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#MeToo, Cisheteropatriarchy and LGBTQ+ Sexual Violence on Campus

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Abstract

This article examines two case studies related to LGBTQ disclosures of sexual violence on university campuses, in the US and Australia. We argue that in a landscape of mediated #MeToo discourse, LGBTQ testimonies are often mapped onto a cisheteropatriarchal framework which limits adequate institutional responses to LGBTQ experiences of sexual violence. We illustrate how resolutions are often imagined via individualised empowerment narratives, and how this works in concert with the cisheteropatriarchal framing to delimit responses to sexual violence. We consider alternative possibilities for accounting for LGBTQ experiences going forward, and how institutions like universities might better respond to these issues.

Keywords

#MeToo, LGBTQ, sexual violence, neoliberal feminism, cisheteropatriarchy

In this article we draw on two case studies that raise complex questions around rethinking power and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse and queer (LGBTQ+) subjectivity in terms of sexual violence on university campuses. Our analysis takes shape through the deployment of Alim et al.'s (2020) sociolinguistic concept,

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cisheteropatriarchy, and is set against a backdrop of contemporary MeToo politics and the mediated #MeToo moment. The purpose of this analysis is to argue that while institutional responses to sexual violence have been broadly impacted by feminist activism and social change, approaches to sexual violence prevention and intervention have often been constrained by what we name a 'cisheteropatriarchal axis', relegating LGBTQ+ subjectivities to outliers in prevention and intervention strategies. Our analysis accounts for both the *Me Too movement* and *#MeToo discourse* (Rister and McClure, 2019) as they have been discussed across contemporary feminisms to further conceptualise the ways that sexual violence is understood, managed and responded to in universities specifically. Universities are important sites of enquiry precisely because of the hierarchal power that is involved in the organisation of these institutions, and the implications that the power dynamics of universities have for experiences of—and institutional cultural responses to—sexual violence.

We follow the theory of cisheteropatriarchy developed by Alim et al. (2020) to assert that discourse around sexual violence operates via the assumption that power relations can be neatly mapped onto a single-axis (heterosexual) dynamic of cisgender men's power over cisgender women. This mapping serves to simplify the management and response of institutions against instances of sexual violence. According to Alim et al. (2020: 292), cisheteropatriarchy is

> an ideological system that naturalizes normative views of what it means to 'look' and 'act' like a 'straight' man and marginalizes women, femininity, and all gender non-conforming bodies that challenge the gender binary; it is a system based on the exploitation and oppression of women and sexual minorities.

This concept provides a framework for critiquing how universities approach and understand sexual violence. We argue that universities take a cisheteropatriarchal view; the repertoire of sexual violence plays out in individual cases where 'bad apples' (Duggan, 2018)—unilaterally understood to be cisgender men—perpetrate acts of sexual violence over subordinate, cisgender women. Under a cisheteropatriarchal lens, power dynamics are read as interpersonal, with transformation imagined via individual empowerment narratives.

We consider the impact of Me Too as a movement and its mediated invocation, #MeToo, on the university landscape where we find the most prominent survivor stories are often those which follow cisgender and heterosexual scripts. In this critique, we draw on theories of post- and neoliberal feminism to suggest that #MeToo as a moment has triumphed individualised assumptions of empowerment and retribution (Serisier, 2018; Tambe, 2018; Fileborn and Loney-Howes, 2019; Rottenberg, 2019; Moon and Holling, 2020; Phipps, 2020). The individualisation of sexual violence produces a grid of what constitutes the grammar of sexual violence and is further underpinned by notions of a biological binary of male/female, heterosexuality as the default sexuality and the presumption of male supremacy (Alim et al., 2020: 293). We assert that while #MeToo may have provided the opportunity for LGBTQ+ people to share their experiences of sexual violence, these testimonies have often been missed in broader dialogues about #MeToo,

leading to further oppression of gender and sexuality minorities (Ison, 2019; Mendes and Ringrose, 2019: 42; Namaste, 2021).

To articulate this disjuncture, we draw on two case studies from different legislative and geopolitical contexts (USA and Australia) to illustrate how a cisheteropatriarchal axis has been utilised to understand and respond to sexual violence on university campuses in the #MeToo moment. The first case involves a prominent lesbian-identified scholar accused of harassment by a gay-identified graduate student on a US campus. This case highlights how LGBTQ+ testimonies of sexual violence have been obscured by the cisheteropatriarchal assumptions consolidated within #MeToo discourse. Our second case looks at how the limits of #MeToo and the feminist discourse that inform them specifically play out within the institutional setting of the Australian academy. We consider the constraints of many policy and program responses which, as a result, do little justice to LGBTQ+ experiences of sexual violence. Together, the two cases demonstrate how queer testimonies of sexual violence can be distorted in terms of understanding how sexual violence is perpetrated. The cases further illustrate that despite the significant positive impact of #MeToo discourse on pathways to call out sexual violence, LGBTQ+ testimonies have often proven to be outliers within a grid of power that operates at both an interpersonal and institutional level.

The Me Too movement and #MeToo

In this section, we discuss the Me Too movement and hashtag Me Too (#MeToo) as overlapping but distinct fields of social and political activism. Many feminist scholars have already rightly pointed out the distinction between mediated #MeToo discourse and the Me Too movement broadly (Fournier, 2018; Fileborn and Loney-Howes, 2019; Moon and Holling, 2020: 255; Namaste et al., 2021). Tarana Burke, civil rights activist and founder of the Me Too movement, suggests that #MeToo in its mediated form is something unrecognisable to her; that instead of meeting a raised hand in solidarity, #MeToo has become individualised, focusing on *instances* of sexual violence, rather than their prevalence. Burke suggests we not forget that #MeToo operates within the same neoliberal feminist and individualistic confines through which sexual violence flourishes, encouraging instead an understanding of the possibilities of #MeToo and imploring activists to critique media and populist narratives which draw attention away from survivors of sexual violence (Burke, 2018).

Gender, sexuality, race and disability have been central to feminist critiques of #MeToo as a mediated phenomenon and the proliferation of discourse that sees the triumph of white, Western narratives of women's empowerment. Ashwini Tambe (2018: 198) notes, 'from the inception of #MeToo, I have also watched its racial and class politics with some wariness: whose pain was being centered, I wondered?' Tanya Serisier also recognises, 'even with the growing influence of speaking out, certain stories remain easier to tell than others' (Serisier, 2018: 48), speaking to the dominant narratives of mainstream feminism acting as a kind of grammar which repeats familiar stories and assumptions (Phipps, 2020: 59). This grammar reproduces a cisheteropatriarchy, naturalising 'normative views of

heterosexual, patriarchal exploitation and oppression of women and sexual minorities…
performed and sustained through linguistic and semiotic means' (Alim et al., 2020: 294).

Jess Fournier (2018) traces how trans and queer narratives of sexual violence have
become 'footnotes' in mediated #MeToo activism, often appearing as peripheral to
articulations of 'men's violence against women'. Since the publication of Fournier's
article, many scholars have worked to highlight that research on sexual violence needs
a closer and more critical examination of the dynamics of power that reproduce it
(Ison, 2019; Hindes and Fileborn, 2021; Namaste et al., 2021; Waling, 2022). For
example, Hindes and Fileborn (2021) find the inability of #MeToo to grapple
meaningfully with sexual violence beyond the scope of cisgender men's perpetration
of violence against cisgender women is symptomatic of broader cultural norms about
social relationships. In their review of the mediated response to sexual violence
perpetrated by and against celebrities, they found while 'reporting presents seemingly
sympathetic and positive constructions of male survivors, it does so through the
reproduction of narrow and harmful norms relating to both masculinity and homo-
sexuality' (Hindes and Fileborn, 2021, 178). This finding speaks to the ways in which
#MeToo reproduces cisheteropatriarchy by propagating 'the idea that biology nat-
urally drives sex, gender, and sexuality, further perpetuating systematic and social
scripts of patriarchy and biological determination' (Alim, 2020: 293).

LGBTQ+ subjectivity and #MeToo

In attending to issues of sexual violence 'there must be an interrogation of the power
relations that are entangled in who is able to speak and who is able to be heard'
(Kennedy and McCann, 2020: 97). Experiences of sexual violence in the LGBTQ+
community trouble any neat gender mapping of sexual violence, and although power
is undoubtably gendered in these cases, to take a gendered lens *alone* does little justice
to LGBTQ+ experiences of sexual violence (McCann, 2018). As we demonstrate,
despite the significant positive impact of mediated #MeToo discourse, LGBTQ+
testimonies about experiences of sexual violence have often been funnelled into a
framework that relies on a cisheteropatriarchal axis in ways that occlude their
specificity. Reflection on how LGBTQ+ experiences complicate discrete narratives
around who is subject to sexual violence, and how this should be understood in terms
of gender and power, is largely unacknowledged in contemporary research about
sexual violence and how institutional responses should be approached (Ison, 2019;
Hindes and Fileborn, 2021; Namaste et al., 2021; Waling, 2022). This is despite
reports which consistently show that LGBTQ+ people globally are subject to sexual
violence at similar or higher rates than heterosexual and/or cisgender people
(Fileborn, 2012; Namaste et al., 2021; Sharp et al., 2021).

Importantly, it can be difficult to raise concerns about LGBTQ+ persons and sexual
violence specifically given that conservative commentators may draw on this as
evidence that an LGBTQ+ 'lifestyle' is dangerous. LGBTQ+ perpetrators of sexual
violence are more likely to be convicted and are seen as 'giving gay people a bad
name' (Björklund and Dahl, 2018: 7). Such homophobic backlash leaves little room to

raise understandings of sexual violence beyond a cisheteropatriarchal axis and maintains the silence around accounting for LGBTQ+ experiences. The discussion of LGBTQ+ experiences of sexual violence is therefore both vital *and* risky (Ison, 2019).

#MeToo in the neoliberal academy

There is no doubt that the widespread attention garnered by the mediated #MeToo moment necessitated that many workplaces and institutions—including universities—pay more serious attention to sexual violence (Ralph, 2018). In August 2018, feminist theorist Lisa Duggan published a controversial blog post claiming the disproportionate ways that LGBTQ+ university faculty members are affected by allegations of sexual assault. While experiences of sexual violence in the LGBTQ+ community might trouble the neat gender mapping offered in #MeToo discourse, as Duggan reminds us there have also been few alternative theorisations of power offered to understand sexual assault and harassment in general. To this end, Duggan suggests that the discourse of #MeToo is neoliberal, insofar as it focuses 'primarily on bad individuals, rather than structures of power' (2018, n.p.). As Catherine Rottenberg (2014) defines, neoliberal feminism involves understanding structural problems in individual terms, a response that displaces system critique (2014). #MeToo discourse in this context has often relied on disclosure of personal stories as an avenue to personal empowerment, and a vulnerability politics focused on individual (women) 'calling out' other individuals (men), implicitly suggesting an ontological understanding of power as enacted through horizontal violence.

This contrasts with the claim made by many feminist commentators that #MeToo broadly represents a turn away from individualised activism, toward the collective (Gill and Orgad, 2018). Calling this assumption into question, Duggan's piece urges the reader to consider the intersecting social factors (including gender, sexuality and race) that might affect who is accused of, and perhaps scapegoated for, sexual assault and harassment in the university system. Curiously, Duggan's gesture toward analysing power is at once used to defend LGBTQ+ individuals (accused of sexual assault) and undermine individuals who make allegations of assault (who may or may not be LGBTQ+). We agree with Duggan's suggestion that if we are social justice feminists and not neoliberals, we care about the broad structures of power, and not individual 'bad apples' case by case. Yet we are left to wonder: what are the structures of power to which Duggan refers?

In the following analysis of interpersonal and institutional testimony, we consider how responses to sexual violence in the #MeToo era in university contexts have largely deployed a cisheteropatriarchal axis for understanding sexual violence, and followed a neoliberal feminist scaffold for attending to the issue, occluding the experiences of LGBTQ+ staff and students. We acknowledge here that universities are unique sites of study across a range of social and cultural phenomena. The following analysis should be read for its engagement with discourse about sexual violence on campus, rather than as a representative sample. The following considers how attending to structures of power beyond interpersonal oppression can help to do justice to LGBTQ+ experiences of sexual violence without inadvertently defending or demonising LGBTQ+ persons who stand

accused. Furthermore, we argue that the university focus on consent programs and training reveals an understanding of power dynamics as interpersonal and individualised and in turn, cisheteropatriarchal.

Ronell and Reitman: Queer conflicts and hierarchies of power

In August 2018, almost 1 year following the beginning of #MeToo discourse going viral, news broke in *The New York Times* (*NYT*) that a former graduate student—Nimrod Reitman—of NYU had brought a Title IX case against academic—Avital Ronell—a professor of German and Comparative Literature well-respected in feminist theory circles (Greenberg, 2018). The Ronell case sits within a US context wherein Title IX legislation (a federal civil rights law protecting against discrimination in education) has been mobilised by student activists to hold universities to account for failing to provide education free from discrimination (Brubaker, 2019). We are not by any means intending to indicate a determination on the case or guilt of Ronell in our analysis here. We are however suggesting that the media framing, institutional response, and defence of Ronell by some queer and feminist thinkers, indicates a profound failure to assess and respond to this case in a way that resists cisheteropatriarchal assumptions. In many ways, the case demonstrates highly individualised neoliberal feminist solutions to LGBTQ+ testimony on sexual violence.

The *NYT* article notes that 'Mr Reitman is gay and is now married to a man; Professor Ronell is a lesbian,' but is framed with the headline *What Happens to #MeToo When a Feminist Is the Accused?* We suggest that this case offers a prime example of how LGBTQ+ testimony around sexual violence, and the institutional responses to it, is severely limited by such cisheteropatriarchal mapping in the mediated #MeToo imaginary, which relies on the notion of a male aggressor and a passive female victim (Mortimer, 2019: 345). The notoriety of the case was sparked not only by confusion and questions raised about desire—*why would a lesbian woman desire a gay man?*—but also by the feminist and queer theory standing of many of the fifty-one academic supporters that jumped to her defence via a formal letter to NYU (Leiter, 2018). This included preeminent thinkers Judith Butler, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Joan Scott, who offered a reputational defence of Ronell. Ronell's defenders describe the allegations against her as 'malicious', despite having 'no access to the confidential [Title IX] dossier' (Butler, Apter and Stimpson et al., 2018: n.p). As the *NYT* article details, evidence in the Title IX case included an extensive email exchange, which included emphatic emails of adoration from Ronell to Reitman (Greenberg, 2018). While the formal defence of Ronell called upon her reputation and character, the question of reciprocity was also raised by her defenders—with the suggestion that Reitman responded positively to Ronell's advances (via email). Thus, Ronell was simultaneously defended on the basis of her high standing within the institution of the university, *and* on the basis that the power relation between her and Reitman was flattened and without coercion. At once, the power of 'Professor' was both deployed and denied.

Taking Duggan's (2018) article as an exemplar of how some feminist and queer theorists responded to the case, we see that Duggan urges the reader to consider the

intersecting social factors (including gender, sexuality and race) that might affect who is accused of, and perhaps scapegoated for, sexual harassment in the university system under Title IX cases. However, Duggan's analysis, rather than attending to structures of power beyond patriarchy, merely reiterates gender as a trumping factor. Importantly, Duggan fails to acknowledge that the identities of both accused and accuser sit within the LGBTQ+ community. Ronell's own explanation of the interactions between her and her student locates queerness (and to an extent ethnicity) as a form of communication, one which the student and those on his side simply misread (Ison, 2019). Despite Butler's later 'explanation' of the aforementioned Ronell letter, which apologised for the appeal to reputation (as an oft seen defence of perpetrators of sexual violence), Butler similarly asked for a generous reading of their original communication and intent in signing the letter (Butler, 2018). Thinking here about Duggan, Butler, the other letter signatories and indeed Ronell herself, we are struck by the consistency of all of these accounts in appealing to 'good intentions'.

This case illustrates the limits of understanding such events either in terms of heterosexual gender dynamics and interpersonal oppression, or in terms of 'selective demonisation' of LGBTQ+ faculty as Duggan suggests. It seems that both Duggan and Ronell's supporters in the NYU letter appear unwilling to acknowledge or account for any possible aspects of power informing the case, *other than* gender. In these accounts, Ronell is rendered as the victim made target for being a queer feminist female academic, and Reitman is made villain as the scheming and revenge-seeking male graduate student, privileged in his own right as a student who feels entitled to a tenure-track position. The case asks us to account for the imbalance in power between teacher and student (which Duggan raises but ultimately dismisses), with Ronell in the powerful position of supervisor able to influence Reitman's future scholarly and job prospects. The case should also raise questions about the vulnerability of graduate students to adapt to the whims and desires of their supervisors (in this case, affectionate email exchange and more), given the increasing precarity of the academic job market (Hush, 2019).

Despite the extensive mass and social media discussion of the Ronell case, very few questions about graduate student's power or lack thereof were raised. Masha Gessen (2018) writing for *The New Yorke*r, for example, claims that the case has led to a necessary complication of #MeToo discourse, not because of the deeper understanding of power it elucidates but because it shifts our definitions of the 'sexual' in sexual violence. While Gessen raises an interesting point about rethinking sexual dynamics, this nonetheless individual an individualised #MeToo refrain in terms of the possible *desires* of Ronell and Reitman, rather than the positions occupied by Ronell (professor) and Reitman (graduate student). Similarly, Andrea Long Chu's (2018) dissection in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* focuses on drawing out the nefarious qualities of Ronell, in defence of Reitman. Such an account does no more to extend our understandings of LGBTQ+ experiences of harassment in the context of #MeToo than the letter written in defence of Ronell.

The case should also raise concern about the presumption that sexual harassment or assault cannot occur between a lesbian and a gay man, how such a dynamic might impact reporting, and the seriousness with which such cases are adjudicated or responded to.

Here, cisheteropatriarchal assumptions cultivated through #MeToo discourse function to annihilate the possibility that lines of desire might operate in ways that challenge understandings of LGBTQ+ identity, or that sexual violence may be enacted without a penetrative heterosexual sex act. Again, while this queer-er understanding of sex and desire is a point raised by Duggan (2018: n.p) who is both a feminist and queer theorist, it is marshalled in defence of Ronell, as she suggests: 'My hypothesis is that queers are disproportionately charged, often by homophobic or sexually confused students, sometimes by queer students whose demands for "special" treatment are disappointed'. We must also attend to the question of the power of the institution in such cases. Critics of Title IX claim that it is disproportionately used against LGBTQ+ people and people of colour (Halley, 2016). However, any such readings applied to the Ronell case fail to account for *Reitman's* gay identity, the lenient institutional consequences for Ronell and the reputational defence of Ronell mounted by tenured staff. Keguro Macharia (2018: n.p) refers to the pleas of the academics defending Ronell, such as Duggan, as 'white woundedness', that cannot account for the various ways that graduate students are disadvantaged, often along racial and class lines.

Outside of the very public media discourse, we note that in their piece on the missed LGBTQ+ voices of #MeToo Ison (2019) provides a brief analysis of the Ronell case that offers a different queer feminist approach contra Duggan. Ison suggests that in contrast to the dominant framings which failed to comprehend Ronell as a possible perpetrator, 'myself and other queer people I know felt no confusion about the fact that the perpetrator was a lesbian and the survivor was a gay man' (Ison, 2019: 160). Ison's claim here gestures to a key failure of cisheteropatriarchal frameworks of sexual violence, which not only understand power as always enacted 'male over female' but that relatedly understand sexual encounters as necessarily involving penetrative penis-in-vagina acts. Ison's suggestion that queer people 'felt no confusion' about the case indicates that queer people occupy a different position when it comes to understanding both power and sex, that is, queer people are used to challenging cisheteropatriarchal assumptions about how the world works. While we note that this standpoint is not *necessarily* true for all LGBTQ+ actors, we also agree with Ison's point that 'Queer communities have diverse ways of engaging in sex and relationships' (Ison, 2019: 163) that ought to inform how we understand and respond to LGBTQ+ testimony of sexual violence. In relation to the Ronell case, and for the purposes of an adequate institutional response, such an approach would mean attending to the facts without relying on the assumptions of a pre-existing cisheteropatriarchal framework.

Internal NYU processes determined that the case against Ronell was credible, placing her on leave for 1 year (Gessen, 2018). This response indicates a limited and highly individualised neoliberal line of action, wherein the alleged perpetrator is merely removed for a time, rather than enacting any major structural or cultural changes. In late 2019 a group called 'NYUtoo', along with the Graduate Student Organizing Committee (NYU's graduate union), released a statement and petition calling for a more substantive institutional response to the Ronell case. The statement drew attention to the 'power imbalance between advisors and graduate students, and the barriers that prevent students and workers from reporting instances of misconduct and being taken seriously' (NYUtoo &

Graduate Student Organizing Committee, 2019: n.p.). Yet even in this response, there was little acknowledgement of the factors around gender and sexuality that we suggest affected the reception of Reitman's testimony in the first place. With the exception of Ison, in much of the analysis that was offered the Ronell case was rendered as merely an issue of defining how one person's actions were or were not harassment, rather than any reflections about how gender, sexuality, precarity, reputation and institutional power *interweave* to produce powerful versus vulnerable subjects.

Neoliberal feminism, postfeminism, and the institutional response

Despite very different legislative and media contexts, Me Too activism happening in the US around sexual violence has significantly impacted Australian activists and university campuses where tertiary institutions have been in the media spotlight over their complicity in and potential production of cultures of sexual violence (Matthews, 2019). For example, in 2016 the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) launched a national survey into sexual violence on university campuses. This survey was replicated in 2021 by Universities Australia (UA) with the results being released publicly in March 2022. Although the initial survey was launched prior to the virality of #MeToo, the timing of the institutional response coincided with the movement and exposed staggering rates of sexual harassment among students: up to 51% of survey respondents across all 39 institutions represented. The keynote speech delivered by the Chief Executive of UA at the 'Respect. Prevent. Respond.' conference in February 2019 affirmed, 'As the conversation continues to shift in Australia and around the world, the #MeToo movement has been a powerful catalyst' (Universities Australia, 2019). In other words, though the initial data-gathering exercise was pre-MeToo, the global virality of the #MeToo movement pushed many universities to respond to the issues identified. This case raises similar issues articulated by Mortimer (2019: 336) in that 'heterosexism and cissexism can shape discourses about what sexual violence is, who experiences it and why'.

Both iterations of this national survey have demonstrated that LGBTQ+ people are among the most at risk of sexual violence in the university context. The AHRC's 2017 *Change The Course* report, which details the initial survey results, showed that reports of sexual harassment were higher for students who identified as bisexual (44%), and gay, lesbian or homosexual (38%) than their peers who identify as heterosexual (23%). Students who identified as bisexual were also more likely to report having been sexually assaulted at university than gay, lesbian or heterosexual students. Furthermore, almost half of trans and gender diverse (TGD) students responding to the survey reported being sexually harassed in a university (45%) in 2015–2016. The 2021 *National Student Safety Survey* (NSSS) published by Heywood, Myers and Powell et al. (2022) found that lesbian and gay (12.3%), bisexual (17.1%) and pansexual (21.5%) students were more likely to have experienced sexual harassment in an Australian University context in the past 12 months than heterosexual (6.4%) students. A further 14.7% of trans and 22.4% of non-binary students had experienced sexual harassment since starting university. This is compared with 10.5% of cis female students and 3.9% of cis male students (2022: 1).

Heywood, Myers and Powell et al. (2022: 5) ultimately found that despite universities attempting to disrupt cultures of sexual violence, gender and sexuality diverse students had consistently experienced substantially higher rates of sexual harassment than heterosexual and cisgender students.

Of particular interest to us are the institutional responses to sexual violence and the register of interventions taken up within the broader context of #MeToo activism. Unsurprisingly, despite the increased pressures on institutions in the #MeToo context, the policy response to the initial survey has done little to specifically address the higher rates of sexual violence reported by LGBTQ+ students. The recommendations of the AHRC in responding to sexual violence did not make mention of promoting TGD specialised services or practitioners, nor other LGBTQ+ health and well-being providers that might be a more specific response catered to the needs of the LGBTQ+ community. While the report indicated that gender/gender diversity mediates the nature of the sexual violence experienced, much of the institutional response that has followed has not accounted for this specificity. In 2022, an updated recommendation was provided in the NSSS report stating that universities should be 'taking proactive measures to improve inclusivity and safe learning environments for gender and sexuality diverse students' (Heywood, Myers and Powell et al., 2022: 6). The inclusion of such a clause indicates that LGBTQ+ students have unique lived experiences that can factor into the prevalence of sexual violence against this population.

Since the 2016 survey data were released, the 'Respect. Now. Always.' campaign has largely been interpreted using the same cisheteropatriarchal logic as #MeToo, requiring attitudinal and behaviour change at a local level (Showden, 2018). One of the key initiatives of Respect. Now. Always. has been a focus on 'consent' training and strategies which include personal safety maintenance through smartphones and security, bystander response and counselling support (Universities Australia, 2018b). Just as consent has become a major paradigm for challenging sexual violence, so too is there an abundance of feminist critiques that illustrate the limits of the 'narrow vision of sexuality' offered by these programs (Hush, 2019: 142). As Hindes and Fileborn (2021) rightly point out, there is little research to date about sexual scripts and negotiating consent in LGBTQ+ communities specifically, and even less about the reliance on sexual scripts as a vehicle for learning about consent. Even if consent training modules feature LGBTQ+ characters or stories, the consent model—focused on individual power/empowerment—cannot account for broader power structures which inform why different populations experience sexual violence at different rates (and often in different forms). Echoing Ison (2019), we also suggest that centring dominant paradigms present in #MeToo of what it means to seek and obtain consent risks sidelining LGBTQ+ experiences as unintelligible and therefore beyond the scope of university sexual violence prevention strategies.

The hyper-focus of this campaign on the need to 'call out unacceptable behaviour' of individuals (Universities Australia, 2018a: n.p.) echoes the 'call out' logic of #MeToo as it has played out on social media (Mendes et al., 2018: 241) and invokes a cisheteropatriarchal view of sexual violence. While it is nominally focused on institutions taking responsibility for cultures of sexual violence, the initiatives suggested through the campaign reduce cultural change to a neoliberal feminist understanding that the problem

is interpersonal individual dynamics and a postfeminist narrative of taking personal responsibility to maintain well-being. Addressing LGBTQ+ experiences of sexual violence more seriously would require institutions to a) gather more specific information about LGBTQ+ experiences of sexual violence; and b) design specific solutions to address the cultures of sexual violence that differentially affect LGBTQ+ persons. Consent programs effectively assimilate experiences of sexual violence into a cisheteropatriarchal framework (as 'unexceptional' and coextensive with a general problem of men's subordination of women), offering little more than postfeminist strategies (individual disclosure, management and self-empowerment [Gill, 2017]) as remedy.

Conclusion: #MeToo beyond the individual

These two cases demonstrate the specificity of LGBTQ+ subjectivities in terms of sexual violence on university campuses, which we suggest ought to complicate mainstream #MeToo discourse. Though very different, both cases reveal the problem of reliance on cisheteropatriarchal dynamics and broader conceptual framework to understand the relationship between power and sexual violence for LGBTQ+ subjects. Placing these cases alongside one another illustrates the ways that LGBTQ+ experiences are frequently funnelled through an overriding discourse that sees the problem of sexual violence as lateral, rather than structural, where solutions are imagined in neoliberal feminist and postfeminist terms. Here we follow Jess Fournier (2018) and others, who provide critiques of the individualised and cisheteropatriarchal narratives of #MeToo to argue that the concept of cisheteropatriarchy is useful for raising concerns about sexual violence. Fournier reminds us that attempting to constrain subjectivities using rigid boundaries 'does a disservice to everyone by limiting our understanding of the full relationship between gender, oppression, and sexual violence' (2018: n.p.). These two case studies highlight how LGBTQ+ subjectivities have been—and continue to be—misread, misappropriated and undermined in multiple settings where sexual violence is brought to light, including in the media and academy in the Global North. This analysis leads us to ask, how might we better account for LGBTQ+ experiences within the academy, media, institutional settings and indeed #MeToo at large?

First, more research is needed on LGBTQ+ people in regard to consent and experiences of sexual violence specifically. For universities in Australia, this means supporting further research on this topic in response to data unearthed by Change the Course, rather than ignoring the specificity of the data that is already available. Second, as Ison (2019) argues, we might turn to LGBTQ+ communities for guidance on transformative justice approaches rather than individualistic carceral ones, given that such all-of-community cultural responses are already commonplace in some LGBTQ+ community organising spaces. The university turning to the community for guidance must also mean involving LGBTQ+ staff and students in responses to reports like Change the Course, and decision-making processes around enacting policies related to sexual violence. We might note that the emergence of NYUtoo in the US indicates what happens when there is a breakdown between institutions and their students, where students do not trust that institutions will enact a positive duty of care or include students in decision-making processes that affect

them. Third, and perhaps most significantly, we suggest that the broader discourse around #MeToo and sexual violence needs to challenge reliance on cisheteropatriarchal assumptions wherever possible, given the voices occluded and distorted by this normative framing. In the institution of the university, this means designing responses to the issues of sexual violence on campus that are tailored to the needs of students who may be targeted because of their gender presentation or sexuality, rather than assuming that there can be a one-size-fits-all approach to understanding sexual violence.

In bringing together these two cases of LGBTQ+ testimony, we have outlined how the mediated landscape of #MeToo and the institutional responses to sexual violence in this context have often failed to account for power outside of a narrow, reductionist and cisheteropatriarchal framework. However, we are buoyed by the possibility of returning to Burke's original vision for #MeToo, the aim to share experiences and eradicate sexual violence globally via properly accounting for the role of intersecting power dynamics. Despite the funneling of narratives that has occurred around and in response to #MeToo, we might still see #MeToo as the significant 'rupture' point. As our cases confirm, the #MeToo movement's potential to address LGBTQ+ experience is stifled by these limits, where perpetrators are framed as 'bad apples' and survivors as individuals who must find self-empowerment. We look to the limits of mainstream #MeToo discourse as it continues to circulate in our media and institutional settings, with a view to name the potentialities of such a movement, and work towards broadening the scope of its critique. To this end, Burke's message has always been one of empathy: That we must meet a raised hand with solidarity, kindness and activism, and seek to understand the specifics of how all forms of sexual violence are symptomatic of imbalances of power and privilege.

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