourses render rape virtual in women’s lives such that no social experience seems to escape the ever-present possibility of rape” (Hall, 2004, p. 3). For men and women living in the age of rape prevention, the rape discourse in the United States’ culture presents the masculine body as the dangerous body and the feminine body as the risky and/or vulnerable body (Hall, 2004). While rape prevention discourse distinguishes the differences between masculinity and femininity, it does not account for the significant racial and economic differences among men and women, which ignores the fact that all men and women are not statistically equally at risk (Hall, 2004). Specifically, rape prevention discourses often ignore race and class differences among men and women and perpetuate the myth of the black male rapist and the female white victim and the stereotype of the sexually voracious black female (Hall, 2004). The rape myth of a black, hypersexual male rapist and a white, innocent female victim influences

reactions to rape because this myth encompasses racist, classist, and gender stereotypes, along with (negative) attitudes regarding interracial sex, that go unchallenged in “Western” ideology. “The articulated myths of the black man as rapist, the vulnerable white woman as victim, and the black woman as sexually inviolable continue to exert their influence today” (Hall, 2004, p. 5).

Prevention discourses and “safety tips” that stem from education programs and rape crises centers need to account for the fact that rape is out of the victim’s control. Current prevention discourses encourage (potential) victims to develop strategies to reduce their chance of being raped, which continues to place (potential) victims in the vulnerable position of victimization and without placing responsibility onto the perpetrators. Simply addressing rape does not stop rape; rather, it creates a culture of fear in which femininity is seen to inevitably lead to sexual violence (Hall, 2004). That is why we, both men and women, must take action to alter the prevention discourses that place the victim with the responsibility of preventing the attack and not the perpetrator with the accountability for attacking another human being.

By altering men and women’s attitudes and behaviors toward sexual violence, rape myths, and rape prevention, we will be able to alter the misconceptions of rape and rape myths. By taking into account the impact that gender performance, hegemonic and reconstructed masculinity, structuration theory, and symbolic convergence theory have on how we understand perpetrators and victims, we should be able to (re)construct our socially constructed attitudes and behaviors to create a better world that does not support rape and does not blame victims, but rather holds the perpetrators responsible for their actions. Feminists, both women *and* men, have the power to challenge prevention

discourses, change social views, and fight for a rape prevention that upholds all of our rights to feel safe and to live free from sexual violence.

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