Sexualisation: Stories of silencing and resistance

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Abstract

Sexualisation is a serious issue. This study has a particular focus on discourses which produce effects of sexualisation for women and girls from a post-structural, autoethnographic position. Theoretical and philosophical positions from Foucault, Butler, Davies, Drewery and Humphreys inform the writing. I also turn to Gavey, in my use of her theory on rape myths to examine the myriad of positions available for people to take up in regard to what constitutes as real rape (2018).

My experiences with sexualisation are storied into ten vignettes to examine some of the possible effects of these discursive positions and to document stories of resistance that have enabled and constrained me to take effective action. The vignettes are ordered to show there are a number of different experiences associated with sexualisation; from sexualising comments through to rape.

I focus the writing on discourse to consider how sex, resistance and power are inextricably linked. Drawing from theories on power, gender, discourse, positioning, resistance, repression and consent have produced a migration of identity away from positioning my(self) as victimised towards that of Justice-Doing and resistance.

Discourse analysis shows some of the effects sexualisation can produce for women and girls. I analyse how the use of particular language has been established through the ongoing production of dominant discursive positions and the effects this can produce for people within an experience. A particular focus for the analysis was to demonstrate the number of positions available to be taken up during an event and the contradictions these positions may produce.

This study presents as Justice-Doing work, because it investigates how discursive practices can produce inequitable effects for women. I argue that producing equitable, discursive positions for women to take up within heterosexual relationships can be complex due to deeply entrenched, historically founded discourses that are/have been available to be taken up by people, places and institutions.

Dedication

To my darling Frankie: For without you, I would not be me.

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The University of Waikato: The substantial Master's Research scholarship I received to complete this research enabled me to continue with this study. Thank you.

Wendy and Jenny: In your own ways, you have both inspired a shift in my understanding. You have provided support, and an ear to listen. Most importantly, you set a standard that I strived to reach. Undertaking this study has been life changing and shifted my understanding of who I am. Thank you both.

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To my friends: Thank you for the love, support and care you have provided over the last few years. This has been an unbelievably difficult ride. I may not have seen it through to the end without you all. In different ways you acknowledge, nurture and push me to be a better version of me. Thank you.

Mum and Dad: This life has been a rollercoaster, thank you for securing my harness and for sometimes hanging on to me while I dangled from above. Thank you for the love, the unconditional support and the time you have given me. I am proud of the woman I am today. I would like to acknowledge the part you have both played in that. Maybe I'll be okay after all.

Melanie: I am unsure if you realise the level of strength and support you have shown me. I have been alone and you have been there, every time. After all these years your house is still the first place I want to go when I need a break from the world. More than an Aunt, a mentor and a friend. I am so lucky to be in this Mad family.

Samuel: I have looked up to you for the past eleven years, all that I have seen has made me immeasurably proud of you. Thank you for your kindness, your loyalty, and

your unwavering ability to be you. Most importantly, thank you for teaching me the value of me. You were right, the hard work was worth it.

Te Whatarangi: The person that you are is the person many only dream of becoming. Thank you for taking care of me, for loving me and for always being the best friend you can. Being around you is easier than breathing. Kindness and warmth radiate across your skin and onto all others around you. This world does not deserve the pureness of your heart. I will spend my time uplifting you to where you belong, with the gods. E mutunga kore ana taku aroha ki a koe.

There are many paths to Justice-Doing, and I have respect for yours, as I outline mine.

(Reynolds, 2020 p. 19)

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Chapter One: Introduction

Situating myself

I identify as a cis-gendered, straight, female who resides in Aotearoa, New Zealand. From a young age, I was curious about the concept of right and wrong. When I was a girl, I perceived right and wrong to be fixed and binary positions where I could be either one or the other. This viewpoint continued into my teenage years. When my peers were experimenting with sex and alcohol, I held back, and was unwilling to deviate from my already established boundaries. Although boys also experimented with alcohol and sex, I found it easier to navigate through my teenage years in their company. In my experience, girls were constantly comparing themselves to others. In particular, how girls looked was a common comparison drawn. This behaviour went beyond my boundary of what was right and caused me to struggle to make friends with girls. In my experience, the practice of comparing was not as common with boys.

The comments made by girls toward me often compared the way I looked to others. I remember walking through the courtyard at school with a female friend, from behind we heard "Wow Claire's hair is longer and much prettier than X hair". My friend and I shared an uncomfortable glance and continued on to our next class. Later that same year I was walking in late to a maths class, as I sat down I heard "Why doesn't Claire wear more make-up? She could be way prettier than X she hangs out with if she put more of an effort in". I felt embarrassed at these words. I remember them clearly because they made me feel as though I could not go anywhere without my appearance being questioned. This feeling only grew when these types of comments transcended the walls of the school and found their way into my home. I remember my first experience of going to a party with a group of girlfriends. Another girl and I had both selected to wear a top with a similar neckline. I can still hear her comments: "Okay, so Claire's boobs are smaller than mine so maybe I should be the only one wearing a low cut top out tonight".

These comments and others like them had adverse effects on the way I viewed my body. I found high school to be a minefield of uncertainty. I was uncertain about the level of effort I was supposed to put in to my appearance. I was ridiculed for wearing make-up and straightening my hair. The term “try hard” was often used to describe girls who acted in this way. On the other hand, criticism was rife. I felt like I was being mercilessly picked apart if I made no effort towards my appearance. I remember speaking to my mother on several occasions about how I was being treated. Her typical response was “That is high school. Girls are awful to each other”. The simple passing comments from my mother about girls being girls suggested to me that over 30 years ago, in a country on the other side of the world, my mother had experienced similar scrutiny to me. I recognise now, this is normative gendered behaviour. I can link it to the effects it had for me and can have for young women (or girls) in schools. For example, when I reflect on my time at high school the sexual and comparative comments that were aimed towards me caused a significant change to the way I dressed. After overhearing those comments in a maths class, I started to make more of an effort. It got to the stage where I would not leave the house without spending time on my hair and applying make-up. However, I found the deliberate effort to fit in did not stop the comparative comments.

The behaviour I experienced from girls caused me to spend the majority of my childhood and early teenage years surrounded by boys. As I aged, I started to detect differences between the comments made by boys and girls. By the time I started high school, I had overheard numerous sexual comments targeted towards me, by boys. When I was under the age of ten, the men making these types of comments were significantly older than me. However, I noticed that as I aged, male counterparts of a similar age to me were the people making sexually suggestive remarks.

The sexualising comments I overheard did not end when I left high school. In contrast, the sexualising comments developed into non-consented touching. My experiences with non-consented touching included sexual violence and were traumatic.

Due to the continuation of those sexualising experiences, when I entered the workforce, I took a different approach to what I had previously at high school. I was

no longer concerned with fitting in with how other girls expected me to look and dress. I stopped wearing make-up, and I put in minimal effort towards my appearance. I found this deliberate effort to hide my body did not put an end to the sexual or comparative comments. The only change, was the age gap between me and the men making sexual comments widened once more.

I have used the term sexualising in this story to describe some of the practices I have experienced with men and boys. I now move into the selection of language and scaffold the premise for the study. The selection of language is relevant here, because it serves to demonstrate why I have used the terms *victimised* and *perpetrated by*, and what these terms mean in the context of this study.

Selection of language

Language can shape how and where some lives are lived. Language can create positions for people that can be taken up or refused. It is important to consider the ideas which become dominant are often developed and thrust upon people by a majority (Coates & Wade, 2007). The ideas and language that I have discussed have been developed from my experiences and have been shaped by the time and places that I have lived. Therefore, before further storying my experiences I acknowledge my positioning as the author.

I now discuss the terms *victim* and *perpetrator*, and explain my stance on them for this work. An overwhelming majority of the more recent studies (over the past 25 years) such as Lee (2019), Riger et al. (2002) and Ullman (2010) depict women and girls as survivors of violent sexualisation. I have a personal aversion to the term survivor. Although survivor may be preferable as a descriptor for some women, personally, I experience it as patronising. I searched for other choices of language selected in the literature and came across the term victim. Egan (2020) has developed literature in the field of sexual assault for a number of years. She described women who had been sexually assaulted as victims (Egan, 2020). Coates and Wade (2007) also termed victim as a descriptor for women's experiences with gendered violence. To identify someone as a victim or a perpetrator can have the effect of ascribing a

totalising label that can obscure other aspects of their identity. Therefore, I opted to not define people as such because of the totalising effects this may cause. Instead I focused on the practice of victimisation and use the verb 'victimised' rather than the noun 'victim'. I refer to acts of gendered sexual violence within the data as perpetrated by men. In adopting the active grammar of victimised by, I depict my own, and other women's, experiences with sexually suggestive commentary and physical actions.

Defining terms

The term *sexualisation* has been drawn from to describe some of the practices I have experienced with men and boys. I have come to understand that sexualisation can be exercised in a number of visual ways including staring or leering. Further practices that produce sexualisation are unwanted touching which can be displayed in many ways including hugs, shoulder rubs, knee strokes, hip grabbing, kissing and rape. Whilst many of these responses can be welcomed and enjoyed in mutually consensual relationships, they become sexualisation when those perpetuating these acts are sexually objectifying the other person, valuing them only for their sex appeal and they occur in the absence of mutual consent. In these contexts the person subjected to these unwanted actions can experience them as offensive.

There are a number of different definitions for the term sexualisation. To date, academics have not agreed upon one meaning (Duschinsky, 2013). I have chosen to use the definition set by the American Psychological Association (2007), because this definition is most closely aligned to the focus of this research:

> Sexualisation occurs when [1.] a person's value comes only from his or her sexual appeal or behaviour, to the exclusion of other characteristics; [2.] a person is held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness (narrowly defined) with being sexy; [3.] a person is sexually objectified – that is, made into a thing for others' sexual use, rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making; [4] and/or sexuality is inappropriately imposed upon a person. (p. 1)

Sexualisation is associated with relationship and gendered discourses. Chapter Five will describe a sexual experience between me and a man. This particular sexual experience was not entered into with a prior discussion nor did it establish mutual consent, which is why I have called it rape. I have provided the definition for the term rape, from the New Zealand Crimes Act (1961) (s128):

> (2) Person A rapes person B if person A has sexual connection with person B, affected by the penetration of person B's genitalia by person A's penis,—
>
> (a) without person B's consent to the connection; and
>
> (b) without believing on reasonable grounds that person B consents to the connection.
>
> (3) Person A has unlawful sexual connection with person B if person A has sexual connection with person B—
>
> (a) without person B's consent to the connection; and
>
> (b) without believing on reasonable grounds that person B consents to the connection. (Ministry of Justice, 2020)

A further section of the act (128a) states:

> A person does not consent to sexual activity just because he or she does not protest or offer physical resistance to the activity
>
> A person does not consent to sexual activity if he or she allows the activity because of:
>
> the fear of the application of force to him or her or some other person. (Ministry of Justice, 2020)

The latter definition (128a) will be further explained in Chapter Five. I discuss how some discourses subscribed to by men can prevent women from physically resisting unwanted sexual experiences with them.

Why this study on sexualisation and why now?

During my first visit to a nightclub I witnessed several events of young men touching, watching, and whispering about young women. Although by this stage, I had been subjected to sexualising experiences, I distinctly remember this night as the first time I felt particularly uncomfortable and fearful of the sexualising behaviours I witnessed. I watched a friend being followed into the bathroom by a young man. This experience re-sparked my curiosity about sexualisation. I was particularly interested in how

many other women and girls are subjected to sexualisation practices and the effects this may produce for them. At this time, my right and wrong viewpoint began to cause issues for me again. Markovic (2012) commented; the urge to do the right thing can create issues for young people's sexual identities, sense of self and belonging. In particular, this type of thinking can cause issues for young people when they feel immense societal pressure to do the moral/right thing. When I was in that nightclub, I was grappling with what the right thing to do was. My friend told me to drop it, she laughed it off as a normative gendered practice between women and men, and continued on with her night, unperturbed. I have now come to understand that there were different positions available for me and my friend to take up. The position I took, was that I was perturbed and recall this as the first time, where I began to realise how common sexualising experiences were for young women.

Once I became more aware of some of the sexualising practices women and girls experience, I began to notice them more and more. I found that no matter where I travelled, how I dressed or what company I was in, I continued to witness these interactions between men, boys, women and girls. However, my friend's reaction in the nightclub sparked my thinking about different practices of resistance. I began to be curious about how many women resisted violent sexualisation by speaking up or seeking help. My friend offered no outward verbal communication, she appeared to simply ignore the young man who followed her into the bathroom. At this time, I reflected back on my own experiences and I came to realise that more often than not, I too had not verbally communicated my resistance. Although there was a lack of verbal communication between me and the men who sexualised me, I now understand that I resisted in other ways.

As I became more interested in this topic, I began searching for and reading literature about sexualisation and the effects this can have for women and girls. I found that some discourses available to be subscribed to, promoted innocence as an ideal sexual expression for women and girls to display. The theory on innocence suggested: commitment to one partner and exerting a sense of innocence are often the more socially acceptable forms of sexual activities for women (Bale, 2010; 2011). In this context innocence is in reference to the behaviours young women and girls display towards their sexual experiences and interests.

Research questions

I have witnessed and described some of my and other women's experiences with sexualisation. I have read literature on sexualisation and the effects it can have for women and girls. From my search and experiences, I have produced two questions that I want to investigate further:

1. What discourses are evident in a female's lived experiences with sexualisation?
2. What are some of the possible effects of these discourses and what are the stories of resistance that enable and constrain effective action?

To address these questions, Chapter Two defines the theoretical positions that have guided this study. I demonstrate how sexualising practices exhibited by men can be affected by available discursive positions. I also explore some of the effects these available positions can have for women and girls, such as resistance. Chapter Three is a literature review. The review begins with a historical account which explores some of the discourses that have enabled and constrained the speaking about sex and sexualisation over the last 100 years. I also draw from historical and current literature to examine how some positions taken up can create inequities for women who have been sexualised by men, with a particular focus on discursive practices within the New Zealand criminal Justice system. Chapter Four stories the challenges I faced when writing, and examines the research methods that were ultimately decided upon for this study. Chapter Five presents and analyses the data, to show some of the effects sexualising women can produce. Some of the effects I explore and analyse include; silencing, inequitable gendered power relations, and the continued reproduction of sexualisation discourses in social and institutional contexts. Chapter Five also develops the theory of resistance and the actions I took to resist the sexualising practices I was subjected to. Chapter Six weaves together and succinctly presents the findings of the study.

Chapter Two: Philosophical Positions

Introduction

The work in this chapter draws from a number of scholars to inform the positions I have taken up on sexualisation. These positions are also discussed in relation to how inequitable gendered politics and practices can exist between women and men and how these gendered politics can play out in heterosexual relationships. When I use the term 'relationship' I include any relational encounters between men and women in which sexualising practices occur. These can occur in brief encounters between strangers or established relationships between friends, family members, colleagues, peers and intimate partners. This chapter discusses my selection of theoretical and philosophical positions that are central to power and inextricably linked to discourse. I draw from the discussion of power to describe the effects some discourses subscribed to about sexualisation can have for women. I include seven theoretical perspectives. I begin by theorising post-structural discourse theory and how it works to demonstrate there are a number of versions for any one event. Foucault, Butler, and Davies' work on power is explored next in relation to sexualisation. I then explain their collective theories on discourse with a focus on repression and resistance to show some of the positions available for women to take up against sexualising practices. Drewery and Davies' theories on positioning are then drawn from, to demonstrate that positions available to be taken up by people can depend on a number of factors such as their socio-cultural context. Next, I introduce Reynolds proposal on 'Justice-Doing' theory. This theory explores resistance as one of the available positions women and girls can take up against sexualising practices. Then, I draw from some of Butler's work on gender to explore how power can be inequitably exercised within relationships and how gender theory is related to sexualisation. Finally, Humphreys, Foucault and Butler's theoretical positioning on the concept of consent is introduced to develop a basis for the discussion on rape and resistance.

Post-structural discourse theory

Post-structuralists propose that reality is a social construction which offers numerous perspectives and positions to be taken up regarding any one experience. Post-structuralists also peer beyond the lens of reality to suggest it is not as it appears (Bryman, 2015). Therefore, post-structuralists determine that the dominant position subscribed to is not the only position that may be taken up. The search for meaning from an event is illusory because there will always be other perspectives from which to interpret the material under review. To seek a definitive account is, thus, a "misguided undertaking" (Humes & Bryce, 2003, p. 180). I adopt the position that post-structural discourse theorists should avoid replacing one version of truth over another. The researcher should instead recognise that there "can be no universal truths or absolute ethical positions" (Wetherall, 2001, p. 384).

Post-structural discourse theory works to explore the current and historical parameters that have produced discursive positions (Fjellman, 1992). The theory deconstructs some of the discourses that are present within and across institutions (Fjellman, 1992). An example provided by Fjellman (1992) on different position calls that may be taken up for the same experience was their account of Florida's Disney World. For instance the consumer's position may be drawn from discourses of fair pricing. They may subscribe to discourses about capitalist manipulation through the astronomical mark-up of items at this type of attraction. The account of Florida's Disney World aimed to deconstruct the shadows that lay behind the design features of the park, to take the consumer's gaze beyond the attraction, and to look instead at the park's manipulation of their wallet (Fjellman, 1992). However, a capitalist position may provide a different perspective. A person who subscribes to capitalist discourses may take up the idea that prices are relative to the experience or once in a lifetime opportunity that is being presented to the consumer. This example of capitalist discourse and consumerism has relevance for this study's focus on gendered discourse and sexualisation.

Building on Fjellman's example of the manipulation of consumers' wallets, gendered discourses can condition or manipulate people into expecting women to endure domination within a relationship. Men who subscribe to sexualising practices can act

in ways that reproduce inequities for women. However, post-structuralists view reality as a fragile, social construction that is subject to interpretation and numerous angles of sight (Van Maanen, 2009). Therefore, there are numerous positions that may be taken up within sexual relationships, in particular with regards to sex and consent. I acknowledge that the stories I tell and the positions I take up in this study are selections from a number of possibilities. I also acknowledge that this positioning has been produced by the socio-cultural context of the time I have lived and has been influenced by the discourses I subscribe to.

Post-structural discourse theory seeks to deconstruct and criticise the work of historical, deeply ingrained, institutional policies and practices that appear to be neutral and independent, to unmask the ways dominance works (Foucault, 1977b). Therefore, post-structural discourse theory provides a good fit with my hopes for this study and its analysis by providing a means for me to speak about my experiences in ethical and honourable ways. I now theorise how power is exercised by people in places and institutions and the effects discursive positioning of sexual power may have on women.

Power

According to Foucault (1978), power is everywhere. It is strategic and self-producing from one moment to another, and operates in circulation (Foucault, 1978). Power is always available to be exercised by people, places and/or institutions. By removing a person from a position of power, their power is not lost, it is available to be exercised by other individuals or entities (Foucault, 1988). This is because power is not an object that can be taken from someone and given to another person. Rather, power is available regardless of who is exercising it. Individuals can strive to position themselves in a way that attracts and connects them with institutions, because this positioning can create a comprehensive system of power to develop (Foucault, 1978; Foucault, 1996).

People are constantly in positions of exercising and undergoing power. Hence, people can be "vehicles of power, not its points of application" (Foucault 1980, p. 98). Power

can be productive (Foucault, 1980). I draw from Foucault's (1988) question, "What exactly happens when someone exercises power over another?" (p. 102). The circulation of power can have many effects. For instance, there is a substantial shift in relations of power between partners that come into play during negotiations and acts involving sex (Butler, 2014). When entered into consensually, these acts and negotiations can have pleasurable outcomes for women and for men.

A relationship that involves mutually consensual conversations or understandings can produce pleasurable, sexual experiences. In order to be involved in equitable power relations Foucault (1982), believed that both persons must have a degree of freedom and understand that there is possibility for action if they perceive a lack of freedom. Power "induces pleasure, forms knowledge and produces discourse" (Foucault, 1980, p. 119). In order to understand how relationships involving equitable power are maintained and practised, we should look at the knowledge which contributes to the formation of reasonable levels of power (Davies et al., 2002; Foucault, 1980). The concept of productive power will be later explored and discussed in relation to resistance. As well as considering pleasurable, productive, power this study includes discussion about how inequitable acts of power can produce harmful effects for some women. Inequitable experiences with sexualisation can occur when someone exercises their power over another person in a way that is not mutually consented to, or satisfying.

Power is exercised through the use of language. Language can be deliberately selected within conversations for the transferral and exercise of power within relationships (Foucault, 1980). The language people use within intimate relationships can contribute to the circulation of power between a person and their partner. For example if a man said, "you are not allowed to go out today" to his partner, this may evoke a fear or anger response in her. The words "not allowed" deny the woman the opportunity to enter into the conversation. Alternatively, if the man asked, "would you like to have lunch together?" this provides the woman with an open invitation to respond. She may perceive this invitation as considerate and caring. I take up the position that consensual, sexual, experiences should involve opportunities for conversation that establishes mutual consent prior to sexual relations and that consent can be withdrawn or renegotiated at any stage of the relationship or sexual encounter.

Consensual conversations must be available to be entered into in order to develop a relationship where power can circulate. Therefore, a system that involves the constraint of an individual is intolerable when there are limited means to modify the restrictions placed upon them (Foucault, 1989).

Some exercises of power within relationships are inequitable (Foucault, 1978). The difference between the sharing of power and the domination of an individual within a relationship is of particular importance to this study. The power that exists within a relationship must have the potential to be refused, however small this freedom may be (Foucault, 1981). Therefore, when someone attempts to refuse another person from exercising power this can lead to violence. Violence is defined as the brute force of one person onto another (Davies et al., 2002). Violence acts directly from one onto another in a way that "forces, bends, breaks, destroys, or closes off all possibilities" (Foucault, 2000, p. 340). A relationship involving a man who subjects a woman to sexual violence contributes to the production of an inequitable power relationship. However, the woman continues to have power (albeit limited), available to her because she is able to exercise resistance.

Inequitable relations of power can exist within and across a number of institutions. Within the scope of sexualisation, the inequitable use of political power can contribute to gender inequities. Inequities occur when power does not circulate freely between individuals as I have stated above. When power is circulating people have the chance to alter their circumstances. Therefore, restrictions placed on people by institutions must be within reach of those affected, to provide them with the sense that there is a chance to alter them (Foucault, 1989). I now theorise discourse to demonstrate how people create meaning from their experiences, and to highlight that there are a number of discursive positions available to be taken up from one experience.

Discourse

Discourse produces objects of knowledge and is concerned with the meaning which can be gained from that particular knowledge (Foucault, 1972). Discourse governs

the way people talk about knowledge, influences the way people put ideas into practice and how these ideas regulate peoples' conduct with one another (Foucault, 1972). Discourses can also subvert the language people use and the way they conduct themselves. Therefore, some topics are more acceptable to be spoken about than others.

There are multiple discourses available to be taken up at any particular time. Discourse never simply consists of one statement or source of information (Foucault, 1972). However, when discourses refer to the same topic and support the same strategy they become 'discursive formations' (Foucault, 1972). Discursive formations can affect the ideas institutions take up in regards to particular normative behaviours such as values and morals. When particular ideas are taken up by the majority of people within a certain context, this can produce positions that cause inequitable experiences for women. For example, some men may subscribe to an intimate relationship discourse which encourages partners to engage in conversations and practices that foster mutually satisfying sex. Alternatively, they may subscribe to patriarchal relationship discourses that promote the domination of women within heterosexual relationships. Regardless of the discursive position a man chooses to take up, this may produce effects for his partner and their relationship.

Physical objects and people can only take up meaning and become objects of knowledge within discourse (Foucault, 1972). How these things are discussed will put them into practice and produce institutional practices which can be taken up by others. Furthermore, meaning is developed from discourse; an object's meaning comes through practices taken up. These practices produce knowledge, which can dictate how people think and take action, practices then become normative (institutionalised). For example, readers of this study may determine that I am an individual. They may view me as a woman, a teacher, a Pākeha. However, these and my other attributes will only become meaningful within the socially constructed regimes of research. Furthermore, a discourse used in one particular context and time can lead to different forms of conduct when placed in a different institution (Foucault, 1972). For example, a young, female, Pākeha, researcher detailing experiences with rape will probably have different meanings for someone who identifies as an older, Asian, man. The concepts used to describe the researcher (in this case me) remain

constant. However, the meaning placed on my attributes depends on the socio-cultural context, and time of the person who chooses to read them.

Foucault (1977a) discussed the relationship between institutions and discourse. The term institution refers to an organisation founded for a specific purpose, which places controls on the behaviour of a group of individuals within a community (Collins Dictionary, 2019). Examples of institutions are; prisons, churches, schools and banks. Foucault (1977a) emphasised, institutions can 'de individualise' power, which makes it appear that the power lies within the institution itself rather than with the individuals which support them to function. Foucault (1977a) discussed the emergence of a 'top-down' social surveillance system which worked to socially control its inhabitants. Bentham's Panopticon was selected to demonstrate the introduction of a prison surveillance system which arranged inmate cells around a central watchtower (Foucault, 1977a). At any given moment the supervisor could watch the inmates. However, the inmates were unable to ascertain precisely when they were being watched. Over time, the inmates began to police their own behaviour (Foucault, 1977a). The surveillance system within the confines of the institution made new discursive positions available to the inmates. The discursive position of fear of retribution became readily available and was taken up by many of the inmates. This self-surveillance meant that the guard did not need to be present which acted as a further system of control.

For the context of this study, the discursive positions readily available in regard to sexualisation can have effects for the social order of a group which experiences it. The top-down surveillance system can still operate effectively in this scenario because again, it builds on people's fear of retribution. If the dominant behaviours of the group are not conformed to, there may be social implications for people. Hence, some discourses are dominant whilst others are marginalised (Foucault, 1978). Discourses are multi-faceted, therefore, the social ordering of some institutions as dominant over others can produce positions that promote some viewpoints as mainstream whereas others are positioned to be oppositional, alternative or marginal (Fairclough, 2001). Therefore, historically founded discourses may be positioned as deeply entrenched ideologies that are difficult to challenge. These ideologies can

have effects for the way institutions operate, and may affect the positions available for people within and across institutions to take up.

Discourses are produced through language (Butler, 2014). In order to unravel the positions men take up to subject women to sexualising practices, there needs to be an understanding of the discourses that operate within the language they select (Adams et al., 1995). Discourses that are formed by language serve to "construct the phenomena of our world for us" (Burr, 2015, p. 76). Each discourse that is produced can bring about different views and can have different implications for what should be done about them (Burr, 2015). Therefore, some language selected and spoken by men can cause ambiguities in their discussions with women. For instance, in reference to my example above of the man and his partner, when taken up, intimate relationship discourses can involve practices of mutually consensual and satisfying sexual experiences. However, patriarchal discourses subscribed to can also involve practices of male domination and self-satisfaction.

Contradictory discourses can exist within the same argument (Foucault, 1978). Examples of contradictory discourses are in a number of newly-developed movements that have taken up positions to discuss sexual relations between women and men. One such movement is the #metoo movement, a phenomenon of resistance to gendered sexual violence by men in prominent positions in political and entertainment institutions. Different positions available in regard to speaking about sex can result in constraints and repression within relationships. I will now theorise repression and the effects it can have for women.

Repression

Discussions about sex and its subsequent relationship with power are often repressed. Foucault theorised this when he stated, "to say that sex is not repressed, or rather that the relationship between sex and power is not characterized by repression, is to risk falling into a sterile paradox" (Foucault, 1978, p. 8). The repression of discussions about sex can promote discursive positions that silence women from speaking about issues pertaining to sexual relations. For example, suppressing discussions about

pleasurable, consensual sex may inhibit people from understanding what this looks like. Therefore, they may be unaware that the sexual relations they participate in are not consensual.

One of history's greatest dilemmas is centred upon the power exerted on those who get to speak, what they are permitted to say, and to whom (Foucault, 2014). Constraints placed on speaking about sex are not a recent development. In contrast, some available discursive positions about sex have been constraining voices for centuries (Foucault, 1978). Discussion regarding the constraint of voices and the repression of non-dominant ideas dates back to the sixth century. Within Greek philosophy, dominant discourses inspired terror and respect amongst the masses, they held sway over all men, in accordance with rituals and an obligation to submit (Foucault, 2014). During this era, a man's words were considered void if they did not form part of the common discourse (Foucault, 2014). Therefore, some marginalised discourses and non-dominant ideas were silenced. In the context of this study, Foucault's proposal claims, the repression of sex became so common, for such a long period of history, that to speak of sex was an aberration.

Another issue with repressing discussions about sex, is if a woman was sexually assaulted, it may be difficult for her to find a place to speak openly about this experience. Studies that work to demonstrate discursive practices available to men that cause inequities for women within sexual relationships can provide a voice for women who have been otherwise unable to participate within these types of discussions. One of the hopes for this study is that it adds to existing literature that denounces the repression of discussing sex and sexual violence.

Resistance

The existence of power relations depends on a multiplicity of acts of resistance which are present everywhere within the network of power (Foucault, 1978; 1996). The repression and constraint of a voice can produce resistance. The discursive repression working on a person's voice can create difficulties for those attempting to make changes to institutional and everyday practices. On Foucault's terms, "where there is

power there is resistance, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). However, voices that have been repressed are only recognised when injustices that have repressed marginalised groups are able to be identified (Foucault, 1981). Therefore, individuals may only produce discourses that subvert inequities when they are in a position to do so. Foucault (1981) proposed when an individual has the opportunity to provide commentary that may seem to be novel and different, these ideas that have been marginalised and overshadowed by dominant and widely held discourses have, nevertheless, been "silently articulated deep down":

> Commentary's only role is to say finally, what has silently been articulated deep down. It must – and the paradox is ever-changing yet inescapable – say, for the first time, what has already been said, and repeat tirelessly what was, nevertheless, never said. (p. 321)

By storying my experiences with sexualisation, I seek to say what some women have been tirelessly speaking for centuries. Some of the discursive positions available to men, cause inequities for women. Further, the positions subscribed to by men can minimise the harm that has been caused to women. For example, women who have been victimised by sexual violence do not always experience justice. In some instances, women are silenced before they are able to speak about their subjection. Therefore, the quote from Foucault (1981) "repeat tirelessly what was, nevertheless, never said" is particularly important to me, because I view this study as an example of a woman speaking about the topic of sexualisation which is a topic that is often repressed (p. 321). In this study I have intentionally worked to expose sexualisation and the effects it can have for women. I view this as my own form of resistance to suppression of discussions pertaining to sex.

Resistance to inequitable practices can be displayed in many forms. I draw attention to the idea that there is no single law of revolution, rather a plethora of resistances (Foucault, 1978). For example, a woman's resistance to sexualisation may include verbal denunciations or the physical movement of her body. Kitzinger and Frith (1999) discuss in circumstances that do not involve sexual relations, women's decline and resistance by using qualified dissent are understood as refusal. There are many different ways a woman can resist or subvert sexualisation because there are a

multitude of discursive positions available to be subscribed to by her and the men involved in the subjection. However, Kitzinger and Frith (1999) also concluded when women use the same vocal cues to resist unwanted sexual encounters, these cues can be seen as "inadequate and insufficiently communicative" (p. 309; Snowdon, 2021). Later in this chapter I explore how different discursive positions available for women and men can contribute to inequitable, ambiguous, sexual relations. I now speak about positioning theory to show the number of perspectives available to be taken up during an experience, and what can cause people to take up certain positions and refuse others.

Positioning theory

The way subjectivity was negotiated in relation to the "great anonymous murmur of discourses" was a concern for Foucault (Foucault, 1989, p. 27; Winslade, 2005). Foucault's scholarship on the production of the subjectivity of language led to Davies and Harré's development of positioning theory (Winslade, 2005). Instead of focusing on the self as a set of instinctual drives, Foucault positioned individuals as being affected by and shaped through discourse (Foucault, 1989; Winslade, 2005). Therefore, discourses on sexualisation can shape and be shaped by the positions taken up by people. Positioning theory is drawn from to demonstrate how people make decisions and take up or refuse positions created by discourses.

Davies and Harré (1990) developed Foucault's (1989) concept of subjective positioning, to conceptualise discursive positioning as a way of positioning the self. They termed positioning as the "discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines" (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 47). They proposed, people are (re)producers of social discourses within their social exchanges. Therefore, discourses subscribed to in regards to sexualisation can create positions for people to take up or subvert within conversations. An example of taking up a position against sexualisation was described in Chapter One. The position I took up in response to comments made by boys produced a new way to present my body. I chose to dress and act in a way that I perceived would hide my body, whilst I attempted to navigate

‘fitting in’ with the dominant discursive practices of the socio-cultural context of the time I experienced them.

Further, Harré et al. (2009) suggested that positioning is an instrumental part of the framework from which people develop their sense of reality from. Each utterance between people creates or participates within a social relation or discourse (Davies & Harré, 1990; Winslade, 2005). By making utterances, people establish their own position in relation to an other, and they establish themselves in relation to other patterns of discursive exchange (Foucault, 1978; 1980; Winslade, 2005). Foucault's (1978; 1980) discussion on disciplinary power described the multiple repetitions of utterances which all contribute to the development of social discourses (Winslade, 2005). Gendered discursive exchanges in conversation between genders are entwined with power. In addition to power, when people establish a discursive position for themselves through exchanges, they offer the people they are addressing a choice of discursive positions from which they may respond (Foucault, 1978; 1980; Winslade, 2005).

Positioning theory can demonstrate how and/or why some individuals may “take up” certain identities but not others (Drewery, 2005, p. 306). Positioning can also establish an individual's agency (Davies et al., 2002). Agentic positioning has been defined as “persons who are participants in the conversations that produce the meanings of their lives” (Drewery, 2005, p. 316). Heterosexual relationships that involve mutual consent and an equitable power dynamic are key indicators for whether the individuals involved will be called into agentive positions within conversational interactions (Drewery, 2005, p. 306). People who exercise agentic positioning have the possibility to make decisions about their own lives. An important distinction from Drewery (2005) is that a person cannot be agentive alone. Rather, agentive positioning can only occur in relationships with others. Agentive positioning affords people the opportunity to collaborate with others by negotiating meaning from interactions. These negotiated interactions produce the future conditions of people’s lives (Drewery, 2005). Therefore, to be in an agentive position people will need to participate within relationships with others who are also actively engaged with the co-production of the condition of their life (Drewery, 2005).

Given that individuals are affected by discourses, they either take up, refuse or subvert positions offered by the discourses of the socio-cultural context they live in. Positioning theory can demonstrate how some individuals take up or subvert certain identities and it can also establish an individual's agency. A relationship in which equitable power dynamics are exercised will offer each individual to participate in conversations and negotiate meaning from them. For example a man offering his partner an option of what she would like for dinner demonstrates he is inviting her to participate and negotiate meaning from their interaction.

The philosophical positions and literature I have chosen to draw from have been selected to deconstruct the discourses that have dominated and repressed the speaking about sex for centuries. The next section demonstrates a form of resistance termed Justice-Doing theory. This theory can be drawn from to identify practices of resistance available for women to take up against sexualising practices.

Justice-Doing

Reynolds (2012; 2020) theory on Justice-Doing was established from a perspective of medical practitioners adequately supporting women who were victimised by sexual violence. Her work has shown that language selected by practitioners can construct a narrative that implies women's main issue is their resilience to the trauma they have been victimised by (Reynolds, 2020). This thinking can reduce the complexity of a person's trauma and can move the focus of a conversation away from the woman's acts of resistance. This experience may result in women being less receptive to seeking help after experiencing sexual violence. Discourses subscribed to by some practitioners can act as repression of women's voices. Hence, Reynolds (2020) advocated for acts of resistance to be the centre-point for therapeutic relations between psychologists and their clients/patients. Rather than centring the power a man exercised, this theory centres a woman exercising power through attempts to resist a man's advances. Therefore, it demonstrates Foucault's (1978) claim that, "where there is power there is resistance" (p. 95).

Justice-Doing promotes enactors to work in solidarity with one another (Reynolds, 2012). It provides a platform for taking up socially-just positions to be collaborative. Justice-Doing work should be done both upon the shoulders of others whilst "we shoulder others up" (Reynolds, 2012, p. 22). Therefore, acts of social justice are most effective when they offer others positions to take up in support of the cause. Furthermore, establishing a common focus, will maintain the solidarity that brings and holds together other enactors of social justice (Reynolds, 2012). By, working together in solidarity, I and other enactors of social justice, work to create allegiances with one another to combat the different accesses to power we have that could otherwise divide us (Reynolds, 2012).

Justice-Doing also requires people to take up positions that resist and seek to transform the structures that create conditions for the exploitation and oppression of others (Reynolds, 2012). It invites and provides positions for women to take up, in order to resist patriarchal systems which can cause inequities for them. The next section of this chapter focuses on gender theory and its effects within heterosexual relationships.

Gender

Gender theory is complex. This study does not seek to define gender. Rather, it hopes to explain that people subscribe to discourses and some discourses can position men and women differently. Gender discourses can have significant shaping effects for women. Butler generated scholarship from Foucault's discussion on discourse. She claimed, people interact with, subscribe to and produce discourses, which can have effects for their identity (Butler, 2016). Butler was interested in discourses that demonstrated how gender and bodies interrelate and how they are subsequently discussed within literature. From this discussion, she supposed that a person's body is created out of the resources of dominant discourses. This means that the socio-cultural context a person resides within can affect and shape the discourses they subscribe to (Butler, 2016). Hence, from a discursive perspective, sexual identities are socially constructed. Therefore, patriarchal discourses subscribed to, could produce available positions to be taken up on people's bodies (Butler, 2014; 2015).

Discourses can change over time and socio-cultural contexts. Furthermore, individuals have the freedom to express themselves sexually in a way that does not reflect dominant discourses of the time and socio-cultural world they live in (Butler, 2016). For example, women can have sexual relations with men who they are not in a committed relationship with. They can also choose to have sexual relations with more than one man at a time. Women also have the option of not having any sexual relations. Therefore, the question 'do we draw the line based on what we see or what we comprehend to be the sexes?' can never be quite answered (Butler, 2015), because there is an array of discourses and multiple positions available from which to consider this question.

Gendered discourses subscribed to can have effects for women and girls. Discourses are readily available to everyone and some parents may subscribe to them which may produce effects for their young children in later years. For example, dominant language and gendered norms can be thrust upon girls before they have the ability to communicate with or understand language (Butler, 2016). This can have effects for young girls and be shaping of their identity. The language selected by caregivers and onlookers towards young girls may be viewed as sexualising practices. For example, comments such as "she is such a pretty girl". Or "All the boys will want her when she's older" display sexualising content. An issue with subscribing to gendered discourses that promote pretty girls is that girls do not have the ability to make choices about their gender identity until they are much older (Butler, 2016). Therefore, although girls may be subjected to sexualising practices from an early age, they may also be dominated by discourses that define their ability to respond to and understand the behaviours they are experiencing in a meaningful way.

One of the many complexities related to gender is that although gendered discourses can act on people, there is also a certain obligation that they reproduce them (Butler, 2016). This is because people are in some way dependent on the structural norms that let them live (Butler, 2016). For example, in Chapter One I described some of my experiences at high school, with particular regard to comments made by other girls about my appearance. These comments positioned me to inadvertently reproduce and take up a certain position on how I should look by dressing and presenting my body

in particular ways. During this time, I subscribed to the discursive position available to me that allowed me to fit in with my peers. Therefore, I acknowledge that some form of structure is needed for functionality within communities. However, gendered discourses that promote the domination and repression of women should not need reproducing.

Within consensual relationships, power circulates between women and men and so on during discussions about and physical actions involving sexual relations (sex) (Butler, 2016). However, some current, gendered discourses which inform relationships include patriarchal relationship discourse that position men to take up the idea, they have the right to expect sex from their partners. Some men subscribe to the view of masculinity as powerful and that with this power comes certain entitlement to look at and treat women's bodies as objects of sexual satisfaction without consideration for what this might mean for women. The discourses that promote these ideas may contribute to the production of acts of domination by men who subscribe to them. In particular, Butler (2014) proposed that from a patriarchal, masculine discourse, a man's greatest fear is castration. Men who take up this position may view castration as an inadequate identification because if they were to be castrated, they would then become/be identifiable as feminine (Butler, 2014). When implied in this way an assumption is produced that femininity is weaker or less valued than masculinity. Therefore, in this context, the phallus is portrayed as a mark of strength and superiority. When men take up this position, this can promote practices of domination and unwanted sexualisation.

Butler's theory on gender affirms that some gendered discourses can create adverse effects for women and girls which can be experienced from a young age. She also comments that although a person's body can be defined by language, it is not reducible to it (Butler, 2014). Equity can be produced and maintained within heterosexual relationships when parties consistently enter into conversations which produce and maintain consent between them. When mutual consent is established, this can support individuals to take up agentive positions for themselves and make agentive position calls for others within the relationship. I now focus on the importance of establishing mutual consent before sexual relations take place.

Consent

I draw specifically from Humphreys (2007) work on consent. I focus on consent in the context of heterosexual relationships because the focus of this study is to examine some of the sexualising experiences that have been perpetrated by men and boys onto women and girls.

Relationships that involve dominating practices of power that consistently position one person less favourably to another are unlikely to produce mutual consent. There are different discursive positions that can be taken up by women and men in regards to the importance of consent (Humphreys, 2007). Given that the positions taken up by women and men may depend on the discourses they subscribe to, there can be complexities associated with entering into a discussion that aims to establish mutual consent. For example, a man may not require verbal consent from a woman before engaging in sexual relations with her. However, this position may be prudent for the woman. Many women have stressed the importance of consent more so than men, and also stressed they often preferred an explicit approach when obtaining it (Humphreys, 2007). Therefore, if women and men take up different positions in regards to obtaining consent, ambiguity and confusion may exist within their sexual relationships (Humphreys, 2007).

Humphreys (2007) proposed a series of questions to be used by women and men to determine whether consent is present before engaging in sexual relations with one another. The questions include, “does the context of the relationship have a bearing on how consent decisions are made? What form should this communication take? Does everyone involved have the same assumptions about what is being consented to?” (Humphreys, 2007, p. 307). These questions work to demonstrate that different discursive positions taken up or subverted within a relationship can create an inequitable power imbalance. Consensual decisions can be made with good communication and similar ideas about what consent involves. This can create space for mutual consent to be negotiated and upheld. The production of mutual consent is vital to relationships which seek equitable power relations and mutually satisfying sexual experiences.

In addition to their work on power, resistance and gender, Foucault and Butler have also produced scholarship on consent. In their own ways, Foucault and Butler examined how power and resistance can shape discourses subscribed to in the context of relationships. Foucault explored consent through his work on truth and desire. Butler explored consent with her discussion on language and gender. Both concluded that power and resistance are inextricably linked to consent. Therefore, the inclusion of consent was selected for this study to demonstrate how gendered discursive positions that promote power inequities can be resisted by engaging in sexual relations that uphold mutual consent.

The following chapter examines the available literature on sex and sexualisation including an historical account which shows how deeply entrenched sexualisation is. The chapter also explores some of the discursive practices available to be taken up in regards to what constitutes consent within a relationship and the effects produced for women when the establishment of consent has different available positions.

Chapter Three: Sex and Sexualisation a review of the literature

Introduction

Sexualisation has a long history and is a deeply entrenched part of the misogynistic and patriarchal system in which some women and girls live. I begin with an account of sex and the discursive positions available to discuss it because women generally experience sexualisation when their value is reduced to their sexual appeal. I demonstrate how the literature conceptualises sexualisation, including positions of resistance that women can take up against it. Alongside theory, this chapter includes selected examples of lived experiences from women who have been victimised by sexual violence. The inclusion of quotes hopes to highlight some women's experiences with reporting gendered sexual violence within the New Zealand Justice system, to examine some of the sexualising, discursive positions available to be taken up.

There is an abundance of literature on sexualisation. I have been particularly selective about what has been included. I took cognisance of Snowdon's (2021) claim that, "the problems and dilemmas of violence against women are vast and far reaching, the (ongoing) potentiality in the available literature is too" (Snowdon, 2021, p. 60).

I now discuss the progression of how discourses about sex have shaped what can be talked about and how and when these discourses have developed over time in a particular place.

The history of sex and sexualisation

The parameters that determine an act as sexualisation for the purposes of this study have been defined in Chapter One. Sexualisation and sex are inextricably linked because available discourses which produce sexualisation, can encourage participants to position their partner as an object for sexual pleasure. I have drawn from Gavey's

(2018) position that the practice of sex is a natural part of life that is broadly understood as a form of reproduction. It has also come to be viewed as an important component of developing and maintaining adult relationships (Gavey, 2018). Although sex can be a component of equitable relationships, when discourses are produced to constrain or control the speaking about sex, this causes some women to face inequities within relationships.

Discourses that constrain speaking about sex have shifted over time for different purposes. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, some available discourses created positions for people to take up which tolerated the speaking about sex. People were more open to discussing sex, and sexual relations between the genders were not solely constrained to married couples. Rather, sex occurred between willing participants. There was little need for secrecy and "anatomies were shown and intermingled at will" (Foucault, 1978, p. 3). The concept of marriage became more common towards the end of the nineteenth century. Discussions about sex moved into the home and became a family matter, with the topic confined to the bedroom and discussed only between husband and wife. Eventually the topic of sex was silenced outside the bedroom altogether and was only discussed in relation to reproductive matters (Foucault, 1978). There came a time when dominant, discursive positions reduced the discussions about sex to silence (Foucault, 1978). This implies a repressive discourse that only condoned the speaking about sex within the marital bedroom. The repression of sex operated as a confirmation of nonexistence, there was simply nothing to see and nothing to know (Foucault, 1978).

After the repression of conversations pertaining to sex outside the bedroom occurred, four discursive constructions regarding sex and the power to control it emerged. First, the hysterisation of women's bodies such as 'nervous woman' was born from a two-fold dance between a saturation of sexuality, and the identity of the mother (Foucault, 1978). Secondly the pedogogisation of children's sexual behaviours came with the development of ideas that children indulge in sexual acts. This indulgence swung on a pendulum from being considered natural and a part of being a child, to the idea that sexual practices were contrary to nature. The latter meant that parents and professionals had to step in to stop what they considered to be the child's dangerous, deviant behaviours (Foucault, 1978). A socialisation of procreative behaviour came

next. This socialisation included the discouragement of birth control practices and a fiscal responsibility for couples to procreate. Finally, a psychiatrisation of perverse pleasure was produced. The clinical physicians of the time focused on the isolation of sex and separated it between biological and physical needs (Foucault, 1978).

The four discursive pillars used to constrain and control discussions about sex promote sex as a social construct. The four discursive pillars were used to restrict the sexual practices of women, children and men. Dominant discourses on sex were deployed through ways that inextricably tied power and the interests of some social groups together (Gavey, 2018). The deployment of sex was used as a domain for regulation and social control (Foucault, 1980; Gavey, 2018). Therefore, marriage could be taken as an act of resistance to the attempt to control sexual interactions between women and men. The rules placed upon men, women and children made room for the development of an allegiance which is now most commonly known as the family. Marriage was promoted as a financial gain for couples, due to the sharing of resources. Marriage also promoted a sexual advantage because couples were able to be sexually active within the marital bedroom, without judgement. The four discursive pillars used to constrain sex demonstrate that the strengthening of rules can create resistances, and that these resistances are inextricably linked to power. I now focus more specifically on how the constraints on sex have produced inequities for women within relationships.

Sexualisation and sex

Over the past 20 years a number of academic publications and government reports have argued the harm sexualising young people can cause them. It is now an emerging issue of policy debate at a government level (American Psychological Association, 2007; Coy, 2009). Journal articles including those publicly shared by The American Psychological Association, (2007), McEwen (2008), Palmer (2015) and Papadopoulos (2010) proposed that the damage caused by the sexualisation of young people, in particular girls, robbed them of their innocence and caused them to engage in self-destructive behaviours (Tsaliki, 2015).

There has been significant growth in global attention towards sexualisation. The term itself has helped to galvanise feminist activism by speaking to the sexualised experiences of young people (Duschinsky, 2013). This attention has led to a number of proposed and actioned measures across the healthcare, education and social care sectors (Bailey, 2011). Although these actioned measures may represent the state's denouncement of such conduct, within the theory of criminalisation, this denouncement or statutory prohibition on certain behaviours may be viewed as a deterrent against people undertaking them. Furthermore, legal reform is a continuous work in progress, as it rarely ends anything (Nourse, 2000). Legal reform does not in itself shift discourses that are subscribed to and acted upon. Therefore, it would be naïve to claim that statutory reform could end a concept as ancient as sexism (Nourse, 2000).

The discourses produced in regards to constraining or controlling discussions about sex have gained hegemonic status in the framing of sexualisation. A number of sources have deemed sexualisation a moral panic (Bragg & Buckingham, 2013). Some discourses that are subscribed to in regards to sex can create ambiguous and paradoxical messages for young girls. An example of a discursive paradox produced for girls is they can be perceived simultaneously as bearers of power and objects of risk. The balance between a girl's desirability and innocence depends on the girls' relationship with her sexuality and womanhood (Duschinsky, 2013; McRobbie, 2008). This balance can have effects for a girl's identity and cause confusion about the way she is supposed to act.

Further to causing confusion, some discourses available to be taken up may be widely subscribed to even if they have been produced by a small number of people. Discourses which produce sexualising acts are often shaped by both the current psychological thinking and how they are understood within wider social contexts as acceptable or not. Psychology textbooks can be heavily influenced by the moral, cultural and political affiliations of the author (Barker, 2018). Therefore, discourses available to be taken up about sex and sexualising behaviours may be influenced by the personal experiences of a few academics (Barker, 2018). If the topics discussed and the author's position on the topic vary from book to book this can create further ambiguities in regards to how people should (not) act.

Alongside sexualisation being a growing and important topic within academic circles, it is also a current and relevant issue in New Zealand. Recently (January 2022), James Gardner-Hopkins a former partner of the law firm Russel McVeagh was found guilty of misconduct due to sexually inappropriate behaviour in the workplace. The charges were the result of alleged sexual misconduct six years previously and involved a number of young law students working as interns at the firm. All complainants were women.

After the allegations of misconduct came to light, Dame Bazley was tasked with conducting an independent review on the Russell McVeagh law firm. The review was conducted two years after the allegations were presented by the interns (Bazley, 2018). The review included interviews with current and former staff of Russell McVeagh. Other institutions were also contacted and provided comments. These institutions included the New Zealand Law Society and the Wellington Women Lawyers' Association. When reading the review, I found a few parts troubling. In particular Bazley (2018) provided quotes from staff which described the behaviour of a few senior members of staff and their witnesses. I have included three comments from the review:

> I was particularly concerned to hear of a number of incidents of grossly obscene behaviour relating to a particular partner, always in the context of heavy drinking… Some of the incidents concerning this particular partner I was told about took place in front of others at social functions. Generally, I was told that people either laughed or did not say anything when it happened due to the seniority of the person.
>
> One junior asked me "How can we trust management when one of the senior partners was the biggest problem for so long?"
>
> There is not necessarily a big age gap between the partner and the more junior or subordinate staff. However, the power imbalance is significant. (Bazley, 2018, p. 40)

These excerpts from the review demonstrate a complex discursive position that has been produced. The onlookers have disclosed they chose not to say anything to the perpetrator of these acts due to his seniority. The onlookers comments provide a clear

example of the power relation operating in such a way as to not create speaking space for those who witnessed these sexualising practices.

Inequities faced by women

Alongside the silencing of discussions about sex, power inequities between genders can produce situations where women are isolated and suffering (Duschinsky, 2013). The suffering experienced can be more prominent within relationships, particularly when women subscribe to different discourses than their partner in regards to what constitutes rape and sex. The suffering caused by gender inequities is often not addressed due to heteronormative assumptions regarding gender and sex (Duschinsky, 2013). I now speak to the inequities some women face outside of their intimate partner relationships, in particular within the work place. The inclusion of literature which describes women's experiences with sexualisation in the workplace seeks to demonstrate the complexity of positions available for men to take up and how these positions can lead to inequitable practices.

Women spend exponentially longer completing household labour than men (Traylor et al., 2020; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). In some cultures this work is devalued and has been overlooked by social science researchers investigating issues for working women. Therefore, the working mother has been referred to in this section to demonstrate the deeply entrenched beliefs that are available to be subscribed to about her. These beliefs produce and maintain discourses that marginalise women and also locate power inequities between men and women within relationships.

The first hurdle for women to overcome in the workplace is to successfully gain employment. On the global scale, women are more likely to be unemployed than men, with a 50 percent unemployment rate; in comparison men have a 23 percent rate of unemployment (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). The second hurdle, is the sexualisation some women are subjected to by men within the workplace. Over 100 working mothers in Britain were interviewed about their experiences with men in the workplace (Tutchell & Edmonds, 2016). The

researchers were surprised at the number of sexualised practices the participants had been subjected to and the difficulty they faced when challenging this type of behaviour in the workplace. An example of the difference in treatment between women and men was demonstrated when the researchers explored the dress code. For men, the dress code was interpreted as a suit, or dress pants and a shirt. However, for women there was a minefield of being confident, not flamboyant, sexy, but not overly. There was also a call for not being a prude. The study concluded that women are consciously aware that their clothing, hair and choice of make-up will be analysed and scrutinised by the majority of people they meet (Tutchell & Edmonds, 2016).

I now discuss more specifically inequitable relations between women and men within intimate relationships. I begin by providing a summary of New Zealand statistics that show the prevalence of intimate partner violence. Fanslow has conducted significant research within New Zealand regarding the issue of sexual violence perpetrated by men against women and has generated important statistics.

Statistics sourced demonstrate that violence within an intimate partner relationship in New Zealand is common. A study conducted by Fanslow and Robinson (2011) concluded 55 percent of women surveyed within a New Zealand study, had experienced violence by an intimate partner within their lifetime. A further study involving 85,000 adult participants found that 53,000 had experienced offending by an intimate partner in the last twelve months (Ministry of Justice, 2019). Some statistics proposed up to 90 percent of sexual violence offences against women occur from a man known to them (Ministry of Justice, 2003). A recent study found that despite considerable social and legal changes and reforms over the past 85 years there has been no change in the lifetime rates of sexual violence perpetrated by an intimate partner (Fanslow et al., 2021). On average one in six women reported sexual violence by an intimate partner (Fanslow et al., 2021). However, the true scale of sexual offending is unknown due to alarming rates of underreporting. Less than 10 percent of all sexual-violence-related offences are reported to the New Zealand police (Ministry of Justice, 2015). Over the 2018-2019 period this statistic appears to have worsened within New Zealand, with an estimated 94 percent of sexual assault incidents not reported to the police (Ministry of Justice, 2019).

Some academics have claimed it is universally known that the number of rape offences reported to and recorded by the police is a portion of the number that actually occur (Temkin & Krahe, 2008). A possible cause for low conviction rates is that judgements regarding sexual assaults are skewed because of widely held attitudes about rape, rather than the lack of evidence in the case (Temkin & Krahe, 2008). The stereotype of what constitutes real rape can dominate positions taken up by members of the public which can make their way into the courtroom. These perceptions include: the kinds of men who commit rape, and the kinds of women who are credible. The latter includes the expected behaviours of a genuine victim during and after the assault (Temkin & Krahe, 2008). "These 'myths' are part of dominant discourses about women, men, power, and sexuality which help to construct views about the likelihood of rape in particular situations, about the sorts of women who get raped, and about men who rape" (Gavey, 2018, p.166). The prescriptive discourses that are available to be subscribed to can lead to people defining the characteristics that are considered necessary for a rape allegation to be deemed credible (Temkin & Krahe, 2008).

I will now strengthen my argument by saying more about some of the dominant discourses which produce sexualisation and the inequities these may create for women and girls. The inequities are particularly evident within the New Zealand Justice system, specifically within cases that involve rape.

Rape and the New Zealand Justice system

There have been considerable policy changes and advances in gender equity (Gangoli & Westmarland, 2011). However, despite the changes, male sexual violence against females is a serious public health issue and human rights problem (World Health Organisation, 2021). Therefore, sexual violence against females has been deemed a pandemic (Gangoli & Westmarland, 2011; World Health Organisation, 2021).

For me, the most troubling inequity that is produced by discursive practices that control sex, is through rape. Rape can occur within a range of contexts and relational situations. Parties may be completely unknown to each other or may be partners in

established intimate relationships. Rape that occurs in an established intimate relationship can be difficult to classify as rape and prove in court due to some of the discourses that determine what is acceptable sex within established relationships. The difference in available discursive positions has contributed to the development of the term rape myths. The term rape myths was established to compare which acts are most commonly viewed as real rape within a relationship (Gavey, 2018). Rape within a relationship can cause repression and resistance from the person victimised by these acts. Therefore, the discourses subscribed to in regards to what rape and sex are can affect the circulation of power between women and men within relationships (Gavey, 2018).

Jury members are citizens and men and women who serve on a jury may subscribe to discursive ideas that women ask for it or that men are entitled to sex when they want it. Therefore, rape myths subscribed to by jury members may discredit the harm caused by sexual violence and may prejudice the final decision (Foster-Sinclair, 2016). This is a further concern for women who have been victimised by sexual violence.

Furthermore, a trial may be influenced by positions taken up by women and men in regards to their discursive ideas about consent (Humphreys, 2007). The difference in discursive positions may cause doubt about whether consent was mutually achieved or not before the sexual encounter occurred.

Discursive practices that create inequities for women can appear at all levels of the New Zealand and Australian Justice sectors. In particular, there are examples in the literature which suggest obtaining consent can be an ambiguous process between two people. The rape myths I introduced in the previous section may also produce discursive positions that some members of the court take up. I found the following statement particularly troubling. When addressing the jury, a Judge stated:

> Consent may be words, may be by actions or even inaction... It may be hesitant, it may be reluctant, it may be grudging, it may even be tearful, but if the complainant in this case consciously permitted the act of sexual intercourse that you find occurred, if you do, provided her permission or consent is not obtained by terror, force or fear, it is still consent. (Van de Zandt, 1998, p. 138)

These comments suggested to me that this judge subscribed to discourses of patriarchal misogyny. His words show inequitable power relations being reproduced through gendered discursive ideas about what constitutes terror, force or fear, and how this is expressed by women facing unwanted sexual encounters. The judge's statements prompted me to look further at New Zealand rape laws. What I read troubled me further.

In New Zealand, it was not until 1972 that sexual violence against women became more publicly discussed. The catalyst for further discussion was the introduction of a radical monthly issue called Broadsheet. Broadsheet became the centre for feminist politics, with rape, exploitation and women-beating quickly becoming dominant themes (Cross & Newbold, 2010). It was not long before initiatives began to take place that addressed violence more directly. For example, in 1974 the first network of women's refuges were established. The Domestic Protection Act (1982) was then introduced. The Act contained provisions that enabled the police to detain any person who breached a non-violence order for 24 hours without charge (Cross & Newbold, 2010). However, s10 of the Act allowed for police discretion regarding whether to arrest the accused or to provide them with a warning. Several implications arose from s10 of the Act. For example, in 1985, New Zealand began a pro-arrest policy, which meant that officers were required to arrest for all instances of domestic violence. A result of the pro-arrest policy was the New Zealand Police Commissioner mandated arrests in all domestic violence cases (Cross & Newbold, 2010). This mandate became problematic when the training procedures accompanying the new policies were only applied in some departments and were often inconsistent with the intended aims (Cross & Newbold, 2010). This meant that some officers were acting under a pro-arrest strategy, whilst others viewed domestic violence as a non-criminal offence.

It took a further 11 years from the establishment of women's refuges, before rape within a marriage was outlawed (Cross & Newbold, 2010). This means that until 1985, it was legal for a man to rape his wife in New Zealand (Smaill, 2018). The current redefined s128(4) of the Crimes Act (1961) declared that a person can be convicted of the sexual violence of another person regardless of their relationship/marriage status at the time of the sexual violence (Ministry of Justice,

2020). A further 10 years passed before the Domestic Violence Act (1995) was passed. Up until this point, charges for domestic violence offences were rare. Police were viewed as more of a mediator within family disputes. Charges were often only laid if the situation presented clearly that an assault had taken place and if the women victimised by violence could be relied upon to testify (Cross & Newbold, 2010). The process to determine a woman's reliability often involved her ability to endure court processes that included having her character called into question by defence lawyers and legal systems informed by discourses. The issue of consent was also something that women were held accountable for. This was illustrated earlier in the words of the Judge, "provided her permission or consent is not obtained by terror, force or fear, it is still consent" (Van de Zandt, 1998, p. 138).

Some studies have documented how the positions taken up by some policemen can produce effects for women, in relation to equitable justice. One particular study was conducted across 2004-2006 in Christchurch, New Zealand (Cross & Newbold, 2010). Within the study, nine male police officers in management roles were interviewed and observed in their field work. When asked about the decision to arrest a male for partner assault against a female, one male police officer stated:

> It's got to be a big judgement, and it's going to take months to get dragged through the courts, and the courts can have all the time to make decisions and all that… while the cop on the street's got a few minutes to make that decision whether to arrest or not arrest and yeah, he's got to weigh it all up very quickly - Male aged 27 years. (Cross & Newbold, 2010, p. 63)

The researchers also documented the officers' discussion with them in regards to timeframes and the pressures of the job. Many described the significance of the pressures they were under, particularly at the end of a shift. A common narrative shared involved the discussion of timing. The officers were aware that if they were to make an arrest at the end of their shift, it was going to impact on their ability to finish their shift on time (Cross & Newbold, 2010). Some officers claimed that a few more hours of work would be needed before they were able to finish (Cross & Newbold, 2010). During occasions when officers were tired or at the end of their shift "he may decide not to arrest, even though an apprehension may have been justified" (Cross & Newbold, 2010, p. 63). The quotes shared from the officers suggest that time and pressure may have been significant factors that effected their ability to

follow due process. I wonder what gendered discursive ideas are at work for these officers that have them prioritise time over addressing the alleged sexual offence and the effects for the woman concerned.

I now discuss the Rape Shield to explore a legal effort to protect women who have been victimised by sexual violence. The Rape Shield works to safeguard women and to limit the inequitable discourses which may be subscribed to about her.

The Rape Shield

Foster-Sinclair (2016) produced scholarship on The Rape Shield. The Rape Shield was established in 1977 in s23A of the Evidence Act 1908. Foster-Sinclair proposed that the introduction of the Rape Shield in New Zealand law acknowledged there is a significant need for a complainant of sexual violence to be safeguarded and to have their interests respected. Furthermore, she proposed that, "historically, the law of evidence considered the sexual history of a complainant to be relevant to her credibility as a witness" (Foster-Sinclair, 2016, p. 16). Thus, the rationale behind the Rape Shield provision is based on the call to reduce unfair prejudice to complainants that may otherwise be included in trial due to other irrelevant factors (Foster-Sinclair, 2016). The Evidence Act (1908) has since been repealed. Within the New Zealand Evidence Act (2006) s44 provision stated:

> In a sexual case, unless a judge gives permission no evidence can be given and no question can be put to a witness that relates directly or indirectly to—
> (a) the sexual experience of the complainant with the defendant (except to establish 1 or both of the following:
> (i) the mere fact that the complainant has sexual experience with the defendant:
> (ii) an act or omission that is one of the elements of the offence for which the defendant is being tried, or that is the cause of action in the civil proceeding in question):
> (b) the sexual experience of the complainant with any person other than the defendant:
> (c) the sexual disposition of the complainant
> (as cited in Ministry of Justice, 2006, s44)

The original intention for the provision, was that it would be solely used for complainants in cases that involved rape. It was not until a 1985 reform of the Act that a more broad revision included the provision to try cases of a sexual nature that did not meet the threshold for rape (Foster-Sinclair, 2016, p. 16). According to Foster-Sinclair (2016), the rationale behind developing a Rape Shield was to ensure complainants did not face unfair prejudice from members of the court (lawyers, judge, jury and other members) in relation to information that is deemed irrelevant to the case at hand. An example of irrelevant information that could bias members of the court include a woman's prior sexual relations with parties other than the defendant.

Foster-Sinclair's (2016) work on the Rape Shield within New Zealand questioned the relevance of a prior sexual relationship between the person accused of and the person who had been victimised by sexual offences. She argued that any prior relations were irrelevant and that they could cause prejudice within jury trials. In particular, she argued for the removal of evidence that seeks to develop a picture of the prior sexual history between the person accused of, and a person who has been victimised by sexual violence. This argument is based on the assumption that jurors may perceive that the person accused of sexual offending believed there was consent provided on the occasion in question because it had been provided in the past. In accordance with Foster-Sinclair's (2016) call, each sexual relation between two parties should be viewed as separate and distinct from the other. I draw from the claim that any past sexual history between the complainant and the person accused of sexually offending should not be used to prejudice the outcome of the trial at hand. Foster-Sinclair (2016) stated that consent to sexual activity on one occasion does not imply assumed consent on another occasion. Therefore, including such evidence could distract the jury to focus on the relationship rather than the alleged offence which may inappropriately misdirect the focus of the trial (Foster-Sinclair, 2016).

In addition to rape myths contributing to the positioning of members of the court, rape trials can have adverse effects for women who have been victimised by sexual violence. Recent research conducted by McDonald et al. (2020) compared trial processes from 30 adult rape cases from 2010-2015. One of the study's objectives was to determine at which point in the questioning process a female who was

victimised by sexual assault displayed distress and a heightened emotional state. The study also intended to uncover why cross-examination techniques are resistant to reform measures (McDonald et al., 2020). The study investigated stories shared from people who had been victimised by rape to determine why the experience of providing evidence had not changed over a number of years, despite the myriad of law reforms. The study found rape myths were recounted and used during trials, and that judges and prosecutors contributed to the "ongoing reproduction and reliance on the 'real rape' schema, and rape mythology" (McDonald et al., 2020, p. 58). The researchers concluded that a complainant's experience could be improved by recognising her as a woman in a difficult position with a harrowing story to tell (McDonald et al., 2020).

Another recent study identified that some available discursive ideas produced constraints to speaking about sex (Zydervelt et al., 2016). The study compared 42, contemporary cases of adult men raping women over the age of 16. Half of the cases selected were historic and the other half were contemporary. The contemporary cases were tried between 1996-2011 across New Zealand. The historical cases were tried between 1950-1959 and sourced from New South Wales, Australia. The study investigated the ways in which the complainants were cross-examined during both eras. At the point of the contemporary cases, the Rape Shield had been established and implemented. Despite the implementation of the Rape Shield across New Zealand courts, the study's thematic analysis concluded that women who had been sexually victimised by men were more likely to have their prior relationships and sexual history appear in contemporary than historical cases. The study concluded that defence lawyers' tactics within the courtroom have remained unchanged since the 1950s, with lawyers "pursuing the same goals in different ways" (Zydervelt et al., 2016, p. 565).

Another earlier study also demonstrated how women who have been victimised by sexual violence experience difficulties within the court system. A mock jury trial involving 160 members of the public was conducted to explore how some of the discourses subscribed to by jurors can have effects on the outcome of a rape trial involving two people known to each other (Ellison & Munro, 2013). After observing one of four mini trials involving an alleged rape by the complainant's ex-partner,

participants were divided into juries and asked to deliberate a verdict. Despite selecting participants that were open to the idea that a woman could be raped by a man they were previously in a relationship with, it was a recurrent theme during deliberation that convicting acquaintance rape was more difficult than convicting stranger rape (Ellison & Munro, 2013). The difficulty of obtaining conviction was influenced by the ambiguity involved because the complainant and defendant were previously sexually acquainted. Therefore, it has been proposed that rape trials can be influenced by "an array of expectations regarding 'appropriate' forms of socio-sexual behaviour, conventions of sexual (mis) communication, and presumptions regarding the will and capacity of victims to resist an attack physically" (Ellison & Munro, 2013, p. 302).

The discourses available to be subscribed to by the wider public, can make their way into the courtroom, this has been demonstrated in the studies conducted by Ellison and Munro (2013), McDonald et al. (2020) and Zydervelt et al. (2016). Their literature proposed that if a victim is known to the defendant, a case that involves rape is more complicated to convict than stranger rape. Therefore, proving there has been an act of rape beyond reasonable doubt can still be regarded as difficult within New Zealand's current Justice system. There are complexities faced during a rape trial when the trial involves people who are known to each other. An independent review was conducted by the New Zealand Law Commission, to determine the difficulties that may arise when a woman who had been victimised by sexual violence reported rape by someone known to her. The review concluded that most acts of rape do not conform to the stereotype of a stranger with a weapon (Hammond & Boshier, 2015). It was further proposed that the rape myth of a violent stranger grabbing a woman in the street has been superseded by new terminology such as acquaintance, marital, and date rape (Gavey, 2018). A quote from a lawyer, Dacree (1998) demonstrates that some members of the court would not participate within its format:

> As a practising lawyer… it would only be in the most extreme circumstances that you would ever advise a woman to participate in the criminal process if she was alleging that she had been raped… I would never advise members of my family to report a rape. (p. 505)

Reading Dacree's (1998) statement prompted me to search further about the scrutiny that women who have been victimised by sexual violence may be subjected to in court. I found a significant number of quotes from women about their adverse experiences with reporting sexual violence. These three statements, the first by a woman complainant and the remaining two by trial judges, speak to the scrutiny that women faced within New Zealand courts:

> I thought I was prepared but I wasn't – it was awful- like being raped all over again to tell all those people – Victim statement (McDonald, 1997 p. 67)

> If every man stopped the first time a woman said 'no' the world would be a much less exciting place to live – New Zealand Judge (Quaintance, 1996, p. 3)

> There is, of course, nothing wrong with a husband, faced with his wife's initial refusal to engage in intercourse, in attempting, in an acceptable way, to persuade her to change her mind, and that may involve a measure of rougher than usual handling. - Supreme Court Justice Derek Bollen (McIntyre, 2005. Page unknown)

I now further examine issues that are produced by some of the discursive positions taken up by members of the court. One example is that evidence in relation to a woman's sexual history with a defendant may be put forward without prior question or consideration in New Zealand (Foster-Sinclair, 2016). The inclusion of this evidence suggests that there is a misalignment between the Victims' Rights Act (as cited in Ministry of Justice, 2002) and the proceedings in New Zealand courts.
According to the Act:

> Any person who deals with a victim (for example, a judicial officer, lawyer, member of court staff, police employee, probation officer, or member of the New Zealand Parole Board) should—
> (a) treat the victim with courtesy and compassion; and
> (b) respect the victim's dignity and privacy.
> (As cited in Ministry of Justice, 2002, Part 2, 7)

The literature discussed above has illustrated a woman's dignity and privacy may be affected when she is publicly asked about her sexual history. Some literature has proposed that including evidence regarding the nature of a woman's sexual history suggests the complainant is too morally flawed to deserve the jury and judge's

sympathies; which often justifies a lesser punishment for the accused (Roberts & Zuckerman, 2010). In accordance with the Victims' Rights Act (as cited in Ministry of Justice, 2002), a high level of compassion and empathy for women victimised by sexual violence is not always apparent. Furthermore, an independent review concluded, a significant number of complainants of sexual violence choose not to participate in the current New Zealand Justice system as they perceived it to be "traumatising, alienating and unresponsive to their legitimate concerns" (Hammond & Boshier, 2015, p. 4). The Victims' Rights Act (as cited in Ministry of Justice, 2002) may exist to minimise and where possible prevent harm. However, some literature demonstrated that not all women experienced courtesy and compassion during questioning; nor did they always leave the courtroom with their dignity intact (Foster-Sinclair, 2016; Hammond & Boshier, 2015; Roberts & Zuckerman, 2010).

Some literature has claimed that discourses available to be taken up suggest that women secretly desire mental humiliation and even rape during intercourse (Horney, 1973). Although this statement was published over forty years ago, according to Gavey (2018) significant spheres of victim-blaming and minimising rape discourses still exist today. An example of victim-blaming is that the defence does not have to notify the state (prosecution) of the material they will be arguing before court commences (Foster-Sinclair, 2016). This proposition may contribute to harmful positions being taken up by women. For example, they may be unable to be robustly prepared on topics of questioning before they appear in open court. This may create re-traumatising effects for women who have been victimised by sexual violence. It may also create position calls that the woman is somewhat to blame for her experience with sexual violence.

At this point I clarify my positioning of lawyers within this study. Although some of the literature selected has suggested some women who have been victimised by sexual violence are ill-treated by lawyers, I acknowledge that lawyers are bound by the Lawyers Conduct and Client Care rules to put forward the best defence for their client. I do not suggest it is a moral failing of lawyers that causes them to ill-treat women who have been victimised by sexual violence. Rather, some of the discourses subscribed to by defence are upheld within the legal system. If successful, these

discourses may be called upon by the defence counsel who may be bound to uphold these practices if they believe this will provide their client with the best defence.

Discursive analyses have outlined three distinct models that influence people's views regarding rape accounts (Crawford, 1995). Social-structural, victim precipitation and the miscommunication model are the most common influences on people's beliefs regarding whether rape has occurred. The social-structural model identified cultural justifications of inequality, such as the belief that women are the property of men, that women's sexuality is inherently evil and that men are entitled to the sexual services of women (Crawford, 1995; Sheffield, 1989). Rather than depicting rape as a woman's problem, the social-structural model shifts the focus to a discussion of the structure of western patriarchal social contexts. The victim precipitation model suggests all women experience an unresolved conflict between their unconscious desires and their conscious wishes for coerced intercourse (Crawford, 1995). This model can position women to be blamed for sexual acts that occur without their consent such as rape. Finally, the miscommunication model proposed that women must clearly say no or an unambiguous yes to sexual relations (Crawford, 1995; Tannen, 1992). From this perspective, acquaintance rape can be classified as a miscommunication event which involves men and women failing to understand each other's verbal and non-verbal cues (Crawford, 1995; O'Byrne et al., 2008).

Despite Crawford's (1995) work some years ago, the underreporting of sexual violence continues to be a recurring issue within New Zealand. Furthermore, rape myths are discussed across the sexual assault literature. Some available discourses imply that women who have been victimised by sexual assault, invite the assault through; their choice of dress, their lack of fighting back, their level of alcohol consumption and their platonic friendships with males (Schwark & Bohner, 2019). One of the most common rape myths available to be taken up is that many women make false allegations of rape (Costin 1985; Wheatcroft et al., 2009; Wheatcroft, & Walklate, 2014). Furthermore, women who have been victimised by sexual violence are often viewed negatively by the wider public (Schwark & Bohner, 2019). I now examine more closely the difficulties women can face when they choose to take up a position of resistance against unwanted sexual advances.

Resistance and saying no

When reviewing women's accounts that involved sexualisation I found that much of the literature focused on women saying no to unwanted sexual advances and behaviours. It was challenging to find accounts of women's resistance to practices of unwanted sexualisation and the effects of this resistance. I speculate these accounts are not readily available in the literature because of the treatment some women are subjected to when they attempt to tell their story of sexualisation.

Participating in the refusal of sexual advances can be complex for women and for men (Kitsinger & Frith, 1999). This complexity can lead to ambiguous sexual experiences. The individuals involved within sexual acts can leave the experience with different positions on what has occurred. A woman may have felt unspoken pressure to comply with sexual acts. However, the man perpetrating the acts may have been unaware of how his actions were perceived by the woman. He may also subscribe to discourses which promote men's authority over women in relationships. Adams et al. (1995) conducted a rhetorical analysis of discourse to demonstrate discourse generated by men who had recently been violent to women. The following conversation between one of the researchers and a participant explored a man's discursive positioning:

> Researcher: Can you explain what discipline means in your relationship?
> Participant: A woman whose gonna put up when they shut up.
> Researcher: For her to put up and shut up?
> Participant: Yeah. So for her not to undermine (laughing) my authority.
> (Adams et al., 1995, p. 389)

The participant's claim that his partner should fall in line with "my authority" suggests that he subscribed to a discourse that men should dominate women in relationships (Adams et al., 1995, p. 389). Furthermore, a difference of perception may be caused by the discourses that each individual subscribed to in relation to sex. For instance, women describing abusive relations can usually provide an accurate portrayal of events. However, it is the extra features of communication, the emphasis the man places on certain words, and the use of analogies which contribute to the full terror of the experience (Adams et al., 1995). When purposefully enacted, ambiguity of language can cause significant effects for women. Ambiguity in the language

selected for use can be called on for specific purposes; some men specifically create ambiguous messages in their actions and language used towards women (Adams et al., 1995). Ambiguity used by men as a tool to dominate women, can create further doubt and fear as to the man's meaning. This can be particularly harmful from a post-structuralist position because numerous angles of meaning can be inferred by language.

In accordance with this ambiguity, the majority of rape prevention programmes stress the leading cause of rape is misinterpretation (Cocoran, 1992). Due to differences in the discursive practices subscribed to by women and men, date rape prevention programmes for young women heavily focus on the teaching of refusal skills (Cocoran, 1992). Hence, often the suggested remedy for rape is assertive communication, which must be verbalised by the woman (Cocoran, 1992). However, a problematic position that underpins this suggested remedy, is that many women find it difficult to refuse unwanted sex (Kitzinger & Frith, 1999). If a woman is unable to verbally communicate the word "no", she may offer other signals. These signals may include silences or weak acceptances to the sexual activities as they unfold. Although other authors claim there should be no requirement for a woman to have to say "no" for her to be understood as refusing, the issue with women not verbally communicating "no" to sexual activity, is that men can then argue their innocence to the situation (Kitzinger & Frith, 1999). Thus, other available positions to doubt a woman's refusal are produced.

The literature further proposed that some men stifle a woman's ability to refuse sexual activity because they are aware of the right level of force to use. This means that when they engage in sexual activity, some men are actively aware of how much force to use without physically assaulting a woman (Wade, 1997). Women have detailed accounts that explained that men applied just enough pressure during sex, that it fell short of physical force, but which the women felt unable to resist (Wade, 1997). Other instances described by women included men being rough to the point where they 'let sex happen' because of their perception that they would be unable to stop it (Wade, 1997). Further quotes detail women finding themselves going along with sex that they did not find enjoyable. According to Wade (1997) the women in his study did

not know how to refuse sex and did not feel that it was her right to put a stop to it when it had begun.

I now address experiences of some minors (persons under the age of 18 years) with rape trials. This has been included firstly, because some of my experiences with sexualisation occurred when I was a minor. Also, I have included this literature to explore the working of the New Zealand Justice system from a minor's perspective. In addition to women, minors have also experienced the court process of reporting sexual violence as confusing and distressing (Randell et al., 2021). A study conducted by Randell et al. (2021) interviewed eight young victims and nine caregivers about the court processes involved with reporting sexual violence that has been imposed on a minor in New Zealand. The following four themes that were found by the research team included; the difficulty of moving forward after the trial, the distress of cross-examination, the distress of separation of witnesses from their caregivers, and the considerable length of time between reporting an alleged offence and the trial (Randell et al., 2021). The similarities between women who have been victimised by sexual violence and minors suggest that a reform for both the juvenile and adult courts may be necessary.

Some literature has further demonstrated, the unsatisfactory involvement of the Justice system in supporting vulnerable women's rights extends further than the courtroom and sexual violence spheres. A particular concern for women in abusive partnerships is the arduous process of gaining a protection order and having it acted upon. I have included this section of literature because one of the experiences I story in Chapter Five includes stalking.

New Zealand women were studied by a team from the University of Waikato. Of the 43 women involved in the study, 32 of these women applied for a protection order. From the 32 applicants, 28 received a temporary order and one from the remaining four, received a permanent order (Robertson et al., 2007). Although these numbers appear relatively high, and most of the women who applied were successful, some of the women from the study reported having to be mindful of how they came across to the police. They also reported the lack of support they received from the police about

breaches in the order. The three following accounts from Robertson et al. (2007) support this statement:

> I said, "What do you mean, what do I want to do about it? He has breached the protection order and I was told that I have to report every single breach" … This policeman said to me, "Well you know, in the greater scheme of things, it's only a phone call. It's not a big deal is it, really?" It went through my head that if I go hysterical here, he is going to believe what [John] tells everyone… (p. 252)

> The officer returned the next day and told her, "I thought you were completely looney when I saw you". Rachel said: "What sort of fucking comment is that from a police officer? He sees a woman that has been nearly battered to death. What do you think you are going to see? Some beautifully made-up woman?" (p. 252)

> Every time he contacted me, whether it was a letter or anything, I would report it to the police station. He was not meant to contact me at all under the protection order and the police did nothing. The times I started to get really serious and think that I was going to die, I started to hound the police to do something about it… I was reporting everything. I would do a report and it would get filed and nothing would happen. (p. 252)

This chapter has shown how discourses can operate in workplaces, heterosexual relationships, courtrooms, and police stations. It has also demonstrated how the discursive ideas taken up by people within and across these particular institutions can have harmful effects for women. This chapter demonstrated how some women respond to sexual encounters and has discussed the complexity of aspects such as consent, reporting, and engaging in court processes. Some of the complexity was relevant for me as I considered the challenges of ethically writing about sexualisation and giving personal examples. It was important in this research context that I did not identify or seek to redress from those who had perpetrated he sexualising events. At the same time I wanted to engage in Justice-Doing and refuse invitations to be silenced or complicit in these events. The following chapter addresses the development of the study and how I addressed these challenges.

Chapter Four: Research design

Introduction

This chapter begins with an account of how I came to select an auto-ethnography that presents vignettes as the data for analysis. This story is an important one to tell because it illustrates how the work of discourse, positioning, power, gender, consent and resistance that I introduced in Chapter Two played out during the design phase of this study. Furthermore, the story shows how I attended to the ethical considerations that enabled me to speak about my experiences in ways that didn't identify or implicate those indirect participants who were involved in the experiences I present in the data. The chapter goes on to theorise the methodologies I drew from. These include auto-ethnography and vignettes. The chapter ends with discourse analysis and how this provided a fitting means for analysing the data and addressing the research questions.

When I set out to undertake this study, I was a beginning researcher with a considerable amount to learn, particularly within the realms of epistemological positioning and ethics. I was drawn to post-structuralist theory because of its attention to discourse, power and resistance. However, my epistemological knowledge and experience had me positioned more at the margins of these approaches. I searched for literature and authors who had researched and written from post-structuralist perspectives who also positioned themselves as Justice-Doing researchers. I came across Strega's (2005) work which was helpful for me starting out on this study. She proposed some questions a beginning researcher should ask herself before commencing her work. These questions include, "how can I best capture the complexities and contradictions of the worlds, experiences, or texts I am studying? Whose voice will/does my research represent? Whose interests will it serve? How can I tell if my research is good research?" (Strega, 2005, p. 199). I knew I wanted to investigate sexualisation and sexual violence in ways that would speak out about the effects of these for women. Developing a study from a post-structural lens caused me to reflect on the purpose for the study. I arrived at the place of wanting to engage with socially-just work. Strega's questions were a helpful guide. I also learnt early on that a thorough understanding of ethics is a vital part of the research process (Guillemin

& Gillam, 2004; Mutch, 2013). I had initially hoped to interview women who had been subjected to intimate partner violence and took several steps to define the parameters for selection. These parameters included women who had been in an intimate partner relationship which involved rape, had been apart from the partner who had perpetrated the violence for at least one year, and who had reported intimate partner rape to the New Zealand police within the last five years.

This initial proposal posed several ethical concerns. The research design was a qualitative study, which meant that I would be drawing on stories of lived experience and needing to take considerable care to maintain participant anonymity. I would also need to ensure that the emotional wellbeing of the participants and the researcher remained intact. I was committed to the moral principle of beneficence. I also determined that I was adequately following Bryman (2015) and Mutch's (2013) suggestion that before consent can be given, all participants must be fully informed of the purpose, conduct and potential dissemination of the research. Although I had processes in place, I understood that it is extremely difficult to encapsulate and present all information required for a participant to make an informed decision (Bryman, 2015). For instance, I would not be able to foresee the potential psychological harm the participants may (not) experience before, during and after this process. Furthermore, informed consent would require the participant to comprehend the level of emotional discomfort that may be involved with participating in a study (Mutch, 2013). At this stage, I found it difficult to determine the level of discomfort this process might cause, because each participant would respond in accordance with the discourses they subscribed to.

To further support my decision making, I thought about the recruitment of participants. I considered the organisations I might approach that work with women who have been subjected to sexualising practices by men. I made contact with the Principal Policy Advisor of the New Zealand Women's Refuge research division who was someone I had a prior professional connection with. During these initial conversations two concerning ethical issues arose. The first was: "How would I maintain participant wellbeing during the interview process?" The second ethical question was: "How would I ensure participant wellbeing and physical safety after the interview process?"

Further to considering questions about the safety of participants, I also began to wonder about my own safety as both the researcher and someone who had been victimised by sexualising practices. I did not wish to create a situation where I would be negatively impacted by the research process. It was at this point that I took guidance from Mutch (2013) who suggested the researcher should take steps to seek help. I sought the support of a psychologist who specialised in trauma involving women and sexual violence. Through discussions with the psychologist, I began to question the level of my own expertise. I am not a trained counsellor; I am an educator. I ultimately decided this initial research proposal was too great a risk for the participants and for me.

It was this psychologist who suggested I look at auto-ethnography. They suggested that I could minimise participant safety if I was the sole participant. After further searching into the theories and practices associated with auto-ethnography, I drew a parallel between my aim for this study and the objectives within auto-ethnography. I was drawn to auto-ethnography because using this method would provide me with the capacity to story my experiences. This aligned with my hopes for this research as I have always been a storyteller; it is a large part of who I am and how I communicate with others. Therefore, I was interested in the prospect of interweaving this part of my identity into the study. I was curious about how I could story my experiences into data. I looked to Ellis and Bochner (2011) who proposed the stories that are heard and told are a significant part of our lives, and that we "depend on stories almost as much as the air we breathe" (p. 76). Storying my experiences came to the forefront of the decision making for the methods that I would use to generate the data. I will further explore the objectives of auto-ethnography later in this chapter but now continue with my account of the development of this study's method and the possibility of an auto-ethnographic study.

Although it was an exciting prospect, the auto-ethnographic path brought about new ethical challenges. I encountered resistance to this proposal from the University Human Research Ethics Committee. The committee drew my attention to the process of storying my experience and how this necessarily implicates others. An auto-ethnographical account that involved me storying my experiences with sexualisation,

created the issue of maintaining the anonymity of others involved. Furthermore, it could also have the effect of producing accusations that have legal implications. The intention for this study has never been to seek justice for what I have experienced. Rather, I took up the position that de-constructing discursive positions available for men to sexualise women would have a wider impact than an accusation I may make. Therefore, when the legal implication was raised by the ethics committee it was not an angle that I had considered prior. The concerns raised by the ethics committee meant that I may not be able to speak about my experiences. The concerns also meant that I may be silenced, as I had been many times in the past from speaking about experiences that were close to my heart. This silencing would have been out of consideration for indirect participants who had been involved in perpetrating sexualisation or were associated with them. Foucault's (1981) words confronted me with the reality that speaking out had serious implications:

> We know perfectly well that we are not free to say just anything, that we cannot simply speak of anything, when we like or where we like; not just anyone, finally, may speak of just anything. (p. 316)

I understand the positioning of the committee. Telling this story, that may be read by others, may have made it possible for people to know or guess who I was talking and writing about. After it became apparent that this research could not continue in its current format, I thought further about how I could produce the work I set out to. This research is very important to me and I was committed to finding ways to speak and write about my experiences of sexualisation that addressed the risk of identifying others. I decided, rather than telling a detailed story of my own experience with sexualisation, I would find other ways. I searched techniques that would allow me to adequately draw on my experiences without the risk of legal issues or engaging in unethical practice. I was drawn to the idea of vignettes as a means of storying my experiences without the need to provide detail that might risk identifying people. Vignettes would make it possible to identify practices of sexualisation, including rape. I came to appreciate that it would still be possible to identify discursive practices at work in the vignettes and consider what this might mean for women more broadly who have endured similar experiences of sexualisation. It would also provide a way for me to engage in a process of Justice-Doing by speaking about sexualisation in ways that did not produce the kind of silencing or repression that detailed accounts

would have. Furthermore, I was drawn to the poetic possibilities vignettes could offer. Creating a poetic style for the vignettes was important to me as a way of creating connection with the experiences I was speaking about. I further discuss the work of vignettes and poetic possibilities later in this chapter as one of the three methodologies I selected for this study.

Methodologies

This section discusses auto-ethnography, vignettes, and discourse analysis. I define and describe each of these research methodologies and demonstrate why they have been selected for this study.

Auto-ethnography

Auto-ethnography is an autobiographical genre of research (Ellis, 1999). Auto-ethnography is usually written from first-person perspective and will often display multiple layers of experience because the researcher weaves between the self and others to make connections to wider socio-cultural contexts (Ellis, 1999). Auto-ethnography as a research methodology is both product and process because it treats research as a socially conscious, socially just, and political act (Ellis et al., 2011). Therefore, it fits well with my hope to provide a platform to explain sexualising practices and to analyse their effects. It also fits well with my hope to demonstrate the positions of resistance I took up in response to my experiences and consider the relevance of these more broadly for other women who have been victimised by sexualising practices.

Furthermore, auto-ethnography explores significant or critical events in the researcher's life that cause them to consider their socio-cultural context differently (Mutch, 2013). The use of stories that demonstrate current forms of resistance can act as a basis for people to investigate relationships that involve power and violence (Foucault, 1982). The vignettes presented in this project refer to a very small selection

of situations from my life that involve sexualising practices. Each experience that has been crafted into a vignette stories a significant moment in my life.

Using auto-ethnography as a method placed me within a community of women who have also been victimised by sexualisation. In addition to creating a relatable context for other women, as researcher I was required to be both participant and observer which were difficult positions to navigate. Dyson's (2007) suggestion, that auto-ethnography recognizes the researcher as both insider and outsider was helpful during this navigation. Furthermore, although some of the experiences I have written about happened over a decade ago, I still feel a strong emotional connection to the time and place they occurred in. I draw from Ellis' (1999) claim of heartful auto-ethnography which prompts the researcher to gaze first through a wide-angle lens of the socio-cultural impact of their own experience, then to zoom backwards and forwards to an inward exposure of their vulnerable self.

During preliminary readings I resonated with women's accounts of violence perpetrated by men that involved first-person narrative. One quote that roused strong feelings for me was found in Fletcher's (2018) account of violence that she had been subjected to by a man. She said, "I struggled to see myself as a full person separate from him…all of my decisions were dictated by this other person...It was as if I had regressed into the state of being a child" (Fletcher, 2018, p. 52). I came to understand that an auto-ethnographic study should provide a platform for a more diverse audience, to make social and personal change a possibility for more people (Ellis et al., 2011). Sharing heartfelt accounts of personal experience, as Fletcher does was not a position I took lightly. I hoped to create an opportunity for others to resonate with my personal stories in similar ways that I did with Fletcher's story. Perhaps this might inspire them to reflect on and speak out about their experiences in helpful ways. With this in mind, I have included experiences that are relatable and not uncommon for women and girls. This inclusion of relatable experience is in line with Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) narrative view of experience which proposed people need to be seen not only as individuals but also in relation to and in context with others. Vignettes are the means I used to present my personal experiences in ways that may be relatable and connected to others.

Vignettes

The most common form of vignette is a written, fictional or hypothetical story (Gray, Royall & Malson, 2017). Vignettes as a data source can be used in a multitude of ways. When used in qualitative research studies, these stories are often presented to participants with a questionnaire based on written stories (Gray, Royall & Malson, 2017). Whilst not responding to a particular questionnaire, the vignettes I present in this study, provide enough detail to make an analysis that addresses the research questions.

The use of vignettes has become more widespread as a means of data generation and analysis over recent years. Their use has become more popular as an effective means of researching sensitive topics such as abuse, mental health and social justice (Khanolainen & Semenova, 2020; Winstone & Kinchin, 2017). This makes them an ideal means of data generation for this study. However, I found, there were minimal 'how to' guides for designing studies that involved the use of vignettes (Gray, Royall & Malson, 2017). The limited literature pertaining to use of vignettes in research brought about challenges and opportunities for me. One challenge was that there were not many maps to follow. However, an opportunity was that I could create a structure and style that fitted well with my research purpose. I chose a poetic structure as a way of evoking a similar emotional response and connection to my experiences that poetry can evoke for readers. Considering the analysis of the vignettes also posed challenges. I needed to consider how I might position myself as researcher and as a woman who has been victimised by sexualisation. I addressed this second challenge by deciding to write the vignettes from a third-person perspective. As discourses are socially constructed, a third-person perspective would allow me to stand alongside and in solidarity with other women who have encountered similar experiences of sexualisation. This would provide me with a way of taking a reflexive position in relation to the vignettes. Davies et al. (2004) spoke of the benefits of reflexive positioning for researchers:

> Reflexivity involves turning one's reflexive gaze on discourse - turning language back on itself to see the work it does in constituting the world. The subject/researcher sees simultaneously the object of her or his gaze and the

> means by which the object (which may include oneself as subject) is being constituted. (p. 360)

Reflexive positioning provided me with the opportunity to engage as "spect-actor" (Park-Fuller, 2003, p. 300). Spect-actors "act in, audience and critique the research conversations" (Talbot, 2012, p. 7). Positioning myself as spect-actor would make it possible to explore the data from a more nuanced perspective.

A third challenge presented by using vignettes was locating other studies that had also incorporated them as a methodology. I was unable to locate any other auto-ethnographic studies that investigated sexualisation or sexual violence which used vignettes as a data source. However, this challenge provided me with some autonomy regarding how I could structure the vignettes. I deliberately elected to provide enough detail within the vignettes to show the work of sexualisation whilst taking care to manage anonymity. I was also particularly mindful that some vignettes are so vague that inferences need to be made by the reader, which can cause doubt in regards to credibility of the author (Font, 2013). Furthermore, some vignettes offer such scarce detail that readers may be forced to interpret situational contexts (Font, 2013). The potential for these interpretations alerted me to consider them when crafting the vignettes. Some details such as time and location, would need to be changed to protect the anonymity of the men and boys involved and significant others who might identify them.

The final challenge that would affect the development of the vignettes was the language I selected to include. I was careful to select literature that drew from a range of sources. I took care to identify the discourses and discursive positions I subscribed to and to consider and acknowledge other possible positions. For example, in Chapter One I storied the event I witnessed which involved my friend being sexualised and followed in a night club. The effects of this sexualisation were different for me and my friend. I viewed the man's actions as inappropriate and I tried to engage in conversation with her about her feelings towards the experience. However, she took up a different position and stated it was just a "typical night out" with men. Furthermore, Gill (2000), proposed that discourses drawn from language can represent a person's view of reality. This means that, if the meaning of the language I selected for the vignettes was unclear, or ambiguous, the discursive positions I have

made available through my selection of language may affect the way people interpret this study. Some language can evoke strong feelings. For example the term sexual assault may evoke thoughts of fear, violence and/or victimisation. In contrast the words sexual relationship may evoke thoughts of mutual love, pleasure and affection (Font, 2013). For the context of this study, the word rape was carefully considered before inclusion. I acknowledge, by electing to include the term rape that this can imply that a crime has been committed and that I am making an accusation. However, my use of the term was intentional. As stated in Chapter One, I have used the term rape to describe my experience because from my perspective mutual consent was not established prior to the sexual act that took place. Language use and the limitations and possibilities this produces can have different effects for different people and is a central consideration in my crafting of the vignettes. I now discuss discourse analysis and its usefulness and relevance for analysing the vignettes and addressing the research questions.

Discourse analysis

Foucault's perspective on discourse analysis established that the language selected for use by people is a sample of the discursive ideas available. Therefore, one of the objectives of discourse analysis is to look at statements for what discourses do, rather than say (Graham, 2011). From a Foucauldian position, discourse analysis is focused on what constitutes certain ideas to be thought and said. Institutions shape and are shaped by discourse and discourses can regulate what can be said and who can speak (Foucault, 2002).

The repression of discussions surrounding sex that I introduced in Chapter Two is an example of how discourse can regulate what can be said and done in any given time and geographical location. According to Foucault (1977b), "Sex has been the central object of examination, surveillance, avowal and transformation into discourse" (p. 111). Discourses about sex have been used to regulate people's sexual responses in different ways at different times in history. Any analysis that I undertake in relation to sexualisation and sexual violence must take into account the current socio-cultural context and how these have been shaped over time.

Discourse analysis is both a normative and an explanatory technique (Fairclough, 1992). It is normative because it evaluates existing realities to determine how they measure up to values that equate to a just society (Fairclough, 1992). Discourse analysis is an explanatory technique because it explains how existing realities are the effects of structures the analyst seeks to test out (Fairclough, 1992).

Discourse analysis is simultaneously deconstructive and a facilitator of the emergence of new possibilities (Winslade, 2005). This means that new discursive positions that become available can seek to deconstruct historically founded positions whilst creating new ones. Therefore, historical discourses that produced inequitable positions for women can shift. For example, discursive positions available that positioned women as the stay at home parent have since shifted due to demanding pressure for more household income and for women to have the option to have a career. However, there are still discursive positions available that can cause inequities for women, such as sexualisation. Foucault claimed that discourses uttered can carry the presence of what is not said, which can undermine from within all that was said (Foucault, 2002). For the context of this study, I draw from Foucault's idea to mean that although some discursive ideas have shifted, the underlying regulations of what can be said about women have been founded from historically produced ideas about women. Therefore, I draw from Foucault's statement which suggests everything that is formulated within discourse has already been articulated in the silence that precedes it (Foucault, 2002).

Discourse analyses have commonly focused on how people make identity claims informed by discourse. They also typically include ways that people resist dominant, discursive, practices (Winslade, 2005). Resisting discourses that maintain power imbalances can be in the form of critique. Critique can make old ways of thinking transform (Foucault, 2000). "As soon as people begin to have trouble thinking things the way they have been thought, transformation becomes at the same time very urgent, very difficult, and entirely possible" (Foucault, 2000, p. 457).

Discourse analysis should seek to determine why certain statements emerge at the exclusion of others and what function these statements serve (Foucault, 1980;

Graham, 2011). For example, dominant discursive positions can supress people's sexuality and leave them both muted and frustrated (Foucault, 1977b). The discourse analysis in this study seeks to identify and discuss how discursive positions can cause women to be silenced by men within relationships. Furthermore, this discourse analysis works to demonstrate there are a number of positions available to be taken up or subverted. Therefore, researchers' objectives should be to recognise that people's rendition of their truth is "contingent upon the subjectivity of the reader and the fickleness of language" (Graham, 2011, p. 666).

This study draws from discourse analysis to focus on the critical issue of power relations. It seeks to demonstrate how the language selected by men to speak to and about women can produce inequities for women. Discursive positions available for women to take up within a relationship have shifted significantly since the 1950s in New Zealand. For instance, it is now more socially acceptable within New Zealand for women to own property, be single mothers and have full-time careers. However, discourses available to be taken up about a woman's role within a relationship have many overlaps between the 1950s and today. For example, women are still often positioned to be; in charge of the housework. There are also positions that are still available for men to take up which suggest they should be able to have sex with a woman when they want to, regardless of her position.

In conclusion, this chapter has considered the relevance of an auto-ethnographic approach to research that draws on examples of lived experience of sexualisation. It shows how the researcher can use auto-ethnography to investigate personal experience in ways that resonate with others who have had similar experiences. By using stories of personal lived experience, researchers can produce work to act in solidarity with other women through Justice-Doing. Vignettes have provided the means to story my experiences with sexualisation whilst evoking a similar emotional response and connection to my experiences that poetry can evoke for readers. Vignettes can also engage with discourse analysis to deconstruct positions whilst creating new ones. The vignettes that I have crafted from events in my life and discursive analysis of them are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Vignette analysis

The writing of the vignettes: How I procured them

Procure is defined: "to obtain after a great effort" (Collins English dictionary, 2019). I included this term, to signify the effort taken to story the data into written vignettes (see Appendix A). Each of the ten vignettes will be presented and analysed separately to identify relevant discourses of sexualisation, the position calls these offered, and some of the effects for me and my life.

The vignettes have been ordered to demonstrate a development in severity of sexualising practices that range from sexualising comments, to practices that include rape and stalking. The first two vignettes offered me the opportunity to discuss how contradictory discourses available to be taken up on sexualisation have arisen, and to discuss how the media has had a significant institutional factor in this development. I then discuss in vignettes three-ten how these particular macro-level discourses can have inequitable effects for women when they are taken up by men. Each analysis begins with a reflective comment to provide insight into how I am positioned towards the experience now. I use the metaphor of spect-actor (Park-Fuller, 2003; Talbot, 2012) to show the complex positioning and repositioning between first and third person actor to first-person spectator/researcher to analyse the vignettes. Although the events storied into vignettes span my lifetime from childhood through to adulthood, they have not been placed in chronological order. This was a deliberate choice as a step to minimise the risk of identification of the men who were involved in perpetrating these practices. However, it is also important to make the point that women and girls can be subjected to a range of sexualising practices from any age.

The vignettes have been ordered to show the development in my positioning towards subscribing to a position of resistance. The vignettes show there are many forms of resistance, some of which include verbal and non-verbal cues, positioning of the body, speaking in solidarity with others and sharing stories. One example of verbal resistance I have taken up is continuing with this study. Due to the nature of this topic, the writing caused some significant personal challenges for me. The most challenging was that I experienced flashbacks and bouts of nightmares during the writing process.

Although I had taken several steps to ensure ethical care had been taken, I underestimated the position calls I would encounter during the writing. Re-living sexualising experiences and focusing on painful memories caused me to experience significant stress. Despite these effects I took up a position call of resistance to continue with this study.

Vignette One

She sits on the grass in a bikini,
eating a classic kiwi lunch.
Sausage-and-bread.

From behind her,
a man's hand
falls onto her right shoulder.
She turns to look up.
The sun is in her eyes.

He laughingly says:
"If you keep eating like that
you might have to wear
a one piece".

This memory is significant for me because it is the first time I remember feeling self-conscious about the way I looked. It is the first memory I have of looking at my own body and wondering whether I needed to watch what I was eating. I took up a position of self-consciousness to the point where I developed a harmful relationship with the way I looked. Now, when I re-read the words the man spoke to me, I still smell the grass, salt air, and the tomato sauce. I can still identify some of the effects this experience has had for me, years later. At 27 years old, I am now unable to sit in a bikini without covering my stomach with my hands. This story works to encapsulate a typical experience for any girl eating her picnic lunch. The man could be a relative, a family friend, or a stranger. At the point of subjection, it made no difference what connection this man had to me. The effects of his words caused me to suddenly, and self-consciously wrap my arms around my stomach. At this moment, the words he spoke caused me more unease than his hands did as they brushed my shoulder.

During this experience, I was young, and I was unaware that position calls were available for men to take up which could produce sexualising effects for me. I took up positions of confusion and unease, I have since come to understand, sexualising experiences are not uncommon for girls. The sexualisation of girls is a growing concern amongst academics and policy makers (American Psychological Association, 2007). In accordance with these concerns, the American Psychological Association (2007) created a task force which proposed the positions available to

sexualise girls are often produced within three interrelated spheres: societal contribution, self-sexualisation and through interpersonal contributions. I now explore how available discursive resources can promote inequitable societal contributions to sexualisation by developing positions of expectation to be taken up by young women.

Sexualisation involves discursive practices which make position calls available. However, some girls may be unaware of the effects of the discourses available to them at the point of sexualisation (Gavey, 2018). The positions available to be taken up may cause confusion for young girls particularly in regards to the appropriate action she should take at the point of sexualisation. A position available for me to take up was self-sexualisation. Self-sexualisation is concerned with perpetuating the behaviour that gains approval. Some sexualised behaviour gains approval and rewards from people that girls admire. Therefore, girls are more likely to internalise and engage with these behaviours (American Psychological Association, 2007). After this experience occurred, I internalised behaviours displayed to me by other women and girls. In particular, I found that I took up discursive positions offered to me that privilege thinness and prettiness.

Searching available literature demonstrated to me that the position I took on thinness was common. One of the more prominent societal contributions to the sexualisation of girls is the discursive positions that become available from some forms of media- such as magazines. In particular, the language selected for branding and selling items to young women can make positions available for the wider public to sexualise girls. A common headline in magazines targeted at young girls included the words: how to lose weight and get a boyfriend (American Psychological Association, 2007). A later study was conducted in New Zealand involving 71 girls aged 10-12 years (Jackson & Vares, 2013). The objective of the study was to contribute to existing literature that detailed the complex relationship between girls' identities and the media. The researchers proposed that post-feminist media have produced an intense gaze on female bodies (Jackson & Vares, 2013). The researchers also outlined that if women wished to be viewed as attractive there was a requirement to be sexy. Jackson and Vares (2013) further stressed, to be successfully classed as sexy a woman would need to obtain this status through consumerism. For example, improvement products were

heavily marketed at women and the objective of marketing was to promote younger looking, healthy skin and being slim as ideal attributes for women (Jackson & Vares, 2013).

The positions available and the experience I had encouraged me to subscribe to a discursive position that sexualised me. The position I took up involved me fixating on the way my stomach looked. I also felt embarrassed that a man would suggest I may need to wear a one piece soon, or risk being unattractive. The message that 'thinness is pretty' was re-produced and reinforced by me and by the man involved. I also perceived that I should be consciously aware of how I looked at all times. In particular, this awareness caused me to wonder whether I was attractive to the men around me. This experience created a position call to dress in a way that I perceived would be appreciated by men. This position call was problematic for me and has continued to shape my identity in problematic ways. The statement "Sexualisation may be especially problematic when it happens to youth" (American Psychological Association, 2007, p. 2) aligns with my experience.

Another problematic position call after this experience was taking up interpersonal contributions about how I should dress and act around men. Interpersonal contributions to discursive, sexualising positions can occur when girls are treated as or encouraged to be sexual objects by their peers and family members (American Psychological Association, 2007). I found that members of my family and my peers subscribed to the same discursive idea as the man at the picnic. This idea that thin is pretty contributed to me developing an unhealthy relationship with my body. For example, I was spoken to about appropriate ways to sit, walk, dress and act around men. My family members' reasons for taking up positions that caused them to comment on my appearance and behaviour around men may be drawn from a discourse of protection. They may have been fearful of the teasing or comments from other girls and/or boys and men if I did not fit in with the beauty standards. In an example from Gavey (2018) she discussed how a participant within her study named Sarah traced her positioning towards sex back to a discursive idea her mother subscribed to. This idea was informed by dominant discourses about male sex drives and women's requirements to fulfil these (Gavey, 2018). Positioning theory can explain why people come to support the understanding of why and how they may

come to take up certain identities (Drewery, 2005). Therefore, I draw from Gavey (2018) to demonstrate that my positioning at this stage was influenced by familial discourses and practices to please my family. When I took up this discursive practice of pleasing my family, I subsequently dressed and acted in ways that I was not comfortable with.

If a person receives enough comments on their behaviour, it will not need to be monitored as carefully (Foucault, 1977b). Therefore, when I was exposed to sexualised comments from people close to me, this called me into an obligatory position from which to monitor the behaviour that was commented on. Within the context of this experience, the positioning I subscribed to after hearing comments about my body caused me to monitor my own food intake. The man at the picnic was the first person outside of my family who had made comments about my body. Before this time, I determined earlier comments made by people close to me were just teasing. I have now come to realise I had adopted discursive ideas and practices about being thin as a result of the comments I had termed teasing.

As an adult, I have reviewed some of Foucault's work on the theory of discourse and the inextricable link this has with power. This review has supported me to understand that the uneasiness I felt during this experience was directly related to the exercising of power between the man and I. Reflecting back on this time, I perceive that he took up a discursive position which made commenting on my body acceptable to him. The uneasiness I felt at the time can be drawn from two positions. First, the difference in physical power between us concerned me. I was sitting down and he was standing behind the sun. The physical position he chose not only impaired my vision but also caused me to take up a position of vulnerability. Furthermore, the age gap between us was significant. The difference in knowledge I perceived to be between us contributed to me to taking up a further position of inferiority.

Storying this vignette has supported me to find a way to refuse the effects this experience has produced for me. I have now come to understand the unease I felt was my own act of resistance. Albeit limited, I determined the behaviour of the man to be unacceptable and I can now appreciate that this act of resistance meant that I was not fully complicit. The process of writing about and reflecting on this experience

highlights the inappropriateness of what I was subjected to at a young age and I can be agentic in refusing to carry any accountability for it.

This analysis has shown how certain forms of media can produce discursive positions that encourage the sexualisation of young girls. It has also highlighted how the discursive positions family members and peers take up can contribute to long-lasting effects for girls. The next vignette stories my experience with a group of boys who were of similar age to me. I further explore how some forms of media have made positions available to boys to sexualise women and girls.

Vignette Two:

The sand is rushing between her toes
she sprints towards the water.
She stops for a moment as she reaches
the cold, hard, sand.

Peace…
Her eyes were closed,
the sun falls across her face.

She hears him approach before he touches her.
One hand roughly clutches at her back,
the other caresses her hips…
He has untied her bikini.

She turns to see a group of teenage boys –
both shocked and impressed
with what they are witnessing.

When I think back to this time, my body tenses and I can still see the onlookers' faces. I remember their eyes wandering over my bare skin as I tried desperately to cover my body. At the time it was difficult to process the emotions I was feeling. I went rapidly from calm and at peace to humiliated and scared. This vignette shows how power was exercised between me and the boys. The boy who untied my bikini dominated me physically because I was unable to stop his actions. He choose not to engage in conversation with me, rather he snuck up behind me and crudely undressed me. There are a number of positions available to the boy at the moment of undressing. He could have reflected on his actions and realised I was near enough naked in public. He could have taken up a position of care and looked to support me by helping me to cover up. Instead, he chose to walk away from me with a smile on his face.

Sexual violations can have different affects for women and girls. At the time I took up a position that the actions of the boy who undressed me were an utter violation of my personal privacy. He chose to undress me in front of a group of onlookers, in the middle of the day, on a crowded beach. I still hold this position when I reflect on his actions. What he did was unjust and I believe he sexualised me because he perceived my value to be equated to my physical attractiveness (American Psychological Association, 2007). There were several discursive positions available to me at the

point of undressing. During the moment I took up a position of resistance. I scrambled to cover my body so that he would not get to see it. I also used my body to demonstrate his behaviour was unacceptable to me. I glared at him, and attempted to portray that I would not let his actions embarrass me. When I reflect back on the initial position I took up, I believe that it would change if this were to happen to me now. I would use my voice to tell him how he had made me feel in that moment. I would take up a different position of resistance by attempting to communicate with him about how his actions had impacted me.

Despite my position towards the boy who undressed me, the (non)action of the boys in the group had more of an impact on me. When I started to craft this analysis, I noticed significant reluctance to approach this again. This reluctance was a response to the profound effects the sexualising experience had for me because I perceived that the boys witnessing the undressing allowed the sexualising act to happen. Although there were no words spoken during this experience, the actions taken by the boys invoked a similar response to Vignette One. I had an awareness that I was being measured up against the standards set for girls about what it means to be sexy and desired.

The boys who watched on exercised power. Like the boy who undressed me, each member of the group could have supported me during this humiliating experience. However, no one took physical action. When I reflect back on this time, I wonder if the boys who were a part of the group responded to the call to accept and conform to the behaviour of the other members. My perspective is drawn from Foucault's (1977a) theory that discipline is infused in a multitude of ways which imposes behaviours and creates regulations for the way people position themselves. This means that, the boys may have looked to each other for an appropriate response to what they were witnessing. Some may have responded with concern for me. However, the positions available to them to fit in with the group may have had them refuse the call to support me in favour of supporting each other. Therefore the apparent inaction of the boys who were watching produced more of an effect for me than the action of the boy who untied my bikini.

Some of the sexualising, discursive positions available for boys to subscribe to, have been re-produced by some forms of media. Furthermore, the position calls available to boys and men may differ from those offered to women and girls. Some women subscribe unquestioningly to patriarchal discourses. When confronted with the story of this experience, they may say "that is just what boys do". The positions available for boys and girls to take up can be affected by the socio-cultural context of the time they live in. For the people involved within the context of this study, there were opportunities of exposure to the sexualisation of women and girls from a young age (Gavey, 2018). For example, I remember watching numerous make-over television shows when I was a young teenager. Female participants on make-over television shows were often subjected to scrutiny, which was often focused solely on their physical appearance (Jackson & Vares, 2013). The experts on the shows undertook to transform the long list of flaws the participant was deemed to have. The transformation revealed a woman who more closely resembled the ideal beauty standard, looking sexier and thinner. The words "men", "thin" and "sexy" are often not placed within the same sentence. However, these are often desired attributes for women to obtain. The word perfect was spoken constantly by the girls in the Jackson and Vares (2013) study when they were asked to discuss aspects of their appearance. One of the effects for me of watching the make-over shows was that they made position calls available to me and other young girls, to regulate how we perceived the ideal or perfect body standard. What then transcribed was the perpetuation of these standards by the girls towards themselves and each other. Therefore, we contributed to the regulation of the beauty standards that were available for boys to take up and that potentially could result in sexualising practices.

Some of the discursive positions available for girls and boys can offer competing and potentially contradictory ways of providing meaning to the world (Foucault, 2002). A potential contradiction, is that discourses are not absolute, rather they often take shape depending on the time, place and cultural context they exist within (Foucault, 2002). For example, the thin body type can be associated with discourses such as "poor" or "malnourished". However, the socio-cultural context I associate with has available positions for boys and girls to subscribe to that promote, to be thin is considered perfection. This discursive idea can have damaging affects for young girls. For example, I took up the position that thinness could be achieved by

regulating my eating, which lead to an unhealthy relationship with food. In some cases, closely monitoring food intake and becoming focused on weight can lead to hospitalisation. In contrast, this kind of thinness is not considered perfection.

There are a number of positions available for boys and girls to take up in regards to how girls should look. Jackson and Vares (2013) study demonstrated that despite the age range and differing locations of the participants, girls considered perfection as a "normative requirement of femininity" (Jackson & Vares, 2013, p. 352). I draw back to Foucault's (1972) discussion on "discursive formations". Within the socio-cultural context I lived in, many boys and girls subscribed to the idea that thin is pretty. A discursive formation was produced which regulated the way we viewed each other and ourselves. Therefore, I acknowledge, the boys within the group of onlookers and the boy who subjected me to this practice of sexualisation, acted on the cultural norms (discursive formations) of the time and place they lived in. They were expressions of discursive positions available to boys and girls that are socially constructed. They trouble the ideas that the desires and anxieties that are socially constructed about bodies are relevant to any one person's life (Gavey, 2018). Instead they are deeply ingrained within the socio-cultural context a person lives in.

By storying this experience of sexualisation I hoped to explore the experience of a young woman encountering intersecting views on sex and girls bodies. To the boys perpetuating this act, I may have looked like the girls they had seen on television or in magazines. At the time, I was young, I was skinny, and I was in a bikini. The discursive idea that thin is sexy had been available to this group of boys from a young age. In contrast, I felt degraded and humiliated. I did not want the boys to be looking at my body, to be deciding whether or not it was perfect or sexy or thin enough. I simply wanted to have a swim at the beach on a summer's day.

The next vignette focuses on how language can be used to regulate the discursive positions available to be taken up during a sexualised experience.

Vignette Three

She is walking alone.
She passes a building site on a suburban street.

She hears a man's voice:
"Look at the way her arse moves
when she walks".

He continues his commentary:
"Hmm I think you should put on a little bit of weight.
Just on your thighs".

Another, much older man joins in:
"I don't think you should wear those pants around all these other males,
a young
attractive
girl
like you".

The effect on me from this experience differs from what I experienced from the stories in Vignettes One and Two because, in this instance, particular body parts were being singled out and commented on. The words "look at the way her arse moves…" humiliated me during this experience and now when I reflect back on it. These words continue to produce a number of effects for me. The most prominent effect was the way I felt when one of the men commented on my thighs. The thought of the man imagining himself touching my inner thigh still causes me extreme discomfort. Although he did not physically touch me, I felt his touch on my skin with his words. The language he used offered me a position call that I had somehow welcomed or encouraged his commentary.

The language used in any context is discursive and can be powerful. Barad (2003) commented that it would be difficult to deny language has substantial power. Language can produce or subvert available positions during acts of sexualisation. Therefore, the meaning of an experience can change for a person depending on the language involved (Barad, 2003). I am still affected by the language spoken at me during this experience. When I walk past a group of men I can feel their eyes on me, I wonder what they are thinking, and I begin to assess each item of clothing I am wearing. This position I have taken up has followed me into the workplace. I select

clothing that does not show my figure whilst trying to maintain professionalism. I draw attention back to the Tutchell and Edmonds (2016) survey I discussed in the Literature review. In particular, I focus on the dress code which imposed a particular minefield that had to be navigated daily for women. Available discourses regulated the standard of dress for women to be; confident but not flamboyant and sexy but not overly. There was also a call for not being prude. The researchers concluded that women were consciously aware that their clothing, hairstyle, and choice of make-up was constantly under scrutiny within the workplace (Tutchell & Edmonds, 2016). Therefore, a myriad of discursive positions available to sexualise a woman must be overcome before she can step out of her front door in the morning. I draw from Tutchell and Edmonds (2016) study at this point because I can resonate with the women involved. The context of this experience is that I was on my way to work. I was in professional work attire and was still experiencing sexualising comments on my body.

Language has a variety of uses, and can have different effects for people within the same experience. This is because objects only take up meaning and become objects of knowledge within discourse (Foucault, 1972). People can place meaning on objects depending on their socio-cultural context. I took these comments to mean that I was sexually objectified by these men - I was made into a "thing for others sexual use" (American Psychological Association, 2007, p. 1). My body was judged based on its appearance and appeal. This included the way I walked, and the clothing I had worn. Furthermore, words can be broken down, to allow for hidden meanings to become clearly visible (Foucault, 2018). However, it is important to consider the intention behind language spoken may not always reflect the effects the language has on the person the words address. Again, there were a number of positions available for the men to take up. The men involved may have taken up a fatherly discourse to care for my wellbeing. The desire of the men may have been entangled with the fathering discourse to protect. "I think you should put on a bit more weight" may have been a concern for my health. However, for me, the men's body language was sexually suggestive rather than fatherly. For example, the way their eyes lingered over my body suggested that I was an object of sexual appeal rather than a daughter. Therefore, I draw from Foucault's (2018) questionings that ask "what is unspoken in the world, in our gestures, behaviour… Do all of these words speak? If so, to what

language?... Is everything significant, and, if not, what is, and for whom, and in accordance with what rules?" (p. 333). These questions posed by Foucault display the multiplicities of language and the number of position calls available to be subscribed to within any one event. In the days after this experience I wished that the spoken words had been withheld by the speaker until I was out of ear shot. Now when I reflect on this experience, I comprehend no difference between people speaking comments that I take up to be sexualising whether I can hear them or not. I take up the position that people who comment on my body and how it looks in this way do so in order to make judgement on whether it is sexually appealing for the person who is looking. Therefore, the language selected produced discursive positions that could be taken up or refused by me and the men involved.

The age difference between me and the men in this example of subjection is relevant to highlight because it demonstrates how some discursive positions available for men to sexualise women and girls can create power inequities within their interactions. Power is influential because it produces effects at both the level of desire and at the level of knowledge (Davies et al., 2002; Foucault, 1980). In this situation, I perceived a power imbalance between me and the men due to the age difference. One man was older than me. One of them was much older. At this time I subscribed to discourses of aging that privileged older men's knowledge as more authoritative than mine. I assumed they had many more experiences interacting with strangers on the street than I did, and in my view, this positioned them as more knowledgeable than me.

The language spoken by these men produced more detrimental effects for me than in the previous experiences. These effects were produced from their commentary and what I perceived to be an open acceptance from both men involved in the sexualisation. Similar to the previous experience, I acknowledge there were a multitude of discursive positions available to be taken up or subverted. I draw from Foucault (1977a) who claimed there are a multiplicity of discourses surrounding sex that have been produced by a host of mechanisms that work together across different institutions. During this experience, both men were active participants. Their comments may have come from a discursive position of fatherly care for my well-being. However, the effect their language had for me was that, albeit small, I took up

a position of resistance. I was uncomfortable at their remarks and I chose not to engage with them.

The resistance I take up when faced with these types of comments has shifted. I now have access to a wider range of discursive positions from which to respond. For example, I now dress in clothing that is comfortable for my body and that allows me to continue to maintain professionalism in the workplace. Although I continue to experience discomfort when I am faced with these types of comments, I position myself to appear confident and unperturbed by them. The next experience discusses some of the positions available for men to take up when they interact with a woman who is accompanied by another man.

Vignette Four

It's dark, but she is confident.
She holds her back straight
and her head up as she walks.
Her male friend is close beside her.

A group of men approach.
She becomes aware of her friend's hand beside hers.
She feels his indecision.
She shrugs him off.
She's confident.

A man in the group
probably her age
grins at her:
"Look at those tits!"
She keeps her stride.
She continues
walking past the group.

Out of earshot,
her friend asks,
breathlessly,
"What was I supposed to do then?
I'm so sorry.
Should I have fought them?
What should I have done?"

She discovers that he was thinking…
Do I pretend to be her boyfriend?

She reassures her friend,
this is just a typical night out
for a young woman.

The position I take up during and after this experience demonstrates the complexity of available discourses. The presence of my friend made me more anxious than when I had been alone and sexualised. I did not experience safety in his presence, rather I was afraid that he may make the situation more frightening for me. During this experience I was afraid that if my friend reacted to the group (physically or verbally) that a confrontation may ensue. I would then be in a position where I would have to make a decision between supporting my friend or removing myself and seeking safety. I believed that my presence was creating this ambiguous environment for

everyone and I found these emotions difficult to navigate. Furthermore, a part of me still believes that this experience is as much my friend's story as it is mine. Therefore, this created further uncertainty about whether I should include the storying of this experience. I elected to include this example because my friend was victimised by this event and was an ally rather than complicit in the sexualising practices. If my friend were to read this account, he would not be poorly positioned by it and would not be identifiable to anyone else who might read this study.

Despite the appearance of being in a couple relationship, the group of men disregarded my friend. The apparent lack of concern for my friend demonstrates the multitude of discursive positions available at this time. One of the discursive positions available to be taken up was that men should not comment on another man's partner out of respect for him. The term bro code is often used to highlight men's positioning in relation to another man's girlfriend/partner. Despite the availability of this discourse, in this instance, my friend's feelings were as disregarded as my own. Furthermore, despite his presence, I was sexualised by these men. In particular, my sexuality and sexiness were inappropriately imposed on me by the group (American Psychological Association, 2007).

My friend and I both experienced effects from this subjection. I remember turning to look at my friend to see him appear upset. At this moment I was confused by his reaction. I remember feeling confused because I had never been in a position where I had visibly seen a man be upset by another man's sexualising comments. Therefore, when he asked me if he had responded appropriately, I was unsure how to respond. I took up a position of embarrassment that I had caused him to feel uncomfortable in my presence.

Reflecting back on this moment still causes me embarrassment. At this stage of my life, the embarrassment has a different origin. I am now embarrassed that I did not share how I felt during this sexualising experience and that I did not agree with my friend's protests at the inelegance of the language spoken at me. I would rashly term my behaviour as freezing up. I was unable to comprehend a response, so I froze and continued to move without conscious thought. I draw from Foucault's (1977a) use of the term docile which seeks to demonstrate how a body can become unmoving when

it is subjected to dominant discourses. I provide some leniency towards my actions and docility during this time. I had been subjected to a number of sexualising practices including rape at this point. These prior experiences caused me to position my body and subsequent actions in a way that I perceived would keep me safe from further subjection and harm. A woman's previous experience can play a vital role in dictating her future behaviour. Davies et al. (2002) described young women who often conduct themselves as the right kind of girl. The discursive position of being free is readily available for women to take up. However, taking up this position can create further positions for men to take up that free women are easy or a "slut" (Davies et al., 2002, p. 304).

Although I took up a docile, position, I also took up a position of resistance. After the comments were made by the men, I continued to physically move forward. It was at this moment that I identify a further development to my resistance. I decided against acknowledging any words that had been spoken to me. Before this development occurred, if I had to describe me and my soul within my body, I would say that I inhabited it, but I did not live there. I was a shell of the woman I used to be and was no longer the confident woman I knew before I was raped. Prior to this development, I would be visibly shaken by any encounter that left me sexually victimised by men. At the time, I did not have access to a discursive description. I searched Foucault's work on Discipline and Punish (1977a) to formulate some meaning from my actions. From the search, I decided that people are imprisoned within their own bodies. The soul as argued by Foucault is a normative ideal that trains, invests and shapes the body into materiality (Butler, 2006; Foucault, 1977a). The soul inhibits a person, effectively controlling their existence. I take this to mean that the discourses subscribed to by the men who spoke those comments were so readily available and taken for granted, that they were unwittingly prisoners to their own thoughts. It is difficult to shift this material thinking when it is a part of the power that drives your actions. Thus, the soul is the prison of the body (Butler, 2006; Foucault, 1977a).

Directly after the group had walked passed I took up the patriarchal, masculine discourse "that's just how men are". Based on his response, I perceived that my friend took up a different position. He appeared visibly upset and uncomfortable at what he had witnessed. He also grappled with the appropriate response to make. My friend

appeared to have subscribed to discourses that promote the fair and equitable treatment of women. He was unsure that if he had acted as my boyfriend whether this would have had an impact on the words spoken by the group. At this time I perceived he also took up a position of fear. He was concerned with my safety and his own, and he did not want to provoke the group by responding with a physical act or language.

Power can regulate and maintain bodies (Butler, 2006; Foucault, 1977a). This means that, the power exerted by the men in the group regulated mine and my friends actions because we perceived the physical imbalance to be a danger. Furthermore, the discourses available to be subscribed to can have a powerful effect on the way people conduct themselves. I took up a position of inferiority to the men in the group because of the number of participants in comparison to my friend and I. At the time I estimated that if there was a physical interaction we would have been overpowered purely by numbers. However, some of the men from the group may have had similar responses to the boys portrayed in Vignette Two, who conformed to the discursive positions available and subscribed to by other members of the group. What I mean by this, is that some of the men may have gone along with the sexualising comments out of fear for their own social status. I perceived that the men in the group took up a discursive position that places women as objects of sexual desire. They may also have subscribed to patriarchal, masculine discourses that authorise men to comment on women's bodies.

The resistance I enacted in this vignette is comparable to previous ones I have storied. I remember bracing myself once I had become aware that the group was approaching. Instead of wrapping my arms around my stomach I reacted by continuing to stride past the group. I kept the physical position of my chin high and did not allow my facial expression to position me as a willing participant in the men's actions. The next experience storied into a vignette explores the vulnerable position some women can take up because of a man's sexualised actions.

Vignette Five

At the party,
she was sober;
always sober *(she had learnt that the hard way).*

A man,
a stranger,
stumbles towards her
as she waits in line for the bathroom.
The man's breath is damp,
close to her ear:
"It's my birthday tomorrow –
you owe me
birthday sex".

She backs into a wall.
She looks at him.
A look.
Only a look.

Startled;
he goes.

Will he be back..?

I have learned that I am disinhibited by the effects of alcohol. After a few drinks I am more carefree. I smile more. I engage with men and often display friendliness when approached. Now, when I spend time with friends in unfamiliar situations I am more cautious about my alcohol intake. I learned that the difference in my actions when I am under the influence of alcohol are often correlated with an increase in sexualising behaviour from men. Therefore, after this particular experience I responded from an agentic position, preferring a discursive position of control. I now prefer to exercise full control of my body in any given situation. I no longer enjoy the effects that alcohol has on this ability to exercise control.

At the time of the encounter with the man at the party, the combination of proximity and language this man used had me take up a position of vulnerability in that room full of people. I have come to understand his actions subverted my ability to develop my own agency within the interaction. Subscribing to an agentic position does not afford an individual to do as they like because a person cannot

be agentive on their own (Drewery, 2005). Rather, agency draws upon collaboration between people (Drewery, 2005). Therefore, to be positioned as agentic, an individual would need to create a web of relationships with others who are also engaged in the co-production of the conditions of their lives (Drewery, 2005).

Power relations between people can be affected by their agency (St. Pierre, 2000). The man in this experience made a decision to act in a sexual manner without my consent. There was no discussion between us. No relationship or co-production of agency was entered into. He did not act in a manner that provided me with freedom to be agentic. Therefore, the man exercised power in a way that positioned me as submissive. The position the man took to control the circulation of power between us demonstrates that no person has complete control of a given situation. This means that agentive positioning has limits (Drewery, 2005).

Furthermore, all actions have consequences and can both produce and have affects for relationships (Drewery, 2005). The man in this experience took up a position that he was in control of the situation. To me, the words he used to attempt to persuade me to have sexual relations with him show that he subscribed to discourses of patriarchal misogyny that entitle men to sex with women.

I draw from Drewery (2005) to explore the positions I had available for me to take up and my thought process during this moment. Drewery claimed that the social interactions we are subjected to or participate in can influence the possibilities we have and the way we think about things in momentous and unremarkable ways (Drewery, 2005). This experience had social implications for me. At the time, I perceived I was in a stalemate. Other girls may have found this experience flattering and admirable. However, my position was drawn from a place that I expect a consensual conversation to be entered into before discussions pertaining to any sexual relations occur. I was numb which left me unable to respond to his shocking words “you owe me”. This man was a stranger to me. He may have taken up a position which encouraged him to exert confidence when talking to women. However, his choice of language again draws me to conclude he subscribed to patriarchal discourses about women being obligated to provide men with sex. I

found similar stories within Gavey's (2018) work. She discussed Sarah's experience with a man demanding access to her body:

> Sarah found that when faced with a man who wanted to have sex with her, her embodied response would be to acquiesce irrespective of her own desire for sex. (Gavey, 2018, p. 138)

Sarah later described that her own tendencies to oblige and perform sexually despite her own desires not to, were in her bones (Gavey, 2018). I found myself struggling with the decision to take up these discursive positions which are so readily available for women. Drawing from Butler (2011) my confusion displays that discourses may be lodged within an individual's body.

With an increase in agency, there can also be an increase in power (Davies et al., 2002). The man in this subjection appeared confident. He deliberately closed the option for discussion with his choice of language "you owe me". His words entangled with the position I had taken up to make people happy, but also with my desire not to engage in sexual acts with a stranger. When I took up a position of resistance, I chose to react. I was mindful that my reaction may cause others to look over and position me as aggressive or upset. As discussed from the previous experience, the language aggressive and upset do not position me as having the ideal behaviour of a young woman on a night out. Therefore, similarly to Sarah's story, I chose to react to the man in a way that I believed would have the least harmful social effects. I chose to use my gaze, the best action I could muster was a look, I hoped that it would speak for me. A gaze can exude that the beholder is the overseer against him/herself (Foucault, 1982). Therefore, there was no need for physical violence in this situation. Rather, "Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze" (Foucault, 1982, p. 155). I have come to realise that this look restored the possibility of me re-acting to him. I chose to use my gaze as an act of resistance against the man's intentions.

Although my gaze appeared to have caused a stir for him, I continued to take up a position of vulnerability. He regulated my position through the placement of his body. He remained in close proximity to me, which subverted my ability to react without physically touching him. At this moment I believed he had dominated me. According to Foucault (1982) domination is an act that bends or closes the door on all

possibilities. However, my position has now shifted. I now know that I resisted him. The gaze I used had the effect of deciding to walk away. Perhaps my look startled him and changed the dynamic of our interaction. This moment proved to me that resistance does not have to encompass physical acts nor violence.

Despite him walking away, I was afraid that I would see him again that night. I believe that this fear existed because I was still taking up a position of vulnerability. I was unsure about why I had been approached in the first place. I quickly thought of a number of potential possibilities to try to understand why I may have been singled out. I was physically vulnerable. I was not with my friends, I had gone to the bathroom alone. He may have also perceived this as a vulnerable position for me to be in. Further, due to the loud music, his voice in my ear was not overheard. The music allowed him to exercise power over me by having an excuse to physically lean in toward me without it looking odd to any onlookers. The reason which most frightened me, was because of the environment, a stray hand that moved to touch me would probably have gone unnoticed. At this moment I felt trapped under the power he had available to him.

The next vignette explores further how I perceived I was dominated by a man. Similar to this experience, the man involved placed himself within a physically dominating position. I now understand, that once again I resisted his advances.

Vignette Six

Noise from the party blares through the house,
from upstairs.
Her favourite song comes on.
A banger
as her friends would say.

She bends over the computer to reconnect a power cord.
From behind,
a hand comes under her skirt.
Fingers move and probe.
She moves to resist;
She looks back.
He puts his finger to his lips
and smiles.

She has never met this man.

The other person in the room has her back turned.
She never told her.

This experience is particularly troubling for me to analyse. Up until this moment I felt safe. I had known the majority of people at this party for a number of years. This knowledge supported me to relinquish some of the controls I had placed on my actions previously. I allowed myself to have a few alcoholic beverages because I believed I was in safe company.

The story I have shared in this vignette exemplifies male entitlement and an absence of consent. I did not perceive any attempt from him to negotiate his actions with me before he engaged with them. Despite the myriad of discursive positions that he could have taken up to negotiate consent, none were invoked. I acknowledge a similarity between this experience and the one storied in Vignette Two. Both experiences included unwanted touching from a man. However, this vignette stories the touching of one of my most intimate, private, areas. The experience storied in Vignette Two detailed a hand on the hips, a caress from a young man. In contrast, this story works to story a more violent violation of my body.

At the time of subjection, I perceived that I was dominated by this man. The type of domination exercised over me during this experience can be troubling for young women. In particular, domination can create an immobilisation where the individual exposed to it is frozen and/or blocked (Foucault, 2000). Foucault's description emulates the position I took up at this time. I felt immobile, both physically and from the ability to speak. Again I draw from Foucault (2000) who stated: when an individual successfully creates a state of domination, certain practices of freedom either do not exist, or they are extremely constrained. I took up a position of vulnerability and perceived that I was constrained from making a physical move. The look in his eyes as he gazed down at me caused me to believe there was potential for him to become more violent, if I were to make the wrong move. My belief is drawn from the confidence he demonstrated by so carelessly fondling and probing me. In addition to my vulnerability, I was also aware that there was another woman in the room. I was afraid that if I were to yell out the woman would see me, and a scene may develop. From my perspective, he had created a situation that led me to take up a position of immobilisation.

The way he attempted to control the power circulating between us also caused me to take up a form of resistance. The act of resistance I took up was an innate response. My body reacted before my thoughts could process the situation. My response was visceral. I knew that I had some power available to me to exercise, because Foucault (1982) emphasised, there is no power that can be exercised wholly in the hands of one over another/others. Despite being aware that I had power available for me to exercise, I continued to position my body as immobile. When I moved to resist I looked back at him, and he smiled at me. At the time, I saw the smile as a gesture from him. The discursive positioning I took up was that the smile meant *this is our little secret*. This position I took up was particularly troubling to me, because it reinforced that he believed that I enjoyed our interaction. His response caused me to wonder whether I was meant to be smiling along and joining in with the fun he was having. Another position available to be taken up, is that the man may have been smiling at me because he had gotten away with it.

I continued to take up the position of immobilisation because I was afraid of what may happen if I made my resistance clear to him. Due to the physical position of his

body there was no option for me to exercise physical power without moving my body. The sentence "she moves to resist" still produces adverse effects for me. I find it difficult to describe the thoughts that were troubling me at this time. In order to physically move, I had to position my body in closer proximity to the man. This meant that I had no option other than to back up, so that I could find space to turn around. I found that I was retreating into his personal space in order to retrieve some of my own. When I reflect back on this movement, the three seconds the manoeuvre took could have been an hour. I could feel every part of me that was in physical contact with him. I could hear his heart racing. I could feel his penis pushed up against my back. At this time, I believed he took up the position that I was purposefully and consensually moving my body closer to him. The arrogance and confidence of this man to continue smiling after I had turned my body away from him, has stayed with me for a number of years. His actions surpass that of the previous man in Vignette Five. He did not falter and there was no hint of him retreating.

The actions he displayed suggested to me that he subscribed to patriarchal discourses that promote the domination of women within heterosexual relations. Although a man or a group of men may not produce the discourses that actualised their dominance, they should be held accountable for them (Davies et al., 2002). By drawing from Davies et al. (2002) I acknowledge that this man may not have produced the patriarchal discourse that caused him to attempt to dominate me. However, this does not excuse him from both taking up and acting upon those discourses. Furthermore, men do not always allow their ambivalence to surface (Davies et al., 2002). He may have taken up similar positions to the boys in Vignette Two. His friends could have been eagerly waiting in the next room to hear about his approach. I draw further from Davies et al. (2002) who claim that men who attempt to violently deprive others of their power are agents who drive forward the "blind mole of power" (Davies et al., 2002, p. 308). Therefore, he could have felt an obligation to subject me to this interaction because of his own fear of the potential social implications if he did not perform this act.

Turning around to face him, whilst knowing that this action would result in more physical contact between us took courage from me. I draw from Wade's (1997) suggestion that women who have been victimised by sexual violence should be asked

about what it meant for them to take a small act of resistance against a male perpetrating these acts. My choice to not speak an outright “no” further supported my thinking that resistance to unwanted sexual advances does not have to be spoken in the moment. In this situation, a freeze, a shuffle, a determined gaze were all invoked.

Women resist sexual violence in many ways, however, they are not often provided with a platform to speak (Wade, 1997). Now that I am in a position to speak about these experiences, I understand the strength it took from me to resist this man and the others before him who had participated in sexualising acts towards/against me. A participant in Wade’s (1997) study, Joanne, described feeling “a lot stronger” than she thought she was, when she was able to discuss the acts of resistance she had taken, rather than focusing on the acts of the men who sexualised her (p. 28). I draw from Reynolds (2020) call for people to focus their discussions on sexual violence from the perspective of women’s resistance to it rather than on men’s actions. This alternate position places the woman at the centre of the discussion and affords her the ability to participate in the circulation of power. The man’s actions did have an effect on me. However, storying my response despite him positioning me to feel immobile is also an important narrative to be told.

I now speak to the act of silencing I experienced after the sexualisation. I chose not to share this story with the other woman in the room. The four words: “she never told her” have weighed heavily on my conscience for a number of years. At the time, I was afraid of how I would be perceived by her. I have now come to understand that I was afraid of her discursive positioning. She may have subscribed to discourses that support men’s rights to a woman’s body. She also could have shared my aversion to his actions, but like me, subscribed to discourses that verbally silenced her. Most significantly, I was afraid that speaking the events would cause me to re-live the act that so often occurs when a story is re-visited.

The following storied experience explores the first (and only) time I take up a physical response with aggression to a sexualising act. This experience also includes dialogue from a female witness' perspective on the sexualised act I am subjected to.

Vignette Seven

The woman is dancing.
She's animated, blithe,
care-free.

A man moves towards the woman.
He grabs her hips and
inches his hands downwards.
He pulls the woman closer.
She wrestles him to the ground.
The security guard has his eye on what is happening.
He rolls his eyes as if to say,
okay, but that's enough.

As she makes her way to the bar,
another woman approaches:
"I don't know what that was all about,
but I wish I had a body like yours.
I would kill to have your figure…
being fat shamed
is so much worse
than being admired".

This experience has had a significant impact on my life because I have had many similar encounters in nightclubs. Although I am now older and do not attend nightclubs, the feeling of unease still rears its head when I walk into a bar. My friends have now learnt to follow along with my lead. They wait patiently while my eyes scan the room before I find us an appropriate space to sit.

During the dancing experience with the man, albeit brief, I perceive the man took up the position that he attempted to gain my consent. I took his front-on approach as a courtesy to allow me time to respond to his advances before they occurred. However, I was also aware of the way his eyes lingered over my hips. His frontal approach is the extent to which he sought consent from me. I provided no acknowledgement that his following actions would be in any way encouraged or accepted.

The man did not invite me into a conversation, and I perceived that I was not afforded the opportunity to take up an agentic position. I subscribe to the discursive position that there should be a conversation between a woman and a man that establishes

consent before they enter into sexual relations. I acknowledge that the man in this situation may not subscribe to this position. He could have subscribed to a position that woman will say "no" if a sexual advance is unwanted. Therefore, his ideas could have positioned him to believe his advances were acceptable because I did not use my voice to convey to him that they were not. He may also have subscribed to patriarchal discourses that promote men as entitled to touch and engage in sexual acts with women without their verbal consent.

I took up a position of resistance and used my body and facial expressions to speak for me. Although my intentions of rejection were clear to me from the outset of his approach, I concede this may not have been what he interpreted from my actions. Therefore, in this experience, the difference in the way we communicated our expectations from one another may have inhibited us from forming and developing an equitable interaction. Furthermore, our differences created an experience that I determined to be another subjection to sexualisation.

The difference between this experience and the others I have previously storied in this study, is that I drew a physical line. The experiences I have storied are a fraction of the number of sexualising acts I have been subjected to. Therefore, at the point of this sexualisation there had been one too many instances of men touching me without my consent. Something happened within me and I physically reacted to his advances. As I moved the words "that girl is crazy" bounced around in my head. I believed that for the other men in the bar, I was no longer positioned as a worthy, desirable woman. Instead, I was angry, aggressive, crazy. I was very aware of my surroundings and the people watching my movements, however, this time I simply did not care.

When confronted with an angry woman, some men temporarily lose their dominant, patriarchal position (Davies et al., 2002). When he approached me, and I attempted to use my body to communicate I was not interested, I do not recall seeing a shift in his demeaner. His pace did not falter, and he did not appear to be afraid. My experience aligns with the proposal that regardless of a woman's outburst a man is still supported by the overall effect of being amongst a dominating class (Davies et al., 2002; Deleuze, 1988). The inappropriate actions of the man, may have been overlooked because they aligned with the discursive positioning other men had also

taken up. This could also be yet another example of men conforming with positions their peers have taken up, in order to fit in.

Furthermore, the positions some men take up that promote the sexualisation of women are usually tolerated by good women (Davies et al,. 2002). During this experience, I perceived the most appropriate position for me to take up would have been to either accept his advances with a smile, or to politely decline. However, my past experiences informed me to understand that a polite decline can also be taken as an invitation for a man to *work a bit harder and she'll change her mind*. At this point I realised that men not understanding my refusal of "no" as an absolute impacted on my ability to effectively communicate with them. To me, the touch was unwanted and my physical actions sought to communicate there was no room for ambiguity.

Davies et al. (2002) positioning theory claims that there are multiple positions available to take up within an experience. Therefore, I have also included the narrative from the female onlooker, to provide another available position from the nightclub. Davies et al. (2002) further described misrecognition and admiration as tipping points for women. At the time, the woman's comments were shocking and confusing for me. Now, I can understand her misrecognition of the pleasure in desire. She may have positioned herself to take up discourses which promote that being admired by men is a positive attribute and something that should be aspired to. I draw from Foucault's (1980) discussion on discourses to sculpt a possible line of thinking for the onlooker. He described discourses that position women and men to act in a way that is desired/admired and to accept/encourage when it is happening (Foucault, 1980). Perhaps the position the onlooker took up was one of: "I might have to deal with being grabbed and pulled closer if I am pretty, I am okay with that because having a body that isn't desired is worse than being grabbed".

The guard's response to the man's actions suggest his discursive position was different from the female onlooker and the man perpetrating the act. I perceived that the guard took up a sympathetic position. I arrived at this conclusion because he allowed me to physically handle the man by pushing him onto the ground and then continue on with my night. There were a few positions available for the guard to take up, however, two were distinct for me. One example is the fatherly discourse

entanglement I discussed in Vignette Two. The guard was quite a lot older than me and he may have seen his younger sister/niece/daughter when he looked at me. However, there was also a form of acceptance from the guard to the man perpetrating the acts, because there was no action taken against him. He was also allowed to remain in the bar. The contradiction of the guard's positioning draws attention to the available discourse it is okay as long as it is not my sister/daughter. I have observed multiple examples of men willing to accept and even encourage the sexualising behaviour of other men onto women including pornography, strip clubs, OnlyFans and revenge porn. However, when it is their own sister/mother/daughter/niece involved, their positioning can often change to a violent attrition that, that particular sexualising behaviour is wrong.

I concur with Snowdon's (2021) description that actions can have differing effects on each player within the situation. The man perpetrating, the guard, the woman, and I, either witnessed or were subjected to the same action. However, our responses were vastly different. The discourses that were available for each person and the ones they decided to take up dictated their actions during this sexualising experience. The onlookers added a depth and further complexity to the vignette that may not have been possible to describe or envision without them.

The next vignette stories a very personal and painful experience for me. Before now I have taken a position of silence on it that has burdened me for years.

Vignette Eight

His eyes.
His breath on her cheek.
His hands on the small of her back.
Force, fear and failure overwhelm her.
Rape.
A terrifying word.
She still can't say it aloud.

Although there were words spoken within the act, I chose against including them in this vignette.

I view rape as the ultimate act of domination and injury to a woman's sense of self. I had to muster innate courage to write the word. Rape. Each of the four letters I typed onto this page penetrated my mind. It is still difficult to talk about and the word itself is almost taboo to me. Every time I utter the word I draw in my breath, and my heart picks up speed. Rape is an act that violently strips away one's sense of self. Knowing that I have been raped follows me around. It is a dark shadow that I cannot shake. I used to believe that if I went outside people would be able to tell. That there was some sort of tainted mark on my skin that would let people know.

I have come to understand that the thoughts and beliefs I took up towards my own identity were shaped by dominant discourses available to be subscribed to about sexualisation. Shortly after I was raped, I believed that words such as pure and good were examples of language that could no longer be used to describe me. I draw from Davies et al. (2002) who provided comments made by a woman who had been raped. The woman was confused about how to react after being raped because she had taken up a position of being the right kind of girl. The woman subscribed to discourses that allowed her to conduct herself in a manner that would not portray her as the wrong type of girl (Davies et al., 2002). The term the "right kind of girl" in this context means I wanted men to be attracted to me in an equitable, consensual and mutually pleasurable way. At this time in my life, I took up a position that I had been tainted by this man's actions and that men would not want to engage with me in a mutually pleasurable way again. However, the woman in Davies et. al (2002) study may have taken up the position that the right kind of girl is a further sexual violation. These

words may offer position calls to men that allow them to regulate women's actions in a sexualising, violating way. Therefore, this difference is an example of different discursive relational positions.

The discursive positioning I took up after the rape is shocking to me now. I struggle to understand how, after such a violent breach of my trust, I could still yearn for the acceptance of men. Regardless of the fact that I had been sexualised to the point of rape, I still subscribed to discursive positions about how I was meant to be sexy and desirable for men. I continued to dress, act, walk and wear make-up all in a certain way so that I could be positioned as the right kind of girl. I took up the position that I have claimed other men took up in previous vignettes. I yearned to fit in with other women, and this meant I yearned to be desirable and present my body in a certain way for men to be attracted to me.

I was also afraid that if I did not position myself to be the right kind of girl, I may develop a reputation for being a tease. When I was growing up, a tease was the word no girl wanted to be described as. Boys would label girls a "tease" if they wanted her sexually and she wouldn't 'put out' for them. In terms of available discursive positions in my hometown, being positioned as a tease was more damaging socially than being positioned as easy or a slut. Therefore, I found it difficult to refuse sexual activities once a sexual encounter had commenced. Kitzinger and Frith (1999) discussed that it is very common for people of all ages to experience difficulty with refusing invitations, across a variety of situations. They also discussed the positioning that women can be forced to take up during sexual relations with men. Kitzinger and Frith (1999) included commentary from Liz, who described the torturous battle of refusing sex:

> You've sat there and all through it you've been thinking 'I don't want to do this, I should have said no, I should have stopped him before, and I can't stop him now, because we're half way through the swing of it all, and I'm just so stupid. Next time I'm just going to sort it all out…' […] But you never do.... (p. 296)

Liz' story exemplifies that some discursive positions available for women to refuse sex and the potential social implications she may be subjected to if she does, can create a murky water for sexual assault to thrive in. The man from my experience

with rape was more physically powerful than I was. His physical stature intimated me and I took up a position of vulnerability. I perceived that he was aware of his physical dominance and this knowledge was used to subvert my agentic position. I draw from Davies et al. (2002) to describe him as having an increased agency to me.

When men have an increased agency, there is also an increased opportunity to abuse their power (Davies et al., 2002). Power is available to be exercised everywhere. It reaches into the "very grain" of an individual, touches their body, discourses and everyday lives (Foucault, 1982, p. 39). Although I was overpowered physically, my mental capacity was my own. The power I exercised was different to his. I took up a position to exercise emotional power. This position enabled me to perceive that I was in control of my own mind, which was a place he could not penetrate at this point. My experiences with rape connected with Wade's (1997) commentary from two young women who described their experiences with sexual assault:

> Pam... described mentally floating up behind the ear of a blue elephant whenever her father sexually assaulted her. And on reviewing the ways in which she mentally resisted sexual abuse by her father, another woman remarked, "I knew he could take my body, but he never got me". (p. 30)

Similar to the women in Wade's (1997) analysis, I believe the man who raped me got my body. He used my physical form as he pleased. I was afraid, and I took up positions that caused further detrimental effects. For example, I continued to believe that I was tainted by the rape. However, I now subscribe to alternative discourses. Writing this study has led me to search literature about resistance, this search has enabled me to understand there were different position calls available for me to take up, rather than perceiving my body to be tainted or unworthy of consensual, mutually satisfying sex. I also take up the position that I did resist the man during and after this subjection. Wade (1997) proposed that whenever a person is treated badly, they resist in some form. He stated that across history, when researching power and repression, alongside it there are tales of "creative and determined resistance" (Wade, 1997, p. 23). Although at the time I did not speak an outright "no" in my experiences with rape, I took up a response that displayed my discomfort at the man's subjection.

The next vignette will describe the steps I took to resist the man's actions from regulating mine. Furthermore, I hope to articulate some of the complexities women face when they choose to speak about their experiences with rape.

Vignette Nine

The chair under her legs is scratchy,
like wool.
She shifts uncomfortably.
Her hands are clammy.
The back of her knees are sweaty.
Her eyes blink rapidly.

She is trying to tell someone about being raped:
“I woke up to him on top of me,
I was pinned down.
I couldn't move.
I couldn't speak.
I couldn't breathe.”

Telling someone about being raped
is terrifying.

As I begin to write this analysis I stop and look down at my keyboard. The letters are damp. My fingertips leave a mark where they have touched, just as that room has left a mark on me. Although it has been a while since I have entered, I can see everything in that room down to the fabric of the curtains. This exploitation has taught me that some experiences leave a mark that transcends time and space. I am unable to decide which experience has affected me more; the rape, the speaking of it or the writing about it.

If the identity of the man were to be divulged there may be a number of discursive positions available for women to take up against him. For example they may perceive him to be the wrong kind of man. His actions towards me could be perceived as violating which may not be an ideal attribute for a partner. The choices he elected to make have tainted my perception of him. I view them as heinous and a complete betrayal of my most intimate area.

The person I confided in about my experiences with rape was a man older than me. I have often wondered why I chose to confide in him. I have now come to understand that I was hopeful he would respond in accordance with a fatherly discourse. That he would hear my story and feel the anger and betrayal that I did. At the time of

addressing this issue with him, he actively encouraged me to report the man to the police. During this time, I searched the conviction rate and median prison sentence for men found guilty of rape in New Zealand. During this search I was positioned from a place of concern for the man involved. I was fearful that if I spoke to the police, he would be convicted and sent to prison, and I would have to carry the burden of that decision. However, my search concluded that women's experiences with the Justice system including the conviction rate has had a significant impact on the number of women who report sexual assault in New Zealand. A particularly concerning statistic demonstrated that over the 2018-2019 period an estimated 94 percent of sexual assault incidents were not reported to the police (Ministry of Justice, 2019). I then began reading other women's accounts of reporting assault perpetrated by a man, which shocked me further. I have re-included an anecdote from the literature review to support my statement:

> I thought I was prepared but I wasn't - it was awful - like being raped all over again to tell all those people. - Victim statement (McDonald, 1997 p. 67)

After reading many anecdotes similar to the above, I had discussions with a number of women about their experiences with reporting sexual violence perpetrated by a man. All of the conversations I had casted a shadow on whether or not I should speak about my own experiences. Alongside these discussions, discursive thoughts of being a good girl, giving a man what he wants not wanting to be known as a hold out all swam around in my head. I feel ashamed to admit that one of the most concerning aspects to me in regards to speaking about my experiences was the position calls the people who knew me might offer me. I was afraid to be positioned as "that girl that said x raped her". For a number of years, I hid behind the discursive positions I was afraid people would have taken up if they heard my story.

There has been little written about the "lived impact" on women in regards to the way men have accounted/not accounted for their responsibility for their violent actions against women (Towns & Adams, 2016, p. 497). After a considerable length of time, I began to question why I had chosen to take up a position which silenced me. I arrived at the conclusion that I was concerned about the power available to be exercised by members of the Justice system. Further searching demonstrated to me

that some of the patriarchal, misogynistic, discursive positions available to be taken up can cause inequitable practices to occur within sexual violence cases. I also found that these positions can be deeply entrenched within hierarchal positions. The following quote from Dean et al. (1998) supports this statement:

> Sexual violence is located in hierarchical social and political structures which reinforce discrimination and oppression through laws and education and social systems… further systemic disadvantage is experienced by victims of sexual assault in their interaction with health, legal and other social systems. (p. 49)

Furthermore, the literature review demonstrated that the rights of the accused are often held above the rights of the woman victimised by sexual violence (Foster-Sinclair, 2016, Hammond & Boshier, 2015, Roberts & Zuckerman, 2010). The review further demonstrated that there is a strong desire for the courts to presume innocence and a miscommunication between the two parties, before delivering a guilty verdict (Hammond & Boshier, 2015). Therefore, ambiguity surrounding what constitutes rape, coercion, and consensual sex can cause significant problems for women and for men within the New Zealand Justice system.

The discursive positioning available to members of the public can filter into the courtroom. In particular, the discussion of men's actions in previous vignettes demonstrated to me that they subscribed to patriarchal discourses that promote the domination of women within heterosexual relations. Gavey (2018) further described the difference in available discursive positions and the effects this can have when she posed the question, "what does it say about our culture(s) that there can be so much ambiguity over the differential diagnosis of rape versus sex?" (p. 159)

The stories I read and heard from other women about their experiences with reporting sexual violence contributed to me taking up a position of fear. I was afraid that my story would not be listened to or taken seriously. I also came to understand that discourses are available to be taken up in every situation. Some of the discourses taken up by members of the public, which can filter into the court system are not favourable for women. I began to make further wonderings. One of those wonderings was that "if a woman's lawyer subscribes to a discourse that promotes men are

entitled to sex from women, how would she receive a fair trial or even just representation?"

I continued to search for stories that discussed women's experiences with reporting rape. I found that some discursive positions available to be taken up by officers can produce inequitable power relations between them and the woman reporting. I draw from Foucault (1982) who proposed, certain positions of power permit and can even promote supremacy. If positions of supremacy are taken up by members of the Justice system, further discursive positions regarding being superior and having authority may become available. The effects of taking up a position of authority over women have been discussed in Jordan's (2001) study. Jordan addressed the experience some women had when reporting rape to the New Zealand police. Forty women were interviewed for the study. The quotes shared from the women regarding their experiences with reporting rape shocked me:

> He talked to me like I was dirt… He said he wanted to get the truth out of me.
>
> They asked me so many questions, I felt like the bad person.
>
> They were doing the interview like it was just a burglary… it was mundane to them.
>
> I went seeking help but then it turned and I was accused of false allegations. (Jordan, 2001, p. 687)

Since the time of deliberating on whether I should report my experience with rape, I have taken up a different position. This position was presented by Wade (1997) who stated that even if someone has been subjected to the most extreme acts of violence it is important that their story of resistance is spoken. However, I also take up a position which affirms that despite a woman resisting silencing discourses and positioning herself to speak about her experiences, this does not stop the effects of hierarchical power that may act against her. Ultimately, the reading of quotes and reflecting on my discussions with other women supported me to make the decision not to continue with a police report.

The final vignette examines my experiences with stalking. I explore stalking as an iteration to sexualisation. I discuss the complexities that can be associated with this type of violent attrition on a woman and the effects it may produce for her.

Vignette Ten

A woman is walked home from a bar one night by a man.
He asks her name.

Days and weeks follow:
the man is watching – following her,
at home,
outside,
and online.

The woman lives in a ground-floor apartment.
She is vacuuming her floors.
She turns,
the man is on the footpath,
looking in – through the glass door.

She's in a bar,
and there he is.

On social media,
every post,
he's following.
She blocks his account,
the next day,
he's back.

She stops going out.
She no longer walks or runs at night.
She leaves her groceries in the boot of the car until morning.
She deletes her social media accounts.

In trying to stay away from him,
she becomes more
and
more
alone.

The man in this vignette knew my name. He knew where I lived, where I worked, and who my friends were. Thinking back on this time, I can remember how my heart used to accelerate when I saw him outside my window. I remember that each time I saw him peering in at me, he was smiling. When I reflect on the other experiences, this man's smile reminds me of the man I described in Vignette Six. I perceived at the time that he thought he had gotten away with his behaviour. However, being

involved in this experience produced further adverse effects for me than those storied in Vignette Six, because he got away with his behaviour, time and time again.

I take up a position that stalking is a further iteration to sexualisation. In reference to the definition of sexualisation I provided in Chapter One, the man made me believe that my desirability was being inappropriately imposed on me. He saw me and attempted to engage in sexual relations. When I refused, he then took steps to continue his sexualising behaviours by attempting to impose himself as a permanent fixture in my life. He followed me on many different forms of social media. When I blocked his accounts, he would appear within a day with another profile, which he used as an attempt to contact me. Similar to Vignette Seven, I got to a point where I had had enough of the man's behaviour. This time, I perceived that acting in a physical manner would not deter him. Instead, I deleted all forms of social media so that he could not watch me online. He responded to my actions by sitting outside my house to watch me in the physical world. At this point I took up a position of vulnerability and fear. I was afraid of my own lounge because he could look through the window as he pleased. I lived on a main road, across from a park. His sitting in the park could have been perceived innocently from a bystander. To me, it created a level of fear and isolation I have never felt since. This isolation conflicted with my efforts to deter him and his advances. The more I withdrew, the easier I became to target. I was living in a paradox where the steps I took to resist his advances caused me to become more alone. This mistaken reversal shut me off from physical and online worlds.

I resonate with a story shared by Davies et al. (2006). The story speaks of a young girl on a train with her family. During the journey she loses her precious book, and her father stops her from retrieving it due to the dangerous environment. In this scenario, the girl transforms from a confident child into a vulnerable girl and she no longer enjoys the adventure (Davies et al., 2006). I draw parallels between me and this girl during my experience with stalking. I was excited to be living with my friends, I was carefree and enjoying the adventure. However, when I encountered this man, the metaphorical train, he transformed me back into a vulnerable girl by the mere perception of his danger. As a consequence, I no longer enjoyed the adventure.

During the period of stalking I took up a position of blame. I often thought if I had not allowed him to walk me home, he would not have known where I lived. If he was unaware of where I lived, the transformation I took back into a vulnerable girl may not have occurred. Towns and Adams (2016) discussed the struggle many women who have been victimised by men have when they attempt to shift the position they take up from personal blame. Often, the men within their analysis obfuscated moral responsibility, which then falls onto the unsuspecting woman (Towns & Adams, 2016). This means that some of the discursive positions available to be taken up provide a position for men to live within the constraints of women's moral dispositions. I took responsibility for his actions as I perceived I was at fault. No one had taken blame, so I perceived it was mine to carry. This discourse I took up may be part of a historical discursive position that women, should clean up after men and any children they may care for.

An earlier study conducted by Towns and Adams (2009) explored the positions available for women to take up in situations involving domestic violence. Socio-cultural constructions of gendered discourses can be critical to understanding a woman's view of her own responsibility during instances involving domestic violence. An example was provided which discussed that a woman may perceive herself to be the initiator of violence between her and a man because she did not have dinner ready on time. I draw from Towns and Adams because at this time I felt responsible for the man's actions towards me. Furthermore, the assumption of blame can effect a woman's ability to speak out against acts of violence (Towns & Adams, 2016). I now understand the positions of fear and vulnerability I took up during this period of stalking were inextricably linked to the thoughts I had during the decision to report against rape.

This man attempted to dominate the power which circulated between us. I was not in any physical danger so from a legal perspective I perceived that I had nothing to report, as he hadn't done anything to me. The type of power inequity he attempted to create between us was described by Foucault (1982) as more complicated and pervasive than a set of laws. I continue to take up the position that his actions were morally wrong. My position was drawn from the available discourse that people should not impose their unwanted company on others. However, in terms of available

legal discourses, he was not committing any crime. He was simply sitting in a park enjoying the view. Gavey (2018) spoke to the effects of women being subjected to inequitable relations of power over time. She discussed coercive practices can produce women who have been victimised by violence in less obviously horrific ways by slowly "eroding her agency over time" (Gavey, 2018, p. 165). Being involved in this subjection slowly eroded my agency. If I refer back to the story of the girl on the train, I was no longer enjoying the adventure of living alone. The position of resistance I took up did not thwart his advances. I continued to see him outside my house until I moved to another city. Since this time I have continued to take up a position of fear and vulnerability because I continue to perceive that I have no control over when or if I may see him again.

Stalking is a further iteration to sexualisation. It can have paralysing effects on women which cause them to withdraw from themselves and the socio-cultural contexts they live in. By attempting to avoid this man's advances, I inadvertently took up a more vulnerable position. I no longer enjoyed where I lived and continue to take up positions of fear and vulnerability when I think of him.

The following and final chapter of this study is entitled 'A final word'. I draw together the threads I have weaved throughout to summarise the discursive positions available for people to take up that produce effects of sexualisation for women and the many acts of resistance available for women to act on.

Chapter Six: A final word

I set out on this study to discuss sexualisation because I had reached a point in my life when I was beginning to be significantly affected by the experiences I had been subjected to. One of the most troubling effects for me was that I developed an unhealthy relationship with my body. Over time the sexualising experiences changed the way I presented my body. I started to wear clothes that were less figure hugging and stopped wearing make-up. I put little effort into the way I looked, removed myself from social media and limited the time I spent out with friends. Although I took these significant steps to eliminate my body as a target for sexualising practices, I continued to be subjected to them. I found that I was carrying these effects around with me, and I was dissatisfied with my response. This growing dissatisfaction continued and with it silence about the occurrence of these sexualising experiences and their effects. I quietly carried them with me through my life but continued to be disturbed by them.

Eventually, I arrived at the point where taking up a position of silence was no longer acceptable to me. My first steps were hampered by finding ways to speak and write about my experiences that didn't identify others, particularly the men and significant others who had perpetrated the sexualising practices. From the outset of this study my intentions were not to expose or blame these men but to examine sexualisation, including rape. I was interested in the discursive operations and the effects for those who are subjected. In particular I wanted to investigate examples from my life, by way of vignettes, to show these workings and effects. Selecting to use vignettes as a methodology, made it possible to speak and write about sexualisation and its effects at the same time as protecting the identities of others who are inextricably implicated in the violation that sexualisation can produce.

During this work, I came to understand there was power being exercised by men that had encouraged me to take up a position of silence. The discursive positions available to be taken up had regulated the way I interacted with my own body and with men. The vignettes storied examples of situations where I encountered non-consensual sexualising experiences that produced discomfort, fear and silencing. The theoretical and philosophical positions on power, gender, discourse, positioning, resistance,

repression and consent formed the foundations for the study. They each wove through the vignettes I crafted and featured in the discursive analysis that addressed the research questions.

Undertaking this study was an act of Justice-Doing and resistance and an example of how sexualisation can be discussed and examined. To arrive at this place I read a proposal from Reynolds and Hammoud-Beckett (2017) which encouraged people to acknowledge what aspects of their life they may take up resistance towards:

> What positions are we not taking or are being silent about? What promotes this silence: …discomfort… not knowing what to say and how to say it, concern for career or advancement? Or is silence promoted by histories of being unsupported, victims of backlash, lack of allies, precarious employment, lack of safety as opposed to discomfort, lack of privilege, power, and solidarity? (p. 5)

I came to understand that my responses to the men who subjected me to sexualising practices were acts of resistance. I resonated with Reynolds (2020) proposal which claimed an individual's response to abuses of power were better understood when they were classified as acts of resistance. The vignettes showed a number of different types of resistance. Some were non-verbal, deliberate, physical movements, others were verbal with deliberate, physical movements. Thus, I began to view my responses from a position of strength rather than vulnerability.

This study has contributed to my life and understanding of the importance of participating in conversations that establish mutual consent before engaging in sexual relations. It also highlighted the need for consent to be re-negotiated at any time. Conversations that establish and re-negotiate mutual consent can make a significant contribution to equitable power relations and satisfying sexual relationships. I hope the importance of engaging in conversations about consent are highlighted.

The vignettes and analysis may resonate for other women and men because relationship discourses that condone sexualisation are widely and readily available to many people. Sadly sexualisation still occurs and the effects continue to be experienced by women. I hope that the need for more attention to be given to conversations about resistance is also evident and that these practices might be

engaged with more in therapeutic and other relevant contexts. More attention to practices of resistance may save women from the ongoing burden of limiting stories of powerlessness, shame and complicit submission in relation to their experiences. I draw from Foucault (1980) to summarise how this hope might be realised, "we should listen to these people… what is it that sustains them, what gives them their energy, what is the force at work in their resistance, what makes them stand and fight?" (Foucault, 1980, p. 136)

This study has provided me with a means to "stand and fight" against discursive positions on sexualisation that can cause inequities for women. Further studies might focus on consent to extend the literature on how people go about negotiating consent and what this makes possible for them. Further studies might also focus on acts of resistance that might not get noticed or storied so that these acts can be acknowledged, appreciated and woven into the stories of women's lives.

The river is everywhere at once - at its source, at its mouth, by the waterfall, by the ferry crossing, in the rapids, in the sea, in the mountains, everywhere at the same time. And that for it there is only the present not the shadow called the future… When I learned that, I looked at my life, and it too was a river; and the boy Siddartha and the old man Siddartha were only separated by shadows, not by anything real… Nothing was, nothing will be; everything is everything has its being and is present. (Hesse, 2008, p. 106)

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Appendix A

Vignette One:

She sits on the grass in a bikini,
eating a classic kiwi lunch.
Sausage-and-bread.

From behind her,
a man's hand
falls onto her right shoulder.
She turns to look up.
The sun is in her eyes.

He laughingly says:
"If you keep eating like that
you might have to wear
a one piece".

Vignette Two:

The sand is rushing between her toes
she sprints towards the water.
She stops for a moment as she reaches
the cold, hard, sand.

Peace…
Her eyes were closed,
the sun falls across her face.

She hears him approach before he touches her.
One hand roughly clutches at her back,
the other caresses her hips…
He has untied her bikini.

She turns to see a group of teenage boys –
both shocked and impressed
with what they are witnessing.

Vignette Three:

She is walking alone.
A sunny day.
She passes a building site on a suburban street.

She hears a man's voice:
"Look at the way her arse moves
when she walks".

He continues his commentary:
"Hmm I think you should put on a little bit of weight.
Just on your thighs".

Another, much older man joins in:
"I don't think you should wear those pants around all these other males,
a young
attractive
girl
like you".

Vignette Four:

It's dark, but she is confident.
She holds her back straight
and her head up as she walks.
Her male friend is close beside her.

A group of men approach.
She becomes aware of her friend's hand beside hers.
She feels his indecision.
She shrugs him off.
She's confident.

A man in the group
probably her age
grins at her:
"Look at those tits!"
She keeps her stride.
She continues
walking past the group.

Out of earshot,
her friend asks,
breathlessly,
"What was I supposed to do then?
I'm so sorry.
Should I have fought them?
What should I have done?"

She discovers that he was thinking…
Do I pretend to be her boyfriend?

She reassures her friend,
this is just a typical night out
for a young woman.

Vignette Five:

At the party,
she was sober;
always sober *(she had learnt that the hard way).*

A man,
a stranger,
stumbles towards her
as she waits in line for the bathroom.
The man's breath is damp,
close to her ear:
"It's my birthday tomorrow –
you owe me
birthday sex".

She backs into a wall.
She looks at him.
A look.
Only a look.

Startled;
he goes.

Will he be back..?

Vignette Six:

Noise from the party blares through the house,
from upstairs.
Her favourite song comes on.
A banger
as her friends would say.

She bends over the computer to reconnect a power cord.
From behind,
a hand comes under her skirt.
Fingers move and probe.
She moves to resist;
She looks back.
He puts his finger to his lips
and smiles.

She has never met this man.

The other person in the room has her back turned.
She never told her.

Vignette Seven:

The woman is dancing.
She's animated, blithe,
care-free.

A man moves towards the woman.
He grabs her hips and
inches his hands downwards.
He pulls the woman closer.
She wrestles him to the ground.
The security guard has his eye on what is happening.
He rolls his eyes as if to say,
okay, but that's enough.

As she makes her way to the bar,
another woman approaches:
"I don't know what that was all about,
but I wish I had a body like yours.
I would kill to have your figure…
being fat shamed
is so much worse
than being admired".

Vignette Eight:

His eyes.
His breath on her cheek.
His hands on the small of her back.
Force, fear and failure overwhelm her.
Rape.
A terrifying word.
She still can’t say it aloud.

Vignette Nine:

The chair under her legs is scratchy,
like wool.
She shifts uncomfortably.
Her hands are clammy.
The back of her knees are sweaty.
Her eyes blink rapidly.

She is trying to tell someone about being raped:
“I woke up to him on top of me,
I was pinned down.
I couldn't move.
I couldn't speak.
I couldn't breathe”.

Telling someone about being raped
is terrifying.

Vignette Ten:

A woman is walked home from a bar one night by a man.
He asks her name.

Days and weeks follow:
the man is watching – following her,
at home,
outside
online.

The woman lives alone in a ground-floor apartment.
She is vacuuming her floors.
She turns,
the man is on the footpath,
looking in – through the glass door.

She's in a bar,
and there he is.

On social media,
every post,
he's following.
She blocks his account,
the next day he's back.

She stops going out.
She no longer walks or runs at night.
She leaves her groceries in the boot of the car until morning.
She deletes her social media accounts.

In trying to stay away from him,
she becomes more
and
more
alone.