Feminism and Philosophy

INTRODUCTION

#MeToo and Philosophy

Lauren Freeman
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

[Content warning for discussion of sexual violence.]

Continuing an important legacy of Black women's advocacy for sexual violence survivors, in 2006 Tarana Burke, a Black feminist, social activist, and community organizer, founded the Me Too movement. Her founding of this movement was a culmination of sorts, after having worked with Black female survivors of sexual violence for over a decade. Beginning in the late 1990s, Burke was working in Selma, Alabama, with youth, many of whom had been victims of sexual violence. Burke herself had also been a victim of repeated sexual assault, beginning from the age of six. One day, Burke was talking to Heaven, a thirteen-year-old girl who she could tell wanted to confide in her about abuse she'd experienced. Knowing where the conversation was going, and that Burke herself was not in a place where she could properly respond to someone else's trauma, she cut the conversation short, before it went there. Later, she regretted that decision immensely. "I cut her off," Burke recounted. "She was so hurt and devastated. That moment taught me the power of empathy. All she needed was to hear the words, 'Me, too'."[1]

Burke knew that these girls needed help. She also knew that, at the time, she was not equipped to offer the kind of help they needed, so she sought advice from and possible collaboration with a local rape-crisis center. This proved to be a dead end, as she was told that the center would only work with girls who had gotten a referral from the local police department after they'd filed an official report. Burke knew how sexual assault worked and how police are often the last people survivors go to, let alone trust, after having experienced sexual assault. So, in 2003, she started Just Be, Inc., a non-profit organization that aims to help women heal from sexual assault. In 2006, she named the movement Me Too. The focus of this movement was to respond to the experiences of abuse suffered by Black and brown girls and women who are and remain disproportionately vulnerable, specifically, by connecting survivors of sexual assault to the resources they need in order to heal.

More than a decade later, in the wake of the growing accusations of sexual harassment and assault by film mogul Harvey Weinstein, the term "me too" resurfaced in a different way and to a different end. At around noon on October 15, 2017, Actress Alyssa Milano encouraged spreading the hashtag #MeToo on social media, in order to draw attention to the prevalence and pervasiveness of sexual harassment and assault by showing how many people have personally experienced such events. By six o'clock p.m. on the same day, the hashtag had been shared over 200,000 times; by noon the next day, over 500,000 times. On Facebook, the hashtag was used by over 4.7 million people in 12 million posts in the first 24 hours. Facebook has estimated that 45 percent of US users had at least one friend who had posted the statement "me too."[2] As of October 2018, #MeToo has been tweeted more than 19 million times.[3]

As Tarana Burke has recently said, "What #MeToo allowed people to do was create community with these shared experiences. You have a built-in group of people who automatically gets you, who automatically believes you, who automatically wants to hear you. That's the wildfire of it."[4] As Miranda Pilipchuk discusses in her contribution to this issue, "This emphasis on marginalized survivors is particularly important given that many of the white-led anti-violence movements that have gained national uptake have largely failed to address the concerns of marginalized survivors." For Burke, the aim of the movement is to provide resources to people to help them heal and to advocate for changes to laws and policies. Specifically, she's emphasized goals like processing all untested rape kits, re-thinking local school policies, improving the ways in which teachers are vetted, and updating sexual harassment policies.[5] For Burke, the aim of the movement ought to be focused on survivors and not on perpetrators. For Milano, a priority of #MeToo is to challenge the laws surrounding sexual harassment and assault, for example, implementing legislation that makes it difficult for publicly traded companies to hide cover-up payments from their stockholders and to make it illegal for employers to require new employees to sign non-disclosure agreements as a condition of employment.[6]

#MeToo continues to loom large in the national and international consciousness as increasingly more men are accused and charged of sexual harassment and sexual assault. And yet the number of cases that go unreported and the number of women who remain silent is even larger, pointing to the systemic problems of injustice for victims of abuse, assault, and harassment and the systematic failures of our institutions to bring about justice. All of these problems are complicated by the class, race, nationality, immigration status, sexuality, gender identity, and disability of victims.

#MeToo is a crucial form of resistance and the #MeToo movement, in all of its complexity, is ripe for philosophical engagement and analysis. In October 2018, in collaboration with The CUNY Graduate Center Advanced Research Collaborative, the Center for the Humanities, the Philosophy Program, and Hunter College, Linda Martín Alcoff and Charles Mills organized and hosted an interdisciplinary conference on "#MeToo and Epistemic Injustice." Aside from that, there has been no sustained philosophical treatment of the #MeToo movement. The present issue of the *Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy* aims both to fill this lacuna and also to start more of a profession-wide discussion about what philosophy and philosophers have to contribute to the movement. Because this is the first sustained treatment of #MeToo by philosophers, it does not claim to be comprehensive by any means. Yet, the papers that you will find here begin some important conversations.

Miranda Pilipchuk's article, "**Good Survivor, Bad Survivor: #MeToo and the Moralization of Survivorship**," examines how #MeToo's reliance on disclosure has resulted in moral dilemmas for survivors and, more generally, in a moralization of survivorship itself. She begins by situating Burke's original version of Me Too within the historical legacy of Black women's advocacy for sexual violence survivors and then highlights the central features that differentiate Burke's original version of Me Too from the viral social media version of the movement. Pilipchuk then goes on to discuss the nature of disclosure within the context of #MeToo and argues that the impetus to disclose has created a moral hierarchy of survivors, where survivors who publicly disclose receive greater moral standing than survivors who remain silent. In response to this problem, she recommends that #MeToo realign itself with the priorities of Burke's original Me Too movement, namely, to focus on survivors (rather than perpetrators) and to provide resources for survivor healing—especially survivors from marginalized communities. Ultimately, her claim is that in order to be truly inclusive of all survivors, #MeToo must expand beyond mere disclosure.

Sarah Clark Miller's paper grapples with the question of whether to disclose at all and the kinds of moral conundrums that disclosing poses to survivors. She opens "**Beyond Silence, Towards Refusal: The Epistemic Possibilities of #MeToo**" by admitting that for decades, she was silent about her own sexual assault. However, after watching Dr. Christine Blasey Ford's harrowing testimony before Congress on September 27, 2018, something in her changed, something she's come to understand as "a moment of tremendous epistemic refusal galvanized by the similar gestures of refusal [she] saw all around [her]." That moment, within the larger context of #MeToo, she began to see the complicated and myriad ways in which victims are pressured to remain silent and, as a result, how our confidence in our knowledge about the violence we endured is undermined. As Miller goes on to show, such mechanisms of silencing and undermining are insidious, "accomplished through widespread practices of credibility erosion as well as ostracization and shaming." Miller uses her reflection on her own decision to come forward as a victim of sexual assault as a point of departure for considering the nature of such

an epistemic transformation, and, more broadly, as a lens to better understand some of the epistemic dimensions of what she saw happening around her. Of import, Miller coins, unpacks, and develops the term "epistemic refusal," which refers to the strategy of breaking one's silence, in one's own way, on one's own terms, thereby refusing the dominant epistemic structures that have kept us tightly in check.

Miller's paper shows how the mass informal disclosure of survivor status of #MeToo that took place in conjunction with other hashtags like #WhyIDidntReport and #BelieveHer has created space for epistemic, ethical, and political community between survivors of sexual violence, specifically by denying the hegemonic epistemic discourses of contemporary rape culture. A key insight of Miller's paper is her discussion of the ways that mass informal disclosure of sexual violation can "shift the focus from the credibility of the survivor to the wrongful actions of the perpetrator—moving feelings of shame and responsibility away from victim and back onto perpetrator." The implications of this point have great moral and political promise as we consider how to move forward in building communities of solidarity and epistemic subcultures for and between survivors in the #MeToo era and beyond. This idea might also help us to reconcile some of the goals of #MeToo with the original guiding initiatives of the Me Too movement.

Though it seems as though #MeToo has launched a paradigmatic shift in the way that we collectively understand sexual assault—just look at the number of times the hashtag has been shared on social media—in "**The Speech Acts of #MeToo**," Cassie Herbert asks whether the movement has really been all that successful in bringing about justice. She notes that as we look around us, there does not seem to be a corresponding increase in holding perpetrators accountable for the sexual violations they've committed. Insofar as that's the case, she writes, it seems as though #MeToo has not been the great success that one might initially assume. Yet Herbert contends that this is the wrong way of measuring the success of the #MeToo movement for at least two reasons: First, by using such a metric, its emphasis is misplaced by focusing on perpetrators rather than on the support given to survivors (recall, Burke's concerns about the way that sexual assault is understood and discussed); second, it misunderstands the precise kinds of actions that comprise the movement. According to Herbert, speech act theory can help to provide a better sense of what #MeToo was and is, and, subsequently, it can help us better evaluate the success of the movement. In order to do this, Herbert explores two ways of understanding the social media posts that comprised #MeToo: namely, as accusations (speech acts that call for holding the perpetrator to account) and as reports (truth-claims about the world rooted in the speaker's first-personal experience). She goes on to argue that #MeToo ought to be understood as composed primarily of reports. This move, she contends, better enables us to evaluate the successes of the movement; moreover, it also allows us to recognize how the movement signifies an important shift in the dominant frameworks by which survivors' speech is understood.

Varying successes of #MeToo notwithstanding, in her paper "**#MeToo?**," Lori Watson points out, importantly, that "[i]ntersectional inequalities, including those on the basis of race, class, sexuality, disability status, as well as gender expression and identity mean that the power of #MeToo is unequally distributed." This means that credibility attached to the testimonies of victims of sexual assault is also not equally assigned and "[t]he more socially subordinated, the more inequality on the basis of group membership, the less credibility or support is extended." Consequently, she contends that "[t]he potential power of #MeToo depends on equality within it; hierarchies of standing that underwrite social inequality such that only some women finally get their moment of justice, whether legal or social, must be dismantled for the reality of the #MeToo moment to unfold." Thus, we must articulate and underscore the experiences of the most socially marginalized across all intersecting inequalities in order for #MeToo to bring about the kind of all-encompassing social change that many call for.

Watson paves one of the many roads necessary in order to do this. Specifically, she notes that for the most part, #MeToo has focused on heterosexual encounters of sexual harassment and violence. Same-sex sexual harassment and violence has played far less a role in the movement. And even when same-sex violations have been revealed (most famously, Terry Crews and James Van Der Beek), they have primarily been by men calling out abuse they've experienced by other men. Same-sex sexual harassment and violence between women has not been a part of the narrative of #MeToo. Watson's contribution to this issue begins to fill this lacuna by shedding light on same-sex sexual harassment between women. Specifically, she explores the gendered dynamics that shape and define such harassment and, in so doing, reveals the layered complexities of power dynamics at work. The broader aim of her paper is to begin to help make the #MeToo movement more inclusive, particularly for those who fall outside of the heterosexual female mold to which it has mostly catered up until now. As she indicates, clearly, there is still much more work to be done.

In her essay, "**#MeToo vs. *Mea Culpa*: On the Risks of Public Apologies**," Alice MacLachlan analyzes how we should understand and what we should do with all of the apologies—and, in particular, the plethora of non-apologies and quasi-apologies—we've seen in the wake of the accusations and allegations of assaults and violence of #MeToo. MacLachlan notes that "[b]ad apologies can be frustrating, infuriating, and profoundly painful—in some ways, they are more hurtful than outright denials of wrongdoing." In response, MacLachlan asks, what if they'd been better, namely, "what if the #MeToo movement had produced, along with an upsurge of truth-telling and solidarity among survivors and allies, an equivalent rise in genuinely sincere statements of responsibility and remorse by perpetrators and collaborators?" Her answer to this question is not what we might intuitively expect. Instead of going on to argue that our situation would have been much improved had we received the kind of ideal apologies many might have hoped for and wanted, in a more nuanced manner, MacLachlan suggests that this

would not have been a straightforwardly happy ending. Her view is that "the risks of public apologies are not limited to the faults and flaws of bad apologies; in many ways, good ones are more insidious." Consequently, her essay focuses not on how to assess and compare individual apologies; nor on the necessary and sufficient conditions for the ideal apology, or even a good apology in the age of #MeToo. Rather, MacLachlan identifies three risks to both *good* and bad public apologies and shows how these risks increase when it comes to the gender politics of #MeToo. Ultimately, she argues that the aims of #MeToo may be in tension with and may even be undermined by the practice of public *mea culpae*.

In the final paper in this volume, "**Women, Work, and Power: Envisaging the Radical Potential of #MeToo**," Robin Zheng considers #MeToo as a form of political struggle aimed at social change. To begin, she situates the movement between two poles of structured organizing and mass protest: the Women's March of 2017 and the recent wave of teacher's strikes that we've seen across the United States in the last few years. This comparison is important as it casts into relief the need for movements to translate *symbolic* solidary power, which shifts discourses and norms, into exercises of power that can alter *structural* conditions in a more fundamental way. She goes on to argue that while #MeToo has been highly successful in disrupting sexist mores and patriarchal norms on the cultural front, there is still a good deal of work to be done structurally. That is, we must match this success with a larger commitment to transforming the fundamental material conditions that enable men's dominance over women. If we are going to eliminate sexual harassment, Zheng argues—particularly of non-elite women—then there are many related issues that must also be simultaneously addressed, since sexual harassment never happens in a bubble and is a part of the larger issues of systemic and systematic discrimination against women. Specifically, Zheng urges the inclusion in our discussion of sex-based discrimination the related issues of underlying job insecurity, poor working conditions, and economic vulnerability that threatens almost all workers. In short, her claim is that #MeToo must go radical.

The narrative essay in this issue, "**Field Notes on Conference Climate: A Decade with the Philosophy of Science Association Women's Caucus**," by Julia Bursten, chronicles many of the changes that occurred at the conference between 2008 and 2018. Bursten herself served as the early-career co-chair of the PSA Women's Caucus from 2014 to 2018. In her narrative essay, she reflects on their aim "to make a more humane conference environment for everyone involved, and in so doing, to make it easier for women to exist in the conference space—and to exist as philosophers, rather than as *women* philosophers." This essay will be helpful for all conference and symposium organizers to read. Of particular note is the initiative to assemble and disseminate in all conference registration packages a flyer on bystander intervention that reviews basic information on what constitutes sexual harassment and discriminatory behavior and offers a number of quick, in-the-moment strategies to reroute an instance of discrimination and support the targeted person. Also of note is the dependent care offered by the conference,

details of which can be found here: https://psa2018.philsci. org/en/83-information-for-attendees/108-dependent-care. Though it seems like there is always a taller mountain on the horizon to climb when climate issues in philosophy are on the table, Bursten is optimistic that we are on the right track.

Book reviews in this issue include Caleb Ward's discussion of Hilkje Charlotte Hänel's *What Is Rape? Social Theory and Conceptual Analysis*; Mari Mikkola's discussion of Andrew Altman and Lori Watson's *Debating Pornography*; and Catherine Clune-Taylor's discussion of Shelley L. Tremain's *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability*.

In closing, I'm so grateful to all of the wonderful contributors to this volume for giving the newsletter the opportunity to profile their superb work, as well as to Ann Cahill, Rebecca Fraser, Rebecca Harrison, Grayson Hunt, Debra Jackson, and Heather Stewart for their helpful comments on papers and for their service to the profession. I look forward to the discussions that result from this issue. I hope that you find the contributions to be as illuminating as I do.

As a final note, I'd like to welcome Kate Norlock to her new post as chair of the APA Committee on the Status of Women. Kate is taking over from Charlotte Witt, who has served in this position for the past three years. On behalf of the entire committee, we offer a heartfelt thanks to Charlotte for her hard work and service, and a warm welcome to Kate!

NOTES

1. E. Wellington, "Tarana Burke: Me Too Movement Can't End with a Hashtag."
2. CBS News, "More Than 12M "Me Too" Facebook Posts, Comments, Reactions in 24 Hours."
3. M. Anderson and S. Toor, "How Social Media Users Have Discussed Sexual Harassment Since #MeToo Went Viral."
4. U. Dabiero, "Tarana Burke, Creator of #MeToo, Says the Movement 'Has Lost It's Way' for This Reason."
5. C. Snyder and L. Lopez, "Tarana Burke On Why She Created the #MeToo Movement—And Where It's Headed."
6. For a far more detailed discussion of the key differences between the two movements, see section I of Pilipchuk's paper in this issue.

REFERENCES

Anderson, Monica, and Skye Toor. "How Social Media Users Have Discussed Sexual Harassment Since #MeToo Went Viral." *Pew Research Center*. 2018. Accessed July 2019. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/11/how-social-media-users-have-discussed-sexual-harassment-since-metoo-went-viral/.

CBS News. "More Than 12M "Me Too" Facebook Posts, Comments, Reactions in 24 Hours." *CBS News*. October 17, 2017. Accessed June 2019. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/metoo-more-than-12-million-facebook-posts-comments-reactions-24-hours/.

Dabiero, Una. "Tarana Burke, Creator of #MeToo, Says the Movement 'Has Lost It's Way' for This Reason." *FairyGodBoss. 2018.* Accessed July 2019. https://fairygodboss.com/articles/tarana-burke-creator-of-metoo-says-the-movement-has-lost-its-way-for-this-reason.

Snyder, Chris, and Linette Lopez. "Tarana Burke On Why She Created the #MeToo Movement—And Where It's Headed." *Business Insider*. December 13, 2017.

Wellington, Elizabeth. "Tarana Burke: Me Too Movement Can't End with a Hashtag." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. October 23, 2017. Accessed July 2019. https://www.inquirer.com/philly/columnists/elizabeth_wellington/philly-me-too-movement-founder-tarana-burke-20171023.html.

ABOUT THE *NEWSLETTER ON FEMINISM AND PHILOSOPHY*

The *Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy* is sponsored by the APA Committee on the Status of Women (CSW). The newsletter is designed to provide an introduction to recent philosophical work that addresses issues of gender. None of the varied philosophical views presented by authors of newsletter articles necessarily reflect the views of any or all of the members of the Committee on the Status of Women, including the editor(s) of the newsletter, nor does the committee advocate any particular type of feminist philosophy. We advocate only that serious philosophical attention be given to issues of gender and that claims of gender bias in philosophy receive full and fair consideration.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

1. Purpose: The purpose of the newsletter is to publish information about the status of women in philosophy and to make the resources of feminist philosophy more widely available. The newsletter contains discussions of recent developments in feminist philosophy and related work in other disciplines, literature overviews and book reviews, suggestions for eliminating gender bias in the traditional philosophy curriculum, and reflections on feminist pedagogy. It also informs the profession about the work of the APA Committee on the Status of Women. Articles submitted to the newsletter should be around ten double-spaced pages and must follow the APA guidelines for gender-neutral language. Please submit essays electronically to the editor or send four copies of essays via regular mail. All manuscripts should be prepared for anonymous review. References should follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

2. Book Reviews and Reviewers: If you have published a book that is appropriate for review in the newsletter, please have your publisher send us a copy of your book. We are always seeking new book reviewers. To volunteer to review books (or some particular book), please send the editor, Lauren Freeman (lauren.freeman@louisville.edu), a CV and letter of interest, including mention of your areas of research and teaching.

3. Where to Send Things: Please send all articles, comments, suggestions, books, and other communications to the editor: Dr. Lauren Freeman, University of Louisville, lauren.freeman@louisville.edu.

4. Submission Deadlines: Submissions for spring issues are due by the preceding November 1; submissions for fall issues are due by the preceding February 1.

ARTICLES

Good Survivor, Bad Survivor: #MeToo and the Moralization of Survivorship

Miranda Pilipchuk
VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY

This article analyzes the issue at the heart of the viral social media "Me Too" campaign (#MeToo) that began in the fall of 2017: disclosure. Survivor disclosure is a key defining feature of the campaign that distinguishes it from other anti-violence campaigns—including Tarana Burke's original version of Me Too.[1] Unlike previous anti-violence campaigns, #MeToo relies exclusively on survivor disclosure to educate the general public about issues of sexual violence. This article examines how #MeToo's reliance on disclosure has led to moral dilemmas for survivors, and a moralization of survivorship itself. Section I outlines the central features of both versions of the Me Too movement—Burke's original version and the viral #MeToo version—paying careful attention to how #MeToo has departed from Burke's original movement. Section II focuses specifically on the issue of disclosure in #MeToo. I argue that the impetus to disclose has created a moral hierarchy of survivors, with survivors who publicly disclose being given greater moral standing than survivors who remain silent. Finally, in section III I recommend #MeToo realign itself with the priorities of Burke's original Me Too movement, which is to provide resources for survivor healing—especially survivors from marginalized communities. Ultimately, I argue that in order to be truly inclusive of all survivors, #MeToo must expand beyond mere disclosure.

I. TWO ME TOOS

Burke's original version of Me Too and #MeToo share two prominent similarities: a name and a theme. Both movements are titled "Me Too," and both movements explicitly address issues of sexual violence. Beyond these similarities, the two movements differ substantially in their history, their target audience, and their desired outcomes. This section traces the genesis of each movement and explicates the key features that distinguish the movements. I argue that although the movements share a name, they are in many ways engaged in different projects.

Burke founded the original version of Me Too after a personal encounter with a young survivor of sexual violence named Heaven, which took place more than a decade before #MeToo went viral. When Heaven disclosed her experience with sexual violence to Burke, Burke "listened until I literally could not take it anymore . . . cut her off, and immediately directed her to another female counselor who could 'help her better.'"[2] Burke expresses regret about the exchange, recounting that "I couldn't even bring myself to whisper . . . me too."[3] Burke founded Just Be, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing resources to sexual violence survivors, in 2003. In 2007, she named the movement Me Too.[4]

Burke's original version of Me Too continues an important legacy of black women's advocacy for sexual violence survivors.[5] Black women were among the first to raise sustained, comprehensive critiques about sexual violence in the United States. In 1861, Harriet Jacobs published one of the first accounts of sexual violence written from a survivor's perspective. Jacobs discloses her abuse by Dr. James Norcom, documenting that "He threatened me with death, and worse than death, should I make any complaint."[6] Though Jacobs's work contains a brilliant critique of the relationship between power, oppression, and sexual violence that foreshadows analyses from contemporary scholarship, she is not widely credited as a sexual violence theorist.

In 1892, Ida B. Wells published the first "political understanding of sexual assault."[7] Wells is perhaps best known for her analyses of how rape was used to justify the lynching of black men, but an important part of her anti-lynching work involved calling attention to how frequently black women and girls were raped by white men, and how white America refused to acknowledge or address this problem. Wells's work emphasizes the double standard in white America's concern with rape, highlighting how race led to extreme discrepancies in both legal and extra-legal responses to rape. For example, Wells reports that "A white man in Guthrie, Oklahoma Territory, two months ago inflicted such injuries upon another Afro-American child that she died. He was not punished, but an attempt was made in the same town in the month of June to lynch an Afro-American who visited a white woman."[8]

Black women were also the first to stage organized protests against sexual violence. Angela Davis reports that "Before the end of the nineteenth century pioneering Black clubwomen conducted one of the very first organized public protests against sexual abuse."[9] Darlene Clark Hine argues that from the start, the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs was thoroughly invested in addressing sexual violence against black women. Mary Church Terrell, the founding president of the Clubs, launched a campaign designed to undermine the negative tropes that have traditionally been used to justify sexual violence against black women.[10] And Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, a leading member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, started a campaign to urge white women to speak out about sexual violence against black domestic workers.[11]

Burke's original version of Me Too continues this legacy of black women's advocacy by explicitly calling attention to the disproportionate impact of sexual violence on marginalized communities. One of the central purposes of Burke's original version of Me Too is to provide resources for survivors who might be marginalized from mainstream sources of assistance.[12] The official Me Too website states that "The 'me too' movement was founded in 2006 to help survivors of sexual violence, particularly Black women and girls, and other young women of color from low wealth communities, find pathways to healing."[13] This emphasis on marginalized survivors is particularly important given that many of the white-led anti-violence movements that have gained national uptake have largely failed to address the concerns of marginalized survivors. Despite the fact

that black women were the earliest, strongest advocates against sexual violence, popular movements led by white activists have historically neglected issues of racism as well as heterosexism, transphobia, and ableism.[14] In the mid-late nineteenth century, white suffragettes who advocated on behalf of sexual violence survivors focused exclusively on white women survivors.[15] In the 1970s, some prominent white anti-violence activists explicitly endorsed racialized myths surrounding sexual violence—including the myth that black men were more likely to be rapists.[16] And many current anti-violence campaigns have called for solutions to sexual violence that could have a disproportionately negative impact on marginalized communities.[17] By being attentive to survivors from marginalized communities, Burke has explicitly addressed the shortcomings of other anti-violence movements and reoriented activism against sexual violence to include survivors that have been alienated by other movements.

#MeToo has a somewhat different origin story. In October 2017, Alyssa Milano tweeted, "If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote 'Me too' as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem."[18] Milano later reported that she was inspired to send out the tweet by Rose McGowan, who had been struggling with issues of sexual violence.[19] Both Milano and McGowan are famous white women. In less than a day, the hashtag went viral. Facebook reports that 4.7 million people engaged with "me too" in the first 24 hours.[20] The Me Too hashtag was tweeted 1.7 million times in 85 countries in the first week alone. Within 6 months it had been used over 12 million times globally.[21]

Although Milano was originally credited with starting Me Too, she has since publicly acknowledged Burke as the Me Too founder. This acknowledgment is important. Given that white-led anti-violence movements have tended to overlook or obscure the importance of black women's activism, it is crucial that all anti-violence movements publicly recognize the contributions of black women. Burke is the founder of Me Too and should be credited as such. Yet even while Burke should indeed be credited for founding both versions of the Me Too movement, the two versions themselves are actually quite different. This difference becomes most evident when answering one key question: Who is the target audience of the movement(s)?

The target audience of the original version of the Me Too movement is survivors. Burke designed the movement to be a way for survivors to connect with and support one another. In Burke's words, "The work is really about survivors talking to each other and saying, 'I see you. I support you. I get it.'"[22] The original version of Me Too is an intra-survivor movement, meaning that it is a movement made by survivors, for survivors, and involves survivors working with each other. The original version of Me Too is also survivor-centric, meaning that the primary goal of the movement is meeting the needs of survivors themselves, and making sure they have the resources they need to recover. Burke reports that Me Too "is actually about . . . centering victims or survivors of sexual violence, making sure the most marginalized survivors have access to resources, and making sure all survivors have resources to craft their own

healing journey."[23] Note that Burke's description of Me Too encourages survivors to support each other, but it does not require that survivors educate non-survivors about sexual violence.

In contrast, the target audience of #MeToo explicitly includes non-survivors. Milano's original tweet specifies that the purpose of #MeToo is to "give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem."[24] This phrasing indicates that #MeToo is about reaching people who are unaware of issues of sexual violence, which substantially expands the range of the movement beyond survivors. The difference in audience between the two versions of Me Too can appear to be a relatively minor detail, but it fundamentally alters the purpose of Me Too. As a survivor-centric movement, the purpose of Burke's original version of Me Too is to build resources and support for people who have experienced sexual violence. Milano's stated purpose was public education through survivor disclosure. As I outline below, disclosure can itself be a source of healing, empowerment, and bonding between survivors, which indicates that #MeToo has in many ways expanded beyond simple public education. Although public education may have been one of the original motivations for #MeToo, the movement has come to mean much more for many survivors. In this article, I want to acknowledge the importance #MeToo has had for many survivors, while also exploring the problematic elements of basing public education about issues of sexual violence on survivor disclosure. I argue that this project of public education through survivor disclosure may unduly burden survivors who do disclose, and creates a moral dilemma for survivors who do not wish to disclose.

II. GOOD SURVIVOR, BAD SURVIVOR
The difference in audience between the two versions of Me Too shifts the roles of survivors in each version of the movement. In Burke's original version of Me Too, survivors have the opportunity to fill two roles: (1) they can use the movement to access support and resources for their healing journey; and (2) they can themselves become a resource and support to other survivors embarking on their own healing journeys. #MeToo, by contrast, turns survivors who participate in the movement into public educators. This section focuses on the consequences of asking survivors to become public educators. Before beginning, I want to emphasize that my critique in this section applies only to #MeToo, not to Burke's original version of the movement. Burke's original version of Me Too does not necessarily ask survivors to become public educators, and thus falls well outside the scope of my critique.

#MeToo centers entirely around survivors disclosing their experiences with sexual violence. The movement does not specify what form the disclosure should take, and survivors participating in #MeToo have taken different approaches to disclosure. But in each case, one central feature remains the same: survivors must identify themselves as survivors. I use the word "must" deliberately. Even though #MeToo has come to mean different things to different survivors, all survivors participating in #MeToo have disclosed that they are survivors. The central feature of the movement is, precisely, disclosure, and most often disclosure through social media platforms. These acts of disclosure have

been crucial to the public education element of #MeToo. The movement has engaged in public education primarily by having survivors identify themselves as survivors in order to demonstrate the vast number of people who have experienced sexual violence, and the different forms their experiences take. Milano's original #MeToo tweet suggests that if all survivors identify themselves, then people will have a better understanding of the prevalence of sexual violence.

In order for this public education project to work, and for the general public to get an accurate picture of just how extensive sexual violence is, two conditions must be met. First, survivors must disclose. #MeToo relies virtually exclusively on survivor disclosure to educate the public about sexual violence. There are few alternative sources of information. If survivors choose not to disclose, then the public education campaign will have relatively limited success. The second condition is that a critical mass of survivors has to disclose. If #MeToo is to convey not just the existence of sexual violence but also the extent of sexual violence, then a substantial number of survivors have to disclose. Without a critical mass of survivors disclosing, the movement cannot convey the widespread nature of sexual violence. The success of the movement is in many ways reliant on the number of survivors who are willing to disclose.

Disclosure can be a source of healing and empowerment for some survivors. Sexual violence has long been closely associated with practices of silencing and denial. Jacobs wrote *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* for an audience of white women,[25] at least in part to encourage them to finally acknowledge a history of sexual violence that white women knew about but spoke little of. In 1987, Sandra Harding recounted "the struggle we have had to get women's testimony about rape, wife battering, sexual harassment, and incest experiences accepted as reliable by police, psychiatrists, other men and women, etc."[26] More recently, Kate Manne has noted the structural similarities between intimate partner violence and silencing.[27] For some survivors, publicly disclosing their experience with sexual violence serves as a powerful way of undermining the testimonial injustices that often accompany acts of sexual violence, and dismantling the very systems that perpetuate sexual violence.

Disclosure can also be a way for survivors to bond with each other, and find sources of comfort, support, and understanding that non-survivors cannot provide. Susan Brison reports that hearing the testimony of other survivors can help survivors to heal from their own trauma: "[survivors] come to have greater compassion for their earlier selves by empathizing with others who experienced similar traumas. They stop blaming themselves by realizing that others who acted or reacted similarly are not blameworthy."[28] Some of the more highly publicized survivors who came forward during #MeToo do report that disclosing their experiences with sexual violence has helped them to find unexpected communities with other survivors. For example, Rachel Renock—who disclosed being harassed by an investor and has since testified before Congress on issues of workplace harassment—says that "I had a very special bond with the

other women who have come forward . . . I don't know that I quite expected or understood what kind of bond would come from that. That's been really an incredible force, having a support system."[29] In this aspect, public disclosure can sometimes be beneficial for some survivors.

However, acts of disclosure can also jeopardize the well-being of survivors. There are (at least) four problems that make any act of disclosure potentially dangerous to survivors. First, it is not always safe for survivors to disclose. A striking example of the danger of disclosure is sexual violence in US correctional facilities. As I will argue below, the dangers of disclosure can make #MeToo inaccessible for members of marginalized communities, such as incarcerated persons. According to the US Department of Justice, in 2011 alone there were almost 9,000 reported incidents of sexual harassment and assault in adult correctional facilities.[30] Given that incidents of sexual harassment and assault in correctional facilities are severely underreported, this number is likely inaccurate. An independent survey conducted with incarcerated persons leaving correctional facilities estimates that 80,600 incarcerated persons experienced sexual violence in 2011–2012.[31] The difference between these two numbers is telling. If they are both correct, it would imply that over 90 percent of acts of sexual violence in prisons and jails remain unreported.

There are many reasons incarcerated survivors choose to remain silent, but one of the most commonly cited reasons is the very real threat of retaliation. Survivors who choose to report abuse by a staff member must file an administrative report known as a "602" in order to request an investigation of their case, which means they must report their abuse to the administration that is responsible for their abuse. As Diana Block notes, "you are filing the 602 basically with, if not the actual people, the friends of the people, the coworkers of the people, who have abused you."[32] And as Jerry Metcalf reports, prison guards often retaliate against survivors who file complaints: "The guards make it a point to label you a 'rat' and destroy your peace of mind and what little you may own in a thousand different ways if you tell on them or one of their coworkers."[33] Even when survivors do choose to report, only 1 percent of correctional facility staff accused of sexual misconduct are ever convicted.[34] The US prison system is structured in a way that makes publicly disclosing experiences of sexual violence dangerous for incarcerated survivors. For many incarcerated survivors, disclosure is simply not an option, and this will be of crucial importance for my normative claims in what follows.

The second problem with disclosure, specifically as it relates to #MeToo, is that survivors are being asked to disclose to communities that likely include the people who assaulted them. RAINN reports that 80 percent of survivors know their perpetrators.[35] This statistic makes it highly likely that when survivors participating in #MeToo disclose their status using social media, their social media audience will include either the perpetrator themselves or friends and/or acquaintances of the perpetrator. Disclosing to the perpetrator or the perpetrator's community is an entirely different phenomena than disclosing to someone with no connection to the perpetrator, and may affect survivors'

experiences of disclosure. Psychological research on trauma suggests that when confronted about their actions, abuse perpetrators tend to "deny or minimize the abuse, attack the victim's credibility, and assume a victimized role."[36] Sarah Harsey, Eileen Zurbriggen, and Jennifer Freyd report that individuals who confront perpetrators that used these kinds of evasive tactics experienced an increase in self-blame, which could result in further psychological distress.[37] Survivors who publicly disclose to a community that supports or includes their perpetrator could experience evasive or minimizing behaviors that may increase their self-blame. These evasive or minimizing behaviors could become more pronounced in a high-stakes social media disclosure if the perpetrator feels called out in front of their community and feels the need to defend themselves in order to maintain their standing in that community. In these cases, public disclosure could result in increased psychological and emotional harm for survivors.

The third problem with disclosure is that stereotypes about the sexual dangerousness of men of color—especially black men—can make disclosure especially weighted for survivors of color. Survivors of color who are harassed or assaulted by men from their own community may be reluctant to disclose out of concern that their disclosure could be used as fuel for negative stereotypes about men of color. Nellie McKay describes this dilemma as a struggle between sides of the self: "In all of their lives in America . . . black women have felt torn between the loyalties that bind them to race on the one hand, and sex on the other. Choosing one or the other, of course, means taking sides against the self."[38] For survivors of color, disclosure can aggravate racial injustices, harming both themselves and their communities.

Finally, the fourth problem with disclosure is that disclosing itself can be an additional psychological burden on survivors. Burke has repeatedly acknowledged this problem, and the need to address it, recounting that "There's a cycle that people go through that requires support, even in just saying 'Me, Too.'"[39] Disclosing a history of sexual violence means confronting and addressing highly personal acts that may have had a profound impact on the survivor's life. Working through the impact of sexual violence in private, or among trusted allies, can be an incredibly difficult experience for many survivors. Publicly addressing this impact to a broad audience on highly visible social media platforms may increase the burden of the already difficult process for some survivors.

The increased burden on survivors is especially true if survivors are asked to educate uninformed non-survivors in addition to disclosing their survivor status. Non-survivors who are shocked or confused by survivors' testimonies, or simply want to become better informed about issues of sexual violence, may turn to survivors as a source of explanation, information, and advice. Since survivor testimony is the only form of public education #MeToo offers, it makes sense that non-survivors would turn to survivors for help in understanding sexual violence. The problem is that in doing so, non-survivors substantially increase the amount of emotional and other types of labor survivors have in addressing issues of sexual violence. Not only must survivors find healing from the impact of sexual violence, they must also convince non-survivors to care about issues of sexual violence, and teach them how to be good allies to survivors. Nora Berenstain refers to this additional burden as "epistemic exploitation," namely, "when privileged persons compel marginalized persons to produce an education or explanation about the nature of the oppression they face."[40] Some survivors might be willing to undertake this additional work, but others could find it overwhelming.

There are two key problems with epistemic exploitation in the context of #MeToo. First, as Berenstain correctly argues, epistemic exploitation "maintains structures of oppression by centering the needs and desires of dominant groups and exploiting the emotional and cognitive labor of members of marginalized groups."[41] Asking survivors to educate non-survivors could thus maintain traditional structures of privilege and marginalization instead of dismantling them. Secondly, as Burke notes, if #MeToo is going to ask survivors to disclose, then it should also be prepared to help survivors manage the burdens of disclosure: "If you make something [like this] viral, you have to be prepared to help people deal. You have to give people something else besides the disclosure."[42] The official Me Too website—which is run by Burke and her organization—does provide information about resources survivors can turn to for support. However, #MeToo itself has provided no additional resources for survivors. It has merely asked them to disclose without helping them manage the consequences of disclosure. This lack of support is especially problematic given the disproportionate burden disclosure can have on survivors from marginalized communities.

The tension between the incitement to disclose and the potential harms of disclosure creates a moral dilemma for survivors. #MeToo is structured in a way that provides survivors with two responses to the movement: (1) either they participate in the movement by disclosing their status, or (2) they remain silent and do not directly participate in the movement. Any survivor who wishes to participate in #MeToo must disclose their status as survivors. I do want to note that #MeToo does not explicitly demand that all survivors disclose their status. Survivors can choose not to disclose their status, but doing so means effectively opting out of the movement. A survivor's silence could even be interpreted as positive assertion that they have *not* experienced sexual harassment or assault. Sanford Goldberg argues that, especially in conditions of oppression, silence is frequently misinterpreted as assent or agreement.[43] In the context of a massive outpouring of survivor testimonies, the public might assume that people who do not testify are not survivors.

Even though #MeToo does not explicitly demand disclosure, it has created substantial implicit pressure to disclose. Part of this implicit pressure comes from the unique nature of social media and the way it influences relationships between users. Kathryn Norlock argues that social media platforms serve as a means for users to become part of influential social groups, and increase their standing in those groups. She notes that users have become invested in being perceived in a positive light, and this concern

directly informs how users interact both with each other and with viral social media campaigns, writing that "we cannot help thinking about and caring about the strong and positive reactions to our words online."[44] The very fact that #MeToo went viral increases the pressure on survivors to disclose. As the movement gained momentum, it started to achieve a social prominence, and some survivors who disclosed ended up increasing their social standing as a result of their disclosure. For example, Wendy Walsh—the first woman to publicly accuse Bill O'Reilly of sexual misconduct—reports that public disclosure has made her more successful than she was before disclosing. Walsh notes: "Although I was worried this would hurt my business . . . somehow this increased my credibility. Suddenly all kinds of ethical companies wanted me to represent their brands."[45] Because of #MeToo's status as a social media movement that could alter a survivor's standing within their community, survivors may experience implicit pressure to disclose in order to join such an influential movement. If they want to participate in #MeToo, and potentially gain the social benefits that could come from being identified as a participant in the movement, then survivors must disclose.

The implicit pressure to disclose creates a moral dilemma for survivors who are unwilling or unable to disclose. As detailed above, disclosure can be harmful for some survivors. But the only way any survivor can participate in #MeToo is through public disclosure. The very structure of #MeToo requires survivors to make a morally weighted choice: either they accept the harms that may come from disclosure, or they forfeit their place in the movement. This structure creates an in-group/out-group distinction in #MeToo. Survivors who publicly disclose automatically become part of #MeToo. Survivors who choose not to publicly disclose remain essentially external to the movement.[46]

My concern is that because the movement itself deals with such a high-stakes moral issue, in-group survivors may receive an elevated moral standing that is not available to out-group survivors. Debra Jackson argues that survivor testimony is often evaluated within the context of social scripts: "The rhetorical spaces in which a victim's testimony is expressed are shaped by social scripts, attitudes, stereotypes, and discourses which are culturally and historically situated."[47] #MeToo has—perhaps inadvertently—created a social script for how survivors should behave in relation to their own survivorship: survivors should use their survivorship to raise awareness about sexual harassment and assault, despite the potential risks to their own well-being. Survivors might now be publicly judged based on whether or not they perform this script. Those who perform the script may receive public praise and credit for behaving as good survivors should. By participating in the movement, in-group survivors publicly identify themselves not only as survivors of sexual violence, but also as the right kind of survivors—as advocates against sexual violence, and as part of the solution to changing cultures of sexual violence. By contrast, the out-group survivors who do not perform the script may remain hidden from the public view, and will not necessarily be publicly identified as advocates against sexual violence or as part of the solution to end sexual violence. Out-group survivors

may thus experience little to no public credit for behaving as good survivors, decreasing their moral standing in relation to in-group survivors.

The in-group/out-group structure of #MeToo may thus have created a moral hierarchy that grants survivors moral standing based on public disclosure. The moral standing accorded to survivors increases when they disclose and decreases when they do not, turning survivors who disclose into "better" survivors than survivors who do not. The survivors who disclose become "good survivors"; the survivors who choose not to disclose become comparatively "bad" survivors. Survivorship itself then becomes moralized to the extent that how survivors manage their own survivorship is morally ranked based on whether or not they perform the script of the "good" survivor, and it becomes a way for survivors to gain or lose moral standing in their communities. Good survivors are the ones who say "me too." Bad survivors are the ones who remain silent.

This moral hierarchy is especially concerning given that #MeToo may be the most inaccessible to survivors from marginalized communities—such as incarcerated survivors. Survivors from marginalized communities are the least likely to be able to disclose without significant backlash, to experience significant uptake of their stories, and to have access to the additional resources they may need to support them if they do disclose. For example, Josephine Yurcaba argues that incarcerated survivors do not fit the stereotypical definition of a good survivor, and thus are less likely to receive sympathy or support from the general public. Yurcaba notes that "those women who have become the face of the [Me Too] movement usually haven't been charged with crimes. There's an extra battle that prison abuse survivors face: The public thinks prisoners deserve what they get, and there's a persistent belief that inmates do not have rights."[48] For survivors from marginalized communities, the choice between public disclosure and personal safety may be more extreme, and could lead to more severe consequences than for famous white survivors. Survivors from marginalized communities are thus the most likely to end up at the bottom of the moral hierarchy created by #MeToo. #MeToo may indeed be very beneficial to some survivors. However, the benefits of #MeToo are not equally accessible to all survivors, and I worry that in creating a platform for some survivors to speak, the movement has also created an additional moral burden for survivors who choose to remain silent (often, in not fully autonomous ways).

III. A RETURN TO ORIGINS
In this last section, I suggest that in order to make good on this problem, #MeToo should realign itself with the priorities of Burke's original version of the movement. I want to emphasize here that I am not arguing that #MeToo should be abandoned. The movement has been a source of support, encouragement, and empowerment for many survivors. As Catharine MacKinnon argues, #MeToo has also brought an unprecedented level of public awareness of and concern for issues of sexual harassment and assault.[49] Public awareness of and support for sexual harassment and assault may itself be an important precursor to funding increases for organizations that provide resources and

support for dealing with issues of sexual harassment and assault, as well as important recruiting tools for people willing to engage with this kind of work.[50] Realigning with Burke's original Me Too movement does not mean giving up on the beneficial elements of #MeToo. It does, however, mean shifting the priorities and strategies of #MeToo to be more genuinely inclusive of all survivors.

Realigning #MeToo with Burke's original movement should take two forms. First, #MeToo should prioritize the needs of survivors themselves, including developing resources to help survivors heal. #MeToo currently relies on survivor labor, but it does not center the needs of survivors themselves. Unlike Burke's original version of Me Too, #MeToo largely prioritizes the educational needs of the public instead of the healing needs of survivors. As noted above, while public disclosure can be part of the healing process for some survivors, it alone is not a sufficient healing process for all survivors. Public disclosure should be a viable option for any survivor who wishes to take it, but it cannot be the only option available to survivors. There must be additional resources available to both survivors who disclose and survivors who choose to remain silent. Without these additional resources, #MeToo will be at best incomplete, and at worst potentially harmful to the well-being of survivors.

The second form of realigning that I am suggesting is specifically in regard to marginalized communities. #MeToo should remain profoundly attentive to how sexual violence impacts members of marginalized communities, and should work to ensure that all communities have resources to deal with sexual violence. A core feature of Burke's original version of the movement was this attentiveness to marginalized communities, but this feature has been largely lost in #MeToo. It is important to stress that survivors from marginalized communities have indeed been speaking out;[51] but their stories have not received the same uptake in the mainstream media as those of famous white survivors.[52] And while some famous white survivors have acknowledged marginalized survivors and survivors who choose not to disclose, this acknowledgment has primarily taken the form of speaking for silent survivors. In a *New York Times* op-ed, Diana Nyad states that "I will continue to tell my story until all girls and women find their own voice."[53] In a *Rolling Stone* article, Milano states that "[w]e will succeed if we are the voice of the voiceless," and that "I have a platform that I will continue to use to amplify those who don't have a voice."[54] Nyad's statement indicates that she intends her voice to stand in for the voice of other survivors. Milano's statement explicitly indicates that she considers herself to be the spokesperson of all survivors, but most especially survivors who have not themselves spoken out—including survivors from marginalized communities.

This kind of speaking for risks reestablishing racist, classist, and nationalist tendencies that have often been problematic in white-led anti-violence movements. As Linda Alcoff argues, speaking for others can have the effect of asserting the power of the speaker over the power of those who are spoken for: "The effect of the practice of speaking for others is often, though not always, erasure and a reinscription of

sexual, national, and other kinds of hierarchies."[55] Speaking for survivors from marginalized communities overwrites the speaking those survivors themselves have done, and recenters the spotlight on the famous white women who speak for others. Instead of addressing the needs of survivors from marginalized communities, this speaking for can become a way of ensuring that famous white survivors and their needs remain the central focus of #MeToo.

I am not suggesting that famous white survivors should refrain from speaking to issues that impact survivors from marginalized communities since, indeed, they have a lot of social capital that can be leveraged in productive ways. These issues deserve far more attention than they have received, including from more privileged survivors. However, I do recommend that famous white survivors who speak to these issues do so in ways that resist the traditional power dynamic between privileged and marginalized communities instead of reinscribing it. Alcoff suggests that "anyone who speaks for others should only do so out of a concrete analysis of the particular power relations and discursive effects involved."[56] In the context of #MeToo, this kind of remaining attentive may mean having difficult conversations about how and why privileged survivors continue to receive so much more public attention and support than marginalized survivors, and about how privilege and marginalization can affect the experience of survivorship itself. It may also mean focusing more on engaging with women-of-color-led organizations such as Sista II Sista[57] and Burke's own Just Be, Inc., which were actively addressing the needs of survivors from marginalized communities long before #MeToo became a trending hashtag.

Realigning #MeToo with Burke's original version of Me Too will have two benefits. First, this realigning will provide the best way forward for survivors themselves. Providing survivors with additional resources will better enable them to move forward on their own healing journeys, instead of focusing most of their energy on educating the public. Second, this realigning will make the movement more accessible to all survivors. Explicitly addressing the needs of survivors from marginalized communities will ensure that the needs and perspectives of all survivors have a place in the movement, not just the needs and perspectives of famous white survivors. If #MeToo is to be more than just a platform for famous white survivors, then it must return to the spirit of Burke's original Me Too movement.

NOTES

1. In order to distinguish between the two versions of the Me Too movement, I will refer to the viral social media campaign as #MeToo, and reserve Me Too (without hashtag) for Burke's original version of the movement.

2. Tarana Burke, "The Inception," Just Be Inc., https://justbeinc.wixsite.com/justbeinc/the-me-too-movement-cmml.

3. Ibid.

4. Elizabeth Wellington, "Tarana Burke: Me Too Movement Can't End with a Hashtag," *The Inquirer*, October 23, 2017, https://www.philly.com/philly/columnists/elizabeth_wellington/philly-me-too-movement-founder-tarana-burke-20171023.html.

5. See Danielle L. McGuire, "Recy Taylor, Rosa Parks and the Long History of Black Women's Resistance to Sexual Violence," presented at the #MeToo and Epistemic Injustice Conference, CUNY University, October 5, 2018. Available online at https://livestream.com/roosevelthouse/metoo-epsistemic-injustice/videos/181288887.

6. Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 33.

7. Maria Bevacqua, *Rape on the Public Agenda* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000), 21.

8. Ida B. Wells, *On Lynchings* (New York: Arno Press and the *New York Times*, 1969), 12.

9. Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 175.

10. Darlene Clark Hine, *Black Women in America*, 2nd ed., online version (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

11. Ibid.

12. Wellington, "Tarana Burke: Me Too Movement Can't End with a Hashtag." Burke "decided to seek advice from a local rape-crisis center. These girls needed help. But when she got there, she was told rather coldly that the center would only work with girls who were referred from the local police department after they filed a police report. She thought to herself: 'Who is going to do that?' In 2003, she started Just Be Inc., a nonprofit that helps women heal from sexual assault. She named the movement Me Too in 2007."

13. About me too," Me Too Movement, https://metoomvmt.org/about/#history.

14. See, for example, Kim Q. Hall, "'The Epidemic No One Talks About,'" presented at the #MeToo and Epistemic Injustice Conference, CUNY University, October 5, 2018.

15. Bevacqua, *Rape on the Public Agenda*, 19–20.

16. See, for example, Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975), 247.

17. See, for example, Beth E. Richie, *Arrested Justice* (New York: New York University Press, 2012); Critical Resistance and INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, "Gender Violence and the Prison-Industrial Complex," in *Color of Violence*, ed. INCITE! (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 223–26.

18. Christie D'Zurilla, "In saying 'MeToo,' Alyssa Milano Pushes Awareness Campaign about Sexual Assault and Harassment," *The Los Angeles Times*, October 16, 2017, http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/la-et-entertainment-news-updates-metoo-campaign-me-too-alyssa-milano-1508173882-htmlstory.html.

19. "MeToo Creator Tarana Burke and Alyssa Milano: 'It's Not Just a Moment, It's a Movement,'" *Today*, December 6, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxuZB-K_Q1A.

20. Cassandra Santiago and Doug Criss, "An Activist, a Little Girl and the Heartbreaking Origin of 'Me Too,'" CNN, October 17, 2017, https://www-m.cnn.com/2017/10/17/us/me-too-tarana-burke-origin-trnd/index.html.

21. J'na Jefferson, "A Long Road Ahead: #MeToo Founder Tarana Burke on Sexual Assault, Stigmas and Society," *Vibe*, April 3, 2018, https://www.vibe.com/featured/tarana-burke-me-too-feature.

22. Wellington, "Tarana Burke: Me Too Movement Can't End with a Hashtag."

23. J'na Jefferson, "A Long Road Ahead."

24. D'Zurilla, "In Saying "MeToo, Alyssa Milano Pushes Awareness Campaign about Sexual Assault and Harassment."

25. See C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 67.

26. Sandra Harding, "Ascetic Intellectual Opportunities" in *Science, Morality, and Feminist Theory*, ed. Marsha P. Hanen and Kai Nielsen (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1987), 77.

27. Kate Manne, *Down Girl* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 3–4.

28. Susan J. Brison, *Aftermath* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 63.

29. "How Saying #MeToo Changed Their Lives," *The New York Times*, June 28, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/06/28/arts/metoo-movement-stories.html.

30. Allen J. Beck, Ramona R. Rantala, and Jessica Rexroat, "Sexual Victimization Reported by Adult Correctional Authorities, 2009–11," US Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics, January 2014, https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/svraca0911.pdf.

31. Valerie Bauman, "The Forgotten Voices of #MeToo" Just Detention International, December 10, 2018, https://justdetention.org/the-forgotten-voices-of-metoo-prison-rape-in-america-perpetrated-by-both-inmates-and-staff-remains-pervasive-and-under-reported-15-years-after-the-passage-of-a-law-intended-to-end-crisis/.

32. See Marisa Endicott, "'No Longer Human': Women's Prisons Are a Breedings Ground for Sexual Harassment, Abuse," *Think Progress*, August 29, 2018, https://thinkprogress.org/sexual-harassment-abuse-womens-prisons-me-too-5231b62c1785/.

33. Jerry Metcalf, "When Prisoners Say #MeToo," *The Marshall Project*, September 20, 2018, https://www.themarshallproject.org/2018/09/20/when-prisoners-say-metoo.

34. Josephine Yurcaba, "For Survivors of Prison Rape, Saying 'Me Too' Isn't an Option," *Rewire News*, January 8, 2018, https://rewire.news/article/2018/01/08/survivors-prison-rape-saying-isnt-option/.

35. "Perpetrators of Sexual Violence: Statistics," *RAINN*, https://www.rainn.org/statistics/perpetrators-sexual-violence. The notable exception to this statistic is Indigenous women. Indigenous women are more likely to experience sexual violence than women of any other race or ethnicity, and they are most often assaulted by perpetrators from outside their own communities (see "Victims of Sexual Violence: Statistics," *RAINN*, https://www.rainn.org/statistics/victims-sexual-violence).

36. Sarah J. Harsey, Eileen L. Zurbriggen, and Jennifer J. Freyd, "Perpetrator Responses to Victim Confrontation," *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, & Trauma* 26, no. 6 (2017): 645.

37. Ibid., 656 and 658.

38. Nellie McKay, "Remembering Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas," in *Race-ing Justice, En-gendering Power: Essays on Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, and the Construction of Social Reality*, ed. Toni Morrison (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), 277–78.

39. Abby Ohlheiser, "The Woman Behind 'Me Too' Knew the Power of the Phrase When She Created It—10 Years Ago," *The Washington Post*, October 19, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2017/10/19/the-woman-behind-me-too-knew-the-power-of-the-phrase-when-she-created-it-10-years-ago/.

40. Nora Berenstain, "Epistemic Exploitation," *Ergo* 3, no. 22 (2016): 570.

41. Ibid.

42. Wellington, "Tarana Burke: Me Too Movement Can't End with a Hashtag."

43. Sanford C. Goldberg, "Arrogance, Silence, and Silencing," *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 90, no. 1 (June 2016): 96.

44. Kathryn J. Norlock, "Online Shaming," *Social Philosophy Today* 33 (2017): 193.

45. "How Saying #MeToo Changed Their Lives." Note that not all survivors who publicly disclose experience this same increase in social standing. Gabrielle Union has importantly pointed out that while many famous white women have received a lot of uptake through #MeToo, the stories of women of color have received considerably less attention. See Bethonie Butler, "Gabrielle Union on #MeToo: 'The Floodgates Have Opened for White Women,'" *The Washington Post*, December 8, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/

wp/2017/12/08/gabrielle-union-on-metoo-the-floodgates-have-opened-for-white-women/.

46. Some scholars argue that in at least some contexts, survivors may have a duty to disclose in spite of the potential harms of disclosure (see, for example, Ashwini Vasanthakumar, "Epistemic Privilege and Victims' Duties to Resist their Oppression," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 35, no. 3 [2018]: 465–80). Survivors' duties to disclose is an important subject of conversation that is well beyond the scope of this article. For the purposes of this article, I'm most concerned with exploring the impact #MeToo has on survivors, instead of whether or not survivors have a duty to disclose. In other words, I'm more interested in evaluating #MeToo than in evaluating the duties of survivors themselves.

47. Debra L. Jackson, "'Me Too': Epistemic Injustice and the Struggle for Recognition," *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (2018): 5.

48. Yurcaba, "For Survivors of Prison Rape, Saying 'Me Too' Isn't an Option."

49. Catharine A. MacKinnon, "#MeToo Has Done What the Law Could Not," *The New York Times*, February 4, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/04/opinion/metoo-law-legal-system.html.

50. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this point.

51. See, for example, the documentary *Surviving R. Kelly*.

52. In some ways, #MeToo has counteracted its own goal of public education. Since the movement has tended to be most accessible and receptive to the stories of famous white survivors, it may have perpetuated the false notion that the way famous white survivors experience sexual harassment and assault is universal to all survivors. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this point.

53. Diana Nyad, "My Life After Sexual Assault," *The New York Times*, November 9, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/09/opinion/diana-nyad-sexual-assault.html.

54. Alyssa Milano, "Alyssa Milano on Joining Time's Up," *Rolling Stone*, January 4, 2018, https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/alyssa-milano-on-joining-times-up-women-are-scared-women-are-angry-204035/.

55. Linda Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Others," *Cultural Critique* 20 (Winter 1991–1992): 29.

56. Ibid., 24.

57. See Sista II Sista, "Sista's Makin' Moves" in *Color of Violence*, ed. INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 196–207.

Beyond Silence, Towards Refusal: The Epistemic Possibilities of #MeToo

Sarah Clark Miller
PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

On September 27, 2018, I sat watching the painfully careful and exceedingly brave way in which Dr. Christine Blasey Ford navigated testifying in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee regarding now Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh's alleged assault of her. As this took place, something happened: survivors of sexual violence—friends and acquaintances, primarily women—began to post their own stories of sexual violence on Facebook and Twitter. The strength that Dr. Blasey Ford demonstrated inspired many survivors to disclose the details of their stories, many for the first time. As they did so, the sense of solidarity among them grew. It was not entirely unlike and was undoubtedly inspired by the #MeToo moment that preceded it nearly a year before in October 2017 when the hashtag exploded on social media. What was originally called the #MeToo moment had grown into a movement.

Dr. Blasey Ford's testimony was also personally significant. In that moment of watching her and seeing the many posts catalyzed by her testimony, something in me shifted. It is what I have come to understand as a moment of tremendous epistemic refusal galvanized by the similar gestures of refusal I saw all around me. For decades, I had remained largely quiet about my own sexual assault. I had done so for the reasons that many victims of sexual violence do: because of the threats, obstacles, and harms that sexual violence survivors commonly face in rape culture. These include how we are pressured to remain silent and how our confidence in our knowledge about the violence we endured is undermined. This silencing and undermining are accomplished through widespread practices of credibility erosion as well as ostracization and shaming. Sexual violence survivors can be harmed both with regard to their ability to know the truth of their own experiences, as well as the ability to share their knowledge with others. Spurred on by the bravery of other survivors and a desire to exhibit the same form of bravery as a gesture of solidarity, I decided to break my silence.

So, I disclosed to 1,020 or so of my closest friends on Facebook that I, too, was a rape survivor. This is what I wrote:

> Dr. Blasey Ford's story is much like my own, except I was unable to escape from my perpetrator, who raped me when I was 16. It was a violent event that shattered my life and shaped much of who I am today.
>
> I have spent over two decades largely silent and ashamed. Not any longer. Not after today. After what I just witnessed, I stand firmly in solidarity and in strength with all survivors of sexual violence and will no longer be ashamed about what he did to me. That shame was never mine. It was always his.

My story was one in a deluge of stories that poured forth publicly on that day. In coming forward, I added my voice to a chorus of millions who had already spoken on social media as part of the wider #MeToo movement. What became clear to me in that moment was the power of the #MeToo movement to affect not only cultural, ethical, and political change, but equally importantly, *epistemic* transformation. It is that epistemic transformation that I want to consider in this article. For me, the drive to understand the possibilities of such transformation is rooted in a desire to understand my own epistemic shift, as well as the wider meaning of what I saw happening all around me on that day.

There are many ways to understand the meanings of the #MeToo movement. Analyses of its significance have proliferated in popular media; some academic analyses have also recently appeared.[1] Commentary on the philosophical and epistemic significance of the #MeToo movement has been less plentiful.[2] The specific moment of the #MeToo movement in which Dr. Blasey Ford's testimony garnered a widespread social media response from sexual violence survivors highlighted the power of a particular form of epistemic response, what I call

"epistemic refusal." In breaking our silence, those of us who are sexual violence survivors have used this strategy to refuse the dominant epistemic structures that have kept us tightly in check. Mass informal disclosure of survivor status represented in conjunction with hashtags such as #MeToo, #WhyIDidntReport, and #BelieveHer creates space for epistemic, ethical, and political community between survivors of sexual violence by denying hegemonic epistemic discourses of contemporary rape culture. Regarding Dr. Blasey Ford's testimony and the social media response it garnered, analysis of three main elements proves particularly illuminating: the nature of mass informal disclosure of sexual violence, what the hashtag #WhyIDidntReport reveals about refusing silence, and what the hashtags #BelieveHer and #BelieveSurvivors can show us about what it takes to begin to overcome epistemic gaslighting.

MASS INFORMAL DISCLOSURE

The advent of the #MeToo Movement in October 2017 and the occasion of Dr. Blasey Ford's testimony represented the power of disclosure and, more specifically and technically, mass informal disclosure as a mechanism of epistemic refusal. Mass informal disclosure of sexual violence takes place when a survivor divulges information regarding their assault to a large group of people, often in a public context, absent the intention of that disclosure having some form of official implication or effect. Undoubtedly, the moment of #MeToo and #WhyIDidntReport gave rise to other forms of disclosure, too—countless private moments between friends, spouses, child and parent in which those who had been violated shared what had happened to them. These private, informal modes of disclosure represent a form of disclosure with a more limited scope than is found with mass informal disclosure. #MeToo and #BelieveHer presumably also gave rise to some cases of formal disclosure too—the realization that one was one of many survivors may have provided some impetus for the lodging of formal complaints—for example, with the police—regarding the sexual violence one had suffered. Formal modes of disclosure differ from mass informal disclosure in terms of the institutional or bureaucratic power and intervention they activate, sometimes unwantedly.

There is arguably always vulnerability in the face of the disclosure of sexual violence, no matter what its form, though the nature of that vulnerability will differ based on the kind and circumstances of disclosure.[3] Similarly, choosing to disclose one's status as a survivor is nearly always risky, though the extent and forms of associated risk can also differ. In its peculiar form of being simultaneously a disclosure to no one and everyone, mass informal disclosure is not without its own specific kinds of vulnerability and risk. Should the intention behind the disclosure be one of hoping for a public embracing of one's status as a survivor of sexual violence (an approach I do not recommend), then one can be vulnerable to everything from shaming to recrimination to indifference from those to whom one blasts one's status. The risks are myriad, as well, and include a possible reorienting of how others see you—layered now with pity, discomfort, or even fear. Other possible risks include all of the forces that kept you from saying anything in the first place—threats

of violence, being called a liar or a whore, retraumatizing oneself through the process of disclosure, internalizing all of these consequences, and so on.

The predominant mode of disclosure catalyzed through the hashtags #WhyIDidntReport and #BelieveHer or #BelieveSurvivors was mass informal disclosure. And it is the epistemic space and possibilities that mass informal disclosure can open that I explore here. The mass informal disclosure that survivors engaged in during and after Dr. Blasey Ford's testimony embodied epistemic refusal in a couple of respects. They served as examples not so much of *resisting* our collective rape culture, in the sense of pushing back against it, as *refusing* its logic and outcomes entirely. Rather than pushing back against prejudicial epistemic standards that harm survivors, such as testimonial injustice and credibility deficit, those who engage in mass informal disclosure assert their experiences of violation in a way that denies the importance of epistemic uptake from others, hence beginning to reclaim the autonomy and power that was taken from them. Mass informal disclosure of this nature involves an implicit shift in the terms of epistemic exchange—it is an articulation of personal knowledge absent the requirement of epistemic uptake of that knowledge by the broader public—perhaps most especially those likely to doubt the credibility of rape survivors. Instead of further engaging the various ways in which rape victims are made to hustle for their worth through prejudicial epistemic standards, those who disclose begin to create a different knowledge economy by generating epistemic spaces of their own.

Of equal importance is how forms of mass informal disclosure of sexual violation can shift the focus from the credibility of the survivor to the wrongful actions of the perpetrator—moving feelings of shame and responsibility away from victim and back onto perpetrator. This was true in my own case: the form of mass informal disclosure in which I engaged served to take a festering bucket of shame and firmly shove it where it always should have been—with the person who raped me. And mass informal disclosure can also lay the groundwork for the creation of communities of solidarity among survivors of sexual violence, which is an aspect of what Tarana Burke has called for and represents one intention behind the important work she has done. This is one way of understanding the kind of epistemic spaces the #MeToo movement can create. These communities afford the creation of a different sort of epistemic subculture for and between survivors—a subculture that can be governed not by dominant epistemic structures that are prejudicial against survivors but rather by the forms of mutual understanding of both the harms of sexual violence and the epistemic injustices that keep survivors silent about those harms.

A CONTRAST IN #HASHTAGS

What I am designating as the second major moment of the #MeToo Movement, which involved Dr. Blasey Ford's testimony and the mass informal disclosures that it engendered, differed in several key regards from the initial #MeToo moment. One way to characterize that difference is through the associated hashtags as well as the meanings those hashtags were meant to carry. #MeToo was and is a

way of saying, this also happened to me. It was a way of raising one's hand, as Tarana Burke has noted.[4] One aspect of the impactful force of #MeToo was how it shattered some of the layers of denial around the sheer magnitude of sexual violation, bringing to light what many of us have long known: sexual violence is pervasive, systemic, and not at all rare. #MeToo garnered more than 12 million posts, comments, and reactions on Facebook alone in less than 24 hours, hence showing the world—or at least those who cared to take notice—that sexual violence is a shockingly widespread phenomenon. It was also a pivotal moment for the ways in which it helped survivors feel much less isolated, as they could concretely see that they were very much not alone. Thus, the advent of the #MeToo hashtag was perhaps more about quantity, that is, the overwhelming numbers of women who signaled in tweets and Facebook posts that they, too, had been victims of sexual violence, often without providing contextualizing details. In fact, this was one part of the power of it—the ability to disclose without needing to offer extensive details designed to justify the disclosure, to forestall challenges to one's credibility, or to seek affirmation.

In the second main moment of the movement, survivors who shared their own experiences during and after Dr. Blasey Ford's testimony often appended the hashtag #WhyIDidntReport as they detailed the myriad challenges survivors experience regarding formal disclosure in the wake of a sexual violation. And supporters of both Dr. Blasey Ford and the many others who told their stories on that day affixed #BelieveHer or #BelieveSurvivors to their posts, to emphasize the importance of giving proper epistemic weight to the claims of violation sexual violence survivors make. We can therefore see that Dr. Blasey Ford called forth a response that wasn't primarily about sheer quantity—some victims had, after all, already disclosed during the earlier #MeToo moment. Instead, it was about quality and circumstance in the sense that many focused on the contextual details of the obstacles to reporting. Concurrently, #BelieveHer and #BelieveSurvivors represented a way to signal support for all of those who came forth on that day and to emphasize the importance of confronting patterns of credibility deficit that survivors so often experience.

#WHYIDIDNTREPORT

The hashtag associated with Dr. Blasey Ford's testimony, #WhyIDidntReport, highlights specific epistemic angles of the difficulties of disclosure in a society steeped in rape culture. There are many reasons why survivors of sexual assault don't report. What epistemic analysis of the underreporting of sexual violence highlights is at least twofold: both the widespread epistemic silencing and the epistemic gaslighting victims endure. One overarching way to understand social media posts that feature #WhyIDidntReport is as a strategy of epistemic refusal in response to epistemic silencing. (Gaslighting plays an interesting role for both #WhyIDidntReport and #BelieveHer/#BelieveSurvivors. Gaslighting in the context of the latter will be my focus in the next section.) Survivors deploy mass informal disclosure to lay bare the mechanisms of silencing and gaslighting they and others encounter. Rather than continuing to remain silent and doubtful about

their own experiences or to rail against dominant epistemic systems, those who use #WhyIDidntReport do something else: they reveal the very mechanisms of epistemic oppression that so profoundly harm them for all to see.

While #WhyIDidntReport was designed to explore the barricades to formal reporting, it also represents an opportunity to consider the broader patterns of silencing survivors experience. There are different ways we don't tell and a multitude of reasons why we remain silent. In a sense, then, #WhyIDidntReport explores the vast and varied temporal landscape prior to disclosure, which is not to assume that disclosure is an inevitability—far from it. Disclosure also isn't a toggle switch. While moments of mass informal disclosure tend to have a certain sense of loudness or force about them, there can be many quieter, private moments of partial or attempted (and often inevitably thwarted) disclosure that survivors face. Thus, #WhyIDidntReport can tell us a lot about the risks and vulnerabilities that survivors know are there when they contemplate telling others they were violated.

As for my own story, the truth of what happened to me attempted to bubble up multiple times in my late teens, only to be forcibly stuffed back down. In addition to being outright threatened for my attempted informal disclosure, the indignities I encountered included being ostracized for being supposedly promiscuous and being told that I was lying in an attempt to stoke drama in my otherwise apparently very boring life. On the one hand, this reads as the ordinary drama of middle-class suburban girlhood. On the other hand, it is absolutely appalling that such an experience reads as ordinary drama at all. I was subjected to multiple instances of outright aggression that threated my well-being and social standing in my small-town Pennsylvanian community. I was threatened in ways that attempted to shatter my very sense of self. After experiences like that, formal reporting seemed an absolute impossibility.

My experience shows how the forces of violence visited upon survivors represent a complicated intermingling of the formal and informal. In my particular case, the informal mechanisms of social policing designed to maintain the impunity of boys and men functioned to ensure that the costs of formal reporting would be so high as to appear unfathomable. This is not to say that once survivors feel they can report, they will then be safe in doing so. The power that institutions such as law enforcement and the medical establishment possess can be, and all too frequently is, wielded against survivors themselves. While, in theory, institutional power may be designed to protect survivors, it can and often does, in fact, exacerbate their vulnerability. This can happen either by the devastating forms of resistance to the truth of the prevalence of sexual violence that institutions can enact or by a similarly damaging violation of survivor autonomy when institutions insist on the details of disclosure being shared and pursued in case they are formally actionable—as we find with contemporary mandatory reporting requirements on today's college and university campuses.

We can bring some of the difficulties of #WhyIDidntReport into focus by peering through lenses of epistemic analysis. The first lens is that of epistemic silencing. Among other epistemic feats rape culture accomplishes, silencing is one of the most pernicious. #WhyIDidntReport points to specific practices of epistemic silencing, which Kristie Dotson, following Gayatri Spivak understands as "a type of violence that attempts to eliminate knowledge possessed by marginal subjects…"[5] There is more than one way to silence a survivor of sexual violence. Dotson identifies two primary ways of silencing: testimonial quieting and testimonial smothering.[6] Testimonial quieting takes place "when an audience fails to identify a speaker as a knower. A speaker needs an audience to identify, or at least recognize, her as a knower in order to offer testimony."[7] If you don't believe a particular sexual violence survivor has the epistemic authority to be a knower in the first place, and are therefore incapable of identifying her as someone who could have reliable, valuable knowledge to share, why would you bother to listen to what she has to say? It is important to note that survivors of sexual violence may experience differing degrees of testimonial quieting based on the particular social position they occupy, as well as how their speaking might be perceived to support or hinder patriarchal aims. The degree of testimonial injustice visited on a survivor through forms of silencing often varies based on the particular race, sex, gender, and/or class of that survivor.

The second variety of silencing that helps to shed light on the epistemic mechanisms that cause survivors not to report is testimonial smothering. Testimonial smothering "occurs because the speaker perceives one's immediate audience as unwilling or unable to gain the appropriate uptake of proffered testimony. . . . Testimonial smothering, ultimately, is the truncating of one's own testimony in order to insure that the testimony contains only content for which one's audience demonstrates testimonial competence."[8] When people are raised in rape culture, they are epistemically conditioned to a kind of ignorance that renders them incapable of receiving some forms of testimony from sexual violence survivors. Many survivors already know this and therefore deliver only part of their experience—the parts that have some chance of being heard. This is a second way in which epistemological silencing makes plain why survivors often don't disclose and report. Or, if they do disclose, it makes clear why they sometimes choose only to disclose slivers of their experience.

When survivors deploy the hashtag #WhyIDidntReport, they reveal the mechanisms of testimonial quieting and smothering, thereby beginning to refuse the epistemic terms of engagement to which they have long been subjected. They refuse testimonial quieting by asserting their status as knowers. And they refuse testimonial smothering by asserting what they know without caring whether the broader audience has testimonial competence. In that moment, they are far more interested in connecting and building epistemic community with other survivors who believe what they know and who possess the testimonial competence to hear what they are saying.

BEYOND #BELIEVEHER AND #BELIEVESURVIVORS

Epistemic refusal is also present in how sexual violence survivors come to believe the truth of their own experiences, a process that can be thwarted mightily by another mechanism of epistemic oppression: epistemic gaslighting. Kate Abramson characterizes gaslighting as "a form of emotional manipulation in which the gaslighter tries (consciously or not) to induce in someone the sense that her reactions, perceptions, memories and/or beliefs are not just mistaken, but utterly without grounds—paradigmatically, so unfounded as to qualify as crazy. Gaslighting is . . . quite unlike dismissing someone, for dismissal simply fails to take another seriously as an interlocutor, whereas gaslighting is aimed at getting another not to take herself seriously as an interlocutor."[9] While Abramson characterizes gaslighting in the quote above primarily as a form of emotional manipulation, I take it to be in the spirit of what she is saying to assert that it is also very much a form of epistemic manipulation. Sexual violence survivors are frequently subjected to gaslighting of both an emotional and epistemic nature. They are told they are overreacting. It wasn't that bad. They are generating false memories. They were too drunk to really recall. They were too emotional to see the situation clearly, etc.

It is in these ways and more that sexual violence survivors' view of their own epistemic authority is undermined and sometimes outright obliterated. When one is told over and over again that what they thought had happened did not, in fact, actually happen, and that their belief that it did arises through their inability to properly perceive the true nature of experience because they are crazy, too emotional, inherently deceitful, etc., they all too often start to believe that they did not experience what they, in fact, actually did. Even more perniciously, they will begin to internalize the very mechanism that destabilizes and can obliterate their own sense of epistemic credibility and authority. That is to say, they will do it to themselves.

When sexual violence survivors engage in mass informal disclosure of their violation, they refuse the terms of engagement necessary to get gaslighting off the ground. Mass informal disclosure amounts to a broadcasting of their epistemic confidence in themselves and of their self-conception as agents with epistemic authority. They thereby refuse to buy into the undermining of the knowledge they have of their own experiences. They refuse to let others undermine their self-trust. They, in short, refuse to be gaslighted.

It is in view of these very common and utterly destructive experiences of epistemic gaslighting that I want to respond to the prevalence of #BelieveHer and #BelieveSurvivors. Both hashtags offer an interesting window into this particular problem. The intentions behind #BelieveHer and #BelieveSurvivors are admirable ones—those who use such hashtags want to signal that they support survivors in trusting themselves. Use of both hashtags also functions as an implicit recognition of the pervasive epistemic gaslighting survivors encounter—a form of recognition that is very much needed. And it offers the beginnings of a shift away from a dominant framework of credibility in which survivors tend to come out on the losing end.

While appreciating the goodness of these intentions, I want to assert that in light of the pervasive nature of the gaslighting of sexual violence survivors, what is equally, if not more important is that survivors believe themselves and that they come to believe one another by stepping into a shared epistemic space of their own creation. This is to say that while believing her and believing survivors are both important things to do, there is perhaps something even more significant to accomplish. It is something that I take to be a paradigmatic move of epistemic refusal: for survivors to center on their own knowledge, build their self-trust and trust in one another, and in doing so, create epistemic communities through which they can further support one another.

Dr. Blasey Ford serves as a potent example in this regard: it was in and through her characterization of herself as "100 percent" sure that Kavanaugh was her attacker—even though some details of the evening in question were fuzzy—that other survivors could step into the truth of their own experiences, the certainty of their own testimony, and the power of their own epistemic authority. It is in and through such self-trust, truth, and power that we begin to refuse the epistemic deck that for so long has been so carefully and relentlessly stacked against us.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Michelle Rodino-Colocino, "Me Too, #MeToo: Countering Cruelty with Empathy," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 15, no. 1 (2018): 96–100; Reshma Jagsi, "Sexual Harassment in Medicine—#MeToo," *The New England Journal of Medicine* 378, 3 (2018): 209–11; Kaitlynn Mendes, Jessica Ringrose, and Jessalyn Keller, "#MeToo and the Promise and Pitfalls of Challenging Rape Culture through Digital Feminist Activism," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 25, no. 2 (2018): 236–46; Ritty Lukose, "Decolonizing Feminism in the #MeToo Era," *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* 36 (2018): 34–52; and Martha Chamallas, "Will Tort Law Have Its #MeToo Moment?" *Journal of Tort Law* 11, no. 1 (2018): 39–70.

2. There are some examples from within philosophy of analysis of the #MeToo Movement, most notably "#MeToo and Epistemic Injustice," a conference organized in fall 2018 by Linda Martín Alcoff and Charles W. Mills. See also Linda Martín Alcoff, *Rape and Resistance* (Medford, MA: Polity, 2018); and Debra Jackson, "'Me Too': Epistemic Injustice and the Struggle for Recognition," *Feminist Philosophical Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (2018): article 7.

3. See Ann J. Cahill, "Disclosing and Experience of Sexual Assault: Ethics and the Role of the Confidant," in *Vulnerability and the Politics of Care* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

4. Liz Rowley, "The Architect of #MeToo Says the Movement Has Lost Its Way," *New York Magazine*, October 23, 2018, https://www.thecut.com/2018/10/tarana-burke-me-too-founder-movement-has-lost-its-way.html, accessed 5/1/19.

5. Kristie Dotson, "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing," *Hypatia* 26, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 236.

6. Ibid., 242–51.

7. Ibid., 242.

8. Ibid., 244.

9. Kate Abramson, "Turning Up the Lights on Gaslighting," *Philosophical Perspectives* 28, no. 1 (2014): 2.

The Speech Acts of #MeToo

Cassie Herbert
ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

In the fall of 2017 I, along with many others, watched and participated as #MeToo unfolded across social media. Women, nonbinary folks, and some men shared their experiences of being sexually harassed or assaulted. Some went into gut-wrenching detail. Some simply wrote the hashtag #MeToo. Some named their assailants, though most did not. As more and more people chimed in, I remember being struck by the realization that *I did not know a single woman who hadn't been sexually violated in some way*. This thought was likely too sweeping, but it speaks to how overwhelming the moment was: it felt like everyone had a horror story. One month after it gained prominence, a Facebook estimate held that 45 percent of US users had at least one friend who had posted the statement "me too."[1] One year later, the hashtag had been used at least 19 million times across Twitter.[2] In the time since, the movement has continued to maintain a presence in the global social landscape.

#MeToo took work and energy; it took courage to speak up, and attending to the flood of stories day after day could be emotionally draining. It required emotional and epistemic labor to process the stories coming out, to sort through the various responses to those stories, and to figure out what to do next. For many it was retraumatizing, as survivors[3] relived their own violations by sharing their experiences publicly or by taking in the stories told by others. The movement made stark the extent of sexual violations occurring around us. Survivors and others performed this difficult labor with the hope that it would make some sort of difference.

One of the repeated questions to come up in the wake of the movement is, "Has #MeToo helped?" Or, put slightly differently, "Has #MeToo been successful?" Despite all the experiences of sexual harassment and abuse shared on social media, there hasn't been a corresponding significant uptick in holding perpetrators accountable for the sexual violations they commit. Some high profile figures lost their jobs (though often, the severance package they received would hardly be termed a hardship), some people were publicly censured (though think pieces are already heralding their "comebacks"), and a very few people have had legal charges filed against them (though it's not clear if anyone in the US, to date, has actually been prosecuted or found guilty as a result of #MeToo). If these are the measures of success, then it seems like #MeToo hasn't succeeded at much.

I hold that these metrics are the wrong way to evaluate #MeToo. Not simply because they focus on the wrong things (centering perpetrators rather than, say, the support given to survivors), but also because they misunderstand what kind of actions made up the movement. We need to have a better sense of what the movement *was* in order to evaluate the success of the movement. Speech act theory can help us do this. In what follows, I explore two ways of understanding the social media posts that comprised

#MeToo: as accusations and as reports. *Accusations* are speech acts that call for holding the perpetrator to account, while *reports* are truth-claims about the world rooted in the speaker's first-personal experience. #MeToo, I argue, ought to be understood as primarily composed of reports. This better enables us to evaluate the successes of the movement and, in fact, allows us to recognize the ways in which the movement signifies a noteworthy shift in the dominant frameworks by which survivors' speech is understood.

I. SPEECH ACTS, REPORTS, AND ACCUSATIONS

Before discussing #MeToo, I first need to lay out the core features of speech act theory. As J. L. Austin and others have pointed out, we do more with speech than simply put forward information. Speech is an action, and through this action we make real normative changes to the world. (Note that "speech" here is maximally inclusive, and involves spoken interactions along with Tweets, texts, social media posts, and any other form of communication.) We can command, invite, entreat, persuade, call to order, or any number of things via speech. Each of these actions has a particular performative structure. To start with a familiar example, a speaker must have the appropriate standing to issue a command and must issue it to the right people, in the right context, for it to succeed. A professor can command a student to turn in their assigned paper, but that student cannot order the professor to return their exam. However, the professor cannot command a student who is not in the course to turn in a paper and they cannot arbitrarily order their student to wear purple, eat bananas for breakfast, or any number of things the professor simply has no authority over. Drawing on the framework developed by Rebecca Kukla and Mark Lance, while commands are agent-relative and require certain authority conditions to be felicitous, other speech acts are agent-neutral in their inputs—anyone can properly issue them, regardless of whether or not they have authority in that context.[4] A declarative, for example, fits this mold: declaratives are publicly accessible truth-claims about the world ("The sky is blue," or "Trump is the 45th president.") Anyone may issue these speech acts, it doesn't take a particular kind of standing or authority to do so.

Not only are speech acts distinct from one another based on their entry conditions and to whom they can be directed, but they differ by their function and what they *do*. Declaratives call on the audience to incorporate the truth-claim into their belief structure.[5] Going back to commands, a command, issued with the proper authority, in the right context, and to the right person, creates a requirement for that person to do something. A boss commanding their underling to attend a meeting properly expects the underling to comply; if they don't, they have responded inappropriately. (Of course, sometimes life happens and we miss meetings—but when that happens we offer excuses and apologies in recognition of having failed to do something we ought to have done.) On the other hand, an invitation creates an option which one can take up or not, and both are appropriate responses. An invitation to coffee between friends does not automatically require attendance—the whole purpose of an invitation is that it is optional, and one would be dismayed to find out a friend

came because they felt they had to. Yet an invitation is not a neutral laying out of the options either: someone has offered us something by extending the invitation and they are properly owed gratitude, however minimal, for doing so ("Thanks for the invite, but I just grabbed coffee a bit ago!").[6] Invitations are agent-relative in their outputs; only the person to whom it is issued is authorized to take up the invitation (a stranger who overhears me invite my friend to coffee has not, themselves, been invited to join me for coffee.) An invitation is not simply a weak command or one issued by someone with only marginal authority. Invitations and commands have different performative structures and pragmatic outputs, even when they both aim at the same result of getting someone to show up for a particular event. Even when the effects are similar, the particular speech act performed makes a difference in *why* the person is there, whether they ought to thank the other for the invitation, the tenor of their ongoing interactions, etc.

Crucially, speech acts can be indistinguishable at the level of surface-grammar. "Gee, I sure am cold" might be a mere statement said to the room at large or, if said while making pointed eye contact with the person near the open window, might be a request for them to close it. We rely on non-linguistic features of the situations, such as context and body language, as well as established discursive and social conventions, to govern how to properly decipher and take up speech acts.

Here, I want to explore two speech acts that have received little direct philosophical attention: reports and accusations. Accusations seek to hold a person accountable for some sort of wrongdoing, while reports are truth-claims about which the speaker has direct first-personal knowledge. Each has a distinct performative structure even though their surface grammar can at times be indistinguishable.

Reports help make up the fabric of our daily lives. "I woke up and made coffee" is a familiar report about the start of the speaker's day. Reports are truth-claims about something the speaker has particular standing to talk about, i.e., the things the speaker has knowledge of via direct first-personal experience. Presumably, anyone in a similar position would assent to the report, and so the truth-claims offered are agent-neutral in their outputs. The difference between reports and declaratives lies in the relation between the speaker and the subject. Reports require a first-personal relation between the speaker and the topic on which they are speaking. For example, if a person reads a book about sailing, they may give a report on *that book*, but they cannot report on sailing itself—they must *go sailing* to be able to report back on it. Thus, reports are agent-relative in their inputs, but agent-neutral in their outputs. These utterances have propositional content, but only those with first-personal access to that content have the standing to issue the report. However, anyone overhearing the report may incorporate that propositional content into their knowledge of the world. Having heard a report, an audience member[7] may go on to issue declaratives about its content.

Reports instantiate a particular second-personal relationship between the speaker and the audience. As Richard Moran has argued, in telling, a speaker offers the one told their

word, and vouchsafes the truth of the content of the telling.[8] Reports take this a step further, assuring the audience that the speaker has direct, first-personal experience of what they are disclosing. That is, reports are an invitation to trust, both in terms of trusting that the content of the account is true and in terms of trusting *in* the speaker themself in terms of their first-personal experience of that propositional content. This raises the stakes of a report, and disbelief in the report is subsequently a stronger repudiation than it is for tellings generally. A person may fail as a knower by, say, being too gullible and telling others unwarranted and false information, but failure as a reporter means that person failed to aptly perceive their own lived experiences.

Accusations, on the other hand, aim to hold someone to account for their wrongdoing. The wrongdoing can range from the trivial, "You took my pen!" to the serious, "She sexually assaulted me." While accusations can be leveled by the person wronged or by another, and can be directed to the accused directly or offered to a third party, at their core, they seek to hold the accused accountable for what they have done.

Accusations are about wrongdoing. This is definitional: a statement simply *isn't* an accusation unless it is about norm violation in some way. While just which norms are the focus of the accusation may vary depending on context, accusations are a way to call attention to those norms and the accused's failure to properly follow them. However, accusations do more than point out wrongdoing; they are a call to hold the accused accountable for their transgression. Just what form this holding to account takes may vary, but it requires a material, enacted response that directly engages with the wrongdoer. It must to go beyond merely eliciting reactive attitudes from the audience; thinking "wow, he's an asshole" in response to a news story on a politician's deep seated corruption simply isn't holding that politician to account in any meaningful way; if reactive attitudes are all that happen, the accusation has not been properly taken up. Instead, there must be some sort of genuine material engagement with the wrongdoer in which they are sanctioned for what they have done.

This is why accusations paradigmatically must identify a wrongdoer. (Note that "I was robbed, but I don't know who did it," isn't an accusation. It's a statement *about* a crime, but it doesn't yet accuse any specific person or persons of committing that crime.) Generally, this means naming the person who broke the norm or committed the crime, though sometimes it might mean naming a company or group. Accusations require some amount of corroborating evidence in order to proceed, but the accusation itself initiates this process of holding the wrongdoer accountable to the norm they have broken.

Accusations and reports are often indecipherable at the level of surface grammar. "That person raped me," could fall into either category. This makes it easy for intended reports to be taken up and treated as accusations, and vice versa. Yet, accusations and reports differ, both in terms of what sort of normative relation is initiated and instantiated by the speech act, how the audience ought to respond, and what disregard for the speech act signifies.

II. THE SPEECH ACTS OF #METOO

It may be tempting to view #MeToo as a movement comprised of accusations. After all, the social media posts of #MeToo identified sexual violations the speaker was subject to and the movement overall is about identifying and combating sexual violence. It seems reasonable that holding perpetrators to account for the sexual violations they enacted would be at the core of the movement. If #MeToo is centrally about accusations of sexual violation, then the proper uptake of these speech acts is to initiate the process of holding perpetrators to account for their actions. Since accusations do require corroborating evidence, this might mean opening investigations either in the workplace, through the law, or via some other mechanism. How many perpetrators have been fired, prosecuted, or otherwise held materially accountable for the sexual violations they enacted would thus be a key metric of whether #MeToo succeeded in its aim. But we know that relative to the number of stories of sexual violation shared, there have been few official sanctions against perpetrators. If #MeToo is a movement centered on accusations, then it's pretty clear that the movement failed to achieve the ends of its speech acts.

Certainly, at least some of the utterances from the movement fall into the category of accusations, most clearly those that named the perpetrator and called on others to do something about it. But most do not fit the structure of an accusation. The paradigmatic post "#metoo" doesn't identify a perpetrator or give any of the details needed to hold someone to account in the material way that accusations call for. The only way to take this as an accusation is to treat it as a particularly incompetent and ill-formed one—one which never had a chance of succeeding in doing the work of an accusation. Treating the speech acts of #MeToo as accusations serves as a way of shifting the goal posts of the movement so that it was structurally unable to succeed. Moreover, it does so in such a way that puts the responsibility of that failure on the survivors who spoke out—it treats the failure to sanction assailants as the survivors' fault, since they were the ones to issue such poorly structured accusations. This reading of the speech acts of #MeToo demeans the agency and competency of the survivors who spoke out with these posts. Rather than assuming that survivors utterly failed at the basic mechanics of accusations, we ought to recognize that survivors were doing something else with their speech.

#MeToo is not a movement of accusations, but rather of reports. #MeToo was centrally and powerfully about survivors issuing truth-claims about first-personal experiences of sexual violation. Some survivors shared detailed stories, while some merely wrote "#metoo." This statement, which made up the core of the movement, is a report in its most pure form: it's a first-personal truth-claim about the world, stripped down of all other description or information. Survivors asserted their own experiences. Note that the movement didn't center on declaratives: Facts and statistics about sexual violence may have been shared to give context to survivors' speech, but they weren't the heart of the movement, nor the purpose of the claims. #MeToo did something more than circulate information about sexual violence: it was about sharing first-personal

experiences of sexual violation. It was centrally, specifically, and importantly about reports.

Understanding what sort of speech acts #MeToo was comprised of shifts the metric by which we ought to evaluate the movement. Rather than focusing primarily on prosecutions or other forms of sanctions, we ought to look at what it means for these reports to receive the appropriate uptake. Taking up a report means taking the speaker to have the proper first-personal relation to the topic they are discussing. By issuing reports, speakers called for trust from their audiences, both in the truth of their testimony and also trust that survivors *are able* to speak to their own life experiences. Recognizing the reports of #MeToo means placing survivors as active epistemic and discursive agents within their own narratives.

III. UNSILENCED SPEECH

Feminist philosophers have long noted the ways survivors' speech has been silenced and dismissed. One way this happens is when survivors' testimony about the violations they've endured is rendered *unspeakable*.[9] Survivors might say the words, recounting their violation, but audiences don't give the uptake needed for that speech to have any impact. That is, audiences don't take survivors to be saying anything at all. In order to successfully perform a speech act, speakers must receive uptake from their audiences. Audiences draw on linguistic conventions, social norms, and contextual features of the interaction to properly take up speech acts. Broad social conventions render survivors' speech unintelligible as any kind of speech act. Note that this is a common response to men's testimony about being subject to sexual violation: awkward silence, perhaps some laughter, and then changing the subject. Lacking a framework to govern how to interpret this speech, the audience doesn't take it as anything at all.

Of course, survivors' speech isn't always wholly silenced. But when survivors are taken as doing *something* with their speech, they often still labor under the dual burdens of epistemic and discursive injustice. Epistemic injustice, in which survivors aren't taken as credible *knowers*, leads to dismissing survivors as lying or mistaken (see responses to Christine Blasey Ford's Congressional testimony for a striking instance of this).[10] Again, social conventions structure audiences to disregard survivors' accounts of their sexual violation, this time on the basis of survivors' status as either untrustworthy or incompetent epistemic agents. Either way, audiences take themselves to be justified in dismissing the survivor's account since it's not rooted in true facts about the world.

Other times, survivors aren't dismissed due to presumed lack of credibility, but rather are taken as issuing a wholly different sort of speech act altogether: instead of making assertions about the world, survivors are taken as issuing *expressives*.[11] These wholly personal speech acts express the speaker's emotional state, but don't call on the audience to recognize any propositional content about features of the world. When a speaker says, "My boss is sexually harassing me," the response they receive is, "I'm so sorry you're feeling that way." To the degree the audience member feels called on to do anything further in response to this,

they might follow up with, "What can I do to make you feel better?" But expressives don't make truth-claims about the world, and so the audience isn't called on to respond with anything more substantive. This is a form of what Kukla terms "discursive injustice," where a disempowered speaker is unable to do with their speech as they properly ought to be able to do, and instead their speech is taken up in a way that reinforces their disempowerment.[12] Treating survivors as hyperemotional and denying them the possibility of factual statements about the world further solidifies survivors' lack of social power.

The #MeToo movement signifies a substantial shift in the dominant interpretation and uptake given to survivors' speech. Quite clearly, survivors were taken as doing *something* when they spoke; the speech didn't simply disappear into a void. The more than 19 million Tweets in just one year, the thinkpieces, rallies, conferences, and continued attention to #MeToo all illustrate that at least some sort of uptake was secured. Moreover, survivors weren't merely taken as venting about their internal emotional states; the participants' speech wasn't simply dismissed as hysterical or angry. Rather, they were generally taken as issuing a statement that had some sort of propositional content. Neither were the participants all simply dismissed as lying or confused or misguided. While, of course, many people did ignore or disregard the movement, #MeToo seems to mark a shift in the dominant frameworks that governs how we take up survivors' speech. Overwhelmingly, survivors were recognized as speaking to their own experiences. Of course, all the traditional forms of dismissal are still occurring; the traditional forms of silencing have not been wholly supplanted by this new interpretive framework. But #MeToo heralds an important addition to our social norms, where the statement "me too" is now readily legible as a report on the speaker's lived experiences. Within #MeToo, we saw survivors' speech become speakable in a way it traditionally hasn't been.

Even the resistance to #MeToo illustrates this shift. The typical pushback to the movement has centered on asking if #MeToo "has gone too far." The thought here tends to be that innocuous interactions are being interpreted as sexual harassment or assault; we've gone "too far" in what we label as sexual violations. But the crucial point to note is that even the detractors recognize the survivors' speech as the action it is. They are giving uptake to survivors' speech as a having propositional content about the survivor's own experiences; the dismissal comes at the level of how survivors label those experiences. While survivors may still be dismissed, they're no longer being entirely silenced.

CONCLUSION

If we misconstrue the movement as being comprised primarily of accusations, this puts the focus on whether or not sanctions have occurred. With this focus it's easy to think the movement was ineffectual. But the survivors of #MeToo were doing something different. They were exerting ownership over their experiences and were calling on others to recognize both their authority over and the concrete reality of those experiences. Once we recognize what sort of action the participants in #MeToo were doing, we can see the substantive ways in which they succeeded.

We are still working out how to respond to the reports issued in #MeToo. There needs to be large social change so that sexual violations are no longer supported and enabled by the institutions in which many of us are immersed. We need to find better ways to hold perpetrators accountable for the sexual violations they enact, and we need to do so far more consistently. But in order for those changes to occur, we first needed people to recognize a *need* for them to occur. #MeToo heralded a shift in dominant interpretations of survivors' speech, where survivors were able to assert authority over lived experiences of sexual violation. This opened up the possibility for audiences to recognize how prevalent these experiences are and the need to make substantive changes to combat these violations. #MeToo marked a change in the possibilities available for what survivors can do with their speech. Though there's still much work to be done, this is an important success that we ought to celebrate.

NOTES

1. CBS News 2017.

2. Anderson and Toor, "How Social Media Users Have Discussed Sexual Harassment Since #MeToo Went Viral."

3. I'm going to follow standard practice and use "survivor" to refer to a person who has been subject to sexual violation. I recognize, though, that not everyone with such experiences self-identifies this way—sometimes because they do not consider their experience to be egregious enough to warrant the term "survivor" and sometimes because "survivor" seems to imply that the experience is in the past, while their trauma moves with them through life. I also recognize that this is, to an extent, begging the question—using this term presupposes that the speaker really has been sexually violated. This last part is deliberate; given the widespread dismissal of experiences of sexual violation here I opt to err on the side of belief.

4. Kukla and Lance, *Yo! and Lo! The Pragmatic Topography of the Space of Reasons*.

5. Ibid.

6. Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences."

7. "Audience member" here is again maximally broad, and refers to anyone who hears, reads, sees, or otherwise takes up the speech act.

8. Moran, "Getting Told and Being Believed."

9. Langton, "Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts."

10. Dotson, "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing"; and Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*.

11. Kukla, "Performative Force, Convention, and Discursive Injustice."

12. Ibid.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, Monica, and Skye Toor. "How Social Media Users Have Discussed Sexual Harassment Since #MeToo Went Viral." *Pew Research Center*. October 11, 2018. Accessed June 2019. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/11/how-social-media-users-have-discussed-sexual-harassment-since-metoo-went-viral/.

CBS News. "More Than 12M "Me Too" Facebook Posts, Comments, Reactions in 24 Hours." *CBS News*. October 17, 2017. Accessed June 2019. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/metoo-more-than-12-million-facebook-posts-comments-reactions-24-hours/.

Derrida, Jacques. "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences." In *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alan Bass, 232–50. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966/1978.

Dotson, Kristie. "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing." *Hypatia* 26, no. 2 (2011): 236–57.

Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power & the Ethics of Knowing*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Kukla, Rebecca. "Performative Force, Convention, and Discursive Injustice." *Hypatia* 29, no. 2 (2012): 440–57.

Kukla, Rebecca, and Mark Lance. *Yo! and Lo! The Pragmatic Topography of the Space of Reasons*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Langton, Rae. "Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts." *Philosophical Affairs* 22, no. 4 (1993): 293–330.

Moran, Richard. "Getting Told and Being Believed." *Philosophers' Imprint* 5, no. 5 (2005): 1–29.

#MeToo?

Lori Watson
UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

INTRODUCTION

The #MeToo movement has moved us closer to what no law or prior social movement has yet to do: it has created significant social acknowledgment and *belief* of the pervasiveness of sexual harassment and sexual violence. Prior interventions, notably sexual harassment law and accompanying consciousness-raising, created the context for survivors to speak, defined their injury as one of inequality, and paved the way for the #MeToo movement to emerge as powerfully as it has. Against that backdrop, #MeToo has become a forceful social movement shifting the burden of proof away from survivors and placing it on perpetrators, where it always belonged. This shift from a kind of a priori suspicion of survivors' testimony to a predisposition to believe them marks a moment with incredible potential for transformation of the culture of disbelief and degradation of survivors.

Yet, as is so common with social movements aiming to increase the standing of subordinated groups, there is an undercurrent of a backlash. #Himtoo and other forms of victim blaming and denial are ever present in conservative circles and social media. And the fact that Brett Kavanaugh was confirmed to the Supreme Court of the United States amidst multiple accusations of sexual violence and harassment and in the face of the very powerful testimony of Christine Blasey Ford was a stark reminder that male power will consolidate itself when real power is at stake. This backlash, however, hasn't fully undermined and overtaken the power of #MeToo, and that suggests that the cultural shift has legs that may well underwrite the social transformation feminists have been working toward for some time.

Still, there is work to do to sustain this momentum and broaden its reach. Intersectional inequalities, including those on the basis of race, class, sexuality, disability status, as well as gender expression and identity mean that the power of #MeToo is unequally distributed. The aforementioned credibility boost attaches more or less to survivors' testimony depending upon their social location. The more socially subordinated, the more inequality on the basis of group membership, the less credibility or support is extended. The potential power of #MeToo depends on equality within it; hierarchies of standing that underwrite

social inequality such that only some women finally get their moment of justice, whether legal or social, must be dismantled for the reality of the #MeToo moment to unfold. Articulating and calling attention to the experiences of the most socially marginalized, across all forms of intersecting inequalities, is essential for the power of #MeToo to bring about the form of social change to which its visionaries and the rest of us aspire.

Arguably, the primary consequence of #MeToo has been to expose both the commonality and pervasiveness of heterosexual sexual violence and harassment. #MeToo has brought the analysis of heterosexual sexuality as structured by relations of domination and subordination, power and powerlessness, constituted by male power to coerce, extract, and demand sexual access to women as a social entitlement, into public social consciousness in a broader fashion than previous social movements were able to do. Same-sex sexual harassment and violence has played a significantly lesser role in the #MeToo movement. To the extent that same-sex sexual violence and harassment have received attention, or survivors have spoken out, it has largely been men revealing such abuse by other men. Same-sex sexual harassment or sexual violence between women has not been a part of the #MeToo movement. It is fair to say that, as far as #MeToo goes, woman-on-woman sexual violence and harassment has not yet found expression.

There may be important social-psychological reasons for this lacuna: First, as a sheer numbers game, there are likely far fewer of such instances. But they are not zero. And yet, same-sex sexual harassment and violence between women has not found a home in the #MeToo movement. Second, as is well known, members of socially subordinated and marginalized groups are often reluctant to call out or report on other members of such groups; they often fear, rightly, that reports of "bad behavior" on some members of the group will be used to taint and smear the entire group. The anticipation of social cost of such a backlash often prevents such reporting. Third, those subject to it may not readily conceptualize woman-on-woman sexual harassment or sexual violence as "like" male forms of sexual harassment and violence. Fourth, fear and shame of public ridicule, harassment, or worse often keep the most socially unequal persons from speaking their truth.

The aim of my comments is to shed some light on same-sex sexual harassment between women. In particular, I want to explore the gendered dynamics that shape and define such harassment, revealing the layered power dynamics at work. The fact that the harassment or sexual violence may occur between same-sex persons doesn't thereby make it any less gendered. Of course, there is a wide variety of gender expression within the lesbian, bi, trans, queer, and questioning community. And one need not be self-identified as a member of our community to sexually harass a woman; straight women, too, harass women or gender queer persons in sexual ways. Perhaps contrary to common assumptions, same-sex sexual harassment does, in fact, have gendered structure. Social scripts of masculinity and femininity mediate and define the relational status of the women, though perhaps with some less rigidity than

opposite-sex cases of sexual harassment. The structure of gender might be most clear in cases in which the harasser is "the masculine one" defined in relation to "the feminine one." But even in cases when the sexual harasser is marked "the feminine one" and the harassed "the masculine-yet-woman," in my experience and observation, gendered power dynamics mediate the interaction. The masculine-identified women occupies a space of sometimes being conferred forms of male power, but always a woman, and this unique gender constellation can reveal how gender power tracks and reinforces social inequality on the basis of sex.

BECAUSE OF SEX

Sexual harassment is "[g]enerally understood as unwelcome verbal, visual, or sexual conduct, typically in a context of inequality."[1] Though, "[h]arassment does not have to be of a sexual nature, however, can include offensive remarks about a person's sex. For example, it is illegal to harass a woman by making offensive comments about women in general."[2] Key to the legal concept of sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination is that the harassment is "because of the sex" of the harassed. In other words, but for the sex of the victim, the harassment would not have occurred. And yet put another way, sexual harassment happens, has the structure it does, "because of the victim's gender."[3] However, precisely how to understand and define "because of sex" has proven less than straightforward in legal cases, and its doctrinal evolution took some time. It wasn't until 1998 that the Supreme Court of the United States recognized that same-sex sexual harassment was "because of sex" and thus a prohibited form of sex discrimination under the auspices of Title VII. In *Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Services, Inc.*, the Court held that same-sex sexual harassment is a violation of sex equality rights. Leading up to this case and subsequent to its holding, some have argued that same-sex sexual harassment should be understood as sexual orientation discrimination rather than sex discrimination, despite the fact that there is no federal prohibition against same-sex discrimination. Perhaps this suggestion is grounded in thinking through the various constellations of man-on-man sexual harassment, the underlying thought being that given male privilege, sexual harassment directed at men by other men, even if sexual in content or on the basis of sex-stereotyping, isn't sex discrimination, it must be something else. This thought is mistaken. Perhaps, too, a similar thought underlies misrecognition of the gendered forms of woman-on-woman sexual harassment. What *Oncale* embraced, as legal theorists, most notably Catharine A. MacKinnon, had been advancing for some time, is that under conditions of inequality, sex and gender are socially fused such that gender power dynamics are not determined by biology, but rather, the social structure of gender, and its dominant form, heterosexuality.[4]

WOMAN-ON-WOMAN SEXUAL HARASSMENT

As I aim to shed light on the gendered structure of woman-on-woman sexual harassment both as a phenomenon that exists and as a gendered, sex-based phenomenon, two questions guide my analysis here: Where is the power? And how is it gendered? Putting these questions together, my comments aim to reveal the forms of gendered power that

are often operative in woman-on-woman sexual harassment, revealing the ways in which same-sex sexual harassment is shot through with gendered forms of inequality. My examples will largely draw on harassment aimed at masculine-identified women. This is perhaps the less intuitive case, though for that reason I think it is particularly illuminating. Also, it is my experience. In addition, though, I think that this particular gendered position is revealing insofar as being socially read as masculinely gendered may serve to obfuscate the power dynamics at work when people like me are subjected to unwanted sexual advances or attention.

First, such harassment often rests on an implicit assumption of sexual availability, with all the gendered assumptions that attach to femininity and masculinity. Feminine-presenting women harassed by other women, whether the other women identify as feminine or masculine or neither, are sexualized in their femininity. As such, the harasser often positions herself vis-à-vis the harassed as seeking to gain access in ways that demand polite acceptance, demur passivity, or engagement that affirms the sexual value, attraction, or power of the harasser. The gendered power dynamics are shaped by the social scripts of masculinity and femininity irrespective of the same-sexness of the parties. The harassed qua subordinate is expected to receive unwelcomed advances with aplomb, if not immediate acceptance. The positional power of the harasser situates them as entitled to demand, force sexual interactions upon, or otherwise press unwanted sexual overtures upon their prey. Where the harassed is clearly normatively feminine[5] and the harasser is read as more masculine presenting, this dynamic may be most clear. However, the same power dynamics are at play for "masculine"-identified women, where the harassment they receive is often from "feminine"-identified women.

The projection of masculinity onto women who present more masculinely often comes with the assumption that they are ever up for a sexual overture or encounter. Insofar as the social interpretation of masculine sexuality is projected onto us it carries with it the belief that masculine persons don't turn down sexual offers from anyone, ever. However, there is an interesting twist on the way in which the assumption of sexual availability functions in the context of the masculine-identified woman. She is still a woman, on some level, or in some way. And so, the assumption that she play a caregiving role, attending to the needs and vulnerability of the woman making the sexual advance, is also often operative in these contexts. In my experience, the way this can play out is that the (feminine) woman making an unwanted sexual advance projects the sexual nature of the interaction upon the masculine-identified woman. So, for example, she may sexualize the masculinely identified woman and then follow up such a remark in ways that shift the responsibility of the sexual content of the interaction to the masculinely identified woman, such as making a sexual comment and following it up with "you are such a flirt." The interaction is shot through with gendered scripts, and the power dynamics are interestingly marked by the combination of masculine-yet-woman sex status of the harassed. The projection of masculinity and accompanying norms onto women who are read as socially masculine,

or self-identify as such, does not serve to undermine the requirement of a complicit femininity in receiving the unwelcome overtures of other women. Thus, the position of the advancer, harasser, often suggests that the sexual invitation is a form of flattery and assumes, as such, it is or ought to be welcomed. Refusal or failing to give uptake to the harassment often comes with the explicit or implicit judgment that you are a bitch, or a tease, or uptight, or other similar responsibility-shifting judgments.

The point is that despite the same-sex status of the harasser and the harassed, and even the socially read or imputed gender presentation of either party, the power dynamics are such that social femininity, even if not conjoined with physical presentation of outward femininity, is imposed upon the harassed. Accept the overture, comply, be polite, affirm the harasser's sexual status or be a bitch, a tease, or someone who can't take a joke.

A second prominent dynamic in sexual harassment, both opposite-sexed and same-sexed harassment, is the eroticization of "otherness": many members of intersecting subordinated groups report the ways in which their "difference"—inequality, in fact—is sexualized and tokenized as "exotic." One form of such "exoticism" within lesbian, bi, and other non-normative sexualities is "female masculinity" as it has been called,[6] or "butchness," relying on the older term, or gender non-conformity such that masculinity and femininity are combined or shunned, say, through androgyny. Such "exotic otherness" is often fetishized among some women who are sexually interested in women with masculine or other forms of gender-non conforming appearance. Sometimes this is marked by questioning and curious women feeling free to say things like "if I were ever going to be with a woman, I would be attracted to or want to be with a woman like you." This kind of unwelcomed advance also reflects the false belief that gays and lesbians are sexually available to any interested same-sex other—the false belief that gays and lesbians don't have discriminating tastes or preferences, but are just willing to have sex with any other available interested party. Sometimes the projection of "exoticness" comes from other lesbians or bi women who want to announce or otherwise make clear their interest in "women like you" irrespective of any indication on your part as to whether you are interested in them or welcome such suggestions. The insertion of sexual comments or overtures targeting you, and quite independent of your wants, desires, and needs, or expressions of them, is one of the primary ways in which male sexuality is forced upon women. That women can take this position vis-à-vis other women doesn't make it any less gendered. Sexuality is structured in the first instance by normative heterosexuality and male dominance, and the eroticization of "otherness"—social subordinates—is one manifestation of such power. This dynamic occurs across and within same-sex sexual harassment and the same power structure underlies it: erotization of inequality as difference.

A third feature of the way in which gendered power relations are expressed in sexual harassment is the way in which persons who are harassed are often reduced to their sexuality. This experience is often characterized,

in part, by those harassed as a reduction of self to one's sexuality, such that one is seen and treated merely as a sexual object for the use and enjoyment of the harasser. This experience is common to women, even as it takes on particularized forms across and intersecting with other forms of inequality, such as race, class, nationality, and so on. Gays and lesbians, too, live in a world that frequently reduce them to their sexuality; they are seen and treated as their sexuality. This reduction of self to sexuality is no less prominent in same-sex sexual harassment, or when the harasser shares a sexual identity with the harassed, for the structure of such harassment involves unwanted sexual attention or demands on the harasser's terms. The power of the harasser to define, construct, and impose their vision of the sexual status and interests of the harassed is constitutive of sexual harassment per se. The specificity of such power dynamics in the case of same-sex sexual harassment in particular includes not just the reduction to sex-object but to a marginalized sexuality in a context in which much of the lived experience of such persons includes such reduction.

A further feature of sexual harassment, well documented in discussions of the phenomena and especially prominent in outing the behavior of harassers in the #MeToo movement, are the ways in which harassers count on the subordinated status of the harassed to protect them from accusations or accountability. To the extent that the woman experiencing harassment is also socially situated vis-à-vis the harasser through other layers of inequality, race, class, non-normative gender expression, her membership in these groups with intersecting forms of inequality serves to undermine her credibility and prop up her harasser. Her "difference"—i.e., unequal social position—works against her in positioning her as a target and, likely, in any subsequent attempt to call out or report her harasser. #MeToo has had some efficacy in shifting the responsibility back to where it belongs, upon perpetrators. Whether and how effective that shift may be for women experiencing same-sex sexual harassment is unknown. Gays and lesbians are at heightened risk for blame shifting, especially in the context of dominant ideologies that pathologize gay and lesbian sexuality.

A further harm of same-sex sexual harassment is the way in which it functions to deprive the harassed of something like "insider status," at least as it concerns gender group membership. What I have in mind here is same-sex sexual harassment, for example, between women, where the harassed is seeking community or connection with the harasser simply as a woman, or as a lesbian, or member of the broader LGBTQIA community, and that connection is thwarted because of the sexual harassment. The experience of harassment as sexualized object positions the harassed as outsider, in some sense, to the community or connection. She is not and cannot be in that context "just one of the girls." The deprivation of inclusion within a community from which one seeks refuge is an especially harmful form of further subordination.

Though the examples and categories of analysis offered here in no way aim to be exhaustive of the phenomena and experience of sexual harassment, whether understood broadly or in the more specific case of same-sex sexual harassment, they identify some of the key gendered dynamics of such harassment. Whether the harasser is the same-sex as the harassed, the power dynamics, the imposition of unwelcomed advances or comments serve to construct the power position of the harasser while enacting the subordination of the harassed.

CONCLUSION

Part of my motivation for writing this paper came from a recent discussion with a similarly situated gender non-conforming friend; although I identify as a woman and lesbian and they do not, our social presentation of gender is very similar. I am often read socially as a man, and "pass" regularly even though I do not explicitly aim to pass as a man; I do, however, accept whatever gender assignment any stranger projects on to me without correcting them, partly for safety, partly out of exhaustion with the whole damn gender thing. In any case, the friend and I were discussing the ways in which we are routinely sexualized by women, sometimes sexually harassed, and as we were discussing it, we were sharing the ways in which our gender presentation is read in ways that both seem to serve to "authorize" the harassment and to structure it. And in that sharing, I came to fully think through and own all the various moments in which I have felt unwanted sexual attention, as a butch lesbian, which is how I most identify, and how unable I was to sometimes name it and other times to do anything effective about it. I engaged in all the forms of self-blame, self-shame, catering to the harasser, excusing her, working to make her feel more comfortable, when I avoided or declined the unwelcomed advances, and many other forms of, well, self-denial. All this from someone who identifies as feminist, has read the relevant literature, and would support and assist any other woman in calling out or otherwise recognizing sexual harassment for what it is. Thus, what my conversation with my friend gave me was my own #MeToo moment, and central to its possibility, for me, was the shared experiences of someone like me in the salient respects. I haven't known many "like me." Thus, my humble hope is to have shed some light on the phenomenon of same-sex sexual harassment in ways that resonate for women, or others, like me, as it were, such that #MeToo includes us.

NOTES

1. Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Sex Equality*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Foundation Press, 2015), 1002.

2. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "Sexual Harassment" Definition, available at https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/sexual_harassment.cfm.

3. Catharine A. MacKinnon, "Afterword," *Directions in Sexual Harassment Law*, eds. Catharine A. MacKinnon and Reva B. Siegal (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 676.

4. See, for example, Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Toward A Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), where she writes, "In the concomitant sexual paradigm, the ruling norms of sexual attraction and expression are fused with gender idenity formation and affirmation, such that sexuality equals heterosexuality equal the sexuality of (male) dominance and (female) submission" (131).

5. I use "normatively feminine" here rather than the more commonly accepted "cis" to denote persons for whom their gender expression aligns with the social interpretation of their bodies. For reasons that are too long and complex to enumerate here, I am not a fan of "cis" as it now stands in for persons who don't reject, or accept in some sense, their gender assignment at birth as a contrast to trans or gender non-conforming persons. While I recognize that persons who live in the world in ways that are more comfortable, in some sense, with their assigned at birth gender can do enjoy forms of privilege that others lack, I think the reductive dichotomy of "cis" vs. "trans" is itself not especially helpful for diagnosing that privilege.

6. See, for example, Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998).

#MeToo vs. Mea Culpa: On the Risks of Public Apologies

Alice MacLachlan
YORK UNIVERSITY

1. INTRODUCTION

One need hardly be an expert in public apologies to conclude that the 2017 #MeToo resurgence on social media produced some spectacularly bad ones.[1] Harvey Weinstein, the movie mogul at the center of the celebrity turn in #MeToo, began his apology by blaming his upbringing in the 1960s for his actions in the 1990s and beyond. He ended by ranting about the NRA and Donald Trump.[2] After actor Anthony Rapp accused fellow actor Kevin Spacey of assault when Rapp was a minor, Spacey chose to offer a hypothetical apology—"If I did behave as he describes" —only to then seize the moment and throw himself a coming out party, publicly identifying as a gay man for the first time.[3] And after four women accused him of sexual misconduct, chef Mario Batali issued a letter apologizing to his friends, family, fans, and team—but not to his victims— and then threw in a recipe for pizza dough cinnamon rolls as a postscript.[4]

More predictably, there was a spate of the usual non-apologies and quasi-apologies, that is to say, performances that might *appear* to say sorry without ever quite admitting wrongdoing, taking responsibility, or acknowledging the impact of the speaker's actions on their victims. Actor Dustin Hoffman offered regrets for "anything I might have done" while disputing all the things he was actually accused of doing;[5] fellow actor James Franco denied the accusations but insisted he nevertheless supported his accusers' newfound voice.[6] YA author Sherman Alexie denied all the specifics while going on to admit, almost cryptically, "there are women telling the truth about my behaviour" in his apology, and so on, and so on.[7]

Bad apologies can be frustrating, infuriating, and profoundly painful—in some ways, they are more hurtful than outright denials of wrongdoing. Certainly, the ambivalent, obfuscating public statements described above deserve our critique and condemnation. But what if they had been better? That is, what if the #MeToo movement had produced, along with an upsurge of truth-telling and solidarity among survivors and allies, an equivalent rise in genuinely sincere statements of responsibility and remorse by perpetrators and collaborators? I want to suggest that, while perhaps preferable to what we did get, this would not have been a straightforwardly happy ending. That is, I believe the risks of public apologies are not limited to the faults and flaws of bad apologies; in many ways, good ones are more insidious. As a result, my focus in this essay is not primarily how we might assess and compare individual apologies, or even what makes for a *good* #MeToo apology in general. Instead, I identify three risks to both *good* and bad public apologies and demonstrate how these risks intensify when it comes to the gender politics of #MeToo, arguing that the aims of #MeToo may be in tension with and even be undermined by the practice of public *mea culpae*.

2. SORRY STORIES

The #MeToo apologies I am discussing are *public* apologies.[8] More specifically, they are *public-personal* apologies, rather than official or institutional apologies: public figures addressing their own individual actions. There now exists a respectable philosophical literature analyzing the nature and value of both public and private apologies and debating the standards by which we ought to evaluate them.[9] Since my aim here is not to rank individual #MeToo apologies as apologies, but to note overarching trends in the *practice* of apologizing, I do not dedicate much space to the topic here. Instead, a broad or inclusive approach to what counts as an apology will serve useful for identifying the risks associated with characteristic instances of the practice.

An apology takes place in the aftermath of wrongful harm. One person (the apologizer) offers it to another (the recipient), who can accept or refuse it. Apologies express or imply that the actions in question took place and were wrongful and harmful, that the recipient was wrongfully harmed by them,[10] and that the speaker takes responsibility for their actions *and* censures or disavows them. Many apologies also express a commitment to some remedy, reform, or repair.[11] Finally, apologies typically express some appropriate affect, e.g., sorrow or shame— an emotional expression of the wrongdoer's self-evaluation and current moral commitments.

The value of a given apology will usually depend on whether the speaker is able to persuade her audience of the truth of these claims and—in particular—the depth and sincerity of her responsibility and disavowal, her appropriate understanding of how the victim has been hurt, as well as the reliability of her commitment to change.[12] Together, these indicate that the speaker is appropriately apologetic, that she has shifted her beliefs, attitudes, dispositions and behaviors in the relevant ways. Other factors may play a role too: the timing of the apology, the events precipitating it (and, indeed, following it, so that our assessment of an apology cannot be made conclusively in the moment), and the conditions under which it is offered. Finally, there is an undeniable aesthetic dimension to a good or even outstanding apology. As Mihaela Mihai puts it, an apology is an *imaginative* act—a recasting and re-imagining of the relationship between act, agent, and recipient—and so "a check-list model of apology fails to capture faithfully the kind of imaginative act that an apology must be."[13]

Not all #MeToo apologies were bad apologies. None were perfect (I suspect few of us have given or received a perfect apology) but several met some basic threshold for all or most of these elements.[14] But the problem with #MeToo apologies is not simply that they need to be better.

3. RISK #1: APOLOGIZING TO *WHOM?*

The first risk of apologizing in public is that the primary victims of wrong will be overlooked in the wrongdoer's effort to address and reassure multiple audiences and—in particular—the broader public on whom the institution or public figure relies (e.g., state apologies that aim to reassure the voting public or corporate apologies that aim to establish broader market trust).[15] It is telling that the framing of many #MeToo apologies suggest that it would be *insufficient* merely to apologize to the woman or women in question; she is often displaced altogether in the apologizer's concern for (in Mario Batali's words) "family, friends, fans, and team" or is blurred into the impersonal, easily substitutable "anyone" who might have taken offense. Weinstein would only specify "colleagues." Other apologizers go out of the way to make it clear that while they are apologizing, they offer that apology to anyone *but* their actual accusers (for example, Sherman Alexie). The most important people in the equation are erased.

Even those apologies that do name and acknowledge the victim(s) may dilute that focus in paying equal attention to secondary victims and those affected not by the apologizer's actions but by the events following their public accusations. Take, for example, two #MeToo apologies that actually succeed along many of the axes I described above: those by Senator Al Franken and stand-up comedian Louis CK.

In November 2017 Leanne Tweeden, a news anchor, accused Franken of forcibly groping and kissing her on a USO tour (for which she provided photographic evidence). Franken's eventual public apology began by naming his victim directly, "The first thing I want to do is apologize: to Leeann," but then went on to immediately list "everyone else who was part of that tour, to everyone who has worked for me . . . everyone I represent . . . everyone who counts on me to be an ally and supporter and champion of women."[16]

Ten days earlier, Louis CK had issued a public statement, admitting, for the first time, that he would expose himself and masturbate in front of women. While the comedian never quite brought himself to say the words "sorry" or "apologize," he did begin by immediately acknowledging his victims and their truths: "I want to address the stories told to *The New York Times* by five women named Abby, Rebecca, Dana, Julia who felt able to name themselves and one who did not. These stories are true." But this direct acknowledgment was later diluted, first, by his extended meditation on the relationship between power and consent that dwelt a little too long on how universally he had been "admired" and, again, when CK concluded by saying, "I'd be remiss to exclude the hurt that I've brought on people who I work with and have worked with whose professional and personal lives have been impacted by all of this, including projects currently in production. " CK went on to name the "hardship and anguish" faced by his manager

(who played a not-so-minor role in pressuring women to cover up the stories) and FX executives.[17]

While, on one level, this widened audience is perhaps noble—it recognizes that the unfolding drama is *also* something the perpetrator brought on themselves—it also has the rhetorical effect of treating the public shaming as a second, equally significant harm, even equating the two traumas. Indeed, in the predictable but disappointing backlash to #MeToo, several have suggested that being called out for sexual assault is a harm equivalent or greater than sexual assault itself. Take these remarks by comedian Norm MacDonald: "There are very few people that have gone through what they have, losing everything in a day. Of course, people will go, 'What about the victims?' But you know what? The victims didn't have to go through that."[18] MacDonald is not an outlier; others in the industries most affected by #MeToo have made similar comparisons.

Because #MeToo apologies didn't arise directly following the *harm*, but after a later and highly public moment of accountability—one that probably felt like a bigger deal to the apologizer—they tend to address the latter as much as the former, almost as if the apologizer is being asked to weigh in on #MeToo as a whole, rather than their own actions, shifting their role from target to ally.[19]

4. RISK #2: FROM WOMEN'S LIVES TO MEN'S FEELINGS

The second risk in the growing practice of public apologies is their tendency to shift our attention from accuser to accused. Like so many women, I remember quite viscerally when #MeToo rippled across my social media in October 2017. It was invigorating and heartbreaking in equal parts to read familiar iterations of the same story: harassment, pressure, coercion, manipulation, assault, silencing, denial. Sexual violence was filling cyberspace, media spaces, and daily spaces—and not as the plot on a crime-of-the-week TV show or murder podcast, as a depressing set of statistics, or other familiar tropes. Rather, it was being told in the voices of women, genderqueer, non-binary, and other marginalized folk, about the *experiences* of women and marginalized folk, and the very act of telling was taking on a new and collective power from those margins.[20]

In many ways, the ability to call forth public acknowledgment—and even apology—was the most obvious (and sought after) manifestation of that power. Apologies will always matter insofar as victims and survivors *want* them, and insofar as they represent genuine accountability *to* those victims and survivors. But receiving the apologies of wrongdoers requires that victims pass the mic and the wrongdoer take center stage. Our attention moves from victim's stories to the wrongdoer's own accounting of what happened, why it happened, and how. In one sense, that first act of power—filling up public space with women's experiences of sexual violence, told in women's voices—was substantially diminished the minute perpetrators started talking.

And when perpetrators picked up the mic, they told us of their confusion and amnesia, remorse and shame, guilt and

sadness, who they were and weren't, what they would or would never do, what they resolved to do going forward, the ordeal they had experienced simply by being named, where they stood on the #MeToo movement and—in great detail—of their tremendous respect for women. The vast majority of #MeToo apologies focused on the apologizers themselves: their perceptions ("I don't remember," "I misread the situation," "indications . . . it was consensual," "I told myself it was ok"), their intentions ("that was not my intention," "however unintentionally") their emotions ("the hardest regret to live with," "I am horrified and bewildered," "I feel disgust with myself") and their character ("it's not reflective of who I am," "I am not an assaulter," "I have the utmost respect for women," "I'm trying to do better").

The spate of #MeToo apologies turned our attention away from what had happened to victims to what *was* now happening in the inner—and outer—lives of perpetrators. The apology became a report on the state of the soul of the apologizer: an inner assessment on which, coincidentally, the apologizer is a unique authority. Kate Manne has described her groundbreaking reconception of misogyny as a shift in focus from what men feel to what women face: a sociopolitical rather than a psychological phenomenon.[21] The narrative shift in #MeToo story from protest storytelling to public apology effectively reversed this trend, drawing our attention away from what was actually happening to women in the world to what particular men did or did not remember, how they did or did not understand their own actions, and even what they felt and thought about the broader #MeToo movement—as when the apologies became opportunities to (re)assert one's credentials as a feminist ally.

This shift in attention and, thus, in narrative control is worrying for a second reason: namely, it shifts who has authority over the story and how it gets remembered; who has *credibility*. And while it might seem that the person who publicly admits to groping or harassing or assaulting women—or even to being in such a drunken or drug-induced haze that he can neither confirm nor deny these acts—would lack credibility, this isn't always the case for several reasons.

First, the perpetrators were largely known to the public, familiar and often beloved; for the most part their accusers were less so. The perpetrators were recognizable individuals, public figures, even anti-heroes. Their accusers were a collective and, increasingly, seen as a "mob."[22] Second, the #MeToo perpetrators who publicly apologized were powerful and successful men—mostly straight, mostly white, mostly able-bodied, almost entirely wealthy, and in many cases beloved, and therefore benefited from the privilege afforded to that demographic. They were speakers who possess what Kristie Dotson, Miranda Fricker, and others have identified as a "credibility excess," a systematic bias in their favor in the economy of credibility.[23] Their accusers were—almost universally—members of subordinated groups who are likely taken as *less* competent and *less* trustworthy.

Third, the public apology—as genre—actually strengthens rather than weakens the moral and narrative credibility of the apologizer. As Elizabeth Spelman writes, the apology is a vehicle for "vice nested in virtue"—since the apologizer both owns up to wrongdoing and disavows it—which allows the apologizer to "wrap herself in a glorious mantle of rehabilitation."[24] Someone who is capable of apologizing for wrongdoing can claim (now) to know right from wrong, (now) to understand their responsibilities and their accountability, (now) to have appropriate commitments to make *right* their past wrongs and repair their damage, and (now) to express that commitment in appropriate affect. Someone capable of doing so in public can claim a certain degree of moral courage, too. In other words, the public apology allows the apologizer to position themselves on the side of the angels, to draw attention to their other *good* works (past and future), to perform and even *lead* our shared horror at sexual violence and inequality. Even the non-apology affords the apologizer room to be morally generous, allowing that while they certainly didn't do *this* particular abhorrent thing, they can recognize their own lesser imperfections and take the opportunity to be better.

For example, Richard Dreyfuss issued a statement that almost, to my mind, ranked among the most thoughtful and reflective #MeToo responses out there, discussing the "complicated truth" of his life as "an asshole—the kind of performative masculine man my father modeled for me to be," admitting he disrespected himself and others, was swept up in celebrity, that he must redefine what it is to be a man, that what he did—who he was—was not ok, that even now he is "playing catch-up" to what is necessary. He even acknowledged he needs to rethink what he thought was a mutual flirtation. And yet, buried in the middle of this thoughtful exhortation is a flat-out denial: "I emphatically deny ever 'exposing' myself to Jessica Teich, whom I have considered a friend for 30 years." He acknowledges the effects of drugs, being drunk on power, that he is having to rethink every perception and relationship and interaction, that he *doesn't know anything* except for this one thing: that he is not guilty of the thing he is actually accused of. In effect, Dreyfuss makes it the one thing he is prepared to bet on. His generosity thus becomes the perfect denial, more plausible than if he had insisted on his wider righteousness.[25]

5. RISK #3: APOLOGY, EXILE, AND REDEMPTION

The narrative arc of the apology performs another redirection: #MeToo apologies turn our attention toward the question of male *redemption*. The offer of apology effectively marks the end of a period of wrongdoing, denial, and demands for accountability, and the beginning of a new arc of redemption—what we might call the first step in a comeback—the first premise of a syllogism that shifts next to forgiveness and concludes with absolution and rebirth.

After the first spate of credible #MeToo apologies, think pieces started emerging musing: "Do the men of #MeToo deserve to be forgiven?";[26] "How to find room for forgiveness in the #MeToo movement";[27] "Does forgiveness have a place in the #MeToo movement?"[28] These were not media assessments of the forgiveness already offered by victims, but critiques of the victims' apparent *failure* to do so. In other words, the salient public judgment was no

longer "Have these men been held accountable?" but—subtly different—"Are they candidates for redemption?" What was being assessed was no longer the experiences and the pain of women victims, but the experiences and the pain of male perpetrators: Had they suffered enough?

Again, it is useful here to turn to Kate Manne, who coined the term "himpathy" to describe our "tendency to pardon the hitherto historically dominant, especially when their currently down on their luck,"[29] noting especially "the excessive sympathy sometimes shown toward male perpetrators of sexual violence."[30] There are few better illustrations of the distorting effects of himpathy on our assessment of comparative harms than the remarks by Norm MacDonald I referenced above: "There are very few people that have gone through what they have, losing everything in a day. Of course, people will go, 'What about the victims?' But you know what? The victims didn't have to go through that'."

And yet, only a small minority of #MeToo perpetrators have faced charges, and many of those have had the charges dropped; almost none have faced conviction—despite a preponderance of editorial cartoons that fashioned the hashtag into the barred windows of a cell. Many #MeToo perpetrators have had their careers impacted, but not at the rate women who face harassment have. A 2018 Marketplace-Edison research poll found 46 percent of women who have experienced harassment say it caused them to quit their job or switch careers; many of the #MeToo accusers specifically described the career-impacting and career-destroying effects of their harms, especially since the perpetrators were often their bosses or superiors.[31] In other words, it is still far worse for one's career to be assaulted than to assault. Moreover, powerful perpetrators are better cushioned in their fall.

It is remarkable how many perpetrators are prepared to position themselves as either already primed to repent or as capable of authoritatively stating they have already done the relevant moral work. For example, when pressed about accusations of onset harassment and bullying, actor Jeffrey Tambor simply said, "I've reckoned with this" and refused to engage further.[32] Many #MeToo responses self-describe the apologizer as already having performed the requisite moral education. Newscaster Tom Ashbrook's *Boston Globe* editorial was titled "Is there room for redemption?" and was written only a few months after he was fired for abusive behavior on the job. It opened with the line "Boston, can we talk?" and explicitly concluded that, at least in his case, there was indeed—or should be—room for redemption.[33] Journalists John Hockenberry and Jian Ghomeshi wrote long, rambling reflections on the uniquely painful experience of "Exile" (the title of Hockenberry's piece in *Harper's*) that lamented being banished from the world—where, by "world," they presumably meant a uniquely privileged position of public influence.[34]

In other words, the public apology has been taken by perpetrators to be the starting whistle for a limited period of exile, after which the tide will have turned, the past will be buried, and things can return to what they were. Less than a year after their respective public disgraces, both Aziz Ansari and Louis CK have done stand-up sets in which they reference their #MeToo moments first obliquely and then directly, only to critique the movement for going too far, demanding too much, and talking too long. Implicit in each of these "returns" is the assumption that the apology—once offered—the last word on the matter. There is no attempt to discern and reflect on the fact that, as Lauren McKeon puts it in her *Walrus* article, "the women are not done talking yet."[35] Once the perpetrator has spoken and the apology been issued, such talk is no longer publicly read as a moving uprising but rather, the ranting of an embittered mob.

6. CONCLUSION

My aim in this discussion has not been prescriptive—"stop demanding and offering apologies!"—but cautiously diagnostic. As the practice of public apology becomes further entrenched in public perceptions of #MeToo, we need to become increasingly savvy consumers of public apologies. Doing so requires that we move beyond the question of whether or not a given instance is a "good" one; we need more than "good" apologies.

In the cases described above, I have demonstrated how public apologies, both good-enough and bad, risk displacing the victims of harm, unmooring the question of accountability from its relational underpinning. They also direct our attention away from the suffering of the accuser, and toward the very present, publicly displayed, suffering of the accused. In doing so, they effectively rewrite #MeToo stories, complete with a new protagonist and a new narrative arc.

Indeed, analysis of #MeToo apologies draws our attention to two competing and potentially incompatible narratives of accountability and repair. The first—embraced by the #MeToo movement itself—presents accountability and repair as a question of reckoning, even revolution. It frames the misogyny of endemic assault and violence in Manne's terms: as a social-political phenomenon that predominantly impacts and affects women and marginalized people. This model is also relational: In telling their stories, #MeToo survivors situate themselves in relation to that broader phenomenon and to other survivors (quite literally, me *too*). The harms in question are repaired when the moral landscape is changed, and the social conditions have shifted; when perpetrators are reliably and systematically held accountable, and victims are reliably and systematically believed and protected.

Most #MeToo apologizers, on the other hand—and those who support, defend, and enable them—draw on a performative and even *purifying* model of accountability. On this model, the repair at issue is a matter of soul-searching and penitence; what needs fixing is interior and achieved through self-reflection and sustained—but not permanent—remorse. Repair takes place when the wrongdoer is (in their own lights) sufficiently sadder and better. So long as #MeToo apologies continue to enact the second model of repair, even the best of them will sit in tension with and even undermine the very goals of the #MeToo movement itself.

NOTES

1. #MeToo is a grassroots movement founded by black feminist activist Tarana Burke in 2006, whose aim is to support survivors of sexual violence—particularly Black women and girls—through community-based activism, with a goal of "build[ing] a community of advocates, driven by survivors, who will be at the forefront of creating solutions to interrupt sexual violence in their communities" ("Me Too. History & Vision" from the website of the Me Too Movement). In many ways #MeToo the movement has been coopted and distorted by #MeToo the cultural moment, when the hashtag went viral in 2017 after a wave of public accusations against media mogul Harvey Weinstein.

2. See "Statement from Harvey Weinstein," *The New York Times*, October 5, 2017.

3. See "Kevin Spacey Apologizes for Alleged Sex Assault with a Minor," CNN, October 31, 2017.

4. See "Mario Batali's Misconduct Apology Came with a Recipe," *TIME*, December 16, 2017.

5. See "Dustin Hoffman Apologizes After Allegations That He Sexually Harassed a 17-year-old Intern in 1985," *The Los Angeles Times*, November 1, 2017

6. "James Franco says accusations of sexual misconduct 'are not accurate'," *VOX*, January 10, 2018;

7. "Author Sherman Alexie Apologizes Amid Anonymous Allegations," *The Guardian*, March 1, 2018.

8. Not all #MeToo apologies are public apologies; some of the more moving accounts of apology in the #MeToo era have been women's private stories of being contacted by a former abuser or assaulter, and having that abuse or assault acknowledged for the first time. Indeed, non-celebrity #MeToo apologies are the focus of my current work-in-progress on this topic.

9. See, for example, Thompson, "The Apology Paradox"; Smith, *I Was Wrong*; Martin, "Owning Up and Lowering Down"; MacLachlan, "'Trust Me, I'm Sorry',"; and Russell, "The Paradox of Apology."

10. She might not be the only person harmed, in the case of multiple victims.

11. Many excellent apologies will open up this commitment to the recipient, asking rather than deciding what is to be done. This element is not always present; some repeat offenders may not be able to commit sincerely, and yet wish to apologize—in part for this very failure.

12. If the apologizer couches her apology in excuses and self-justifications, for example, and brings up past grievances to settle the score, the recipient may have good reason to doubt her apologetic sincerity.

13. Mihai, "When the State Says 'Sorry'," 209.

14. Those interested in an example of a good #MeToo apology are invited to listen to or read comedy writer Dan Harmon's apology to his fellow comedy writer and former colleague, Megan Ganz. After Ganz called out Harmon on Twitter for past harassment, Harmon dedicated seven minutes of his podcast to addressing, admitting, elaborating, and reflecting on Ganz's accusations. (See Bryn McIvor, "Dan Harmon Apology," YouTube.) Following his performance, Ganz publicly wrote the following: "Yes, I only listened because I expected an apology. But what I didn't expect was the relief I'd feel just hearing him say these things actually happened. I didn't dream it. I'm not crazy. Ironic that the only person who could give me that comfort is the one person I'd never ask. Please listen to it. It's only seven minutes long, but it is a masterclass in How to Apologize. He's not rationalizing or justifying or making excuses. He doesn't just vaguely acknowledge some general wrongdoing in the past. He gives a full account" (@MeganGanz, Twitter, January 11, 2018). See also "Megan Ganz on Dan Harmon's Apology: 'I Felt Vindicated'," *The New York Times*, January 20, 2018.

15. See MacLachlan, "'Trust Me, I'm Sorry'," for further elaboration and discussion of this risk.

16. "Read Al Franken's Apology Following Accusation of Groping and Kissing Without Consent," CNN, November 17, 2017.

17. "Louis CK Responds to Accusations: 'These Stories Are True'," *The New York Times*, November 10, 2017.

18. "Norm MacDonald Apologizes After #MeToo Comments," CNN, September 12, 2018.

19. Franken said, "what people think of me in light of this is far less important than what people think of women who continue to come forward to tell their stories. They deserve to be heard and believed. And they deserve to know that I am their ally and supporter" ("Read Al Franken's Apology Following Accusation of Groping and Kissing Without Consent," CNN, November 17, 2017). James Franco said, "But I completely support people coming out and being able to have a voice, because they didn't have a voice for so long. So I don't want to shut them down in any way" ("James Franco says accusations of sexual misconduct 'are not accurate'," *VOX*, January 10, 2018). Also, Aziz Ansari declared, "I continue to support the movement that is happening in our culture. It is necessary and long overdue" (Aziz Ansari Responds to Sexual Misconduct Allegations Against Him," *VOX*, January 15, 2018).

20. While the voices of #MeToo were overwhelmingly women, I am wary of using the term exclusively—and want to honor, in particular, prominent male #MeToo voices Terry Crews and Anthony Rapp (both of whom spoke up from a marginalized position).

21. See Ezra Klein, "This Conversation Will Change How You Think about Misogyny," *The Ezra Klein Show*, January 31, 2019.

22. See "#MeToo is Mob Justice, Not Social Justice," *The Los Angeles Times*, September 26, 2018; "Terry Gilliam Says #MeToo Movement Has Transformed Into 'Mob Rule'," *Variety*, March 2016, 2018; "#MeToo has Morphed into a Career-Destroying Angry Mob," *New York Post*, September 22, 2018.

23. See Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*; Dotson, "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silecing; Medina, "The Relevance of Credibility Excess in a Proportional View of Epistemic Injustice"; and Yap, "Credibility Excess and the Social Imaginary in Cases of Sexual Assault."

24. Spelman, *Repair*, 96–97.

25. See "Richard Dreyfuss Responds to Sexual Harassment Allegations: 'I Am Not an Assaulter'," *Entertainment Weekly*, November 10, 2017.

26. *The Globe and Mail*, September 6, 2018.

27. *TIME*, February 26, 2018.

28. *The Japan Times*, January 14, 2019.

29. See Manne, *Down Girl*, 184.

30. Ibid., 197.

31. See "Jian Ghomeshi and the Perils of the Non-Apology Apology," *The Walrus*, September 19, 2018.

32. "'Arrested Development': We Sat Down With the Cast. It Got Raw," *The New York Times*, May 23, 2018.

33. "Tom Ashbrook Asks: Is There Room for Redemption?" *The Boston Globe*, April 10, 2018.

34. "Exile," *Harper's Magazine*, October 2018; see also "Jian Ghomeshi, John Hockenberry, and the Laws of Patriarchal Physics," *The New Yorker*, September 17, 2018.

35. "Jian Ghomeshi and the Perils of the Non-Apology Apology," *The Walrus*, September 19, 2018.

36. Previous versions of this material were presented as part of a panel on #MeToo and Responses to Everyday Oppression at the 2019 meeting of the APA Central Division, and at the 2019 University of Toronto and York Undergraduate Research Conferences, where I benefited tremendously from the thoughtful engagement of each audience. I am especially grateful for the contributions and feedback of my fellow APA panelists, Clair Morrissey and Yolonda Wilson. I also wish to thank Daniel Groll, Susanne Sreedhar, and my research assistant, Olivia Sultanescu, for their assistance in drafting this essay, and especially Lauren Freeman for the opportunity to write it, and her encouragement and editorial advice as I did so.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ashbrook, Tom. "Tom Ashbrook Asks: Is There Room for Redemption?" *The Boston Globe*. April 10, 2018, sec. Tom Ashbrook asks. https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2018/04/10/tom-ashbrook-asks-there-room-for-redemption/IL437IIYbamQgTNmTOYcWL/story.html.

Bromwich, Jonah Engel. "Megan Ganz on Dan Harmon's Apology: 'I Felt Vindicated.'" *The New York Times*. January 20, 2018, sec. Arts. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/13/arts/dan-harmon-megan-ganz.html.

Chuba, Kirsten. "Terry Gilliam Says #MeToo Movement Has Transformed Into 'Mob Rule.'" *Variety*. March 16, 2018. https://variety.com/2018/film/news/terry-gilliam-metoo-mob-rule-1202728819/.

CNN. "Read Al Franken's Apology (Full Statement)." November 17, 2017. https://www.cnn.com/2017/11/16/politics/al-franken-apology/index.html.

Cowen, Tyler. "Does Forgiveness Have a Place in the #MeToo Movement?" *The Japan Times*, January 14, 2019. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2019/01/14/commentary/world-commentary/forgiveness-place-metoo-movement/.

Deb, Sopan. "'Arrested Development': We Sat Down With the Cast. It Got Raw." *The New York Times*, May 23, 2018, sec. Arts. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/23/arts/television/arrested-development-netflix-interview-jeffrey-tambor.html.

Dotson, Kristie. "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing." *Hypatia* 26, no. 2 (2011): 236–57.

Ducharme, Jamie. "Mario Batali's Misconduct Apology Came with a Recipe." *Time*. December 16, 2017. http://time.com/5067633/mario-batali-cinnamon-rolls-apology/.

Filipovic, Jill. "How to Find Room for Forgiveness in the #MeToo Movement." *Time*. February 26, 2018. http://time.com/5160427/forgiving-sexual-assault-perpetrators-metoo/.

Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Ganz, Megan (@MeganGranz). "Please Listen to It. It's Only Seven Minutes Long..." Twitter, January 11, 2018, 12:41 am, https://twitter.com/meganganz/status/951373403625177088?lang=en.

Grady, Constance. "James Franco Says New Accusations of Sexual Misconduct 'Are Not Accurate.'" *Vox*. January 10, 2018. https://www.vox.com/culture/2018/1/10/16873464/james-franco-denies-sexual-misconduct-allegations.

Hockenberry, John. "Exile." *Harper's Magazine*. October 2018. https://harpers.org/archive/2018/10/exile-4/.

Klein, Ezra. "This Conversation Will Change How You Understand Misogyny." Interview with Kate Manne, The Ezra Klein Show, January 31, 2019. https://www.vox.com/ezra-klein-show-podcast.

Levin, Sam. "Author Sherman Alexie Apologizes amid Anonymous Allegations." *The Guardian*. March 1, 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/01/sherman-alexie-author-apologizes-amid-sexual-misconduct-allegations.

The Los Angeles Times. "#MeToo Is Mob Justice, Not Social Justice." Accessed April 7, 2019. https://www.latimes.com/opinion/readersreact/la-ol-le-metoo-mob-justice-20180926-story.html.

MacLachlan, Alice. "'Trust Me, I'm Sorry': The Paradox of Public Apologies." *The Monist* 98 (2015): 4.

Manne, Kate. *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Martin, Adrienne M. "Owning Up and Lowering Down: The Power of Apology." *The Journal of Philosophy*. 107 (2010): 10.

McIvor, Bryn. "Dan Harmon Apology." YouTube video, 9:14, January 13, 2018, featuring Dan Harmon's public apology to Megan Ganz in the Harmontown podcast, episode 272. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyKA8ARBSkw.

McKeon, Lauren. "Jian Ghomeshi and the Perils of the Non-Apology Apology." *The Walrus*, September 19, 2018. https://thewalrus.ca/jian-ghomeshi-and-the-perils-of-the-non-apology-apology/.

Medina, José. "The Relevance of Credibility Excess in a Proportional View of Epistemic Injustice: Differential Epistemic Authority and the Social Imaginary." Social Epistemology 25, no. 1 (2011): 15–35.

"Me Too. History & Vision." Me Too Movement. Accessed April 6, 2019. https://metoomvmt.org/about/.

Mihai, Mihaela. "When the State Says "Sorry": State Apologies as Exemplary Political Judgments." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 21 (2013): 2.

Oh, Deborah. "Do the Men of #MeToo Deserve to Be Forgiven?" *The Globe and Mail*. September 6, 2018. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-do-the-men-of-metoo-deserve-to-be-forgiven/.

Park, Madison. "Kevin Spacey Apologizes for Alleged Sex Assault with a Minor." *CNN*. October 31, 2017. https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/30/entertainment/kevin-spacey-allegations-anthony-rapp/index.html.

Respers France, Lisa. "Norm Macdonald Apologizes after #MeToo Comments." *CNN*. September 12, 2018. https://www.cnn.com/2018/09/12/entertainment/norm-macdonald-metoo-apology/index.html.

Rice, Lynette. "Richard Dreyfuss Responds to Sexual Harassment Allegations: 'I Am Not an Assaulter.'" *Entertainment Weekly*, November 10, 2017. https://ew.com/news/2017/11/10/richard-dreyfuss-responds-harassment-allegations/.

Rottenberg, Josh. "Dustin Hoffman Apologizes after Allegations That He Sexually Harassed a 17-Year-Old Intern in 1985." *The Los Angeles Times*. November 1, 2017. https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/la-et-entertainment-news-updates-dustin-hoffman-apologizes-after-being-1509561081-htmlstory.html.

Russell, Francey. "The Paradox of Apology." Manuscript, 2019.

Smith, Kyle. "#MeToo Has Morphed into a Career-Destroying Angry Mob." *New York Post*. September 22, 2018. https://nypost.com/2018/09/22/metoo-has-morphed-into-a-career-destroying-angry-mob/.

Smith, Michelle R. "In Age of #MeToo, Can There Be Forgiveness, Second Chances?" *Associated Press*. April 15, 2018. https://apnews.com/c69e3a82417f4af280376fdc10cf8651.

Smith, Nick. *I Was Wrong: The Meaning of Apologies*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Spelman, Elizabeth V. *Repair: The Impulse to Restore in a Fragile World*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002.

Stewart, Emily. "Aziz Ansari Responds to Sexual Misconduct Allegations against Him." *Vox*. January 15, 2018. https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/1/15/16893468/aziz-ansari-allegations.

The New York Times. "Statement From Harvey Weinstein." October 5, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/10/05/us/statement-from-harvey-weinstein.html.

The New York Times. "Louis C.K. Responds to Accusations: 'These Stories Are True.'" November 11, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/10/arts/television/louis-ck-statement.html.

Thompson, Janna. "The Apology Paradox." *The Philosophical Quarterly (1950-)* 50, no. 201 (2000): 470–75.

Tolentino, Jia. "Jian Ghomeshi, John Hockenberry, and the Laws of Patriarchal Physics." September 17, 2018. https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/jian-ghomeshi-john-hockenberry-and-the-laws-of-patriarchal-physics.

Yap, Audrey S. "Credibility Excess and the Social Imaginary in Cases of Sexual Assault." *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly* 3 (2017): 4.

Women, Work, and Power: Envisaging the Radical Potential of #MeToo[1]

Robin Zheng
YALE-NUS COLLEGE

Remarkably and unmistakably, a striking number of watershed moments in the post-Trump era have been orchestrated by women. The day after the President's inauguration, an astonishing 4 million people—over 1 percent of the US population, thought to be the largest one-day political demonstration in the country's history[2]—participated in the Women's March on Washington, in over 673 cities across the country and around the globe.[3] Equally astonishing, the next year saw public school teachers—77%

of whom are women[4]—beginning to walk out on the biggest educator strikes in a quarter-century,[5] most notably in such conservative bastions as West Virginia, Oklahoma, Arizona, North Carolina, and Kentucky (dubbed by some the "Red State Rebellion") but also in solidly Democratic states like California and Colorado. And then, of course, there was #MeToo.

In this essay, my interest is in thinking through #MeToo as a form of political struggle aimed at social change. In Section I, I analyze the movement alongside the Women's March and the teacher's strike wave, situating it between two poles of structured organizing and mass protest. This comparison highlights the imperative for movements to translate *symbolic* solidary power, which shift discourses and norms, into exercises of power that can alter *structural* conditions in a more fundamental way. Thus, in Section II, I argue that while #MeToo has been highly successful in disrupting sexist mores and patriarchal norms on the cultural front, it must match this with a commitment to transforming the fundamental material conditions that enable men's dominance over women.[6] Eliminating sexual harassment—particularly of non-elite women—requires addressing the underlying job insecurity, poor working conditions, and economic vulnerability that threatens almost all workers. In short, #MeToo must go radical.

I.

The Women's March and the teachers' strike wave exemplify what are sometimes thought of as two opposing poles of collective action: *structured organizing* and *mass protest*. Both represent modes of building the power of the people, i.e., the power of masses of "Have-Nots" who otherwise lack wealth, political influence, and the coercive backing of state-sanctioned violence.[7] But they take very different forms. Building up grassroots power into long-lasting, disciplined, membership-based organizations is the aim of *structured organizing*, as manifest in much community and labor organizing.[8] From this perspective, engaging in mass action without establishing organizational structure is like "skipping the first two [acts of a play], in which case there is no play, nothing but confrontation for confrontation's sake—a flare-up and back to darkness."[9] By contrast, critics argue that social movements like the Depression-era labor upsurges and the Civil Rights Movement achieved their largest gains *before* individuals were folded into formally structured organizations, and lost them after.[10] Large bureaucratic organizations are prone to co-optation and complacency. They are often inclined to restrain the disruptive potential of unorganized *mass protests*—that is, the spontaneous and broad-based defiance of masses of unorganized people—which can actually force the hand of elites.[11] I will not try to adjudicate between these views here, particularly since both types of action arguably play complementary roles in bringing about social change.[12] Without discounting the critical role of mass protest, however, I place greater emphasis on the importance of structured organizing, since it is here that I think #MeToo should learn the greatest lessons.

To set the scene, I begin by explaining some important differences between the Women's March and the teachers' strikes. The most obvious hallmark of the Women's March

was its ability to energize and bring people out into the streets. The sheer size and scale of the marches—as broadcast via images of entire airplanes brimming with women's marchers on their way to Washington, DC, solidarity protests as far-flung as Antarctica, profiles of mother-daughter marchers and first-time marchers ranging from businesswomen to poets—commanded wonder. It was an undeniable display of symbolic power; as a friend put it on Facebook, it was "the political statement we'[d] been waiting for" since November 8, 2016. For many, especially the marchers, it was deeply emotional: feeling oneself in the company of so many others was healing and fortifying. It inspired hope and replenished motivations to act in defense of a better future. In short, the Women's March changed the conversation—boldly signaling that there would be resistance to a Trump agenda—while channeling collective anger, defiance, and determination on a massive scale.

The March thus demonstrates several features—in its etiology, nature, and effects—that are characteristic of "New Left" mass protests that coalesced in the 1960s–1970s around social identities such as race, gender, and sexuality (among other issues, like opposition to the Vietnam war). It was conceived independently on the night of Trump's election by a retired attorney in Hawaii and a fashion entrepreneur in New York, who teamed up with seasoned activists after their Facebook events unexpectedly attracted 100,000 participants in a single day.[13] The multi-sited, broad-based origins of the March thus epitomize what social movement activists call a "moment of the whirlwind," that is, an atypical burst of intensive, spontaneous, and decentralized mobilization—beyond the control of any single individual or organization—that erupts after a dramatic public event.[14] Moreover, the deliberately open-ended, "big tent" nature of the call for women to march encouraged an unusually broad array of participants. Indeed, even politically conservative women, also horrified by Trump's sexist remarks on the campaign trail, participated in order to provide what they described as a "pro-life feminist voice;" others felt "misunderstood and frustrated" when the official organizers of the march released a pro-choice platform and dissolved their initial partnership with an anti-abortion organization.[15] Still, the success of the March demonstrated the power of calls for "sisterhood" and "solidarity" based on social identity, and scores of participants—through selfies and social media—celebrated the personally transformative experiential dimensions of participating in mass demonstration. When Trump unrolled his notorious "Muslim Ban" in the weeks following the march, he was met by tremendously energetic protesters (and immigration lawyers willing to work pro bono) who rallied their forces at airports across the country.

Three years on, the Women's March has also displayed some of the characteristic weaknesses of mass protest. Many individual participants—recruited via social media—were unyoked to local or more longstanding political organizations, and therefore unlikely to take further action after completing their personal emotional catharsis. As time wore on, moreover, the urgency of resisting the Trump presidency began to wear off, due to "protest fatigue" and the onward grind of daily life. Perhaps most importantly,

the movement did not formulate a clear list of sufficiently specific demands or concrete goals, and it was unclear how to move forward.

None of this is intended to detract from the major accomplishments of the Women's March. The same features that weakened the March's long-term prospects were crucial for its rousing symbolic appeal and ability to spur unprecedented numbers of people into the political arena, which arguably paved the way for both #MeToo and the teachers' strikes (along with other groundswells of action such as the March for Science and protests against family separations at the border). Changing the conversation is a key step in changing social conditions, as I discuss in Section II with respect to #MeToo, because disruption functions to loosen the grip of unreflective ideology and subject it to questioning.[16] But it is not sufficient. Momentary disruptions can be brushed past, and powerful elites will not be swayed unless they are under pressure, that is, unless and until their self-interest is actually at stake.[17]

What I want to stress here is that the collective power of the people—the ability of groups to apply pressure in the absence of control over wealth, political influence, or coercive state backing—is held purely in virtue of two things: their numbers, and the fact that their acquiescence (and labor) is indispensable for social functioning. Both historically and in the present, structured organizing has played a key role in unlocking this kind of collective power, which brings me now to the teachers' strike wave. Although teaching—itself a form of gendered "carework"—is predominantly performed by women,[18] and although the teachers amassed large numbers at their rallies, the logic of what were effectively *industrial strikes* differed greatly from that of the Women's March. For their genesis, the teachers' strikes relied on the existence of established, nationally networked labor unions[19] such as the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association. The union membership, often recruited laboriously over years in the workplace or through face-to-face door knocking, had deep roots and strong support in their communities; during strikes, they coordinated free meals and childcare together with local businesses, churches, and non-profits. The strikes themselves were the result[20] of careful deliberation stemming from a formalized collective decision-making procedure (i.e., strike authorization votes), and each teachers' union struck for a highly specific list of demands—no changes to healthcare premiums, restoration of state funding, the employment of nurses and librarians, etc.—generated by the bargaining process. More experienced unions intentionally studied analyses and tactics of previous strikes, and they exercised tightly regimented discipline even on the picket lines, where attendance was taken and reported to the central strike committee. In virtue of the bargaining cycle, there are clear "next steps" to take after striking: enforcing the agreed-upon contract, filing grievances for violations, and building membership for the next round of bargaining when the contract expires. (Moreover, strikes themselves can escalate insofar as other industries join in or refuse to cross picket lines.)

Most importantly, the strikers did not demonstrate power only symbolically but *exercised* it by withholding their labor: the work stoppages cost untold millions and forced recalcitrant policymakers to make genuine concessions. And though each union's demands were specific to their work situations, the underlying threats—evaporating funding, increasing privatization of public services, attacks on collective bargaining rights—were common to teachers nationwide, as well as other workers. In West Virginia, rank-and-file members of the union defied their leaders by refusing to accept a deal that gave teachers a 5 percent raise while only giving 3 percent to other public workers, perpetuating a wildcat strike until the demand was secured for all.[21] In Los Angeles, teachers demanded[22]—and won—an end to racial profiling in schools, a legal defense fund for students and parents at risk of deportation, and the construction of green spaces, in addition to basic pay raises and the elimination of a clause that routinely allowed class size caps to be overruled.[23] Impressively, they secured a temporary moratorium on charter schools,[24] as part of a growing statewide and national consciousness that the privatization of education via explosive growth in charter schools amounts to an undermining of the public good for the benefit of wealthy profiteers. The teachers' deployment of "bargaining for the common good" demonstrates the prodigious potential for industrial action, even by a historically weakened labor movement, to force social change across multiple dimensions and levels. Through the long process of education and consciousness-raising, cultivating internal and external relationships, and democratic decision-making that is necessary for structured organizing to produce mobilization, workers thereby build up their collective capacity to win larger and longer-lasting structural changes to their shared social conditions.

In light of the foregoing discussion, I propose to understand the #MeToo movement as lying somewhere on the spectrum between these two poles. In its origins, of course, #MeToo began as a moment of mass protest: after a damning exposé covering decades of allegations against director Harvey Weinstein, actress Alyssa Milano's tweet in support of the women who reported him went viral on October 15, 2017. The #MeToo hashtag garnered 825,000 uses on Twitter and 4.7 million interactions on Facebook within 24 hours; indeed, more than 45% of Facebook users in the US were estimated to be friends with someone who posted "Me too."[25] Without doubt, #MeToo changed the conversation by, in the words of Milano's tweet, "giv[ing] people a sense of the magnitude of the problem." A day later, she identified community organizer Tarana Burke as the founder of an earlier #MeToo movement, and the "moment" began to consolidate into a more unified "movement." Milano, meeting Burke in person for the first time on the *Today* show in December, clasped hands with her while professing that they had developed a friendship involving multiple texts a day. Their interview came on the heels of a *TIME* magazine article declaring "the Silence Breakers" Person of the Year, which conspicuously joined the experiences of (mostly White) celebrity and professional women of varying political persuasions to those of (non-White) women employed as a hotel worker, dishwasher, strawberry picker, housekeeper, and office assistant.[26] In the first week of January 2018, a number of actresses

coordinated a headline-grabbing action at the Golden Globes Awards in which they wore black, brought longtime activists of color such as Burke as their dates, and rehearsed a well-organized message: that sexual harassment must be eliminated "not just in this industry, but every industry," and that supporters should donate to their legal defense fund.[27] By the end of the month, they had raised $21 million for the fund,[28] which is being administered by the National Women's Law Center to provide free legal assistance, with priorities for LGBTQ people and people of color, as well as those in low-income or non-traditional employment and those facing retaliation.

In tandem with such high-profile symbolic actions, the incipient power of #MeToo grew apparent as time passed. One year later, over 200 prominent men had been fired from their positions (about half of which were then filled by women),[29] while estimates of public allegations ranged between twice to four times that number,[30] across all different industries: news media, government and politics, art and entertainment, finance, education, and medicine. State legislatures passed a number of laws in response, especially those targeting non-disclosure agreements, rape kits, and statutes of limitation.[31] #MeToo thus typifies what activists call the toppling of "pillars of support," i.e., changes in prevailing opinion within major social institutions such as the media, courts, government, corporations, and religious communities, which represents a crucial pathway toward social change.[32]

The political potential of #MeToo is also evident in the logic of its demands. The problem of sexual harassment lends itself to being treated fundamentally as a *workplace issue*. By this I do not mean to imply that harassment does not occur outside the workplace. But the workplace by nature is a highly specific context in which people are first and foremost required to perform productive tasks; social and non-productive activities are condoned only insofar as they contribute to or do not hinder productivity. In this sense (for better or worse) it has traditionally been deemed a "public" space, defined against "private" activities such as sexual intimacy and reproduction. It is no wonder, then, that sexual harassment is paradigmatically thought of—and legally prohibited as—a workplace phenomenon. This connection to work means that the #MeToo movement has built-in possibilities for leveraging the strategies of structured organizing found in the labor movement. Indeed, #MeToo has already demonstrated an extraordinary capacity for forging common interests between women ranging from the most vulnerable to the most privileged. Less than a month after #MeToo went viral, the Alianza Nacional de Campesinas (National Alliance of Women Farmworkers) published an open letter of solidarity with the actresses. At the same time, #MeToo galvanized the most elite and well-paid of white-collar workers: in November 2018, Google employees conducted a global walkout across 60 percent of its offices. Prompted by the news that major executives were secretly given cushy exit packages after allegations of sexual misconduct, they issued a list of demands for better accountability, transparency, and wage equality that even included a brief mention of contingent workers.[33] In the next section, I argue that #MeToo must tap into this radical potential and build itself from the support of a broad coalition of workers, if it is to achieve its aims of eliminating sexual harassment against (*all*, and not just some) women.

II.

Notwithstanding #MeToo's considerable victories, much remains to be done. Unsurprisingly, given #MeToo's origins in the world of Hollywood celebrities, its effects have primarily been felt in what Patricia Hill Collins calls the "hegemonic domain of power," that is, in the body of collectively shared images, narratives, tropes, concepts, and values that perform the ideological function of rationalizing an unjust status quo.[34] For many men, #MeToo shattered the illusion that sexual harassment is caused by a few "bad apples," incontrovertibly establishing that our society systemically and ubiquitously enables perpetrators to commit wrongdoing and remain protected from consequences. For many women, #MeToo reduced the feelings of shame, self-doubt, and guilt that often plague targets of harassment and prevent them from reporting. The sheer scale of the thousands who began to "break the silence"—not only on social media, but through filing reports—vividly demonstrated to individual women that they were not alone,[35] which thereby introduced two complementary shifts in the narrative. First, it resolved women's doubts about their own experiences: if so many others experienced harassment, then it was not attributable to naivety, carelessness, overreaction, or some other fault of their own. Simultaneously, it forced the public to finally recognize that if women were not the problem (not "asking for it"), then *men were*. The importance of these changes in perspective should not be underestimated. By validating women's experiences of harassment, and by holding men accountable for perpetrating harassment on a global scale, #MeToo profoundly altered the possibilities for women to report, and more importantly, to be believed—both necessary steps for resolving and preventing future cases of harassment.

Unfortunately, these changes are not as easily incorporated into the "structural domain of power," that is, the large-scale social institutions that configure individuals' life prospects such as law, government, markets, media, and systems of education, healthcare, housing, etc.[36] According to Carol Moody, president of the country's oldest legal advocacy group for women: "Everybody thinks some massive, massive change in laws has happened with the #MeToo movement. But it hasn't. Nobody will disagree something needs to be done, but the devil's in the details."[37] Changing the law takes time; and the more substantial the change (or the more it threatens powerful interests), the harder it is to pass. Moreover, merely changing the law on the books is insufficient for improving conditions on the ground. Catharine MacKinnon writes:

> It is widely thought that when something is legally prohibited, it more or less stops. This may be true for exceptional acts, but it is not true for pervasive practices like sexual harassment, including rape, that are built into structural social hierarchies. . . . If the same cultural inequalities are permitted to operate in law as in the behavior the law prohibits, equalizing attempts—such as sexual harassment law—will be systemically resisted. . . . [T]oday's

survivors are initiating consequences none of them could have gotten through any lawsuit—in part because the laws do not permit relief against individual perpetrators, but more because they are being believed and valued as the law seldom has. Women have been saying these things forever. It is the response to them that has changed.[38]

The lesson here, then, is that #MeToo must *structurally* solidify the gains it has made in altering the wider, extra-legal "cultural inequalities" that allow powerful individuals to ignore the law.

Hegemonic gains, however, are easy to reverse if rooted only in public opinion, as was proved all too clearly by the devastating confirmation trial of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh. The trial not only showed that the testimony of even an extremely competent, compelling, socially respectable White witness could be overridden, but also that #MeToo's narrative was vulnerable to backlash and distortion. While Trump declared that it was a "very scary time for young men in America," 40 percent of Americans stated that the #MeToo movement had gone too far.[39] These developments expose the limitations of a strategy aimed at taking down individual bad actors one at a time. To be sure, punishing perpetrators is undeniably important. It is needed for targets of harassment to heal, long overdue to them on grounds of justice, and vital for the shift in norms I described earlier. But no matter how many big fish get skewered, their demise in itself cannot constitute the structural transformation that is ultimately needed. So long as the conditions of unequal power that enable men to harass women remain in place, harassment will continue (and the most powerful and deplorable of perpetrators will continue to get away with it).

To better understand this, I suggest that we must, in the words of bell hooks, bring "from margin to center" the experiences of poor and working-class women of color.[40] We must examine the conditions that turn them into deliberate targets of harassment and rape. What becomes evident in these cases is that sexual harassers intentionally use women's subordinate gender and class status against them, coercing women into sexual activity—and then into silence—by threatening to have them deported or deprived of their jobs if they do not comply or if they consider reporting.[41] The situation is compounded by the fact that the very nature of the work itself—picking vegetables in large fields, scrubbing floors in hallways after hours, cleaning people's homes and hotel rooms, etc.—requires women to be in situations where they are isolated and unsupervised. This makes it easy for men to physically overpower them, and it also undermines women's chances of making credible reports without eyewitnesses.[42] To reiterate an earlier point: no matter how stringent the legal protections against harassment may be, they will be of no use unless enforced. The only way to truly protect these women from harassment is to reduce the stark disparities in power that exist between them and their employers.

This lesson has been brilliantly understood by the Fair Food Program (FFP), an initiative founded by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW). The CIW is an organization

of farmworkers drawing on popular education techniques pioneered by peasant and community organizers in Latin America. Where rates of sexual harassment and assault amongst women farmworkers have been revealed to be as high as 80 percent elsewhere, only a single case of sexual harassment involving physical contact has been found since 2013 on farms participating in the FFP.[43] This extraordinary achievement has been accomplished by enormously empowering FFP farmworkers in multiple areas. The FFP works by establishing legally binding contracts between the CIW and major corporate buyers such as Taco Bell, McDonald's, and Walmart (fourteen in all so far), which the CIW identified as the primary cause of poor working conditions due to their combined ability to force down the price of produce, which in turn suppresses workers' wages and incentivizes exploitative labor practices.[44] Participating corporations, which were initially pressured to sign on due to consumer boycotts, are subject to two requirements. First, they must pay a "one penny per pound" premium toward farmworkers' wages, which has generated a wage increase of 50–70 percent,[45] and second, they must cease purchases from any farms that are found to violate the FFP Code of Conduct, as determined by an independent monitoring organization called the Fair Food Standards Council (FFSC).[46] The Code of Conduct, which was developed according to workers' own knowledge of exploitative practices and over which the CIW maintains veto power, includes zero tolerance for forced labor, child labor, and sexual harassment;[47] between 2011 and 2017, nine such cases of sexual harassment involving physical contact were found, all of which resulted in offenders being terminated and a ban from future FFP employment of up to two years.[48]

The success of the FFP depends on its aggressive, multi-level approach to enforcement. First, worker-to-worker education programs for all 35,000 FFP workers—compensated by the hour, repeated on multiple occasions, and attended by farm managers to indicate buy-in—serve to inform employees of their rights (including protection from retaliation) and the reporting process, which creates an unparalleled on-the-ground monitoring system far outstripping the capacity of government investigators and commercial auditors. Second, the FFSC implements a 24/7 hotline and reporting system that typically resolves complaints within two weeks; cases of retaliation that involve the firing or denial of work to an employee, for instance, are resolved by immediate termination or public reprimand of the retaliator. Third, the FFSC conducts audits in which it interviews at least half of the workers on every farm; notably, these audits are performed by the same personnel who answer the hotlines and are therefore uniquely positioned to detect patterns of repeat offense.[49] In sum, the FFP provides farmworkers with virtually unheard-of rights and protections against their employers, enforced by the threat of losing sales to corporate buyers that are legally bound to cease purchases from FFSC-sanctioned farms.

The FFP's consumer-worker alliance thus represents one concrete model according to which #MeToo could pursue structured organizing. Ultimately, the model depends on both the ability of consumers to pressure corporations into joining the program and the ability of the FFSC to carry out

its aggressive enforcement program. Unfortunately, both of these have inherent weaknesses, and may be difficult to scale. Consumer boycotts are hard to sustain outside industries like food and clothing, which are particularly likely to gain traction due to politically active constituencies like college students. Corporations may steadfastly refuse to sign FFP contracts even in the face of consumer pressure (as Wendy's has consistently done), or may eventually decide to simply back out.[50] Insofar as suppliers can still sell their products to non-participating corporations— and so long as there remain populations of potential workers willing to tolerate poor working conditions[51]— the power of the FFP is diminished. Moreover, the FFSC itself is a non-profit organization funded in large part by philanthropic organizations like the Kresge and Kellogg Foundations,[52] which are by their nature utterly dependent on private capital and hence unlikely to support initiatives that represent any real, large-scale threat to employers' domination over workers. This is not in any way to retract my support from the FFP and similar initiatives, but only to recognize their limitations.

The case of farmworkers and the FFP lucidly illustrates the fundamental connection between sexual harassment and women's economic vulnerability. At the end of the day, the only failsafe way to empower workers is to ensure that they have viable exit options—that is, an ability to find stable employment elsewhere. Unless marginalized women attain job security and freedom from the fear of poverty, the underlying material conditions of their lives will continue to perpetuate their economic vulnerability—and, hence, their vulnerability to harassment. In short, as socialist feminists have long argued, the problem of sexual harassment against women cannot be solved without confronting the larger problem of capitalist exploitation.

Let me be clear: there are two distinct arguments here. The first, it must be emphasized, is *not* an instance of what Angela Harris calls "nuance theory," in which, for example, cursory consideration of the plights of women of color "reduces racial oppression to a mere intensifier of gender oppression" that demonstrates more clearly how *all* women suffer.[53] My point here is that the sexual harassment faced by working-class women on the job, and by Black, Asian, and Latina women subordinated on the basis of race, ethnicity, and immigrant status (who are also disproportionately poor and working-class), is qualitatively different from that faced by middle-class White women. The only way to address their vulnerability to sexual harassment is to fundamentally restructure the capitalist economic order in such a way that they are no longer *economically* vulnerable. If #MeToo's proponents are serious about supporting the working-class women of color with whom they have dramatically and symbolically joined forces, then they must be serious about working against capitalism as we know it.

That said, there are undeniable resonances that should not be ignored. First of all, the material dimensions of coercion are present for many women even outside the lowest-paid, menial jobs. Aspiring actresses more often than not also struggle to make ends meet, and many middle-class women are far from being financially independent. Furthermore, the working conditions of increasing numbers of women in traditionally well-paid and/or prestigious industries are being eroded by the "gig economy," or by two-tier systems in which stable employment is restricted to a tiny minority while the majority works precariously in contingent positions; academia, media, and the arts represent particularly clear examples of the latter. Moreover, gender oppression is not wholly reducible to class exploitation: prevailing gender norms, even after #MeToo, make it difficult even for women of means to adequately resist or report sexual harassment. And much sexual harassment occurs outside the workplace. But gender norms— according to which women should be sexually available (yet appropriately modest), physically attractive (yet not overly so), compliant and cooperative (though that prevents them from demonstrating leadership), instinctively nurturing (though that signals lack of commitment to their careers), and so on—are unlikely to change, or stay changed, without more wholesale structural changes in the sexual division of labor between men and women as a whole. In this sense, the fates of all women are connected, though not equivalent. Specifying precisely what would be needed to dismantle the gender norms that enable sexual harassment is not something I can address within the confines of this essay, but it is clear that the requisite changes would need to radically alter the fundamental social organization of our world.

Whether #MeToo can manage to realize its radical potential, however, remains very much in the balance. For such a task is not at all easy, and is yet to even appear on the agendas of many ardent #MeToo supporters. I suspect that if it does, it will be due in no small part to interweaving the movement with a much larger confluence of anti-oppressive forces that are currently gathering on multiple fronts. If #MeToo wants to achieve its own goals, it should welcome these anti-racist, anti-heternormative, anti-ableist, anti-fascist, pro-workers' movements as natural and necessary allies.

NOTES

1. This work is supported by a Ministry of Education (MOE) Tier 1 funded grant (IG17-SR103) from Yale-NUS College.

2. Chenoweth and J. Pressman, "This Is What We Learned by Counting the Women's Marches."

3. Przybyla and Schouten, "At 2.6 Million Strong, Women's Marches Crush Expectations."

4. Bhattacharya, "Women Are Leading the Wave of Strikes in America. Here's Why."

5. Kerrissey, "Teacher Strike Wave: By the Numbers."

6. Of course, men suffer from sexual harassment as well. However, given space constraints, I focus here on dynamics particular to men's harassment of women.

7. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*.

8. Ibid.; Engler and Engler, *This Is an Uprising: How Nonviolent Revolt Is Shaping the Twenty-First Century*.

9. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*, xix.

10. Piven and Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*.

11. Ibid.

12. Engler and Engler, *This Is an Uprising*.

13. Hintz-Zambrano, "Bob Bland of the Women's March on Raising Children in the Resistance, & Much More"; Woerner, "Who Started the March? One Woman."

14. Engler and Engler, *This Is an Uprising*, 188.

15. Stein, "Is There a Place at the Women's March for Women Who Are Politically Opposed to Abortion?"

16. Haslanger, *I—Culture and Critique*.

17. Cf. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*, xxxiv.

18. Bhattacharya, "Women Are Leading the Wave of Strikes in America. Here's Why."

19. Importantly, however, the willingness of rank-and-file teachers in West Virginia to act against their official union leadership (discussed briefly below) was key to securing their eventual victory (Blanc, "Betting on the Working Class").

20. While some strikes were openly inspired by the West Virginia teachers, the UTLA strikes in Los Angeles had been in preparation for years.

21. Petersen-Smith, "West Virginia Put Class Struggle Back on the Map."

22. The original demands even included an ambitious call for building affordable housing, the lack of which is one of the primary causes of teachers' leaving the field (La Ganga and Chabria, "Teachers' Strike Fueled by Bay Area Housing Crisis: 'They Can't Afford Oakland'"), on unused land.

23. UCLA Center X, "Bargaining for the Common Good: Alex Caputo-Pearl."

24. Stokes, "LAUSD Calls For Charter Moratorium After Teachers Strike."

25. Santiago and Criss, "An Activist, A Little Girl and the Heartbreaking Origin of 'Me Too'."

26. Zacharek, Dockterman, and Sweetland Edwards, "Person of the Year 2017: The Silence Breakers."

27. Sen, "The Lefty Critique of #TimesUp Is Tired and Self-Defeating."

28. Seale, "What Has #MeToo Actually Changed?"

29. Carlsen et al., "#MeToo Brought Down 201 Powerful Men. Nearly Half of Their Replacements Are Women."

30. Griffin, Recht, and Green, "#MeToo: One Year Later."

31. However, most legal changes remained relatively limited in scope—see (Kelly and Hegarty, "#MeToo Was a Culture Shock. But Changing Laws Will Take More Than a Year") discussion in the next section.

32. Engler and Engler, *This Is an Uprising*, 107.

33. Stapleton et al., "We're the Organizers of the Google Walkout. Here Are Our Demands."

34. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*.

35. As Piven and Cloward (*Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*, 12) write of social movements in the 1930s and 1960s: "The sheer scale of these dislocations helped to mute the sense of self-blame, predisposing men and women to view their plight as a collective one, and to blame their rulers for the destitution and disorganization they experienced."

36. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*.

37. Kelly and Hegarty, "#MeToo Was a Culture Shock."

38. MacKinnon, "#MeToo Has Done What the Law Could Not."

39. Smith, "On #MeToo, Americans More Divided By Party Than Gender."

40. hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*.

41. Yeung, *In a Day's Work: The Fight to End Sexual Violence Against America's Most Vulnerable Workers*.

42. Ibid.

43. Fair Food Standards Council, *Fair Food 2017 Annual Report*.

44. Asbed and Hitov, "Preventing Forced Labor in Corporate Supply Chains: The Fair Food Program and Worker-driven Social Responsibility."

45. Dearing, "The Fair Food Program."

46. Asbed and Hitov, "Preventing Forced Labor in Corporate Supply Chains."

47. Ibid.

48. Fair Food Standards Council, *Fair Food 2017 Annual Report*.

49. Asbed and Hitov, "Preventing Forced Labor in Corporate Supply Chains."

50. I owe this argument to David Smith.

51. I am indebted to Xing Xia for discussion of this point.

52. Williams, "Fair Food Standards Council Oversees Compliance with Fair Food Agreement."

53. Harris, "Race and Essentialism in Feminist Legal Theory," 595.

REFERENCES

Alinsky, S. D. *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

Asbed, G., and S. Hitov. "Preventing Forced Labor in Corporate Supply Chains: The Fair Food Program and Worker-driven Social Responsibility." *Wake Forest L. Rev.* 52 (2017): 497.

Bhattacharya, T. "Women Are Leading the Wave of Strikes in America. Here's Why." *The Guardian*. April 10, 2017. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/apr/10/women-teachers-strikes-america.

Blanc, E. "Betting on the Working Class." *Jacobin*. May 29, 2017.

Carlsen, A., M. Salam, C. Cain Miller, D. Lu, A. Ngu, J. K. Patel, and Z. Wichter. "#MeToo Brought Down 201 Powerful Men. Nearly Half of Their Replacements Are Women." *The New York Times*. October 29, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/10/23/us/metoo-replacements.html.

Chenoweth, E., and J. Pressman. "This Is What We Learned by Counting the Women's Marches." *The Washington Post*. February 7, 2017. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/02/07/this-is-what-we-learned-by-counting-the-womens-marches/.

Collins, P. H. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, 1990/2000.

Dearing, P. "The Fair Food Program." 2017. Retrieved from *Harvard Business Review*: https://www.bridgespan.org/fair-food-program.

Engler, M., and P. Engler. *This Is an Uprising: How Nonviolent Revolt Is Shaping the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Nation Books, 2016.

Fair Food Standards Council, *Fair Food 2017 Annual Report*. 2017. Retrieved from http://www.fairfoodstandards.org/reports/.

Griffin, R., H. Recht, and J. Green. "#MeToo: One Year Later." *Bloomberg News*. October 5, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2018-me-too-anniversary/.

Harris, A. "Race and Essentialism in Feminist Legal Theory." In *Critical Race Feminism*, edited by A. K. Wing, 11–26. New York: New York University Press, 1997.

Haslanger, S. "I—Culture and Critique." Paper presented at the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume. 2017.

Hintz-Zambrano, K. "Bob Bland of the Women's March on Raising Children in the Resistance, & Much More." *Mother*. September 1, 2017.

hooks, b. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. Boston, MA: South End Press, 1984.

Kelly, C., and A. Hegarty. "#MeToo Was a Culture Shock. But Changing Laws Will Take More Than a Year." *USA Today*. October 5, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/investigations/2018/10/04/metoo-me-too-sexual-assault-survivors-rights-bill/1074976002/.

Kerrissey, J. "Teacher Strike Wave: By the Numbers." *Labor Notes*. 2018. Retrieved from https://labornotes.org/blogs/2018/10/teacher-strike-wave-numbers.

La Ganga, M. L., and A. Chabria. "Teachers' Strike Fueled by Bay Area Housing Crisis: 'They Can't Afford Oakland'." *The Los Angeles Times*. February 21, 2019. Retrieved from https://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-edu-oakland-strike-2019-story.html.

MacKinnon, C. A. "#MeToo Has Done What the Law Could Not." *New York Times*. February 4, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/04/opinion/metoo-law-legal-system.html.

Petersen-Smith, K. "West Virginia Put Class Struggle Back on the Map." *Socialist Worker*. March 15, 2018. Retrieved from https://socialistworker.org/2018/03/15/west-virginia-put-class-struggle-back-on-the-map.

Piven, F. F., and R. A. Cloward. *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Przybyla, H. M., and F. Schouten. "At 2.6 Million Strong, Women's Marches Crush Expectations." *USA Today*. January 21, 2017. Retrieved from https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2017/01/21/womens-march-aims-start-movement-trump-inauguration/96864158/.

Santiago, C., and D. Criss. "An Activist, A Little Girl and the Heartbreaking Origin of 'Me Too'." *CNN.com*. October 17, 2017. Retrieved from https://edition.cnn.com/2017/10/17/us/me-too-tarana-burke-origin-trnd/index.html.

Seale, R. "What Has #MeToo Actually Changed?" *BBC News*. May 12, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-44045291.

Sen, R. "The Lefty Critique of #TimesUp Is Tired and Self-Defeating." *The Nation*. 2018.

Smith, T. "On #MeToo, Americans More Divided By Party Than Gender." *NPR News*. October 31, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.npr.org/2018/10/31/662178315/on-metoo-americans-more-divided-by-party-than-gender.

Stapleton, C., T. Gupta, M. Whittaker, C. O'Neil-Hart, S. Parker, E. Anderson, and A. Gaber. "We're the Organizers of the Google Walkout. Here Are Our Demands." *New York*. October 1, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.thecut.com/2018/11/google-walkout-organizers-explain-demands.html.

Stein, P. "Is There a Place at the Women's March for Women Who Are Politically Opposed to Abortion?" *The Washington Post*. January 18, 2017. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/is-there-a-place-for-anti-abortion-women-at-the-womens-march-on-washington/2017/01/17/2e6a2da8-dcbd-11e6-acdf-14da832ae861_story.html.

Stokes, K. "LAUSD Calls For Charter Moratorium After Teachers Strike." *LAist*. January 29, 2019. Retrieved from https://laist.com/2019/01/29/lausd_board_asks_state_to_temporarily_halt_new_charter_schools_from_opening.php.

UCLA Center X. "Bargaining for the Common Good: Alex Caputo-Pearl." *Just Talk: Voices of Education & Justice*. September 28, 2017. Retrieved from https://www.utla.net/news/bargaining-common-good-alex-caputo-pearl.

Williams, A. B. "Fair Food Standards Council Oversees Compliance with Fair Food Agreement." *The News-Press*. June 16, 2012. Retrieved from https://www.nesri.org/news/2012/06/fair-food-standards-council-oversees-compliance-with-fair-food-agreement.

Woerner, M. "Who Started the March? One Woman." *The Los Angeles Times*. 2017. Retrieved from https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-pol-womens-march-live-who-started-the-march-one-1485033621-htmlstory.html.

Yeung, B. *In a Day's Work: The Fight to End Sexual Violence Against America's Most Vulnerable Workers*. New York: The New Press, 2018.

Zacharek, S., E. Dockterman, and H. Sweetland Edwards. "Person of the Year 2017: The Silence Breakers." *TIME*. October 15, 2017.

Field Notes on Conference Climate: A Decade with the Philosophy of Science Association Women's Caucus

Julia R. S. Bursten
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Between 2008 and 2018, registration at the biennial meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association doubled. During that same interval, attendance at meetings of the Philosophy of Science Association Women's Caucus grew nearly fourfold. It is still not a large percentage of the meeting attendees—a quick back-of-the-envelope calculation revealed that just over 20 percent of 2018 PSA registrants attended the 2018 Women's Caucus meeting—but there is a marked difference between what forty people can accomplish and what one hundred fifty can.

I served as co-chair of the Caucus from 2015 to 2018, and many of our most successful initiatives aimed to make a more humane conference environment for all participants, rather than focusing solely on the experience of women at the conference. This focus was not preplanned or coordinated by the co-chairs; rather, it emerged from the interests and energies of Caucus members. Upon reflection, it is clear that this focus both came from and contributed to my desire to see gender parity become not just a reality, but an unremarkable one, at future PSA meetings.

I attended my first PSA meeting in 2008, a few months after beginning graduate school. I would not have gone to a conference at all at that stage, but it was in the city where I lived, and my department was looking for volunteers to help manage the registration desk. Plus, classes were cancelled, since most of my professors were involved in the conference in some way.

The conference was a transformative experience for me. I was still adjusting to the idea that philosophy of physics was something that one could just *do*, as a career, and it filled me with hope and excitement to enter sessions on quantum entanglement and statistical mechanics and find crowded rooms. I remember noticing at the time, without much reflection, how easy it was to get a seat in the women's restroom even at the end of standing-room-only talks.

That year, when I showed up early on Saturday morning to attend the PSA Women's Caucus breakfast meeting (having failed to convince the other women in my graduate cohort to join me at 7:45 a.m. on a weekend) I figured the forty-person attendance rate was due mostly to the timing. After all, my undergraduate thesis advisor, a philosopher of science, had been a woman, and another woman had taught my first philosophy of science class. My graduate department was chaired by a woman. Three other women entered my graduate program with me. Sure, I was the only woman enrolled in my philosophy of quantum mechanics seminar, but sometimes weird flukes happen. It wasn't until the next PSA meeting in 2010 that I noticed the pattern and drew the connection between the pleasantly un-crowded

public restrooms and the quantity of leftover pastries at the Women's Caucus breakfast.

The point of this personal anecdote is not to convince the readers of this newsletter that philosophy, or philosophy of science, has a gender representation issue. That is a given. And, for my part, my experience as a woman in philosophy of science got much worse before it got better, in all the mundane and terrifying ways gender-based discrimination and harassment are wont to do. The point is that once the wool came off my eyes, I wanted nothing more than to have it back. Not to go back to my ignorance, but rather to find my way to a place where I could just *do* my philosophy, without constantly scratching at the itchy, ill-made sweater of self-conscious awareness of my gender every time I presented work or submitted a paper. So, when I was approached for the position of early-career co-chair of the PSA Women's Caucus in 2014, I figured that getting involved in activism for women philosophers of science may at least soften, if not reshape, the sweater.

When my term came to an end this winter, I reflected on a number of the efforts I undertook with my co-chairs and committee heads. The ones I am most proud of are all about softening the sweater, trying to make it possible to forget for a few minutes or hours that the women philosophers of science at PSA meetings were *women* philosophers of science. Selfishly, perhaps, they were geared toward recasting the conference as I first saw it in 2008, with the naïve enthusiasm made possible by a career that, despite its brevity, had prominently featured other women doing philosophy of science.

Many of these initiatives are not specific to women. Rather, many of them aimed to make a more humane conference environment for all involved, and in so doing, make it easier for women to exist in the conference space—and to exist as philosophers, rather than as *women* philosophers. For instance, beginning before my tenure, the Caucus spearheaded an initiative to distribute dependent-care grants for meeting participants. In 2016 and 2018, the Caucus was also involved in the governing board's decision to provide on-site childcare. We developed a mentoring program for scholars in philosophy of science from underrepresented groups. We compared notes with other coalitions that supported the work of minoritized groups in related areas, such as Minorities and Philosophy and the History of Science Society Women's Caucus, and we saw how few of our problems were unique to the PSA. We invited allies to our business meetings, and they came.

In 2016, we sponsored the first Women's Caucus Prize Symposium, a special session selected by a committee of our membership as an exemplar of quality philosophy of science done by women, responding to women philosophers of science, and about issues of interest to Caucus members. The Caucus has sponsored two prize symposia now, one on animal cognition and one on climate change. Each symposium prominently featured both early-career and established scholars of multiple genders, and each has centered on a cutting-edge topic. Each has hosted at least one scientist, and each has aimed to advance philosophical methodology as well as subject matter. Both

symposia have been delivered to packed rooms, and I have had to wait in line in the restroom after both of them. Both times, standing in those lines nudged awake an awareness of my gender. However, unlike in 2010, the reminders were welcome and revitalizing, largely because the awareness had been allowed to lie dormant while hours of philosophy had happened around it. Coming back to awareness from that perspective was pleasantly bracing, a cool breeze to remind you why you brought a sweater in the first place.

In advance of the most recent PSA meeting in 2018, we assembled a flyer on Bystander Intervention and distributed it in all attendees' registration packets. The flyer reviews basic information on what constitutes sexual harassment and discriminatory behavior, and it offers a variety of quick, in-the-moment strategies to reroute an instance of discrimination and support the targeted person. Like many of our other initiatives, it is not geared solely toward the experience of women at the conference; it addresses discrimination due to other aspects of personal identity as well. The flyer was developed primarily by Janet Stemwedel, the head of our professional climate committee, and approved by the Caucus at large prior to distribution.

We assembled this flyer because we were not able to get an enforceable sexual harassment policy on the books for the 2018 meeting, due to logistical and budgetary constraints. There was a conduct statement that attendees were asked to sign upon online registration, and at the conclusion of the 2018 meeting, the Governing Board approved the plan to implement an enforceable policy for 2020. We have no data on how many registrants read the flyer or found it useful, and I harbor few illusions. It was a flyer in a registration packet. But it was a flyer that showed up in *every* PSA registration packet, indicating that the association at large has a vested interest in combatting discriminatory behavior at PSA meetings.

Two anecdotes from the meeting suggest that the culture is changing in more substantial ways. The first has to do directly with the flyers. During the meeting, a relatively well-known philosopher of science wrote a blog post on a not-quite-anonymized personal blog decrying the mentoring initiative and the distribution of bystander intervention flyers. As of the time of this writing, the blog post still has no comments, while a Caucus member's social media post about the blog has over seventy comments variously pointing to logical flaws in the argument, offering biting ripostes, and generating a sense of solidarity among women attendees and allies at the meeting and beyond. Yes, it's just something that happened on social media, but as the past few years have shown, social media can be a powerful force.

Second, I met up with an old friend during the meeting, someone who I met at an undergraduate experience prior to entering graduate school. We are both on the tenure track now. When I first met him, he was not particularly interested in the problem of diversity in philosophy. Not that he was opposed to it; it just wasn't on his radar. He told me about a casual experiment he and his colleague had been conducting during the meeting. They were tracking data on how many men versus how many women

raised their hands during question periods, how often each gender was called on, and other information that would track patterns of behavior consistent with gender-based discrimination during question periods. The past decade had transformed my friend into someone who felt a pressing need to do something about the environment for underrepresented groups in philosophy of science. My friend and I are both still (hopefully) early in our careers, and the changes we have both undergone since beginning graduate school give me hope to imagine what we might find, and what we might create, at philosophy conferences thirty or forty years from now.

Although my term as a co-chair of the Women's Caucus has ended, I hope that as the Caucus continues to grow and evolve, it will make more contact with broader efforts to diversify philosophy in the APA as well. None of the initiatives discussed here were targeted solely at improving the climate for women in philosophy of science. The Women's Caucus has some of those initiatives too. However, the more obviously intersectional efforts discussed here have played a significant part in creating a PSA meeting with a climate that is more welcoming to a wider net, more generally. There are more women and more people of color coming to meetings, as well as more accommodations available for people with children and people with special needs. With a little luck and a lot of effort, and with the continued support of a governing board that has chosen to recognize and prioritize the need for coordinated efforts to improve diversity in the PSA, I can only hope the situation will continue to improve. It would be nice to leave the sweater at home someday.

BOOK REVIEWS

What Is Rape? Social Theory and Conceptual Analysis

Hilkje Charlotte Hänel (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag, 2018). 320 pp. $100.00. ISBN 978-3837-64434-0.

Reviewed by Caleb Ward
STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY (SUNY)

Over the past forty years, philosophical discussions of rape have focused on two sometimes-overlapping aims. With key insights about power and social structure, feminist social and political theorists (e.g., Susan Brownmiller, Carole Pateman, Claudia Card, Ann Cahill) have sought to produce more adequate accounts of the causes, social functions, and lived effects of rape and to articulate viable avenues for resistance and societal transformation. Meanwhile, moral and legal philosophers—both those who explicitly adopt feminist commitments (e.g., Susan Estrich, Lois Pineau, Keith Burgess-Jackson, Jean Hampton, Joan McGregor) and those who don't (e.g., David Archard, Alan Wertheimer, Donald Dripps)—have asked a different set of questions: What is the wrong of rape? How can legal definitions reflect this wrong? How ought culpability to be determined?

With *What Is Rape?* Hilkje Hänel enters the debate from a refreshingly new angle, leveraging contemporary critical theory and social ontology to analyze how the phenomenon of rape is conceptualized, upstream from the normative and definitional concerns of moral and legal theory. She expands the project of feminist structural critique to look beyond rape's causes and effects to the question of how the conceptualization of "rape" is itself shaped by power relations and socially available epistemic resources. Her careful analysis produces a convincing social theory of how rape fits into sexist ideology and a rigorous, constructive account of how rape ought to be conceptualized—not only to reflect the complexity of the phenomenon but also to account for "rape" as a concept susceptible to ideological distortion.

While the category of rape is widely contested in legal and popular discourses, Hänel diagnoses a common, often implicit working understanding of rape shaped by defective beliefs and judgments colloquially known as "rape myths." Rape myths are a particular kind of cultural narrative that "shape our understandings of sexual activities and sexualized violence," particularly in ways that "legitimize male entitlement to a female body" (35). Rape myths serve both explanatory and justificatory functions in shaping attitudes and interpretations of sex; in other words, they shape both how people interpret the factual events of a sexual encounter (e.g., "it wasn't really rape") and how they apportion blame for harms (e.g., "she/I was asking for it"). It is characteristic of rape myths that they are generally false but widely held either implicitly or explicitly to be true and that they circulate in both "everyday depictions and symbols" and by means of "everyday language practices" (44–45). Given their ready-to-hand cultural accessibility, Hänel argues that the distortionary effects of rape myths are especially great when they stand in as "indicator properties" to help us interpret situations where other evidence or information is lacking or where alternative explanations appear less salient.

Hänel argues that despite increasing institutional uptake of more adequate formal definitions of rape (replacing force with lack of consent, recognizing marital rape, etc.) the pervasive influence of rape myths fuels a dominant working understanding of rape that privileges aggravated stranger rape as the paradigm case, thereby failing to track the wide range of phenomena—date rape, acquaintance rape, war rape, rape in prisons, etc.—that ought to be included in the category. This descriptive failure of the concept has significant normative effects in that the inadequate conceptualization of rape hinders victims' abilities to make experiences intelligible to themselves and to others. Even when formal definitions of rape evolve, the influence of rape myths on the dominant working understanding can produce an "institutional mismatch" between such definitions and their application. Victims' experiences are read as "not really rape" if they don't match the dominant working understanding, which undermines victims' ability both to gain private support and to be believed by institutional gatekeepers of justice.

Hänel argues, following Sally Haslanger (2012), that the injustices stemming from the failure of the concept to

track reality can and ought to be ameliorated by enhancing the descriptive power of the concept in politically useful ways. However, rather than simply pursue a more refined definition of rape—the project of much feminist moral and legal theory—Hänel argues for a reconsideration of the conceptual architecture used to understand the phenomenon. To respond to the distortions of rape myths, she develops a methodology she calls *emancipatory amelioration*, which builds on Haslanger's conceptual amelioration by formulating a concept of rape that is not only more descriptively adequate but also "fruitful for overcoming the de facto distorted conceptions of the concept and the equally problematic usage of the term" (24). This project requires two steps: (a) a systematic social theory that locates the phenomenon and its conceptualization within social structures, and (b) a reformulation of the concept to better capture the phenomenon and to become more resistant to the distortions that characterize the status quo.

Hänel's social theory identifies rape as a social practice (in the technical sense) within Haslanger's (2017) detailed conceptual map of social structures. With case studies and a careful attentiveness to debates in social philosophy, Hänel argues that rape can be described as an *accepted* social practice within the social structure because many of its forms are persistently misrepresented and justified according to available schemas (namely, rape myths), and because institutional responses distribute resources to perpetrators of rape (e.g., the ability to get away with it) while denying resources, including testimonial credibility, from victims.

Hänel adopts insights from well-established feminist critiques, but she also adds complexity to the classic argument that rape is a feature of patriarchal social control. She argues that the social practice of rape and the way it is popularly conceptualized cannot be understood without examining the sexist ideology—beliefs, attitudes, and practices—of which it is a part. Drawing omnivorously from Haslanger (2017), Barbara Fields (1990), Tommie Shelby (2003), and the Frankfurt School (Geuss 1981), she develops a nuanced view of how different social groups are susceptible to the epistemic distortions that mask rape's injustice. Locating rape within an ideology has the benefit of acknowledging the many social functions of rape beyond the unidirectional domination of women by men (e.g., destruction of communities in war, enforcement of white supremacy), which helps explain why women are not the only targets of rape and men are not alone in reproducing rape myths. All social groups can be located within the ideology, and each plays a role in its perpetuation. Crucially, the ideology explanation of rape also lends itself to the tools of immanent critique, suggesting that contradictions emerge within the social structure to create possibilities for resistance from within.

How should rape be conceptualized given its vulnerability to distortion within a sexist ideology? Rather than settle the contested conceptualization of rape with a definition based on necessary and sufficient essential characteristics, Hänel proposes that rape be understood as a "cluster concept," with disjunctively, rather than conjunctively, necessary criteria. (She grounds the theory of cluster concepts with an extensive discussion of Wittgenstein's (1997[1965]) concept of "family resemblance" as a tool for describing social phenomena.) The ten salient criteria she selects for the concept of rape are drawn from empirical observation and social theory and articulated through a wide range of case studies. They include sexual activity, violence, means of physical coercion, means of psychological coercion, lack of consent, context of social vulnerability, and others.

Hänel astutely recognizes, however, that these criteria are not binary features cleanly present or absent in particular cases. Rather, they are each time actualized in varying degrees, which motivates Hänel to add a further dimension of depth to her cluster concept. This is what she calls a "core" to the cluster, where an event that has many criteria actualized to the greatest degree is closer to the core—and therefore most clearly rape—while an event that has few or no criteria to a high degree and others to a low degree will be further from the core. In the latter case, an event may still appropriately fall under the category of rape, but it may also be more adequately included under a neighboring concept, such as another form of sexual mistreatment (e.g., sexual harassment) or a form of morally permissible sex (e.g., high-risk consensual sex).

Hänel's approach brings several advantages. By examining the concept of rape apart from its juridical uses, she avoids drawing a sharp line between rape and not-rape, which in turn allows examination of how grey areas can be present not only within rape but also between rape and neighboring concepts. This appreciation for grey areas is also well-served by the variability of degree she builds into each criterion—an ambitious solution to the problem of conceptualizing the multifaceted character of rape, even if the complexity of the solution at times exceeds the metaphors offered to aid the reader's visualization. This approach leaves open substantially more space for discussion and contestation of the concept of rape, allowing a more reflexive stance toward genuine ambiguity and toward shifts in intuitions, such as those that come about in response to survivor movements like #MeToo.

Hänel's model views the "consent" criterion, for example, as always actualized in degrees, which enables the significance of an ambiguous expression of consent to be evaluated within a wider consideration of the features and context of an encounter. While standard philosophical discussions of consent acknowledge that context can affect consent's "moral validity," Hänel avoids defining rape according to a lack of morally valid consent alone. By taking into account a wider range of features within a given encounter, she seeks to weaken the potential power of rape myths over how consent is understood and evaluated. Here, however, her discussion would be strengthened and clarified by a more detailed explanation of how her cluster account departs from standard definitions of rape according to valid consent. Hänel allows that the criteria she identifies might be present in varying degrees in any particular rape, but it is not self-evident how she would respond to the argument that some criteria are simply more important to determining whether something is rape—namely, non-consent and sexual penetration of any kind.

As methodology, Hänel's approach to rape as a normative core-cluster concept can be applied to other social phenomena characterized by grey areas, ideological obscurations, and interference from neighboring concepts. (In footnotes she draws interesting parallels with critical analyses of race and racism.) She usefully reminds us of the need for concepts to accommodate shifting social realities, such as changing cultural norms and practices, and to allow productive contestation to continue. While legal scholars have work to do to figure out whether this flexibility can influence the law—Hänel argues that it can indirectly—critical theory and activist practice will benefit immediately from the move to decouple a concept's adequacy from its authority to resolve all contestation.

The book ends with a return to common normative questions, exploring the implications of Hänel's account for holding perpetrators responsible and for enacting solidarity with accusers. Specifically, Hänel considers the problems posed by a "cognitive deficit" (i.e., ignorance-based) interpretation of the ideological distortions surrounding rape. If ideological distortion is straightforwardly a category of ignorance, locating rape within a pervasive ideology might be taken to give perpetrators an excuse for their actions (i.e., because they act out of ignorance) and to undermine the epistemic authority of victims' testimony. Hänel takes a generous approach to perpetrator ignorance, gesturing toward a model of accountability and restorative justice that can "adequately and productively confront ideological beliefs and result in a learning process," even if it softens blame toward perpetrators whose social positions within the ideology (e.g., as cis-males) encourage ignorance as to the harmfulness of their actions (205). Moral philosophers steeped in debates about the nature of responsibility will probably have qualms with Hänel's specific disaggregation of blameworthiness from accountability, but they would do well to remember that her proposal is political—what is to be done?—rather than a metaethical claim about moral responsibility as such.

For responding to victims, Hänel prescribes solidarity that affirms the validity of victims' subjective experiences and recognizes that, due to their position within a sexist ideology, they are likely to suffer hermeneutical injustice as well as testimonial injustice (Fricker 2007). However, she stops short of attributing to victims epistemic privilege to wholly define the truth of what took place and its appropriate moral interpretation. Her position is that victims ought to be recognized as full epistemic authorities on their experiences of harm, but the questions of what objectively happened and whether an encounter should be defined as rape often require further interpretation. This argument is a close neighbor to Linda Martín Alcoff's argument in *Rape and Resistance* (2018)—published when *What Is Rape?* had already gone to press—and it could be revisited and strengthened in light of Alcoff's insights. Hänel's argument would benefit from Alcoff's point that experiences must also be interpreted—empowerment and solidarity require enhancing survivors' epistemic resources—and from Alcoff's claim that we can recognize epistemic *privilege* of survivors without granting absolute epistemic *authority*. On balance, Hänel's prescriptions in the final chapter reflect a laudable commitment to hold the emancipatory aspect of

her project accountable to feminist activism, but her claims will require a more sustained treatment—perhaps in her next book?—to satisfy both philosophers and activists who focus on these particular issues.

The only true weak point in this ambitious book is the introduction, which doesn't do justice to the breadth or depth of the project and could do more to set up the analysis that follows. In particular, the introduction could have provided more transparency regarding the operative concept of rape that undergirds Hänel's conceptual critique; the basic commitments she names are only peripherally connected to the primary argument of the first two chapters. Moving some of the methodological points forward from chapter three could have grounded the critique of standard conceptualizations of rape, making the argument more convincing by acknowledging that the author's own social position shapes her critical intuitions about the concept (Cf. Alcoff 2018).

Still, Hänel's arguments throughout *What Is Rape?* are characterized by fine-grained distinctions and careful attention to how concepts are produced and used in social reality. Her writing is paced for clarity and marked by abundant signposting. Perhaps the most widely accessible contribution for a general audience will be Hänel's insightful account of the nature and function of rape myths. However, specialists in social philosophy will also benefit from her methodological innovation for analyzing ambiguous and complex social phenomena. The nuance and flexibility of her approach to the topic of rape is welcome, and its importance will only increase as popular intuitions about rape continue to shift and as prevailing sexual values and practices across societies continue to be questioned.

REFERENCES

Alcoff, Linda Martín. *Rape and Resistance*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018.

Fields, Barbara. "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America." *New Left Review*, no. 181 (1990): 95–118.

Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Geuss, Raymond. *The Idea of Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Haslanger, Sally. *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

———. *Critical Theory and Social Practice*. Spinoza Lectures. Assen: Koninklijke Van Gorcum, 2017.

Shelby, Tommie. "Ideology, Racism, and Critical Social Theory." *Philosophical Forum* 34, no. 2 (2003): 153–188.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *The Blue and Brown Books*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1997[1965].

Debating Pornography

A. Altman and L. Watson (Oxford University Press, 2018).

Reviewed by Mari Mikkola
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD AND SOMERVILLE COLLEGE

This book is part of OUP's *Debating Ethics*-Series, where authors defend opposing views on pressing ethical,

political, and legal issues. As the title suggests, this edition is about pornography. Andrew Altman first offers a defense of the right to buy, sell, and use pornography made with consenting adults on the basis of adults' right to sexual autonomy. Lori Watson provides the opposing view: she advances a sex equality argument for the view that pornography ought to be restricted under civil rights law. Both Altman and Watson hold that in order to make a reasonable case for legally restricting pornography, we must demonstrate how pornography threatens and undermines women's equal standing as citizens. However, they disagree on whether pornography systematically does so: Altman takes the empirical evidence to establish this to be lacking, while Watson holds that the evidence for pornography systemically interfering with equality is overwhelming. Both parts of the book (around 150 pages each) offer ample and detailed background to the relevant legal and ethical matters, and readers without a robust background in these debates will gain excellent introductions to them. The book is written lucidly with wonderful clarity, and yet without compromising philosophical rigour and depth. It is a rich work that offers much to both beginners and seasoned experts in the debates. Both Altman and Watson discuss pornography philosophically with real-world considerations in mind, drawing on legal cases along with psychological and social scientific research on pornography's effects on consumers and the wider society. This is deeply compelling and (I maintain) precisely the correct methodology when thinking about whether and how to restrict pornography legally.

Altman starts his contribution (Chapter 1) by discussing the common view that legally regulating pornography hinges on free speech concerns. He rejects the view that pornography's permissibility is about freedom of expression; rather, governmental efforts to restrict pornographic materials is an issue about sexual autonomy understood as "a moral right of adult individuals" (17). Legal restrictions that block access to "material that graphically depicts sex" (17) violate that right, though legal regulations as to where and how much materials may publicly be displayed and advertised do not. (This highlights a frequent misunderstanding about the liberal pornography position: that they promote an "anything goes" laissez-faire attitude to pornography.)

Altman's view presupposes that sexual autonomy is a basic liberty that is not on a par with all other liberties; it is part of "a small group of liberties that carry special weight" (29). This being the case, in order for (adult) pornography restrictions to be justified, its proponents must make good on the claim that pornography causes harm to women at a social, rather than an individual level. Altman is convinced that pornography production and consumption has harmed individual women, but finds the evidence on the social level "very weak" (24). Moreover, Altman continues, even if there were strong evidence of harms caused on the social macro-level, this still would not eo ipso justify pornography restrictions. He draws a parallel between alcohol and pornography consumption: the social-level evidence that alcohol consumption causes violence (both sexual and non-sexual) against women is strong and apparently "much stronger than the evidence that pornography consumption

causes violence against women" (25). Nonetheless, there are no legal restrictions to block the production, purchase, and consumption of alcohol for adults—something they have a right to since drinking is "an exercise of personal liberty" (25). However, pornography use isn't just "an exercise of personal liberty" but the exercise of our freedom to shape our lives as sexual beings (25)—it is an exercise of our *basic* liberty to sexual autonomy. This renders the right to pornography even stronger than the right to consume alcohol (the former being grounded in a morally weightier liberty than the latter). Hence if adults have a right to drink, they have a right to pornography consumption. Altman doesn't think that the right to pornography is absolute. But given the strength of this right as a matter of sexual autonomy, he holds, arguments to restrict pornography on the basis of societal harms must be on very sturdy grounds. And the empirical case for these harms is allegedly too weak to do the work. That is, although our basic liberty to sexual autonomy doesn't generate permissions to exercise that liberty in whatever way we want, unless anti-pornography advocates can demonstrate that pornography production and consumption generates systematic harms to women, the right to pornography remains intact since it is an aspect of the right to sexual autonomy. What supports the view that the right to pornography is part of our right to sexual autonomy is that pornography is used for sex (section 2.4.). Pornography consumption then, for Altman, is a kind of sex.

Let me pause for a moment to comment on this part of Altman's argument. I am happy to accept that we have a basic liberty to sexual autonomy. (Although both Watson and myself find Altman's explication of this curious: for him, lacking control of one's sex life signals a degraded social status "because it means that others have social permissions to spill their disgusting sticky substances onto or into you without your consent" (45).) I am less convinced, though, that there is a right to pornography on the grounds Altman cites (pornography is used for sex). Many things are used for sex: vibrators, dildos, lube, etc. Their exercise is also an expression of our sexual autonomy. Following Altman, then, we seemingly have a right to dildos, lubricant, and a whole array of sex toys. I suspect that many people think this generates rights too cheaply and we should not dilute rights-talk to such an extent. And if the right to pornography is "cheap" in this way, it is doing little work apart from serving a rhetorical purpose in being provocative insofar as the talk of "a right to pornography" is typically taken to connote something stronger and to engender different expectations.

Moreover, although it is certainly a common view that pornography is used as "masturbation materials," empirical research suggests (perhaps surprisingly) that pornography consumption is grounded in a variety of motives, where being used for sex is one among many. Men consume pornography for (e.g.) entertainment, escape, or release.[1] Many young male consumers self-report consuming pornography as an educational guide (see, e.g., the 2013 report from the UK Office of the Children's Commissioner). Because pornography is not always used for sex but apparently sometimes just to pass the time or to find out about sex, I am not convinced it should be viewed as a kind of sex. Of course, Altman might retort and claim there

is a difference between *viewing* pornography (which is done out of various reasons and isn't a kind of sex) and *using* pornography (where pornography just is a sexual surrogate). This, however, seems to presuppose that what it is to use or consume pornography is to view it while masturbating. The idea that pornography use is a kind of sex, I contend, now becomes even less convincing: the kind of sex going on is masturbation—pornography just happens to be there in the background.

In Chapter 3, Altman considers empirical evidence for harm that pornography supposedly does to women's equal citizenship. He accepts that this evidence establishes correlations between pornography use and "aggressive behaviors and attitudes toward women" (85). Still, causal connections remain to be established. Altman goes through various studies that allegedly fail to establish harm at a population level. In Chapter 4, Altman discusses and rejects the famous MacKinnon-Dworkin ordinance against pornography on the grounds that the empirical evidence of systematic harm is lacking (I will discuss the ordinance shortly since Watson's contribution defends it). The final substantive chapter, Chapter 5, briefly rejects the idea of pornography as subordinating speech. A well-known anti-pornography position (championed by Rae Langton in addition to MacKinnon and Dworkin) is that pornography does not merely depict subordination; it is women's subordination. This is because pornography is said to "speak authoritatively"—a claim Altman is skeptical of. His concerns, on the one hand, turn on the idea that pornography *says* anything at all and, on the other, that pornography is authoritative. He accepts that some men take pornography to be authoritative, but goes on to claim that these men can hardly be considered "representative of men in society generally" (129). By way of evidence, Altman offers a personal anecdote of watching a pornographic film as a naïve college student and *even then* thinking it was not authoritative about sex insofar as the film was utterly ludicrous. He further notes that he would be very surprised if anyone in the audience thought any differently. This isn't the only part where Altman appeals to anecdotal personal experiences as a pornography consumer. In section 2.3, he discusses the feminist anti-pornography claim that pornography eroticizes inequality. Altman rejects this claim, holding instead that pornography's consumers drawn to materials that do so must already find inequality and dominance/submission sexy. If they did not find such depictions arousing, they wouldn't seek to view them: "If men do not find sex as dominance arousing to begin with, then I do not see how exposure to pornography makes such sex arousing for them" (72). Again, he offers evidence for this from his own pornography consumption.

Altman's discussion is admirably frank, and he notes that perhaps his experiences have been idiosyncratic. Still, the methodological problems here run deep. For one thing, plenty of other pornography consumers self-report having initially found some deeply inegalitarian pornography disgusting and disturbing, having only viewed such materials originally out of curiosity and to see what all the fuss is about. (I have seen this claim made in print and have heard it in conversation with pornography-consuming men.) Upon longer exposure, they report coming to enjoy

such materials. There is, of course, much that Altman can say against this: we can, for instance, speculate that those men unconsciously harbored inegalitarian thoughts to begin with, which predisposed them to finding such materials ultimately arousing. Be that as it may, to hold that male sexuality works in the way Altman suggests or that there is such a thing as uniform "male sexuality" to begin with is highly suspect in my view. Furthermore, the appeal to personal anecdotes and intuitive speculation leaves me with little grounds to find Altman's case convincing. Watson also critiques the idea that pornography use doesn't affect consumers' psychologies: given the robust empirical evidence that media affects our beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (just think of advertisements), it is strange to think that pornography doesn't affect consumers. "How is it," Watson asks, "that somehow pornography, almost alone, is an exception to the general knowledge about how images and words impact behavior?" (232) According to her, both common sense and empirical evidence run counter to the idea that pornography has little effect on people's behavior.

In her contribution, Lori Watson takes a sex equality approach to pornography, whereby pornography is "a key social location of the subordination of women to men" (151). She takes evidence for this claim to come from scientific empirical studies of pornography's harms, testimony of women and girls harmed through pornography, and from seeing how pornography eroticizes inequality and affects women's social status. As part of her approach (see Chapter 7), Watson explains and defends MacKinnon and Dworkin's civil rights ordinances by way of legally regulating pornography's production and consumption. Note at the outset that legally regulating something isn't equivalent to banning or censoring it—nor does Watson advocate legislation that makes pornography production and consumption a criminal offense or subject to censorship. Rather, certain materials are civilly actionable provided that they fulfill two conditions. First, they fall under a narrow conception of *pornography* as

> the graphic sexually explicit subordination of women through pictures and words that also includes women dehumanized as sexual objects, things, or commodities; enjoying pain or humiliation or rape; being tied up, cut up, mutilated, bruised, or physically hurt; in postures of sexual submission or servility or display; reduced to body parts, penetrated by objects or animals, or presented in scenarios of degradation, injury, torture; shown as filthy or inferior; bleeding, bruised, or hurt in a context that makes these conditions sexual.[2]

Second, in addition to meeting this definition of *pornography*, a harm specified in the ordinances must be proven before a judge, jury, or other legal administrative body. These include coercion into a pornographic performance, forcing pornography on a person, assault or physical attack due to pornography, and discrimination by trafficking in pornography. In the first part of her contribution, Watson helpfully clarifies MacKinnon and Dworkin's ordinances against common misconceptions, which is both valuable and overdue. In other words, contra critics, some work isn't

legally actionable just in satisfying the first condition (the definition of *pornography*). Demonstration of harm is also necessary. And Watson holds that the empirical evidence of pornography's harms is overwhelming.

In Chapter 8, Watson goes on to discuss how the pornography industry harms. She maintains that various pornographic genres not only eroticize gender inequality but also racial, trans-identity-based, age, queer, and familial inequalities insofar as "the 'sexiness' is in the inequalities, the hierarchy between the paired groups" (213). Moreover, she takes there to be production and consumption harms well-documented empirically. For one thing, evidence suggests that pornography consumption increases the acceptance of rape myths and callous attitudes towards women. Hence:

> Insofar as consumers of pornography occupy the positions of police investigator, judge, and jury member, and consumption of certain forms of pornography . . . is demonstrably shown to increase acceptance of rape myths and the acceptance of interpersonal violence, then pornography is implicated in the systematic denial of women's equal civil rights to have a fair and impartial investigation and adjudication of crimes against them. (225)

Watson then discusses the evidential strength of social-level studies. Contra Altman, she thinks that the evidence is strong. One extremely important point Watson raises centers on the claim that pornography consumption is causally connected to the occurrence of rape. This is something that critics of anti-pornography feminism and proponents of a right to pornography typically home in on: Since there is no conclusive proof of such a causal connection, the anti-pornography position is a nonstarter. Watson rightly critiques this view. Of course feminists are not merely concerned with grave sexualized violence, and there are many harms that anti-pornography feminism has identified. Once we cast the net more widely and look at harms that are not merely to do with rape, the empirical evidence paints a rather different picture to that held by critics of anti-pornography feminism.

Nonetheless, I am not convinced that Watson's treatment of the empirical evidence persuades critics. The debate between her and Altman follows familiar lines: both sides cite more or less the same evidence, where one side finds mere correlation while the other finds clear causation. This is one way I take pornography debates in philosophy to be intractable: our interpretation of the available evidence turns too much on our prior normative views to produce genuinely fruitful results. Bluntly put, interlocutors in pornography debates tend to find evidence in empirical research for the views that they antecedently hold. I am skeptical that the moral or legal case for or against pornography can be settled by looking at allegedly systematic harms to women, even though the evidence cited by both Altman and Watson is illuminating and important. It is also striking that in the quote above Watson claims pornography to be "implicated in the systematic denial of women's equal civil rights." At the start of her

contribution, she claims pornography to be "a key social location of the subordination of women to men" (151). The idea that pornography is implicated in gender subordination is much weaker and something I suspect Altman would not reject. He doesn't think that pornography is harmless; he seems rather to hold that evidence shows pornography not to be a key social location of subordination and hence for our right to sexual autonomy (of which pornography use is supposedly an aspect) to be overriding when thinking about pornography's legal regulation.

Chapter 9 charts out and ultimately rejects various defenses of pornography. These are the free speech defense, the feminist pro-porn position, and the argument from sexual autonomy. Watson convincingly (I hold) critiques the first and third defenses. However, I found her treatment of the second defense less compelling. She starts by focusing on the supposed feminist attacks of the MacKinnon-Dworkin ordinances. At the time (1980s), Feminists Against Censorship Taskforce in the United States prominently campaigned against anti-pornography positions. Watson discusses FACT's opposition to the ordinances and rightly points out that it grossly misrepresented the ordinances and the available empirical evidence. I am in utter agreement with Watson that this and some other supposedly feminist defenses of pornography in the 1980s–90s fail. However, Watson also rejects newer feminist pornography positions. In fact, she doesn't appear to accept that feminism can genuinely be compatible with a pro-pornography stance. One of the most celebrated self-proclaimed feminist pornography books is *The Feminist Porn Book* (2013). According to self-proclaimed feminist pornographers, the central features of feminist and mainstream pornography come apart in terms of what is represented and depicted, and how production is organized. Feminist pornography is said to be a genre that

> uses sexually explicit imagery to contest and complicate dominant representations of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, ability, age, body type, and other identity markers. It explores concepts of desire, agency, power, beauty, and pleasure at their most confounding and difficult, including pleasure within and across inequality, in the face of injustice, and against the limits of gender hierarchy and both heteronormativity and homonormativity.[3]

Watson, however, rejects that this vision of pornography is genuinely emancipatory. She holds that just because some natal females take up and enact dominant sexual roles, this isn't emancipatory for them or women in general. On her approach, "relationships of domination and subordination, including sexually scripted roles in which someone is the dominator and another the subordinate, do not constitute liberation for anyone, especially the people at the bottom of the hierarchy. They remain hierarchical, hence unequal" (265). Supposed feminist pornography retains the sort of inequality and lack of freedom that serves women's subordination, hence not being genuinely feminist.

I wholeheartedly agree with Watson that not all self-proclaimed feminist pornography *therefore* counts as

feminist. But I find her treatment of contemporary (at least putative) feminist pornography to be somewhat uncharitable and too quick.[4] Moreover, I am troubled by Watson's suggestion that any hierarchies found in sexuality and sexual scripts is *eo ipso* subordinating. Underlying Watson's discussion are seemingly strong normative views about sexuality and what constitutes "good" sex. For instance, she holds that pornography undermines sexual autonomy in that it "limits, undermines, and restricts the development of authentic sexuality, for both women and men, and interferes with interpersonal intimacy" (287). Although she doesn't draw on this, Watson's views reflect those of Gail Dines, a well-known anti-pornography activist and writer, whose work Watson elsewhere cites approvingly. Dines claims that in "pornland"

> an authentic sexuality—one that develops organically out of life experiences, one's peer group, personality traits, family and community affiliations–is replaced by generic porn sexuality limited in creativity and lacking any sense of love, respect, or connection to another human being.[5]

Given what we know about coercive mechanisms that families, communities, and even the law exercise to make people conform to heteronormative sexual expectations, I see little reason to believe that an authentic sexuality would "organically" develop in the course of sexual maturation without pornography. Furthermore, Watson's view reflects something else Dines writes: "Missing from porn is anything that looks or feels remotely like intimacy and connection, the two ingredients that make sex interesting and exciting in the real world."[6] I suspect that not everyone agrees with Watson and Dines about the role of intimacy and what makes sex interesting in the real world—and (I contend) it is possible to disagree without being in thrall to a sexist sexual ideology. Contra Watson, I think that there is more to be said in favor of some pornography and that pornography can be a genuine force for liberation. Of course, Watson can retort noting that she is merely interested in materials that fall under the narrow conception of *pornography* and sexually explicit liberatory materials don't count as such. But then her discussion of the above putative feminist pornography looks puzzling. In order for this discussion to be intelligible, Watson must think that these sorts of materials fall under the narrow conception she is operating with. This move, I contend, is not obviously warranted, though.

Debates about what we should legally do about pornography (if anything at all) are at an impasse and, despite the admirable cases both Altman and Watson make for their views, I remain unconvinced that the book resolves this impasse—or even comes close to resolving it. But I do not see this as a weakness. Rather, the richness of the book will (I am sure) instigate many further discussions that are both interesting and sorely in need of taking place.

NOTES

1. Matthew B. Ezzell, "Pornography Makes a Man: The Impact of Pornography as a Component of Gender and Sexual Socialization."

2. Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified*, 176.

3. Taormino et al., *The Feminist Porn Book: The Politics of Producing Pleasure*, 9–10.

4. For more, see chapter 7 of my *Pornography: A Philosophical Introduction*.

5. Gail Dines, *Pornland: How Porn has Hijacked our Sexuality*, xi.

6. Ibid., 68.

REFERENCES

Dines, G. *Pornland: How Porn has Hijacked our Sexuality*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2011.

Ezzell, Matthew B. "Pornography Makes a Man: The Impact of Pornography as a Component of Gender and Sexual Socialization." In *The Philosophy of Pornography: Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Lindsay Coleman and Jacob M. Held, 17–34. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014.

MacKinnon, Catharine A. *Feminism Unmodified*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987.

Mikkola, M. *Pornography: A Philosophical Introduction*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Taormino, Tristan, Celine Parreñas Shimizu, Constance Penley, and Mireille Miller-Young, eds. *The Feminist Porn Book: The Politics of Producing Pleasure*. New York: The Feminist Press at CUNY, 2013.

Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability

Shelley L. Tremain (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2017).

Reviewed by Catherine Clune-Taylor
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

In 2002, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson called for the integration of disability as a "category of analysis and a system of representation" into feminist theory, arguing that such work would generatively enrich and transform both feminist theory and disability studies. Further, it would clearly demarcate a vibrant field of academic study that was already producing critical interventions with regards to both—feminist disability studies.[1] In 2017's *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability*, Shelley L. Tremain performs the urgent work of providing (and motivating) a clear feminist philosophy of disability to theoretically underwrite such a field, while making clear the "transgressive potential" of her account. The book builds upon Tremain's Foucauldian account of the constitution of impairment *and* disability first introduced in 2001's "On the Government of Disability" in which the author followed Butler's (1990) lead in challenging both the sex/gender binary—and the nature/culture binary onto which it mapped—through the revelation of sex as "gender all along." With her (2001) excavation of impairment as, similarly, "disability all along," Tremain provided the foundation for critical disability studies as a field of analysis characterized by a rejection of impairment as a natural fact of the body. This was the first critical alternative to the British Social Model and its assertion of an impairment/disability binary drawn along nature/culture lines.[2] In *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability*, we are provided a full articulation of Tremain's feminist account of disability as "an apparatus of productive force relations rather than as a personal characteristic, an identity, a difference, or a form of social oppression," and

of impairment as the naturalized effect and mechanism of that apparatus, brought about through the historical emergence of a "diagnostic style of reasoning" previously available only in piecemeal (204).[3] Near the beginning of her first chapter, Tremain states that her book is a call for a "conceptual revolution" (borrowing Rae Langton's term)—that is, a "critical ontology of what philosophers think disability is, of what they think about how disability is produced, and of what their current thinking about disability does" (3). While the call she issues in the form of arguments regarding the historically and culturally specific constitution of both impairment and disability and of the emergence of the academic discipline of bioethics as a "technology of government" may have particular import for feminist philosophers, philosophers of disability, social epistemologists, and bioethicists, it aims at the reform of philosophy as a discipline in general.

The book's arguments span what Tremain calls "two distinct, but interrelated and mutually constitutive spheres," outlined within the first chapter of the book, titled "Groundwork for A Feminist Philosophy of Disability." The first is a "reconstructive-conceptual sphere" in which she provides a historicist and relativist account of the constitution of both disability *and* impairment as a corrective to what she identifies as the "standard philosophical view" pervasive throughout the field that disability is a natural, pre-discursive, objectively disadvantageous human trait that should not only be prevented or corrected, but is also philosophically uninteresting (2). The second is a "metaphilosophical sphere" which connects the exclusion of disabled philosophers from the field to this standard view. As Tremain writes, this standard philosophical view regarding disability which she dispels, and the "underrepresentation of disabled philosophers within the profession are inseparably embedded in the institutional infrastructure of the discipline, mutually constitutive and mutually reinforcing" (2–3). And disabled philosophers are—indeed—exceptional in their marginalization from professional philosophy—a discipline (in)famous for its overwhelming homogeneity. While women make up about 25 percent of full-time philosophy faculty in the United States and 30–35 percent of them in Canada, philosophers of color are estimated to make up less than 10 percent of that population in North America, and Black philosophers only about 2 percent (29). Despite disabled individuals making up 22 percent of the general population, recent surveys indicate disabled philosophers only make up about 2 percent of faculty members in the United States and less than 1% in Canada. Professionally, then, philosophy is—as Tremain writes—"made up almost entirely of nondisabled white people" (29).

The underrepresentation of disabled folks in philosophy can be at least partially attributed to the employment discrimination these individuals are subject to within the academy, and at large, for which Tremain provides compelling empirical evidence. However, she argues that the "grievous unemployment and poverty that accrue to disabled people" are the result of the apparatus of disability itself, which naturalizes impairment and (among other things), renders higher education inaccessible to many disabled folks by relying upon an "individualized, medicalized,

and privatized conception of disability," that positions their requirements for flourishing as "special needs" (30). Tremain notes that this "accommodationist" understanding of disability is echoed within the philosophical canon, reminiscent—as it is—of Rawls's "set[ting] aside" disabled folks' entitlement claims to be only considered after those in the original position arrived at their blueprint for a just society for "normal and cooperating" people (31).[4] This conception of disability, which underwrites and supports the standard philosophical understanding of disability (and impairment) as philosophically uninteresting, positions valid engagements with disability as those which properly construe it as a primarily biomedical issue. This, in turn, legitimates sequestering considerations of disability in (always already) devalued areas of "applied" philosophy, and nonideal theoretical fields like applied ethics, or as subfields of bioethics and cognitive science at best, in ways that disincentivize specialization as well as hiring.

This constitutive (mis)construal of disability—for description is never neutral, but rather always both constitutive and prescriptive—is reified by and reflected within professional output on the topic. As Tremain notes, most feminists philosophers who take up disability and most philosophers of disability "do not rigorously question the metaphysical and epistemological status of disability, but rather advance ethical and political positions that largely assume the self-evidence of that status" (2). This is despite the work of many feminist scholars—particularly feminist philosophers of science and social epistemologists—stressing the importance of demographics and the sociopolitical nature of knowledge production, pointing to, for example, the constitutive nature of categorization, the sociopolitical effects of speech acts, and the need to explore identity intersectionally, etc. Tremain introduces the term "ableist exceptionism" to refer to the phenomenon persistent throughout the discipline, whereby disability, "because it is assumed to be a pre-discursive, natural, and politically neutral human characteristic . . . is uniquely excluded from the production and application of certain values, beliefs, principles, and actions that circulate in a political consciousness" (33). Evidence of ableist exceptionism can be seen throughout the profession: in the quotidien use (and defense) of ableist phrases (e.g., "blind review," or "blind to the consequences"); in the theoretical reliance on ableist concepts and metaphors ("moral blindness," "justice is blind)," and in the continued failure to include disability in analysis which otherwise admit (and often specifically study) the constitution of identity-based oppression.

Ableist exceptionism is perhaps most striking when reproduced in theorizing which aims specifically at highlighting the sociopolitical nature of knowledge production and its oppressive forces. For example, the lacuna in knowledge production that results from the failure of professional philosophers to dispense with the standard philosophical view of disability, and thus, to recognize and engage with disability as an object (and appropriate subject) of epistemic and metaphysical investigation, arguably constitutes a form of hermeneutical injustice on Fricker's increasingly popular account of epistemic injustice.[5] However, Tremain highlights the ableism within Fricker's account itself, insofar as it reproduces the standard

philosophical understanding of disability as external to power relations (38–40). Indeed, Fricker uses disability (i.e., a medical condition that is largely undiagnosed and misunderstood at a particular historical moment) as an example to differentiate hermeneutical disadvantages that result in epistemic injustice from those which are merely bad luck. Tremain notes how striking it is that Fricker—like many feminist philosophers keenly aware of (and seeking to address) the political nature of knowledge production and its role in oppression—reproduces the same hermeneutical injustice she is attempting to articulate regarding disability in her articulation of it. If women experiencing postpartum depression are subject to hermeneutical injustice regarding their situation because of unequal social conditions "conducive to the relevant hermeneutical lacuna," such that they are likely members of a "hermeneutically disadvantaged group," then the same is true for those folks with undiagnosed and misunderstood medical conditions she invokes.[6] Background conditions similarly shape "the public perceptions and authoritative epistemologies from which the negative social, political, interpersonal and economic consequences" Fricker describes as accruing to these folks, argues Tremain, in ways that "natural[ize], medical[ize], and depolitic[ize] these perceptions and epistemologies in ways that conceal their contingent and artifactual character" (40).

Tremain's contribution in *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability*, then, is a politically astute, culturally specific, and historically situated account of the constitution of both impairment and disability of the type that is essential to those currently theorizing (and challenging) systems of gendered and racial oppression. Indeed, it is very clear why the book won the 2016 Tobin Siebers Prize for Disability Studies in the Humanities while in manuscript form. In providing it, she successfully undermines not only the standard philosophical understanding of disability, but also the multitude of theories and practices within the profession upon which it rests. Her identification of the ways in which the standard philosophical account of disability works to not only constrain philosophy as a *discipline* (that is, as a field of knowledge/power), but also to contribute to the oppression of disabled individuals beyond the boundaries of the professional field is of import to every practitioner in the field. Indeed, while efforts to address the overwhelming whiteness and cisgender maleness of professional philosophy have been inconsistently successful for at least some marginalized folks, disabled folks have thus far been left out of such efforts almost completely, in a manner that is, indeed, exceptional (and often mirrors the culture at large). In the same way that combating gendered and racialized oppression within the academy and beyond requires representative accounts of the unique emergence and functioning of its many forms (e.g., misogyny, transphobia, misogynoir, etc.), so too does social justice for disabled folks and for the treatment of disability require the kind of "historicist and relativist" account of disability Tremain provides. In outlining a new metaphysics of disability, Tremain reveals the epistemic, sociopolitical, and bioethical stakes of disability, both in itself, and as an object of analysis.

Thus, I would argue that this book is a necessary intervention for *every* professional philosopher, given that the overwhelming homogeneity of the field is, arguably, a problem for all of its members—both politically and epistemically. However, beyond those working in disability feminist theory, social epistemology, and bioethics, Tremain's work in this book will be of particular interest to Foucault scholars as well. I would argue that Tremain is one of the most incisive and careful readers of Foucault in the field and her skill is on display throughout the book.

After briefly outlining her two spheres of argument in Chapter One, Tremain moves on in Chapter Two ("Power and Normalization") to review Foucault's insights regarding the historical emergence of biopower and the constitutive effects of normalization in order to "flesh out and fill in the sketch of this historically and culturally specific apparatus of power relations that effectively brings disability . . . into being as a problem"—the rigor and care she takes in her analysis is evident (47). In Chapters Three ("Historicizing and Relativizing Philosophy of Disability") and Four ("Foucault, Feminism, Disability"), she takes up critiques regarding the liberatory potential of a Foucauldian approach to disability, feminist theory, and activism respectively, rebutting each and articulating the critical potential for each in turn. Her treatment in dispelling each of these claims is masterful, and her analysis of Foucault's controversial treatment of Charles Jouy in particular moves the conversation regarding this case among feminist Foucauldians forward in important ways. Finally, the arguments presented in Chapter Five ("Bioethics as a Technology of Government") have urgent implications for anyone in the field. In it, Tremain charts the emergence of bioethics as an academic discipline which "rationalizes the eugenics of a (neo)liberal governmentality," making sense of (and further grounding for) feminist concerns regarding the use of atomistic notions of autonomy, and tendency to discount disabled folks' assessments of their own quality of life (45).

The work as a whole, as well as specific arguments in it, feels uncannily timely within not only our larger biopolitical context, but also within the academy, where time-worn debates regarding social justice have reignited in slightly new forms. For example, Tremain's arguments against using "people-first" language ("people with disabilities") in favor of "disabled people" in order to emphasize the constitutive nature of power seem to me in line with an emerging trend among intersectional scholars to shift away from thinking about the identities that power constitutes to thinking about power itself in its technologies, its administration—that is, in the multitude of quotidian ways in which certain populations are "made live" while others are "let die."[7] Further, the critical feminist account of disability the book lays out strikes me as an articulation of the theoretical core of recent feminist work attempting "decolonize disability," by situating the constitution of impairment and disability within the functions of colonial power and transnational politics, as well as global capitalism and its racialized ecological effects.

NOTES

1. Garland-Thomson, "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory," 3.

2. Tremain, "On the Government of Disability," 632.

3. Tremain "This Is What a Historicist and Relativist Feminist Philosophy of Disability Looks Like"; Tramain, "The Biopolitics of Bioethics and Disability."

4. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*.

5. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*.

6. Ibid., 152–53.

7. Latham, "(Re)Making Sex: A Praxiography of the Gender Clinic"; Spade, *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*.

REFERENCES

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory." *NWSA Journal* 14, no. 3 (2002): 1–32.

Latham, J. R. "(Re)Making Sex: A Praxiography of the Gender Clinic." *Feminist Theory* 18, no. 2 (2017): 177–204. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700117700051.

Puar, Jasbir K. *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability*. Duke University Press, 2017.

Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press, 1971.

Spade, Dean. *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*. Duke University Press, 2015.

Tremain, Shelley. "On the Government of Disability." *Social Theory and Practice* 27, no. 4 (2001): 617–36.

———. "The Biopolitics of Bioethics and Disability." *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry* 5, nos. 2–3 (2008): 101–6. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11673-008-9105-6.

———. "This Is What a Historicist and Relativist Feminist Philosophy of Disability Looks Like." *Foucault Studies* 19 (June 2015): 7. https://doi.org/10.22439/fs.v0i19.4822.

———. *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability*. University of Michigan Press, 2017.

NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

On behalf of the committee, I am pleased to welcome the following new members, whose terms end in 2022:

Naomi Scheman
Katie Kirkland
Luciana Garbago
And *ex officio*, Jill Gordon as the new Site Visit coordinator.

I also extend the entire committee's gratitude to the following outgoing members, whose terms ended as of July 1, 2019:

Charlotte Witt (chair)
Amy Baehr
Michael Rea
Margaret Atherton
And *ex officio*, Peggy DesAutels, the founder and the outgoing coordinator of the Site Visit program.

SEEKING NEW EDITOR OF BLOG SERIES

The CSW seeks a new editor, for a term starting in March 2020, of the Women in Philosophy series on the *Blog of the APA*. Thanks to inaugural editor Adriel Trott, this has been a successful series and a source of communal support in its first two years. The successful blog editor serves *ex officio* as a voting member of the Committee on the Status of Women. If interested in being considered for the position, email the chair at kathrynnorlock@gmail.com.

"ASK A SENIOR WOMAN PHILOSOPHER" IS A YEAR OLD!

As readers know, for over a year, our blog series editor Adriel Trott has offered a platform for voices and perspectives that are not often given space in the field by editing a series on Women in Philosophy for the APA's blog. The first installment of her mini-series, "Ask a Senior Woman Philosopher," was posted in August 2018, the second in December 2018, and the third in January 2019. See the July 2019 installment for Jill Gordon's response to "Dealing with Unwelcome or Inappropriate Attention." If you have a question for which you would like advice from a senior woman philosopher but don't have someone to ask or don't feel like you can ask the senior women philosophers you know, send your question to the series editor, Adriel M. Trott, at trotta@wabash.edu. Questions will be anonymized and a suitable respondent found. Topics in the wider series of Women in Philosophy thus far have included feminist philosophy conferences, Southern Black feminism, the work of the Graduate Student Council of the APA, the importance of having people who have experienced oppression working in relevant areas of philosophy, and a call to decolonize the philosophical canon, among other topics. At the CSW we noticed that the comment sections still tend to be populated by men, and often men who are telling the posters how to better think about diversity, so Adriel Trott has also worked with the APA on better moderation of the comments. If you are interested in supporting the series, consider submitting a post to the series editor (Adriel M. Trott at trotta@wabash.edu) or commenting on posts.

CSW POSTERS

Two new posters are available for purchase on the CSW website (http://www. apaonlinecsw.org/). The background for the "W" poster includes hundreds of names and images of contemporary women in philosophy. All the posters in this series are available for purchase at http://www.zazzle.com/apacsw.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2019–2020

Adriel M. Trott (APA Blog Series Editor), Kathryn J. Norlock (Chair 2022), Rachel V. McKinnon (Member 2020), Julinna C. Oxley (Member 2020), Katie Stockdale (Member 2020), Nancy Bauer (Member 2021), Nicole J. Hassoun (Member 2021), Janet A. Kourany (Member 2021), Luciana S. Garbayo (Member 2022), Katie Kirkland (Member 2022), Naomi Scheman (Member 2022), Lauren Freeman (Newsletter Editor), Jill Gordon (Site Visit Program Director)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FEMINIST APPROACHES TO BIOETHICS (FAB) CONFERENCE 2020

University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

June 17–18, 2020

IAB: June 19–21, 2020.

The FAB conference is a part of the World Congress of Bioethics (IAB). The CFP is coming in a few weeks.

World Congress of Bioethics website: http://www.bioethics.net/2018/12/iab-world-congress-of-bioethics-2020/

If you have questions, please contact Anna Gotlib at agotlib@brooklyn.cuny.edu.

14TH ANNUAL PHILOSOPHIA CONFERENCE: A SOCIETY FOR CONTINENTAL FEMINISM – CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Hosted by Vanderbilt University, Nashville TN
May 14–17, 2020

Plenary Speakers:
Kathryn Sophia Belle, Penn State University
Lisa Guenther, Queens University, Canada
Tracy Sharpley Whiting, Vanderbilt University

Plenary Panel: New Perspectives on Disability
Kim Q. Hall, Melinda Hall, Joel Reynolds, and Shelley Tremain

The conference will have two workshop streams: Rethinking Prisons and Rethinking Disability.

Submit abstracts (500–700 words), or panel proposals [panel abstract (500 words) plus panelists' abstracts (500–700 words)], on any topic related to Continental Feminism— very broadly construed—for the general program. Indicate on your abstract if you are applying to participate in a workshop. **Send abstracts to 14thphilosophia@gmail.com by December 15, 2019.** Lodging will be provided on a limited basis.

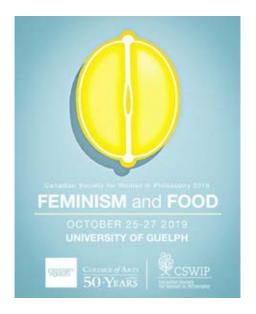## FEMINIST ETHICS AND SOCIAL THEORY (FEAST)

The Future of Feminist Ethics: Intersectionality, Epistemology, and Grace

Celebrating FEAST's 20th year
October 3–6, 2019
Sheraton Sand Key Resort in Clearwater Beach, FL

This year we're asking what challenges feminists continue to face and what new challenges have arisen since FEAST first began and how "revisiting feminist ethics" at this juncture might help feminists confront those challenges.

Thinking through how well we have engaged intersectionality and where we've failed; engaging with how our ethical and political lives are intertwined with our lives as knowers; articulating the grace—sometimes generous and sometimes critical—necessary to navigate this difficult world.

We are fortunate to be featuring a Keynote Conversation between Kristie Dotson and Britney Cooper and a Keynote by Talia Bettcher. We will also be holding a session in honor of Joan Callahan.

CONTRIBUTOR BIOS

Julia R. S. Bursten is an assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Kentucky and former co-chair of the Philosophy of Science Association Women's Caucus. Her research concerns questions of modeling and scale in nanoscience and other physical sciences. From 2011 to 2015 she served as the resident philosopher in the Millstone Nanosynthesis Laboratory at the University of Pittsburgh.

Catherine Clune-Taylor is assistant professor of feminist science and technology studies in the Department of Women's Studies at San Diego State University. Before that, she was a postdoctoral research associate in the Program in Gender and Sexuality Studies at Princeton University. In addition to a PhD in philosophy from the University of Alberta (and some other degrees in philosophy), she has a BMSc in microbiology and immunology from the University of Western Ontario. Clune-Taylor writes and teaches in the fields (and at the intersections) of feminist theory, philosophy of gender and sexuality, critical disability studies, and bioethics. She is currently at work on a book critically exploring the science, ethics, and biopolitics underwriting contemporary clinical, social, and political management of intersex and trans lives. She has published articles in *PhaenEx: Journal of Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture*, *The American*

Journal of Public Health, and *Hypatia* (forthcoming, November 2019).

Cassie Herbert is an assistant professor at Illinois State University, where she holds a joint appointment in Philosophy and Women's and Gender Studies. She received her PhD in philosophy from Georgetown. She works in social philosophy, philosophy of language, and philosophy of sex. Her research focuses on the pragmatics of slurs, how we use language to construct ingroups and outgroups, and on the harms of sexual violence. In her spare time, Cassie boxes, bikes, and takes great pleasure in making excessively intricate crafts.

Alice MacLachlan is an associate professor of philosophy at York University (Toronto, Canada), where she directs the graduate program in philosophy, and is co-editor of *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly*, an open-access, peer-reviewed, scholarly journal. She writes and teaches in moral, political, and feminist philosophy, focusing on philosophical issues arising in the aftermath of conflict: the nature and limits of forgiveness, the power and value of apologies, and the role that emotions like resentment and indignation play in reconciliation and repair. She has also worked in LGBTQ philosophy on topics ranging from the ethics of coming out to the changing nature of family. Her recent publications include "Fiduciary Duties and the Ethics of Public Apology" (*Journal of Applied Philosophy* 2018), "'Trust Me, I'm Sorry:' The Paradox of Public Apology" (*Monist* 2015), "Gender and the Public Apology" (*Transitional Justice Review* 2013), and "Closet Doors and Stage Lights: On the Goods of Out" (*Social Theory and* Practice 2012). She co-edited a collection titled *Justice, Responsibility, and Reconciliation in the Wake of Conflict* (Springer 2013) and she is currently completing a SSHRC-funded research project on the ethics and politics of civility.

Mari Mikkola is an associate professor of philosophy at University of Oxford and tutorial fellow of Somerville College. She is the author of two books (*The Wrong of Injustice: Dehumanization and Its Role in Feminist Philosophy* and *Pornography: A Philosophical Introduction*, both with Oxford University Press) and of several articles on feminist philosophy, social ontology, and pornography.

Sarah Clark Miller is associate professor of Philosophy and affiliate faculty in Bioethics and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Pennsylvania State University. She is an ethicist who also works in social and political thought. She is past acting and associate director and current faculty affiliate of the Rock Ethics Institute. Her recent work includes *The Ethics of Need: Agency, Dignity, and Obligation* (Routledge) and articles on sexual violence, relational dignity, reproductive ethics, global responsibility, and harm and moral injury in journals such as *The Journal of Social Philosophy* and *Social Theory and Practice*. She is currently completing a book on sexual violence.

Miranda Pilipchuk is a PhD candidate in the Department of Philosophy at Villanova University, specializing in feminist theory, philosophy of law, and critical race theory. Her dissertation examines the relationship between public discourses surrounding sexual violence and logics of mass incarceration. She is the recipient of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship, the Sir James Lougheed Award of Distinction, the Villanova University Gender and Women's Studies Graduate Research Award, and is a two-time winner of the Greater Philadelphia Women's Studies Consortium Graduate Research Award. She served as the managing editor of *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* for two and a half years, and she was an appointed member of the APA's inaugural Graduate Student Council, a PIKSI: Boston Teaching Fellow, and the founding member of Villanova's Minorities and Philosophy chapter. Her previous work has been published on the *Blog of the APA*.

Caleb Ward is a PhD candidate in philosophy at Stony Brook University (SUNY). His research is about sexual consent and responsibility in intimacy, a topic he approaches using feminist philosophy (especially critical theory and black feminist thought), as well as tools from both continental and analytic ethics. He has also co-edited two volumes on food ethics, including the *Routledge Handbook of Food Ethics* (2017).

Lori Watson is professor and chair of Philosophy at the University of San Diego; she is also an affiliate faculty member in the School of Law. Her books include *Equal Citizenship and Public Reason: A Feminist Political Liberalism*, co-authored with Christie Hartley (Oxford University Press, 2018); *Debating Pornography* with Andrew Altman (Oxford University Press, 2019); and *Debating Sex Work* with Jessica Flannigan (forthcoming).

Robin Zheng is an assistant professor of philosophy at Yale-NUS College. She specializes in ethics, moral psychology, and feminist and social philosophy. Her recent publications include "Why Yellow Fever Isn't Flattering: A Case Against Racial Fetish" in the *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*; "Bias, Structure, and Injustice: A Reply to Haslanger" in *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly*; "A Job for Philosophers: Causality, Responsibility, and Explaining Social Inequality" in *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review*; and "Precarity is a Feminist Issue: Gender and Contingent Labor in the Academy" in *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*.