Abstract

Sexual violence is ubiquitous throughout the Anglophone West and shows no sign of abating. Feminist analysis has long demonstrated that this is a problem grounded in gender relations, patterns of masculine socialisation, and patriarchal social organisation. However, this thesis proposes that the roots of the Anglophone West’s rape culture also extend far beyond matters of gender and sexuality, deep into the core of the dominant culture itself. Setting feminist theory in dialogue with wider socio-cultural analysis, the research explores the complex relationships between the prevailing ideologies, ethics, systems, structures and practices of the dominant culture and the Anglophone West’s high incidence of sexual violence. In so doing, it reveals that, contrary to popular misconceptions, rape is neither a ‘natural’ nor a ‘savage’ act but a highly ‘civilised’ one which expresses the foundational philosophies of Anglophone Western culture in a sexualised, gendered form. Specifically, it shows that sexual objectification, which presents women as little more than ‘rapable bodies’, is part of a far wider pattern of normalised objectification developing from the Anglophone West’s underlying belief that some lives are worth less than others and so may be legitimately used and ‘consumed’ for personal gain. Expanding this to include analysis of men who commit sexual violence, it also establishes that perpetrators’ ‘rapist mentalities’, or the modes of thought and relation that enable and motivate rapists to commit rape, function as interpersonal, gendered expressions of the Anglophone West’s celebration of and reliance upon exploitation, conquest and coercive rule. Through these arguments, the thesis ultimately demonstrates that rape is not only an act of gender violence but also an inevitable manifestation of the dominant culture of the Anglophone West at large which can be fully addressed and challenged only by expanding analytical frameworks to include broad socio-cultural critiques and diverse social justice activism. In taking this position, the thesis expands understanding of rape beyond the limits of existing research and raises significant issues for both future scholarship and the ongoing struggle against sexual violence.
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Introduction

On December 16th 2012, an unnamed woman was beaten and gang raped by six men whilst travelling on a bus in Munirka district of New Delhi; despite emergency treatment, her injuries—which included the rapists ripping out her intestines—were so severe that she died in hospital thirteen days later.¹ Media response was swift and extensive, with numerous articles and reports from around the world expressing outrage, shock and disgust at the attack. In the Anglophone West, much of this coverage treated the issue as a specifically Indian problem, laying the blame on the country’s ‘deeply entrenched patriarchy and widespread misogyny’ and its men’s ‘murderous, hyena-like male contempt’ for women.² Recalling the colonial treatment of sati or self-immolation in the nineteenth century, sexual violence in India was presented as a symptom of India’s supposedly primitive barbarism with journalists deploring the country’s ‘medieval attitudes towards women’ and speculating whether ‘gang-rape shame could drag India into 21st century’.³ Alongside this narrative, however, there emerged another which challenged the implied image of the West as a paragon of gender equality and ‘progressive’ attitudes to violence and abuse. This narrative argued that,

³ Priya Virmani, ‘Will the protests against the Delhi gang rape reach rural India?’ (31/12/2013) <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2012/12/will-protests-against-delhi-gang-rape-reach-rural-india> [accessed 1 September 2013]; Purves, ‘Gang-rape shames'
whilst there is indeed a serious problem with patriarchal violence against women in India, it is by no means an isolated issue unique to the country and its ‘primitive’ attitudes. Drawing on numerous counter-examples, journalists and theorists reported a stark reality that many commentators on the Munirka gang rape were reluctant to confront, namely that rape, as Emer O’Toole argues, is not ‘something that only happens “over there” – something we civilised folk in the west have somehow put behind us.’\(^4\) As O’Toole highlights, the supposedly ‘progressive’, ‘advanced’ make-up of Western culture has not produced countries free of sexual violence; on the contrary, Anglophone Western countries have some of the highest incidence rates for rape and some of worst records for dealing with the issue.\(^5\) Importantly, this point can be developed further to suggest that it is, in fact, this ‘progressive’ and ‘advanced’ make-up—or more specifically, the underlying systems, structures and philosophies that enable such ‘progress’ and ‘advances’—that underpin the Anglophone West’s rape problem, and it is precisely this that the thesis will argue.

This thesis will analyse the relationship between the foundational ideologies of the Anglophone West and its high incidence of rape, suggesting that the dominant culture of the Anglophone West is deeply, perhaps even inherently, supportive of sexual violence. It has been argued that the ‘civilised’ West is the most destructive culture there has ever been, a society, as Stanley Diamond notes, founded on ‘conquest abroad and repression at home’, which has been steadily gaining cultural hegemony across the globe through warfare, colonialism and the insidious spread of its culture, ideologies and politics.\(^6\) It has been accused of being a culture driven by an insatiable need to dominate the world and everything on it, a culture that has destroyed

\(^4\) Emer O’Toole, ‘Delhi gang-rape: look westward in disgust’ (1/1/2013) <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jan/01/delhi-rape-damini> [accessed 1 September 2013]

\(^5\) The scale of the Anglophone West’s rape problem will be discussed further into this introduction.

numerous indigenous cultures and peoples, routinely enslaved, exploited, abused and killed those it considers Other or inferior, and been instrumental in bringing about the extinction of countless species and the overall degradation of the planet.\(^7\) From amongst the list of abuses one might select the oppression of women, and from the many forms this oppression takes, one might further select the sexual violence that is routinely and relentlessly directed at women throughout the world by Western men.\(^8\) It is the position of this thesis that this is precisely how rape should be understood: as one facet of the oppression of women, which itself should be understood as one aspect of a great network of interwoven and intersecting abuses that characterises the dominant culture of the Anglophone West.

Importantly, the above is not intended to suggest that rape should not be studied as an important issue in its own right, but rather to argue that dissociating it entirely from the wider network of abuses is to overlook how deeply ingrained in Anglophone Western culture it truly is. Rape is frequently presented as something external to ‘civilisation’, as an aspect of man’s ‘animal nature’ or as a practice that developed in an ancient and violent past, the legacy of which still blights the civilised West to this day.\(^9\) This thesis will suggest that this position is deeply misguided, and that rape in contemporary Anglophone Western society is not an echo of primitive savagery that civilisation struggles to contain and eliminate but something that it has frequently legitimised for use in conquering and enslaving other peoples, and


\(^8\) Unless stated otherwise, throughout this work, ‘rape’ refers exclusively to sexual violence, or coerced sex, imposed on women by men. Whilst the thesis acknowledges that rape survivors include men and women, as well as intersexed and trans* people (of all ages, classes and races), it is not within the scope of the project to discuss all forms of rape.

normalised as an inevitable aspect of life in the Anglophone West. Of the many approaches adopted in the study of sexual violence, the ‘rape culture’ paradigm was the first to incorporate this form of analysis. As Robin E. Field notes, rape culture theorists understand rape to be a learned behaviour that is tolerated and even encouraged by the culture at large, and which will continue as long as women’s subordination continues. This understanding made an important contribution to the study of sexual violence, locating the focus of analysis less on individual rapists (as had been the case in most previous approaches) and more on the nature of the society that produces them and, the paradigm suggests, encourages them to rape. However, whilst I concur entirely with this shift in focus, this thesis will suggest that the perspective from which rape culture theorists approach the issue is too narrow and that the almost exclusive focus on patriarchy, misogyny and often simplistic understandings of male socialisation mean that the full extent of the Anglophone West’s rape culture, and the ways in which it is maintained, are not fully explored. Whilst the mechanisms of patriarchy are, indeed, vital considerations in the struggle to end rape, the thesis will assert that the roots of the Anglophone West’s rape culture extend past patriarchy and into the very foundations of the dominant culture itself. In line with this, it will argue that to challenge the Anglophone West’s rape culture requires challenging the underlying abusiveness and destructiveness of the dominant culture. To begin to address this point, it is crucial that we clarify both the precise field of enquiry and the scale of the issue being discussed, and it is to this the discussion will now turn.


12 Emilie Buchwald, Pamela Fletcher and Martha Roth, ‘Editors’ Preface’, in *Transforming a Rape Culture*, ed. by Emilie Buchwald, Pamela Fletcher and Martha Roth (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 1993), pp. 1–4 (pp. 1–4).
The Scale of Enquiry: The ‘Anglophone West’ and Sexual Violence

This thesis is primarily concerned with, and draws the vast majority of its examples from, the contemporary cultures of the UK and US (supplemented occasionally by references to other predominantly English-speaking countries such as Canada, Australia and Ireland). I refer to these countries throughout as the ‘Anglophone West’ and treat them as relatively unified in their cultural attitudes, at least as far as sexual violence is concerned, as I will discuss presently. However, in certain contexts, I also expand the field of analysis in order to consider ‘the West’ or ‘Western culture’ in a wider sense. Thomas H. Greer and Gavin Lewis observe that it is ‘standard usage [...] to speak of the common values and interests of North America and western Europe as those of [...] “the West”’, and note more broadly that these countries share significant common roots and traditions. It is in this sense that I treat ‘the West’ and ‘Western culture’ in this thesis. That is to say, the thesis asserts that the cultures of Western Europe and North America (and, I suggest, also Australia) hold sufficient commonalities in terms of their cultural foundations that it is possible, in specific contexts, to discuss them collectively as ‘the West’. Indeed, several of the key texts I employ in my treatment of the wider themes of my work do precisely this, treating these countries as comprising a single unified culture described with terms such as ‘Western civilization’ or ‘European culture’. Where my analysis addresses the broad themes with which these texts are concerned—for example, philosophical traditions or deep-seated socio-political systems—I follow the lead of such theorists and structure my analysis in terms of ‘the West’ or ‘Western culture’. Similarly, where it is pertinent to the discussion, I also move away from my focus on the contemporary Anglophone West to consider historical examples and the roots of significant Western traditions. This is not to suggest that the West or the Anglophone West are monolithic cultures that have remained static,

14 For example, see: Jensen, Endgame volume 1; Marimba Ani, Yurugu: An Afrikan-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior (Washington DC: Nkonimfo Publications, 2007). Ani uses ‘European culture’ to refer not only to the cultures of mainland Europe but also those derived directly from European colonisation, such the non-indigenous, dominant culture of the US.
15 As Greer and Lewis observe, this too is an established approach to understanding the contemporary West (for discussion, see: Greer and Lewis, A Brief History of the Western World, p. xxiv).
stable and unchanged throughout history. Rather, this approach highlights the fact that, as Greer and Lewis note, many cultural elements of earlier ‘Western’ civilisations are widely accepted as having ‘continued without interruption into the civilization of the modern West’. Exploring these connections between earlier Western cultures and the contemporary culture of the Anglophone West allows us to analyse both the ways in which some aspects of contemporary culture come to be seen as ‘natural’ or unquestionable, and how contemporary Western societies’ self-identification as the progenies of the ‘great’ early civilisations influences their sense of culture superiority. Both of these points allow a greater understanding of contemporary ideologies, attitudes and practices which, in turn, allows us a greater understanding of how sexual violence operates in the contemporary Anglophone West.

However, whilst the approaches outlined above are both appropriate and effective in the treatment of ‘deep’ cultural themes, they are too broad and generalised for my treatment of sexual violence. Accordingly, when discussing rape culture or other more detailed specifics such as patterns of gender socialisation or trends in media coverage, my analysis is solely concerned with the contemporary Anglophone West, and my conclusions, like my examples, should be taken as applying only to this specific context. Of course, there remain differences between the cultures of the UK and US (as well as those of other Anglophone countries); moreover, neither the Anglophone West nor its constituent countries are composed of singular coherent, monolithic cultures but rather are populated by multiple interconnected subcultures and diverse, heterogeneous discourses, all interacting and negotiating every aspect of cultural life. However, this thesis is primarily concerned with the dominant cultures of these Anglophone countries. The *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* (1994), states that in

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16 Greer and Lewis, *A Brief History of the Western World*, p. xxiv. For further discussion, see: p. xxviii.
17 It is possible that some of the analysis is applicable to the wider contexts of ‘the West’ or points in Western history, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore these potential commonalities.
a conglomeration of different, often competing culture and subcultures [...] a dominant culture is one whose values, language, and ways of behaving are imposed on a subordinate culture or cultures through economic or political power. This may be achieved through legal or political suppression of other sets of values and patterns of behaviour, or by monopolizing the media of communication.\textsuperscript{18}

That is to say, a dominant culture comprises the prevailing ideologies, ethical systems, behavioural codes and discourses within a network of other cultures which it pressures to assimilate or acculturate into the dominant culture with the aim of achieving cultural hegemony. Whilst this thesis recognises the existence of multiple cultures within the Anglophone West, it is primarily concerned with the dominant cultures of the UK and US and, as noted above, draws its examples from these cultures. Similarly, whilst my analysis does recognise that the dominant cultures of these countries are by no means identical, it also proposes that there are sufficient correlations between them that it is possible to discuss them collectively as the dominant culture of the Anglophone West.

On a basic level, the dominant cultures are connected by the fact that the UK and US are both neoliberal democracies characterised by relative affluence, political stability, global influence, late capitalist economic organisation and advanced levels of industrialisation, all of which, as will be discussed at several points throughout the thesis, greatly influence prevailing ideologies, ethical codes and prescribed patterns of behaviour. Likewise, both countries are hierarchically organised and share similar patterns of social stratification along lines of gender, race, class and sexuality, with the highest echelons of politics, business and media largely dominated by rich, white, heterosexual men.\textsuperscript{19} The dominant cultures also share what is often referred to as the ‘special relationship’: a close political and economic partnership based on shared values, aims and interests, which both attests to and furthers the socio-cultural connections between the two.\textsuperscript{20} Likewise, there is significant

\textsuperscript{20} For discussion, see: Frances G. Burwell, ‘Building a US–UK “Special Relationship” for the Future’ (28/9/2009)
cultural exchange between the two dominant cultures—especially in terms of entertainment media—which also works to strengthen the connections and increase the similarities between the dominant cultures. The above examples all represent areas of interconnection and correlation between the dominant cultures of the UK and US, and support and substantiate my methodological approach of treating them collectively as the dominant culture of the Anglophone West. The thesis will argue that understanding this dominant culture is central to understanding—and so, to challenging—sexual violence in the Anglophone West. However, before I outline the methodology and structure of this argument, it is necessary to establish the scale of rape incidence in the Anglophone West.

Amongst the most persistent delusions about sexual violence in the Anglophone West is the belief that it is a rare and aberrant act, entirely at odds with the prevailing ideologies of the dominant culture. Although coverage is steadily improving, Anglophone Western media still routinely reproduces and disseminates this erroneous understanding of sexual violence. At the most basic level this is reflected in the fact that, relative to the number of rapes that are actually committed in the Anglophone West, sexual violence is seldom reported, giving the impression that it is a rare occurrence. Moreover, when rape is reported, the coverage almost exclusively focuses on individual cases (and, even then, only on cases deemed newsworthy by either their ‘extreme’ nature or the celebrity status of the rapist) and rarely on the extent of the Anglophone West’s rape problem as a whole. Indeed, whilst statistics are regularly employed in the mainstream media’s analysis of large-scale atrocities taking place in non-Western conflict-zones, such data is frequently absent from reports on rape in the Anglophone West. Indeed, as Helen Benedict notes, ‘that news must be the unusual, never the usual, virtually guarantees that the press will ignore typical rapes or assaults (the rape of a young, single, poor woman by someone of her own race, whom she knows) in favour of the bizarre,
sensational, or gory'. This trend in reporting gives the illusion, reflected in the earlier discussion of the Munirka gang-rape case, that rape is only widespread in far away, socially unstable locations: in war-zones and ‘developing nations’, in lands not yet fully indoctrinated into Western-style high-civilisation. Furthermore, the focus on ‘extreme’ or ‘unusual’ cases of rape inaccurately suggests that, in the Anglophone West, rape is primarily committed by a small number of outcasts and violent sociopaths. Indeed, the image of the violent, psychologically-disturbed rapist is a central illusion of the popular understanding of rape in the Anglophone West. As Julie A. Allison and Lawrence S. Wrightsman note, ‘there does seem to be a prototypical conceptualisation of rape in the mind of all of us—that of the madman with a weapon waiting for his victim to arrive’. This rapist-as-pariah stereotype is an extremely pervasive rape myth, and one that is essential to the belief that the Anglophone West does not face a significant rape problem. In reality, however, statistics pertaining to rape in both the UK and US absolutely undermine assumptions that it is an act only committed by a small number of insane outsiders, or that the Anglophone West is greatly advanced in the prevention of sexual violence against women.

The British Home Office states that in England and Wales alone 43,579 cases of ‘most serious sexual crime’ were recorded by the police in the 2009/10 financial year. Whilst this figure, by itself, is extremely high, when

23 This is by no means intended to suggest that cases of rape occurring in ‘developing nations’ are of less importance than those occurring in the West. The ongoing atrocities (including but not limited to wide-scale sexual abuse) found in the world’s conflict-zones deserve and require vastly more coverage, attention and, much more importantly, action than the still minimal amount that they currently receive.
one considers the fact that the majority of cases of rape are not known to the police, the actual incidence of rape potentially rises considerably higher. A separate Home Office bulletin estimates that eighty-seven percent of rapes occurring in the 2006/7 financial year were unknown to the police. If one were to assume this percentage to be accurate and that there has not been an unprecedented change in the proportion of rapes recorded by the police, then the actual number of rapes occurring in England and Wales in the 2009/10 financial year is likely to be closer to 335,000 than to the 43,579 suggested above. Moreover, it is not only cases of rape that are not reported to the police that statistics fail to represent. As Allison and Wrightsman observe, ‘some rapes aren’t even labelled as such by the victims’. In cases where the rape survivor does not recognise an experience as ‘rape’ per se, the survivor will obviously not report it as such, even on an anonymous survey (let alone officially to the police), and so these cases are not accounted for in any statistics. Moreover, such cases are likely to be extremely common. As Lisa Jervis observes:

Survivors of any attack that doesn’t fit the most extreme stranger-in-the-bushes-with-a-knife paradigm are very often reluctant to name their experiences as rape. When culture teaches you that lack of consent is measured only in active, physical resistance, when your actions are questioned if your date refuses to respect your “no,” you’re going to have a hard time calling rape by its real name.

There are numerous scenarios in which underlying cultural prejudices and assumptions prevent rape survivors from identifying their own experiences as cases of rape. These so-called ‘grey areas’ of rape include, but are not limited to, situations in which subtler forms of coercion are employed, rapes

27 Whilst this analysis is based on several assumptions, absolute accuracy is, of course, impossible in these matters.
29 Lisa Jervis, ‘An Old Enemy in a New Outfit: How Date Rape Became Gray Rape and Why It Matters’, in Yes Means Yes!: Visions of Female Sexual Power and a World Without Rape, ed. by Jaclyn Friedman and Jessica Valenti (California: Seal Press, 2008), p. 165. Jervis’ quote also illustrates how the myth that rape is a rare occurrence committed by insane outsiders self-perpetuates and self-supports. Due to the pervasive influence of the myth, many rape survivors do not recognise their experiences as cases of rape and so do not report them as such; this in turn lowers both the overall number of reported rape cases and, specifically, the number of cases that do not match the rapist-as-pariah stereotype, supporting the myth that such stereotypical figures are, in fact, the key perpetrators of rape.
committed by husbands, sexual partners or dates (commonly in cases where the survivor believes either that she does not have the right to refuse sexual activity or that non-violent coerced sex does not constitute rape) and cases where the survivor can be considered incapable of fully providing consent (through intoxication, incapacity or similar).\textsuperscript{30} Whilst it is documented that scenarios such as these do occur (as in the sources referenced above), there is no way of accurately documenting the frequency of such assaults. However, it is a logical deduction that, were there a way of including them in statistics, even the already significant figure of 335,000 incidents of rape would increase considerably.

Similarly high incidence rates are also found in the United States: a Bureau of Justice statistical bulletin states the number of cases of serious sexual assault in 2009 to be 125,910.\textsuperscript{31} However, as with the Home Office reports cited above, this figure refers only to cases of rape recorded by the police and actual occurrences of rape are almost certainly considerably higher. Indeed, a federally-funded report for the U.S. Department of Justice estimates that only sixteen percent of rapes occurring in the United States are known to the police and suggests that, in 2006 alone, the number of actual cases of rape was likely to be over 1,000,000.\textsuperscript{32} Moreover, even this figure cannot account for cases of rape that were not recognised as such by the survivor. For both countries, even if one works only with the statistics pertaining to rapes recorded by the police, the figures are still extremely high. When one considers that every single case represents a human being atrociously abused and a life profoundly changed, the magnitude of such statistics is readily apparent. When one considers that each case also represents a human being prepared to inflict such absolute abuse, the notion that rape is only committed by a small number of psychologically-disturbed pariahs is simply untenable. It is upon this understanding that the thesis is


premised: if the presence of rape in the Anglophone West cannot be explained as the anti-social behaviour of a small number of mentally-unstable outcasts, then its cause must be found elsewhere.

Throughout the thesis, I will argue that the prevalence of rape can be explained through analysis of the Anglophone West itself, that rape is, in fact, a socially-learned behaviour, produced and supported by several intersecting aspects of Anglophone Western culture. This suggestion is not, in itself, original. Many theorists have written extensively on this topic, arguing that there is a direct link between cultural attitudes and practices and incidence of rape. However, the majority of these arguments employ relatively narrow fields of enquiry, analysing only cultural factors that are directly connected to sexual violence. Moreover, many of these explorations rely on rigid, simplistic understandings of patriarchy and gender hierarchy, and often take the form of polemical rhetoric. I will both interrogate and extend these arguments, locating analysis in the context of wider patterns of hierarchy, exploitation and abuse that characterise the dominant culture of the Anglophone West. Through this approach of setting gender and sexuality theory in dialogue with wider social theory, the argument will develop beyond the limitations of other previous approaches to the topic. Accordingly, the discussion will establish both a foundational understanding of feminist analysis of sexual violence and begin to introduce critical perspectives that extend its focus.

Methodology: Revisiting and Revising Radical Feminism

The fact that rape is an overwhelmingly gendered act—not only in the sense of being disproportionately committed by men against women but also in the sense that it is premised on and supported by societal attitudes to gender and

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33 For example, see: Andrea Dworkin, 'I Want a Twenty-Four-Hour Truce During Which There is No Rape', in *Transforming a Rape Culture*, ed. by Emilie Buchwald, Pamela R. Fletcher and Martha Roth (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions: 1993), pp. 11–22; Jill Filipovic, ‘Offensive Feminism: The Conservative Gender Norms that Perpetuate Rape Culture, and How Feminists Can Fight Back’, in *Yes Means Yes: Visions of Female Sexual Power and a World Without Rape*, ed. by Jaclyn Friedman and Jessica Valenti (California: Seal Press, 2008), pp. 13–27.
sexuality—means that feminist theory is essential for a thorough understanding of all aspects of sexual violence in the Anglophone West. Feminist understandings of rape provide a solid foundation of analysis of patriarchy, misogyny and gendered socialisation and their relationship to sexual violence from which to develop the broader themes of my work. This considered, feminist theories of rape are of course diverse in both their methodologies and their findings, and it is useful at this stage to discuss briefly how my own critical position relates to, draws on and critiques some of the principal approaches.

The foundation of my critical position is provided by second-wave radical feminist analysis, particularly the pioneering anti-rape texts of the 1970s such as Susan Brownmiller’s *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (1975) and Susan Griffin’s *Rape: The Politics of Consciousness* (1979). As Nicola Gavey observes, these texts—alongside concomitant anti-rape activism—helped to politicise rape, locating it within detailed and damning critiques of patriarchal social organisation and framing it as a site for widespread social change.34 As such they made vital contributions to the understanding of sexual violence that make them highly influential in a general sense and of great significance to my own work. Amongst their most important contributions was to critique and expand definitions of ‘rape’. Prior to radical feminist interventions, the majority of popular, specialist and legal discourses understood the term ‘rape’ to apply to only an extremely narrow band of sexual violence. As Gavey reports, ‘[u]nless rape was committed by a stranger using extreme physical violence it was something that was easily accommodated within the dominant

discourses of heteronormative activity – that is, as just sex and certainly not as rape’. Early radical feminists were instrumental in beginning to challenge these definitions, critiquing both legal conventions—such as ‘marital rape exemptions’ which decreed that a man could legally force his wife to engage in ‘sexual’ activities—and broader conventions, such as prevailing understandings of heteronormativity as an exercise in men’s active dominance and women’s passive submission. Alongside challenges to prevailing understandings of what constituted ‘rape’, early radical feminists also challenged (at least some) misconceptions of ‘who’ rapists were, beginning the process of undermining stereotypes of rapists as ‘insane’ pariahs or simply overly-passionate lovers in order to highlight the pervasive normality of men’s violence against women. Indeed, radical feminism not only highlighted the fact that ‘normal men’ commit rape but also expanded their field of enquiry to attack the social structures, ideologies and cultural norms that encourage them to do so. This position is perhaps most explicitly stated in Griffin’s argument that rape is so deeply entwined with patriarchal social organisation that it simply cannot ‘be rooted out from patriarchy without ending patriarchy itself’. Statements such as this represented a fundamental reframing of sexual violence and its relationship with the dominant culture: by highlighting the fact that the majority of rapists were acting within the bounds of social convention, enacting normative behaviour patterns, often with the full support of a male-dominated, rape-supportive society, radical feminists moved the target of anti-rape activism away from an exclusive focus on the

35 Ibid., p. 31.
36 For example, see: Brownmiller, Against Our Will, p. 380; Griffin, Rape: The Politics of Consciousness, pp. 8–9. Similar arguments were also made by later radical feminists. For example, see: Catharine MacKinnon, ‘Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: Toward Feminist Jurisprudence’, Signs, Vol. 8, No. 4 (1983), 635–658 (p. 646).
37 For example, see: Griffin, Rape: The Politics of Consciousness, pp. 5–6.
(often pathologised) individual and onto the patriarchal social systems that simultaneously present women as ‘rapable’ objects and teach men that they are entitled to rape them.

Together, the above aspects of radical feminist analysis provide a foundation for my critical position. Throughout the thesis, I actively engage with definitions of ‘rape’, responding critically to the ways in which it is defined and treated in a variety of sources, and problematising understandings that attempt to present sexual violence as discretely removed from dominant models of heterosex. I explore how the act of defining rape can help legitimise sexual violence, and the ways in which understandings of what constitutes sexual violence are shaped by societal attitudes around consent, women’s subjectivity and men’s conditioned self-interest and sense of entitlement. Moving beyond the sometimes limited focus of the early radical feminist analysis, I also explore the ways in which these understandings intersect with other systems of oppression and are complicated by issues such as the stereotyping of women of colour as ‘jezebels’ who always consent to all sexual activities or the presentation of sex workers as having forfeited their rights to refuse consent because of the stigma associated with sex work. My work also continues the radical feminist task of undermining the stereotyping of rapists as pariahs and outcasts, or as enacting ‘natural’ sexual urges, arguing instead that they are operating within an established framework of ideology and prescribed behaviour that is widely legitimised, celebrated and rewarded in the Anglophone West. Again, however, I develop this past what I perceive to be the limitations of much radical feminist

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39 For discussion of these particular intersectional understandings, see: pp. 132−143, 155−162 of this thesis.
analysis—in this case, as I will discuss in more detail presently, the privileging of gender oppression as the primary form of oppression—in order to consider how rapists relate to prevailing ideologies, ethical systems and behavioural codes within the dominant culture at large. Finally, my critical position holds as a central tenet the notion that combating sexual violence can only be achieved through radical social change throughout the dominant culture aimed at undermining and dismantling patriarchal social organisation. Of course, as I will discuss in more detail, I also argue that this process can only be truly successful if it occurs as part of an intersectional resistance strategy that works to dismantle the vast network of interconnected oppressions and abuse that structure the dominant culture. Nevertheless, my thesis explicitly insists that feminist activism against patriarchy, as well as concerted challenges to the ways in which ‘rape’ is defined in relation to normative heterosex practices, remains both highly significant and entirely relevant in the contemporary Anglophone West.

This insistence means that my critical position sets itself in opposition to ‘postfeminist’ analysis of sexual violence. Leslie Heywood and Jennifer Drake note that “‘postfeminist’ characterizes a group of young, conservative feminists who explicitly define themselves against and criticize feminists of the second-wave’.40 The decades following the pioneering radical feminist anti-rape activism discussed above have seen a steady flow of postfeminist critiques which argue that second-wave feminism has been so effective that it has either rendered feminism obsolete, or else has produced a culture which

is overly sensitive to sexual violence and victimises innocent men by labelling innocuous ‘normal’ sex as ‘rape’. Perhaps the most recent high-profile example of this is Caroline Kitchens’ article ‘It’s Time to End “Rape Culture” Hysteria’. Angered by the American government’s declaration that more must be done to combat the ‘culture of passivity and tolerance’ surrounding sexual violence on university campuses, Kitchens argues that feminist rape culture analysis does little more than breed ‘censorship and hysteria’, ‘poison the minds of young women’, and create ‘hostile environments for innocent males’.

This last point, that feminism’s pervasive influence on mainstream culture is unduly victimising men, is a recurrent theme in the article: Kitchens goes on to argue that ‘a growing number of young men find themselves charged with rape, named publicly and brought before campus judicial panels informed by rape-culture theory’ and claims that ‘[i]n such courts, due process is practically nonexistent: guilty because accused’. However, Kitchens’ suggestion that cultural attitudes in both university administrations and what she refers to as ‘the mainstream’ are overwhelmingly biased in favour of (alleged) survivors of sexual violence and against (alleged) perpetrators is flawed. We have already seen in the previous statistical analysis that, as RAINN report, only approximately ‘6% of rapists will ever spend a day in jail’; when this is considered in relation to the fact that a 2010 survey conducted by the American government reports that ‘[n]early 1 in 5 women (18.3%) [...] in the United States have been raped in some time their lives’ and

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42 Ibid.
43 Ibid. Italics in original.
‘[a]pproximately 1.3 million women were raped in the year preceding the survey’, there is very little basis for a claim that ‘mainstream’ culture is biased in favour of those reporting sexual violence.\textsuperscript{44} The situation is, if anything, worse at American universities and colleges. A 2009 survey of undergraduate women, cited in a report by the national public health institute of the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, notes that ‘19% experienced attempted or completed sexual assault since entering college’.\textsuperscript{45} Further, a U.S. Department of Justice report states that over 95% of women who survived ‘completed rape’ at college did not report their crimes, largely due to fear of how they will be judged by others.\textsuperscript{46} In those few cases where survivors do report the incident, it is extremely rare that the alleged perpetrators face serious consequences: a 2010 investigative report by NPR News and the Center for Public Integrity found that only 10 to 25 percent of men found guilty of sexual assault were even expelled from college or university, and the news media abounds with reports of cases in which women reporting sexual violence were summarily dismissed by educational administrations.\textsuperscript{47} Again, the suggestion that American


Campuses and educational administrations have abandoned due process is without foundation.

Kitchens’ attempt to present America as a postfeminist culture that is entirely opposed to sexual violence is equally flawed, for much the same reasons. For example, questioning the existence of a ‘culture of passivity and tolerance’, she writes: ‘Tolerance for rape? Rape is a horrific crime, and rapists are despised’. However, as Jaclyn Friedman asks, ‘[i]f we already despise rapists, why are they so rarely held accountable in any way?’ That is to say, if American culture is so adverse to sexual violence and the men who commit it, why is this not reflected in any of the statistics and accounts cited above? Friedman offers an explanation of this issue, suggesting that

[what we really despise is the idea of rapists: a terrifying monster lurking in the bushes, waiting to pounce on an innocent girl as she walks by [...] But actual rapists, men who are usually known to (and often loved by) their victims? Men who are sometimes our sports heroes, political leaders, buddies, boyfriends and fathers? Evidence suggests we don’t despise them nearly as much as we should.]

In other words, Kitchens’ analysis is undermined by the research begun by the second-wave feminists so reviled by postfeminists: the reality that not all rapists fit the stereotypical model of the pathological violent stranger. Like many postfeminist arguments, Kitchens’ position ultimately relies not so much on undermining radical feminist challenges to the stereotyping of rapists as on simply ignoring it in order to insist that only rapes that are achieved through violence and committed by strangers count as ‘real rape’.

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‘End the Rape Culture at University’ (22/7/2013) [accessed 25 March 2014].
Kitchens, ‘It’s Time to End “Rape Culture” Hysteria’.
Jaclyn Friedman cited in Zerlina Maxwell, ‘Rape Culture is Real’ (27/3/2014) [accessed 29 March 2014].
Ibid. Italics in original.
We find a similar position in Katie Roiphe’s notorious postfeminist article ‘Date Rape’s Other Victim’, in which she writes:

That rape is a fact in some women’s lives is not in question. It’s hard to watch the solemn faces of young Bosnian girls, their words haltingly translated, as they tell of brutal rapes; or to read accounts of a suburban teenager raped and beaten while walking home from a shopping mall [...] but we no longer agree on what rape is. Today’s definition has stretched beyond bruises and knives, threats of death or violence to include emotional pressure and the influence of alcohol.51

Even more explicitly than Kitchens, Roiphe states that feminist analysis has created unreasonable expectations of what constitutes rape, suggesting, again, that only stereotypically violent acts can be considered rape and so denying the significance of numerous forms of coercion and abuse, and the experiences of a great many survivors of sexual violence.52

Ultimately, such postfeminism is, as Sujata Moorti (summarising the work of Sarah Projansky) suggests, ‘a nostalgic return to a mythical point in time prior to feminism’s realization that there is something wrong with patriarchy’.53 That is to say, it is characterised by a seeming desire to return to the understandings that the original radical feminists were responding to—where, as Gavey phrases it, ‘[u]nless rape was committed by a stranger using extreme physical violence’ it was understood as ‘just sex’—and blames feminist ‘hysteria’ for taking away the apparent clarity these understandings provided.54 However, as Moorti highlights, this point in time was ‘mythical’:

52 For discussion other forms of coercion and abuse, see pp. 77-79, 199-201 of this thesis.
54 Gavey, Just Sex?, p. 31.
between normative heterosex and sexual violence were present before radical feminists began analysing them. Feminism did not create the issues but rather reported them and attempted to unpick and undermine them. The fact that these issues are still present and pressing only highlights the necessity of further feminist analysis and activism, rather than the straight denial of their existence proposed by postfeminists, and this is a principal reason why my critical position holds to its foundation in radical feminist theory and rejects postfeminism as offering little but reactionary rhetoric to the central debates of this thesis.

However, my rejection of postfeminist critiques does not mean that my critical position is a direct, non-critical reproduction of radical feminist theory. Since the pioneering anti-rape texts were published in the 1970s, feminism has developed and diversified significantly, and other theoretical branches have critiqued several aspects of second-wave radical feminism’s perspectives, methodologies and conclusions far more effectively than postfeminism has yet achieved. As I have alluded to earlier in this discussion, my critical position is informed by, incorporates and, in some cases, extends these criticisms, as well as drawing heavily on other strands of feminist theory in a more general manner. One of the most pronounced influences in this regard comes from works by feminists of colour. Some of this influence takes the form of direct critiques of second-wave radical feminism’s treatment of race, such as my analysis of Brownmiller’s racist and classist stereotyping in the first chapter, which is greatly informed by Angela Y. Davis’ notion of ‘the myth
of the black rapist’. However, as suggested above, the importance of feminisms of colour to my critical position is not limited to critiques of overt racism by radical feminists; the thesis is also shaped by such analysis in a more general sense, especially in light of the fact that, when not being overtly racist, much second-wave radical feminism is simply more subtly racist in its failure to consider race as a significant factor in feminist struggle and the fight against sexual violence.

Ellen Willis notes that early radical feminism was based around ‘the abstraction of feminist issues from race and class issues’, that is, the assumption that the oppression of women could be addressed without addressing racial and class oppression; she adds that this further excluded women of colour and working-class women from the movement, which in turn ‘limit[ed] and distort[ed]’ radical feminism’s ‘analysis and [...] practice’ by leaving the focus almost solely on the experiences of middle-class white women. Where it did acknowledge these forms of oppression, radical feminism frequently framed them within what bell hooks describes as ‘a hierarchy of oppression [...] with sexism in first place’. In other words, it considered all other forms of oppression to be of less significance than the oppression of women, even going so far as to argue, as Willis notes, that the oppression of women is the ‘primary form’ of oppression from which all other oppression develops, leaving systems of oppression such as white supremacism and classism as little more than ‘specialized forms of male

55 See: pp. 71-76 of this thesis. For Davis’ original discussion, see: Davis, Women, Race and Class, pp. 172–201.
56 Ellen Willis, ‘Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism’, Social Text, no. 9/10 (1984), 91–118 (p. 95).
57 bell hooks, Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center (Boston: South End Press, 1984), p. 35.
It is the position of this thesis that these approaches are entirely inadequate and that a proper understanding of both the oppression of women generally and sexual violence against women specifically can only be achieved by considering how gender oppression intersects with other systems of oppression. This is true in the sense that, by ignoring other forms of oppression, one overlooks the experiences of many survivors of sexual violence who belong to marginalised groups and whose experiences do not match those of more privileged women, and in the sense that the mechanisms of sexual violence and socio-political responses to it are profoundly shaped by numerous intersecting hierarchies and oppressions. Moreover, it is also true in the sense that, as hooks argues, 'since all forms of oppression [...] are supported by similar institutional and social structures, one system cannot be eradicated while the others remain intact.' That is to say, this thesis holds to the belief, outlined by hooks, that one cannot hope to challenge a specific form of oppression without understanding that it operates as part of an intersectional network of oppressions that share roots, structures and systems of operation (an issue I will examine in more detail further into this introduction, and throughout the thesis). This conviction marks an extremely important area in which my critical position and methodology departs from its radical feminist foundations to consider a far more intersectional analysis of sexual violence.

Another important departure can be found in the influence of third-wave feminism on my critical position. Like the work of pioneering feminists of

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58 Willis, ‘Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism’, p. 96.
59 This issue is explored throughout the thesis, but is treated in particular detail throughout the second chapter.
60 hooks, Feminist Theory, p. 37.
colour discussed above, a significant amount of third-wave feminism is also highly intersectional in its analysis. In a large part this is due to the fact that much third-wave analysis is itself influenced by such works and has incorporated and benefited from previous critiques of second-wave feminism. Indeed, as Leslie Haywood and Jennifer Drake note, ‘the definitional moment of third wave feminism has been theorized as proceeding from critiques of the white women’s movement that were initiated by women of color, as well as from the many instances of coalition work undertaken by U.S. third world feminists’. Moreover, it is not simply a case of influence: crucially, far more than the almost exclusively middle-class white feminism of the second-wave, much third-wave analysis and activism comes from marginalised women, producing theory, critiquing established ‘truths’, recounting their own experiences and exploring their own identities. This increasingly diverse ‘movement’ produces feminist theory and activism that not only explore how gender intersects with other identity markers such as race, class and sexuality but with wider issues that shaped the lived experiences of such identities. As Haywood and Drake note, third wave feminism’s political activism on behalf of women’s rights is shaped by—and responds to—a world of global capitalism and information technology, postmodernism and postcolonialism, and environmental degradation [...] Third wavers [...] are [...] concerned not simply with “women’s issues” but with a broad range of interlocking topics [...] ranging from protests of the World Economic Forum and welfare reform to activism on behalf of independent media outlets.

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62 This is particularly evident in the pioneering collections that helped to establish ‘the third wave’ in the mid-1990s. For example, see: Listen Up: Voices from the Next Feminist Generation, ed. by Barbara Findlen (New York: Seal Press, 2001); To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism, ed. by Rebecca Walker (New York: Anchor Books, 1995).
As a result of this broad, intersectional, often coalition-based approach to feminism, third wave analysis often exhibits a far greater awareness of difference, of privilege and marginalisation, of the complexities, contradictions and fluidity of women’s experiences than that found in most second-wave radical feminism. With this greater understanding comes a greater capacity to analyse and challenge the complex interpenetrating power structures that enable, motivate, legitimise and defend all systems of oppression, including the oppression of women, including sexual violence against women. It is this approach that has the most significant influence on my critical position, providing a framework for exploring the ways in which multiple intersecting systems of oppression mark some groups and individuals as disposable, ‘consumable’ and abusable, and for examining how larger forces such as capitalism, imperialism and globalisation interact with sexual violence in the Anglophone West. Indeed, in some respects, my critical position goes beyond the intersectionality of third-wave feminism, drawing extensively on wider social justice theory to argue that the social change required to end sexual violence goes to the very roots of Anglophone Western culture. This point is perhaps best illustrated by exploring the ‘rape culture’ paradigm: an understanding of sexual violence that arose in radical feminism, has been remodelled and redeployed by third-wave feminism, and which my work expands even further, employing it to explore the relationships between sexual violence and the dominant culture of the Anglophone West at large. It is to this that the discussion will now turn.
Beyond Patriarchy: Expanding the Rape Culture Paradigm

Perhaps the best known and most widely cited definition of ‘rape culture’ is the proposal by Emilie Buchwald, Pamela Fletcher and Martha Roth that a rape culture is:

a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women as the norm.64

What is immediately apparent here is the extent to which this definition mirrors the second-wave radical feminist analysis discussed above in its focus not on men who commit violence against women, but on ‘a complex of beliefs that encourages violence against women’. In other words, like the pioneering anti-rape texts of the 1970s, the rape culture paradigm moves analytic focus away from the study of the pathologised individual and towards the study of the patriarchal enculturation of whole societies. Indeed, this reflects the fact that, like my own critical position, the rape culture paradigm has its foundations in radical feminist theory. Joyce Williams notes that the exact history of the rape culture paradigm is unknown, although she posits Margaret Lazarus’s 1975 documentary film Rape Culture as a likely origin.65

Whilst this may well reflect the origin of the phrase itself, the conceptual roots appear to be most firmly grounded, as Patricia Donat and John D’Emilio suggest, in Brownmiller’s analysis of ‘rape-supportive culture’ in Against Our Will.66 Certainly, the notion that a rape culture ‘condones physical and emotional terrorism against women as the norm’ bears a distinct resemblance to Brownmiller’s conception of rape as ‘a conscious process of

64 Emilie Buchwald, Pamela Fletcher and Martha Roth, ‘Preamble’, in Transforming a Rape Culture, ed. by Emilie Buchwald, Pamela Fletcher and Martha Roth (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 1993), p. vii (p. vii). Italics in original.
intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear’.67 Likewise, the ‘complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women’ described by Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth mirrors Brownmiller’s own focus on ‘those elements in our culture that promote and propagandize [...] attitudes, which offer men [...] the ideology and psychologic [sic] encouragement to commit [sexual violence]’.68 However, whilst the rape culture paradigm has its roots in such radical feminist positions, its influence is by no means limited to this particular approach; rather, it appears, remodelled and refined, in many branches of feminist analysis, although perhaps nowhere more prominently than in third-wave feminism.

Writing for third-wave magazine Everyday Feminism, Kelsey Lueptow observes that challenging rape culture is one of the primary concerns of third-wave feminism.69 However, third-wave feminism does not simply adopt the rape culture paradigm in its original form but reworks it to suit its own focuses and priorities, and responds to rape culture with its own approaches and tactics (as well as continuing with methods originally employed by second-wave feminists). For example, it adapts the paradigm to suit the general turn towards ‘sex positivity’ in third-wave feminism. That is to say, where second-wave radical feminism often discusses heterosex only in terms of violence and oppression, and treats pornography and sex work as key causal components of rape culture, third-wave feminism frequently explores the possibilities of empowerment and liberation through sexuality, and the role celebrating sexuality can play in ending rape culture.70 As Jaclyn Friedman and Jessica Valenti note:
So often it seems as if the discourse is focused solely on the “no means no” model—which, while of course useful, stops short of truly envisioning how suppressing female sexual agency is a key element of rape culture, and therefore how fostering genuine female sexual autonomy is necessary in fighting back against it.\(^{71}\)

Much third-wave feminist analysis of sexual violence responds to the issues highlighted by Friedman and Valenti, expanding the rape culture paradigm and ways of challenging it, creating new forms of activism such as SlutWalks—which often explicitly identify ‘rape culture’ as the target they are confronting—and spaces for voices traditionally marginalised from second-wave feminist analysis, such as those of sex workers.\(^{72}\)

Such remodelling and expansion greatly informs my treatment of the concept and my work overall, and mirrors my underlying methodology of setting radical feminism in dialogue with third-wave feminist analysis and activism. However, there is also another aspect of the third-wave’s development of the rape culture paradigm which is of central importance to my work, and which my work, in turn, develops even further. Robin E. Field suggests that central to the rape culture paradigm is the belief that ‘in order to eliminate rape […] the mechanisms of the rape culture need to be confronted.’\(^{73}\) Early uses of the paradigm and associated analysis primarily identify these mechanisms as products of patriarchy and misogyny, exploring only the ways in which the male-dominance of Western cultures encourages, supports, legitimises and rewards sexual violence against women. However, there are many other ‘mechanisms of […] rape culture’ that are crucial to understanding rape in the Anglophone West. Third-wave feminism’s increasing regard for the intersectionality of oppression means that it further remolds the rape culture paradigm to include ‘mechanisms’ that are produced by the intersection of


\(^{73}\) Field, ‘Rape Culture’, p. 175.
gender oppression, white supremacy, heterosexism, classism, ableism and other systems of oppression.\textsuperscript{74} These revisions and expansions are, I argue, crucial to making the rape culture paradigm an effective means of understanding, and so challenging, the Anglophone West’s rape culture. Indeed, as Alisa Bierra suggests, ‘Transforming [a Rape Culture]’s assertion that rape culture supports violence against women is true but incomplete. Rape culture as a paradigm representing a set of principles shows us how the culture of rape actually supports many types of violence against many groups of people’.\textsuperscript{75} That is to say, a rape culture cannot be discretely divided from the dominant culture within which it exists; rather it is one of many violent, abusive and destructive practices that emerge from the ‘character’ of the dominant culture itself. In line with this, I propose that the rape culture paradigm must be expanded further by treating the ‘mechanisms’ of the Anglophone West’s rape culture, and the rape culture itself, as manifestations of a larger pattern of normalised exploitation, abuse, social stratification, violent domination and the commodification and objectification of life that are, I argue, central to the overall structure of dominant culture. This holistic approach brings us back to the discussions from the beginning of the chapter and the relationships between how the Anglophone West views itself as superior and ‘civilised’, the realities that exist beneath this perception, and the rape culture of the Anglophone West.

In Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre (1984), bell hooks adopts a position similar to this, arguing that male violence against women cannot be separated from other patterns of hierarchical violence found in Western society. She writes


While I agree [...] that male violence against women [...] is an expression of male domination, I believe that violence is inextricably linked to all acts of violence in this society that occur between the powerful and the powerless, the dominant and the dominated. While male supremacy encourages the use of abusive force to maintain male domination of women, it is the Western philosophical notion of hierarchical rule and coercive authority that is the root cause of violence against women.\textsuperscript{76}

hooks makes a crucial connection here, marrying together a feminist critique of patriarchy with not only wider social theory, but also analysis of the deep-seated philosophies, systems and structures that shape the dominant culture and underpin multiple forms of oppression. The result is a compelling and logical argument that male violence against women originates not simply from patriarchal social structures, nor only from patriarchy intersecting with other systems of oppression, but also from the underlying systems of oppression and hierarchy on which dominant Western ideology is based. As such, it presents a significant challenge to the Anglophone West’s perception of itself as a peaceful, just and progressive society, and the resultant ideological tensions are, I suggest, central to understanding the relationships between the dominant culture of the Anglophone West and its rape culture. Exploring the concept of ‘civilisation’ is useful to my arguments on this matter, serving as a means of understanding and articulating the prevailing ideologies, systems and structures of Anglophone West. As I explore in detail in the first chapter, in much philosophical, political and popular thought in the Anglophone West, ‘civilisation’ is understood as a mode of existence that is separate from and inherently superior to both ‘nature’ and ‘uncivilised’ or ‘savage’ human societies. Moreover, such understandings frequently present the Anglophone West specifically as the principle example of this superiority, identifying, as Greer and Lewis note, ‘the civilization[s] of Greece and Rome and [...] Christian Europe [...] as forerunners of the West of their own time’, and so presenting themselves as the progeny of these ‘great’ civilisations and the pinnacle of a long chain of succession and ‘progress’.\textsuperscript{77}Such reasoning often manifests in what Jensen describes as ‘the deeply and most-often-invisibly held beliefs that there is really only one way to live, and that we are the one-and-only possessors of that way. It becomes our job then to

\textsuperscript{76} hooks, Feminist Theory, p. 118.
\textsuperscript{77} Greer and Lewis, A Brief History of the Western World, p. xxiv.
propagate this way, by force when necessary until there are no other ways to be’.\textsuperscript{78} As Jensen alludes to, one of the most immediately apparent manifestations of this self-declared superiority is a cultural tendency to spread the dominant culture of the Anglophone West, to ‘civilise’ the ‘savages’ of other, less enlightened nations and cultures. However, this reasoning also manifests in and helps to shape many other aspects of the dominant culture including prevailing perceptions of sexual violence. As suggested earlier in this introduction, we can identify a clear example of this in the coverage of the Munirka gang rape case, and the belief, paraphrased by O’Toole, that rape is ‘something we civilised folk in the west have somehow put behind us’.\textsuperscript{79}

However, the obvious issue here is that, as discussed throughout this introduction, the Anglophone West does, in fact, have both extremely high levels of rape incidence and an extremely poor record of dealing with the problem. Sexual violence, then, becomes a stark challenge to the vision of the Anglophone West as the paragon of liberal, progressive, benevolent civilisation. I suggest that the primary response to this challenge is a, frequently unknowing or unintended, conceptual framing of rape as something ‘savage’ or ‘natural’ that ‘civilisation’—in this case, the ‘civilised’ Anglophone West—endeavours to contain and control. In some cases, including much of the coverage of the Munirka gang rape, this takes the form of suggestions that the ‘civilisation’ of the Anglophone West has already succeeded in controlling or even eliminating rape; in others, it manifests in suggestions that the Anglophone West, although not entirely successful in this task, is more advanced and more successful than other, less ‘civilised’ cultures. Implicit in both constructions, however, is the belief that, regardless of whether it has yet succeeded, ‘civilisation’ remains the best, or even the only, means of ending rape: the sole antidote to the ‘savagery’ of sexual violence. Sometimes this belief is overtly stated, but more often it seeps insidiously into discourses of sexual violence as a subtextual bias transmitted alongside or beneath the intended meaning. In either case, however, it reflects the same basic understanding: that further ‘progress’ away from

\textsuperscript{78} Jensen, \textit{Endgame Volume 1}, p 22.  
\textsuperscript{79} O’Toole, ‘Delhi gang-rape’.
‘savagery’ and (human) ‘nature’, and towards higher or greater ‘civilisation’ is the solution to the Anglophone West’s rape problem. This thesis explores the ways in which this understanding is constructed and conveyed, and the ways it undermines different approaches to combating sexual violence. It also challenges this understanding and its foundations, questioning prevailing perceptions of ‘civilisation’ and ‘civilised’ Anglophone Western culture, and critiquing the conceptual framing of rape as something ‘savage’ and ‘uncivilised’. These critiques build ultimately into an argument that, far from being a means of ending sexual violence, the ‘civilisation’ of the dominant culture may in fact be a principal cause of the Anglophone West’s rape culture.

We have already observed that the prevailing understanding of the Anglophone West—at least within the Anglophone West itself—is that it is the pinnacle of human development, a benevolent global force spreading enlightenment, liberty, peace and progress throughout the known world. However, as alluded to previously, submerged beneath this dominant and dominating account is a far bloodier narrative of conquest, abuse and exploitation. In this narrative, the Anglophone West is not characterised by benevolence, erudition and liberty but by atrocities and cruelty, by an insatiable desire to dominate and devour. Importantly, this is not limited to ‘civilised’ states and institutions; it shapes the behaviours of ‘civilised’ individuals, recreating the same forms of behaviour on an interpersonal level. Jack D. Forbes describes civilisation as a pathological condition, a contagious ‘cannibal psychosis’ in which ‘consuming [...] another’s life for one’s own private [...] profit’ becomes the ‘normal’ mode of existence.80 In other words, to be socialised into the prevailing mores of a ‘civilised’ culture such as the dominant culture of the Anglophone West is to learn that abusing and exploiting others for personal gain is an acceptable, normative form of behaviour.

The above understanding is vital to a proper assessment of the Anglophone West’s rape culture because it reveals that, contrary to popular belief, the

prevailing ethical codes, behavioural norms and underlying philosophies of the dominant culture do not prescribe cooperation, mutuality, equality and respect for life but rather self-interest, objectification and the consumption of others. As Marimba Ani notes it is not considered immoral in the West to act in one’s own interest at the expense of [...] others; rather, selfishness, competitiveness, exploitation of others [...] represent moral behavior [...] in that they are sanctioned by every aspect of the culture, and the individual [...] is conditioned to manifest them.\(^{81}\)

It is in this context, I suggest, that rape and the Anglophone West’s rape culture must be understood as one manifestation of the normalising of self-serving, exploitative and abusive treatment of others. Considered in this context, sexual violence is neither an aberrant act nor the product of some form of ‘savage’ or ‘natural’ instinct that ‘civilisation’ cannot control; rather, it is a highly normative, widely legitimised and often even celebrated expression of prevailing ideologies and ethics. This is not to deny the significance of gender dynamics and gendered socialisation to Anglophone Western rape culture but to situate these issues in the broader, and more fundamental, ‘character’ of the ‘civilised’ dominant culture. Likewise, it is not to say that the struggle to end rape should be co-opted into a broader political ideology, a fate that has too often befallen feminist movements, but to suggest that a larger pattern of abuse must be considered if the struggle against rape culture is to be fully realised.\(^{82}\) The effectiveness of such a struggle is reliant on the ability to identify and challenge the deeper roots of a rape culture rather than the surface manifestations. As hooks notes, ‘it is [the West’s violent and hierarchical] belief system that is the foundation on which sexist ideology and other ideologies of group oppression are based; they can be eliminated only when this foundation is eliminated’.\(^{83}\) In line with, and extending beyond, hooks’s position, this thesis will ultimately argue that the Anglophone West’s rape culture has roots that spread far beyond gender

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\(^{81}\) Ani, *Yurugu*, p. 379.

\(^{82}\) For discussion of the co-opting of feminist movements, see: Lynn Farrow, ‘Feminism as Anarchism’, in *Quiet Rumours: An Anarcha-Feminist Anthology* (London: Dark Star), pp. 11–23 (pp. 13–16).

\(^{83}\) hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, p. 118.
dynamics and sexual practices, down into the very foundations of the dominant culture of the Anglophone West.

Dissecting a Rape Culture: Structuring the Argument

The relationships between the dominant culture of the Anglophone West and sexual violence are many and complex; they form a vast network of associations and intersections, operating from the most foundational Western philosophies through to the most superficial expressions of Anglophone Western culture. Accordingly, unpicking this network is also extremely complex, requiring analysis not only of gender and sexuality but also of politics, economics, history and psychology, all of which share numerous points of intersection and must be considered from a range of critical perspectives. However, as wide ranging as this analysis must be, it can be relatively neatly contained in three key tasks. These are: 1) to establish a critical position that combines feminist analysis of sexual violence with broader analysis of the dominant culture of the Anglophone West; 2) to apply this critical perspective to the question of why the objectification (and subsequent abuse) of women is so common throughout the Anglophone West; and 3) to apply this same perspective to the matter of why so many men in the Anglophone West choose to commit rape. It is these three key tasks that form the three chapters of the thesis.

The first chapter, then, introduces the positions that inform the whole thesis, bringing together theoretical perspectives that are critical of ‘civilisation’, social justice analysis of the dominant culture of the Anglophone West and feminist analyses of sexual violence, and using each to critique and inform the other. Central to structuring this is the introduction of a case study—Dominique Strauss-Kahn’s alleged rape of Nafissatou Diallo—which is used throughout the chapter to illustrate and expand key points of analysis. Using this case study as a point of departure, the opening chapter explores

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84 Although Strauss-Kahn is obviously not from the Anglophone West, the allegations and trial both occurred in the US, and my treatment of the case study focuses primarily on the coverage of the case in Anglophone Western media and its relationships with prevailing attitudes in the dominant culture of the Anglophone West.
how notions of ‘civilisation’, ‘savagery’ and ‘nature’ inform contemporary understandings of sexual violence. Drawing on critical analysis of how the dominant culture of the Anglophone West presents ‘civilisation’ as both inherently superior to and the antithesis of ‘nature’ and ‘primitive’ or ‘natural’ humans, the discussion demonstrates that many analyses of rape attempt—consciously or unconsciously—to present both the act and the perpetrator as somehow outside of or unconnected to civilisation. In this understanding, rape is the product of ‘natural’ or ‘savage’ instincts and something to which ‘civilisation’, the antithesis of ‘the natural’, is inherently opposed. This conception of sexual violence is manifest both in Western analysis of sexual violence in non-Western cultures and, through allusions and associations, in many discussions of Anglophone Western rapists, who are widely portrayed as ‘uncivilised’ or as committing rape because they have not been properly socialised into the dominant culture and its supposed opposition to sexual violence.

Much of this argument is concerned with the way this misguided conception of rape shapes many Anglophone Western feminist analyses, which imply that further ‘civilisation’ or further passage along the road of ‘progress’ is the solution to the sexual violence in the Anglophone West. Often unintended, this message creeps into feminist theory in numerous forms, from presentations of rape as something ‘natural’ that must be ‘refined’ out of men by external cultural influence to the scapegoating of poor men and men of colour (both seen as inherently further from ‘civilisation’). Such conceptions and implications, the chapter argues, are far from accurate: in reality, the normalising of rape in the Anglophone West is deeply entwined in the fabric of ‘civilised’ Anglophone Western society, not only in its gender dynamics but also its broader ideologies and normative practices. Using feminist analysis of ways in which a cultural acceptance of violence encourages a cultural acceptance of sexual violence as a point of departure, the chapter asserts that the normalising of abuse and exploitation as part of how the dominant culture operates provides a foundation for the Anglophone West’s rape culture, socialising individuals to believe that it is normal and acceptable to ‘consume’ others for private gain. Ultimately, this resolves into an argument that rape cannot be blamed on subcultural groups who express ‘uncivilised’
ideologies and practices but rather must be seen as a manifestation of the West’s superculture of objectification: its almost total normalisation of the treatment of others as objects to be exploited and consumed.

This notion of a superculture of objectification provides the starting point for the second chapter, which explores the notion that Western commodification and objectification of life in general is the key foundation for the sexual objectification of women or the social production of ‘rapable’ bodies. Building on the previous assertion that rape is not the product of ‘nature’ or ‘savagery’, this chapter establishes how one key aspect of rape—the widespread belief that women may be ‘justifiably’ or ‘legitimately’ raped—is firmly rooted in the ‘civilised’ culture of the Anglophone West. The chapter draws parallels between the highly normalised sexual objectification of women and the highly normalised objectification of other marginalised groups, ultimately suggesting that Western culture is founded on and shaped by an underlying philosophy of objectification: the belief that some lives are less valuable than others and may be used as objects and instruments so that others may profit. This belief is central to the dominant culture of the Anglophone West, enabling it to function and to spread its cultural hegemony throughout the world; it underpins everything from (neo)colonialism to profiteering from sweatshop labour to the commodification of non-human nature. It also underpins the Anglophone West’s rape culture, providing a foundational understanding that it is acceptable and ‘normal’ to treat others as objects to be used for one’s own benefit. Put simply, without the basic belief that it can ever be ‘acceptable’ to perceive a living being as an object rather than as an autonomous, subjective whole, one cannot develop the gender-specific objectification of women that helps enable men to commit rape. This perception inculcates Westerners into an understanding that it is ‘normal’ to relate to the world as though it were composed of objects to be used and consumed and this understanding is routinely manifest in the actions of individuals, including in the sexual objectification of women that underpins rape. The significance of this point will be highlighted through

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85 In this context, to be made ‘rapable’ is to be seen by the dominant culture as a ‘legitimate’, ‘justifiable’ target for sexual violence (for discussion, see: Andrea Smith, Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide (New York: South End Press, 2005), p. 3). This concept will be explored in greater detail in chapters one and two.
cross-cultural analysis which demonstrates that non-Western cultures that do not perceive the world in general as composed of objects to be used and consumed also have remarkably lower levels of sexual violence than those found in the Anglophone West.

Returning to analysis of the Anglophone West, this point is further clarified through the suggestion that, even in direct terms, it is not only sexual objectification that is used to justify rape; rather, numerous forms of objectification, all of which have their roots in the same basic belief, intersect together to exert influence upon and help shape the Anglophone West’s rape culture. Illustrating the argument by returning to the case study, the chapter notes that the objectification of people of colour, immigrants and sex workers, as well as many other marginalised groups, all intersect in various scenarios to maintain the belief that rape can be justified because survivors are simply objects who exist to be consumed by rapists. Bringing these points together, the chapter asserts that, whilst systems of gender oppression mark women’s bodies as culturally rapable, they do so in inseparable intersectional conjunction with other systems of oppression, all of which are, at best, deeply ingrained in the structure of the dominant culture and, at worst, inherent elements of it. In line with this, the chapter suggests that the social production of rapable bodies is the product of the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification and so raises the question of whether the Anglophone West’s rape culture can ever be truly challenged without challenging the belief that some lives are worth less than others and so may be treated as objects to be consumed for personal gain.

Where the second chapter discusses the social production of rapable bodies, the third addresses the other side of the same issue: the social production of rapist mentalities, or the processes by which men develop both the psychological capacity and the desire to commit rape. Framed around challenges to the twin myths that rape is a ‘natural’ male instinct and that rapists are deviant pariahs, the chapter suggests that it is in fact normative socialisation into both prevailing models of masculinity and the dominant culture more broadly that enables and motivates so many Anglophone Western men to commit rape. Initially, this discussion focuses on the belief
that men have a natural psychological capacity to commit rape and have to be socialised to ‘unlearn’ this instinct. Drawing on a range of sources concerned with the ways in which institutional figures such as soldiers or concentration camp guards are trained to harm others, the chapter suggests that human beings must learn to perceive abuse as personally acceptable through specific patterns of socialisation. Applying this analysis to sexual violence, it argues that there are three key characteristics that rapists must hold—at least for the duration of the assault—in order to commit rape: self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy, and a sense of entitlement. Contrary to the longstanding perception of rapists as deviant, psychopathological figures, these characteristics are, in fact, an aspect of how a great many men are socialised to relate to women, both ‘sexually’ and in general. This is a key point as it highlights the fact that the psychological capacity to rape, although not ‘natural’, is extremely common amongst men because it represents an aspect of normative masculine behaviour. Even more significantly, these characteristics are not only part of normative masculine behaviour but are actually widely celebrated throughout the dominant culture. That is, the chapter argues that far from deviant and rare, the characteristics that enable rapists to commit rape are also those held by many of the Anglophone West’s most successful figures, and are widely perceived to be both routes to and measures of ‘success’.

From here, the chapter takes this basic premise—that the supposedly aberrant psychologies of rapists are actually highly normative—and applies it to the issue of rapists’ motivations. Whilst acknowledging that rapists are not a conveniently homogeneous group and so commit rape for a variety of reasons, the chapter argues that at their most fundamental level these motivations all revolve around domination or power over others, in intersection with prevailing understandings of masculinity and heterosex. As in the previous argument, it suggests that this too is not aberrant or unique to rapists’ mentalities but rather is both an aspect of normative (heterosexual) masculine socialisation and an expression of the prevailing ideologies and practices of the dominant culture at large. That is to say, the desire to dominate others—and the cultural rewards for doing so—are a central component of Anglophone Western culture, manifest in everything from
(neo)imperialism to the organisation of workplace hierarchies. The chapter brings the two aspects of rapist mentalities together and questions whether they can truly be said to be only the product of gender dynamics and masculine socialisation or if they too must be considered as part of a wider pattern of normalised abusive behaviour. Central to this is a consideration of whether prevailing models of masculinity shape the cultural ideals of a patriarchal society or if these models of masculinity are themselves the product of a society that requires ‘agents’ to enact its desires and satisfy its broader ‘need’ for power, wealth, resources and ceaseless expansion. Ultimately, then, the chapter raises the question of whether, like the social production of rapable bodies, the social production of rapist mentalities can ever be fully challenged without challenging the broader abusiveness of the dominant culture of the Anglophone West.
Nafissatou Diallo vs. Dominique Strauss-Kahn: An Overview

On May 14th 2011, Nafissatou Diallo, a Guinean refugee working at the Sofitel hotel in New York, alleged that Dominique Strauss-Kahn, at that time the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), sexually assaulted her after she entered his suite to clean the room.86 The official complaint made against Strauss-Kahn by the State of New York states that he trapped Diallo in the suite, tried to remove her underwear, forcibly grabbed her breasts and crotch, attempted penile-vaginal penetration without Diallo’s consent and ‘engaged in oral sexual conduct and anal sexual conduct [...] by forcible compulsion’.87 Although, in general, rape receives relatively little coverage in the mainstream media, reports of Diallo’s allegations spread throughout the world within hours.88 However, although this is an exception to the media’s standard response to sexual violence (which, as discussed in the introduction, is most often to deem it not newsworthy), the reaction was, in the circumstances, largely to be expected. As we saw in the introduction, Helen Benedict makes this same point when she writes ‘that news must be the unusual, never the usual, virtually guarantees that the press will ignore typical rapes or assaults [...] in favour of the bizarre, sensational, or gory’.89 In line with this observation, it is reasonable to suggest that Strauss-Kahn’s high-profile, supposedly publically-accountable position and status (and the fact that Diallo had the courage to challenge it) are the key reasons that the story was deemed newsworthy. Certainly, this is in keeping with another of Benedict’s observations: that the Western media routinely fails to report on cases of

88 ‘Dominique Strauss-Kahn’s Accuser goes Public as Case Nears Collapse’.
sexual violence committed against women of colour (particularly when they are committed by white men) and fixates on cases of sexual violence committed by men of colour (particularly acts committed against white women). In this sense, were it not for Strauss-Kahn’s public profile and the fact that the story could be presented as a ‘celebrity scandal’ rather than yet another instance of the privileged violating the marginalised, it is unlikely that Diallo’s name would even have appeared in a police report, let alone a national news report. Indeed, it is also extremely likely that Strauss-Kahn’s status was the principal factor that provoked the American police and judicial system into the relatively unusual act of arresting, charging and imprisoning a wealthy, white man accused of raping a poor, refugee woman of colour. Despite his claims that he had ‘diplomatic immunity’, on the afternoon of May 14th plainclothes police officers removed Strauss-Kahn from a plane moments before it left JFK airport. On May 15th Strauss-Kahn was charged with a ‘criminal sexual act, unlawful imprisonment, attempted rape’ and was incarcerated, without bail, in Riker’s Island prison, New York. Strauss-Kahn was formally indicted on May 19th, facing seven charges carrying together a maximum penalty of seventy-four years in prison, although he was also granted bail and the following day was moved from Rikers Island to house arrest in a rented townhouse (allegedly rented for $50,000 per month).

Even taking into account the ostensibly unusual nature of the case, the fact that Strauss-Kahn was not only arrested but also charged and incarcerated

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90 Ibid., pp. 8–9.
94 Ibid.
is, perhaps, somewhat surprising. Certainly it represents a statistical irregularity: working from United States government figures, the Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) states that, in America, only approximately ‘6% of rapists will ever spend a day in jail’. Far less surprising, however—at least to anyone who has studied Western judicial responses to sexual violence—is the fact that the case was dismissed: on August 23rd, the incident in the Sofitel room was decreed to have been consensual and Diallo's clothing, stained with Strauss-Kahn’s semen, was declared to be evidence of nothing but a ‘hurried sexual encounter’. Later, Strauss-Kahn would apologise for what he called ‘a moral fault’: a fault to his wife and to his family, a fault to ‘the French people, who placed in me their hope for change’ and in whom, were he to run for a publically-elected governmental position, he would in turn have placed his hope for votes. Diallo, meanwhile, would become increasingly vilified in the media as a profit-seeking liar with dubious morals and links to criminal networks.

95 I refer to the case as ‘ostensibly unusual’ because, as noted above, instances of rich, powerful white men sexually assaulting poor women of colour are, in fact, common, and part of a long tradition dating back at least as far as the white European invasion of America and the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and arguably as far back as the Crusades and beyond. See: Andrea Smith, Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide (New York: South End Press, 2005), pp. 7–10; Patricia Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 176–177; Patricia Viseur Sellers, ‘The Cultural Value of Sexual Violence’, Proceedings of the Annual Meeting (American Society of International Law), Vol. 93 (1999), 312–324 (p. 315)).

This shift in the popular perception of Diallo from abused to abuser left a void in the orthodox narrative around which much media analysis is structured, a void that was quickly filled by Strauss-Kahn himself. Although accused of two further instances of sexual assault, Strauss-Kahn became widely (although by no means exclusively) presented—particularly in the French press—as the victim of a terrible abuse.\(^{100}\) It was a position he embraced with enthusiasm, insensitivity and a statement about his treatment by the American judicial system that so closely resembles the account of a survivor's experience of rape it could almost have been consciously intended to do so: 'I was afraid. I was very, very afraid. When you are in a crunching machine like that [the US justice system], you have the impression it is crushing you to death. I felt ground under its heel, humiliated, and I wasn't able to say a word. I have suffered a violent experience.'\(^{101}\) However, as the results of the trial (whether ‘true’ or not) should not surprise given the biased and even corrupt nature of the American judicial system, so too should the reaction of the media and Strauss-Kahn himself not be considered a shocking anomaly.\(^{102}\) Disbelieving, interrogating or discrediting rape survivors

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\(^{101}\) Willsher, ‘Dominique Strauss-Kahn: Sex with Maid was a “Moral Fault”’.

\(^{102}\) That the American judicial system’s treatment of rape is biased and unjust along lines of gender, race and class has been noted, in detail, in the above footnotes. For a more general indictment of this system, its mistreatment of people marginalised by gender, sexuality, race and class, and its corruptibility and venality see the chapter ‘Unequal Before the Law’ in
or suggesting that they are somehow culpable for their own assaults are extremely common responses to rape allegations, as are automatically believing accused rapists’ accounts or treating them as victims, and each of these trends has been extensively documented.\textsuperscript{103} Indeed, the fact that these trends have been so widely analysed actually means they will not be discussed in great detail in this thesis (although, of course, their significance to the topic at large requires that they will be, at least, referred to throughout). Of far greater interest to this discussion is a trend that, whilst by no means unique to this case, is perhaps more apparent in this instance than in many others: the presentation of rape as a ‘savage’ or ‘primitive’ act that is fundamentally in conflict with the ideologies, attitudes and prescribed behaviour of the ‘civilised’ Anglophone West. This trend relates to the West’s great dualisms of civilisation/savagery and civilised/savage, dualisms which are, as will be discussed, variations on the underlying dualism of civilisation/nature that is so central to Western ideology. That these dualisms are so central to the dominant ideologies of the West means that they are central to understanding Western culture and, as such, are fundamental to a proper understanding of the Anglophone West’s rape culture. In this sense, it is essential to move away briefly from the direct consideration of sexual violence in order to outline the form and function of this dualistic thinking.

‘Dualistic Thinking’ and the ‘Discourses of Civilisation’

In \textit{Beyond Geography: The Western Spirit Against the Wilderness} (1983), Frederick Turner writes that the emergence of early civilisation in the Near East saw:

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\textsuperscript{103} For example, see: Allison and Wrightsman, \textit{Rape: The Misunderstood Crime}, pp. 98–126; Benedict, \textit{Virgin or Vamp}, pp. 17–19; Bourke, \textit{Rape}, pp. 21–53.
\end{flushleft}
the supplanting of the older, organically derived feelings of gratitude towards nature and of the vital interdependence of all things by [...] notions of force meeting force, of the enduring opposition of man and nature [...] Civilization as it emerged here was consciously walled off from organic harmonies and defined in terms of oppositions.  

What Turner is referring to here is, I propose, a definitive theme in Western thought: ‘dualistic thinking’. Ecofeminist Heather Eaton defines ‘dualistic thinking’ as ‘a manner of thinking in pairs or opposites, with one side having priority over the other.’ What this means is that ‘dualistic thinking’ firstly divides the world into supposed ‘opposites’, categories that exist as and take their definition from being the discrete antitheses of each other, and secondly, assigns one ‘side’ of the dualism the position of superiority. Perhaps the most widely analysed example of this thinking (and the one which is especially relevant in the context of my overall subject matter) is masculine/feminine. As will be discussed in more detail later in the thesis, in the dominant discourses of the West, masculinity is defined as ‘not femininity’ and femininity is defined as ‘not masculinity’; in this sense, the two ‘categories’ are defined as discrete and oppositional, each taking their definition from not being the other. Additionally, masculinity is the ‘side’ of the dualism that, in Eaton’s terms, has ‘priority over the other’: that is to say, masculinity is defined as ‘not being femininity’ but it is also defined as being implicitly superior to femininity (as femininity is defined as being implicitly inferior to masculinity).

There are numerous other dualisms underpinning Western thought. Carol J. Adams provides further examples as follows: ‘independence/interdependence; heaven/earth; [...] culture/nature; mind/body; white/“non-white”; humans/animals; humans/nature.’ Each of these dualisms plays a central role in many of the dominant ideologies of the

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107 This has been argued in feminist theory since, at least, Simone de Beauvoir’s statement that, in Western ideology, ‘humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him’. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. and ed. by H. M. Parshley (Middlesex: Penguin, 1982), p. 16.
Anglophone West. More than this, however, I suggest that the central ‘ideology of civilisation’ is an amalgamation, or distilling, of these dualisms into civilisation/nature.

As in my discussions of the definition of masculinity above, ‘civilisation’, as it is understood by the civilised, is defined by what it is not, and by its supposed superiority to what it is not: civilisation is not nature; it is a superior form of existence, beyond nature. Maintaining these dichotomous definitions of ‘civilisation’ and ‘nature’—and preserving this understanding of the superior/inferior relationship between them—is a key function of what I shall call the ‘discourses of civilisation’: those discourses that seek both to maintain and expand civilisation and to justify the frequently destructive acts committed in the name of civilisation and its expansion through the ‘civilising’ of ‘savages’, the acquisition of land, labour and resources, the transformation of living beings into commodities, property and capital. These are the discourses that rationalise the wholesale devastation of the planet by arguing that this is the necessary cost of ‘progress’, the discourses that explain warfare, invasion, colonisation as efforts to liberate and enlighten benighted peoples, to free them from their barbarous customs and bring to them a superior mode of existence. Sometimes these discourses operate brazenly, their intentions openly declared, but often, as I will discuss, they disseminate their message more insidiously, influencing both ‘civilised’ and ‘non-civilised’ people so that their own meaning is overlaid on a statement or practice, a parasite on the intended message. In short, the discourses of civilisation are those that seek, openly or surreptitiously, both to ‘police’ (often literally) ‘the borders’ between ‘civilisation’ and ‘nature’ and to insist upon the superiority of civilisation, and each of the dualisms suggested by Adams represents one of the principal means by which this is enacted.

The valuing of independence over interdependence is employed to argue that civilisation and civilised humans are not reliant upon—or even part of—

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the vast networks of life that comprise the ‘natural world’ and that, at its most
civilised, humanity has evolved beyond the rest of life on the planet. It is this
dualism that Derrick Jensen is referring to when he discusses ‘civilised’
people’s

time attempts to separate ourselves from the rest of the world, to pretend
we’re not natural, to consider ourselves exempt from the ways the
world works. Consider our utter disregard for overshooting carrying
capacity—our belief that somehow these ecological principles don’t
apply to us.\textsuperscript{110}

The dualism of ‘heaven/earth’ represents a variation on this idea: in
devaluing the earth, the material world to which all other species are bound,
in favour of heaven (ultimately, a human construct), civilisation again sets
itself apart and above, destined for a higher and greater kingdom. Val
Plumwood argues this point particularly eloquently when she notes that:

For both Platonic and Christian systems, the meaning of death is that
the meaning of human life is elsewhere, not to be found in the earth
or in human life as part of nature, but in a separate realm accessible
only to humans (and only to certain chosen of these) [...] The
salvation awaiting them beyond and above the world of nature, a fate
marked out for humans alone, confirms their difference and
separation from the world of nature, and their destiny as one apart
from that of other species.\textsuperscript{111}

The same theme is found again in the valuing of ‘mind’ over ‘body’: the body,
tied forever to the corporeal world of nature, is devalued in favour of the
mind, the tool that has allowed humanity to rise to its position of dominance
over the rest of nature, the attribute that by its very existence appears to
mark humans as self-evidently ‘superior’. Ward Churchill makes a similar
argument when he notes that:

Rationality is held by those of European intellectual inclination [as
opposed to those working in American Indian and other indigenous
traditions] [...] to be the most important ("superior") relation of all;
humans, being the only entity possessing it, are thus held ipso-facto
to be the superior beings of the universe.\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{110} Derrick Jensen, \textit{Endgame Volume 1: The Problem of Civilisation} (New York: Seven
\textsuperscript{111} Val Plumwood, \textit{Feminism and the Mastery of Nature} (London and New York: Routledge,
\textsuperscript{112} Churchill, \textit{Acts of Rebellion}, p. 249.
The dualisms of human/animals and human/nature mirror this once again, suggesting that ‘civilisation’, that is to say (in the discourses of civilisation) humanity at its furthest distance from ‘nature’ and from other species, is a far superior form of existence to anything that could conceivably be found amongst the other species of the world. ‘White/”non-white”’ can be seen as an extension of the dualism, which Adams does not suggest (and to which I will return shortly), of civilised/primitive: the ‘civilised’ West has long believed itself superior to ‘uncivilised’ peoples and, as Dean Johnson notes, the colonial era found this belief developed in white-supremacist, racial terms, with white Europeans seen as civilised and superior whilst people of colour were presented as ‘savages’ and ‘primitives’ and inherently inferior, an understanding which continues to shape prevailing perceptions of race in the contemporary Anglophone West.113

Similar projections onto gender dynamics show how the male/female dualism supports the alleged superiority of civilisation: the discourses of civilisation have long presented civilisation as a male achievement, the result of men of science, men of war, men of power. Rosemary Radford Ruether refers to this as ‘the male monopolization of culture’, noting that in the development of Western society ‘female consciousness and culture was sunk underneath the growing male power to define the culture for the whole society, socializing both males and females into this male-defined point of view’ 114 With men laying claim to civilisation, women were located, in this male-defined view, in nature, as the natural, the irrational, the uncivilised. Although many (eco)feminists have worked to reconfigure this association as a site of resistance, as a positive, liberating rejection of ‘masculine’ reason and civilisation, there is no escaping the fact that, as Plumwood notes,


To be defined as “nature” in this context is to be defined as passive, as non-agent and non-subject, as the ‘environment’ or invisible background conditions against which the ‘foreground’ achievements of reason and culture (provided typically by the white, western, male expert or entrepreneur) take place.\textsuperscript{115}

What Plumwood highlights here is that being placed in the role ‘nature’ within the discourses of civilisation is to become a resource, an object to be consumed and exchanged. In their supposed lack of reason, the ‘savage’ lack of civilised control, women become equated with that which is seen as without the subjectivity or autonomy that Western culture suggests come only with the ability to reason. Moreover, this notion of civilised reason as superior to irrationality and emotion is not only played out in gendered terms. As Laura B. Citrin, Tomi-Ann Roberts and Barbara L. Fredrickson note:

Cultural discourse on emotional control – controlling one’s allegedly less \textit{civilised} characteristics – is tied with cultural values not only about gender [...] but also about race and class. As a signifier of “civility,” emotional control has been used to distinguish between groups – men from women, whites from blacks, North American from South Americans [...] and the rich or middle class from the poor.\textsuperscript{116}

Underpinning all of the dualisms explored above, and more besides, is this notion of rational control, of civilised reason as the mark of superiority: those who reason gain subjectivity, autonomy, mastery, and those who are said to be incapable, to be too irrational, too ‘natural’, are seen as the uncivilised objects, existing to be manipulated and used.

Plumwood presents this concept of reason over nature as key to Western philosophy, containing all other systems of oppression. She writes that it is

\textsuperscript{115} Plumwood, \textit{Feminism and the Mastery of Nature}, p. 4. For what is perhaps the seminal exercise in reconfiguring the association as a site of resistance, in which the rejection of ‘civilised’, ‘masculine’ reason, objectivity and detachment actually helps shape the poetic prose, see: Griffin, \textit{Woman and Nature}.

exclusion from the master category of reason which in liberation struggles provides and explains the conceptual links between different categories of domination, and links the domination of humans with the domination of nature. The category of nature is a field of multiple exclusion and control, not only of non-humans, but of various groups of humans and aspects of human life which are cast as nature. Thus racism, colonialism and sexism have drawn their conceptual strength from casting sexual, racial and ethnic difference as closer to the animal [...] as a lesser form of humanity lacking the full measure of rationality of culture.  

In this sense, then, it can be suggested that the guiding principle, the central dualism, of Western culture is one of rationality/nature, or culture/nature: those that possess culture and rationality—those that are culture and rationality—are separate from and superior to those who are ‘only’ natural, who are excluded and defined as another part of nature. However, this, I suggest, can be developed further: rationality and culture are the tools through which the civilised and natural are differentiated and marked as subject and object, dominator and dominated. Ultimately, they too can be subsumed within a dualism of civilisation/nature for the discourses of civilisation present civilisation as the very pinnacle of rational culture (the greatest height to which humanity can currently ascend) and the very antithesis of irrationality and nature (the furthest from ‘nature’ that humanity can currently extend). Through the deployment of the culture/nature and rationality/nature dualisms, and all the dualisms that can be subsumed within them, the discourses of civilisation maintain this central understanding of civilisation and nature as discrete and opposing, and insist upon civilisation’s inherent superiority.

The Civilised/Primitive Dualism

Whilst the central dualism of civilisation/nature discussed above is, on an underlying level, essential to this thesis, there is a variant of it that is particularly relevant to the current discussion. Because the analysis here is focused primarily on human cultures, it is more expedient to look at what one might call the ‘human-cultural variation’ of civilisation/nature: the dualism of

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117 Plumwood, Feminism and the Mastery of Nature, p. 4.
‘civilised/primitive’, mentioned above in relation to the dualistic understanding of race. Civilised/primitive may be considered a variation of civilisation/nature because the dominant understanding of indigenous (‘primitive’) communities and nations in Western thought is that they are closer to a ‘natural’ condition of humanity, that they are, in fact, the as yet undeveloped product of ‘pure’ human nature. This is not to suggest that there is a single conception of what this human nature is. On the contrary, as Mary E. Clark notes, understandings of pre-contact/pre-colonial indigenous peoples are largely made of two conflicting images, generally considered to be mutually exclusive: the Rousseauian ‘noble savage’ and the Hobbesian violent, war-making brute.\(^{118}\) However, regardless of how the ‘natural’ condition of humanity is conceived of by the civilised, indigenous peoples are still understood to represent that ‘undeveloped’ state. Likewise, it is also important to note that historically—and to a lesser, but still significant, extent contemporaneously—indigenous peoples have been considered not an example of ‘natural’ humans but, as Ronald Niezen notes, as subhuman, as being either somewhere between human and animal or explicitly vermin, ‘deserving’ or ‘requiring’ extermination.\(^{119}\) However, whilst this does not place indigenous peoples closer to ‘human nature’, the notion that they are more like animals than humans places them closer to non-human nature and so, again, maintains the understanding of indigenous cultures as ‘natural’ or simply ‘nature’. In this sense, however it is approached from within the dominant understanding, the civilisation/nature dualism can become ‘civilised humanity/human nature’, and from here may become the dualism of ‘civilised/primitive’ or ‘civilised/savage’ or even ‘civilised/barbarian’. These later terms are all pejorative names that have been—and continue to be—used, largely interchangeably, by the civilised to describe indigenous cultures. This is part of an extremely long tradition in Western civilisation, stretching back at least far as the ancient Greeks from whom we get the word barbarian, used, as Anthony Pagden notes, in the form barbaros to describe someone who could not speak Greek (and so, to the Greeks, merely ‘babbled’ incoherently) and was, as such, presumed to be entirely uncivilised


and barely human.¹²⁰ The terms, and the dualistic thinking to which they relate, have, as Jack D. Forbes notes, continued through colonialism and into the neo-colonialism of the present day.¹²¹ I use them here consciously, to highlight the fact that, in the dominant ideologies of the West, the ‘opposite’ of civilisation is not ‘indigenous’ but ‘primitive’ ‘savage’ and ‘barbarian’, terms that dehumanise and devalue anyone who is not ‘civilised’.

Essential to this understanding is the notion that there is a universal timeline for all cultures—a single trajectory along which all human culture ‘progresses’—where both the ‘cavemen’ of prehistory and contemporary indigenous cultures are considered to be an early, or primitive, stage in this trajectory, heading inexorably towards the dizzying cultural heights of ‘civilisation’. Pierre Clastres provides a succinct analysis of this notion, referring to it as the ‘Western conviction [...] that history is a one-way street, that [‘primitive’] societies [...] are the image of what we have ceased to be, and that for them our culture is the image of what they have to become.’¹²² As Clastres’ statement suggests, in this perception of the world’s cultures, civilisation—particularly Western civilisation—is understood to be the end point of the one-way street, the pinnacle of this universal trajectory, or, at least, the closest humanity has yet come to it. This understanding has long coloured the West’s perception of itself and it remains a prominent trend in Western theory to this day; in recent years, a slew of texts have been published that present some variation on this idea, most notably Francis Fukuyama’s The End of History and the Last Man (1992), Dinesh D’Souza’s What’s So Great About America (2003), Pascal Bruckner’s The Tyranny of Guilt: An Essay on Western Masochism (2010), Niall Fergusson’s Civilization: The West and the Rest (2011) and Stephen Pinker’s The Better Angel of Our Nature: The Decline of Violence in History and Its Causes (2011).¹²³ With this self-perception comes, of course, the other side of the

dualism: indigenous cultures—treated as the homogenous ‘primitive peoples’—are seen as visions of the West’s ‘savage’ origins, its distant and murky past, whilst ‘achieving’ civilisation is seen as the destiny of all indigenous cultures, their glittering, inevitable, inescapable future. The assumption, then, is that ‘primitive peoples’—both as that image of the prehistoric caveman and as the Western interpretation of contemporary indigenous cultures—are the ‘raw material’, the human nature which civilisation must—and will—refine and shape and mould; the ‘primitive’, in short, becomes yet another form of ‘nature’ that civilisation must conquer and control to ‘prove’ its self-declared superiority. This dualistic understanding of human cultures underpins both how the civilised West conceives of itself and its place in the world, and the ways in which the discourses of civilisation seek to justify the forcing of civilisation (by propaganda and hollow promises or by more direct, physical coercion) onto indigenous communities.\(^\text{124}\) However, it is also essential for understanding how the discourses of civilisation influence a significant proportion of writing on rape, an influence that is well demonstrated in the media coverage of the Strauss-Kahn/Diallo case.

‘Civilisation’, ‘Savages’ and Sexual Violence

Through a series of allusions to ‘primitive’, ‘savage’ or ‘ uncivilised’ behaviour, dualistic thinking and the discourses of civilisation are highly present in the media coverage of the Strauss-Kahn/Diallo case. Regardless of whether the articles are supporting Strauss-Kahn or condemning him, the act of rape itself is repeatedly presented as an act of backward savagery, unexpected or inconceivable from a man as apparently ‘civilised’ as the Managing Director of the IMF. A particularly pertinent example of this is Maureen Dowd’s article ‘Powerful and Primitive’, published originally in *The New York Times* and reproduced in at least six other publications throughout the Anglophone

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\(^{124}\) A similar—and particularly well-phrased—assertion is made by Jensen in *Endgame Vol. 1*, pp. 22–23.
West. Describing Strauss-Kahn’s behaviour as ‘boorish and primitive’, Dowd recreates the alleged rape as a scene of bestial and savage predation with ‘a crazed, rutting, wrinkly old satyr charging naked out of a bathroom, lunging at [Diallo] and dragging her around the room, caveman-style.’

The suggestion, here, that rape is ‘uncivilised’ is readily apparent; it is bluntly stated with the descriptor ‘primitive’ and the allusions to ‘cavemen’, and heavily suggested with the bestial savagery implied by ‘crazed, rutting’, the lack of ‘civilised’ dignity in the image of a ‘wrinkly’ old man apparently debasing himself, and in describing Strauss-Kahn as a ‘satyr’, an ancient civilisation’s image of half-bestial primitive nature, untamed and untameable. Similar language—as well as a marked tendency towards francophobia—appeared in other articles, with Strauss-Kahn again presented as behaving in a primitive, savage manner.

Those proclaiming Strauss-Kahn’s innocence also used the same language and allusions, but simply reversed the implications to suggest that Strauss-Kahn—an apparent model of sophisticated and seductive civilised masculinity—was incapable of such supposedly primitive behaviour. Philosopher, journalist and long-time friend of Strauss-Kahn, Bernard-Henri Lévy stated in an interview that Strauss-Kahn:

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126 That satyrs were Ancient Greece’s image of wild and savage nature is perhaps most famously noted by Friedrich Nietzsche, although David Richards provides an engaging analysis of the ongoing use of the satyr in this symbolic role, including its influence on how the West has perceived ‘primitive’ peoples (Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy and other Writings, ed. by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 41; David Richards, Masks of Difference: Cultural Representations in Literature, Anthropology and Art (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 19–36).

bears no resemblance to this monster, this caveman, this insatiable and malevolent beast now being described nearly everywhere. Charming, seductive, yes, certainly; a friend to women and, first of all, to his own woman, naturally, but this brutal and violent individual, this wild animal, this primate, obviously no, it's absurd.\textsuperscript{128}

Clearly, these responses to Diallo’s allegations vary greatly in their opinions of Strauss-Kahn, and in their attitudes to patriarchal ideologies in general (compare, for instance, the reactionary attitude of Lévy’s statement—exemplified by his referring to Strauss-Kahn’s wife as Strauss-Kahn’s ‘own woman’—with the somewhat myopic, but still broadly feminist, tone of Dowd’s article).\textsuperscript{129} However, despite these divergences, a central assumption unites these responses: that rape is a primitive and savage act. That is to say, the notion that rape is entirely at odds with the dominant ideologies of the ‘civilised’ West is never in question; the only debate is whether Strauss-Kahn himself is ‘civilised’ or ‘primitive’. In this fashion, Western culture is subtly distanced from rape, and its potential culpability for acts of sexual violence committed by Strauss-Kahn or any other ‘civilised’ man is almost unconsciously denied. As I will argue presently, this is part of a far wider trend that pervades much analysis of sexual violence, working to disguise the possibility, not only that rape is far from at odds with the dominant ideologies of Western culture, but that it may actually be the product of them.

Because, as noted above, the dominant Western understanding of indigenous cultures and nations is that they are closer to (human) nature, the presentation of rape as something ‘primitive’ or ‘savage’ suggests that it is the product of nature and not the product of culture (and certainly not the product of Western civilised culture specifically). In this sense, the presentation of rape as ‘savage’ can be seen as a variation on the trend of ‘naturalising’ rape, of treating sexual violence as a ‘natural’ and unavoidable aspect of ‘male’ sexuality. Although this trend is discussed briefly in the introduction, it is important to reiterate that it extends beyond the scope of


\textsuperscript{129} I refer to Dowd’s position as myopic because, as will be discussed presently, the article appears to suggest—entirely inaccurately—that America is not patriarchal, has little in the way of a rape problem and has a judicial system in which ‘justice will be done without regard to wealth, class or privilege’ (Dowd, ‘Powerful and Primitive’).
Thornhill and Palmer’s *A Natural History of Rape*: as Peggy Reeves Sanday notes, the view that rape is a natural expression of a supposed ‘male sexuality’ has a wide range of adherents and finds voice in both popular and specialist discourses, in diverse forms ranging from the simplistic ‘boys will be boys’ attitudes that abound in mainstream media to the complex reasoning of sexological studies.\(^{130}\) It also, as I will discuss in more detail presently, has a more insidious form that, whilst not necessarily working to excuse rape, does manipulate the use of sexual violence in order to support and perpetuate ‘civilisation’ and many of the West’s dominant power structures. To begin addressing this insidious form, it is important to realise that the naturalising of rape is part of a far larger trend in which, as Michael Parenti notes, certain acts or modes of behaviour are presented as being ‘natural’ or universal to ‘human nature’ in order to support certain political aims.\(^{131}\) These aims may be to excuse the act itself by arguing that it is ‘only natural’ and so is exempt from any code of ethics or morals, or to support and celebrate civilisation by arguing that, although the act itself may be undesirable, it is a product of (human) nature and not of (civilised) culture and that civilisation represents the best means of ‘challenging’ nature and addressing the undesirable act.

The first of these aims is commonly seen when those who benefit from a system or act which causes damage or suffering to others seek to justify their involvement in, or profit from, the system or act by suggesting that it is a product of ‘human nature.’ Amongst the most widely noted examples of this are assertions that war and capitalism (or the all too common combination of the two) are merely contemporary expressions of ‘natural’ instincts or drives, expressed by those who seek to justify their involvement in war-profiteering or capitalist exploitation.\(^{132}\) In the context of sexual violence, this aim is most readily identified in the many variations of the ‘boys will be boys’ defence that


states that rape is the ‘normal’—perhaps even admirable—behaviour of ‘red-blooded’ males, the inevitable result of men acting like ‘real men.’ This ‘defence’ is frequently seen as a means to excuse the actions of soldiers or fraternity-affiliated college students and school sports teams accused of rape. A notable example of this with regard to soldiers is Fox News commentator Liz Trotta’s response to a 2010 report that noted that cases of sexual violence in military service academies had increased by 64% since the previous year. Trotta dismissed the significance of this extensive, arguably institutionalised, sexual violence with the statement ‘what did they expect? These people are in close contact’ and used this notion that such rapes are inevitable to support her belief that there should be no funding for programs ‘to support women in the military who are now being raped too much.’

The same argument as used to defend privileged school or college sports stars also yields a particularly notable example in the notorious ‘Glen Ridge rape case’. In this case, the attorney defending the group of school-age athletes accused (and later convicted) of raping a developmentally disabled female student actually said in his opening statement that ‘[b]oys will be boys. Pranksters. Foolarounds. Do crazy things. Experiment with life and disregard their parents. Boys will be boys.’

133 Of course, this explanation of rape relies on the assumption that the current ‘hegemonic model of masculinity’—the mode of masculine behaviour that is currently recognised as ‘acting like a real man’—is actually an expression of an innate ‘manliness’ or a stable, universal ‘masculine essence’. The inaccuracy of this assumption, and its relation to sexual violence, will be addressed later in the chapter and, in more detail, in the third chapter.


135 For video and transcribed statements, see: ‘Fox News’ Liz Trotta On Women Raped In Military: “What Did They Expect? These People Are In Close Contact” (VIDEO)’ (13/2/2012) [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/13/fox-news-liz-trotta-rape_n_1274018.html] [accessed 25 November 2012]. Trotta did not expand on this to suggest the point—if any—at which she believes the number of times a female soldier is raped ceases acceptable and becomes ‘too much’. For further discussion of this ‘defence’ of military rape, see: T.S. Nelson, For Love of Country: Confronting Rape and Sexual Harassment in the U.S. Military (Binghampton, NY: The Haworth Maltreatment and Trauma Press, 2002), p. 107; Theodore Nadelson, Trained to Kill: Soldiers at War (Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 2005), p. 154.


137 Robert Lipsyte, ‘Must Boys Always Be Boys?’ (12/3/1993) [http://www.nytimes.com/1993/03/12/sports/must-boys-always-be-boys.html] [accessed 10 March 2012]). For further discussion of this ‘defence’ of privileged school or college sports
means the only examples, and the ‘justification’ of rapes committed by soldiers and privileged students are not the only scenarios in which this use of the naturalising of rape is to be found. Rather, it is a widely applied argument that is frequently employed in media, judicial and popular responses to sexual violence.\textsuperscript{138} In line with this, this particular use of the naturalising of rape is a significant issue, both for the ways in which it is used to support sexual violence, and for the fact that it highlights how conservative presentations of ‘human nature’ can be utilised to fortify pre-existing power structures. Although I will return to this matter in more detail in the third chapter, it is not central to the current discussion.\textsuperscript{139} Of more immediate significance to my analysis is the second use of the naturalising of rape: to argue not only that civilised Western culture is not culpable for the West’s rape problem, but that it is actually the socio-cultural system best suited to ending rape throughout the world. This application of the naturalising of rape is important for several reasons, including its use in the creation of civilised...
images of ‘the savage’ and the part it has played in ‘justifying’ Western colonialism and neo-colonialism; however, most pressing for the current discussion is the insidious influence this use of the naturalising of rape has had on some Western feminism, and it is to this that the analysis now turns.

**Western Feminism, Naturalised Rape and the ‘Primitive Rapist’**

Anthropologist Christine Helliwell raises the issue of the naturalisation of rape in Western feminism with a pertinent observation about the ways in which many Western feminists respond to violence against women in other (supposedly less civilised) cultures. She notes that:

> Within Western feminist discourse [...] practices deemed oppressive to women that are not commonly found in the West, such as clitoridectomies and sati, are explained as resulting from the barbarism of Third World peoples, while oppressive practices that are common in the West, such as rape, are explained in universalistic terms.¹⁴⁰

What Helliwell highlights here, although she does not describe it in these terms, is the unconscious influence of the discourses of civilisation on Western feminist theory. As suggested earlier, the influence of the discourses of civilisation is insidious: supporting ‘civilisation’ may not be the primary, intended message of an influenced text, but it creeps in nevertheless, underneath and around the primary message, warping and distorting the intended meaning. This insidious mutating of meaning is highly pronounced in the feminist discourse Helliwell is discussing: underneath the primary, intended message that practices such as female genital cutting or self-immolation are oppressive to women is the message that the civilised West is superior to the primitive Majority World because it does not practise such ‘barbaric’ customs.¹⁴¹ This underlying message, like many of the messages disseminated by the discourses of civilisation, has a self-fulfilling circular logic that states that the West does not practice such customs because it is

¹⁴¹ I use ‘Majority World’ here in place of Helliwell’s ‘Third World’ in order to be consistent with the rest of my thesis. It is not intended as a criticism or ‘correction’ of Helliwell’s choice of phrase.
civilised and that it is civilised because it does not practice such customs (and simultaneously, that the Majority World practices such customs because it is savage and primitive, and that it is savage and primitive because it practices such customs).

The influence of the discourses of civilisation in this area is a serious issue that results in many Western feminists supporting neo-colonialism in the belief that they are supporting women’s rights or, as Chandra Talpade Mohanty notes, presenting Majority World women as a monolithic victim class, devoid of all agency, whilst perpetuating the view of Western civilisation as a superior mode of existence.\textsuperscript{142} Similarly, the notion that women in other (‘primitive’) countries need to be ‘liberated’ from the ‘barbarity’ of their native cultures has often played a significant role in Western rationalisations of imperialism and warfare. Amongst the most recent examples is the employment of feminist rhetoric to justify the Western war against Afghanistan; as Andrea Smith reports, Laura Bush actually stated, in defence of the war, that ‘[t]he fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women.’\textsuperscript{143} As award-winning author and activist, Arundhati Roy countered: ‘We’re being asked to believe that the US marines are actually on a feminist mission’.\textsuperscript{144} Stated like this, the concept could easily be read as absurd, but people did believe it, amongst them many Western feminists. As Smith notes, the view articulated by Laura Bush (and ridiculed by Roy) was shared by many mainstream Western feminists, even after groups such as the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) released statements condemning the war and describing it as just another example of American imperialism.\textsuperscript{145} This is a particularly clear example of the influence of the discourses of civilisation on feminist theory, where the rhetoric of ‘women’s liberation’ is mutated by the discourses of civilisation into imperial propaganda. This in itself is a significant issue and one that has long characterised the uncomfortable intersection of Western

\textsuperscript{143} Laura Bush quoted in Smith, \textit{Conquest}, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{144} Arundhati Roy, ‘Not Again’ (30/9/2002) \texttt{<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/sep/30/usa.iraq>} [accessed 29 November 2012].
feminism and Western colonial ideologies. However, Helliwell's observations above also highlight an issue of even greater significance to this discussion: the universalising of rape in Western feminisms.

Whilst non-Western practices are regularly cited (intentionally or unintentionally) as examples of the superiority of ‘Western civilisation’, issues such as rape—which very few feminists would argue is not a serious problem in the West—present a more complex issue. As Helliwell notes, such practices cannot be explained as the product of Majority World (or ‘primitive’) barbarism as they are too widely present in the civilised West. Responding to this fact can be problematic, for if feminist discourse is influenced by the discourses of civilisation (and the extent of this varies considerably) then there is potentially a conflict between the intended message (for example, that rape is a terrible violation and abuse) and the underlying discourses-of-civilisation message (that civilisation is superior to nature/primitive societies). Put simply, the argument that an atrocity such as rape can be regularly, indeed routinely, practised in the civilised West challenges the idealised image of civilised life that the discourses of civilisation are supposed to present. The only way in which this conflict can be resolved without endangering the civilised/primitive or civilisation/nature dualisms is if rape is distanced from, or even presented as unrelated to, civilised Western culture. That is to say, the only way in which rape can be presented as a serious problem without implicating Western civilisation is by suggesting that it stems not from a problem inherent in Western culture but a problem inherent in ‘human nature’. As Helliwell observes, the primary way in which this is achieved is by explaining rape in ‘universalistic terms’: that is, by suggesting that rape is, and has always been, a serious problem across all cultures and not just with the civilised West.

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Being constantly immersed in the discourses of civilisation (and to live in a 'civilised' culture is to be constantly immersed in these discourses) means that one is ceaselessly, in uncountable ways, being informed that civilisation is a superior form of existence founded upon equality and justice and a high quality of life for all. Simultaneously, to live in a civilised is also to have it ceaselessly suggested that life outside the boundaries of civilisation is a pitiful and savage struggle, characterised by barbaric violence and the primal, animalistic (and, certainly, 'un-chivalrous') abuse of women: in short, a life, to quote Thomas Hobbes' famously contemptuous description of 'the natural condition of mankind', that is 'solitary, poore [sic], nasty, brutish, and short.'

Conditioned by such discourses, it is not at all surprising that many people—including 'civilised' Western feminists—come to view rape as universal and 'natural'. A return to Helliwell's critique highlights how this conditioning manifests in some feminist discourse. She writes that:

> Because within Western feminist discourse rape is depicted as a shockingly barbaric practice [...] there is a tendency to view it as atavistic. Because the practice is widespread in “civilised” Western countries, it is assumed to pervade all other societies as well, since these latter are understood as located closer to the savagery end of the evolutionary ladder.

Through enculturation into the belief that civilisation represents the least violent, least 'savage' form of social organization, it becomes assumed that any violent, 'savage' practice found within civilisation—in this case rape—must be universal, an aspect of human nature that even civilisation (the antithesis of nature and the natural) has not (yet) managed to contain and control.

This belief is by no means limited to assumptions about rape. Fromm, for example, in his seminal text *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973), makes similar observations about (equally inaccurate) civilised assumptions about warfare: 'Almost everybody reasons: if civilised man is so warlike, how much more warlike must primitive man have been!' (Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, p. 206).
(again, yet) but the overall implication is still that civilisation is superior to ‘savage’ nature because, apparently in the name of equality, women’s rights and ending sexual violence, civilisation’s aim is to dominate the violent (human) nature that causes rape. In this sense, what Helliwell discusses is a ‘win-win’ scenario for the discourses of civilisation: aspects of other cultures that are considered negative by dominant Western ideologies and that do not exist in Western culture are considered a sign of savagery and are attributed to (human) nature, while aspects that are considered negative by dominant Western ideologies but do exist in Western culture are presented as human universals and so are also attributed to (human) nature. In other words, practices such as female genital cutting and sati are presented as not happening in the West because of civilisation, and rape is presented as happening in the West in spite of civilisation. In this sense, the discourses of civilisation, through their pervasive influences on Western theorists, are successful in preserving the dualisms of civilisation/nature and civilised/primitive, and rape remains naturalised as the unavoidable product of primitive savagery and (human) nature. An interesting, and in some respects challenging, example of this process—albeit in a modified form where the Majority World ‘savage’ is replaced by the prehistoric ‘savage’—can be found in Susan Brownmiller’s speculative discussion of rape’s prehistoric origins.

**Giving Rape its (Pre)History: Brownmiller’s Uncivilised Origins of Rape**

Brownmiller’s seminal text *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* (1975) examines sexual violence throughout (primarily Western) history, noting how patterns of attitudes, practices and gender dynamics that encourage or legitimise rape can be traced from some of the earliest historical documents through to twentieth-century legal practices and popular culture.\(^{150}\) Indeed, the final lines of the text note that ‘my purpose in this book has been to give

\(^{150}\) It should, however, be noted that this does not form quite the unbroken narrative that Brownmiller seems to suggest, largely jumping from early religious texts to the 19th and 20th centuries with the period in between assumed to follow the same patterns.
rape its history. Now we must deny it a future’.\textsuperscript{151} This is, of course, an extremely noble aim, and the text itself remains in many respects remarkable, not least for the significant role it played in bringing feminist analysis to the forefront of research on sexual violence. However, the text is also quite profoundly influenced by the discourses of the civilisation. In part, this influence manifests in the scapegoating of men marginalised by hierarchies of race and class as archetypal rapists (an issue that will be picked up further into this chapter). More relevant to the current discussion, however, the influence of the discourses of civilisation also manifests in the presentation of rape as something natural and primitive. This is primarily due to the fact that, as well as charting the presence of rape through history, Brownmiller also explores what she considers to be the origins of rape in \textit{prehistory}. The introduction to the text contains a speculative scenario detailing the possible forms that the first and second rapes ever committed may have taken. Although clearly speculative and not intended as factual observations, Brownmiller nevertheless provides in this introductory section the fundamental basis of her analysis of rape, the underlying presentation of sexual violence as a part of (human) nature that the civilised must struggle to contain or conquer.

Setting the scenario in ‘the violent landscape inhabited by primitive woman and man’, Brownmiller describes a prehistoric man’s assault of a woman, a woman who has ‘a prescient vision of her right to her own physical integrity’ and who ‘after a thunderbolt of recognition that this particular incarnation of hairy, two-legged hominid was not the Homo sapiens with whom she would like to freely join parts [...] might have [...] picked up the first stone and hurled it.’\textsuperscript{152} In this scenario, where the woman fights for her right to her own bodily integrity, Brownmiller indicates quite clearly why the woman wishes to defend herself but fails to give any suggestion as to why the man decides that he wishes to rape her, or what makes him conclude that she is in fact—to

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., p. 14.
borrow a phrase from Smith—‘rapable’. However, slightly earlier in the introduction, Brownmiller has already outlined an explanation for this. She presents an ‘accident of biology, an accommodation requiring the locking together of two separate parts, penis into vagina’ as holding the key, stating that:

We cannot work around the fact that in terms of human anatomy the possibility of forcible intercourse exists. This single factor may have been sufficient to have caused the creation of a male ideology of rape. When men discovered that they could rape, they proceeded to do it.

The answer for Brownmiller, then, lies simply in the fact that it is physically possible for a man to rape a woman and that simply realising this was enough not just to prompt a few isolated acts of rape but an entire ‘male ideology of rape’. In short, in this account, rape is once again represented as entirely natural, the inevitable result of ‘primitive woman and man’ coexisting in a ‘violent landscape’: no questions are asked about motivation, no human agency or cultural influence is suggested; there is simply a savage and natural male drive to commit rape.

Whilst this assumed naturalness and failure to ask the reasons why a man may rape or a woman may be considered rapable is already resembling the naturalising of rape outlined previously, this becomes more complex as Brownmiller’s scenario progresses to the ‘second rape’. She writes:

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153 Smith, Conquest, p. 3. The term ‘rapable’ and the processes by which people become rapable objects in the dominant ideologies of the West will be discussed in more detail in the second chapter.


155 Note here the obvious influence of Hobbes’ view of ‘the natural condition of mankind’.
The dim perception that had entered prehistoric woman’s consciousness [that she had a right to physical integrity] must have had an equal but opposite reaction in the mind of her male assailant. For if the first rape was an unexpected battle founded on the first woman’s refusal, the second rape was indubitably planned. Indeed, one of the earliest forms of male bonding must have been the gang rape of one woman by a band of marauding men. This accomplished, rape became not only a male prerogative, but man’s basic weapon of force against woman, the principal agent of his will and her fear. His forcible entry into her body, despite her physical protestations and struggle, became the vehicle of his victorious conquest over her being the ultimate test of his superior strength, the triumph of his manhood.\textsuperscript{156}

The failure to enquire into why a man may be motivated to rape and a woman may be considered rapable is modified here. Brownmiller begins to offer some reasons why the men may desire to commit rape. However, these are, in fact, simply the reasons often associated with contemporary rape in the West—preoccupations with ‘victorious conquest’, ‘superior strength’ and triumphant manhood—each stripped of their cultural context and projected onto prehistory. What Brownmiller now fails to ask is precisely why these supposed motivators are present, what cultural components create a culture in which conquering, strength and triumph are desirable attributes for men.\textsuperscript{157}

Like the notion that ‘male’ and ‘female’ genitals automatically produce rapists and rapable victims, Brownmiller suggests that the ‘motivation’ to rape is simply a pre-cultural (and therefore, to follow the dualistic thinking outlined above, ‘natural’) product of homogenised male sexuality and female vulnerability. Once again, rape is rendered a product not of culture (and certainly not of civilisation) but of (human) nature and primitive savagery, and, once again, the reasons for this can be located in the influence of the discourses of civilisation. The reason that Brownmiller assumes that rape would not only occur in prehistory but would occur in forms that so closely mirror rape in the contemporary West is much the same as the reason that the feminist discourse discussed by Helliwell assumes that rape is universal: if rape is present in civilised cultures—assumed to be the model of social organisation furthest away from primitive, violent savagery—then it must surely have existed in the ‘violent landscape’ of prehistory amongst those

\textsuperscript{156} Brownmiller, \textit{Against Our Will}, p. 14.

\textsuperscript{157} This issue will be explored in more detail in the discussion of masculinities and the motivation to rape in the third chapter.
'natural' humans as yet untamed, unimproved by civilisation, just as surely as it must occur amongst the ‘primitive’ people of the Majority World or indigenous communities. This assumption has serious implications for the rest of the text, laying down a foundation of naturalised rape that problematises Brownmiller’s later discussion of the cultural aspects of rape.

Because this opening explanation of rape denies any cultural influence, presenting the origins of rape as the inevitable product of un-civilised humanity living in the ‘violent landscape’ of prehistory, Brownmiller’s later critiques of contemporary ‘civilised’ cultures are largely undermined. Brownmiller certainly does critique civilised cultures (particularly Western, and especially American, cultures), suggesting that it has a serious rape problem that is largely institutionalised and organised so as to further patriarchal power and privilege. However, by initially presenting rape as something innate and biologically determined—a product of (human) nature—the critique becomes an analysis of how civilisation has responded to pre-cultural ‘natural’ rape and not to how it culturally produces and encourages rape. Indeed, Brownmiller does not suggest that rape in early Western civilisations was in any respect the product of the civilised ideologies and ways of life per se; rather she suggests that rape pre-existed the rise of those civilisations and that they simply formalised and organised a pre-established, natural male proclivity towards sexual violence. The role of civilisation in relation to rape is reduced to simply organising male power structures around the threat of rape, and gradually making them more refined, complex and formal. Brownmiller writes that ‘the price of woman’s protection by some men against an abuse by others was steep [...] those who did assume the historic burden of her protection—later formalised as husband, father, brother, clan [...] reduced her status to that of chattel’.158 She furthers this position by adding that ‘it seems eminently sensible to hypothesize that man’s violent capture and rape of the female led first to the establishment of a rudimentary mate-protectorate and then sometime later to the full-blown male solidification of power, the patriarchy’.159 Quite evidently, the role of ‘civilisation’ here is simply profiting from rape, organising male

158 Brownmiller, Against Our Will, p. 17. Italics in original.
159 Ibid.
power structures around pre-existing sexual violence. In this sense, Brownmiller recreates the universal trajectory of ‘progress’ discussed earlier, where rape originates in the (human) nature of the uncivilised and continues in an unbroken timeline from this point, heading, presumably, to the high-point of progress—of civilisation—at which we may ‘deny it a future’.¹⁶⁰ That she also critiques how civilisation has responded to this is not the issue; the issue is that Brownmiller identifies rape as a natural, pre-cultural and pre-civilised occurrence that civilised society must progress away from. In this last respect, Brownmiller’s position is actually surprisingly close to that found in Dowd’s ‘Powerful and Primitive’ discussed earlier, differing only in the stage of the trajectory of ‘progress’ that American society is considered to have reached.

**Beyond Savagery: Brownmiller, Dowd and ‘Progress’**

The similarity between Brownmiller and Dowd’s understandings of ‘the primitive’ and the supposed naturalness of rape is, perhaps, not immediately obvious; the two writers do, after all, differ significantly in their treatment of contemporary American society. Both writers do identify rape as an aspect of primitive (human) nature, but for Brownmiller the natural drive to rape is still entirely present in contemporary society (albeit in a more formal, refined and organised form) whilst Dowd takes what is effectively a ‘postfeminist’ position, treating rape as something that has already been largely suppressed, contained or conquered. That is to say, whilst Brownmiller suggests that the task awaiting feminism is to ‘deny [rape] a future’, for Dowd this struggle is effectively already achieved, at least within the supposedly democratic and just civilisation of America. This is particularly evident in Dowd’s description of the Strauss-Kahn/Diallo case not as yet another case of civilised abuse and exploitation but as a victory for (American) civilisation, as, in fact, ‘an inspiring story about America, where even a maid can have dignity and be listened to when she accuses one of the most powerful men in

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 404.
the world of being a predator’. Even more than this, Dowd also sets up false dualisms of civilised/primitive that suggest that American civilisation (and, presumably, only American civilisation) holds the key to ending rape. She does this initially by comparing America to France, suggesting that the French are far behind America on the trajectory of progress, unable to match or support America’s advanced, civilised justice system. In an awkwardly-phrased outburst of unrestrained patriotism (and, of course, Francophobia and pro-civilisation propaganda) she writes: ‘while the French excoriated the American system of justice […] Americans could pride themselves on the sound of the “bum-bum” “Law & Order: SVU” gong sounding, the noise that heralds that justice will be done without regard to wealth, class or privilege’. The message here, of course, is that France is in some way ‘backward’, closer to the primitive law of ‘might-is-right’ than the highly progressed American civilisation.

However, this dualism is subtle and restrained compared with the one Dowd establishes between America and Diallo’s home country of Guinea. Summarising Diallo’s experiences in a somewhat crude and biased manner, Dowd writes that:

The young woman escaped horrors in her native Guinea, a patriarchal society where rape is widespread and used as a device of war, a place where she would have been kicked to the curb if she tried to take on a powerful man. When she faced the horror here, she had a recourse.

The suggested superiority of (American) civilisation to Guinean ‘savagery’ is readily apparent here: in Guinea, Dowd suggests, rape is accepted and tolerated whilst in America it is considered a terrible crime. Within this is the implication that, in contrast to Guinea, America is not patriarchal, does not have a serious rape problem, and does have a fair and just judicial system: after all, Dowd does not write that Diallo ‘escaped horrors in her native Guinea, a patriarchal society where rape is widespread and used as a device of war’ by coming to face fresh horrors in America, a patriarchal society

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161 Dowd, ‘Powerful and Primitive’. See previous footnotes for discussion of the inaccuracy and unintentional irony of Dowd’s statement.
162 Dowd, ‘Powerful and Primitive’.
163 Ibid.
where rape is widespread and used as a device of war. Such a statement, had it been made, would have been entirely valid, not only for Diallo but for the experiences of many women living in America. As I have indicated previously, Diallo’s experiences as a refugee/immigrant are far from unusual; although receiving little media coverage or discussion in mainstream (white, non-immigrant dominated) feminist analysis, it is still widely noted that female immigrants routinely face the horrors of institutionalised sexual violence in America, as well as the other indignities and abuses less specific to their gender.\footnote{164}{For example, see: Saucedo, ‘INS Raids and How Immigrant Women are Fighting Back’; Ritchie, ‘Law Enforcement Violence Against Women of Color’; Williams, ‘Strauss-Kahn is Accused, but it’s the Maid’s Word on Trial’; ‘Sylvanna Falcón, “National Security” and the Violation of Women: Militarized Border Rape at the US-Mexico Border’, in Color of Violence: The Incite! Anthology, ed. by Incite! Women of Color Against Violence (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2006), pp. 119–129).}

Even more widely noted is the fact that contemporary America is profoundly patriarchal in its social, political and cultural organisation (and that this patriarchy intersects with white supremacy, classism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism and other systems of oppression).\footnote{165}{For example, see: Susan Faludi, Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women (London: Chatto and Windus, 1992), pp. 5–15; Michael Parenti, Land of Idols: Political Mythology in America (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1994), pp. 142–156; Color of Violence: The Incite! Anthology, ed. by Incite! Women of Color Against Violence (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2006).}

Likewise, that rape ‘as a device of war’ has been employed as a routine part of American military practice, from the original colonisation of continent through to the present day, is also well documented.\footnote{166}{For example, see: Smith, Conquest, pp. 7–23; Brownmiller, Against Our Will, pp. 86–113; Huibin Amelia Chew, ‘What’s Left? After “Imperialist Feminist” Hijackings’, in Feminism and War: Confronting US Imperialism, ed. by Robin L. Riley, Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Minnie Bruce Pratt (London and New York: Zed Books, 2008), pp. 75–90 (pp. 77–79); Linda Bickerstaff, Violence Against Women: Public Health and Human Rights (New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 2010), pp. 65–73; Gina Marie Weaver, Ideologies of Forgetting: Rape in the Vietnam War (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010).}

Considered in light of these facts, Dowd’s dualistic approach, in which American civilisation is held up as the single true beacon of liberty amidst the ‘savagery’ of the ‘dark continent’ and the corrupt decadence of Europe, is severely undermined.

Moreover, despite Dowd’s ‘civilised/primitive’ comparisons of America and France and America and Guinea, she is in reality only comparing civilisation and civilisation each time. France is, of course, a part of the civilised West, and shares common ideological, cultural and political roots, and similar contemporary neoliberal, capitalist social organisation with America. It also,
contrary to Dowd’s insinuations, matches the general trends of rape incidence, reportage and conviction found throughout the West.¹⁶⁷ Guinea, too, although not part of the Western ‘First World’, can largely be considered to fall most accurately into the category of ‘civilised’; only gaining independence from French colonial rule in 1958, Guinea has a long legacy of ‘civilised’ Western influence and control, a legacy that includes financial ‘support’ and pressure to privatise (including, appropriately, from the IMF). Western involvement in extracting the country’s great mineral wealth and the West training and equipping the Guinean military (including troops who would later be involved in a massacre and mass rape in 2009).¹⁶⁸ In this sense, Guinea can certainly be considered to be both ‘civilised’ and greatly influenced by the civilised West specifically. Moreover, without diminishing the atrocities committed in Guinea, the image of the country as a rape-ridden bastion of corrupt patriarchy largely develops from the massacre and mass rape of pro-democracy demonstrators committed by Guinean military forces on September 28th 2009.¹⁶⁹ This is, of course, an extremely significant event and a severe indictment of the Guinean military and government (and, presumably, also reflects some degree of institutionalised tolerance of rape). However, when one considers the extremely high incidence of rape in America (in excess of a million cases per year) and the level to which the American military, police and other state bodies are known to use, or tolerate the use of, sexual violence, Dowd’s dualistic approach is, again, undermined.¹⁷⁰

Regardless of these contradictions and inconsistencies, however, Dowd still presents contemporary American civilised culture as holding the key to

¹⁶⁷ See, in relation to the other Western statistics discussed in the introduction, the fully-referenced report by French group ‘SOS Femmes’: ‘Rape: The Statistics’<http://www.sosfemmes.com/english_rape/rape_statistics.htm> [accessed 20 February 2012].
¹⁷⁰ See the statistical analysis of rape incidence on pp. 12–15 of this thesis.
ending sexual violence. This, as noted above, is clearly in direct opposition to Brownmiller’s presentation of American culture as characterised by high levels of both rape and rape-supportive attitudes. However, despite these differences, there remains a unifying strand between Dowd and Brownmiller: both assume that the ‘starting point’ of rape in civilised cultures can be located in primitive (human) nature. Following from this, they each propose that civilised ‘progress’ away from this condition holds the answer to ending sexual violence. Their only significant point of conflict is, as suggested earlier, whether or not America has already ‘progressed’ far enough, or become ‘civilised’ enough, to achieve this aim. In this sense, we can read Brownmiller’s position discussed above as a less blinkered version of Dowd’s own stance: Dowd thinks that American culture has already reached the stage where it can end rape, whereas Brownmiller believes that it is still a long way from achieving this, but they both share the position that rape originates in nature and is or can be ended by civilisation. For each, rape is a part of (human) nature, the raw material that must be refined and moulded by civilisation to create rape-free equality, a presumed higher stage on the trajectory away from primitive savagery and towards civilised harmony.

However, despite how Dowd and Brownmiller present supposed ‘primitives’, it has been widely noted that many indigenous, ‘uncivilised’ cultures and nations are or have been—prior to sustained contact with, or direct ‘civilising’ by, the West—either free from rape or characterised by remarkably low incidence of rape. This fact contradicts the understanding of rape originating in a primitive (human) nature and unavoidably provokes the question of why, if some cultures are effectively free from rape, the civilised Anglophone West has such a ubiquitously high incidence of sexual violence. A small number of theorists have attempted to undermine this question by challenging the assertion that rape incidence varies significantly between cultures. Perhaps most notable among them is Craig Palmer, co-author of A Natural History of Rape, who provides a brief critique of ethnographic data pertaining to rape in order to support his own socio-biological explanation of sexual violence and provide an argument in support of maintaining ‘patriarchal traditions’.

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Although Palmer’s analysis does highlight some pertinent issues with the tasks of defining rape and collecting data across cross-cultural samples, and provides valid critiques of several of the examples, other of his critiques are composed of weak, ‘straw man’ arguments and conjecture—in particular, the implication that the presence of a single reported rape somehow proves a culture to be prone to sexual violence—and his study covers only a fraction of the theorists making such claims and even fewer of the cultures to which such claims are attached. Moreover, Palmer’s argument is reliant on demonstrating that rape has occurred at least once in the societies discussed, whereas the majority of claims he is attempting to discredit state simply that rape incidence is significantly lower in certain societies and that there are cultural patterns that can be extrapolated from this. For these reasons, I suggest that Palmer’s critique does little to discredit the claims that there is a significant variation in rape incidence cross-culturally and, as such, fails to discredit the question these claims raise: why, if some cultures have very low rates of sexual violence, is the Anglophone West’s rape incidence so remarkably high? As I will argue, the answer to this question lies ultimately in the civilised culture of the Anglophone West itself.

Culture and Rape

If rape cannot be said to be a product of (human) nature, as suggested above, then it must logically be considered a product of culture. Certainly, the majority of research concerned with sexual violence suggests that rape is a cultural phenomenon, a product of practices and ideologies, of political structures and social organisation. Joanna Bourke provides a concise summary of this broad position when she notes that, far from being the universally occurring results of a homogenous ‘human sexuality’, ‘rape and sexual violence are deeply rooted in specific political, economic and cultural environments.’\textsuperscript{172} Across the full range of socio-cultural explanations of rape, precisely what these environments are remains a point of contention, but the overarching notion that they exist—and are key to understanding sexual violence—is constant. In Western feminist analysis, the West’s twin traditions

\textsuperscript{172} Bourke, Rape: A History from 1860 to the Present, p. 7. Italics in original.
of cultural misogyny and patriarchal social organisation are considered to be key aspects of the environments in which Western rape is rooted.\textsuperscript{173} Again, precisely how misogyny and patriarchy relate to rape is far from universally agreed, but feminist analysis is united in the assertion that they do relate, and that they are profoundly significant to the study of, and fight against, sexual violence. Indeed, as Helliwell notes, a ‘focus on rape as stemming from difference in social position [between men and women] is what distinguishes feminist from other kinds of accounts of rape.’\textsuperscript{174}

However, as well as identifying the central role of cultural misogyny and patriarchal social organisation to the West’s rape problem, feminist analysis has also explored the influence of other aspects of Western culture(s). One of the key areas targeted in this respect is cultural acceptance (and/or celebration) of violence and warfare. A marked correlation between cultural acceptance of violence and cultural acceptance of rape has been noted in a great many feminist texts, from the popular to the academically rigorous.\textsuperscript{175}

The majority of such analysis is accurate and insightful; however, there are certain limitations that pervade many—although by no means all—texts. These limitations—which, as will be discussed, largely revolve around a failure to explore the issues underlying violence and militarism—also illuminate key aspects of the current discussion. Two theories, in particular,

\textsuperscript{173} It should be noted that, whilst she locates the origins of rape in a ‘natural’ male proclivity to rape, Brownmiller also places great significance on the relationship between (patriarchal) culture and rape. Suggesting that ‘the inherent female incapacity to protect’ left women no choice but to seek the protection of some men from rape by other men, Brownmiller presents patriarchal culture and social organisation as coalescing around systems of threat and protection predicated on men’s supposedly natural desire to rape (Brownmiller, \textit{Against Our Will}, pp. 16–17). In this sense, rape is suggested to be both a natural instinct and a cultural/patriarchal act through which male dominance and patriarchal culture are organised and formalised. It is the latter element (the cultural, rather than the natural, explanation) of \textit{Against Our Will} that has been most influential and is most often reflected—and indeed, cited—in feminist analysis of rape. Nevertheless, given the enduring popularity of the text, it seems impossible that the notion of naturalised rape and the discourses of civilisation that permeate the text do not continue to influence contemporary readers. It is in this sense that Brownmiller’s use of ‘the natural’ and ‘the primitive’ that I critiqued previously remains a relevant and significant subject of enquiry.

\textsuperscript{174} Helliwell, “It’s Only a Penis”, P. 794.

\textsuperscript{175} For example, see respectively: Inga Muscio, \textit{Rose: Love in Violent Times} (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2010) and Peggy Reeves Sanday, ‘The Socio-Cultural Context of Rape: A Cross-Cultural Study’, in \textit{Gender Violence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives}, ed. by Laura O’Toole, Jessica R. Schiffman and Margie L. Kiter Edwards, 2nd edn (New York and London: New York University Press, 1997), pp. 52–66. It should be noted that no value judgement is intended by the terms ‘popular’ and ‘academically rigorous’; both popular and academic styles of writing have produced hugely significant and profoundly inspiring works addressing rape (of which Muscio and Sanday’s works are noteworthy examples).
are useful in this respect: Brownmiller’s discussion of the ‘the typical American rapist’ and ‘the subculture of violence’ and Eileen L. Zurbriggen’s analysis of connections between masculinity, militarism and rape. Brownmiller’s discussion, although highlighting the importance of exploring wider cultural influences, is a notable example of how such analysis can also provide reactionary support for the dominant culture through the scapegoating of marginalised groups. Arguing that the ‘typical’ rapist is a working-class or Black man—whilst simultaneously suggesting that powerful white men do not commit rape—Brownmiller presents rape-supportive ideologies as the product of a subcultural rejection of the dominant culture, effectively denying the culpability of Western culture at large. Zurbriggen’s study, in contrast, draws important correlations between rape and (other) practices that are sanctioned by the dominant culture, beginning the process of implicating the dominant culture itself in the West’s rape problem. However, Zurbriggen’s study also reprises some of the issues that mar Brownmiller’s analysis, suggesting that a specific aspect of the dominant culture is central to its relation to rape, and so redeeming the many other aspects that might also be said to be causal factors. Through exploring these weaknesses and expanding upon the texts’ strengths, my own analysis will begin to situate rape in a wider context of objectification and oppression and to more fully implicate the dominant culture of Western civilisation in the West’s rape problem.

**Brownmiller and the ‘Typical Rapist’**

As suggested previously, although locating the origins of rape in (human) nature, Brownmiller does allow for the influence of culture—or, more specifically, patriarchal culture—on the incidence of, and cultural responses to, sexual violence. However, aside from observing that ‘patriarchy’ is central to the issue of rape, the presentation of cultural influence in *Against Our Will* is restricted to very specific factors. Concerning cultural variations throughout the long history of civilisation—from Ancient Babylon to twentieth-century America—Brownmiller is strangely reticent; rape is treated as a transhistorically and transculturally constant occurrence, appearing across
history in near-identical forms, with a near-identical rate of incidence and near-identical political or patriarchal motivation and function. However, despite treating patriarchy and rape as historically static, Brownmiller does argue that specific variations within an overarching culture produce variations in incidence of rape. In particular, she notes that certain subcultures in twentieth-century America have a far higher incidence of rape and are, in fact, responsible for producing the ‘the typical American rapist’. Despite her arguments that rape is a universal male drive that has existed unchanged from the origins of human society, Brownmiller nevertheless focuses a great deal of attention on detailing precisely ‘who’ the average American rapist is.

Although Brownmiller’s discussion of ‘the typical rapist’ does provide some useful insights—chiefly an examination of the patriarchal and misogynistic biases of Freudian analysis of sexual violence and challenges to the notion that rapists are pathologically disturbed pariahs (a point that underpins my own analysis of rapists in the third chapter)—the overarching presentation of rape is extremely problematic. The opening statement of the chapter in question sets the tone for the analysis:

The typical American rapist might be the boy next door. Especially if the boy next door happens to be about 19 years of age and the neighbourhood you live in happens to fit the socioeconomic description of lower class or bears the appellation of “ghetto.” That is what the statistics show. Perhaps the most striking thing about this statement is the obvious classist message it contains: ‘the typical American rapist’ is the product of working-class communities or ‘ghettos’. Of course, some of this understanding might be explained by biases within the statistics Brownmiller is employing; certainly she acknowledges that “[o]ne must approach all statistics with caution if one is going to make generalizations.”

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176 For detailed—although by no means unproblematic—analysis of the way Brownmiller (and other theorists) address the problematic issue of rape throughout history, see: Roy Porter, “Rape – Does it have a Historical Meaning?”, in Rape: An Historical and Social Enquiry, ed. by Sylvana Tomaselli and Roy Porter (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp. 216–236.
177 Brownmiller, Against Our Will, p. 174.
179 Ibid., p. 174.
180 Ibid.
not actually evidenced in the discussion, except as an acknowledgment that limited legal definitions of rape and patriarchal biases (as well as racist biases against non-white rape survivors) prevent many incidents of rape appearing in official statistics.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 174–5.} Throughout the analysis, there is no consideration of how biases, prejudices and hierarchical power structures influence which rapists are actually arrested and incarcerated. Such biases are an essential consideration when working with statistics from police reports or prison surveys. As Diana Scully notes, classist and racist biases within Western judicial systems intersect with biases concerning what constitutes a ‘real rape’, resulting in the fact that rapists who are imprisoned for their crimes ‘are more likely to have raped strangers, used weapons, physically injured their victims, and committed other crimes in addition to the rape. They are also likely to be poorly educated, lacking economic resources, and members of racial minorities.’\footnote{Diana Scully, \textit{Understanding Sexual Violence: A Study of Convicted Rapists} (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), p. 7.}

Despite her professed caution, Brownmiller entirely fails to consider how issues such as these may influence the statistically ‘typical’ rapist. Certainly, they do not prevent her from making extremely bold—indeed, extremely incautious—generalisations such as:

Rape is a dull, blunt, ugly act committed by punk kids, their cousins and older brothers, not by charming, witty, unscrupulous, heroic, sensual rakes, or by timid souls deprived of a “normal” sexual outlet, or by \textit{super-menschen} [sic] possessed of uncontrollable lust.\footnote{Brownmiller, \textit{Against Our Will}, p. 209. Italics in original.}

It is, perhaps, tempting to read this as Brownmiller simply reporting dominant understandings of rapists rather than detailing her own view; certainly, she acknowledges that the statement is based on the ‘police-blotter rapist’ (the ‘type’ of person most commonly arrested for rape), derived from the image of rapists as reflected in key sociological studies, FBI statistics and the experiences of Clinton Duffy, a San Quentin prison warden. However, these sources are presented uncritically, with no questions asked of their reliability, no evaluation of the image of rape that they present and no real caveat to suggest that statements such as that above are intended to refer only to

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\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., pp. 174–5.
\textsuperscript{183} Brownmiller, \textit{Against Our Will}, p. 209. Italics in original.
specific ‘forms’ of rape and rapist. Indeed, the discussion moves on to how ‘police-blotted rapists’ relate to other, less marginalised men, with the suggestion that ‘[a]lthough they are the ones who do the dirty work, the actual attenat, to other men, their superiors in class and station, the lasting benefits of their simple-minded evil have always accrued.’\textsuperscript{184} In this suggestion, which is Brownmiller’s own theorising rather than a report of what statistics and studies indicate, the ‘superiors’ of the ‘typical rapist’ do not do the ‘dirty work’—they do not rape—but simply accrue the benefits of rapes committed by their supposed inferiors. In this, Brownmiller appears to be arguing that men are divided into the rapists (who are the ‘punk kids’ and other marginalised men) and those who benefit from, but do not actually commit, rape (the punk kids’ ‘superiors’). In light of these points, it is reasonable to suggest that the previous description of rape and rapists reflects Brownmiller’s own understanding and not simply what is reported by others.

The above considered, it is possible, with reference to the rest of the text, to deduce what Brownmiller is trying to convey. Given her challenges to the notion that rape is driven by sexual desire rather than violence and domination elsewhere in the text, a similar challenge can be read in the discussion of ‘timid souls’ lacking sexual outlets and lustful ‘super-menschen’. Certainly, statements such as ‘rape is not a crime of irrational, impulsive, uncontrollable lust, but is a deliberate, hostile, violent act of degradation and possession on the part of a would-be conqueror’ appear to support this reading.\textsuperscript{185} Similarly, given her later chapter refuting ‘the myth of the heroic rapist’, it is possible to read Brownmiller’s presentation of rape as an ‘ugly act committed by punk kids’ as part of this same process of de-glamorising rape and rapists.\textsuperscript{186} This reading correlates with a statement that Brownmiller made during a radio debate with Randy Thornhill (co-author of A Natural History of Rape) in which she notes that the 1970s feminist movement highlighted the fact that

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid. Italics in original.
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid., p. 391.
\textsuperscript{186} See: ibid., pp. 283–308.
rape was not sexy [...] The men, up to that point, had romanticized rape [...] And the act was constructed as sort of a Robin Hood act of machismo. When women started to speak up about their own experiences of rape, the first thing they said was, “No, there’s nothing sexy about this. This was pure power humiliation, degradation.” And that’s where the feminist theory came from, out of listening to the experiences of women.¹⁸⁷

However, even if these readings of Brownmiller’s description of ‘what rape is’ are accurate, the underlying message of her statement still reinforces the previous classism: rape, the statement suggests, is not something done by the powerful, the glamorous or the charming and desirable; it is committed by ‘no-hopers’ and ‘drop-outs’, by ‘punk kids’ with no charm, no wit, no sensuality, just dumb aggression.

This message is even more readily apparent in Brownmiller’s explanation of her logic. She writes that a group of ‘typical’ (that is to say, young, working-class or Black) rapists gang raping a woman together

strengthens the notion of group masculinity and power [...] in much the same way that an executive dining room “open to males only” strengthens the notion of group masculinity and power, or the way an all-male climb up Mount Everest [...] strengthens the notion of group masculinity and power. Corporate executive dining rooms and climbs up Mount Everest are not usually accessible to [poor, working-class or Black men]. Access to a female body—through force—is within their ken.¹⁸⁸

The message here is not open to misinterpretation: rich, powerful, upper-class white men do not rape because they have other means of feeling powerful and masculine, whilst disempowered, poor, working-class or Black men do rape because it is the only power they can possibly grasp. Interestingly, this understanding recalls Thornhill and Palmer’s socio-biological explanation of sexual violence in A Natural History of Rape. Thornhill and Palmer suggest that one of the reasons men commit rape is because they cannot get a ‘mate’ through the ‘usual methods’ of intra-male

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 194. I have used the description ‘poor, working-class or Black men’ to replace Brownmiller’s original phrase ‘those who make up the subculture of violence’ as I have not yet introduced or explained the meaning of the phrase. I take the description from Brownmiller’s suggestion that the ‘subculture of violence’ is ‘formed of those from the lower classes, the poor, the disenfranchised, the black’ (Brownmiller, Against Our Will, p. 181).
competition or female mating preference because they lack the social status and resources required to compete in these areas. Such men, they suggest, are reduced to rape as a means of fulfilling their innate ‘male’ urges to procreate.\textsuperscript{189} Brownmiller applies a remarkably similar logic here except that she conceives of rape as an act of power and domination rather than sexual reproduction: marginalised men commit rape because they cannot get ‘power’ through the usual methods because they lack social status and resources and, as such, they are reduced to rape as a means of fulfilling their innate ‘male’ urges to ‘prove’ how ‘powerful’ and ‘masculine’ they are. In a sense, this similarity sets the tone for my continuing analysis of Brownmiller, highlighting the homogenous categories and disregard for individual choice and agency that characterise both Brownmiller’s and Thornhill and Palmer’s arguments. As I will now discuss, in Brownmiller’s theorising, this position reinforces both the oppression of marginalised communities and the popular misconception that powerful men don’t rape, a misconception which in turn reinforces the routine failure of Western judicial systems to bring powerful rapists to justice and relates directly to the Strauss-Kahn/Diallo case.

‘Powerful Men Don’t Commit Rape’: Problems with ‘the Typical Rapist’

The classist and racist understanding of rape discussed above is the one of the key reasons why Brownmiller’s discussion of ‘the typical American rapist’ is problematic. In situating America’s rape problem squarely in working-class and Black communities, the analysis supports existing power structures and prejudices, undermining the rights of marginalised communities (including, it should be noted, rape survivors within those communities). As Angela Y. Davis observes, the ‘myth of the Black rapist’—the notion that all Black men have an inherent proclivity to rape women, and especially white women—has been a key pretext for racially-motivated violence and repression conducted against Black communities, and for sexual violence committed by white men against Black women.\textsuperscript{190} Brownmiller’s analysis of the ‘typical’ rapist not only

\textsuperscript{189} Randy Thornhill and Craig Palmer, \textit{A Natural History of Rape: Biological Basis of Sexual Coercion} (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2000), pp. 53–54.
\textsuperscript{190} Davis, \textit{Women, Race and Class}, pp. 172–201.
follows this pre-existing model of racial (and class-based) profiling, but also actively reinforces it. Indeed, Davis notes that Brownmiller’s discussion of the ‘typical’ rapist ‘has been severely criticized for its part in the resuscitation of the old racist myth of the Black rapist.’ Specifically, Brownmiller’s discussion helps to rationalise existing prejudices and myths, providing them with fresh ‘relevance’ and a gloss of liberal, academic credibility. In this sense, the analysis undermines struggles for Black and working-class rights, supports violence and repression conducted against Black and working-class communities and may even contribute to the ‘justification’ of sexual violence committed against Black and working-class women. Moreover, this is not the only area in which Brownmiller’s theory may actually undermine the struggle against sexual violence. The suggestion that rape generally takes a specific form, occurs in specific scenarios and is committed by specific ‘types’ of man—along with the suggestion that rape is not committed by other ‘types’ of man—also carries serious implications.

As noted in the introduction, the majority of rapes that occur in the Anglophone West are not reported to the police. There are numerous reasons for this; however, one of the chief issues is that many rape survivors do not feel that their assaults count as ‘real rape’ unless they fit the model most widely discussed in the discourses of the dominant culture. As Diana Scully notes, survivors are more likely to report ‘if the characteristics of their attack resembled a “classic rape”—a sudden, violent attack by a stranger in a public place or a home that was broken into, involving the use of a weapon and resulting in injuries in addition to rape.’ Moreover, this issue not only relates to the reporting of rape but also influences whether or not survivors actually recognise their own experience as rape. As Lisa Jervis observes, ‘survivors of any attack that doesn’t fit the most extreme stranger-in-the-bushes-with-a-knife paradigm are very often reluctant to name their experiences as rape’. In this sense, the belief that only assaults that match the dominant conception of rape are actually ‘real rapes’ greatly influences

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191 Ibid., p. 178.
192 Scully, Understanding Sexual Violence, p. 6.
whether or not a survivor reports their assault, or even recognises it as rape, both of which contribute significantly to the failure to bring the rapist to justice. Brownmiller’s work contains a variation of this issue. In suggesting that rich, powerful white men do not rape (and maintaining the illusion that most rapes are committed by working-class or Black men who are strangers to the survivor), Brownmiller decreases the chances of women who have been assaulted by rich, powerful white men recognising or reporting their experiences as rape—particularly if the rape takes a different form to the dominant violent-stranger model—whilst simultaneously decreasing the chances of the rapist being arrested or charged.

This same understanding, I suggest, is an important component of the biases that virtually guaranteed that Strauss-Kahn would be found innocent. Indeed, it is precisely the logic that underpins political commentator Ben Stein’s undermining of Diallo’s account of the incident:

> In life, events tend to follow patterns. People who commit crimes tend to be criminals, for example. [...] Can anyone tell me of any heads of nonprofit international economic entities who have ever been charged and convicted of violent sexual crimes? [...] Maybe Mr. Strauss-Kahn is guilty but if so, he is one of a kind, and criminals are not usually one of a kind.\(^\text{194}\)

Stein’s argument is based on the notion that powerful, rich white men such as Strauss-Kahn simply do not rape; it is, instead, stereotypical ‘criminals’ who commit rape, because it is, according to Stein’s supremely circular reasoning, only criminals who commit crimes. The same basic belief that underpins this argument is quite overtly stated by Brownmiller when she makes her observations about rich and powerful men and their ‘executive dining rooms’ and poor and Black men and their supposed proclivity to rape: Strauss-Kahn must surely have access to enough ‘executive dining rooms’ (and, indeed, executive hotel suites) to make him feel powerful and masculine, so why would he need to rape a woman like a desperate, disenfranchised commoner? Such logic greatly increases the chances of

men such as Strauss-Kahn being found innocent by the West’s judicial systems, and greatly decreases the chances of women such as Diallo feeling able to report their assaults. There is another issue, too, which stems from both of the previous points and is, for the purposes of this discussion, even more significant: Brownmiller’s presentation of the ‘typical’ rapist’s relation to violence. Intimately connected to the stereotyping discussed above, Brownmiller’s position on violence and rape serves to further distance the dominant culture from the Anglophone West’s rape problem, denying both the violence upon which this culture is based and the other cultural elements that support or encourage sexual violence. In highlighting this process of distancing, my analysis begins to explore the very opposite of Brownmiller’s own position: the complexity and depth of rape’s relationship to the dominant culture.

Brownmiller and ‘The Subculture of Violence’

Underpinning both the classist and racist elements of Brownmiller’s analysis and the focus on specific dominant models of rape is criminologist Marvin Wolfgang’s theory of ‘the subculture of violence’.\textsuperscript{195} Brownmiller provides a summary of Wolfgang’s theory, as follows:

[W]ithin the dominant value system of our culture there exists a subculture formed of those from the lower classes, the poor, the disenfranchised, the black, whose values often run counter to those of the dominant culture [...] The dominant culture can operate within the laws of civility because it has little need to resort to violence to get what it wants. The subculture, thwarted, inarticulate and angry, is quick to resort to violence; indeed, violence and physical aggression become a common way of life.\textsuperscript{196}

Brownmiller considers this theory to be a useful way in which to understand rape, suggesting that it provides a well researched and statistically-supported

\textsuperscript{195} As Brownmiller acknowledges in \textit{Against Our Will}, p. 180.
\textsuperscript{196} Brownmiller, \textit{Against Our Will}, pp. 180–181. It is worth noting that, with the discussion of the dominant culture acting within ‘the laws of civility’ and the presentation of the subculture of violence as violent savages, this statement recalls the civilised/savage dichotomy discussed earlier in the chapter. Certainly, it continues the notions that the dominant culture is opposed to violence and rape and that its laws function as an essential means of controlling more base and uncivilised behaviours.
an explanation of her (classist and racist) reading of America’s rape problem. She credits Menachem Amir’s 1971 study *Patterns in Forcible Rape* as applying the subculture theory to sexual violence, suggesting both that it is an extremely significant contribution to the field and that it applies to ‘the rapist’ as a homogenous and fixed type.\textsuperscript{197} She writes that ‘the single most important contribution of Amir’s study was to place the rapist squarely within the subculture of violence’, an understanding that she herself adopts.\textsuperscript{198} In this sense, then, Brownmiller suggests firstly that the dominant culture is opposed to rape (a point that seems to contradict the majority of her arguments about patriarchal society’s support of rape) and secondly that working-class and Black people homogenously adhere to a set of values that both accept and encourage rape. Here, again, we see Brownmiller’s willingness to believe that working-class and Black men are prone to rape, as well as some of the limited reasoning behind the suggestion.

However, putting the racism and classism aside (given that the above analysis and references already discredit the notion adequately), it is also possible to discern an important point about Brownmiller’s understanding of the relationship between rape and violence. Certainly there are people for whom violence is a common way of life (although such people are not the West’s entire populations of working-class and Black people, nor are working-class or Black people inherently predisposed to hold this attitude to violence). Likewise, Brownmiller is correct in positing a correlation between value systems that accept, tolerate or encourage violence and value systems that accept, tolerate or encourage rape (albeit not necessarily in the totalising fashion that she describes).\textsuperscript{199} In this sense, it is certainly possible—and I suggest highly probable—that being highly desensitised to, or glorying in, violence also leads to one being distinctly desensitised to, or glorying in, rape. However, the crucial failing of Brownmiller’s analysis (aside from the prejudiced stereotyping) is the notion that it is only from acceptance of violence that men learn to accept, justify or celebrate rape. In suggesting that

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{198} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{199} This correlation has been observed in both cross-cultural surveys and studies of rape in the West. For example, see: Sanday, ‘The Socio-Cultural Context of Rape’, p. 61; Martha R. Burt, ‘Cultural Myths and Supports for Rape’, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (1980), 217–230.
\end{flushleft}
the dominant culture opposes rape whilst a homogenous violent subculture entirely justifies it, Brownmiller both denies the violence on which the dominant culture is built and organised and overlooks the ways in which other cultural attitudes and ideologies within the dominant culture are key—even more key than violence, in fact—to the ‘justifying’ and legitimising of rape. This overemphasis on violence is, I suggest, a recurrent issue in areas of mainstream feminist analysis and presents several significant problems, to which my analysis will now turn.

Feminism, Rape and Violence

As Nicola Gavey suggests, one of the most crucial distinctions developed in the early stages of second-wave feminist anti-rape activism and scholarship was the assertion that rape is not an ‘overflowing’ of sexual desire but an act of domination and aggression focused on the humiliation and control of the survivor; this understanding is widely known by, and widely disseminated in the form of, the sloganistic phrase ‘rape is an act of violence, not sex’. As Andrea Lowgren notes, Brownmiller was one of the pioneers of this understanding, along with feminists such as Susan Griffin, who presents the concept explicitly in phrases such as her claim that ‘[r]ape is an act of aggression in which the victim is denied her self-determination. It is an act of violence.’ As a rhetorical device, and in the context of the time the understanding was formulated, the maxim that ‘rape is an act of violence, not sex’ was extremely significant, providing a stark and effective challenge to the longstanding belief that rape was simply an expression of uncontrollable lust motivated by desire rather than power. However, this conception—especially in the simplistic slogan-form of ‘violence, not sex’—is also problematic.

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200 Gavey, Just Sex?, p. 30.
202 It should be noted, as Gavey does, that at least some of the issues associated with this understanding relate more to the reductive slogan ‘violence, not sex’ than to the scholarship of Brownmiller or Griffin (Gavey, Just Sex?, pp. 32–33). Neither Brownmiller nor Griffin suggest that rape has nothing to do with sex, although Brownmiller can still be argued to
The ‘violence, not sex’ understanding of rape has been widely critiqued by other feminists, perhaps most famously by lawyer, academic and activist Catharine MacKinnon, who views it as unintentionally legitimising and disguising coercive behaviour within the dynamics of (in MacKinnon’s construction, an often homogenised) ‘heterosexuality’. For example, she writes that:

The point of defining rape as “violence not sex” [...] has been to separate sexuality from gender in order to affirm sex (heterosexuality) while rejecting violence (rape). The problem remains what it has always been: telling the difference. The convergence of sexuality with violence, long used at law to deny the reality of women’s violation, is recognized by rape survivors, with a difference: where the legal system has seen the intercourse in rape, victims see the rape in intercourse.203

MacKinnon highlights an important issue here: constructing a discrete dichotomy of ‘sex’ and ‘rape’ fails to contend with the fact that sexually coercive behaviour (or, more simply, rape) is a common aspect of heterosexual intercourse, denying survivors’ experiences and entirely legitimising rape in certain contexts. The key point of this argument is compelling and insightful, although the universalism and essentialism for which MacKinnon is widely criticised are problematic. Whilst it is certainly a valid assertion that male coercive behaviour is normalised within many dominant heterosexual scripts, MacKinnon undermines her own argument by insisting that rape is inherently the central aspect of a homogenised ‘male’ sexuality or asserting that all women struggle to tell the difference between intercourse and rape.204 Nevertheless, MacKinnon provides informed and reasoned analysis of significant issues, especially those concerning how rape is defined, understood and experienced in different contexts, by different people and institutions. I will return to these arguments, in particular, in more detail later in the thesis. However, at this stage in the discussion, the key issue raised by MacKinnon’s analysis is the assumption that permeates work place an overly heavy emphasis on violence in some of Against Our Will, as I will discuss shortly.

204 For example, see: Ibid., pp. 646–647.
such as Brownmiller’s, namely that all rapes are ‘violent’ or ‘violently realised’.

In continuing Amir’s placing of ‘the rapist squarely in the subculture of violence’, Brownmiller suggests that rape is inseparable from ‘violence’. Of course, in a very significant sense, all rapes are violent: they are a violation and invasion, an undesired intrusion and abuse. However, the subculture explanation of rape implies that ‘violence’—in the dominant conception of direct, aggressive physical force—is the central aspect of rape and the key means through which rape is realised by all rapists, and that a cultural acceptance of ‘violence’ automatically correlates with a cultural acceptance of rape. The relationship between ‘violence’ and rape is far from being this simplistic. As MacKinnon notes: ‘Sexual intercourse may be deeply unwanted—the woman would never have initiated it—yet no force may be present [...] When sex is violent, women may have lost control over what is done to us, but absence of force does not ensure the presence of that control.’

Using violence is not an essential component of rape and it is not required for an assault to qualify as ‘real rape’: the presence of coercion in any form, however ‘non-violently’ expressed, transforms sexual intercourse into rape. For example, if we return briefly to Strauss-Kahn and the three cases of rape or attempted rape of which he has recently been accused, we find two distinct forms of coercion. Diallo accuses him of aggressively grabbing her (leading to a torn shoulder ligament and genital bruising) and physically forcing her to perform oral sex on him. Journalist and writer Tristane Banon gave a similar account of her ‘encounter’ with Strauss-Kahn, saying that they ‘ended up scuffling on the ground. I kicked him. He unfastened my bra and tried to take down my jeans.’

Both of these cases

205 Ibid., p. 650.
207 John Lichfield, ‘Dominique Strauss-Kahn: What’s in a Reputation?’ (17/5/2012) <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/dominique-strausskahn-whats-in-a-reputation-2284965.html> [accessed 6 April 2012]. Lack of evidence meant the charge of attempted rape was reduced to an accusation of sexual assault (for which there was evidence and at least a partial confession from Strauss-Kahn); however, too much time had elapsed for Strauss-Kahn to be prosecuted on such a charge under French law and the case was dropped in October 2011 (‘Strauss-Kahn French Rape Case Dismissed’).
do meet the stereotypically ‘violent’ model of rape/attempted rape: aggressive physical force was used in order to realise the alleged assaults, and was a central part of the acts themselves. However, Piroska Nagy, an economist who worked at the IMF when Strauss-Kahn was still Managing Director, presents a very different form of coercion.

Unlike those of Diallo and Banon, Nagy’s (alleged) experiences do not contain direct physical force. Rather, she asserts that Strauss-Kahn used his position as her boss to intimidate her into engaging in what the mainstream media refer to as ‘an affair’ but which—given Strauss-Kahn’s alleged forceful and insistent behaviour and Nagy’s statement that she felt that she was ‘damned if I did and damned if I didn’t’—should be more accurately be considered rape. No physical force features in Nagy’s accusation, but the existing power structure, Strauss-Kahn’s insistent disregard for Nagy’s right to give un-coerced consent and the ever-present threat of workplace reprisals make it no less coercive, no less a case of rape. Moreover, there are numerous other forms of rape, and numerous other ways in which a rape may be realised, in which violence—in the sense of direct, aggressive force—is not present. Everything from verbal coercion, threats and blackmail or the exacting of economic control to lying, spiking with intoxicants or implying that the survivor has a responsibility, duty or simply no choice but to ‘provide sex’ may be employed (along with many other ‘techniques’) to facilitate rape without the presence of ‘violence’. Certainly, these scenarios, as in the discussion above, may be considered to be ‘violent’ by virtue of their transgression and abuse, but they are not facilitated through direct, aggressive force. An analysis of rape that focuses exclusively or primarily on rapes committed with or through violence in the form direct, aggressive force fails to account for all such rapes. Accordingly, whilst ‘violence’ is undeniably significant to the issue of rape, and whilst correlations between cultural acceptance of violence and cultural acceptance of rape do exist, a position focused too heavily on direct-force violence overlooks the ideologies and

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understandings that underpin (and encourage) both acceptance of violence and acceptance of rape; such ideologies and understandings are, I suggest, entirely normalised—even celebrated—not just within subcultures but within the dominant culture of the Anglophone West. Zurbriggen’s essay ‘Rape, War, and the Socialization of Masculinity: Why our Refusal to Give up War Ensures that Rape cannot be Eradicated’ (2010), provides an interesting perspective on this issue, developing an analysis of conceptual links between militarism, rape and masculine socialisation that both transcends the limitations of Brownmiller’s ‘subculture of violence’ and recreates them.

Beyond Subcultures and Scapegoats: Rape, War and Hegemonic Masculinity

Like Brownmiller, Zurbriggen explores the ways in which wider cultural attitudes and ideologies influence attitudes towards, and incidence of, rape. Like Brownmiller’s discussion of ‘the subculture of violence’, this exploration focuses primarily on a specific group within an overarching dominant culture, in this case, the military. However, Zurbriggen’s study is, for the most part, considerably better developed, with deeper, more challenging analysis and a more considered approach to the underlying causes of rape (and violence). In this respect, the choice of group on which the study is focused is significant. Brownmiller’s study focuses on a homogenised group that she argues represents values in conflict with those of the dominant culture, an argument which supports the legitimising of the ideologies and practices of the dominant culture whilst—and through—scapegoating working-class and Black communities. Zurbriggen’s focus on the military, in contrast—although guilty of some of the same scapegoating—means that the text is analysing a group that is approved of by the dominant culture, a group, in fact, that the dominant culture valorises and celebrates, and is reliant upon to maintain its dominance. In this sense, Zurbriggen’s analysis cannot explain away sexual violence as being the result of a specific subculture’s ‘savagery’ but must contend with its intricate relations to Western culture, charting the complex intersections and causal relationships between militarism, rape and masculine socialisation. Accordingly, it is not only individual
men/soldiers/rapists who are presented as culpable, but also militaristic states/governments, national militaries as institutions and, to an extent (although, as will be discussed, by no means entirely), the dominant culture at large. The fact that Zurbriggen focuses not on a simplistic model of violence but on various key aspects of Western culture and masculine socialisation that underpin violence, support militarism, and allow ‘properly’ socialised men to both rape and kill, reinforces this position. The same is true of the fact that Zurbriggen’s study of the military is—at least in part—used as a framework for considering wider cultural factors and ‘to explain not only why rape occurs during periods of armed conflict and in military contexts, but also why rape occurs in civilian contexts and during peacetime.’

Approaching the issue in this fashion provides a more complex and balanced analysis of statistical and theoretical data: where Brownmiller discusses a simplistic connection between violence and rape and then sweepingly blames this upon subcultural views, Zurbriggen explores the underlying complexities of how men, and especially soldiers, are socialised into certain models of masculinity and modes of behaviour that, she argues, result in both warfare and rape.

Starting with the fact that ‘[r]ape perpetrated by soldiers is endemic during wartime’, Zurbriggen posits that there are significant links between warfare and rape, and that these links are largely traceable to the centrality of ‘traditional (or hegemonic) masculinity’ to both. Indeed, the central proposition of the text is that ‘traditional masculine socialization is a causal antecedent of both rape and war.’ The validity of this suggested causality is debatable, as will be discussed presently; however, the correlations between warfare and rape—and the centrality of the current hegemonic model of masculinity to these correlations—are significant, and well reasoned, observations. Certainly, the key notions that ‘[hegemonic] masculine socialization is a risk factor for rape perpetration’ and that ‘elements of [hegemonic] masculinity are valued by the military and

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210 Ibid., p. 538.
211 Ibid.
reinforced in military training’ are both important and near-irrefutable propositions.\textsuperscript{212} Crucially, Zurbriggen’s arguments in support of these points go beyond observing simplistic similarities or direct connections between warfare and rape to explore the conceptual links between those characteristics valued in soldiers (and other men) and widely observed in rapists (and other men). For example, Zurbriggen notes that ‘[o]bjectification or dehumanization has long been recognized as a precursor to violence [...] in an intergroup context. Similarly, treating women like objects within interpersonal relationships makes it more likely that they will be abused (sexually or otherwise).’\textsuperscript{213} In this discussion, the argument is not reliant on simplistic declarations about ‘violence as a way of life’ as Brownmiller’s is, but rather is grounded in explorations of the legitimising and enabling processes that rape and (‘non-sexual’) violence share. Moreover, this analysis of conceptual connections is further situated in the context of the dominant culture at large with observations such as the claim that ‘[t]he objectification of others that is often linked to hierarchical social systems clearly plays an important role in preparing soldiers to injure and kill others. Dehumanization and objectification of the enemy are necessary preconditions to killing,’ just as, the analysis implies, the dehumanisation and objectification of women are necessary preconditions to rape.\textsuperscript{214} Here, the analysis is moved even further away from the simplistic scapegoating of groups who are proposed to simply be violent and amoral, and is instead situated firmly in the ways in which the dominant culture legitimises certain modes of behaviour.

Moreover, Zurbriggen notes that being socialised into believing the desirability of practices in one context (such as learning to objectify ‘the enemy’) routinely cross over into other contexts (such as men’s relationships with women) despite the numerous (and inevitably doomed) efforts by military groups to encourage soldiers to ‘compartmentalise’ and ‘turn off’ certain aspects of their character outside of combat situations.\textsuperscript{215} In this respect, Zurbriggen’s analysis is grounded in the study of underlying

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{212} Ibid., pp. 540; 542.
\item \textsuperscript{213} Ibid., p. 540
\item \textsuperscript{214} Ibid., p. 543. My italics.
\item \textsuperscript{215} Ibid., pp. 545–546.
\end{itemize}
processes—in this case, objectification—that may be manifested in different ways but share conceptual and ideological roots and develop from the same cultural acceptance of a process that legitimates violence and/or abuse. It is this form of analysis that allows Zurbriggen’s work to progress past the blaming of certain stereotyped and homogenised groups to analyse instead the systems and ideologies that run through the dominant culture itself, legitimising or normalising destructive behaviour. That is to say, where Brownmiller effectively suggests that supposedly intrinsically violent men will also be (particularly violent) rapists because they do not share civilisation’s professed values, Zurbriggen explores how hegemonic masculinity—as both an aspect of the dominant culture and a means through which the dominant culture is maintained—socialises men in a variety of ways that may be manifested both in military violence or in rape (or, often, both). It is this aspect of the analysis that makes Zurbriggen’s study useful for my examination, providing a precedent both for exploring the ways in which the dominant culture supports and encourages sexual violence and for treating rape as partly the product of state-sanctioned ideologies and practices. This considered, however, when Zurbriggen begins to move beyond observing correlations and conceptual links and begins to posit causal relationships, her discussion becomes more problematic.

Making War, Making Rapists: Zurbriggen and Causality

Zurbriggen suggests that the model of masculinity that she describes interchangeably as ‘traditional’ and ‘hegemonic’ understands ‘status and achievement; toughness and aggression; restricted emotionality; and power, dominance, and control’ to be crucial elements of ‘masculinity’ or ‘manliness’.[216] As noted above, the central proposition of ‘Rape, War, and the Socialization of Masculinity’ is that the model of masculinity is a cause of both warfare and rape. However, Zurbriggen notes that the arguments provided in support of this are ‘silent [...] on the reasons why this form of masculinity is so prevalent, historically, culturally and individually’. [217] Accordingly, she

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[216] Ibid., p. 538.
[217] Ibid., p. 544.
proposes ‘a possible answer: that most societies construct masculinity in the particular hegemonic form [discussed in the essay] because they want the capability to wage war, either in self-defence or as a means of conquest’. Of course, there is no inherent reason why traditional masculinity cannot be a cause of warfare and rape whilst warfare is simultaneously the cause of traditional masculinity—a circular causality is by no means an impossibility—but there is still an important issue raised by Zurbriggen’s proposals. Whilst the assertion that the model of masculinity in question is a cause of rape is accurate and well documented, the argument that it is a cause of war is more problematic. Indeed, despite claims to the contrary, Zurbriggen actually provides very little support for this notion; certainly, there are detailed discussions of how the model of masculinity influences the behaviour of soldiers, helps to make soldiers more ‘effective’ and encourages men to become soldiers, but these do not support the argument that the model of masculinity is actually a cause of warfare. For example, Zurbriggen notes that ‘[b]ecause killing the enemy is one of the important goals of warfare, soldiers must be capable of committing violent acts’ and that the model of masculinity is consequently extremely useful to the military because ‘[t]raditional masculine socialization teaches men that violence is manly’. Whilst this observation is both accurate and significant, it explains only how ‘traditional masculine socialization’ makes training soldiers to kill easier for the military and not how it is a cause of warfare. Similarly, when Zurbriggen argues—again, perfectly accurately—that ‘[w]hen men leave behind restricted emotionality, toughness and aggression, and dominance and control, they are less likely to join the military as a means for proving their manhood’, she is only explaining how the currently hegemonic model of masculinity encourages men to join the military and fight in wars, not why these wars actually occur.

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218 Ibid.
219 Ibid., p. 543.
220 Ibid., p. 546. Also absent from Zurbriggen’s analysis here is any mention of the other reasons men (and women) often join the army (such as poverty/the absence of other economic opportunities or the elaborate systems of patriotic propaganda and media manipulation of people’s fears) or the class and race oppression often underpinning these motivations.
The only argument that might qualify as supporting the claim that ‘traditional’ masculinity is a cause of war is the observation that: ‘War is an act of power, at both the geopolitical and individual levels. Thus it is not surprising that political leaders with high levels of power motivation (i.e. a chronic concern with impact and control) are more likely to enter a war.’ However, this statement simply recreates for politicians the same individual-based analysis that was employed in the discussion of soldiers, attempting to locate the cause of warfare in an individual’s characteristics rather than the structure of the dominant culture at large. This argument is reductive and short-sighted, recalling—albeit in a far more considered and reasoned fashion—the more essentialist feminist position that proposes that men’s ‘inherent’ capacity for violence is the cause of warfare, whilst simultaneously making invisible the systems of imperialism, exploitation, violence and abuse upon which the dominant culture of the Anglophone West relies. Indeed, as Michael Parenti notes in regard to American imperial war-making:

Those who see empire [and empire’s wars] as arising from the macho need to dominate do not explain why U.S. leaders want to dominate some nations more than others. The machismo theory does not explain why Washington comes down so consistently on the side of transnational corporate interests, landowners, and military autocrats rather than on the side of workers [or] peasants.

In suggesting that masculine socialisation creates politicians who enter wars because of a personal desire for power, Zurbriggen makes invisible the economic, political and imperial motivations that underpin the decision to ‘go to war’. In this sense, although correlations and connections between this model of masculinity and warfare do exist, it cannot be reasonably argued that masculinity causes warfare, only that it plays a supporting or enabling role in military recruitment and training.

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222 This is not to suggest that Zurbriggen’s analysis is in any way essentialist; on the contrary, masculinity is treated as a transculturally and transhistorically variable construct throughout the text, with no inherent capacities or proclivities assigned to ‘masculinity’ or ‘maleness’.
223 Michael Parenti, Against Empire (San Francisco: City Lights, 1995), p. 74.
Beyond the Military: The Limits of Zurbriggen’s Focus on War

Once the notion that ‘traditional’ masculinity causes war is removed from the analysis, the problematic proposal that underlies Zurbriggen’s argument is more starkly revealed. If, as noted above, this model of masculinity is central to rape incidence, and if warfare is central to the processes by which this model comes to be hegemonic (and the point is well documented), then Zurbriggen’s argument is effectively that warfare causes rape. Indeed, she actually makes this claim quite explicitly, suggesting that ‘society’s need for effective soldiers is the root cause of traditional masculine socialization and [...] this socialization ensures that rape will be prevalent.’ This assertion is, in isolation, a valid point, but the connections between militarism, masculine socialisation and rape happen in anything but isolation; the issue that Zurbriggen fails to engage with is that there are numerous areas other than warfare/militarism that play central roles in maintaining the hegemony of the currently hegemonic model of masculinity. Through this oversight, Zurbriggen’s analysis begins to recreate the same failings found in Brownmiller’s analysis.

Although the focus on hegemonic masculinity ostensibly means that Zurbriggen’s analysis implicates the dominant culture at large in the West’s rape problem, her subsequent move to locate the origins of this hegemony in a specific element of the dominant culture begins to treat rape as something grounded not in the dominant culture itself but in isolated aspects of it or within specific (military or militaristic) individuals or groups. In this fashion, just as Brownmiller’s scapegoating of the ‘subculture of violence’ suggests that the values of the dominant culture—the ‘laws of civility’—do not contribute to rape incidence and are, in fact, opposed to rape, Zurbriggen’s analysis scapegoats militarism and militaristic individuals or groups, implying that, aside from these elements, the dominant culture does not create and

celebrate models of masculinity that significantly influence incidence of rape. In this analysis, ending the hegemony of this model of masculinity is presented as central to the struggle against rape, and ending militarism is suggested to be the blow required to end the hegemony. In her conclusion, Zurbriggen makes precisely this argument, stating that:

>[P]eace work and rape prevention are intimately intertwined. Efforts aimed at new strategies for global interaction, ones that leave war behind as a failed experiment, will (if successful) eliminate the need for soldiers and the larger military apparatus. With this need eliminated, masculine socialization will no longer be necessary or useful. Because only the negative consequences of masculinity would then remain, it should be possible to embrace new forms of masculinity that are healthier for men, for women, and for the planet.\(^{226}\)

Ending warfare would, undoubtedly, influence masculine socialisation, and might accordingly have some impact on rates of rape in the Anglophone West (aside from ending wartime rape). However, the notion that ending warfare would entirely undermine the dominance of the currently hegemonic model of masculinity (and so significantly influence rape incidence) is simply inaccurate. This model of masculinity is useful and necessary to civilised Anglophone West because it socialises many men (and women) into accepting a series of ideologies, understandings and practices that are beneficial to the civilised project.\(^{227}\) However, supporting militarism is only one way in which these ideologies, understandings and practices are ‘beneficial’; they support many aspects of Western culture that are central to the continued existence and spread of Western civilisation, socialising men into a series of ‘useful’ and ‘necessary’ roles. In this sense, although Zurbriggen’s own analysis has a limited scope, the analytical model she develops can be applied to a far wider discussion, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships between masculinity, the dominant culture and rape.

If the West’s militaries were disbanded as the result of developments in global interaction, the model of masculinity that Zurbriggen associates almost

\(^{226}\) Ibid., p. 546.

\(^{227}\) Although it should be noted that things that are beneficial to the civilised project are often far from beneficial to the vast majority of human and nonhuman life.
exclusively with militarism would still be highly significant to many areas of
the culture and socio-political organisation of the Anglophone West. Perhaps
the most obvious example, given its (increasingly) close proximity to the
military is internal security forces such as the police.\footnote{228} As Stanley Diamond
notes, ‘[c]ivilization originates in conquest abroad and repression at home.’\footnote{229}
Soldiers are required for the former, but internal security forces are required
for the latter. The internal structure of the Anglophone West is, as Derrick
Jensen notes, reliant on legitimised violence and coercive authority to
maintain the power structures and hierarchies on which the West is founded;
accordingly, ending the ‘need’ for the soldiers and military apparatus used to
conquer and exploit those in other countries would not end the ‘need’ for
police officers and the apparatus of internal state repression required to
control ‘the masses’ within the Anglophone West itself.\footnote{230} (In fact, one might
argue that losing the military would limit the West’s opportunities to exploit
workers overseas, leading to an increased exploitation of—and so an
increased need to police—workers ‘at home’.) In this sense, the police can
be seen to perform a similar function to the military, and, as such, it is not
surprising that the ‘masculine’ qualities favoured by the military are also
favoured by the police. The elements of contemporary hegemonic
masculinity that Zurbriggen highlights—including respect for hierarchy, lack
of empathy, focuses on status, aggression, and power, dominance and
control—all encourage certain men (and women) to join the police and play a
central role in making the police ‘effective’.\footnote{231} It is also, perhaps, not

\footnote{228} That the West’s police forces are becoming increasingly militarised has been widely
noted. For example, see: Heather Digby Parton, ‘Militarising the Police from Oakland to
NYC’ (14/11/2011)
[accessed 8 April 2012]; Steve Graham, ‘From Helmand to Merseyside: Unmanned Drones
and the Militarisation of UK Policing’ (27/9/2010)
<http://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/steve-graham/from-helmand-to-merseyside-
military-style-drones-enter-uk-domestic-policing> [accessed 8 April 2012]; Ayesha Kazmi,
‘Occupy and the Militarisation of Policing Protest’ (3/11/2011)
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/nov/03/occupy-militarisation-
policing-protest> [accessed 8 April 2012].
\footnote{229} Diamond, \textit{In Search of the Primitive}, p 1.
\footnote{231} It should be noted that these elements do not necessarily make the police effective at
‘protecting and serving’; however, it is well documented that the primary function of the
police is social control and the protection of private property, corporate interests and the
existing power structures of the West (For example, see: Jensen, \textit{Endgame Vol. 1}, p. xi;
Angela Y. Davis, \textit{The Angela Y. Davis Reader}, ed. by Joy James (Malden, MA: Blackwell
Publishing, 2008), p .49; Michael Parenti, \textit{Dirty Truths: Reflections on Politics, Media,
surprising that Western internal security services (police, border guards and so forth) have a reputation for routinely practising (or employing the threat of) sexual violence akin to that of the West’s militaries. In this sense, Zurbriggen’s analysis must be expanded past indictments of soldiers and war as central to the Anglophone West’s rape problem to include internal security services and coercive state authority as well. However, this is only a very slight improvement on Zurbriggen’s limited scope, remaining focused on clearly demarcated groups with a strong connection to violence. In light of this, it is useful to consider how the same model of masculinity also supports ostensibly different groups: privileged, powerful men with jobs far removed from direct violence and aggression.

It is widely noted that the model of masculinity discussed above is central to the ‘effectiveness’ of, for example, businessmen and corporate bosses.

Sheltered from the direct violence and abuses routinely associated with militarism and internal security, the ‘effectiveness’ of the privileged ranks of a large corporation—or a large financial institution such as the IMF—nevertheless requires the same respect for hierarchy, the same absence of empathy, and the same focus on status, aggression (in the form of aggressive ‘negotiation’, sales pitches and so forth), and power, dominance and control that are required for soldiers to be effective. As Ann Oakley notes, ‘[m]ost corporate decision-making is in the hands of men recruited for their ability to put profit before ethics and act out a tough-minded, aggressive

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attitude to furthering the goals of the corporation above all else." Only on the final point do I contest Oakley’s statement: the ‘goals of the corporation’, I suggest, are not valued ‘above all else’ but rather are subordinated to the goals of the individual decision-makers, valued only when they match those of the individuals. That is to say, profit and power for the corporation is only a goal for individual decision-makers because it translates into profits (or, at least, continued pay) and power for the individuals themselves. R.W. Connell makes a similar argument, noting that what she calls ‘transnational business masculinity’ is characterised by ‘increasing egocentrism, very conditional loyalties (even to the corporation), and a declining sense of responsibility for others (except for the purposes of image making).’ In this sense, it is readily apparent that contemporary capitalism is as deeply entwined with the hegemonic model of masculinity—and its associated proclivity to rape—as the military.

In the wake of the Strauss-Kahn/Diallo case, there have been numerous media attacks on the IMF, Wall Street bankers and the higher levels of corporate capitalism over charges of sexually aggressive or coercive behaviour and attitudes, many of them drawing attention to correlations between business practices and ‘sexual’ practices in the competitive, male-dominated and, arguably, often unethical world of high level finance. Indeed, some, such as Lacy MacAuley, took this to the point of stating that ‘Strauss-Kahn’s alleged sex attack on an African immigrant is a harrowing metaphor for how the IMF treats the rest of the world.’ Men such as Strauss-Kahn and other privileged, powerful financial and business figures are far removed from soldiers; hegemonic masculinity does not lead them to

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237 MacAuley goes on to note that it may be more than a metaphor, observing that it is highly likely that Diallo has suffered as a result of the IMF’s policies before she even left Guinea (Lacy MacAuley, ‘IMF Chief Assails Woman from Guinea—Again’ (19/5/2011) <http://www.fpif.org/blog/imf_chief_assaults_woman_from_guinea_again> [accessed 8 April 2012]).
join an army, nor is it employed to help teach them to kill enemy soldiers in the heat of battle, but it does lead them into the competitive world of high-level capitalism and it encourages them in their efforts to triumph and to profit, even when their choices and their actions leave poverty, suffering and death in their wake. As with the soldiers discussed in Zurbriggen’s essay, the attitudes, ideologies and values that support these practices also produce a marked proclivity to rape. This begins to highlight a crucial point: although hegemonic masculinity is significant to both of these examples (as will be explored further in chapter three), it is itself a manifestation of the ideologies and practices of the dominant culture of the Anglophone West, just as warfare or corporate capitalism are.

Objectifying and Consuming Others: The Dominant Culture of the Anglophone West

The current hegemonic model of masculinity, as suggested above, is intimately connected to the Anglophone West’s rape problem. Similarly, hegemonic masculinity—as experienced by soldiers—does, as Zurbriggen notes, help some men to accept orders and hierarchy, to kill without hesitation and without showing fear, guilt or empathy. Likewise, hegemonic masculinity—as experienced by high-ranking capitalists—also helps some men to treat workers and consumers as objects in an equation and the non-human world as meaningless resources, to make profits at the cost of the lives and liberties of others, without hesitation, guilt or empathy. However, the significant point here is that hegemonic masculinity is not the origin of these behaviours; the model of masculinity in question supports these practices not because it produces them but because both the practices and the model’s hegemony are products of the same underlying cultural ideologies, understanding and practices. The dominant culture of the Anglophone West, I argue, is predicated on and reliant on objectification, on the normalising of subject-object relationships and the utilitarian, self-interested exploitation of others; it functions in its current form precisely because it is widely accepted that—in the correct circumstances—one person’s life, liberty, safety or bodily integrity can be worth less than the pleasure, the profit or the personal gain of
another, more privileged person. Jack D. Forbes presents this aspect of Western culture as a kind of contagious madness spread by contact with the civilised, as a ‘cannibal psychosis’ which teaches that ‘the consuming of another’s life for one’s own private purpose or profit’ is an acceptable, or even preferable, way of life. This understanding of life, I will argue, informs a great many of the ideologies and practices that shape the dominant culture.

The current hegemonic model of masculinity, for example, is hegemonic precisely because it supports this aspect of the dominant culture: the form this model takes and the hegemony it has achieved are the product of the belief that ‘consuming’ others is acceptable, because ‘consuming’ others for personal gain is key to the objectification, the restricted emotionality, the focus on power, control and dominance that shapes this model of masculinity. Warfare, too, is a product of this belief, of the understanding that the conquering and exploiting of other communities for the profit of one’s ‘own’ country is normal and justifiable. The same is true of the IMF, Wall Street bankers and corporate capitalism, which treat the lives of poor people, workers, consumers and other ‘subordinates’ as expendable objects in an equation geared towards profits for the rich and powerful. Finally, the same is true of rape: at its root, the central premise on which rape is predicated is that the pleasure or personal gain of the rapist is more significant than the bodily integrity, the right to consent, the life, of the survivor. Each of these issues intersects with the others at numerous points; they mutually support each other in multiple ways, but they are all—rape included—assuredly products of the same underlying understandings and beliefs. That is to say, sexual violence intersects with a wide range of ideologies and practices, but the underlying issue is the dominant culture itself, the belief that some lives are worth less than others and so may be treated as objects that exist only to be used and ‘consumed’. Looking at how specific groups or ideologies are implicated in the Anglophone West’s rape problem is an important—even essential—task, but locating the roots of rape in these groups or ideologies avoids addressing the true extent of the issue. In this sense, there must come a point at which one stops adding to the list of culpable parties, and begins instead to address that which underlies all of them and the problem of

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rape itself, to look, that is, not to subcultures of violence but to the *super*culture of objectification, to the dominant culture's normalising of exploiting and consuming others. To this end, the next chapter will explore and expand on the notion of the Anglophone West as a superculture of objectification, analysing how consuming others is a central component of the dominant culture in order to suggest that rape, as an extreme example of normalised objectification, is an inevitable and perhaps even inherent product of the dominant culture of the Anglophone West.
In the previous chapter, I critiqued the West's dominant narrative of sexual violence, challenging the understanding of rape as something ‘natural’ and ‘savage’ that civilisation struggles to contain and control. Countering this narrative, I proposed that, far from being the echo of an imagined, primitive past, rape in the Anglophone West is the product of the dominant culture of the Anglophone West itself, of its ideologies, practices and modes of thinking. At the close of my argument, I suggested that the cultural acceptability of objectification is central to this process, and described the Anglophone West as a ‘superculture of objectification’: a culture in which the objectification, use and consumption of others is widely normalised, legitimised and even celebrated. This chapter will develop the argument further, substantiating this description and exploring in detail the key role objectification plays both in enabling rape and in structuring Western society, culture and politics.

As I will argue, the understanding that the use and ‘consumption’ of subordinated others is acceptable, even laudable, has been and remains at the very core of the Anglophone West’s cultural and political development, from its origins to the present day. This philosophy has underpinned the violence and exploitation that characterise the history of the Anglophone West, enabling and ‘justifying’ innumerable acts of objectification and abuse, and continues to exert a pronounced influence to this day; indeed, as I will discuss, this core understanding of the self in relation to others and to the world at large remains a central component of the socio-cultural terrain of the contemporary Anglophone West. Central to this argument will be the outlining of three key ways in which the ‘underlying philosophy of objectification’ operates in support of the Anglophone West’s rape culture: by providing a philosophical and ideological foundation for the normalising of rape, by influencing the socio-political organisation of Western countries in a manner that makes them susceptible to the legitimising of sexual violence against
(marginalised) women, and by supporting the proliferation of modes of interpersonal interaction that share conceptual links with, and provide ideological support for, rape as a form of objectifying, utilitarian relation. This chapter will address these three points in sequence, moving from the macrosocial to the microsocial. First, however, it is important to explore the concept of ‘objectification’ in more detail and to situate it in the context of Western culture so as to clarify—and defend—my description of the Anglophone West as a superculture of objectification.

The Anglophone West: A Superculture of Objectification

Describing Western civilisation as a ‘superculture of objectification’ is perhaps a bold declaration, and one that requires careful development. Firstly, it is essential to establish what is meant by ‘objectification’. In her philosophical exploration of the concept, Martha C. Nussbaum suggests that there are ‘at least seven distinct ways of behaving introduced by the term’: ‘Instrumentality’, ‘Denial of autonomy’, ‘Inertness’, ‘Fungibility’, ‘Violability’, ‘Ownership’ and ‘Denial of objectivity’.239 Each of these ‘ways of behaving’ can indeed be classified as a form of objectification, and each will inform my own analysis to some extent. However, from the list, there is one form that is the most significant to my employment of the concept of objectification: ‘Instrumentality’, a form of behaviour in which, Nussbaum argues, ‘[t]he objectifier treats the object as a tool of his or her purpose’.240 This particular form of objectification is the most useful for my analysis partly because it is perhaps the most consistent, wide-ranging form—indeed, it could be said that understanding ‘the object’ as existing for the objectifier’s own purpose is present in and underpins all the other forms—and partly because it is the form most closely related to the abusive or exploitative use and consumption of others. Nussbaum herself highlights instrumentality, at least in the context of sexual objectification, as particularly significant, suggesting in a separate

239 Martha C. Nussbaum, ‘Objectification’, Philosophy and Public Affairs, Vol. 24, No. 4 (1995), 249–291 (pp. 251, 257). Italics in original. Whilst the majority of these terms are self-explanatory, it is perhaps worth noting that Nussbaum defines ‘fungibility’ as the treatment of an ‘object as interchangeable (a) with other objects of the same type, and/or (b) with objects of other types’ (Nussbaum, ‘Objectification’, p. 257).
240 Ibid., p. 257.
essay that ‘if [...] we want to understand what is wrong with objectification in the context of gender relations we will do well to focus on the idea of (mere) instrumental use: the objectifier treats the objectified as a mere tool of his ends, not as an end in herself.’241 This emphasis is mirrored by Deborah H. Gruenfeld and others, who suggest that instrumentality is key to the process by which an objectifier comes to understand a potential target as ‘desirable’, as having the capacity to serve the objectifier’s interests.242 Certainly, it is instrumentality that is central to many feminist definitions of objectification. Barbara L. Frederickson and Tomi-Ann Roberts provide a representative definition in this respect:

Sexual objectification occurs whenever a woman’s body, body parts, or sexual function are separated out from her person, reduced to the status of mere instruments, or regarded as if they were capable of representing her [...] In other words, when objectified, women are treated as bodies—and in particular, as bodies that exist for the use and pleasure of others.243

The centrality of instrumentality to this definition is readily apparent: in perceiving a woman only in terms of her ‘body, body parts, or sexual function’ the objectifier is viewing and valuing her only in terms of her use to the objectifier. This instrumental perception leads in turn to instrumental treatment: the treating of women ‘as bodies—and in particular, as bodies that exist for the use and pleasure of others’. When women are treated as bodies to be used by others, they are treated as tools or instruments, as a means to another’s ends and, as such, we might refer to this as ‘instrumental objectification’. Importantly, this treatment may well include any or all of the other forms of objectification suggested by Nussbaum. For example, in the form of rape, treating a woman as a sexual object always includes denying her autonomy and subjectivity and treating her as violable, and may include treating her as inert, fungible or as owned property. However, these forms of objectifying treatment are all grounded in the instrumental treatment of the

woman and, ultimately, all develop from the instrumental perception of the woman: it is the perception of the woman as an instrument to be used that provides the ‘justification’ for the objectifying treatment. In this sense, sexual objectification, as it is defined here, is a clear illustration of the centrality of instrumentality to objectification.

However, it is crucial to note that this instrumental objectification—as both a type of act and a mode of perception—is by no means restricted to the sexual objectification of women; the definitions found in feminist analysis require only relatively slight modification to become applicable to other forms of objectification. For example, described by Aristotle as an ‘animate tool’, a slave is both perceived and treated as a body that exists ‘for the use and pleasure of others’, viewed and—quite literally—valued in relation to the capacity to labour for the slave master.244 (Of course, enslaved women and girls—and to a lesser extent men and boys—are also frequently subject to sexual objectification and exploitation).245 Similarly, workers are frequently both perceived and treated as little more than labouring bodies or the capacity to labour (the embodiment of the skills and knowledge required to fulfil certain tasks).246 This instrumental treatment is not limited to relationships between humans: great numbers of animals, caged in zoos or raised in the feculent darkness of factory farms, are also perceived and treated purely in terms of their use to humans, as food, clothing or entertainment.247 Likewise, the vernacular of the Anglophone West routinely

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245 Like so many of the abuses discussed in this thesis, this is part of a long tradition, running at least from the *pornai* and other enslaved prostitutes of Ancient Greece, to the ‘breeding wenches’ and raped labourers of the transatlantic slave trade, to the imprisoned or trafficked ‘sex-slaves’ found throughout much of the contemporary world. (*Greek Prostitutes in the Ancient Mediterranean 800 BCE – 200 CE*, ed. by Allison Glazebrook and Madeleine M. Henry (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011); Anthony W. Neal, *Unburdened by Conscience: A Black People’s Collective Account of America’s Ante-Bellum South and the Aftermath* (Maryland: University Press of America, 2010), pp. 51–89; *International Sex Trafficking of Women and Children: Understanding the Global Epidemic*, ed. by Leonard Territo and George Kirkham (New York: Looseleaf Law Publication, 2010)).
246 See: Nussbaum, ‘Objectification’, pp. 262–263. Of course, this objectification also intersects with other forms of objectification, such as those pertaining to gender and race (for example, see: Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 70–71).
describes the non-human world as ‘natural resources’, as things to be used by humanity, reducing them to the wooden ‘bodies’ of trees, the mineral ‘bodies’ of mountains, the oil and gas beneath the surface of the land.\textsuperscript{248} Each of these examples—and there are many more—share a common characteristic: they all describe the treatment of forms of life (or elements of the land that provide habitats to many forms of life) as instrumental objects, as means to an end, tools to be used for benefit of others. Indeed, placing the last example in a colonial context (and a discussion of the Anglophone West is effectively always a colonial context) makes this conceptual connection even more apparent. In the civilised, imperialist understanding, ‘natural resources’ includes more than trees, minerals and fossil fuels; the fertile land itself, the ‘exotic’ plants and animals, the ceremonial practices of colonised cultures, the labouring bodies of colonised peoples, the raped bodies of colonised women all fall under the same objectifying perception, becoming, in intricate and intersectional ways, ‘resources’ for the invading civilised to exploit.\textsuperscript{249} In this sense, at the raped bodies of colonised women, the examples come full circle, arriving back to ‘bodies that exist for the use and pleasure of others’ with each example in between not a departure but simply a variation on a common theme and a common definition of instrumental objectification.

The fact that the above examples are each only a few short modifications away from Frederickson and Roberts’ definition of sexual objectification highlights the reason I used the definition as a starting point for my analysis: because my work seeks to draw parallels and connections between different forms of objectification (and the discourses of civilisation that normalise and


\textsuperscript{249} There are numerous—perhaps innumerable—examples of this colonial understanding of ‘natural resources’, several of which have already been referred to in the previous citations. For some of the less commonly analysed, but revealingly intersectional, examples, see: Patricia Fara, \textit{Sex, Botany and Empire: The Story of Carl Linnaeus and Joseph Banks} (Cambridge: Icon Books, 2003); \textit{Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Empire}, ed. by Pascal Blanchard and others, trans. by Teresa Bridgeman (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 2008).
legitimise them), the wide-ranging applicability of Frederickson and Roberts’ definition already highlights conceptual connections. However, there is a distinction I wish to make between my own approach and that of Frederickson and Roberts. Like many feminist definitions and discussions of objectification, Frederickson and Roberts’ approach is focused on women’s experiences of being objectified and how it affects their lives, relationships, mental health and self-identity. This approach is, of course, extremely important: in focusing on women’s experiences, theorists both improve understanding of the issues women face under patriarchy and help to return voices—and, indeed, to restore subjectivity—to a marginalised and objectified class. However, my own approach deviates from this. Because I will be situating the concept of objectification in an analysis of the Anglophone West, exploring how objectification is a learnt behaviour that is normalised and, to varying degrees, legitimised by the dominant culture, I will be interrogating the experiences of objectifiers, as well as exploring the resultant repercussions for the objectified. In this respect, it is useful to borrow from ecofeminist Val Plumwood’s concept of ‘instrumentalism’, a concept that is distinct from, although closely related to, the ‘instrumental objectification’ used in this analysis.²⁵⁰ Plumwood writes that ‘[i]nstrumentalism is a way of relating to the world which corresponds to a certain model of selfhood, the selfhood conceived as that of the individual who stands apart from an alien other and denies his own relationship to and dependency on this other.’²⁵¹ Although I will return this theory later, at this stage it is Plumwood’s description of instrumentalism as ‘a way of relating to the world’ centred on a specific conception of the self that is of interest. Like Plumwood’s instrumentalism, the instrumental objectification my analysis is concerned with is a means of relating to others or to the world around oneself. It is not an isolated act, or the product of single specific context or power-relation, but a largely normalised understanding of the objectifier’s self in relation to others, to society, and to the world at large. In this sense, instrumental objectification not only refers to the treatment of others as a

²⁵⁰ As will be explored in more detail later, the key difference between Plumwood’s ‘instrumentalism’ and my ‘instrumental objectification’ is the extent to which the objectified party is considered to exist solely as an instrument or tool: Plumwood’s instrumentalism requires totality, whereas my instrumental objectification has an intentionally broader focus (see: Plumwood, Feminism and the Mastery of Nature, p. 142).
²⁵¹ Plumwood, Feminism and the Mastery of Nature, p. 142.
means to one’s own ends, but also to a self-centred, individualistic mode of perception that views, values and relates to others in terms of their capacity to serve one’s own ends, and which understands the self as entitled to this service despite the cost to the objectified party.

The above definition of instrumental objectification as a mode of perception or a means of relating to others is central to the concept of a ‘superculture of objectification’. A superculture of objectification is not simply a culture in which objectification is widely practised (although that is certainly true as well); rather, it is a culture in which instrumental objectification plays a vital structuring role, informing the culture’s dominant ideologies, social organisation and normative practices. It is a culture in which objectification, in numerous forms, is normalised and legitimised, a culture in which the instrumental use of others—on both a micro- and macrosocial scale—is one of the most prevalent means of relating to others. This suggests that the Anglophone West is an (or perhaps, the) archetypal model of a superculture of objectification. Shaped by its long history of warfare, imperial expansion and the enslavement of objectified Others, the modern Anglophone West, I suggest, is organised socially and politically around the underlying belief that some lives are less valuable than others, that some may be used as objects and instruments so that others may profit. As Stanley Diamond argues, ‘[c]ivilization originates in conquest abroad and repression at home.’ That is to say, in the terms of the current discussion, that the colonial objectification of non-Western peoples (and land and ‘resources’) and the hierarchical objectification of marginalised and subordinated Westerners are both central to the ‘civilised’ Anglophone West. We might also add to Diamond’s statement that civilisation also originates in the objectification and exploitation of non-human life, that, as argued in the previous chapter, dominating nature is central to civilisation’s definition and self-conception. Crucially, instrumental objectification is central to each of these aspects of Anglophone Western culture, providing a foundation of self-serving

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253 Indeed, they can be argued, as Derrick Jensen does, to be inherent to civilisation (see: Derrick Jensen, Endgame Volume 1: The Problem of Civilization (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2006), pp. 17–18, 44–76, and throughout).
ideologies that encourage, normalise and legitimise the utilitarian treatment of living beings as expendable objects. As I will argue presently, on the macrosocial scale, it underpins the actions of Western governments, from resource wars and colonisation to the marginalisation of whole classes of people and the degradation and exploitation of the non-human world. On the microsocial scale, it influences individual practices and interactions, encouraging and normalising self-interested forms of interaction that treat others—from sexual partners and family members to shop workers and sweat-shop labourers—as things to be used in order to serve one’s own interests.

In this sense, the Anglophone West’s superculture of objectification is a complex web of intricately intersecting relations, all premised on the notion that it is acceptable to treat others as objects, but all taking different forms and operating on vastly different scales. Within this complexity there are numerous points at which the Anglophone West’s superculture of objectification supports or enables its rape culture. For the purposes of clarity, I will group these points into three broad categories, distinguished by the social scale on which they operate. These three categories map onto and are consistent with what I suggest are the three key ways in which the Anglophone West’s superculture of objectification supports its rape culture: by providing the rape culture with an ideological and philosophical foundation, by helping to shape a dominant form of social and political organisation that is sympathetic and conducive to the rape culture, and by normalising forms of ‘day-to-day’ relation and interaction that share significant conceptual links to the practice of rape. The remainder of this chapter will discuss these points of connection and support, moving from the macro to the micro, addressing the underlying philosophy of objectification, its influence on the social structuring of the Anglophone West, and finally, its manifestation in daily life and individual interaction.
The Underlying Philosophy of Objectification

As suggested above, objectification is widely present in the Anglophone West, operating on a wide scale that encompasses everything from the relatively benign objectification of shop workers, taxi drivers or waiters by their customers—whose reason for relating to the ‘object’ is premised only on their own interests—through to the mass objectification required to destroy an ecosystem in the name of urban expansion, or to drop a nuclear bomb on a huge number of ‘enemy’ civilians (who are carefully turned, in civilised discourse, from living beings to the objectified ‘collateral damage’). It is to this underlying philosophy, I suggest, that Powhatan-Renâpe/Delaware-Lenâpe activist and academic Jack D. Forbes is referring when he writes of the ‘cannibal psychosis’ of the civilised, the belief in the acceptability of ‘consuming […] another’s life for one’s own private purpose or profit.’

Similarly, hooks’ discussion of the relationship between violence against women and the West’s traditions of hierarchy and coercive rule can be argued to refer, ultimately, to the same underlying philosophy. What hooks describes as ‘the Western philosophical notion of hierarchical rule and coercive authority’ is intimately connected to—and perhaps even interchangeable with—the underlying philosophy of objectification. The Cambridge Dictionary defines a hierarchy as ‘a system in which people or things are arranged according to their importance.’ This arrangement by order of importance is itself premised on the central condition of the West’s ‘underlying philosophy of objectification’ suggested above: some lives are less valuable than others. That is to say, the belief that lives have no intrinsic value, that some may be classed as ‘worth’ less than others, provides the foundation upon which both the philosophy of objectification and the West’s hierarchical social organisation are constructed. In addition, social hierarchy is, in many respects, a manner of organising the underlying philosophy of objectification. As Gruenfeld and others note, ‘the purpose of organizational

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hierarchy, almost by definition, is to formalize who is allowed to be used as a means to an end, and by whom.\textsuperscript{258} In this sense, hierarchy functions as an extension of the West’s philosophy of objectification, as one of the key systems through which objectification operates. Indeed, one could even argue that to discuss ‘the Western notion of hierarchy’ is also to discuss—albeit from a marginally different position—‘the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification’, the philosophical position that is formalised in hierarchy. Moreover, the coercive authority that hooks discusses refers to a form of institutionalised behaviour common to both the notion of hierarchy and the philosophy of objectification: depending on the position from which one is approaching the issue, one may describe ‘coercive authority’ as either the legitimised violence used by those higher up the hierarchy to suppress the rights, and preserve the exploitation, of those below them, or the legitimised violence used by objectifier classes to suppress the subjectivity, and preserve the instrumental use of, objectified classes. In this sense, hooks’ discussion of the ‘philosophical notion of hierarchy’ and my own analysis of the ‘philosophy of objectification’ are, again, intimately connected. The common ground held by the two concepts is particularly useful to my analysis when hooks’ discussion is considered in its original context.

Highlighting the conceptual links between violence, hierarchy and gender oppression, hooks writes:

While I agree [...] that male violence against women [...] is an expression of male domination, I believe that violence is inextricably linked to all acts of violence in this society that occur between the powerful and the powerless, the dominant and the dominated. While male supremacy encourages the use of abusive force to maintain male domination of women, it is the Western philosophical notion of hierarchical rule and coercive authority that is the root cause of violence against women.\textsuperscript{259}

Given the connections between hooks’ analysis and my own, hooks’ full statement provides a model for understanding the relation of the West’s rape culture to the underlying philosophy of objectification. Central to hooks’ argument is the observation that male violence against women, whilst

\textsuperscript{258} Gruenfeld and others, ‘Power and the Objectification of Social Targets’, p. 113.
\textsuperscript{259} hooks, \textit{Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center}, p. 118.
undeniably a product of patriarchal social organisation, does not occur in isolation; rather, she suggests, it is profoundly related to violent oppression in general, and deeply grounded in the philosophical normalisation of social stratification. This argument also applies to the relationship between the Anglophone West’s rape culture and the West’s ‘philosophy of objectification’. By virtue of the fact that it is enabled by the perception of a woman as an objectified tool through which a rapist may gain personal gratification—and the fact that it necessarily involves the denial of the woman’s subjectivity, agency and autonomy—rape is, I suggest, quite evidently an extreme form of sexual objectification. Given that this sexual objectification is normalised and, to varying degrees, legitimised by patriarchal social organisation, it is also undeniably a form of male objectification of women that is supported and validated by systems of male domination. However, as in hook’s argument, this explicitly gendered objectification does not occur in isolation. Rather it is grounded in a deeper philosophical foundation of Western culture, a foundation that underpins both patriarchal domination and the systems of legitimised violence alluded to by hooks and, in the earlier discussion, by Zurbriggen and, to a lesser extent, Brownmiller. Patriarchy and gender oppression certainly dictate the form of the objectification, providing the patriarchal power structure and heterosexual scripts that are so fundamental to rape, but it is the underlying notion that some lives are less valuable than others and so may be used as objects for another’s benefit that provides the necessary legitimising foundation.

Without this underlying philosophy, objectification—in the form of rape or otherwise—cannot be normalised or legitimised within the dominant culture at large; stripped of its foundations, it can only be a deeply stigmatised transgression, culturally unacceptable and indefensible. In this sense, the normalising and legitimising of rape is profoundly grounded in a philosophy that is, as argued above, central to—and perhaps even inherent to—Western culture. However, because this philosophy is underlying—that is to say, deeply immersed, often unseen, within the fabric of the dominant culture—it is difficult to highlight the true extent of its influence. As anthropologist Ruth Benedict notes, it is extremely difficult for anyone raised under the influence of ‘the dominant traits of our own civilization’ to actually recognise, analyse
and criticise those traits. Cross-cultural analysis is a useful remedy to this predicament, providing, through the study of other cultures, a stark reflection of the flaws in civilised Western culture. Indeed, as Diamond notes, ‘man in civilization is the problem’ and only through knowledge of other cultures—of human constants and cultural differences—can we gain ‘self-knowledge as the ground for self-criticism’. It is in this spirit, and with this intention, that I will now refer to cross-cultural analysis of sexual violence: explorations of the trends and commonalities shared by cultures with low or non-existent rape incidence, contrasted with analysis of Western culture, helps to expose the influence of the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification, providing ‘self-knowledge as the ground for self-criticism’.

‘Rape Prone’ and ‘Rape Free’: Cross-Cultural Analysis of Rape

Perhaps the most extensive analysis of cultural attitudes to rape can be found in Peggy Reeves Sanday’s ‘The Socio-Cultural Context of Rape: A Cross-Cultural Study’ (1981). The study brings together analysis of ‘156 tribal societies’, with two key objectives: ‘to provide a descriptive profile of “rape prone” and “rape free” societies’ and ‘to present an analysis of the attitudes, motivations, and socio-cultural factors related to the incidence of rape.’

These combined objectives make Sanday’s work a valuable resource that highlights the fact that rape is not a universal act with a single, coherent cultural status. Of course, the scale on which the survey operates means that its findings must remain relatively broad—processing data from across such a wide range of cultures means that some of the complexities of each culture

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261 In Search of the Primitive, p. 100. It is worth noting that, since Diamond made this observation, studies of indigenous cultures actually written by members of those cultures have proliferated, reducing the reliance on Western anthropological studies (and so reducing the colonial dynamic of such analysis). Similarly, the number of studies of Western culture written by indigenous scholars and activists (as well as other non-Westerners and those working from non-Western cultural traditions) have become more widely accessible, providing analysis that is free from, or at least less influenced and constrained by, Western socialisation. This provides a more rounded and critically vital body of work from which to approach the task Diamond proposes.
are not fully accounted for—but, despite this limitation, Sanday’s research
does demonstrate significant trends and patterns. Perhaps most significant of
all is the observation that attitudes to rape are intimately connected to wider
cultural ideologies and practices, and that ‘a high incidence of rape is
embedded in a distinctly different cultural configuration than a low incidence
of rape.’\textsuperscript{263} Whilst this is only a broad finding, it is, nevertheless, extremely
revealing: correlations between cultural configuration and incidence of rape
not only demonstrate conclusively that rape (or at least high levels of rape) is
not the product of a universal ‘human nature’ but also begin to show that
specific elements of a culture can be seen as encouraging or normalising
sexual violence. Moreover, Sanday goes into further detail on what these
elements are. Unsurprisingly, the analysis finds that gender relations are key
to variations in rape incidence. In particular, the study shows that ‘rape prone’
cultures (that is, societies ‘in which sexual assault by men of women is either
culturally allowable or, largely overlooked’) are male dominated, with women
excluded from positions of social power and authority, and from public
decision making.\textsuperscript{264} However, the study also reveals other correlations
between cultural attitudes and rape incidence.

As in Brownmiller and Zurbriggen’s studies discussed earlier, Sanday also
finds cultural attitudes to violence to be a significant determinant in rape
incidence. She writes that ‘where interpersonal violence is a way of life,
vio\textsuperscript{lence frequently achieves sexual expression’.\textsuperscript{265} Importantly, in this
statement, Sanday presents sexual violence as more than just a product of
gender dynamics and locates it in a wider matrix of normalised behaviour.
Rape becomes, in this understanding, one expression of a broader cultural
pattern, the sexual, gendered manifestation of a cultural existence, a ‘way of
life’, in which violence is normalised and exalted. In this sense, Sanday’s
observation can be seen as a cross-cultural version of Brownmiller and
Zurbriggen’s findings (albeit without Brownmiller’s racist and classist
assumptions): the cultural acceptance of violence in general terms frequently
extends to include the cultural acceptance of sexual violence. Moreover, as

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{263} Ibid., pp. 52–53.
\item \textsuperscript{264} Ibid., pp. 59, 65.
\item \textsuperscript{265} Ibid., pp. 61.
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with that of Brownmiller and Zurbriggen, Sanday’s research provides a precedent for considering wider cultural attitudes as factors contributing to a society’s rape culture. However, because objectification is, as argued earlier, central to both gender oppression and interpersonal violence, it is also possible to include cultural acceptance of objectification within these wider cultural attitudes. That is to say, it is possible to posit a relationship between cultural acceptance of objectification (as the foundation of, amongst other things, both gender oppression and interpersonal violence) and cultural acceptance of rape. Moreover, if the cultural acceptance of objectification that enables both gender oppression and interpersonal violence is premised on an underlying philosophy of objectification, as I have argued, then Sanday’s findings support my earlier suggestion regarding Western culture: that the presence of an underlying philosophy of objectification is directly related to the Anglophone West’s rape culture and high incidence of rape. In this sense, one can remodel Sanday’s statement on the relationship between violence and rape to reflect this broader focus: ‘where objectification is a way of life, objectification frequently achieves sexual expression in the form of rape.’ Certainly, my previous discussion suggests this understanding. However, this pronouncement is given further support by the cultural patterns that distinguish ‘rape free’ societies—that is, by Sanday’s definition, societies ‘where the act of rape is either infrequent or does not occur’—from ‘rape prone’ societies such as the Anglophone West.

Just as gender oppression is a marked characteristic of ‘rape prone’ cultures, gender equality is a marked characteristic of ‘rape free’ cultures. Sanday notes this directly, writing that ‘[i]n “rape free” societies women are treated with considerable respect, and prestige is attached to female reproductive and productive roles.’ However, the cultural patterning shared by ‘rape free’ cultures also extends into wider cultural attitudes and ideologies, including, again, cultural attitudes towards objectification. Indeed, the findings of Sanday’s research suggest that, whilst the cultural normalising of objectification correlates to a high incidence of sexual objectification in the form of rape, the converse is also true: cultures in which instrumental objectification is rarely, if ever, practiced or culturally condoned largely have

266 Ibid., p. 60.
a low incidence of rape. This cultural trend includes a wide range of non-objectifying forms of relation. Sanday’s research shows that ‘rape free’ cultures are characterised not only by an absence of gender oppression, but also an absence of hierarchical social organisation, interpersonal violence and exploitative attitudes towards the non-human world.\(^{267}\) Each of these absent practices is, as discussed previously, an objectifying form of relation: the objectification of subordinates, the objectification of enemies, and the objectification of non-human life.\(^{268}\) Moreover, each of these forms of relation is widely practiced in the Anglophone West and, as argued earlier, finds its foundations in the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification. In line with this, one can argue that an underlying philosophy of objectification correlates to a high incidence of rape, and that the absence of this philosophy—or the presence of what we might call an underlying philosophy of interconnection and egalitarianism—correlates to a low incidence of rape. Analysis of the traditional cultures of the indigenous nations of North America—in comparison with civilised Western culture—provides strong support to this argument, highlighting how these underlying philosophies play a significant role in determining a whether a culture is ‘rape prone’ or ‘rape free’.\(^{269}\)

**Underlying Philosophies and Rape: Native North America and the West**

It has been widely noted that prior to, and for varying periods after, European colonisation, rape was a relatively rare occurrence in the majority of

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\(^{267}\) Ibid.

\(^{268}\) See also: Gruenfeld and others, ‘Power and the Objectification of Social Targets’, p. 113; Eileen L. Zurbriggen, ‘Rape, War, and the Socialization of Masculinity: Why our Refusal to Give up War Ensures that Rape cannot be Eradicated’, *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (2010), 438–549 (p. 543); Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, pp. 4–5).

\(^{269}\) As the subject of my thesis is the rape problem and rape culture of the Anglophone West, my analysis of Native North America will be necessarily brief and focused on comparison with the dominant Western culture. This concision is not intended to suggest—as is too often patronisingly implied by Western studies of supposedly ‘primitive’ or ‘simple’ cultures—that the complex histories, belief systems, social organisation and cultural composition of even a single First Nations or American Indian nation can be adequately described in such a short analysis. Rather it draws on a number of extremely thorough texts (mainly written by indigenous scholars and activists) to produce a highly condensed overview intended to serve a specific purpose.
American Indian nations. There is, perhaps, a temptation to romanticise this fact, to fall back on old stereotypes of ‘noble savages’ living in a peaceful state of grace, inherently free from sexual violence. Such a position is, I suggest, misguided (not to mention racist) and actually undermines the more significant, and more accurate, assertion that many American Indian and First Nations peoples had low levels of sexual violence, and that this was firmly grounded not in an inherent peacefulness but in the nations’ dominant cultural attitudes. As Cherokee scholar and activist Andrea Smith suggests:

[It is important not to overgeneralise or give the impression that Native communities were utopian prior to colonization. Certainly gender violence occurred prior to colonization. Nevertheless, both oral and written records often note its relative rarity as well as the severity of the punishment for perpetrators of violence.]

What Smith discusses here is not the Western stereotype of simple, ‘natural’ people whose inherently peaceful disposition renders sexual violence utterly incomprehensible; rather, she describes complex and culturally rich nations populated by heterogeneous peoples and characterised by the same wide range of behaviour that marks any human culture, including sexual violence. However, and this is a most significant point, the nations Smith discusses are nations whose cultures provide little or no cultural foundation for the normalising and legitimising of rape. In line with this, the purpose of the

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272 It is important to note that some studies suggest that rape was considerably more institutionalised and culturally accepted in certain American Indian nations (for example, see: Sanday, ‘The Socio-Cultural Context of Rape’, pp. 57, 59; Stremlau, ‘Native Americans’, p. 137). However, Sanday notes that such cultural acceptance was often anomalous in terms of wider, traditional gender relations within these nations, and locates the higher cultural acceptance of rape in the context of the profound social upheavals and mass deculturation brought about by contact or war with—or colonisation by—European invaders (Peggy Reeves Sanday, *Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 143–158). This is not in any way to defend (or deny the existence of) sexual violence committed within these nations; rather, it is to highlight the full context of such acts (and their cultural acceptance), and so to note that, fully contextualised, they do not discredit either my analysis or the works that I cite in this section. This, in turn, is not to simplistically suggest that colonisation changed Native North
following analysis is not to present American Indian and First Nations peoples as noble savages, inherently too innocent and peaceful to commit rape, but as examples of peoples whose dominant cultures prevent, discourage and revile, rather than support, encourage, normalise and legitimise sexual violence. Significantly, this understanding highlights the fact that incidence of, and attitudes towards, sexual violence are the products of specific cultural configurations, and that those traditionally found throughout much of Native North America produce both low incidence and few rape-supportive attitudes and ideologies.

Consistent with Sanday’s research discussed above, a key part of this cultural configuration is certainly the relative gender equality and respect for women that characterises many traditional American Indian and First Nation cultures. Although there is some variation in theorists’ understandings of this relative equality and respect—ranging, for example, from Laguna Pueblo activist and writer Paula Gunn Allen’s discussion of ‘gynecentric [sic], egalitarian [...] social systems’ to Nancy Shoemaker’s slightly more reserved statement that ‘[w]omen and men had complementary roles of equal importance, power, and prestige’—it is widely agreed to have been present in most, if not all, Native cultures.273 However, as argued in my above discussion, this relative gender equality does not occur in isolation but rather is part of a wider egalitarian philosophy. As Shoemaker notes, whilst the authority and autonomy traditionally attributed to Native women comes in part from respect for what Sanday refers to as ‘female reproductive and productive roles’, they are firmly grounded in ‘an inherent respect for individual autonomy’.274 Indeed, as Eleanor Burke Leacock so neatly phrases it, in many egalitarian societies, from Native North America, Indigenous Australia and elsewhere, ‘egalitarianism applied as fully to women as it did to

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That is to say, the relative autonomy and authority of women is less an isolated and remarkable aspect of Native North American cultures and more a continuation of their egalitarian social organisation, a manifestation of cultural beliefs in the right of all individuals to autonomy, authority and subjectivity. In the context of my earlier discussion of objectification, this understanding again points to the fact that a low incidence of rape correlates not only to non-objectifying gender relations but also to a broader absence of normalised objectification in society at large. Moreover, in the case of American Indian and First Nations cultures, this absence is not restricted to human relations and social organisation but rather, extends into a far wider understanding of the world that stands in stark contrast to the West’s ‘underlying philosophy of objectification’.

In an exploration of the Lakota greeting ‘hau, metakuyeayasi’ (‘hello, my relatives’), American Indian activist and academic Ward Churchill provides a particularly pertinent insight into the extent of the respect for all forms of life found throughout the traditional cultures of Native North America. He writes:

I have come to understand that when Lakota people use the word Metakuyeayasi, they are not simply referring to their mothers and fathers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, ancestors, nieces and nephews, children, grandchildren, cousins, future generations, and all the rest of humankind. Oh, these relatives are certainly included, but things don’t stop there. Also involved is reference to the ground we stand on, the sky above us, the light from the sun and water in the oceans, lakes, rivers, and streams. The plants who populate our environment are included, as are the four-legged creatures around us, those who hop and crawl, the birds who fly, the fish who swim, the insects, the worms. Everything. These are all understood in the Lakota way as being relatives.

This understanding of everything from family members to plants, from animals to rivers, as not only sentient beings deserving respect but as actual relatives is markedly different from dominant Western understandings.

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discussed previously. Where the West normalises the objectification of the vast majority of life on this planet, including many humans, the indigenous understanding discussed by Churchill treats all life, including those entities considered in Western thought to be unconscious, insensate and insentient, as significant and valuable, as inherently capable of, and inherently deserving of, autonomy and subjectivity. Indeed, as Forbes notes, ‘[t]he life of Native American peoples revolves around the concept of the sacredness, beauty, power and relatedness of all forms of existence. In short, the ethics or moral values of Native people are part and parcel of their cosmology or total world view.’ 278 This point is key to my analysis: central to traditional American Indian attitudes, ideologies and practices is an understanding of the world as populated by, and composed of, interrelated, sentient and subjective beings, a belief that what the dominant culture of the Anglophone West might refer to as ‘the natural world’ has, as Kanien’kehá:ka (Mohawk) scholar, Taiaiake Alfred says, ‘an inherent value, beyond human needs’. 279 Where the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification suggests that life has no inherent value, and so encourages a means of relating to the world in which others are objectified and assigned worth solely in relation to one’s own goals, American Indian cosmologies directly oppose such objectification, understanding the world to be composed of interrelated life forms (or ‘forms of existence’) that are all inherently valuable, and inherently deserving of respect, subjectivity and autonomy. Indeed, Standing Rock Sioux theologian, academic and activist Vine Deloria suggests that these different ways of understanding and relating to the world represent the primary difference between Western and American Indian ways of life, noting that ‘Indians experience and relate to a living universe, whereas Western philosophy [...] reduces things to objects [...] to manipulate and exploit.’ 280 In this sense, in contrast to the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification, American Indian and First Nations cultures are characterised by what we might call ‘underlying philosophies of interrelation and egalitarianism’: a pervasive guiding understanding of the world that suggests that all forms of existence

278 Forbes, Columbus and other Cannibals, p. 15. Italics in original.
are inherently valuable, and should not be treated as objects to be consumed for one’s own gain.\textsuperscript{281}

In my earlier analysis, I outlined how the understanding that life has no inherent value enables the objectifying and abusive treatment of others, and suggested that the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification encourages both this understanding and this manner of treating, or relating to, others. Here, I suggest that the converse is also true: an understanding of all life as having inherent value (outside of its value to one’s own goals) helps to prohibit the objectifying and abusive treatment of others, and an underlying philosophy of interrelation and egalitarianism encourages this understanding and supports this prohibition. This is much evidenced in many Native North American cultures. The understanding that the lives of animals, for example, have inherent worth profoundly influenced traditional hunting practices. As Oglala-Lakota writer Luther Standing Bear notes, ‘[t]he animal had rights—the right of man’s protection, the right to live, the right to multiply, the right to freedom, and the right to man’s indebtedness . . . the Lakota never enslaved the animal, and spared all life that was not needed for food and clothing.’\textsuperscript{282} Animals, though they are killed for meat and for clothing, are not treated as mere objects that exist solely for the use of humans; rather they are considered to have rights, to be deserving of respect, to be killed only out of necessity, rather than with the callous ease of one who does not consider the animal’s life to have inherent worth. This respectful, even reverential, approach to the lives of others is found also in the treatment of these entities traditionally considered inanimate and insentient by the West, as Forbes notes:

\textsuperscript{281} The interrelation aspect of this description is taken from the works of various American Indian scholars and activists who highlight it as a central component of many Native philosophies (for two examples among many, see: Churchill, Acts of Rebellion, pp. 247–248; Smith, Conquest, p. 5). However, I have also added ‘egalitarianism’ to my description to highlight the fact that this interrelation also implies respect and reverence equally applied to all forms of life, including those considered insentient and insensate in dominant Western understandings. This is intended only as a clarification of my summary/definition and not an effort to reinterpret Native traditions.

\textsuperscript{282} Luther Standing Bear cited in Forbes, Columbus and other Cannibals, p. 12.
Native American philosophy recognizes the right of every living creature to life and to live in its own life without interference. For this reason, Native people traditionally avoid the killing of living trees, avoid trampling on plants and seldom, if ever, kill any creature except for food.\(^{283}\)

Here, again, non-human life—including trees and plants—is not treated as objects that exist to be used and consumed by humans; rather each form of life is considered to be subjective and autonomous, to have an inherent value and a right to exist unmolested by human cruelties and violence.

Although animals may be killed for meat and clothing, or plants for food and medicine, these deaths are not simply the unthinking ‘use’ of an object, achieved with the callous ease of the purely self-interested, as they are in much of the West, but acts of great significance, moments of solemnity and gratitude. As Forbes continues:

> When a plant, tree or animal is to be killed, first, the need must be great; second, permission is asked for, if time allows; third, the creature is thanked and, fourth, dances, prayers and ceremonies are used to further thank the creatures so killed and to help those that are alive to grow and prosper.\(^{284}\)

The plants, trees and animals discussed by Forbes are clearly not objects, and they are clearly considered to have a worth far beyond their utilitarian use to the hunter or gatherer who ends their life. The West’s underlying philosophy of objectification makes such reverence appear ridiculous—who, after all, would offer gratitude and honour to a mere object that exists solely for one’s own benefit?—but for those raised without this sense of entitlement and self-interest, without the belief that objectifying others is normal and acceptable, it is an act of appalling cruelty and callousness to do otherwise. As in the previous discussion, this too is a manifestation of the differing philosophies that Deloria suggests is the principal distinction between Western and Native understandings of the world: where the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification views life as having no inherent value and so works to normalise the objectification of others, Native philosophies of interrelation and egalitarianism view all forms of existence as equally valid.

\(^{283}\) Forbes, *Columbus and other Cannibals*, p. 13.
\(^{284}\) Ibid.
and equally valuable and so work to normalise the respectful, compassionate and considerate treatment of others. The above analysis shows that these different levels of respect for life and these different cultural responses to the objectification and consumption of others underpin the differences between how the West and many Native nations relate to the non-human world. As demonstrated previously, they also underpin the differences between how the West and many Native nations are socially organised and politically structured. Finally, as suggested at the beginning of this discussion, they also underpin the differences between the gender relations in the West and gender relations in traditional Native North America. In light of this, I suggest that it must be in the context of this key difference, and its multiple manifestations, that we consider the low incidence of sexual violence in traditional American Indian and First Nations cultures, compared to the remarkably high incidence found in the Anglophone West.

As observed above, the relative gender egalitarianism of Native North America must be seen as a significant element of the low incidence of rape traditionally found in these cultures. However, this, in turn, should be seen as being grounded in an underlying philosophy that opposes the objectification and consumption of others. In my reworking of Sanday’s discussion of violence, I made the observation that ‘where objectification is a way of life, objectification frequently achieves sexual expression in the form of rape’ and, here, the converse is also true. Just as the absence of normalised objectification means that animals are not valued solely for their meat and skins, or trees for their wood, rivers for their fish, humans (in a general sense) for the ability to labour and toil and serve, so too does this absence mean that women are not valued solely for their genitals or sexual function, for their ability to fulfil the goals of the would-be seducer or the would-be rapist. As Thomas Macaulay Miller notes, the West is ‘a culture where sex is not so much an act as a thing: a substance that can be given, bought, sold, or stolen, that has a value and a supply-and-demand curve.’285 This understanding, Miller suggests, induces forms of relation centred on the male

acquisition of female sexuality. Such forms of relation are profoundly objectifying: the woman is reduced, in the objectifier's eyes, to her sexual function or sexual capability; she is no longer fully a human, a subjective, autonomous whole, but simply a carrier for her sexuality. In such a relation, the woman is seen as having no inherent value beyond her ability to satisfy another's desires. This understanding, as established earlier, is central to enabling rape: if the survivor is simply an object that exists to be used, then the question of consent is irrelevant to the rapist. In many traditional Native cultures this understanding is absent. As John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman note, 'in cultures in which one could not “own” another person’s sexuality [...] rape—the theft of sex—only rarely occurred, and it was one of the few sexual acts forbidden by Indian cultures.

Because Native women were considered to be autonomous subjects (that is, coherent wholes not reducible to their sexuality, and not possessable by others), the objectification required to enable rape was largely absent. Crucially, this understanding is firmly rooted in the understanding of the world as entirely populated by and made up of autonomous subjects: in a philosophy or worldview that teaches respectful, non-objectifying treatment of all forms of existence, the profoundly abusive and objectifying act of rape is in fundamental conflict with the very core of the culture. The antithesis of this is found in the Anglophone West, where rape is firmly rooted in the understanding of the world as composed of objects to be used and consumed for personal gain.

Importantly, my analysis of American Indian cultures is not to suggest that they are homogenous, static or utopian, or that they are lost or dead ‘relics’; likewise, it is not intended to the harsh reality of many contemporary Native women’s suffering—at the hands non-Native and Native men (and, of course, colonialism, racism and classism)—or the gender violence that afflicts some Native communities. Perhaps most significantly though, at least for the current discussion, my analysis of Native North America is not intended to

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286 Ibid.
287 In this sense, such relations are entirely consistent with Frederickson and Roberts’ definition of sexual objectification cited earlier (see: Frederickson and Roberts, ‘Objectification Theory’, p. 175).
propose, or even condone, the mimicking of Indian cultures and the appropriation of Indian spiritualities by non-Natives. Although, as Oklahoma Choctaw activist and scholar Devon Abbott Mihesuah observes, many Native activists (and ‘tribalists’) propose the embracing of their cultural traditions as a means of addressing gender inequality and sexual violence within their own communities (just as many others turn to Western feminism or other traditions, or a combination of these approaches) but, crucially, this is only appropriate within those communities; when practiced by non-Natives it is nothing more than cultural appropriation, regardless of how well intentioned the non-Native is. Of course, there are, as Oglala Sioux activist and writer Frank Black Elk suggests, lessons that can be learned from American Indian cultures without engaging in cultural appropriation (just as there are from other, less ‘iconic’ indigenous cultures, other non-Westerners and, as Churchill notes, from the West’s own pre-civilised European cultures). However, this task is delicate and problematic and I suggest that, in the current context, the most appropriate and applicable ‘lessons’ are those gained through employing analysis of Native cultures (particularly when that analysis is by Native activists and scholars) as a means of highlighting the more destructive and abusive elements of civilised Western culture, to, as Diamond phrases it, seek ‘self-knowledge as the ground for self-criticism’.

Accordingly, my discussion of Native North America is intended to highlight issues with Western culture, and not to present Indian cultures as lost utopias or as containing ‘the answer’ to the Anglophone West’s rape problem. In this sense, my comparison of Western and Native philosophies is not a dualistic comparison (which suggests two discrete, inherently opposing and hierarchically organised categories) or a ‘reverse-dualism’ in which the values assigned to the cultures are swapped over whilst the basic dualistic structure remains in place.

292 In *Search of the Primitive*, p. 100.
293 Plumwood refers to this as ‘the Cavern of Reversal, where travellers fall into an upside-down world which strangely resembles the one they seek to escape’ (Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 3).
Indeed, the very fact that the West and Native North America are complex heterogeneous cultures that have developed with markedly different guiding principles (rather than discrete categories, inherently opposed to one another) is actually central to my point: these cultures both contain the full range of ‘human’ behaviours, practices and ideologies (including misogyny and sexual violence) and a diverse range of people who enact them, but the fact that this manifests in remarkably low rape incidence in one culture and remarkably high in the other is testament to the profound influence that underlying philosophies can have. This entirely reinforces my argument that the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification is central to its rape problem, just as Native North America’s philosophies of interconnection and egalitarianism have traditionally worked to greatly limit sexual violence. It is useful at this point to return to Deloria’s observation, cited earlier, that ‘Indians experience and relate to a living universe, whereas Western philosophy [...] reduces things to objects [...] to manipulate and exploit.’

What is particularly significant here, at least for the purposes of the current discussion, is that the focus of Deloria’s comparison recalls a key element of my definition of instrumental objectification: that ‘instrumental objectification’, as I employ it, does not refer simply to single, isolated acts or contexts but to the conception of objectifier’s self in relation to others, and the mode of perception that views, values and relates to others on the basis of their ability to serve the objectifier’s own ends.

As noted previously, this definition borrows from Plumwood’s concept of ‘instrumentalism’, which she describes as ‘a way of relating to the world which corresponds to a certain model of selfhood, the selfhood conceived as that of the individual who stands apart from an alien other and denies his own relationship to and dependency on this other.’ The parallels here are quite apparent: both cited passages are concerned with ways of relating to the world and both identify the dominant Western means as being characterised by a sense of separation and the utilitarian use or consumption of ‘objects’. Deloria’s statement and the analysis I have constructed around it, highlights

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295 Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 142.
this further by comparing the dominant Western means with the common Native means, which are characterised by interconnectivity and the egalitarian interaction of subjective, autonomous beings. In this sense, it seems reasonable to rework the phrasing of Deloria’s statement and propose that the principal difference between the dominant cultures of the West and Native North America is that the Native philosophies discussed above teach an understanding of the self as part of an interconnected network of equals, and that relation to others should be respectful of their autonomy and subjectivity, whilst the dominant philosophies of the West teach an understanding of the self as separate from, and superior to, others, and that relation to others should therefore be based on subjugation, objectification and consumption. This, then, is the true product of the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification and its key relevance to sexual violence: because this philosophy normalises and legitimises the abusive and objectifying treatment of all forms of existence, the profoundly abusive and objectifying act of rape is firmly in line with the very core of the culture, a variation on an accepted, even celebrated, means of relating to the world. As Forbes notes, ‘[t]he rape of a woman, the rape of a land, and the rape of a people, they are all the same. And they are the same as the rape of the earth, the rape of the rivers, the rape of the forest, the rape of the air, the rape of the animals.’ Each of these acts is premised on, and enabled by, the belief that the world and everything and everyone in it exist as objects to be used and consumed, and this belief is the central product of the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification. It is this philosophy that plays the most crucial role in making the West a superculture of objectification, and it is this philosophy that provides the ideological foundation for the Anglophone West’s rape culture, underpinning the normalising and legitimising of sexual objectification and sexual violence. However, as established earlier, this philosophy not only lays the foundations for the Anglophone West’s rape culture but helps to structure it in a manner that is both intricate and wide-ranging.

The above analysis shows how a culture’s deep-seated guiding principles, its underlying philosophies, although operating on a far broader scale than those

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296 Forbes, *Columbus and other Cannibals*, p. xvi.
directly pertaining to gender relations or sexual violence, nevertheless play a significant role in influencing incidence of rape within that culture. As discussed, the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification, the core belief that objectifying others is normal, acceptable, or even desirable, which makes such a central contribution to the West’s status as a superculture of objectification, provides the foundation for the objectification of women and the normalising and legitimising of rape. Although only specific forms of objectification enable rape in this sense, it is the underlying philosophy that supports and enables these specific forms. That is to say, although the objectification of women, for example, may be said to be central to the process of enabling rape (often, as I will discuss, in conjunction with other systems of objectification), this specific form of objectification emerges from, and is partly normalised and legitimised by, the underlying philosophy of objectification, the generalised belief that objectification is acceptable or desirable. Evidence from cross-cultural analysis supports this position by highlighting the fact that the converse is also true: without an underlying philosophy of objectification there is no ideological basis for the objectification of women and no basis for the normalising and legitimising of rape. The above exploration of American Indian and First Nations cultures and their underlying philosophies of interrelation and egalitarianism illustrates this quite plainly, although, given that, as Sanday notes, the majority of ‘rape free’ cultures are similarly egalitarian and respectful of other humans and the non-human world, it is certainly possible to suggest that other cultures would have illustrated the point as clearly.\textsuperscript{297} However, the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification is not the only component of the West’s superculture of objectification, nor the only element to contribute so profoundly to the Anglophone West’s rape problem. Rather the superculture of objectification is, as suggested earlier, manifest in other ways, in the social organisation of Western societies and in individual practices and relationships. That is to say, whilst the previous analysis operates on the most macro-social level, exploring broad trends and ideological foundations, it is also possible to support my argument that rape is firmly rooted in the superculture of objectification through the study of the micro-social. In line with this, my analysis will now begin that process, exploring how the underlying philosophy

\textsuperscript{297} Sanday, ‘The Socio-Cultural Context of Rape’, p. 60.
of objectification is manifest in a dominant form of social and political organisation that is sympathetic and conducive to the Anglophone West’s rape culture, before moving on to discuss how it is manifest in ‘day-to-day’ practices and relationships.

**Objectification, Rape and ‘Systems of Oppression’ in Western Socio-Political Organisation**

Although the way in which the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification provides ideological and philosophical foundations for the Anglophone West’s rape culture is, in itself, a significant consideration, it is important to note that it also contributes to the rape culture through the pronounced influence it exerts over Western socio-political organisation. As suggested earlier, the West’s superculture of objectification can be conceived of as a web of intersecting relations, all of which are premised on the notion that it is acceptable, normal and even desirable to treat others as objects. Hierarchy and dualistic thinking (which, as previously argued, are deeply, and perhaps intrinsically, embedded in Western culture) operate as means of organising and formalising these objectifying relations. As Gruenfeld and others note, in the passage cited earlier, ‘the purpose of organizational hierarchy, almost by definition, is to formalize who is allowed to be used as a means to an end, and by whom’.\(^{298}\) Importantly, this statement is at least as applicable to dualistic thinking as it is to hierarchy. Eaton’s definition, cited at the previous chapter, states that dualistic thinking is ‘a manner of thinking in pairs or opposites, with one side having priority over the other.’\(^{299}\) Importantly, this definition suggests not only that one half of the dualism is dominant or considered to be superior, but also that the dominant half of the dualism has ‘priority over the other’. That is to say, an inherent component of dualistic thinking is the belief that the dominant half of a dualism is more valuable than the subordinated half, that their interests outweigh those of the subordinated class, and if their interests directly contradict or impede those of the subordinated class, then theirs are considered to be the priority; in short, the

\(^{298}\) Gruenfeld and others, ‘Power and the Objectification of Social Targets’, p. 113.

belief that the dominant half of a dualism may objectify, use and consume the subordinated half is built into the very structure of dualistic thinking. In this sense, dualistic thinking, at least as much as hierarchy, functions to ‘formalize who is allowed to be used as a means to an end, and by whom’, marking one class as objectifier and the other as object. Indeed, this objectifier/object dualism can be superimposed onto any of the dominant dualisms that shape Western thought, reflecting everything from racial stereotyping of non-whites (white/non-white dualism) to the human degradation and ‘resourcification’ of the non-human world (human/nature dualism).300 In this sense, both hierarchy and dualistic thinking profoundly shape the socio-political structure of the West in a manner that formalises—indeed, that writes into the very fabric of Western culture—the notion that some lives are more valuable that others, and so may be legitimately treated as objects to be used and consumed. Through this pervasive influence on Western culture and socio-political organisation, hierarchy and dualistic thinking (what we might, given the context, call collectively ‘systems of oppression’) also influences the Anglophone West’s rape culture, further normalising and formalising sexual violence against subordinated groups. This is perhaps most readily apparent in the objectification of women, and the ways in which it is normalised and legitimised by the West’s patriarchal social organisation (which, as ‘gender hierarchy’ or dualisms of male/female, man/woman and masculinity/femininity, is structured by both hierarchy and dualistic thinking). However, as I will discuss shortly, numerous other systems of oppression, each firmly grounded in Western hierarchy and dualistic thinking, also exert a significant influence on the Anglophone West’s rape culture.

Sexual objectification, normalised and legitimised within the dominant culture, is central to the oppression experienced by women under Western patriarchy. As Frederickson and Roberts note:

300 For similar discussion, see: Collins, Black Feminist Thought, pp. 70–71.
Although sexual objectification is but one form of gender oppression, it is one that factors into—and perhaps enables—a host of other oppressions women face, ranging from employment discrimination and sexual violence to the trivialization of women's work and accomplishments.301 Frederickson and Roberts make an important point here: although gender oppression is, indeed, complex and multifaceted, the central enabling process from which it stems is the objectification of women, the belief that it is acceptable, normal and desirable to treat women as objects or tools to be used for another's purpose. Certainly, in the case of sexual violence, objectification not only describes the act but also plays a crucial role in enabling the act: rape, ultimately, is not only an act in which the survivor is treated as a tool to be used to achieve the rapist's own ends, but also an act that emerges from—and is reliant upon—the understanding that it is acceptable to treat women as objects that have no right to autonomy, subjectivity or bodily integrity.302 Without this initial understanding—whether it takes the form of a belief that women are no more than objects and so may be raped without guilt, or the belief that the rapist's own interests simply take priority over the survivor's—rape cannot be a viable action for the rapist.303

Of course, it could also be argued that some rapists do not realise that they are committing rape (owing, for example, to encultured misunderstandings of what constitutes meaningful consent or complex patterns of normalised denial that obscure the reality of their actions); certainly, this is a well-documented aspect of many rapists' understandings of their behaviour.304 In

303 It does not follow that this understanding, whatever form it takes, is necessarily a permanent position: whilst for many rapists it may well be a long-standing aspect of how they understand gender relations, for others it may be more akin to a temporary suspension of the belief that women are subjective, autonomous beings with the right not to be raped (albeit a suspension that is grounded in wider patterns of long-standing patriarchal conditioning and masculine socialisation).  
a cursory analysis, this might appear to contradict the position outlined above, suggesting that some rapists do not view women as objects but rather ‘misread’ the situation and objectify women inadvertently through rape. However, I suggest that such cases are also the product of the same process of objectification, albeit in a more oblique manner: the so called ‘grey areas’ of rape, such as those concerning questions of what constitutes consent, are equally the product of treating women as objects because they necessarily involve a failure to relate to the survivor as a subjective whole, to consider her response to sexual advances even if they are in conflict with the rapist’s intentions, to think beyond a sense of male entitlement to consider the realities of informed consent.\(^\text{305}\) That is to say, the perception of women as objects to be used for the rapist’s own benefit may not constitute a consciously held belief in such cases (although equally it may do so) but it nevertheless remains the rapist’s understanding of the survivor, the principal means through which he evaluates his behaviour and mode of relation.\(^\text{306}\) As such, the objectification of the rapist’s target remains central to the enabling of rape. Indeed, it can be said to be a key component of the four elements that Allison and Wrightsman—drawing heavily on the works of David Finkelhor and Diana Russell—suggest are required for the act of rape to be committed. They write that for rape to occur:

1. First, someone must want to rape or assault women sexually.
2. The person’s internal inhibitions against acting out this desire have to be undermined.
3. This person’s social inhibitions against acting out this desire (for example, fear of being caught and punished) have to be undermined.
4. The would-be perpetrator has to undermine or overcome his or her chosen victim’s capacity to avoid or resist sexual abuse.\(^\text{307}\)


\(^{306}\) Importantly, nothing in the previous discussion is intended to suggest that any of the above ‘forms’ of rape are less abusive or severe than the others, or in any sense more ‘justifiable’.

\(^{307}\) Allison and Wrightsman, Rape: The Misunderstood Crime, p. 35.
Although it does not fully account for a rapist’s motivation to commit rape (a point which will be explored in detail in the third chapter), objectification can certainly be said to provide a significant foundation for that motivation. The desire to rape is premised on the understanding (again held as either a long-standing belief or a temporary position) that it is desirable to relate to another as though they were an object rather than a human being. If such a mode of relation is perceived as abhorrent, or even simply unsatisfying, then there is no motivation, no desire, to relate to another person in that manner, through rape or through other acts. However, if one desires this form of objectified and objectifying relation then relating on a mutual, respectful level to a fellow subjective, autonomous being will not satisfy that desire. That is to say, a rapist must understand objectifying forms of relation to be desirable, at least in the context of sexual violence, in order to desire to rape. As such, wanting to commit rape, although motivated by other factors, is enabled by and reliant upon objectification.

In a slightly less direct sense, the fourth requirement—the rapist’s ability to overpower the survivor—can also be said to be intimately related to objectification. This is particularly apparent when one considers that the rapist is more likely to succeed in overpowering the survivor if the survivor is physically weak, dressed in a fashion that prohibits self-defence or the ability to run away from the rapist, or is incapacitated through fear. The hegemonic model of femininity in the Anglophone West dictates that women should not be physically or emotionally strong or capable, and that they should wear clothing such as high heels and skirts, which inhibit the ability to fight or run. The internalising of the objectifying ‘heterosexual male gaze’ has been suggested to play a key role in women conforming to this potentially incapacitating model of femininity. Similarly, it has been widely noted that the near ubiquitous experience of being viewed and treated as a sexual object is central to many women’s feelings of vulnerability and fears of

attacks in general and rape in particular. In line with this, the fourth requirement, like the first, has key foundations in the normalised objectification of women. However, as I will demonstrate, objectification is of even more significance to the second and third requirements, which are, in turn, of even more significance to my current argument, providing a key basis for understanding how rape is enabled and ‘justified’ in a culture that normalises objectification.

Personal inhibitions against rape are most readily overcome by the belief—however temporarily held—that the survivor exists for this use, and that her security, her suffering, her self-determination and right to bodily integrity are all either non-existent or less significant than the rapist’s own desires. That is to say, the feelings of guilt and internal prohibitions that may (and, I would argue, should) be triggered by committing an act of abuse against another human being are alleviated—however temporarily—by the understanding that the survivor is simply an object, rather than an abused and suffering human being. A similar process also applies to social inhibitions, but on a broader scale wherein the fear of arrest, or of other social reprisals, is greatly decreased if the objectification of women is widely normalised and legitimised by the society in which the crime is committed: if the objectification of women is a socially acceptable act, then acts that objectify, and are premised on the objectification of, women—albeit extreme ones such as rape—enjoy some level of social acceptability, reducing the risk of social reprisals, and so reducing rapists’ social inhibitions. It is in this sense that I suggest that objectification is the central component required to enable sexual violence, and that the patriarchal nature of Western socio-political organisation is, in turn, central to normalising this objectification. However, as I will now explore, patriarchal social structuring is by no means the only system of oppression to normalise objectification in a fashion so profoundly related to rape; numerous other systems—each of which exhibits a considerable influence on Western

313 For related discussions (covering some of the diverse forms social reprisals could take), see: Diana E. H. Russell, Sexual Exploitation: Rape, Child Sexual Abuse, and Workplace Harassment (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1984), pp. 156–159; Jensen, Culture of Make Believe, pp. 44-45.
socio-political organisation—also make significant contributions that are often overlooked.

Intersectional Objectification and Sexual Violence

Thomas Macaulay Millar notes that whilst cultural understandings of gender and sex are crucial to the processes by which rape is legitimised, ‘[n]ot all of the structures of rape support are about sexual culture: racism, classism, and the prison-industrial complex, as just a few examples, create circumstances under which some women can be and are raped with impunity’. This is a vital consideration: although, in the form of rape discussed in this thesis (the rape of women by men), gender oppression is always an important factor, it is neither the only relevant system of oppression nor, in some cases, necessarily the most significant. Gender oppression certainly does—on both individual and societal levels—objectify all women to varying degrees, encouraging, normalising or legitimising sexual violence against them. However, it also intersects with other systems of oppression which also objectify and subordinate particular marginalised groups. As I will discuss, these intersectional systems of oppression mean that women of colour, working-class/poor women, queer women, transgender women (as well as transgender men, who are often viewed as—and treated as—women by rapists), women with mental health issues and women sex workers (as well as numerous other marginalised women) are subject to particularly virulent discourses of objectification. In this sense, intersectional discourses—even more than those of gender oppression alone—present marginalised women as (sexual) objects, and so as legitimate targets who may be raped without personal guilt, social reprisals or state/judicial intervention or punishment. Returning to my study of the Strauss-Kahn/Diallo case provides a clear example of this: as a working-class/poor, immigrant woman of colour working in a hotel for the ultra-rich (indeed, working in the room of an ultra-rich, socially-powerful, white Western man), Diallo is objectified—and so culturally reduced to a ‘rapable body’ rather than a subjective, autonomous being—by several intersecting systems of oppression. Gender is, of course, a central

component of this: as a woman, Diallo is, like all women, subject to the sexual objectification and gendered violence that abounds in the Anglophone West. However, several other systems of oppression intersect with gender oppression in Diallo’s case, each contributing significantly to her objectification. Accordingly, my analysis will now explore some of the discourses and systems of oppression in question, highlighting both how the socio-political organisation of the West is structured hierarchically and dualistically, and how this form of organisation is central to the objectification of marginalised women and so is central to the Anglophone West’s rape culture.

Although there are many different systems of oppression that are pertinent to an analysis of objectification and rape, there are marked commonalities in the ways that they function that allow them to be discussed through representative examples. Each of them is premised on dualistic or hierarchical thinking and the notion that some lives are less valuable than others. As such, each is deeply rooted in the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification in the same manner as the gender oppression discussed earlier. Similarly, they are all largely normalised and, to varying degrees, legitimised within Western socio-political organisation. They also all serve to objectify—and to legitimise and normalise the objectification of—marginalised groups. More significantly for this discussion, this is all carried out in a fashion that is intimately connected to sexual violence, providing ideological ‘justifications’ for treating marginalised women as sexual objects, motivation for privileged men to (re)enact forms of subject-object relation, and institutionalised biases that allow rape to be committed with relative impunity. The specifics of how these systems of oppression operate do vary but these commonalities unite them, at least for the purposes of my analysis here. In this sense, my essential premise that systems of oppression other than gender oppression serve to objectify and make ‘rapable’ marginalised women can be demonstrated through discussion of those systems of oppression directly related to Diallo’s (alleged) assault by Strauss-Kahn. Of these systems, aside from gender oppression, perhaps the most widely critically analysed (although it was largely absent from the mainstream media
coverage of the Strauss-Kahn/Diallo case) is white-supremacist oppression and it is to this that the analysis will now turn.\footnote{Throughout the following discussion, I will use the term ‘white-supremacist’ in line with Frances Lee Ansley’s definition of the term: not ‘to allude only to the self-conscious racism of white supremacist hate groups [but] instead to a political, economic and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings’ (Francis Lee Ansley, ‘White Supremacy (And What We Should Do about It)’, in \textit{Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror}, ed. by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), pp. 592–595 (p. 592)).}

\textbf{Sexual Savages and Objectified Animals: White-Supremacist Oppression and Rape}

In the West, women of colour face particularly virulent forms of oppression in general, and of objectification in particular. Importantly, this oppression and objectification is not simply that experienced by men of colour and that experienced by white women but an intersectional form connected to but distinct from each. As Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw notes, ‘the intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women’s lives in ways that cannot be captured wholly by looking at the race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately.’\footnote{Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, ‘Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women’, \textit{Stanford Law Review}, Vol. 43, No. 6 (1991), 1241–1299 (p. 1244).} That is to say, whilst the oppression and objectification experienced by women of colour may contain elements of white-supremacist and misogynistic or patriarchal oppression, these elements are not experienced discretely but in a distinct, combined form that is unique to women of colour.\footnote{Of course, these elements often intersect with elements of other systems of oppression to create the oppression experienced by individual women of colour, a point that Crenshaw highlights when she notes that her analysis of the intersection of race and gender should not be understood as suggesting ‘that violence against women of color can be explained only through the specific frameworks of race and gender considered here. Indeed, factors I address only in part or not at all, such as class or sexuality, are often as critical in shaping the experiences of women of color. My focus on the intersections of race and gender only highlights the need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed’ (Crenshaw, ‘Mapping the Margins’, p. 1244).} This considered, having already provided an overview of gendered objectification, it is useful to balance this with a discussion of general white supremacist objectification before exploring the intersectional objectification experienced by women of colour.
The objectification of people of colour in the Anglophone West has a long and brutal history and there are innumerable examples that could be drawn on in this discussion. One of the most pertinent, of course, is the transatlantic slave trade, which, as discussed earlier, treated vast numbers of people of colour (primarily Africans but also a significant number of American Indians) as nothing more than labouring objects, resources to be bought and sold and used as ‘animate tools’.\(^{318}\) This is far from an isolated example; Western colonialism in general provides numerous stark examples of normalised white-supremacist objectification. Indeed, at root, colonisation is an act of objectification, treating all aspects of the colonised country as objects to be owned and used by the colonisers, from land and mineral wealth to the colonised peoples themselves. Aimé Césaire notes this with an equation as astute as it is succinct, writing that ‘colonization = “thingification”’, that to be colonised is to be reduced, in the eyes of the coloniser, to a ‘thing’, an object, to be used, owned, exploited and controlled.\(^{319}\) In this sense, in the cases of both the transatlantic slave trade and Western colonialism more generally, the historic treatment of people of colour by Euro-American cultures was centred on objectification, on the understanding—and use—of non-whites as resources and objects, as childish or bestial primitives who must be governed, ‘civilised’ and put to use as a source of labour and profit.\(^{320}\) Importantly, for women of colour, this white-supremacist, colonial objectification frequently also took on sexual forms, as Deborah K. King notes, that were related to (though distinct from) the objectification experienced both by men of colour and white women.\(^ {321}\) Female slaves were widely treated as sexual objects to be used for both the gratification and the profits of their white ‘masters’; they were routinely raped both by white men (for the purposes of the men’s gratification and, as Davis notes, reinforcing the subordination and disempowerment of the slaves) and by male slaves.

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who were forced to do so in order that so-called ‘breeding wenches’ might produce the next generation of slaves to labour for, or be sold by, the master. The centrality of objectification to this oppression is starkly highlighted by Barbara Omolade’s description of how white slave masters perceived enslaved Black women. She writes: ‘to him she was a fragmented commodity whose feelings and choices were rarely considered: her head and her heart were separated from her back and her hands and divided from her womb and vagina.’ In this understanding, enslaved Black women were not seen as complete and whole or as sentient, autonomous, subjective beings but as the sum of those body parts that could serve the master, as only the capacity to labour and toil, to be raped and to reproduce: as, in short, an object, that existed only for the master’s pleasure and profit. Moreover, as I will now discuss, this process extends beyond the transatlantic slave trade and the colonisation of African nations, marking the processes of colonisation and conquest in a far broader sense.

Sexual objectification—particularly in the form of normalised and institutionalised rape—has also characterised many other colonial ‘encounters’, following the same pattern of perceiving and treating colonised women as objects or tools through which the objectifier’s intentions can be realised. Frequently, this intention has been the process of colonisation itself; indeed, in the colonial context rape is both a product of colonisation and a means through which this colonisation is achieved, both the understanding of colonised women’s bodies as inherently rapable and a conscious effort on the part of the colonisers to both achieve and symbolically display their conquest. Claudia Card’s discussion of ‘rape as a weapon of war’ highlights this, noting that rape may be employed with the aim of ‘genetic imperialism’—forcing colonised women to bear the children of colonisers—or as part of a campaign of ‘ethnic cleansing’ or genocide, or to (re)enact the colonisers’ dominance over the colonised: ‘dominance not simply over women but in war even more importantly over other men who are presumed

323 Barbara Omolade cited in Collins, Black Sexual Politics, p. 56.
324 See Smith’s Conquest for an extensive and erudite discussion of the many facets of this use of sexual violence.
to take pride in being protectors of women.” Here, again, it is not only gender oppression that results in the objectification and rape of women of colour, but also systems of racial oppression and colonial violence that provide both the ‘justification’ for the act and at least part of the motivation (to (re)enact dynamics of white-supremacy). Importantly, however, the objectification and rape discussed above is far from a purely historical issue. Sexual colonisation (in neo-imperial wars such as the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan as well as in ongoing cases of colonisation, such as that of American Indians and Australian Aborigines) and sexual slavery (of women of colour and white women) are both highly prevalent. Even setting these aside for the current discussion (as they do not directly relate to my discussion of Diallo), the objectification of people of colour established as part of Western colonialism (including the transatlantic slave trade) also remains commonplace in contemporary white-supremacist discourses and practices. Certainly, understandings of people of colour as exploitable labourers, childlike primitives, subservient attendants, bestial subhumans, or threatening savages—all established in the (original) colonial period—continue to hold currency the contemporary Anglophone West. Again, whilst women of colour experience these forms of white-supremacist oppression as do men of colour, they also experience oppression specific to women of colour, which frequently takes the form of sexual objectification and sexual violence. Just as female slaves suffered the same labour exploitation and cruel treatment experienced by male slaves but also suffered institutionalised sexual objectification and sexual violence, so too do a great many contemporary women of colour share the economic marginalisation, labour exploitation and racially-motivated violence that many men of colour are subjected to, but also frequently suffer sexual objectification and

325 Claudia Card, ‘Rape as a Weapon of War’, Hypatia, vol. 11, no. 4 (1996), 5–18 (pp. 5–15). Again, see Smith’s in-depth study of rape as a key tool used in the colonisation of America and the genocide of American Indians in Conquest.
exploitation both in and outside the workplace. However, this sexual objectification and exploitation is not simply the addition of gender oppression to racial oppression, but rather is an intersectional model that is as distinct from the oppression of white women as it is from the oppression of men of colour.

Patricia Hill Collins highlights the above distinction, exploring how, whilst white women are routinely treated as objects, women of colour are frequently seen as even less, simply as animals. She writes: ‘[r]ace becomes the distinguishing feature in determining the type of objectification women will encounter. Whiteness as symbolic of both civilization and culture is used to separate objects from animals’. What Collins discusses here is, effectively, gradations of objectification: white women, she acknowledges, are treated as sexual objects, but this objectification does not involve the absolute loss of human status as it does for women of colour. Of course, this is a broad approach and there are obviously examples of white women also being entirely dehumanised by systems of gender oppression (and by gender oppression intersecting with other systems of oppression), but, in the general terms Collins employs, this is an important distinction. The intersectional oppression experienced by women of colour means that the dominant culture frequently strips away further layers of subjectivity, not simply treating them as human-objects to be used with relative impunity by men but as animal-objects, uncivilised bestial objects to be used with near-total impunity by white men and, by extension, by men of colour. Summarising bell hooks’ discussion of this issue in *Ain’t I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (1981), Karen Michelle Bowdre provides a concise assessment of this process of dehumanising objectification and its particular significance to rape. She writes: ‘Once it was believed that Black women were sexual savages, the following logic could exist: African American women were sexual savages; savages were not human; they were animals; animals cannot be raped, hence, Black women could not be raped.’

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‘reasoning’ has long characterised the dominant culture’s view of Black women and, as I will now discuss, it continues to exert a significant influence over contemporary Western perspectives.

As in the historical examples, contemporary intersectional oppression of women of colour normalises and legitimises virulent sexual objectification, making them highly ‘rapable’ in the dominant discourse of Western socio-political organisation. The examples of this discussed above are pertinent to analysis of Diallo’s assault by Strauss-Kahn: both her status as a marginalised Black female worker and the prevalence of dehumanising white-supremacist discourses work, in the manners suggested above, to present Diallo as a sexual object/animal who can be raped without personal guilt or serious legal recourse. This intersectional objectification matches the two most objectification-centric conditions of rape given by Allison and Wrightsman: that the rapist must overcome both personal and social inhibitions against the act of rape. The pervasive influence of this objectification means that women of colour such as Diallo are widely considered to be acceptable targets of sexual violence, who may be raped without personal guilt because they are less than human and so do not qualify for ‘human rights’ (as Bowdre notes, ‘animals cannot be raped’). Similarly, the proven history of white-supremacist bias within Western judicial systems means that white men (especially rich, powerful white men such as Strauss-Kahn) can rape women of colour (especially poor, immigrant women of colour such as Diallo) with little fear of punishment. In this respect, the fact that the Strauss-Kahn/Diallo case came to court is unusual (and owes much to Diallo’s courage and determination and, perhaps, anti-European sentiments within the American judicial system and media); the fact that Strauss-Kahn was acquitted was a dramatic return to the established pattern. Likewise, that Diallo was more successful in her later civil suit against Strauss-Kahn—reaching a settlement for an undisclosed sum of money—is unusual, but the fact that, as wealthy and powerful white man, Strauss-Kahn was able to use his considerable wealth to avoid potential

331 Allison and Wrightsman, Rape: The Misunderstood Crime, p. 35.
sentencing (in a manner that is obviously beyond less privileged, financially-solvent men) is, again, a return to the standard pattern. Moreover, there is, as I will now discuss, another element of the intersectional oppression of women of colour (which might be said to be an extension of the ‘women of colour as animals’ discourse discussed above) that is even more pertinent to this analysis: the stereotype of Black women (and, to some extent, women of colour more generally) as inherently promiscuous.

Always Consenting: The ‘Unrapability’ of ‘Promiscuous’ Black Women

Racist stereotyping of Black people as sexual savages is a pertinent illustration of the ways in which Black women (and women of colour more generally) experience white-supremacist oppression in a different fashion from Black men (and men of colour more generally). The stereotype is applied to both Black men and Black women but in distinct ways. For Black men it has fostered what Angela Y. Davis calls ‘the myth of the Black rapist’: the notion that Black men are inherently prone to rape, which contributes significantly to white-supremacist oppression directed at Black men, from historic lynching to contemporary police brutality and wrongful arrest. This same stereotyping is, however, manifest differently, although no less destructively, for Black women. As Davis notes:

The fictional image of the Black man as rapist has always strengthened its inseparable companion: the image of the Black woman as chronically promiscuous. For once the notion is accepted that Black men harbour irresistible and animal-like sexual urges, the entire race is invested with bestiality. If Black men have their eyes on white women as sexual objects, then Black women must certainly welcome the sexual attentions of white men. Viewed as “loose women” and whores, Black women’s cries of rape would necessarily lack legitimacy.

333 See: ‘Dominique Strauss-Kahn settles Manhattan Hotel Maid Assault Claim’ (11/12/2012) <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/dominique-strausskahn-settles-manhattan-hotel-maid-assault-claim-8399648.html> [accessed 14 January 2013]. The above statement is not intended as a criticism of Diallo’s decision to accept the settlement offered by Strauss-Kahn; given both the traumatic effects of the court cases and media scrutiny and the strong possibility that Strauss-Kahn’s power and privilege would, one way or another, prevent him being convicted, the decision is perfectly reasonable and should, all things considered, be seen as a success.


335 Ibid., p. 182.
This understanding is, as suggested above, an extension of the dominant, white-supremacist culture’s animalising of Black women; indeed, hooks’s analysis, as reported by Bowdre above, begins with the treatment of Black women as ‘sexual savages’, and relates this to their consequent dehumanisation and objectification. In both accounts, and as exemplified in the discussion at the beginning of this chapter, the dominant culture’s perception of Black women as closer to nature, as primitive, savage and animalistic, is shown to suggest not only that, as ‘animals’, Black women do not qualify for ‘human rights’ but also that, due to their supposedly ‘animalistic’ sexuality, they are inherently promiscuous, desiring and consenting to all sexual acts, all of the time.\(^3\) Crucially, in relation to rape, this understanding that Black women are inherently always consenting effectively means that they are understood as having no right to consent, no right—or even capability—to refuse sexual contact or seek effective legal recourse if this refusal is ignored. This understanding, therefore, makes Black women culturally rapable in that, in a sense, it renders them entirely unrappable: it presents Black women as hyper-sexual objects whose constant state of consent means that no sexual contact can ever be classed as rape. This particular form of objectification and oppression, as I will now discuss, has particular bearing on Diallo’s alleged assault by Strauss-Kahn.

The intersectional white-supremacist/patriarchal objectification and oppression that presents Black women as inherently promiscuous and always consenting played a key role in Diallo’s case against Strauss-Kahn.\(^3\) The central argument of Strauss-Kahn’s defence—and so, ultimately, the closest we have to an ‘official’ understanding of what occurred in the Sofitel

\(^3\) The relation between these two suggestions becomes perhaps most explicit in the belief, widespread throughout the (original) colonial period and often attributed to Thomas Jefferson, that Black women regularly had sex with apes (Melissa V. Harris-Perry, *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 56; Deborah Gray White, *Arn’t I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999), p. 30.

Hotel room—is that there was ‘a hurried sexual encounter’ between Strauss-Kahn and Diallo but that it was entirely consensual.\footnote{From the recommendation for dismissal court document: ‘Recommendation for Dismissal of Strauss-Kahn Case’ (22/8/2011) <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/08/22/nyregion/dsk-recommendation-to-dismiss-case.html?nl=nyregion&emc=ura1> [accessed 30 July 2012].}

This position was maintained outside of the courtroom, as Jenny Barchfield notes, with extracts from Michel Taubmann’s forthcoming biography of Strauss-Kahn, \emph{DSK Affairs: The Second Inquiry}, presenting the encounter as the result of Diallo behaving ‘seductively’, citing the following passage: ‘[Diallo] started walking toward the exit. But she wasn’t in any hurry [...] She stares him in the eyes. Then, she looks openly at his genitals.’\footnote{Jenny Barchfield, ‘Book purports to tell DSK’s Side of Rape Charges’ (1/12/2011) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/feedarticle/9974264> [accessed 1 August 2012].} Although it was ultimately accusations of ‘other’ apparent dishonesties that undermined Diallo’s position (a point to which I will return later in the discussion), they did so by adding weight to Strauss-Kahn’s defence that Diallo was lying about having refused consent. The media and judicial response to this defence cannot be adequately discussed without considering the stereotype of Black women as promiscuous and always consenting and how this supported Strauss-Kahn’s position. One of the most significant considerations in this respect is the short duration of the ‘encounter’: given that Diallo was in Strauss-Kahn’s room for somewhere between seven and ten minutes (accounts vary), several articles and online commentaries raise the question of how exactly the ‘encounter’ was initiated and completed within such a short period without the use of force.\footnote{For example, see: John Eligon, ‘What Happened in Room 2806: Three Possibilities’ (7/7/2011) <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/08/nyregion/what-happened-in-room-2806-three-possibilities.html> [accessed 1 August 2012]; Michelle Madden Dempsey, ‘The State of New York vs. Dominique Strauss-Kahn: A Critique of Prosecutorial Reasoning’ (6/9/2012) <http://www.ihej.org/laffaire-strauss-kahn-un-point-de-vue-americain/?la=en> [accessed 15 January 2013].}

Indeed, as one of Diallo’s lawyers, Douglas Wigdor, states:

> The encounter lasted 10 minutes, she didn’t know who he was, had never met him before and believed the room was empty [...] So you have to believe that she walks into a room she thought was unoccupied, agrees to have sex... and then, despite being aware of the issues in her background, decides to claim she was a victim of rape.\footnote{Cited in Philip Sherwell, ‘Dominique Strauss-Kahn to Reject Plea Deal’ (21/8/2011) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/dominique-strauss-kahn/8713052/Dominique-Strauss-Kahn-to-reject-plea-deal.html> [accessed 4 April 2012].}
Approached in this fashion, there are few plausible explanations: that Strauss-Kahn raped Diallo, that Diallo is a sex worker and consented to sex expecting payment or that Diallo simply decided, having just entered his room, to have sex with Strauss-Kahn and is, therefore, in the dominant culture’s understanding of female sexuality, ‘promiscuous’. In claiming that the encounter was consensual but not seriously proposing that Diallo is a sex worker (although, as I will discuss, the media filled in this absence, drawing even more heavily on white-supremacist stereotyping), Strauss-Kahn’s defence effectively relied on this ‘promiscuity’, amplified by suggestions that Diallo was deceitful and manipulative.

Given the widely observed biases within Western judicial systems, media and culture at large, it is perhaps not surprising that the burden of proof fell to Diallo, who had to defend herself against accusations of lying, manipulation and, ultimately, promiscuity. As Zoe Williams, reporting on the trial, notes:

> [W]hen a charge of sexual assault is made, everything the accuser says is picked over for inconsistency and improbability […] All the accused has to say is: “It was consensual.” Nobody says: “What exactly made her consent to sex with you? What was your killer move? Do you have a really good line, or do you just do it with your eyebrows?”

The implausibility of Strauss-Kahn’s account—that in the ten minutes or less that Diallo was in the room she spontaneously decided to perform oral sex on him and then decided to ‘cry rape’ despite, as Wigdor notes, her vulnerable social status—was largely not the subject of the trial or much of the media coverage. Rather, as Williams observes, it was Diallo’s (arguably, altogether more plausible) account, along with her past and her entire character, that was subjected to repeated accusation and condemnation; although covered by some areas of the media, Strauss-Kahn’s past—which is littered with prior allegations of rape and sexual aggression—was, on the whole, not subject to the same scrutiny. Much of this can be considered to be a reflection of the patriarchal biases and tendencies of Western judicial systems to effectively

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343 Ibid.
put the rape survivor on trial, defending themselves against accusations of lying and ‘crying rape’ (this is why rape trials are sometimes referred to the ‘second rape’ or ‘second victimisation’).\footnote{See: Allison and Wrightsman, *Rape: The Misunderstood Crime*, pp. 171–176.} As executive director of the New York City chapter of the National Organization for Women, Sonia Ossorio, notes ‘Dominique Strauss-Kahn got lucky. He attacked a woman with a shady past, and all too often in rape cases that’s exactly what we see. A woman’s past, her credibility, is what’s on trial — not the incident at hand.’\footnote{Sonia Ossorio cited in ‘Charges Likely To Be Dropped Against Strauss-Kahn After Prosecutors Meet With Accuser’ (22/8/2011) <http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2011/08/22/prosecutors-to-meet-with-nafissatou-diallo-maid-who-accused-dominique-strauss-kahn-of-rape-may-drop-charges> [accessed 1 August 2012].} However, given the pervasive influence that the stereotype of the promiscuous Black woman has over dominant attitudes, as discussed above, one must also consider that this argument is strongly supported by the intersectional oppression experienced by women of colour.

As suggested earlier, as a Black woman, Diallo is subject to the objectifying, white-supremacist, patriarchal stereotypes that present Black women as inherently promiscuous. Whilst it is impossible to conclusively demonstrate that this underpinned the judicial and media treatment of Diallo, the fact that Diallo’s case so neatly fits Davis’ statement that ‘[v]iewed as “loose women” and whores, Black women’s cries of rape […] lack legitimacy’ certainly makes it a reasonable proposition and an important consideration.\footnote{Davis, *Women, Race and Class*, p. 182.} White-supremacist discourses objectify people of colour, presenting them as exploitable, subhuman savages who may be used and consumed by racially privileged whites. Upon intersection with patriarchal oppression, these discourses present women of colour as hyper-sexual objects that may be raped with relatively low levels of guilt, social reprisal or judicial response. It is in this sense that I suggest that Diallo, and other women of colour, are objectified by more than gender oppression, and that, as such, one must consider more than the issue of gender when analysing the extent and scope and cultural fixity of the Anglophone West’s rape culture.\footnote{This is not to deny the great significance of patriarchy/misogyny to Diallo’s case (or to rape in general), nor to suggest that the only issue is some white feminisms failing to engage with the relationship between white-supremacy and rape; as Aishah Shahidah Simmons notes, the fact that ‘mainstream, national African-American Civil Rights organizations and
will discuss towards the close of this section, these are not the only ways in which white-supremacist discourses, or discourses on female promiscuity and survivor-responsibility for rape, contribute to Diallo’s, and others’, objectification (the issue of sex work, in particular, contributing significantly to the issues at hand). First though, it is useful to provide an overview of other objectifying discourses that, upon intersection with gender oppression and white-supremacist oppression, also exert significant influence on Diallo’s case. These discourses—particularly those concerned with immigration status—share distinct commonalities with the white-supremacist oppression discussed above but also require some preliminary discussion before I address them, as part of an intersectional whole, in relation to Diallo.

**Trafficked Bodies and Disposable Lives: Anti-Immigrant Oppression and Rape**

In a similar fashion to its application to people of colour, the notion of ‘sexual savagery’ is also directed by the dominant culture at immigrants (who are often perceived as coming from ‘backward’ or more primitive and savage countries) and lower-class or poor people (who are often presented as being further from a ‘civilised’ ideal and closer to a more animalistic and barbarous ‘natural condition’). As with the stereotyping of people of colour, this applies to both men and women but in different forms: poor or immigrant men are frequently presented in the media (and treated by judicial systems) as inherently prone to rape, and poor or immigrant women are frequently perceived as ‘promiscuous’ or ‘always consenting’, and are routinely not

“leaders” were largely silent around [Diallo’s] case’ highlights an equally significant failing of some civil rights organisations and discourses to engage with the gendered/patriarchal aspects of racism and white-supremacy (Aishah Shahidah Simmons, ‘Who Will Revere US? (Black LGTBQ People, Straight Women, and Girls) – Part 2’ (25/5/2012) <http://www.peopleofcolororganize.com/activism/general/revere-black-lgtbpq-people-straight-women-girls-part-2> [accessed 29 July 2012]).

believed when they report having been raped. There are other commonalities between the treatment of women of colour and the treatment of poor or immigrant women—such as frequent and normalised accusations of lying, of wrongly accusing men in order to get money from them or of being sex workers—as I will discuss presently. However, anti-immigrant oppression has several unique issues that relate to the objectification and rape of women that should be addressed briefly first. Of course, in some respects, the dominant culture has similar objectifying understandings of immigrants as it does of people of colour (and, of course, many immigrants are also people of colour). This is particularly true with regard to the issue of labour: even more than communities of colour, immigrant communities are disproportionately poor in the West, and disproportionately marginalised and exploited as a cheap, expendable and exploitable labour force. Immigrant workers are regularly forced, by external coercion or economic necessity, to take underpaid (or sometimes unpaid) menial labour or to work in dangerous, unhealthy conditions, often without job security, sick or maternity leave, and with exploitative and abusive bosses. In this sense, immigrants are often treated as, and even more widely, perceived to be, exploitable labouring objects, to be used and consumed by bosses and profiteers.

As in the experiences of women of colour, the objectification of immigrants often finds a sexual expression in the treatment of immigrant women. Numerous reports by human rights groups note that immigrant workers employed in the Anglophone West face extremely high levels of sexual abuse (including rape), with as much as eighty-percent of some interviewed groups having suffered some form of sexual harassment or abuse (including

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rape) by bosses or co-workers. Considering my focus on Diallo it is worth noting that this is as applicable to hotel maids (and housemaids) as it is to the more commonly discussed immigrant women who work on farms or in factories; as Tiffany Williams, advocacy director for Break the Chain Campaign, notes, the master/servant dynamic ingrained in their work objectifies and dehumanises maids, and the requirements of their profession brings them into regular close contact with the very men who dehumanise them, and believe that they ‘own’ them and are entitled to use them as they wish. Also as with women of colour, this normalised objectification is not limited to sexual abuse by bosses and co-workers but rather represents a pervasive understanding of female immigrants as expendable, exploitable objects to be owned, used and consumed that is found throughout the dominant culture, manifest in everything from economic exploitation by businesses and bosses and sexual abuse by police and border guards to the murder of ‘mail order brides’ and the coerced sterilisation of immigrant women. However, whilst this objectification and sexual violence closely mirrors that experienced by women of colour (and many other marginalised women), there is an additional element to the experiences of immigrant women: issues surrounding immigration status and the threat of deportation.

For immigrants living in the Anglophone West (or at least endeavouring to do so), subject/object status is closely related to immigration status. This is particularly true of so-called ‘illegal immigrants’; although all immigrants face distinctly objectifying discourses, for ‘illegal’ immigrants, this is effectively an automatic process. In countries where even (marginalised) citizens are subject to normalised and, to varying degrees, legitimised objectification, people who are not in the country legally frequently find themselves outside


of the rights that are, at least theoretically, granted to citizens and ‘legal’ immigrants. Without this legal status, ‘illegal’ immigrants are often treated as lacking the status of subjective beings, being routinely treated as objects that may be exploited by those who hold the threat of deportation (amongst other threats) over them. As Pérez notes, many immigrant women find themselves ‘dependent on their abusers for their immigration status […] this creates the power imbalance that facilitates […] abuses and makes it extremely difficult for women […] to escape these situations without facing the threat of deportation.’

It is this absence of autonomy (in conjunction with other forms of objectification) that erodes many women’s statuses as subjective beings, reducing them to dependent, exploitable objects in the perception of traffickers, employers, sexual partners and other abusive men. This objectification is manifest in multiple ways; even more than other immigrant groups, many ‘illegal’ immigrants are forced to work dangerous jobs, or to work in unhealthy conditions for extremely long hours with little or no pay, and no security or protection from exploitation by gangs, bosses, government officials or lovers and family members.

Unsurprisingly, this objectification and exploitation frequently takes a sexual form in men’s treatment of ‘illegal’ immigrant women. This sexual violence operates on a particularly significant scale and in many forms. Crossing borders is particularly dangerous in this respect, with ‘illegal’ immigrants being raped by guides, gangs, fellow immigrants and government officials during crossings so routinely that many women attempting to cross the U.S./Mexico border take contraceptive pills or shots before leaving due to the high probability that they will be raped. Similarly, human trafficking, which is responsible for bringing many ‘illegal’ immigrants into Western countries, also makes a significant contribution to the sexual violence experienced by ‘illegal’ immigrant women. Large numbers of women and girls are trafficked into Western countries every year, often voluntarily under the belief they will

355Ibid., p. 144.
357Pérez, ‘When Sexual Autonomy Isn’t Enough’, p. 141.
be given jobs, and many are then raped and forced into prostitution to pay off debts to their traffickers.\textsuperscript{358} Given the illegal, unofficial nature of this practice, exact figures are impossible to acquire although various estimates exist that, considered together, provide an insight into the extent of the problem.\textsuperscript{359} For example, the European Union estimates that 120,000 women and children are trafficked into Western Europe yearly, whilst America's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimates that between 45,000 and 50,000 are trafficked into the United States; although not all trafficked women and children are forced into prostitution or sexual slavery, a United Nations study estimates that eighty percent of all trafficked people—primarily women and children—are trafficked for this purpose.\textsuperscript{360} As with the rape statistics discussed in the introduction, lack of reporting, survivor recognition, appropriate definitions or adequate governmental efforts to assess the situation make it extremely difficult to attach firm numbers to this issue, and many charities and organisations consider government estimates to be highly conservative.\textsuperscript{361}

The above issues are compounded by the fact that trafficked and immigrant women who have been raped or forced into prostitution frequently receive little help from governments and police, often being arrested and deported for illegal entry, prostitution or other coerced criminal activity (such as being forced to traffic drugs), or being further raped and abused by police and other

\textsuperscript{358} 'Attorney General’s Annual Report to Congress on U.S. Government Activities to Combat Trafficking in Persons Fiscal Year 2006’ (5/2007) <http://www.humantrafficking.org/uploads/publications/2007_agreporhumantrafficing2006.pdf> [accessed 4 August 2012], p. 1; Department of Health and Human Services – USA, ‘Sex Trafficking Fact Sheet’ <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/about/fact_sex.pdf> [accessed 4 August 2012]. It should be noted that the following discussion of forced prostitution is not intended to suggest that all sex workers (or all immigrant sex workers) are forced into sex work, nor that consensual sex work is akin to rape. The analysis is concerned with the interrelation of forced prostitution, sex trafficking and rape and should not be considered representative of my position on anything outside of this specific issue.


officials. Combined with the threat of reprisals from traffickers and other exploiters, this lack of legal support often means that trafficked immigrants, and other ‘illegal’ immigrants, are reluctant to report sexual violence, and other exploitation, committed against them. The understanding of immigrants as objects to be bought, sold, used and consumed is central to this objectification; the objectification of immigrants—including legal, illegal and trafficked immigrants—as expendable and exploitable sources of profit intersects with the patriarchal objectification of women to create an understanding of immigrant women as inherently rapable, as dehumanised sexualised objects who may be raped or forced into prostitution without guilt or significant fear of legal recourse. For ‘illegal’ immigrants the latter point is particularly significant: the threat of deportation makes such women uniquely vulnerable to sexual predation, as their legal status leaves them alienated and removed from many systems of support and legal recourse, further marking them as objectified and rapable. However, sexual violence and exploitation, in various forms, remains a significant issue for ‘legal’ immigrants as well.

Although the threat of deportation is most obviously applicable to ‘illegal’ immigrants, to some extent it is a threat to all immigrants: immigration status may be changed and papers withdrawn, visa ‘top ups’ may be declined, prior applications may be reassessed or conditions necessary to immigration status, such as marriage to a citizen or the support of a sponsor, may cease to be valid. As such, even a ‘legal’ immigrant’s status is rarely entirely

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secure. As well as official changes to ‘legal’ immigration status, there are numerous reports of police officers and immigration officials confiscating documents and passports, threatening to change immigrants’ legal statuses or falsifying the conditions of legal immigration status in order to coerce and exploit immigrants or to stop them from reporting exploitation; this is particularly true of the treatment of immigrant women who are often raped (by bosses, traffickers, police officers, border agents or others) and told that if they report their abuse they will be deported. As a consequence of this and other potential threats, fear of deportation—sometimes rational, sometimes the result of understandable paranoia—discourages both immigrants who entered Western countries ‘legally’ and those who came in ‘illegally’ from drawing attention to themselves or becoming too closely involved with the authorities, including the police.

Some of the reasons for this are well demonstrated by Diallo’s case. As well as suggesting that Diallo was ‘promiscuous’, one of the key components of Strauss-Kahn’s defence was the suggestion that Diallo was a serial deceiver who would lie about anything, up to and including rape; supporting this position meant that Strauss-Kahn’s legal team explored every aspect of Diallo’s past that they could, seeking anything that might throw a damning light upon her credibility and, accordingly, on her testimony. Amongst the points raised by the defence in this respect was the fact that Diallo not only had an improper residency and insecure asylum status (which, as Zoe Williams argues, greatly undermined her credibility, especially in the ‘trial by media’), but that she achieved this illicit asylum status by lying about being gang raped by soldiers in her home country of Guinea. It is important to clarify, here, that as Nittle highlights, Diallo was raped in Guinea but instead reported a fictionalised gang rape by

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soldiers on her asylum application, having been encouraged and coached to do so to increase the likelihood of her application being accepted (by, it is worth noting, presenting herself as the survivor of a model of sexual violence more widely acknowledged as significant within the biases of the Anglophone West’s prevailing attitudes to rape). This does not, of course, as will be argued presently, in any way prove that she lied about her alleged rape by Strauss-Kahn. Nevertheless, the accusations of deception were used to portray Diallo as a chronic liar and fraudster, a woman whose word could never be trusted and who was intent on getting as much free money and support as she could, an image that was widely present in some media coverage, such as that provided by the New York Post which, aside from the allegations that Diallo was a sex worker (for which Diallo sued the paper, reaching an undisclosed settlement in December 2012), actually published statements such as ‘she wants to clean out his monetary fund’ and even described Diallo as ‘[t]he maid who cried sexual assault’.369

Also widely present in the media coverage, largely as a result of the previous ‘revelations’, were calls for Diallo to be deported (including from some surprising sources, such as human rights activist and ex-ambassador Craig Murray, who wrote a blog article entitled ‘Diallo Must Be Deported’).370 This highlights the significance of the threat of deportation: in coming forward to

368 See: Nittle, ‘Media Bungles Race and Sex in Coverage of Dominique Strauss-Kahn Rape Scandal’.
report the alleged rape, Diallo was confronted with intense scrutiny of her entire past, including her asylum application. This is far from an isolated issue; many immigrants and asylum seekers who are raped are faced with a difficult and unpleasant choice: to accept that they cannot even report sexual violence committed against them, or to do so and risk deportation or other serious repercussions. As journalist Zoe Williams observed, ‘if you’re a migrant who fled an ambiguous situation, if you can get into another country, good luck with that – but you forfeit your rights under the rule of law.’ In light of this, it is not surprising that many immigrants and asylum seekers do not report that they have been raped. Those whose asylum applications are ‘genuine’ or whose immigration status is legal are still unlikely to report sexual violence due to fear of what an opposing legal team—especially the highly-paid legal team of a rich and powerful man—might be able to discover (or manipulate) to discredit them, and what it might do to their immigration status. Indeed, many survivor support advocates and anti-rape activists have spoken out about how the handling of Diallo’s case is likely to cause a decline in rape reporting from all women due to an increased fear of having one’s past publically scrutinised and an increased belief that rich and powerful men always escape prosecution.

Moreover, the issue of whether or not a woman is ‘legally’ or ‘illegally’ in the country (like the issue of whether she is an immigrant or a ‘native’) makes no difference to her right not to be raped. As Holly Dustin, of the organisation End Violence Against Women, notes, ‘[r]ape victims can be less than perfect, they can have insecure immigration status [...] and they can still be raped’. Dustin’s point here is significant: no aspect of a woman’s status, identity or activities (including those that the dominant culture considers illegal or immoral) should mean that she can be raped with impunity, or disbelieved when she reports sexual violence. However, what is perhaps more significant

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371 Williams, ‘Strauss-Kahn is Accused, but it’s the Maid’s Word on Trial’.
374 Cited in Topping, ‘Strauss-Kahn Case could deter Reporting of Rape, Campaigners Warn’.

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is the reason that points such as Dustin’s still have to be raised. The key reason that it remains necessary to explain and to argue that there are no aspects of a survivor’s life that justify and negate sexual violence committed against them is that the Anglophone West not only objectifies all women but also has multiple intersecting systems of objectification that present and treat certain marginalised women as capable, as objects who are always consenting, or who ‘asked for it’, or who simply lied for their own benefits.

The above discussion has gone into some detail on some of these points, so as to provide a detailed overview of how they relate to systems of oppression that remain normalised in the dominant culture of the Anglophone West. However, this discussion has only covered some of the many ways through which normalised systems of oppression objectify marginalised women. Moreover, the previous analysis has also treated the points as isolated or as the product of only two intersecting systems of oppression. In reality, of course, as Diallo’s case demonstrates, there are multiple means through which survivors are objectified, and their testimony discredited and voice silenced, and these means of objectification are not discrete or isolated or attributable to a single system of oppression (or even a single pair of intersecting systems). Rather, the lived experience of many survivors (particularly marginalised survivors) reveals an entire complex of issues used to undermine the survivor’s testimony and subjectivity, each of which is supported, in various ways, by multiple systems of oppression, all intersecting at multiple points. Having now established some of the more complicated issues that pertain specifically to white-supremacist and anti-immigrant oppression (in intersection with gender oppression), it is now useful to employ Diallo’s case as a lens through which to explore in more detail the great complexity of objectification faced by many survivors, and the complex, intersectional nature of the discourses that discredit survivors’ accounts of sexual violence.

As suggested earlier, the forms of objectification pertaining to Diallo’s treatment by Strauss-Kahn, the American judicial system and the West’s
media are complex, multifaceted and intersectional.\textsuperscript{375} At its most basic level, this is demonstrated through the issue of promiscuity discussed above. The notion that a survivor’s supposed ‘promiscuity’ can excuse rape is, in its most basic form, a product of patriarchal oppression: women are presented as having no intrinsic right to not be raped, but rather have to earn it through restricting themselves to certain ‘patriarchy-approved’ modes of behaviour, whilst the patriarchal violence remains unchallenged. More specifically, such discourses around ‘promiscuity’ and rape are a form of sexual objectification arising from patriarchal oppression: women deemed to be promiscuous are presented as having willingly embraced their own sexual objectification by engaging in sexual acts and, as such, are treated as ‘fair game’ for sexually objectifying behaviour, up to and including rape. In this sense, the notion that certain behaviour by survivors ‘justifies’ their rape is both an expression of the patriarchal sexual objectification of women by men and a process through which that sexual objectification is normalised and legitimised. However, these accusations of promiscuity are grounded in patriarchal responses to women’s behaviour and there was nothing in Diallo’s behaviour, as reported by the press, that could be said to display this kind of ‘promiscuity’; as established earlier, the allusions to promiscuity that undermine Diallo’s testimony come from patriarchal oppression’s intersection with white-supremacist oppression, and the belief that women of colour are ‘sexual savages’ inherently characterised by bestial insatiability. As such, the implied promiscuity that undermines Diallo’s testimony is not just the product of gender oppression but of the intersection of gender oppression with white-supremacist oppression. However, it is not only white-supremacist oppression that needs to be considered in the case of Diallo. Although not necessarily employing the same dehumanising discourses as found in white-supremacist treatment of

\textsuperscript{375} It is worth noting at this point that, although the following analysis addresses Western media more than the American judicial system, media responses to rape trials are intimately related to, and greatly inform, judicial responses; as Samhita Mukhopadhyay notes, “[r]ape cases that are “tried” through the media have a great impact on the way that violence against women is treated in the criminal justice system and in our greater culture. It is the mainstream media that sets the agenda for how we will discuss rape” (Samhita Mukhopadhyay, ‘Trial By Media: Black Female Lasciviousness and the Question of Consent’, in \textit{Yes Means Yes!: Visions of Female Sexual Power and a World Without Rape}, ed. by Jaclyn Friedman and Jessica Valenti (California: Seal Press, 2008), pp. 151–161 (p. 152).
women of colour, both classist and anti-immigrant oppression do, as noted earlier, characterise marginalised women as promiscuous, presenting poor and immigrant women as being distanced from a supposedly reserved, controlled and, ultimately, ‘civilised’ female sexuality.\(^{376}\) In this sense, the allusions to promiscuity that helped to undermine Diallo’s account were supported by a complex intersection of patriarchal, white-supremacist, anti-immigrant and classist oppression. However, the point also becomes more complex still, as allusions to promiscuity do not only function in the direct suggestion that a woman consented to sex (or even that she inherently consents to all sex); there are other allegations that produce similar discrediting narratives, and these allegations also draw on various intersecting systems of oppression. The allegation that Diallo is a sex worker which spread throughout the media part way through the trial illustrates this point particularly well, and it is to this question that the analysis will now turn.

‘Fair Game’: Rape and the Objectification of Sex Workers

The response of the dominant culture to sex workers who have been raped represents a (frequently even more extreme) variation on its response to ‘promiscuous’ women: they are treated as though their choice of actions and profession means that, like women who have chosen to be ‘promiscuous’ (or to get drunk, or dress ‘provocatively’), they have sacrificed the right to give or refuse consent. Indeed, as pro-sex worker advocate and ex-sex worker Susan Lopez notes, ‘[a] common misconception about sex workers is that we have no boundaries, and that we will do anything for money. As such, we are considered fair game for all kinds of denigration, sadly, including rape.’\(^{377}\) This attitude characterises many police responses to sexual violence against sex workers; as Hilary Kinnell notes, when sex workers report being raped, their cases are frequently unsuccessful because ‘[p]olice, courts, and jurors


[...] believe that, by offering sex for sale, the victim has forfeited the right to refuse any partner or sexual practice.'\textsuperscript{378} This understanding leads to dismissive, victim-blaming responses in many Western judicial systems, including, for example, the response of a former state public prosecutor to the rape, torture, murder and sexual mutilation of alleged sex workers in Mexico, who declared that ‘[i]t’s hard to go out on the street when it’s raining and not get wet.’\textsuperscript{379} Although this is an extreme example, it starkly demonstrates the institutionalised perception of sex workers as always consenting, as objects that exist to be penetrated by men without any right to define the boundaries of their own bodily integrity and without any recourse within the law.

This absence of meaningful legal status is deeply ingrained and attitudes such as those shown above are not simply the beliefs of isolated misogynists but a normalised and widely accepted position frequently found in Western judicial systems. As Corinne E. Blackner notes:

\begin{quote}
[s]tatistics attest to the difficulties prostitutes face when they do report rape. Under most circumstances, they are denied protection of law. In the United States, police often call such reports “unfounded,” meaning that no crime ever occurred, and in many other countries prostitutes never file reports.\textsuperscript{380}
\end{quote}

The description of sex workers’ reports of rape as ‘unfounded’ is particularly telling here: the very foundation for a report of sexual violence—that the survivor has a right to bodily integrity, a right not to be raped—is absent in this understanding of sex workers. Because sex workers are understood to be always consenting, to have no claim to an autonomous, subjective right over their own bodies, there is no basis on which to establish an allegation of violating such a right. Nussbaum’s description of ‘violability’ as acts and understandings in which '[t]he objectifier treats the object as lacking in boundary-integrity, as something that it is permissible to break up, smash,

\textsuperscript{379} Cited in Smith, \textit{Conquest}, p. 30.
break into’ is useful in this respect.\(^{381}\) In many respects, the foundation of understanding rape as an invasive act of abuse is the recognition of an existing boundary and the acknowledgement that it has been violated.\(^{382}\) As such, to deny that a survivor has that boundary is to deny that there is any crime, any abuse or violation involved in raping that ‘boundaryless’ individual, effectively ‘justifying’ rape within the limits of that understanding. However, in this context, it is not only the rapist who understands sex workers to be ‘lacking in boundary-integrity’ but also police and judicial systems and beyond: throughout the dominant culture sex workers are understood to have undermined their own boundary-integrity by engaging in sex work, effectively, making it so ‘permeable’ as to by largely non-existent. With the perceived absence of a boundary, the notion of a transgression or violation is seen as inapplicable, impossible even, and any reports of sexual violence are, accordingly, treated as inherently ‘unfounded’.

Of course, rapist and police are by no means necessarily separate parties; the attitudes above manifest not only in police apathy and indifference but frequently in the widespread sexual violence committed by police officers against sex workers. As Hilary Kinnell reports:

> Sex workers in many countries report victimization by police, from demands for unpaid sexual services to sexual abuse and humiliation, rape, physical violence, and extortion. This behavior is not confined to police who abuse their power while off duty, but is reported as happening during arrests and in police custody.\(^{383}\)

In this sense, the treatment of sex workers is reminiscent not only of the objectification of ‘promiscuous’ women but also that experienced by immigrants: as in the treatment of ‘illegal’ immigrant women discussed earlier, the extralegal position of sex workers both undermines chances of seeking legal resolutions to matters of abuse and makes them acutely

\(^{381}\) Nussbaum, ‘Objectification’, p. 257.

\(^{382}\) Of course, the patriarchal traditions of Western rape laws mean that, in judicial terms, the boundary considered to have been violated is often that of male ownership rather female bodily integrity (see: Joanna Bourke, \textit{Rape: A History from 1860 to the Present} (London: Virago, 2010), p. 410; Susan Brownmiller, \textit{Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape} (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975), pp. 16–30).

vulnerable to objectification and exploitation by police officers and other government officials.

Moreover, the similarities to previous analysis also extend to parallels between the treatment of sex workers and women of colour in that sex workers are not only presented as always consenting but also as being less deserving of the right to consent, as having bodies less worthy of bodily integrity. Where women of colour are presented as rapable because they are seen as subhuman, as not qualifying for a human (by which we can infer ‘white’) woman’s (debatable) right not to be raped, sex workers are seen as so tainted, as having bodies so far removed from the standards of virginal worth and so inherently objects rather than subjective beings, that they do not qualify for subjective rights. As Smith notes, ‘[p]rostitutes are almost never believed when they say they have been raped because the dominant society considers the bodies of sex workers undeserving of integrity and violable at all times’. In this sense, sex workers are presented as rapable by the dominant culture through the understanding that, by virtue of their profession, they are always consenting, have chosen to be sexual objects (and nothing more than sexual objects), and are so ‘tainted’ that they have no intrinsic worth outside of their sexual, ‘pleasure-giving’ capacities and no existence, no subjective and autonomous life, outside of being sexual objects to be used and consumed by men, all in conjunction with a vulnerable position in relation to the law and its agents. Of course, it is not simply the case that the objectification of sex workers mirrors that of other marginalised women; it frequently intersects with them too. Indeed, the alleged sex workers who were raped, tortured, murdered and sexually mutilated in Mexico, as discussed above, were all, as Smith notes, also poor and/or indigenous women of colour. As such the objectification that underlay their treatment by both the rapist/torturer/murderers and the disinterested, misogynistic police and state officials was the result of a particularly virulent

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384 For an insightful analysis of virginity as a measure of women’s worth and a tradable commodity, see: Valenti, The Purity Myth.
385 Smith, Conquest, p. 10.
386 Importantly, this is not to suggest that sex workers are sexual objects to be used and consumed by men; rather it is to note that the way sex work and allegations of sex work are frequently manipulated by the Anglophone West’s media and legal systems to ‘justify’ rape uses the concept of sex work to this effect.
387 Smith, Conquest, p. 30
intersection of systems of oppression. Moreover, as in the previous
discussions, the damaging effects of discourses surrounding sex work and
the fact that these discourses intersect with other systems of oppression are,
again, readily demonstrable through looking at Diallo’s case.

Although Diallo is not a sex worker, public opinion about her case was still
greatly influenced by allegations of sex work published in *The New York Post*. On the July 2nd 2011, the paper published the unsubstantiated
headline ‘DSK MAID A HOOKER’ and so began a rumour that spread
through much online media and public discussion relating to the case, and
was widely, and uncritically, reported in other newspapers. As Nadra
Kareem Nittle notes, although the other papers (and several television
companies) that carried the story did not directly make the same allegations,
the result was much the same: by reporting that the story had been published
by *The New York Post*, without engaging critically with the allegations or
providing investigative reporting of their own, these secondary reports
furthered both the spread of the story and its credibility. The original article,
which as noted earlier led to Diallo successfully suing the paper, suggested
that the ‘[a]llegations that [Diallo] worked as a hotel hooker may explain why
Strauss-Kahn insists their encounter was consensual’ before describing the
allegations as ‘damning evidence’. The key issue here is the latter aspect:
the paper’s description of the allegations as ‘damning evidence’. Firstly, it
must be observed that the allegations fail to qualify as ‘damning evidence’ in
that they remain only unsubstantiated accusations, rather than, in any sense,
real proof of anything. More importantly, however, if the allegations were
proven to be true, they would only be evidence that Diallo was a sex worker,
not ‘damning evidence’ that she was not raped: if Diallo was proven to be a
sex worker who worked through her role as a maid, this would offer only the
possibility of another explanation for what occurred in the hotel room
(although notably not one that matches either Diallo’s or Strauss-Kahn’s

389 Nittle, ‘Media Bungles Race and Sex in Coverage of Dominique Strauss-Kahn Rape Scandal’.
LuYGYYJyA0RNbi#ixzz22L6sVbfN> [accessed 1 August 2012].
accounts), not automatic proof that no rape occurred. Even proven allegations of sex work only function as ‘damning evidence’ if one accepts the notion that sex workers cannot be raped. In this sense, the suggestion put forth by The New York Post demonstrates the dominant culture’s understanding of sex workers as always consenting, or as culturally rapable through being unrapable: the possibility that Diallo was a sex worker and was raped is not considered because the two are treated as mutually exclusive, with the image of Diallo as a ‘hotel hooker’ being presented as ‘damning evidence’ against the incompatible image of Diallo as a rape survivor.

This treatment reflects a larger trend in the ways the objectification of sex workers operates in public opinion and judicial practices in the Anglophone West. Certainly, the automatic disbelief and discrediting of sex workers’ rape allegations is a pronounced issue, to the extent that the ‘World Charter for Prostitute Rights’ declares that ‘[t]he word of prostitutes is generally assumed to be invalid [...] In public, be it on the street corner or in court, their testimony and opinion are silenced.’ Moreover, the assumption that, by virtue of their employment, sex workers simply cannot be raped is also highly normalised, in courts and the police force especially. Joshua M. Price points to this as a recurrent theme in many sex workers’ experiences of surviving and reporting sexual violence, with one representative interviewee noting: ‘I can’t tell you the countless time I’ve heard police say that a prostitute can’t be raped [...] After a while you stop telling the police’. That is to say, the prevailing understanding that ‘sex worker’ and ‘rape survivor’ are mutually exclusive consistently renders sex workers as culturally rapable by marking them as ‘unrapable’, as having forfeited all right to give or refuse consent to any sexual activity.

Moreover, such understandings of sex workers intersect with white-supremacist, anti-immigrant, classist and other systems of oppression. Despite occasional portrayals of sex workers as rich, white, liberated and independent women (for instance, the British television series Secret Diary of

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a Call Girl), the image of sex workers as women of colour, immigrant women and poor women remains a dominant narrative in much Anglophone Western media. This dominant narrative corresponds to—and (re)creates and (re-)enforces—dominant narratives within Anglophone Western culture more generally, which also stereotype women of colour, immigrant women and poor women as sex workers. The group ‘Coalition to Support Sexual-Violence Victims and Survivors’ note this in a petition/open-letter to the editors of The New York Post released in the wake of the newspaper’s coverage of the Strauss-Kahn/Diallo case:

Regardless of the current state of the case, this is not the time—or any other time, for that matter—[sic] for NY Post to try this woman in the court of public opinion, especially using the standard victim-blaming rhetoric of saying the woman is “a hooker.” Not only is this abhorrently sexist, but it takes on a grossly racist tone. Black women have been historically cast as “Jezebels”—a synonym for “hooker”—which has been used as the reason why Black women could not possibly be “good” (meaning “sympathetic” or “relatable”) rape victims [...] Considering the victim’s and the alleged perpetrator’s races in the Strauss-Kahn sexual-assault case, the Post’s headline and story play too neatly into the perpetuating this bigotry that has been around since the days of US slavery.

This statement highlights two significant trends in the intersectional oppression of marginalised sex workers: that the tone and content of much media coverage are in themselves offensive and oppressive, and that they bias public opinion against marginalised sex workers by referring to pre-existing prejudices and stereotypes, whilst simultaneously reinforcing and recreating those stereotypes. The first of these points is, in the context of this thesis at least, relatively self-explanatory. Words such as ‘hooker’ are

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393 This is not to suggest that Secret Diary of a Call Girl—with its rose-tinted, glamorised image of sex work, its unchallenging employment of clichéd tropes and popular myths and its normalising of the commoditisation of women’s bodies—is not problematic; rather it is to highlight the cultural significance of a television program (and blog and books) that does not portray sex workers as trafficked, drug-addicted immigrants/women of colour or as victims entirely lacking in agency and does not present sex work (and sex more generally) as inherently dangerous and damaging to women (although, of course, it does imply that only conventionally attractive, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual, cis-gendered white women can attain this model of sex work). For discussion of some of these issues, see: Laurie Penny, Meat Market: Female Flesh under Capitalism (Winchester: Zero Books, 2011), pp. 19–21; Sharon Hayes and Belinda Carpenter with Angela Dwyer, Sex, Crime and Morality (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 82–89).

derogatory towards sex workers, women in general and women of colour in particular, contributing to an extensive legacy of misogynistic and racist stereotyping in Western media and public opinion. The second point is more complex and, arguably, more significant. Referring to pre-existing stereotypes is not only insensitive and derogatory; it also exerts a significant influence on how allegations of sexual violence from marginalised women are perceived in the dominant culture, shaping both public opinion and legal practices.

As the coalition’s statement argues, when a journalist or other commentator uses terms such as ‘hooker’ to describe a Black survivor it ties their account to a long-standing stereotype of promiscuous, always consenting Black ‘jezebels’. This ‘jezebel’ stereotype has, as the coalition suggest, deep cultural roots, grounded in the transatlantic slave trade and ‘forged’, as Kimberly Springer notes, ‘in the complex and perverse race relations of the post-Civil War South’ where it served ‘to set white women on a pedestal and excuse white men’s rape of black women’. It remains highly pervasive in the contemporary dominant culture, due in no small part to further prejudiced reporting by Anglophone Western media and what Samhita Mukhopadhyay describes as its ‘overused narrative’ that states ‘that if a woman of color is raped, she was lying about it and doing it for the money’. The pervasive influence of this stereotype means that there is already a story branded into the public consciousness of the dominant culture in which the promiscuous ‘jezebel’ has sex with the wealthy white man, for financial gain or simply because she inherently consents to all sexual activity, and then ‘cries rape’ in order either to disguise her ‘sluttish’ ways or to exploit the man in question. Accordingly, when media coverage alludes the jezebel stereotype by associating women of colour with sex work, this story is superimposed over the facts of the case, and the survivor’s account is subsumed by the dominant narrative, filtering out the fine detail and remoulding the facts until the case starts to resemble the story of the deceitful, promiscuous ‘jezebel’.

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397 For discussion, see: Mukhopadhyay, ‘Trial by Media’, pp. 154–158.
As such, public opinion of the case becomes a foregone conclusion: because people know the dominant narrative, and they understand the case in question to resemble that narrative, they ‘know’ the truth of the case and how it should be resolved.\textsuperscript{398} Moreover, similar cultural associations of other marginalised women (especially poor women, immigrant women and trans* women) with sex work also intersect with these understandings, increasing the damage of the white-supremacist ‘jezebel’ stereotype, or producing parallel stereotypes that render such women culturally rapable.\textsuperscript{399} Indeed, as I will now argue, both media coverage and wider cultural attitudes around sexual violence are shaped by multiple systems of oppression, all of which interact in complex, multifaceted ways and connect at numerous points of intersection, and in doing so reflect not only the structures of the rape culture but also the dominant culture of the Anglophone West.

\textbf{Complexes of Oppression: The Intersectional Objectification of Survivors}

As a point of departure, it is useful at this stage to briefly reprise the earlier discussion of the Strauss-Kahn/Diallo case, and to note specifically that the intersectional objectification and oppression discussed above carries over into other aspects of the attempts, by Strauss-Kahn’s defence and elements

\textsuperscript{398} This is a common result of prejudiced reporting on issues such as rape. A similar process occurred, for example, in 2011 when The Daily Mail described two twelve-year old survivors as ‘Lolitas’: in alluding to a familiar character, the article allows the case to be eclipsed by a pre-existing narrative, casting the survivors and the rapists in fixed roles already known in the public consciousnesses, significantly influencing how the case is understood by readers of the article. See: ‘Six Footballers Jailed over Gang Rape of 12-year-old Girls in Midnight Park Orgy’ (17/3/2011) <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1367377/Six-footballers-jailed-gang-rape-12-year-old-girls-midnight-park-orgy.html> [accessed 21 January 2013]. For a brief critique of the article, see: ‘End Violence Against Women Coalition FINAL Submission to the Leveson Inquiry, January 2012’ <http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/End-Violence-Against-Women-Coalition-Submission.pdf> [accessed 21 January 2013].

of the Anglophone Western media, to discredit Diallo’s account that we have not yet explored. Diallo was accused of seeking to exploit Strauss-Kahn for financial gain, of being involved in, or at least connected to, crime and drug dealing, of falsifying her social security claims and asylum application, and of having a generally dishonest and deceitful character (or, as The New York Post phrased it, being ‘a pathological liar and scam artist’). In this regard, the case is representative, for such accusations are routinely levelled at many rape survivors regardless of their marginalisation by other aspects of the West’s socio-political organisation, and each in itself is a means through which Western misogyny objectifies women and silences survivors. Indeed, as Gregory M. Duhl notes, in rape trials, ‘[t]he victim’s character [...] is almost always scrutinized’, and critical judgements are made by ‘[m]embers of society and even officers of the court’ about the appropriateness of the survivor’s behaviour and the credibility of their actions before, during and after the attack, and throughout the course of the investigation. However, disparaging assessments and direct accusations are also given further credence when applied to marginalised women because each of these points also corresponds to dominant narratives and traditional Western discourses about people of colour, immigrants, poor people and sex workers. In general terms, it is widely noted that stereotypes of people of colour, immigrants and poor people as criminals and drug dealers, as social security ‘scroungers’ and ‘cheats’, and as generally deceitful and intent of acquiring money from others abound in the mainstream media, public opinion and within government services and police forces. When a woman of colour,
immigrant woman or a poor woman reports that she has been raped, these stereotypes undermine the survivor’s testimony, supporting suggestions that the survivor is lying and seeking personal benefits through ‘crying rape’; this trend is manifest in everything from the ‘overused narrative’ of deceitful, exploitative women of colour discussed by Mukhopadhyay to what charity group Women for Refugee Women call ‘the culture of disbelief’ at the United Kingdom Border Agency and Home Office which leads to many asylum-seeking survivors having their experiences disbelieved, and their asylum applications denied.403

Furthermore, not only are such accusations more widely accepted when directed at marginalised survivors, they also cause greater public response and outrage. Of course, regardless of their relative marginalisation or privilege, women accused of ‘crying rape’ are frequently the subject of intense anger and hatred, particularly from those who view the issue as an endemic victimisation of ‘men’ as a class; indeed, ‘men’s rights’ and ‘masculist’ groups such as the False Rape Society and A Voice for Men are often deeply concerned with, or even formed around, this understanding.404

To be sure, actual cases of ‘false rape allegation’ (if the term can be divorced from its ‘masculist’ connotations) are serious issues that pose a genuine threat to the rights and the liberty of the wrongly-accused. However, the image of ‘false rape allegation’ as far-reaching, society-wide menace—the image propagated by groups such as those above—is greatly exaggerated. A report by ‘The National Center for the Prosecution of Violence Against Women’ notes that, based on the findings of the most methodologically rigorous studies available in America, the United Kingdom and Australia, ‘estimates for the percentage of false reports begin to converge around 2-

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When this already low percentage is considered in light of the fact that reported rapes represent only the slightest fraction of those actually committed (as discussed in the introduction), then the relative scale and significance of the issue recedes even further. Despite this, the issue remains a source of violent outrage for many of those who seek to preserve male privilege and entitlement, who cast themselves as the beleaguered victims of a sadistic ‘feminazi’ conspiracy and—between articles claiming to expose ‘the myth of women’s oppression’ or blaming women’s supposedly domineering attitudes for domestic violence—denounce Western judicial systems’ (already intensely patriarchal and ineffective) rape laws as ‘the instruments of tyranny’ directed against men. As virulent and vindictive as such anger is, it takes on new dimensions and greater intensity, and often gains ‘credibility’ and proponents, when the survivor is accused of using the supposedly false allegations as a means of ‘scrounging’ financial support or sullying the reputation of a man considered to be the survivor’s racial or class superior. Such scenarios not only unleash the rage of misogynists but also tap into the currents of white-supremacist and other systems of oppression that characterise Western culture. Indeed, as Mukhopadhyay rhetorically asks: in the discourses of the mainstream media, ‘what could be worse than a woman of color lying about a rape that could potentially threaten the lives and futures of [...] privileged white men?’

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The above discussion demonstrates that, in line with my earlier declaration, it is not only systems of patriarchal and misogynistic gender oppression that are central to the Anglophone West’s rape culture. Even then it has only addressed a limited number of other systems of oppression; there are others—for example, homophobia, transphobia, abelism, ageism and xenophobia—that function in similar fashions (and in various intersecting formations), objectifying and making marginalised women culturally rapable throughout the Anglophone West. Of course, patriarchal and misogynistic gender oppression is central to the objectification of women, which, in turn, is, as established earlier, central to the enabling of rape. However, this does not mean that somehow eliminating gender oppression (ignoring for the moment the fact that, as argued earlier, gender oppression is itself deeply embedded in the West’s superculture of objectification) would automatically eliminate rape. Marginalised women would still be subject to objectification that would render them culturally rapable in the views of privileged men.

The oppression and objectification experienced by marginalised women is intersectional rather than cumulative, and as such cannot be neatly divided into discrete forms, each the product of a single system of oppression. For example, as noted earlier, the objectification experienced by women of colour is not objectification as a person of colour plus objectification as a woman but a unique, intersectional objectification as a woman of colour. King highlights this point in her critique of the notions of the ‘double jeopardy’ of racism and sexism, and the ‘triple jeopardy’ of racism, sexism and classism. She writes:

Fortunately, most applications of the concepts of double and triple jeopardy have been overly simplistic in assuming that the relationships among the various discriminations are merely additive. These relationships are interpreted as equivalent to the mathematical equation, racism plus sexism plus classism equal triple jeopardy. In this instance, each discrimination has a single, direct, independent effect on status, wherein the relative contribution of each is readily apparent. This simple incremental process does not represent the nature of black women’s oppression.

410 King, ‘Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness’, p. 297.
What King highlights here is that the results of a single system of oppression on a multiply-marginalised person cannot be neatly separated from the whole, from the actual oppression as experienced. Accordingly, the notion that eliminating a single system of oppression simply removes that oppression from the marginalised person’s experiences (for example, eliminating ‘gender oppression’ means that women of colour only experience white-supremacist oppression) is not workable: the oppression experienced by multiply-marginalised people is intersectional, and just as single, discrete forms of oppression cannot be treated as separate from the whole, they cannot be neatly excised from the whole. As such, the notion of eliminating gender oppression, unless understood as fully situated within a network of intersectional oppression, effectively translates as eliminating only the oppression experienced by privileged women, by the relatively small number of women whose oppression is grounded only in gender hierarchy and gendered dualistic thinking. For example, the elimination of gender oppression might mean that ‘women’ as a problematically homogenised group are not viewed as rapable objects by virtue of their gender, but that does not mean that marginalised women would not be considered rapable in the discourses of the dominant culture because they would still be objectified and presented as rapable through the intersectional oppression that is a lived reality for many marginalised women in the Anglophone West. Similarly, the elimination of gender oppression might mean that ‘women’ are not interrogated as liars when reporting rape, but this would not necessarily apply to many marginalised women because of the stereotypes surrounding marginalised women, as outlined above. Systems of oppression can be discussed, as to some extent I have done above, as isolated forces (albeit isolated forces with a shared root in the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification); however, the reality or the lived experience of oppression, shows that oppression, and objectification in particular, frequently take complex intersectional forms that cannot be adequately addressed (or combated) on a purely disconnected, discrete basis. In this sense, the Anglophone West’s rape culture, as well as taking its ideological foundation from the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification, is also closely structured and organised by multiple, intersectional forms of oppression and objectification, each with its roots in the underlying philosophy. As I will now
demonstrate, it is this issue that begins to show the true significance of the previous analysis and the extent to which sexual violence is enmeshed in the dominant culture of the Anglophone West.

**Abusive Culture: The Civilised Foundations of Rape**

Western culture’s underlying philosophy of objectification—the understanding that some lives are worth less than others and so can be used and consumed—is organised and formalised through the complex, intersecting systems of oppression that shape Western socio-political organisation, outlining who may be objectified and consumed by whom. Systems of patriarchal and misogynistic gender oppression mark men as subjects and consumers and women as objects to be consumed, but they do so in inseparable, intersectional conjunction with many other systems of oppression, all of which are, at best, deeply ingrained in the structure of Western culture and, at worst, inherent elements of it. Certainly, it can, at least, be argued that these structures are intrinsic to the Anglophone West in its current form or that they are elements that cannot be eliminated without radical social change across the entirety of the dominant culture. For instance, the West’s current (and longstanding) capitalist social organisation both constantly produces and is entirely reliant upon the existence of subordinated and marginalised groups who may be legitimately objectified and consumed; as David Watson succinctly phrases it: ‘[c]apitalism needs a colony, and someone has to be that colony.’

In this sense, Western capitalism is both product and guardian of social hierarchy and a contemporary manifestation of the belief that some lives are worth less than others; it works to organise and legitimise the objectification of the disempowered by the powerful and celebrates—even venerates—the consumption of the marginalised by the privileged.

Moreover, as Watson’s statement suggests, the groups marked as exploitable, consumable by Western capitalism are not simply the ‘lower-

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class' but numerous different groups, each marginalised and objectified by multiple, intersecting systems of oppression that also play an 'essential' structuring role in the capitalist West. As Silvia Federici notes:

capitalism [...] is necessarily committed to racism and sexism. For capitalism must justify and mystify the contradictions built into its social relations—the promise of freedom vs. the reality of widespread coercion, and the promise of prosperity vs. the reality of widespread penury—by denigrating the “nature” of those it exploits: women, colonial subjects, the descendents of African slaves, the immigrants displaced by globalization [...] If capitalism has been able to reproduce itself it is only because of the web of inequalities that it has built into the body of the world proletariat, and because of its capacity to globalize exploitation.412

To maintain the colonies—both in the sense of territorial expansion and the ‘cultural colonies’ of marginalised and exploited classes or groups—capitalism must mark those it consumes as inherently consumable, as inferior and worthless by their very ‘nature’. In doing so, it presents the exploitation and abuse of the marginalised as ‘normal’ and ‘natural’. Furthermore, capitalism does not, as is often assumed, operate only in the realm of economics. Rather, it is perhaps best understood in the manner Marimba Ani presents it: as ‘a system of ethics that regulates the behavior of individuals in definite directions and in accord with a consistent image of the human being and of his proper relation to others.’413 That is to say, capitalism not only normalises the economic exploitation of the marginalised but infiltrates and influences modes of relation on a far broader scale, presenting objectification and consumption as legitimate, laudable means of relating to others and to the world at large. As this chapter has demonstrated, this mode of relation—and its pervasive normalisation—is central to the maintenance of the Anglophone West’s rape culture. In this sense, without suggesting that capitalism is the cause of rape (a point which is soundly disproved by high incidence of rape in communist countries and throughout the pre-capitalist West), it can certainly be argued, along the lines suggested above, that contemporary Western capitalism creates a culture in which rape thrives.414

From this point, it can also be argued that eliminating the objectifying systems of oppression that underpin the Anglophone West’s rape culture (and so moving closer to eliminating rape) necessarily requires eliminating capitalism.

However, as suggested earlier, capitalism is only a manifestation of the underlying philosophy of objectification, a current means through which it is organised and legitimised, not the cause of these distinct trends in the structuring of Western culture. Indeed, as Ani notes, capitalism simply ‘provides another vehicle for the expression of the insatiable European “will-to-power”’ already firmly grounded in Western culture and worldview.\(^{415}\)

Whilst capitalism is one of the dominant means of (re)producing, maintaining and enforcing it, the underlying philosophy, the perception of world as composed of objects to be consumed, has far deeper roots. It can, for example, be identified in the fact that, as Ward Churchill notes, the systems of oppression, capitalist social organisation, and the society they shape and produce, all operate on stolen, colonised land and are themselves the product of an inherently objectifying colonial relationship that spreads across much of the world.\(^{416}\) Similarly, it is reflected in the understanding that, as Derrick Jensen asserts, ‘industrial civilisation’ is, by its very nature, unsustainable and so intrinsically requires subordinated groups, colonised lands and an objectified world not only to sustain capitalist social organisation but simply to exist.\(^{417}\) The extent to which such issues are origins or expressions of the underlying philosophy of objectification is not our concern here: the philosophy is a complex, convoluted network of mutually reinforcing strands, and its structures and manifestations change constantly as the dominant culture develops and evolves, rendering the notion of an identifiable point of origin utterly unfeasible. The significant point is that these issues, and the others discussed throughout this chapter, are all firmly

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\(^{415}\) Ani, *Yurugu*, p. 384.


\(^{417}\) Jensen provides an extensive argument for this across two volumes in *Endgame Volume 1: The Problem of Civilization* and *Endgame Volume 2: Resistance.*
enmeshed in the network, and collectively, as the underlying philosophy of objectification, they profoundly shape Western culture, providing the foundations, the cultural backdrop, for the Anglophone West’s rape culture.

In this sense, the Anglophone West’s rape culture is not only supported by, and the product of, the numerous intersecting systems of oppression that structure Western socio-political organisation, but also, more broadly, and by the same logic, it is the product of the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification and of the dominant culture of the Anglophone West. It is the product of a society that is structured around the consumption of others, a culture that produces rape survivors as predictably as it produces wastelands and warzones, colonies and slaves, tortured bodies and starving children. It is the product of a culture that is founded on the belief that some lives are worth less than others, a culture that is structured and shaped by the organising and formalising of who is worth less and who is worth more, who is a subjective consumer and who is a consumable object, existing only to be used for the benefit of others. Contemporary gender order and the long traditions of patriarchal social organisation and misogynistic ideologies and practices dictate the specific forms this objectification and consumption take, marking women as rapable rather than simply ‘consumable’, but they are grounded in, and profoundly supported by, this foundational understanding; whilst the foundations remain in place, the structure of the Anglophone West’s rape culture will remain strong and its influence will remain as pervasive and destructive as it currently stands.

These are large, significant issues that, within the scope of the thesis, have helped fuel my analysis so far and will continue to shape the following chapter. Considered in the light of my discussion of objectification and its centrality to the Anglophone West’s rape culture, they begin to raise important questions about what may be required to end sexual violence and, indeed, whether this can ever truly happen within the abusive structures, ideologies and philosophies that prevail in the dominant culture of the Anglophone West. However, this represents only half of the argument; understanding sexual violence, after all, requires not only that we explore the cultural treatment of rape survivors but also that we analyse rapists
themselves. Consequently, understanding the relationships between the dominant culture the Anglophone West and its rape culture requires that we interrogate the place of the rapist within the dominant culture. Central to this is acknowledging that rapists are no less ‘socially produced’ than are rape survivors: that is, just as a complex of attitudes, ideologies, systems and structures works to reduce survivors to ‘rapable bodies’, so too do they generate the processes by which ‘normal men’ come to commit acts of sexual violence. Popular images of rapists as enacting ‘natural’ instincts or as rare aberrations that emerge as a result of chance, idiosyncratic ‘mental illness’ or improper inculcation into the supposedly rape-opposed ethics of the dominant culture actually work to mark rapists as existing outside of the ‘civilised’ culture of the Anglophone West and deny this ‘civilised’ culture’s culpability for sexual violence. The following chapter will argue that, in reality, neither the desire nor the psychological capacity to commit rape is ‘natural’ or inherent; rather they are learned processes developed not through rapists’ exclusion from but their inculcation into the dominant culture. Likewise, these socialised characteristics are not rare and aberrant but commonplace and highly normalised, functioning as extensions of normative attitudes, ideologies and practices that characterise Anglophone Western culture. On the most immediate level, they extend normative gender conditioning and masculine socialisation, which produce in many men a profound sense of entitlement and self-interest and a drive to attain and display power over others. However, as with the social production of rapable bodies, the roots of this socialisation stretch beyond gender and into the deepest structures of the dominant culture itself. Building on the above analysis, the chapter will argue that the Anglophone West is shaped by and reliant upon the normalising of self-interested exploitation and the celebration of conquest and domination, and that rape is a sexualised, gendered expression of these deep-seated cultural characteristics. In this manner, the philosophies, ideologies, systems, structures and practices of the Anglophone West play a central role in the social production of what I describe as ‘rapist mentalities’: the rationales, unconscious thought processes, beliefs, understandings, value systems, behavioural codes and modes of perception and relation that both enable and motivate rapists to commit rape. Understanding this process adds new layers of complexity to the relationship between Western culture
and sexual violence, raising further questions of whether the Anglophone West’s rape culture is an inherent component of the dominant culture of the Anglophone West, and it is to exploring this issue that the discussion will now turn.
Myths and Misconceptions: The Natural Rapist and the Aberrant Rapist

The realities of sexual violence are shrouded in misconception, obscured and distorted by numerous myths of its forms and functions, its meanings and motivations, its relationships with the dominant culture. Most such myths have been widely critiqued in feminist studies and shown to have foundations no deeper than speculation, hearsay and prejudice, yet many still hold considerable sway in both popular and specialist understandings of rape. Of those myths pertaining to the often intangible figure of ‘the rapist’, there are perhaps two that exert the most significant influence. The first suggests that rapists are expressing a ‘natural instinct’ for coercive, predatory sexuality that is inherent to ‘all men’, and the second that rapists are aberrant, deviant pariahs who exist and operate outside the realms of ‘normal’ society. Both of these myths serve the same basic function of denying that the dominant culture has any culpability for the behaviour of rapists or for the Anglophone West’s rape problem in general. The myth of the ‘natural’ rapist, as we have seen in the first chapter, presents rape as pre-cultural, as something fixed that culture may respond to—organising it, controlling it, condemning or celebrating it—but cannot be said to actively cause. As such, it presents rapists’ actions as originating outside of ‘culture’ and so asserts that ‘nature’, and not ‘culture’, is responsible for sexual violence. The myth of the aberrant rapist conveys much the same message, this time by suggesting that ‘normal’ men do not commit rape and that the propensity to do so arises from influences outside of ‘normal’ society, in those who, by dint of ‘mental illness’ or social exclusion, are not properly socialised into the dominant culture. Accordingly, this myth purges ‘the rapist’ from the dominant culture and its

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419 See pp. 42–56, and the first chapter more generally.
420 For discussion, see: Diana Scully and Joseph Marolla, “Riding the Bull at Gilley’s”: Convicted Rapists Describe the Rewards of Rape, Social Problems, Vol. 32, No. 3 (1985), 251–263 (pp. 251–252).
field of responsibility by marking his propensity to rape as the product of his exclusion from, rather than his socialisation into, culturally-prescribed ideologies, attitudes and behaviour patterns.

At times, these two myths contradict one another because the notion that a propensity to rape is ‘natural’ and common to ‘all men’ undermines the notion that rapists are rare and ‘deviant’. More often, they work in unison, either in the belief that rape is an expression of the ‘natural’ psychopathology of ‘deviant’ individuals or, most commonly, in the belief that ‘all men’ have the same ‘natural’ propensity but that most have learned to suppress it, leaving only the ‘deviant’ and improperly socialised to actually act upon their ‘instincts’. Both of these beliefs have long shaped the study of rapists, particularly in psychopathological approaches. For example, A. Nicholas Groth’s seminal and still highly influential study *Men Who Rape: The Psychology of the Offender* (1979), is largely premised on the first belief, as reflected in his assertion that ‘the rapist’ is ‘a person who has serious psychological difficulties which handicap him in his relationships with other people’.421 In other words, all rapists are, according to Groth, aberrant individuals expressing the ‘natural’ deviance of their own psychopathologies. Interestingly, the second belief can also be identified in Groth’s text, in this case in Edward M. Brecher’s foreword to the main study. Brecher writes that ‘many, perhaps most, rapists [...] grew up under circumstances which deprived them of the civilizing influences and the rewards that mold the lives of nonrapists’.422 That is to say, for Brecher, men require the ‘civilizing influences’ of normative socialisation in order not to become rapists, suggesting that predisposition to rape is something pre-cultural that is contained and controlled by civilised culture. However, whether alone, conflicting or intersecting, both myths still maintain the overarching fallacy that rapists’ propensity to commit rape arises from outside the dominant culture rather than being the direct product of the prevailing ideologies, ethics, attitudes and practices of the Anglophone West. The analysis in this


chapter will challenge such understandings, arguing instead that rapists are merely expressing and conforming to the roles prescribed to them by both contemporary gender order and wider patterns of exploitative, self-serving behaviour that shapes the dominant culture.

The previous chapter proposed that sexual violence is at once a product of the Anglophone West's traditions of misogyny and patriarchal social organisation and a manifestation of a broader process of objectification and consumption on which the ‘civilised’ West relies, ultimately concluding that the social production of rapable bodies is an inevitable, and arguably inherent, aspect of the dominant culture of the Anglophone West. This chapter addresses the other side of the same issue, exploring how the dominant culture, again perhaps intrinsically, produces what I shall refer to as ‘rapist mentalities’. The concept of a ‘rapist mentality’ is employed by several theorists, although largely without a fixed definition or qualifying analysis. In this thesis, I use the term to refer to a heterogeneous collection of rationales, unconscious thought processes, beliefs, understandings, value systems, behavioural codes and modes of perception and relation that both enable and motivate rapists to commit rape. That is to say, for the purposes of this discussion, a rapist mentality is a mode of (conscious or unconscious) thinking by which rapists come to perceive, experience or ‘know’ an act of sexual violence to be, within his own psyche, an acceptable and desirable course of action. Importantly, ‘rapist mentalities’ should not be seen as innate—either to the deviant ‘mentally ill’ rapist or to ‘all men’—but as a learned mode of thought and relation, a culturally-constructed product of rapists' socialisation into dominant models of masculinity and the Anglophone West’s prevailing behavioural and ethical codes. Similarly, to further clarify


424 ‘Psyche’ is used here to describe, as Carl Jung phrases it, ‘the totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconscious’ (Carl Jung cited in Polly Young-Eisendrath and Terence Dawson, ‘Glossary’, in The Cambridge Companion to Jung, ed. by Polly Young-Eisendrath and Terence Dawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 314–325 (p. 318)).
the concept, it is also important to note that it should not be taken as a suggestion that all rapists can be grouped into a monolithic category or homogenous community or that there is a fixed ‘personality type’ that predetermines or predicts rape perpetration. Rather, the notion of ‘rapist mentality’ describes the numerous combinations of socialised or culturally acquired thought processes that facilitate and motivate sexual violence. As such, it is applicable to all rapists not because all rapists are in any sense identical or united by anything other than their sexual violence, but because the concept acknowledges, and functions as a collective term for, the wide range of rape-enabling and rape-motivating modes of thought, perception and relation which I argue to be endemic to the dominant culture. Similarly, the social production of rapist mentalities should not be seen simply as the mechanical result of the social production of rapable bodies: the two processes are intimately related and share many roots and supporting structures but the presence of ‘legitimate’ targets does not automatically instil into others either the psychological capacity or the desire to commit rape. Instead, the social production of rapist mentalities must be seen as a process in its own right that mirrors, but cannot be collapsed into, the social production of rapable bodies. In other words, an account must be made of the ways in which individuals are socialised into a variety of rape-enabling and rape-motivating perceptions of themselves in relation to others and in relation to ‘rapable bodies’. Ultimately, it is such an account that this chapter aims to deliver, using the myths of natural and aberrant rapists as points of departure to explore the socialised ‘psychology’ of rape and its relation to prevailing ideologies and practices, to examine why such socialisation is so prolific and to interrogate the place of ‘the rapist’ in the vast web of power relations that make up the dominant culture of the Anglophone West. This enquiry will begin by exploring the psychological capacity to rape, leading into this analysis by reprising the discussion of naturalised rape introduced in the first chapter.
Learning to Harm Others: Socialisation and Inhibitions against Abuse

One of the key aspects of the myth of the natural rapist, at least for the civilisation-critical arguments of this thesis, is the suggestion that normative socialisation into the dominant culture produces a rational, ethical objection to sexual violence that counteracts a supposed inherent ‘male’ drive to commit rape. That is, in such conceptions, the desire to rape is seen as ‘natural’ and common to ‘all men’ and it is only through the development of sophisticated, ‘moral’ societies that most men come to view rape as something damaging and objectionable and so ‘learn’ not to commit it. Although this thinking also pervades both some rape-supportive arguments, often in the form of statements such as ‘boys will be boys’ as discussed previously, and some feminist anti-rape theory (certainly, as suggested in the first chapter, we can find similar positions in Susan Brownmiller’s work), it is perhaps most apparent in the ostensibly ‘neutral’ work of some evolutionary biologists. It clearly underpins statements such as Richard Wrangham and Dale Peterson’s suggestion that ‘[s]ociety’s growing sympathy for rape victims may [...] be working to end a system that has deep evolutionary roots’, which sets up civilisation’s moral ‘progress’ as the solution to ‘natural’ rape. This is even starker, and framed even more directly as a practical ‘solution’ to sexual violence, in Randy Thornhill and Craig Palmer’s proposals for ‘an evolutionary informed educational program’ that teaches ‘young men to acknowledge the power of their sexual impulses and then [explains] why human males have evolved to be that way’. They continue by stating that

the program should stress that, if he understands and adamantly resists his evolved desires, a young man may be able to prevent their manifestation in sexually coercive behavior. We suggest that the program conclude with a detailed and graphic discussion of the penalties of rape.

427 Randy Thornhill and Craig Palmer, A Natural History of Rape: Biological Basis of Sexual Coercion (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2000), p. 179.
428 Thornhill and Palmer, A Natural History of Rape, p. 180. It is worth noting that Thornhill and Palmer also propose ‘a program of anti-rape education for females’ which, as well as warning women that men are evolutionarily programmed to rape them, rehashes several long-standing rape myths such as the notion that rape survivors are almost exclusively
Here, a propensity to rape is clearly framed as ‘natural’ and the ‘solution’ as being the product of ‘civilised’ culture, manifest as educational programs that propose a rational and moral effort to control coercive urges and as a sophisticated legal system that allegedly punishes those who abuse others. Implicit within such arguments is the assumption that ‘men’ have no inhibitions against sexual violence until they are socialised to develop them: that is, it is assumed that the psychological capacity to rape is innate and that inhibitions against doing so are learned and internalised as a result of external cultural influence. This point is significant in itself; however, far more significant, at least for the purposes of our discussion here, is the fact that feminist critiques of ‘the natural rapist’ rarely address this issue. Although many theorists suggest that the desire to commit rape is learned or socialised, discussion of the ways in which rapists overcome inhibitions against committing rape is largely limited to analysis of the dehumanisation and objectification of women, with little consideration given to other aspects of this process. This lack of analysis functions as a de facto assumption that ‘men’ lack inhibitions against rape, or at least lack those inhibitions that aren’t entirely circumvented by the social production of rapable bodies. However, whilst the process of making women culturally rapable is hugely important to this issue, to ignore other aspects of how rapists come to see sexual violence as personally acceptable—that is, how they develop one of the two components of a rapist mentality—is to overlook a significant reason why rape is so prolific in the Anglophone West. Accordingly, it is to this issue that the analysis will now turn.

‘young’, ‘healthy’ and ‘attractive’ (the authors more or less conflate these terms) or that women’s behaviour and clothing choices provoke sexual violence (pp. 180–186). Indeed, they even suggest warning women that they have evolved a ‘tactical’ use of ‘clothing as sexual strategy’ which might lead them to unconsciously signal the passage of their menstrual cycles (because all survivors are ‘healthy’, ‘young’ ‘women’ they all, of course, menstruate) through the amount of bare skin they are revealing, thus advertising their fertility to passing men who may, in turn, express their own evolved procreative tactics by raping them (p. 182).

Thornhill and Palmer’s ignorance about the realities of sexual violence are well illustrated by the fact that they see the West’s judicial response to rape as a deterrent when, in fact, it is widely noted that consistent failure of Western legal systems to effectively address sexual violence may actually encourage rape, framing sexual violence, as Diana Scully notes, as a ‘low-risk, high-reward act’ (Diana Scully, Understanding Sexual Violence: A Study of Convicted Rapists (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), p. 137).
The fact that the psychological capacity to rape is, in many respects, an underanalysed issue places limitations on the sources available for developing a full understanding of how it is socialised into individuals and how it functions as part of a rapist mentality. Accordingly, it is necessary to develop an argument with reference to other contexts in which abusers are socialised to discount their inhibitions against abusing others. Of course, in doing so, it is important not to treat ‘rape’ as neatly interchangeable with generalised ‘violence’ and ‘abuse’: rape, after all, exists within a highly specific network of gendered power relations and gendered socialisation that makes it distinct from other forms of socialised abusiveness. However, in terms of the psychological capacity to commit rape, there is enough correlation between the processes that enable rape and those that enable other forms of abuse that this remains an appropriate comparison and allows analysis of generalised abuse to serve as a useful point of departure. The notion that generalised ‘violence’ is ‘natural’ or that human beings inherently lack inhibitions against abusing others is highly significant to the social structures and ideological traditions of the West. Indeed, the foundations of the Western (neo)liberal state lie in this assumption and in the subsequent conclusion that a powerful, coercive and punitive centralised government is thus necessary to ‘protect’ the citizenry from the threat of ‘natural violence’. However, this position is, I suggest, largely the product of conjecture and the projection of ‘civilised’ attributes onto a ‘human nature’: after all, not only do a great many cultures without centralised governments display remarkably low levels of violent behaviour (in fact, if there is a characteristic that is common to these cultures, it is far closer to cooperation or mutuality than to aggression), but a great deal of evidence also suggests that cultures with centralised governments (and perhaps the West most of all) actually socialise the ‘natural’ lack of inhibitions into their citizens. This is perhaps mostly

clearly illustrated by the fact that, when governments require certain citizens to perform acts of violence and abuse, they have to actively train them to be psychologically capable of doing so: as David Livingstone Smith notes, ‘despite what we see in the movies [...] it’s very difficult, psychologically, to kill another human being [...] or to inflict atrocities on them’ suggesting that to do so, humans must ‘overcome the very deep and natural inhibitions they have against treating other people like game animals or vermin’. The inhibitions Smith refers to here are widely noted to greatly undermine a soldier’s capacity to kill, or otherwise abuse, ‘enemy’ soldiers and civilians and so must be ‘un-learnt’ through the extensive training and socialisation that characterises life in the military. Moreover, this is not limited to soldiers: for example, Mark A. Costanzo and Ellen Gerrity observe ‘people asked to implement the policy of torture must find psychological mechanisms for lowering their inhibitions against cruelty’. Similarly, Hannah Arendt asserts that that one of the key difficulties the Nazi Party faced in the execution of the Holocaust was overcoming ‘the animal pity’ that affected concentration camp guards ‘in the presence of physical suffering’. These observations all point to the notion that the psychological capacity to abuse other people, to act with violence towards them or to kill them, is a learned ‘skill’, the product of patterns of intensive training and socialisation specifically intended to undermine and overcome inhibitions against abusive behaviour.
The same, I suggest, is true of the perpetration of sexual violence in the Anglophone West: the psychological capacity to commit rape—or the absence of internal inhibitions against rape—is not an innate aspect of a homogenised ‘male sexuality’ but a learned ability brought about by socialisation into the patriarchal and misogynistic dominant culture; indeed, the second item on Julie A. Allison and Lawrence S. Wrightsman’s list of conditions necessary for a rapist to commit rape is that the potential rapist’s ‘internal inhibitions against acting out [the] desire [to commit rape] have to be undermined’. However, the existing literature that addresses this issue is primarily concerned with rapists’ perceptions of their targets and the ways in which the objectification and dehumanisation of women—that is, the processes through which women come to be seen as rapable bodies—enables rapists to overcome these inhibitions. For example, Diana E.H. Russell’s study, from which Allison and Wrightsman derive their list of conditions, mainly focuses on factors such as the perception of ‘female sexuality [...] as a commodity’, the acceptance of rape myths and (mis)understandings of consent and the (sub)cultural acceptance of violence, in general and against women. These are all significant issues and I have touched on several of them throughout the thesis but they are not the only factors that enable rapists to overcome internal inhibitions against sexual violence. After all, as I suggested in the introduction, the presence of a legitimate ‘victim’ does not automatically produce an uninhibited victimiser; rather, the psychological capacity to rape arises not only from the ways in which the rapist perceives women but also how he perceives himself. That is to say, the processes that enable a rapist to overcome inhibitions against rape do certainly include the objectification of women or the social production of rapable bodies outlined at length in the previous chapter but they cannot be collapsed into or considered to be subsumed by them: they also include the rapist’s ‘mentality’, his modes of (self-) perception and relation, his conscious and unconscious understandings of his self in relation to others.

This is well illustrated by returning briefly to the examples of generalised violence and abuse noted above.

The dehumanisation of ‘enemies’ and ‘targets’ prefigures most, if not all, acts of institutionalised abuse primarily because it enables abusers to overcome inhibitions against what they are expected to do by moving their victims out of the moral realm, marking them as undeserving of ‘humane’ treatment. This operates in multiple forms with various manifestations ranging from the use of animalising or ‘vermin-ising’ racial slurs (Jews as rats, Tutsis as cockroaches) to the ‘scientific’ classification of groups or races as subhuman (‘Negroes’ as closer to apes than humans, the eugenical sterilisation of disabled people) through to the transformation of victims’ physical appearances until they no longer look ‘human’ (the starved and shaved inmates of the concentration camps, the ‘bagged’ and hooded inmates of Abu Ghraib).\(^{438}\) However, in each of the cases above, such dehumanisation is not the only process in operation: the guards, soldiers, slave traders, eugenics doctors and countless others must all understand themselves to be entitled to act as they do, to be legitimised, to be performing ‘normal’ actions or else extraordinarily worthwhile actions, or at least to be simply following orders as part of a larger pattern in which human responsibility is surrendered to hierarchy and command structure. In other words, contrary to the position underpinning much of the Anglophone West’s prevailing political and cultural ideologies, the psychological capacity to abuse another human being is something that must be learned or acquired and this requires not only that the target be dehumanised but also that the abuser develops an ‘abuser mentality’ or a mode of thinking that enables them to overcome their inhibitions against their own prescribed behaviour. Again, the same is true of the perpetrators of sexual violence who must, I suggest, develop a rapist mentality: some combination of rationales, unconscious thought processes,\(^{438}\) For discussion, see: ‘Less Than Human’; Charles Ogletree, Robert J. Smith and Johanna Wald, ‘Criminal Law: Coloring Punishment: Implicit Social Cognition and Criminal Justice’, in Implicit Racial Bias across the Law, ed. by Justin D. Levinson and Robert J. Smith, pp. 45–60 (p. 49–50); Willie V. Bryan, In Search of Freedom: How Persons with Disabilities Have Been Disenfranchised from the Mainstream of American Society and How the Search for Freedom Continues (Springfield: Charles C Thomas, 2006), pp. 125–128; L. Ali Khan, A Theory of International Terrorism: Understanding Islamic Militancy (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2006), pp. 119–120; David Patrick Houghton, Political Psychology: Situations, Individuals, and Cases (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 64–65.
beliefs, understandings, value systems, behavioural codes or modes of perception and relation that enables them, at least in the moment of the assault, to commit rape.\textsuperscript{439} However, there is an important distinction between sexual violence and the previous examples of abuse: in the majority of cases, sexual violence is not the result of a direct order enacted by a member of a coherent organisation that operates on specific command structures and mechanisms of responsibility and putatively surrendered agency. As I will now discuss, this has important ramifications for how we conceive of the content or components of rapist mentalities.

In his pioneering sociological study of the Holocaust, Zygmunt Bauman endeavours to ‘reconstruct the social mechanism of “overcoming the animal pity” employed by Nazi officials to enable concentration camp guards to engage in “conduct contrary to innate moral inhibitions”’.\textsuperscript{440} Referring to this process as ‘the social production of moral indifference’, Bauman, following Herbert C. Kelman, proposes three conditions that enabled ‘normal’ individuals to commit the atrocities, abuse and violence of the Holocaust: ‘the violence is \textit{authorized} (by official orders coming from the legally entitled quarters), actions are \textit{routinized} (by rule-governed practices and exact specification of roles), and the victims of the violence are \textit{dehumanized} (by ideological definitions and indoctrinations)’.\textsuperscript{441} Further into his study, Bauman adds ‘physical and/or psychic distance between the act and its consequences’ to these conditions, describing this as ‘the social production of moral invisibility’ and citing both the use of gas chambers instead of firing squads as the direct means of killing and the bureaucratic distancing of those who organised the logistics of the Holocaust as examples.\textsuperscript{442} Setting aside the issue of dehumanisation (the relevant equivalent of which—the social production of rapable bodies—is covered in the previous chapter), we can note that there are, broadly speaking, three conditions that composed the mentalities that had to be inculcated into concentration camp guards: a perceived lack of personal responsibility achieved through surrendering moral autonomy to ‘superiors’, a ‘numbness’ to the suffering of others caused

\textsuperscript{439} Also central to a ‘rapist mentality’ is the motivation to rape, a point I will discuss presently.
\textsuperscript{441} Ibid., pp. 18, 21, 18–23.
\textsuperscript{442} Ibid., pp. 24, 25, 24–27.
by the routine ‘normality’ of abuse and a denial of the consequences of acts facilitated by the technological and psychological separation of cause and effect. Moreover, these conditions are by no means limited to the socialisation of Nazi guards: soldiers, torturers and other ‘institutional’ abusers display similar mentalities, manifest in numerous ways, from the (not unreasonable) belief of the Abu Ghraib personnel who tortured inmates that they were following orders and protocols given by their superiors, to the ways in which the normalising of abusive ‘interrogation’ enables increasing levels of unrestrained cruelty (such as that found in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay), to the use of unmanned drones in contemporary warfare. Together, these socialised conditions compose mentalities that, in conjunction with the dehumanisation of their targets, allow ‘normal’ individuals to overcome internal inhibitions against abusing others. Moreover, given the routine use of sexual violence as a weapon of war (and colonialism) and a tool of ‘interrogation’, we can also note that such mentalities help individuals overcome their inhibitions against committing rape (a point which reinforces the parallels drawn in the current line of analysis).

However, outside of such specific state-sanctioned contexts, the mentality that (in conjunction with the social production of rapable bodies) allows rapists to overcome internal inhibitions against committing rape is not the product of command structures, the routines of employment or the distancing of the abuser and the abused. In line with this, it is apparent that rapist mentalities are composed of distinct (although not entirely unrelated) components and it is to these that the analysis will now turn.

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Overcoming Inhibitions: Three Rape-Enabling Components of Rapist Mentalities

Broadly, there are three closely related and intersectional rape-enabling components that, in conjunction with the motivation or desire to rape, make up a rapist mentality.\(^{445}\) Firstly, a rapist must, at least for the duration of the assault, experience extreme levels of self interest or an extreme understanding of ‘the self’ as primary: at its most basic level rape is enabled by the rapist’s belief that his gratification (whether that is sexual, ‘power-based’ or, most likely, an intersection of the two) is of more importance than, and takes precedence over, the pain and trauma caused to the survivor. This applies equally to rapists who deny that their actions constitute rape and to those who acknowledge this fact and its consequences for survivors. Diana Scully describes ‘deniers’ as rapists who refute even ‘the existence of a victim, someone harmed by their behavior [...] and who can justify their actions because their construction of reality excludes women’s perspectives’ and ‘admitters’ as being ‘aware of the emotional impact of rape on women. While raping, they took satisfaction in the belief that their victim felt powerless, humiliated and degraded’.\(^{446}\) In the former case, self interest is so absolute that the interests of survivors do not even register in the rapists’ perception of their actions whereas, in the latter, they are recognised but dismissed as less significant than the rapists’ own interests. Closely related to this component is the fact that a rapist must, if only at the point at which he commits rape, lack feelings of ‘inhibitory empathy’. I stress inhibitory empathy in acknowledgement of the fact that simply empathising with the survivor—that is, merely recognising the traumatic results his sexual violence have upon the target of those actions—does not necessarily prevent a rapist from committing rape. Indeed, it is often in empathising with the survivor’s plight and recognising himself as the cause of her suffering that a rapist achieves gratification: as Susan Griffin notes, ‘[a] man who derives pleasure from raping a woman clearly must enjoy force and dominance as much or more

\(^{445}\) In line with the fact that this thesis is concerned with male rapists and female survivors, I will refer to rapists as male and survivors as female throughout this section. As in other instances, this is not to suggest that men are not raped or that no women commit sexual violence.

\(^{446}\) Scully, *Understanding Sexual Violence*, pp. 115, 133.
than the simple pleasures of the flesh [...] one must assume he derives pleasure directly from terrorizing, humiliating and harming a woman'.\textsuperscript{447} In this sense, we must recognise the response to empathy rather than simply empathy itself, noting that, in order to be capable of abusing a survivor, a rapist must be able to prevent himself from acknowledging the survivor’s distress or from allowing the survivor’s distress to induce sufficient guilt, pity or disgust to force him to stop. Interwoven with these first two points is the final component: a sense of entitlement. Ultimately, a rapist must believe that he is entitled to rape the survivor, that he has the ‘right’ to force sexual contact upon her without considering her consent and its refusal. This may be the product of extreme levels of self interest (if the survivor’s ‘interests’ are seen as inconsequential and irrelevant, then the rapist perceives himself to be automatically entitled to do to her whatever he desires) or it may be the product of specific socio-cultural systems of entitlement (such as the cultural belief that a man has the ‘right’ to sexual contact with ‘his’ wife, or a ‘client’ with a sex worker, or a white man with a woman of colour, regardless of the survivor refusing consent) or a combination of these factors.\textsuperscript{448} Additionally, as I will explore in more detail further into the chapter, this entitlement may take the form of a conscious sense that the rapist is at liberty to rape women or it may be an unconscious mode of perception that means he does not even consider the survivor’s consent, with the result that he cannot distinguish between sex and sexual violence and is unaware he has committed rape.

It is important to note that these components are less discrete than they are presented to be in the above discussion; in reality, they are indistinct and indefinite with permeable, unstable boundaries, each merging with, supporting and providing foundations—or even direct points of origin—for the others. Nevertheless, in broad terms, self interest, an absence of inhibitory


empathy and a sense of entitlement encapsulate the complex, conscious and unconscious thought processes that enable a rapist to commit rape. In this sense, the three components serve as a framework which organises an otherwise unmanageably diverse collection of rationales, unconscious thought processes, beliefs, understandings, value systems, behavioural codes and modes of perception and relation into manageable, workable concepts which may be employed to support the assertion that all rapists have, at least for the duration of their assaults, ‘rapist mentalities’: shared modes of thinking that enable them to commit rape. Having established the components of a rapist mentality, it is important to realise that, in some respects, this understanding of rapists’ psychological capacity to rape is well established; similar traits have consistently been found in psychiatric studies of ‘sex offenders’ for several decades. Consider, for example, a fuller version of Groth’s definition of ‘the rapist’ cited in part earlier, in which he describes ‘the rapist’ as:

> a person who has serious psychological difficulties which handicap him in his relationships with other people and which he discharges, when he is under stress, through sexual acting-out. His most prominent defect is the absence of any close, emotionally intimate relationship with other persons, male or female. He shows little capacity for warmth, trust, compassion, or empathy, and his relationships with others are devoid of mutuality, reciprocity, and a genuine sense of sharing.449

As a description of the characteristics or components of a rapist’s psyche that enable him to commit rape, Groth’s description here is largely in agreement with my theory of rapist mentalities. Certainly, his assertion that rapists lack ‘compassion, or empathy’ and fail to relate to others with ‘mutuality, reciprocity, and a genuine sense of sharing’ reflects the three rape-enabling components of a rapist mentality outlined above. However, there are two crucial differences between these understandings. Firstly, whilst the concept of a rapist mentality suggests that these components can only truly be said to be present in all rapists for the duration of the attack (although in many cases they will extend far beyond this moment), Groth presents them as absolute, immutable ‘conditions’ that characterise the entirety of a rapist’s psyche and shape all of his social interactions. That is to say, ‘rapist mentality’ is used to

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449 Groth, Men Who Rape, p. 6.
describe the modes of thought and relation that enable rape, whilst Groth’s
treatment of the same components is used to diagnose a pathological
personality type supposedly common to all rapists. In this sense, Groth’s
position is focused on labelling rapists as belonging to a distinct and discrete
group, a psychological subculture of ‘anti-social’, ‘mentally ill’ pariahs,
whereas the notion of a rapist mentality is concerned with socialised thought-
processes that allow ‘normal’ men to commit rape. Extending from this is the
second distinction: Groth’s work treats the psychologies of rapists as rare
and ‘deviant’, as emerging from within individuals’ ‘damaged’ minds rather
than, as the rapist mentality theory suggests, from external cultural influence.
In this understanding, then, ‘the rapist’ is an exceptional figure, an aberration
whose sexual violence is not considered to be the product of, or even related
to, cultural conditioning or wider patterns of male violence and patriarchal
oppression but rather is perceived to be simply the result of ‘the rapist’s’
psychopathology. In contrast to this, I will argue that rapists are, as
suggested above, ‘normal’ men whose psychological capacity to rape is
neither ‘natural’ nor ‘aberrant’ but the product of normative socialisation. To
understand how Groth’s understanding differs so starkly from this, it is useful
to turn briefly to the methodology used to reach his definition and diagnosis
of the aberrant rapist.

The fact that Groth’s study finds rapists to be ‘mentally ill’ pariahs can be
explained by one simple, but fundamental, flaw in his methodology: although
the study does draw, to a far lesser extent, on various other offenders (all of
whom were apprehended by the police, although not necessarily tried or
convicted), Groth states that ‘the principal sources of our clinical data’ came
from studies of ‘convicted offenders who were adjudicated dangerous and
committed to a special security treatment centre’.450 It is both obvious and
unavoidable that a study will find a correlation between capacity to commit
rape and mental disturbance or social exclusion if the study’s ‘test subjects’
are primarily people who are considered so dangerous that they have to be
contained within ‘a special security treatment centre’. In particular, the fact
that these people are in a special security treatment centre and not a high-
security prison suggests entirely that they suffer from what are considered to

450 Ibid., pp. xii-xiii, xiii. Italics in original.
be ‘serious psychological difficulties’. Whilst a study of rapists undergoing treatment for ‘mental illnesses’ may demonstrate that ending rape involves pathologising individual rapists and not challenging socio-cultural attitudes, beliefs and practices (although this in itself is highly questionable), there is absolutely no reason to assume that this conclusion is applicable outside of a cherry-picked group of ‘test subjects’. In other words, Groth’s study entirely fails to account for, or even consider, those rapists who are not contained in secure treatment centres but who continue to function, without ‘serious psychological difficulties’ within the dominant culture. Given that it is widely noted that the vast majority of rapes are committed by psychologically normative, ‘normal’ men (who usually know the survivor and most often commit rape not ‘in the bushes’ or in a dark alley but in the home or other private spaces), this gap in Groth’s study leaves an extremely large percentage of rapists outside the scope of his study; as Andrea Dworkin so accurately and necessarily reminded a conference of five hundred pro-feminist men, ‘[rape] is done here and it is done now and it is done by the people in this room as well as by other contemporaries: our friends, our neighbours, people that we know’.451 That is to say, what Groth fails to acknowledge, and what entirely undermines his conception of ‘the rapist’ as aberrant, ‘insane’ pariah, is that sexual violence is, almost entirely, committed by otherwise well-adjusted, upstanding members of the community: the trusted officials, the coercive husbands, the drunken students, frat boys and sports teams, the ‘boy next door’, the workmate, the fellow activist, the friend, the lover, the brother, the father. As soon as such examples are included in the analysis, Groth’s ‘abnormalising’ construction of ‘the rapist’ is discredited and it is possible to argue that what truly enables a man to commit sexual violence is a rapist mentality, learned and developed through normative cultural conditioning, and it is to this issue that the analysis will now turn.

451 Andrea Dworkin, ‘I Want a Twenty-Four-Hour Truce During Which There is No Rape’, in Transforming a Rape Culture, ed. by Emilie Buchwald, Pamela R. Fletcher and Martha Roth (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions: 1993), pp. 11–22 (p. 14).
Being a Man: Self-Interest, Lack of Inhibitory Empathy and a Sense of Entitlement

In the previous analysis we have seen that humans must be socialised to overcome inhibitions against harming and abusing others.452 We have also established the three rape-enabling components of a rapist mentality—self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy and a sense of entitlement—which, together with the objectification of women, allow rapists to overcome inhibitions against committing rape.453 It is now necessary to establish that, contrary to the understanding disseminated by the myth of the aberrant rapist, these characteristics are not deviances produced by, as Groth phrases it, a rapist’s ‘serious psychological difficulties’ but rather are remarkably ‘normal’ traits, both in the sense that they are commonplace and in the sense that they develop from patterns of normative socialisation and cultural conditioning.454 Indeed, as Diana E. H. Russell notes, ‘rape is not so much a deviant act as an over-conforming one [...] It is an extreme acting-out of qualities that are regarded as masculine in this and many other societies’.455 The most important part of Russell’s statement is the notion that rape represents not conforming but overconforming to normative masculinity; in highlighting this point, Russell distances her argument from simplistic assertions that simply conforming to normative masculinity turns men into rapists, asserting instead that rape functions as an extreme manifestation of normative masculinity. That is, Russell does not suggest that all normatively socialised men commit sexual violence but that all sexual violence committed by men reflects an extreme version of their normative socialisation. Russell applies this reasoning to those ‘masculine’ attributes associated with the ‘desire’ to rape—power, dominance, aggression and so forth—but it is equally applicable to the psychological capacity to commit rape. That is to say, the psychological capacity to commit rape is not the product of deviant, ‘mentally ill’ or ‘damaged’ psychologies, but of rapists’ overconforming to normative masculine attributes of self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy and a sense of entitlement.

452 See: pp. 194–202 of this thesis.
454 Groth, Men Who Rape, p. 6.
455 Russell, Sexual Exploitation, pp. 117-118.
Importantly, as in Russell’s understanding, this approach does not suggest that all normatively socialised men are rapists, or even that all normatively socialised men have the psychological capacity to rape; rather, it argues that normative masculine socialisation provides a foundational mentality focused on self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy and a sense of entitlement which, when taken to its extreme forms, renders rapists psychologically capable of rape. In this sense, this examination conceives of masculine behaviour not as starkly divided into ‘normal’ and ‘deviant’ but as operating on a continuum. As Liz Kelly notes, continuum understandings of sexual violence suggest that ‘specific forms of sexual violence are connected to more common, everyday aspects of male behaviour.’ In such conceptions, sexual violence is perceived to be, as Russell’s statement suggests, an ‘extreme’ version of ‘normal’ masculinity, or an extreme point on a continuum of normative masculine behaviour. In other words, where the myth of the aberrant rapist presents rapists’ beliefs and behaviours as radically removed from normative masculinity, continuum understandings, as Kelly argues, highlight the fact that “‘typical” and “aberrant” male behaviour shade into one another.’

In the context of the current discussion, then, we can assert that the ‘typical’, normatively socialised attributes of self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy and a sense of entitlement shade into the extreme ‘aberrant’ forms of these attributes that enable rapists to commit rape. In this sense, normative masculine socialisation, whilst not making all men rapists, operates as a continuum, providing the conditions from which extreme, rape-enabling versions of self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy and a sense of entitlement develop. Accordingly, to understand the ways in which the psychological capacity to rape is not so much a deviation from but an overconforming to normative masculinity, we must explore the extent to which these characteristics are an extremely widespread and pervasive presence in the dominant culture’s prevailing understandings of masculinity and patterns of masculine socialisation, and it is to this that the analysis now turns.

457 Ibid.
The significance of self-interest to hegemonic masculinity and its presence in normative masculine socialisation is perhaps the most readily identifiable of the three rape-enabling components of a rapist mentality discussed above. In the broadest terms, we can note that it appears as an important aspect of two of the key components of contemporary hegemonic masculinity: ‘independence’ and ‘competitiveness’.\(^{458}\) That is to say, the cultural valuing of independence as a ‘manly’ attribute fosters an understanding of ‘real men’ as unburdened by either the need for support from others, or concern for the interests of others, highlighting instead autonomy and the self-reliant search for one’s own fortunes and the pursuit of one’s own interests. Similarly, the association of masculinity and competitiveness often presents the desire to pursue one’s own interest at the expense of others’ interests as a central component of hegemonic masculine identity. As with much normative masculine socialisation, the conditioning of self-interest as an acceptable and admirable ‘masculine’ quality can often be found in childhood socialisation, including both the ‘primary socialisation’ of family and the ‘secondary socialisation’ of school. Certainly, it is widely noted that parents’ attitudes towards children’s playing styles are starkly gendered, with boys being praised and rewarded for displaying independence, assertive pursuit of what they desire and competition with other boys, and sometimes even having direct selfishness with toys excused as expressions of ‘boys will be boys’ assertiveness.\(^{459}\) For more specific analysis, we can refer to Becky Francis’ analysis of gendered behaviour in school classrooms in the UK. In her study of both primary and secondary schools, she identifies a repeated pattern of normalised ‘selfishness’ on the part of many of the boys, especially those who have the most ‘masculine’ social power within their peer groups. She notes that ‘in primary schools, [...] I found that a construction of masculinity as assertive and demanding (selfish) [...] allowed boys to dominate the choice of role play scenario and to grab the most popular roles.’\(^{460}\) That is to say, even in the primary-school setting, Francis identified a clear sense that

\(^{458}\) For discussion of ‘independence’ and ‘competitiveness’ as key ‘masculine’ attributes, see: Eileen L. Zurbriggen, ‘Rape, War, and the Socialization of Masculinity: Why our Refusal to Give up War Ensures that Rape cannot be Eradicated’, *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (2010), 438–549 (pp. 539–540).


boys were portraying a model of masculinity that was brazenly self-interested, as well as being highly competitive. She also observed similar dynamics in the secondary-school setting, writing that:

[M]any boys were often assertive and inconsiderate of the feelings of others in the classroom, whether it be abusing one another or shouting out answers and comments, often over other pupils who were trying to speak. This “selfish” construction overlapped with the dominant construction of masculinity as competitive: some boys took great delight in ridiculing or shouting down the answers of other boys and girls.\(^{461}\)

What is particularly significant in both cases is not simply that the boys in both cases were pursuing their own interests, but that this also intersects with a pronounced sense of entitlement: a belief that they are entitled to pursue their own interests despite disruption to others, and that they are entitled to the rewards of doing so, whether that is the ‘most popular roles’ in the role play exercise, or their own self-interested delight at ridiculing others. Francis also notes that in both settings, this behaviour was tolerated by girls, socially ‘weaker’ boys and even some teachers, and that the ‘selfish’ boys often gained ‘power in the classroom [...] derived both from the prestige such constructions earned and from the ability to use these constructions to put down or threaten other pupils (and teachers)’.\(^{462}\) In other words, the classroom setting served as a site of masculine socialisation in which boys developed and strengthened understandings that self-interest and a sense of entitlement were not only acceptable models of masculinity but highly rewarding ones that brought them social power to which they assumed they were entitled.

We can observe similar patterns in male participation in sports, an area that is, as Don Sabo notes, ‘a major vehicle for male socialization, [...] [which] does much to shape men’s individual and collective behavior and consciousness’.\(^{463}\) Whilst self-interested masculinity might be most obviously displayed in individual sports, where each man pursues his own interests at

\(^{461}\) Ibid., p. 59.

\(^{462}\) Ibid., pp. 61, 57–60.

the expense of those of his competitors, it is also highly present in team sports; staying with analysis of childhood socialisation, we can note that the socialisation of boys through team sports often revolves around self-interest. For example, discussing the study of communication in boys’ team sports, Julia T. Wood argues that ‘[i]n playing games, boys learn to communicate to accomplish goals, compete for and maintain status, exert control over others, get attention, and stand out’. That is to say, Wood’s discussion highlights the way many boys are socialised to interact and communicate in team sports settings is less concerned with ‘the team’, united by shared aims, cooperative practices and the exchange of ideas, and more with a loose-collection of disunited individuals, all pursuing their own interests and vying for social power and influence. In this respect, as Wood notes, it is ‘consistent with other aspects of masculine socialisation […] [in its] emphasis on individuality and competition’. In other words, despite the fact that the boys are operating as part of a ‘community’, ostensibly with shared interests and cooperative strategies, team sports serve as another site of masculine socialisation in which boys learn that it is acceptable and rewarding to struggle with one another in pursuit of personal gain. Moreover, such cooperation as is present in these settings could be argued to represent not a negating of self-interest but the forming of alliances with those who share and support one’s own interests, specifically as a means challenging those whose interests are in conflict with one’s own. Jeff Hearn, exploring these issues in relation to men rather than boys, adopts a similar position, arguing that it is a ‘long established practice of men’s “solidarity” […] in sports and so on […] that such “solidarity” is often at the expense of other similar “teams” of men’. In other words, although team sports may serve as a means of socialising men to embrace cooperation and collaboration, this in itself can be implicitly framed around the primacy of serving one’s own interests and the competitive struggle to see that those interests are met by actively preventing (some) other men from meeting their interests.

465 Ibid.
Indeed, in this respect, a sports team can function as what some masculinities theorists call a ‘fratriarchy’. Kathleen Starck defines ‘fratriarchy’ as ‘a mode of male domination, based on the self-interest of the association of men itself [...] [and] on fictitious kinship in brotherhoods or fraternities’.\textsuperscript{467} That is to say, a fratriarchal community is a group composed exclusively of men and organised around the principle that the collective strength of the group is the most effective means of serving one’s own interests. Indeed, reflecting the centrality of both self-interest and entitlement to such groups, John Remy argues that, at heart, fratriarchy ‘reflects the demand of a group of lads to have the “freedom” to do as they please’.\textsuperscript{468} Fratriarchally organised groups can serve as a powerful means of reinforcing masculine socialisation patterns; after all, as Michael Kaufman and Michael Kimmel note, ‘[m]en look to other guys to define what it means to be a man’, and the homosocial environment of fratriarchal groups involves considerable social pressure to conform to models of masculinity most esteemed within the group.\textsuperscript{469} Given that such models, as noted above, are greatly concerned with the entitled ‘freedom’ to act only in one’s own interests, these settings create a ‘feedback loop’ of socialisation in which men pressure each other to conform to this model and the understanding that self-interest is an acceptable and laudable ‘masculine’ quality is constantly repeated and reaffirmed. It is worth noting that, whilst Remy’s use of the word ‘lads’ here implies an informal, possibly working-class setting, fratriarchal groups, and their intense focus on self-interest, can be found throughout class and privilege hierarchies, from the most marginalised street gangs to Oxford University’s Bullingdon Club.\textsuperscript{470} Indeed, Starck notes that fratriarchal organisation is extremely widespread, with examples including ‘male pub culture, hooliganism, bookmakers, college fraternities, political institutions, managerial clubs, the army, street gangs, scientific societies, boarding

schools, or marauding youths during a war.\footnote{Starck, ‘Fratriarchy’, p. 216.} The pervasiveness of this form of social organisation highlights how significant it is in the socialisation of self-interest as an aspect of socially-acceptable masculinity within the dominant culture at large. However, as pervasive as it is, it is not the only form of masculine socialisation to celebrate and inculcate self-interest.

What we might call the archetypal form of self-serving masculinity is more concerned with the independent individual serving his own interests: the ‘lone wolf’ who might occasionally form fratriarchal alliances to further his own ends but remains firmly focused on his personal gain. Perhaps the most significant example of this can be found in the world of corporate business, which routinely celebrates self-interest as a central part of socially-acceptable and culturally-rewarded masculinity. Although this understanding is the product of a long association of masculinity with ruthless, self-serving business practices, R.W. Connell describes the most recent version of this model of idealised masculinity as ‘transnational business masculinity’ and describes it as being ‘marked by increasing egocentrism, very conditional loyalties (even to the corporation), and a declining sense of responsibility for others (except for the purposes of image making).\footnote{R.W. Connell, The Men and the Boys (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), p. 52.} In a direct manner, this model of self-serving masculinity is only inculcated into those within the corporate setting, largely through intergroup dynamics such as internal competition, the mocking of those who don’t conform to the model and the adulation of those who do, as well through the presentation of such masculinities as aspirational in trade literature and training manuals.\footnote{See: Connell, The Men and the Boys, p. 52; Danny Schechter, ‘Wall Street and “Aggressive Sexuality”’ (21/5/2011) <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/05/201151813030995174.html> [accessed 8 April 2012]; David Knights and Maria Tullberg, ‘Managing Masculinity/Mismanaging the Corporation’, Organization, no. 19, vol. 4 (2012), 385–404.} However, its true significance comes from the fact that the successful businessman is one of the most influential masculine ideals within the dominant culture. Indeed, power and wealth attained through successful business practices are so widely celebrated as a masculine attribute that they are, as Cliff Cheng notes, capable of displacing attributes such as physical strength that are traditionally associated with hegemonic masculinity from...

This also brings us to the socialisation of another of the rape-enabling characteristics: a sense of entitlement. Several of the forms of masculine socialisation discussed above inculcate a sense of entitlement into men, such as schoolboys’ belief that they are entitled to the best roles in the role playing exercise, or fratriarchies’ understanding that they are entitled, as Remy notes, to ‘the “freedom” to do as they please’.\footnote{Francis, \textit{Boys, Girls and Achievement}, p. 58; Remy, ‘Patriarchy and Fratriarchy as Forms of Androcracy’, p. 45.} However, the ‘business masculinity’ described by Connell relates to a form of entitlement that is particularly relevant to our discussion: the belief that men are entitled to women. Connell observes that ‘the assumption in [executive’s] trade magazines and advertising is that they will have dependent wives running their homes and bringing up their children.’\footnote{Connell, \textit{The Men and the Boys}, p. 44.} That is to say, implicit within the socialisation of this model of masculinity is an understanding that men conforming to this form of self-interested masculinity are entitled to the domestic labour of women. This understanding, however, is far from limited to this particular form of masculine socialisation. Dating back at least as far the rise of ‘separate spheres’ doctrine around the time of the Industrial Revolution, the dominant culture of the Anglophone West has long considered it ‘normal’ for women to do the majority of domestic labour in

heterosexual households.\textsuperscript{478} Recent studies show that, whilst the situation is neither as extreme nor as grounded in social doctrine as it once was, there is still a vast disparity in men and women’s domestic labour.\textsuperscript{479} Wood offers gendered socialisation as a possible explanation for this, writing that ‘masculine socialization […] typically doesn’t emphasize developing skills in domestic chores […] [whilst] girls are often socialized to perform more traditionally “feminine” tasks such as laundry, cooking, and dusting’.\textsuperscript{480} This is, I suggest, an accurate but incomplete assessment: it is not simply because they have not been socialised to develop ‘skills in domestic chores’ that leads to men doing far less housework than women but also the fact that they have been socialised to expect women to do it for them, and that they are entitled to women’s domestic labour. This sense of entitlement is frequently propagated through the ‘primary socialisation’ of boys in family settings. Scott Coltrane notes that it remains common for boys to be ‘raised to expect mothers to wait on and nurture them, and girls to help mothers perform repetitive family work’.\textsuperscript{481} This early conditioning in entitlement and expectation profoundly shapes the way many men view women, especially in regard to women’s domestic ‘duties’. As Coltrane continues, if entering a domestic, ‘family’ setting in later life men frequently carry their conditioned beliefs with them and expect ‘families to conform to their own sense of masculine entitlement, expecting that their wives will care for and serve them.’\textsuperscript{482} In other words, the way many young boys experience their own mothers’ domestic labour and their own (and often their fathers’) seeming entitlement to it socialises them to believe that men are entitled to women’s support, care and domestic labour.

\textsuperscript{480} Wood, Gendered Lives, p. 201.
\textsuperscript{482} Ibid.
Such ideas are further reinforced by cultural attitudes about gender roles and women’s supposed domesticity and by media coverage, which both mirrors and reinforces these understandings. For example we only have to look at the fact that it is incredibly rare for television or cinema to show men—and especially successful, powerful or ‘sexy’ men who measure up to hegemonic ideals—doing domestic tasks, and on the occasions where this is displayed, it is almost never presented as something admirable; indeed, as Philip Green notes, ‘[i]n Hollywood a man doing housework is comic or sad, and usually has to be rescued from his fate’. Such presentations further condition men to perceive housework as ‘unmasculine’ and women’s domestic labour as something that men are entitled to and ‘real men’ ensure they have access to. However, entertainment media socialises men to believe that they are entitled not only to women’s domestic labour but to women in general, and especially women as romantic or sexual partners. Joseph H. Pleck highlights this when he discusses the way many films present women as the prize men get for successful displays of masculinity, for overcoming obstacles or competing successfully with other men. Pleck explores this in relation to the 1973 film The Paper Chase, noting that when the law student protagonist ‘gets the professor’s daughter at the end, she is simply another one of the rewards he has won by doing better than the other males in her father’s class’. However, this trope is extremely common (indeed, seeing as it is largely a variation on the fairy tale story of the brave knight slaying the dragon and winning the fair maiden’s hand, it is surely one of the oldest and most common tales in Anglophone Western popular culture). There are numerous variations of this idea, although perhaps the most common are the action hero, whose victory over his enemies is finally sealed by ‘seducing’ the female ‘love interest’ after the climax of the movie, and the common ‘romantic’ plot line where a man either falls in love with or ‘loses’ his ‘love interest’ and spends the rest of the movie pursuing her, until he finally succeeds and the movie ends. Of course, the challenges the man faces, or

485 For discussion, see: Tina Chanter, The Picture of Abjection: Film, Fetish and the Nature of Difference (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), p. 34; Tamar Jeffers McDonald,
the forms of masculinity he must display in order to appear successful, are not consistent between films but the underlying message is the same: if a man is successful within a given set of guidelines and obstacles then he always ‘gets the girl’.486

Tina Chanter argues that in such films, ‘idealized versions of the spectators are [...] represented to themselves [...] We are not, after all, the hero who gets the girl, conquers the world, or lives a life of luxury and leisure—but we could be’.487 In the case of masculine identity, I would argue that this is not so much a case of ‘could be’ as ‘should be’: these films help to socialise men to believe that if they act in a certain way, overcome any obstacles in their path, and meet the requirements of a given situation then they, like the heroes of the movies, should be rewarded. As Luke Winslow argues, motives contribute significantly to cultural narratives filled with ‘idealized gendered expectations’, including the understanding that ‘[i]f James Bond gets the girl, then the one who can best emulate James Bond will also get the girl’.488 Again, the masculine ideal is not necessarily the James Bond-style suave action hero (although this has remained a highly celebrated model of masculinity since the film series’ conception) but the message still remains, as argued above, that the man displaying successful masculinity, overcoming obstacles and vanquishing his rivals, is entitled to, and always receives, his desired woman as a prize. As such, these presentations of masculine behaviour and its supposed rewards socialise many men not only to emulate certain models of masculinity, but to believe that doing so entitles them to women.


487 Chanter, The Picture of Abjection, p. 34.

Media representations of masculinity, and especially the figure of the ‘action hero’ discussed briefly above, are also a key site of socialisation which presents a lack of inhibitory empathy as a laudable ‘masculine’ characteristic. Cinematic portrayals of gender have long reflected and shaped understandings of socially acceptable and culturally rewarded masculinities, often responding to cultural concerns and broader political ideologies. An obvious example is what Rosalind Gill describes as ‘the rise of “muscular heroes” in action cinema during the late 1980s and early 1990s’, characterised by actors such as Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone and Bruce Willis.\(^{489}\) Many theorists have presented the celebration of this model of cartoonish machismo, stunted emotions and hard, impenetrable, indestructible male bodies as a reflection of cultural fears about the ‘feminising’ effects of technology and the rise of the sensitive ‘new man’, and as an effort to re-establish traditional models of masculinity to serve as supports for right-wing US foreign policy and, as Philippa Gates notes, as ‘a denial of the failure of masculinity incited by the conclusion of [America’s war with] Vietnam’.\(^{490}\) As Gates notes, the 1990s saw this focus wane considerably, with ‘the appearance of protagonists who were defined by brains instead of brawn’ reflecting an increasing ‘appreciation of a thinking, feeling, and more sensitive masculinity over the muscle-bound, violent masculinity that was on the rampage in the 1980s’.\(^{491}\) This shift has also intensified throughout the early twenty-first century, with more space being made both for ‘sensitive’ male heroes and for heroines.\(^{492}\) However, whilst the idealised masculinity of the action hero now includes some degree of emotional coherence, his lack of inhibitory empathy remains as present as it has always been. Gates observes that ‘[d]espite the shift to the cerebral, the American hero, nonetheless, must be a man […] of action, and […] must always learn how to be somewhat physical and violent before he can


\(^{491}\) For discussion, see Gates, *Detecting Men*, p. 157.

successfully defeat the villain.\textsuperscript{493} In other words, whilst the ‘new’ action hero is allowed some degree of emotionality, it remains vital that his ‘sensitivity’ does not prevent him from torturing, maiming and killing others.

We can see a clear example of this in the development of the character James Bond in the latest films in the long-running series: \textit{Casino Royale} (2006), \textit{Quantum of Solace} (2008) and \textit{Skyfall} (2012). These three films, all starring Daniel Craig as Bond, were widely praised for displaying far greater emotional depth than previous instalments; in particular, critics highlighted Craig’s portrayal of the famously macho spy as a man who suffers significantly from the traumas of his past and who, contrary to most previous portrayals, is capable of forming emotional attachments to others, even if he is not adept at expressing them.\textsuperscript{494} Certainly, this is a noteworthy remodelling of a character that has long served as an exemplar for suave, sophisticated and sexually attractive masculinity, and significant not only in its (admittedly minor) disruption of the association of masculinity with emotional restraint, but also in its bold decision to demonstrate the considerable costs of masculine socialisation patterns that teach men to suppress their emotions. However, the fact that the ‘new’ Bond is not absolutely devoid of emotional depth, as he has been almost continuously throughout decades of previous films, does not detract from the fact that both the character and the plots of the films remain entirely reliant on his arguably sociopathic ability to inflict pain, suffering and death on others, before moments later casually ordering cocktails and seducing women. This lack of inhibitory empathy remains a key aspect of the character and, despite some efforts to question the social acceptability of such restricted emotionality, it is still largely presented in the films as something admirable, ‘suave’ and, ultimately, ‘manly’. As such, like the older instalments, these later Bond films continue to condition the idea that ‘real men’ do not allow empathy to prevent them from achieving what they set out to achieve. Of course, such socialisation is far from limited to this

\textsuperscript{493} Gates, \textit{Detecting Men}, p. 158.
particular film series, or to the difficulties of updating a character that has long been emblematic of a more traditional model of masculinity. Numerous other versions appear throughout Anglophone Western media, with examples ranging from the unrestrained (and supposedly patriotic) torture routinely engaged in by Jack Bauer, the lead character in Fox’s *24* (2001) to the oddly charming and occasionally played-for-laughs sociopathy of Dexter Morgan from Showtime’s *Dexter* (2006). Moreover, such socialisation is also far from limited to media representations of masculinity but rather appears in many institutions, practices and discourses throughout the dominant culture.

Perhaps the most obvious site of masculine socialisation that conditions men to see inhibitory empathy as a negative and ‘unmanly’ attribute is the military. As touched upon in earlier discussions, a central aspect of military training is the eroding of recruits’ empathy so that it does not prevent them from fulfilling their prescribed roles; after all, as Eileen L. Zurbriggen notes, if soldiers were not ‘taught to suppress their feelings of compassion [...] it would likely make them less able to kill, and therefore, less effective as soldiers’. Such socialisation often takes forms such as desensitising recruits to violence through representations of pain and suffering, and especially through acts of ritual humiliation and ‘hazing’ enacted against recruits by recruits designed to break both self-esteem and empathic inhibitions against harming others. Crucially, such formal and informal training is not only an example of military socialisation but also masculine socialisation, or rather a combined military-masculine socialisation in which rhetoric on how to be a ‘real soldier’ is almost inseparably entwined with rhetoric on how to be a ‘real man’. That is to say, numerous studies show that central to military training regimes is repeated questioning of recruits’ masculinity through gender insults (such as

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calling recruits ‘pussies’, ‘girls’ and ‘bitches’) if they show ‘unmanly’ qualities like weakness or an empathetic concern for others.\textsuperscript{498} This socialisation, then, explicitly connects acceptable masculinity with a lack of inhibitory empathy. Of course, military training might seem to be an extreme example, and one that applies only to those actually undergoing such training; however, this model of military-masculine socialisation is highly influential and intersects with and shapes other sites of masculine socialisation. An obvious example is its intersection with the cinematic action hero discussed above, as many of the characters, and the models of masculinity they represent, come from military or military-like backgrounds.\textsuperscript{499} It is also widely noted to be a key factor in the training of many sports teams, which often feature gendered insults, ‘hazing’ practices and the framing of competition in militaristic terms, where the sportsmen must ‘destroy the enemy’ without mercy.\textsuperscript{500} Likewise, similar patterns can be identified in many workplace hierarchies, especially in terms of ‘hazing’ as a way of proving one’s masculinity and in a focus on destroying one’s competitors without mercy or empathetic concern.\textsuperscript{501}

Moreover, it is important to realise that the conditioned suppression of empathy is really only an aspect of a far wider pattern of masculine socialisation: the reviling and repression of all emotions (except in some cases, ‘manly’ anger).\textsuperscript{502} Like many of the socialisation practices discussed here, the belief that ‘real men’ do not show emotions is conditioned from a young age. As Coltrane notes, the early or primary socialisation of children is characterised by


\textsuperscript{499} See: Gates, \textit{Detecting Men}, pp. 130.


\textsuperscript{501} For discussion, see: John Lynch and Christopher Kilmartin, \textit{The Pain Behind the Mask: Overcoming Masculine Depression} (New York: The Hayworth Press, 1999), pp. 64–65.

\textsuperscript{502} For an overview of some of the key literature on masculinity and restricted emotionality, see: Zurbriggen, ‘Rape, War, and the Socialization of Masculinity’, p. 541.
’[g]ender-differentiated treatment [...] [and] expectations for behavior that result in praise and reinforcement for gender-appropriate behavior and reprimand and punishment for gender-inappropriate behavior. Parents tend to actively discourage displays of emotion in boys by pressuring them not to cry or otherwise express their feelings.503

That is to say, many boys are conditioned to perceive their emotions as shameful and inappropriate, and learn to suppress them in order to display a socially-acceptable form of masculinity and avoid chastisement for expressing unsuitable characteristics. This lesson is also often internalised into their own personal understandings of masculinity and carried forward into adulthood where it both continues to influence their own behaviour and encourages them to chastise and punish not only the next generation of boys but also their peers. Hence, many homosocial settings (including the fratriarchal groups discussed above) are characterised by adult men maintaining established gender ideology by recreating the same forms of conditioning that shaped their early socialisation, ridiculing each others’ emotions and admonishing each other to ‘man up’ and ‘stop being a little girl’ in a world in which ‘boys don’t cry’ and ‘real men’ do not show emotions.504

This socialisation has been widely noted to have a significant impact on many heterosexual relationships, bringing normatively socialised men into conflict with partners who pressure them to express their emotions more. Wood cites a representative interview from a recent study in which a young man explains that

My girlfriend wants me to open up and show my feelings and talk about them and stuff like that. But the guys on the team get on my case whenever I show any feelings other than about winning a game. I’m supposed to be sensitive or not. I’m supposed to keep my feelings to myself or not.505

What the interviewee highlights here is a significant aspect of prevailing understandings of gender in the contemporary Anglophone West: the fact

that, whilst decades of feminist activism have made it increasingly possible for women to critique aspects of masculinity that are damaging to their relationships with men, the attitude within many male homosocial groups and spaces remains extremely traditional in their understandings of masculinity and emotionality. The result of this conflict is largely that, while men may respond to women’s pressure by becoming more openly emotional in private, the public face of masculinity—that is, masculinity, as Kimmel describes it, as a ‘homosocial enactment’—remains characterised by the denial and repression of emotionality. This situation further reinforces the mutual socialisation noted above, with homosocial groups being composed of men all maintaining a public appearance of restricted emotionality, and so reinforcing the belief that a lack of emotions is a key part of ‘normal’ and socially-acceptable masculinity. Moreover, efforts to change this situation and convince men to be more emotionally articulate can also reinforce the idea that it is ‘normal’ for men to be emotionally restricted, as demonstrated in the slew of self-help guides addressing the subject. Such texts purport to help women navigate their relationships with ‘unemotional’ men, but in reality they present a polarising, pseudoscientific vision of ‘natural’ genders that treats the emotional restriction conditioned into many men as an expression of neurological ‘hardwiring’ inherent to all men; the resultant naturalising of masculine emotional restriction presents it as unfortunate but ultimately normative and so reinforces the patterns of socialisation that actually produce the issue.

The above discussion provides an overview of some the most prevalent and pervasive forms of masculine socialisation that condition men to perceive self-interest, a lack of inhibitory empathy and a sense of entitlement as central aspects of normative, socially-acceptable and culturally rewarded masculinity. In doing so, it demonstrates how deeply embedded these characteristics are in prevailing understandings of masculinity in the

507 For what is probably the best known and most influential example of such texts, see: John Gray, Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus: The Definitive Guide to Relationships (London: HarperElement, 2002).
dominant culture. This is highly significant to understanding the position of the rapist within both normative masculinity and the dominant culture of the Anglophone West at large for it highlights the fact that the rape-enabling components of a rapist mentality are not aberrations produced by rapists’ psychopathologies but reflections and manifestations of normative masculine socialisation. That is to say, as discussed in the introduction to this section, whilst prevailing patterns of masculine socialisation do not necessarily render men capable of committing rape, they do establish a continuum of self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy and perceived entitlement of which the psychological capacity to rape is an extreme but still highly normative component. In this sense, the above discussion challenges the myth of the aberrant rapist by highlighting the fact that the rape-enabling components of a rapist mentality do not deviate from normative masculinity but overconform to it. This locates the psychological capacity to rape, and rapists more broadly, not on the peripheries of the dominant culture but firmly within its prevailing understandings, ideologies, behavioural codes and patterns of socialisation. However, there is also a wider context that must be considered here because these characteristics are not only common components of normative masculine socialisation; they also represent some of the most widespread, the most celebrated and the most 'successful' characteristics within the dominant culture itself. In the ‘correct’ forms, self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy and a sense of entitlement are widely considered to be admirable qualities, especially for men but, as neo-liberal, advanced capitalist forms of ‘feminism’ gain ascendancy, increasingly for women too.509 Certainly, it is possible to argue, as I will presently, that these are characteristics held by a great many of the Anglophone West’s most powerful figures, and that they frequently play a key role in enabling individuals to attain the money and power that are so often treated as synonymous with ‘success’ in the dominant culture. Likewise, it is possible to suggest that they are the characteristics on which the dominant culture itself operates, the

509 I question whether such forms of ‘feminism’ can truly be considered ‘feminist’ here in line with the fact that they have little interest in addressing the structural and cultural inequalities facing ‘women’ (as an admittedly problematic group) but rather are primarily or exclusively concerned with allowing certain privileged women to gain positions of greater power within an inherently exclusionary and abusive social-political system (for discussion, see: Catherine Rottenberg, ‘Hijacking Feminism’ (25/3/2013) <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/03/201332510121757700.html> [accessed 7 September 2013]).
characteristics that underpin the neo-colonial, neo-liberal, advanced capitalist policies and practices not only of individuals but of corporations, organisations and whole states. Accordingly, this wider context, as I will now explore, is central to understanding how far from their supposed aberrant, deviant status rapist mentalities truly are and raises the possibility that Anglophone Western rapists are not only overconforming to prescribed masculine behaviour but also to the ethics, ideologies and practices of the dominant culture.

The Normality of Harming Others: The Anglophone West’s Culture of Abuse

Whilst rapist mentalities are profoundly gendered, it is crucial to realise that they also exist within, and are at least in part manifestations and expression of, wider patterns of abusive, coercive and exploitative ideologies and practices that are widely normalised within, and of central importance to, the dominant culture of the Anglophone West. As Michael Kaufman notes of male violence against women more generally, an act of gender violence is

At the same instant [...] the individual man acting out relations of sexual power [...] [and] the violence of a society—a hierarchical, authoritarian, sexist, class-divided, militarist, racist, impersonal crazy society—being focused through an individual man onto an individual woman [...] In total these acts of violence are like a ritualized acting out of our social relations of power

In other words, whilst an incident of sexual violence is the product of an individual’s personal choice to commit rape, it is also simultaneously a manifestation of a culture that operates, to its deepest levels, on an understanding that exploiting, abusing and consuming others is acceptable, desirable and simply ‘normal’. In his capacity to commit sexual violence, a rapist is not aberrant or deviant but is simply engaging in a gendered, sexualised expression of the self-serving abuse and exploitation on which the dominant culture operates, just as a sweatshop owner engages in a capitalist expression or a soldier engages in a neo-imperialist expression.

individual discourses and modes of socialisation differ from case to case, power dynamic to power dynamic, but they are all at root manifestations of a broader cultural understanding that normalises and venerates the self-interested consumption of others. Accordingly, to understand the extent to which rapist mentalities are a normative expression of wider cultural ideologies and practices, we must begin to critically examine how the dominant culture operates and prevailing understandings of what constitutes acceptable and exemplary behaviour. Central to this task is acknowledging which characteristics and modes of thought and relation are, beneath the rhetoric of neo-liberal ‘democracy’, actually most celebrated within, and of most direct benefit to, the dominant culture.

Marimba Ani provides an uncompromising discussion of the above issue, noting that, contrary to how the dominant culture’s ethical codes are usually described:

it is not considered immoral in the West to act in one’s own interest at the expense of […] others; rather, selfishness, competitiveness, exploitation of others […] represent moral behavior […] in that they are sanctioned by every aspect of the culture, and the individual […] is conditioned to manifest them. The successful “culture-bearers” of Europe […] possess these characteristics. The truly “Western man” is the most competitive and aggressive person. While the least successful person in the culture, who in no way determines what the West becomes, is characterized by […] identification with and consequent respect for those around her […] This person is trampled upon in and by European culture. She is considered “worthless.”

What is immediately striking here is that Ani’s description of what constitutes ‘moral behaviour’ in the West is remarkably similar to both my own description of rapist mentalities and to the dominant culture’s understanding of the supposedly aberrant and pathological psyches of rapists. That is, in Ani’s description we find what we might call a ‘civilised mentality’ in which self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy and a sense of entitlement are key components and which enable self-serving abuse and exploitation in a manner that directly mirrors the ways in which rapist mentalities enable rapists to commit rape. Importantly, as Ani suggests, these are not aberrant

and deviant mentalities but the prevailing, normative means of understanding the self and relating to the world. Plumwood makes a similar argument with regard to what she calls ‘[t]he rational egoistic mode’: a mode of thought and relation in which ‘the self is treated as an end itself, of primary or intrinsic value’ and so is ‘not only free to conceive of others without constraint as instruments, but has no motivation to do anything else’.\textsuperscript{512} Such egoism, Plumwood writes, is conceived of in Western liberal (and neo-liberal) traditions ‘as an unfortunate fact of human nature [...] [and yet] is taken to be the dominant rational mode and altruism a subsidiary one, a praiseworthy but irrational exception.’\textsuperscript{513} In other words, whilst prevailing rhetoric presents non-selfish, non-entitled, empathetic behaviour as admirable and worthy, it is still those who display these things that are considered to be aberrant, to be deviating from ‘normal’, or even the ‘natural’, modes of thought and relation.

We can also take Plumwood’s point further to note that, whilst the dominant culture superficially celebrates altruism, it celebrates and rewards the self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy and sense of entitlement that make up civilised mentalities far more expansively and consistently. Indeed, in general terms, it is not those who relate with respect, empathy and altruism who are considered to be ‘successful’ in the Anglophone West or who attain positions of influence and respect (in fact, such people are, as Ani suggests, ‘trampled upon in and by European culture’). Rather, the highest echelons of the Anglophone West are composed of those who display the self-serving, exploitative characteristics of civilised mentalities and who use these ‘attributes’ to attain the great power and its symbolic substitute, great wealth, that constitute ‘success’ in the dominant culture.\textsuperscript{514} We find examples of this

\textsuperscript{513} Ibid., p. 143.
\textsuperscript{514} That this is a prevailing understanding of ‘success’ in the dominant culture is reflected by the fact that the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (OALD), providing a helpful lesson in the culture as well the language of the Anglophone West, offers as one of its definitions of ‘success’: ‘the fact of becoming rich or famous or of getting a high social position’ (‘Success’, in \textit{Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary} [online] <http://oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/dictionary/success> [accessed 17 June 2013]). For similar definitions, see: ‘Successful’, in \textit{Cambridge Dictionary} [online] <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/successful> [accessed 17 June 2013]; ‘Successful’, in \textit{Oxford Dictionary} [online] <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/successful?q=successful> [accessed 17 June 2013]. Moreover, the OALD also offers the following example of how ‘succeed’ may be
throughout the dominant culture in everything from the aggressive, self-serving competitiveness of politicians and the narcissism of ‘celebrities’ to the oligarchical manipulation of media moguls and the objectifying hubris of intellectuals and scientists. In one manner or another, most ‘successful’ figures, from the above categories and beyond them, have acted with self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy and a sense of entitlement, in the attainment of ‘success’ or from a position of entitled authority having become ‘successful’. Indeed, to some extent, these characteristics are not only key to attaining ‘success’ but also to simply existing—and surviving—within the dominant culture; they are, as suggested above, part of the ‘normal’ operations of this society, deeply ingrained in the ways in which Western cultures function, both ideologically and in a practical, ‘day-to-day’ sense. Perhaps the most obvious example of this can be found in the fact that, to operate within the capitalist system that permeates, shapes and governs so much of Western life, it is both normal and, to a degree, necessary to adopt the characteristics of the civilised mentality, as I will now discuss.

Capitalism, by its nature, encourages and operates through competition: from capitalists competing over capital and workers competing over increasingly scarce jobs and increasingly reduced wages to individuals competing over consumer products or through conspicuous consumption and states competing over contracts, resources, land and power. Whatever form such competition takes, to exist within a capitalist system is to compete over finite resources under a doctrine of infinite expansion. In this arena of perpetual

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used in a sentence: ‘She doesn’t have the ruthlessness required to succeed in business’ (‘Succeed’, in Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary [online] <http://oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/dictionary/succeed> [accessed 17 June 2013]). This example is revealing both in terms of how it reflects upon the requirements of business success (one must be ruthless) and the gendered nature of such behaviour (it is, of course, a woman who fails to be ruthless enough).


516 For discussion of this and other associated aspects of capitalism, and their relation to Western culture, see: Ani, Yurugu, pp. 381–388.

517 Jerry Mander, like many others, highlights this flawed premise of infinite growth despite finite ‘resources’ as being a central, if delusional, aspect of capitalism (Jerry Mander, The Capitalism Papers: Fatal Flaws of an Obsolete System (Berkely, CA: Counterpoint, 2012), pp. 81–127).
competition, the characteristics of a civilised mentality are a clear asset, even a necessity. As Erich Fromm argues

It is obvious that the relationship between competitors has to be based on mutual human indifference. Otherwise any one of them would be paralysed in the fulfilment of his economic tasks—to fight each other and not refrain from the actual economic destruction of each other if necessary.\footnote{Erich Fromm, \textit{The Fear of Freedom} (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1943), p. 102. For further discussion, see: Ani, \textit{Yurug}, pp. 384–388.}

The ‘mutual human indifference’ Fromm describes here once again mirrors the components of rapist mentalities and civilised mentalities: to fulfil one’s ‘economic tasks’ in a capitalist model, it is necessary to be concerned primarily or exclusively with one’s own interests, to lack empathy that might inhibit one’s capacity to ‘destroy’ rivals and to hold a belief that one is entitled to profit from the losses of others. As such, the shared characteristics of rapist mentalities and civilised mentalities are enshrined in contemporary capitalist interaction where they serve the purpose of enabling individuals (and, indeed, companies, corporations, states and other bodies) to perform effectively the duties, and meet the aims, assigned to them by prevailing capitalist socialisation.

Importantly, this is far from limited to overtly capitalist interaction in the ‘business world’: it permeates, and is part of the very fabric of, Western culture. In the dominant culture, it is, as Derrick Jensen observes, considered normal (and somehow not utterly ‘insane’) that one must pay money to exist on the planet: one must buy or rent land on which to live, and pay to access such basic things as food, water or materials with which to clothe and house oneself.\footnote{Derrick Jensen, \textit{Endgame Volume 1: The Problem of Civilization} (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2006), pp. 134–135.} At the same time, it is considered normal, and even ‘natural’—and again not utterly ‘insane’ and abusive—that large numbers of people should be unable to access such basic ‘resources’ or should face extreme exploitation in order to do so.\footnote{For example, see: Thomas Blaser, “We let them starve” (5/11/2012) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/poverty-matters/2012/oct/05/jean-ziegler-africa-starve> [accessed 16 September 2013]; Gethin Chamberlain, ‘Admit it. You love cheap clothes. And you don’t care about child slave labour’ (28/7/2013) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/28/india-sweated-labour> [accessed 21 August 2013].} In this cultural climate, it is inevitably
considered ‘normal’ to be concerned primarily with one’s own interest, to block out the suffering and exploitation of others and to operate in a constant state of denial that the comforts and privileges one personally enjoys are made possible only by the privation and suffering of others. As in Plumwood’s observation above, those who go against this normative behaviour—people who, for example, renounce property or who dedicate their lives to the interests of others, or who simply do not share the dominant culture’s stark distinction between self-interest and the interests of others—are seen as abnormal and deviant. Moreover, such people are under great social pressure to conform to normative modes of passive exploitation and apathetic acceptance of others’ suffering; indeed, Bertrand Russell’s observation that ‘[e]very man who has really sincere desire for any great amelioration in the conditions of life has first to face ridicule, the persecution, then cajolery and attempts at subtle corruption’ remains at least as true today as when it was composed in 1917.\(^{521}\) We might even go as far as to concur with Forbes’ assertion that, as this way of life grows in intensity and influence towards a hegemonic domination of both Western and global societies, ‘there may soon be very few places in the world where a nonaggressive person can survive except as a lackey or a slave’.\(^ {522}\) In this fashion, the pervasive influence of capitalism on Western culture works to normalise the characteristics shared by rapist mentalities and civilised mentalities, ingraining them deeply into day-to-day existence in the dominant culture. As such, these characteristics and the forms of self-serving and often abusive or exploitative behaviour that they enable are, as in Ani’s statement cited above, ‘sanctioned by every aspect of the culture, and the individual [...] is conditioned to manifest them’.\(^ {523}\) In other words, prevailing patterns of capitalist socialisation that shape Western life condition into individuals the psychological capacity to directly and indirectly partake in and profit from the abuse and exploitation of others.

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\(^{522}\) Forbes, *Columbus and Other Cannibals*, p. xix. This point also recalls Ani’s observations about the respectful and empathetic being ‘trampled upon in and by European culture (Ani, *Yurugu*, pp. 379–380).

\(^{523}\) Ani, *Yurugu*, p. 379.
Jensen explores these issues in relation to his own life as an individual who is both a politically-aware social justice and environmental activist and a thoroughly conditioned member of the ‘civilised’ Anglophone West:

[N]aturally I value money over life. Why else would I own a computer with a hard drive put together in Thailand by women dying of job-induced cancer? Why else would I own shirts made in a sweatshop in Bangladesh, and shoes put together in Mexico? [...] I benefit from the exploitation of others, and I do not much want to sacrifice this privilege. I am, after all, civilized, and have gained a taste for “comforts and elegancies” which can be gained only through the coercion of slavery. The truth is that like most others who benefit from this [...] I would probably rather die (and maybe even kill, or better, have someone kill for me) than trade places with the men, women, and children who made my computer, my shirt, my shoes.  

What Jensen highlights here is that that even for many of those who acknowledge the suffering and privation that underpins their own privileges, it remains ‘normal’ and ‘acceptable’ to pursue self-interest, to ignore damage such pursuit brings about and to consider oneself to be entitled to take what one wants regardless of the cost to others. Of course, this is not limited to issues of sweatshop labour or the vast wealth, power and privilege disparities between the (over)developed world and the global south: it remains a ‘normal’ and ‘acceptable’ fact that throughout the world and throughout the Anglophone West there are people without homes, without food, without even basic amenities, people who have to work constantly just to survive, who have no time free for leisure or relationships or whose lives are unremitting misery. Simultaneously it remains a ‘normal’ and ‘acceptable’ fact that the vast majority of Anglophone Western citizens are far too preoccupied with their own interests, and far too numb to the suffering of

525 For discussion, see: Chamberlain, ‘Admit it. You love cheap clothes. And you don’t care about child slave labour’.
526 Again, for example, see: Blaser, “We let them starve”; Lyon-Callo, Inequality, Poverty, and Neoliberal Governance, p. 13. Much of this normalising is achieved through the widespread presentation of capitalism as the only viable form of social organisation. (Indeed, this understanding of capitalism is so pervasive that, as the anti-capitalist adage—variously attributed to Slavoj Žižek, Frederic Jameson and others—goes, it is now easier to imagine the end of the world than to image the end of capitalism.) As such, if the negative aspects of capitalism are identified—and often the discourses of capitalism and the West’s pronounced culture of apathy manage to prevent even this from occurring—they are routinely either presented as being less severe than they really are or dismissed as inevitable aspects of ‘human nature’ or ‘progress’, or simply as the price that must be paid for luxuries and comforts to which the West is accustomed.
others, to even acknowledge that their lifestyles are dependent on, and their actions increase, the suffering of others, let alone for them commit to anything more than token gestures to help alleviate this suffering. As such, the characteristics of self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy and sense of entitlement are again both extensively normalised and conditioned into individuals through capitalist socialisation. However, it is also important to realise that these characteristics do not originate in capitalism but are part of the ‘character’ of the Anglophone West at a more fundamental level.

Whilst capitalist conditioning is perhaps the most readily demonstrable—and, at least currently, amongst the most pervasive—aspect of self-serving Western socialisation, it is only one component of a far larger pattern. Indeed, as Ani argues, capitalism itself is only a manifestation of underlying Western values, ‘another vehicle for the expression of the insatiable European “will-to-power”’ that already exists in the dominant culture. In other words, pre-capitalist Western cultures were still shaped by and still socialised individuals to adopt self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy and a sense of entitlement; these characteristics are embedded in the West’s longstanding hierarchical social organisation, ‘democratic’ political systems dominated by the privileged and powerful, endless expansionism and empire building, routine oppression and exploitation of marginalised groups, suicidally destructive relationship with non-human nature and many other aspects of its underlying ideologies and structures. Amongst these deeply rooted expressions, capitalism—and, indeed, what we might call ‘capitalist mentalities’ or the modes of thought and relation that enable individuals to economically exploit and abuse others—is a relatively recent manifestation of the civilised mentality that has always, in various forms, profoundly shaped Western culture. That is to say, these forms of exploitation and abuse, which


528 Ani, Yurugu, p. 384.

529 Forbes, Columbus and Other Cannibals, pp. 38–48. For further discussion of how this relates to capitalism, see: Ani, Yurugu, pp. 384–388.
exert such a significant influence on Western culture, are all intimately connected not only in the sense of following similar patterns of power disparity and normalised exploitation but also in the fact that they all require and condition into individuals remarkably similar mentalities which are characterised by self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy and a sense of entitlement. Plumwood argues a similar point when she notes that

The same basic structures of self which appear in the treatment of nature as lifeless instrument also underlie the rational egoism and instrumentalism of the market, the treatment of those supposedly less possessed of reason as inferior, and as instruments for their more civilised western neighbours (as in slavery, colonialism and racism), and the treatment of women as inferior others whose norms of virtue embody a thinly disguised instrumentalism.\(^530\)

In line with my arguments, Plumwood highlights here that, whilst they manifest in different ways, it is still the ‘same basic structures of self’ that underlie the many forms of self-serving, exploitative and abusive behaviour that structure Western society. ‘Translated’ into the terms of the current discussion, we can note then that whilst there are different mentalities that enable different forms of abuse (for example, rapist mentalities or capitalist mentalities) they remain expressions of a broader mentality, that which I have been referring to as the civilised mentality.

Considered from the above perspective, the myth of the aberrant rapist is even further destabilised: rapists are not deviant pariahs expressing idiosyncratic psychopathologies, nor are they only conforming to normative models of ‘masculinity’; rather they are enacting the modes of thought and relation that are most extensively normalised in the dominant culture in a specific gendered and sexualised form. Indeed, like my remodelling of Peggy Reeves Sanday’s work in the previous chapter—which concluded that ‘where objectification is a way of life, objectification frequently achieves sexual expression in the form of rape’—we can note that where individuals are conditioned to pursue only their own interests with no regard for the suffering of others and with a profound sense of entitlement, these characteristics pervade the ways in which they relate to others, including their sexualised

\(^{530}\) Plumwood, Feminism and the Mastery of Nature, p. 143.
relations.\textsuperscript{531} Of course, this is not to suggest that all those who are socialised into the dominant culture’s normative modes of thought and relation—that is, all those who exhibit culturally-conditioned civilised mentalities—also have rapist mentalities or actually commit rape. Rather, it is to highlight the fact that the psychological capacity to rape is not aberrant but a normative, and predictable, expression of a society in which self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy and a sense of entitlement are normalised, legitimised, celebrated and rewarded. Likewise, it is not intended to deny the significance of the specific forms of masculine socialisation outlined above (or of social production of rapable bodies discussed in the previous chapter) but to locate these socialisation patterns in the wider context of how the dominant culture operates, and explore how this wider context enables self-serving, entitled and abusive models of masculinity to gain ascendancy throughout the Anglophone West. To explore these issues further—and to develop a fuller understanding of how dominant models of masculinity relate to the dominant culture as a whole—it is now useful to bring into the analysis the other central component of rapist mentalities: the motivation or desire to rape. As suggested at the beginning of the chapter, to commit sexual violence, a rapist must both be capable of committing and actually want to commit rape, and only by understanding how this desire for sexual violence is socially produced can we fully understand the place of the rapist in the dominant culture of the Anglophone West, accordingly, it is to this that I will now turn.

Real Men: Masculinity, Heterosex and Rape Motivations

As suggested at the beginning of this chapter, a rapist mentality is composed of both the psychological capacity to commit rape and the desire or motivation to do so. Having established the role of rape-enabling characteristics, the chapter will now move on to consider the second

component, or the question of why rapists commit rape and how this issue relates to the dominant models of masculinity, and the dominant culture, of the Anglophone West. Perhaps the first thing to establish here is that, like the capacity to do so, the desire or motivation to rape is not ‘natural’ or an innate ‘male’ instinct. Unlike with the psychological capacity, however, we have the advantage of a wealth of feminist analysis to draw on in support of this point. We can point, for example, to Susan Griffin’s observation that it is, in fact, rape-supporting patriarchal ‘mythology’ that presents rape as ‘an animal instinct inherent in the male’, or to Joanna Bourke’s argument that, far from being ‘natural’, ‘rape and sexual violence are deeply rooted in specific political, economic and cultural environments’.

We can also refer back to the cross-cultural studies discussed previously to acknowledge that, whilst we cannot definitively prove that any culture is entirely free from rape, rates of sexual violence incidence vary so widely across cultures—from almost no known cases in some to as many one in five women suffering sexual assault in others (in this case, the UK)—that the motivation to rape is clearly dictated by cultural attitudes rather than ‘natural’ instincts. Together, these arguments all point incontrovertibly to the fact that rapists’ motivations are socially produced rather than ‘natural’ or the product of a universal ‘male’ instinct or drive. Such arguments further destabilise the myth of the natural rapist introduced at the beginning of the chapter, reinforcing the argument that sexual violence is a socially produced behaviour. The second myth—that of the rapist as aberrant or deviant—also proves relatively simple to discredit in terms of motivation; however, as I will explore, it also provides us with several important points to consider in relation to the position of ‘the rapist’ in the dominant culture.

At the most basic level, the notion that the desire to rape is aberrant can be disproved by referring to the statistics cited in the thesis introduction: if rape occurs in the Anglophone West with such extreme regularity, then the desire to commit rape can hardly be said to be entirely aberrant. However, this

534 For statistics and analysis, see: pp. 12–15 of this thesis.
only addresses the normativity of the desire to rape at its most superficial level; the argument can be extended far further to posit that the desire to rape, although not always recognised as such or even acted upon, is not so much deviant as it is an extension of normative ‘masculine’ behaviour and prevailing heterosex scripts. Certainly this is the position taken by Lucy Gilbert and Paula Webster when they write that

'[m]any rapes merely extend traditional heterosexual exchanges, in which masculine pursuit and female reticence are familiar and formalized. Although rape is a gross exaggeration of gender power, it contains the rules and rituals of heterosexual encounter, seduction and conquest.'\textsuperscript{535}

Whilst this argument is arguably marred by a homogenising treatment of heterosex, it does contain a useful point: if one takes the statement as referring only to some dominant models of, rather than to all, heterosex, then Gilbert and Webster highlight the fact that rape and (hetero)sex are not as comfortably discrete as many consider them to be. In this respect, it recalls MacKinnon’s observation, cited in the first chapter, that when it comes to separating ‘sex’ and ‘rape’, ‘[t]he problem remains what it has always been: telling the difference’.\textsuperscript{536} Again, this falls prey to the old, ineffectual and inaccurate assertions that heterosex and rape are inherently synonymous and interchangeable but, considered in a less totalising manner, it emphasises an issue that will be central to the following discussion: although heterosex can be—and frequently is—entirely consensual, mutual, non-exploitative, non-objectifying and non-oppressive, many dominant heterosex encounters bear marked similarities to sexual violence. Such similarities, I will argue, extend to shared motivations behind many heterosex encounters and many incidents of sexual violence. Before exploring this in more detail, however, it is important to note that this analysis also recalls Russell’s observation that ‘rape is not so much a deviant act as an over-conforming one [...] It is an extreme acting-out of qualities that are regarded as masculine in this and many other societies.’\textsuperscript{537} This, then, is another important theme for

\textsuperscript{537} Russell, \textit{Sexual Objectification}, pp. 117–118.
the current discussion: rape not only represents an extension of prevailing heterosex scripts but also of dominant models of masculinity and prescribed ‘masculine’ behaviour. Diana Scully and Joseph Marolla make a similar point when they note that ‘rape can be viewed as the end point in a continuum of sexually aggressive behaviors that reward men and victimize women.’ However, I will extend this argument further to suggest that rape functions as one point on a continuum of more general ‘aggressive’ behaviours, for which men are culturally rewarded in the dominant culture. Together, these two points are key to understanding quite how ‘normal’ rapists’ motivations are and, as such, they will be central to the coming analysis. First, however, it is necessary to establish more clearly what actually motivates rapists to commit rape.

As Scully and Marolla observe, one of the advantages of abandoning the notion that rapists are psychopathological deviants is that ‘it forces one to examine the goals that some men have learned to achieve through sexually violent means.’ That is to say, by moving beyond the misconception that rapists are driven by idiosyncratic compulsions (or, for that matter, by a ‘natural’ instinct), we are able to acknowledge that rapists commit rape because they gain something from it or have learned that it is rewarding behaviour. This provides us with a foundation from which to consider the social production of the desire to commit rape and the ways in which an individual may both develop certain goals or desires and come to understand certain acts as a means of achieving or satiating them. To begin this task, it is important to acknowledge that the motivation to commit rape is a complex and multifaceted issue, and that rapists are a broad, heterogeneous ‘group’ of individuals who commit rape for a range of different reasons. Indeed, as Clive R. Hollin concisely observes, ‘[d]ifferent men rape to gain different rewards’. Scully and Marolla provide a revealing study of this matter which found that the (convicted) rapists interviewed

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538 Scully and Marolla, “Riding the Bull at Gilley’s”, p. 262.
539 Ibid., p. 254.
had used rape to achieve a number of objectives [...] Some men used rape for revenge or punishment while, for others, it was an “added bonus” – a last minute decision made while committing another crime. In still other cases, rape was used to gain sexual access to women who were unwilling or unavailable, and for some it was a source of power and sex without any personal feelings. Rape was also a form of recreation, a diversion or an adventure and, finally, it was something that made these men “feel good.”

In other words, rapists do not fit a convenient homogenous model of motivation but rather commit sexual violence in order to achieve a range of different forms of personal gain which operate on different levels and in various combinations of corporeality (such as physical gratification) and cerebrality (such as the use of rape to express anger or elevate self-esteem through feeling powerful). This considered, however, it is still possible to identify trends in, and to establish key understandings that underpin, these diverse motivations. That is to say, just as it is possible to locate the myriad thought processes that enable rapists to commit rape within the broad descriptors or categories of self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy and a sense of entitlement, we can also posit broad categories of motivation that, although manifesting in different forms, are common to most, if not all, rapists.

Katherine K. Baker provides a useful framework for considering the key trends of rapists’ motivation when she writes that, whilst ‘[a]ll rapes are not alike’, they are all ‘in part, about sex and masculinity and domination. But some rapes are predominantly about sex, some rapes are predominantly about masculinity, and some rapes are predominantly about domination’. Baker’s observation is useful here because it acknowledges the diversity of rapists’ motivations whilst highlighting the fact that they still share common bases; as such, this provides a framework for understanding more precisely how rapists come to see rape as a desirable or rewarding action in general terms without homogenising rapists into a single monolithic ‘type’. However, as useful as this is, there is a limitation in how the framework is conceived. This is not to suggest that the three motivation components are inaccurate:

541 Scully and Marolla, ‘Riding the Bull at Gilley’s’, p. 254.
we have already noted the significance of ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’ to rape motivation and, as I will demonstrate presently, ‘domination’ is of central importance. Rather, it is in Baker’s understanding of the relationship between these elements that we can identify issues. Specifically, we can note that, whilst the framework does acknowledge that all rapes are ‘in part, about sex and masculinity and domination’ it fails to develop this point to its fullest conclusion: that it is not simply the combined presence of these elements that composes the motivation to rape but the ways in which they intersect with each other and, in particular, the ways in which ‘domination’ intersects with ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’. Baker’s position treats ‘masculinity’, ‘sex’ and ‘domination’ as discrete components that collectively comprise rape motivation but still remain discrete, if related, components; in contrast, I suggest that the motivation to commit rape results not simply from each of these components but from each of these components as they are shaped by the others. That is to say, rapists’ motivations can be traced to the fact that dominant cultural understandings of all three components are produced in relation to dominant understandings of the others, with ‘masculinity’ shaping understandings of ‘sex’ and ‘domination’, ‘sex’ shaping understandings of ‘masculinity’ and ‘domination’, and ‘domination’ shaping understandings of ‘sex’ and ‘masculinity’. As I will now discuss, it is only through this intersectional triangulation that the components become central to the motivation to commit rape.

Because ‘domination’ is, I suggest, the key aspect of the ‘triangle of motivation’, it is perhaps best to begin by looking at the intersection of ‘sex’ and ‘masculinity’ before plotting their intersections with this central third element. There are several points to highlight in this regard, each of which provides insight into how prevailing understandings of ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’ intersect with, and help to define, each other. One of the most significant of these is the fact that heterosexual sex is central to the Anglophone West’s dominant models of masculinity, or to what is understood to constitute a ‘real man’. It is important to note at this stage that masculinity, as Lynne Segal notes, ‘is not some type of single essence, innate or acquired. As it is represented in our culture, “masculinity” is a quality of being which is always incomplete, and which is based as much on a social as on a psychic
In other words, masculinity is not the transculturally, transhistorically constant essence that it has traditionally been understood to be, but an unstable and incoherent act in which those characteristics that are culturally recognised as ‘masculine’ in a given time and place must be endlessly displayed and proven in the social realm. A central means through which many men make such displays is through the performance of heterosexual desire and heterosexual practices. Because heterosexuality is largely ‘invisible’ in Western culture (due to its assumed ‘naturalness’ and ‘normality’), perhaps the most obvious example of this can actually be found in the fact that homosexuality—the alleged binary opposite of heterosexuality—is widely recognised to be ‘unmanning’ and ‘feminising’. As R. W. Connell observes,

Gayness, in patriarchal ideology, is the repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity, the items ranging from fastidious taste in home decoration to receptive anal pleasure. Hence, from the point of view of hegemonic masculinity, gayness is easily assimilated to femininity.

That is to say, ‘homosexuality’ does not simply describe one’s erotic partner preferences but rather, as Connell suggests, functions as a wider signifier of all that is ‘unmanly’. Accordingly, men who seek to prove their ‘manhood’ by the conditions of prevailing models of masculinity must not only avoid same-sex sexual contact but also avoid even the suggestion or the suspicion that there is anything ‘gay’ about them or their desires. Although this encompasses many aspects of appearance, behaviour, interaction and other social signifiers, the most significant means of avoiding such suggestions is constantly asserting and reasserting heterosexual desire.

Michael S. Kimmel observes that amongst the things ‘heterosexual men do to make sure no one could possibly get the “wrong idea” about them’ is to ‘[a]lways be prepared to demonstrate sexual interest in women [...] In this sense, homophobia, the fear of being perceived as gay, as not a real man, keeps men exaggerating all the traditional rules of masculinity, including

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sexual predation with women'. There are two important points here: firstly, Kimmel emphasises the fact that heterosexuality must be constantly and repeatedly displayed in order to ‘prove’ masculinity. However, he also alludes to an even more significant point, namely that it is not simply ‘heterosexuality’ in a general sense that must be displayed but a particular hegemonic model of predatory, supposedly compulsive, uncontrolled and uncontrollable heterosexuality. In other words, in dominant understandings of masculinity and heterosex, a ‘real man’ always pursues heterosexual encounters, always needs sexual ‘release’ and can—and will—always ‘perform’ if given even the slightest opportunity (including ‘opportunities’ that must be ‘created’ and coerced). In line with this, we find aspersions cast on the masculinity of not only ‘homosexual’ men but many men whose ‘heterosexuality’ does not measure up to prevailing standards, such those who experience ‘erectile dysfunction’, who are not sexually experienced or whose heterosex practices are restrained, inhibited or non-predatory. This social pressure to conform to an ‘assertive’, allegedly compulsive and often predatory model of heterosexual practices in order to prove one’s ‘masculinity’ is highly significant to rape motivation. Again there are numerous manifestations or examples of this, ranging from the stereotypical ‘stranger rapist’ lashing out at random women in response to a perceived slight to his masculine identity by another woman to the naive teenage boy ignoring consent in his insecure and self-absorbed ‘need’ to prove his manhood to his peers.

Moreover, in another variation on the myth of the natural rapist, the belief that men should display active, often predatory, heterosexuality is widely naturalised in Anglophone Western society so that normatively socialised men come to believe that they inherently have no control over their ‘desires’. This is widely noted to be routinely employed by rapists both as a justification for sexual assault and as a means of coercing and pressuring survivors in

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548 For example, see: Scully and Marolla, ‘Riding the Bull at Gilley’s’, pp. 255–257; Perry, ‘Hooking Up with Healthy Sexuality’.
date-rape or acquaintance rape scenarios; as Scully and Marolla argue, ‘males are taught to have expectations about their level of sexual needs and expectations for corresponding female accessibility which function to justify forcing sexual access’. However, it also functions as another form of motivation or another criterion for prescribed ‘manliness’ to which many men feel they must measure up: that is, it sets a behavioural code that is not only used to ‘justify’ sexual violence but also serves as a model to which many men feel compelled to conform. Importantly, in this point we can also see how the intersection of ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’ shapes not only masculinity but also heterosex: the notion that men inherently require, and are driven by a perceived need for, sexual ‘release’ (a ‘requirement’ that is assumed to be absent in women) fosters the notion that heterosex exists to serve this purpose. Perry highlights this point in recounting his teenage inculcation into this dominant understanding of ‘sex’. He writes that ‘[t]he fact that girls could like sex hadn’t even crossed our minds. We knew sex was supposed to involve some type of mutual appreciation for each other’s genitals, but we didn’t understand why—after all, it was us boys who were doing the “getting” of “some” right?’ That is, prevailing understandings of ‘male’ sexuality as something compulsive and uncontrollable that must be ‘released’ encourages the understanding of heterosex as something designed to meet this ‘need’, like a pressure valve designed to maintain the healthy function of a boiler. This relates in turn to a broader aspect of how prevailing understandings of masculinity shape how heterosex is conceived in the dominant culture: the fact that the patriarchal framing of the dominant culture’s gender relations constructs ‘sex’ from a homogenised ‘male’ perspective.

There are numerous expressions of this male-centric understanding of heterosex, ranging from the popular understanding of penile-vaginal penetration as the only form of ‘real’ sex to defining the duration and endpoint

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550 For discussion, see: McCaughey The Caveman Mystique, pp. 7, 81–82.
551 Perry, ‘Hooking Up with Healthy Sexuality’, p. 193. Of course, this understanding is both supported by and reinforces the sexual objectification of women discussed in the previous chapter but it is, as in my general point about the social production of rapist mentalities, also a process in its own right. Indeed, as Perry goes on to note, ‘While female sexual empowerment is an important factor in the struggle to end rape, it will not succeed without corresponding shifts in how boys are taught to experience sexuality and gender’ (Perry, ‘Hooking Up with Healthy Sexuality’, p. 198).
of heterosex encounters in terms of male orgasm to the ‘notches on the bedpost’ reduction of sexual ‘partners’ to units for measuring ‘masculine’ achievement.\textsuperscript{552} In broader cultural terms, it is also widely observed to shape many forms of media in manifestations such as the ‘straight male gaze’ that shapes much Anglophone Western film and literature, projecting onto the audience a ‘heterosexual’ ‘male’ perspective, or the extreme focus on ‘male’ gratification found in the majority of pornography.\textsuperscript{553} Of course, thanks to the efforts of many forms of feminism over many decades, prevailing heterosex scripts are demonstrating an increasing focus on female sexual pleasure; indeed, as Segal argues, ‘our culture has increasingly impressed upon men the importance of the female orgasm’.\textsuperscript{554} However, as positive as this is in a general sense, it remains the case that this focus is still frequently framed in terms of ‘male’ achievement, with many men primarily concerned with their ability to ‘make’ a woman orgasm as a mark of their ‘masculine’ prowess rather than with genuine mutual pleasure.\textsuperscript{555} The male-centric focus, as we have seen in the previous chapter, creates an understanding of heterosex in which women are in many respects irrelevant except as an objectified focus—or indeed receptacle—for ‘male’ sexuality.\textsuperscript{556} This, again as discussed previously, further reduces the distinctions between normative heterosex scripts and rape scripts and so further highlights the similarities between many men’s motivations for ‘sex’ and many rapists’ motivations to commit ‘rape’.\textsuperscript{557} Whilst each of these points has only been outlined briefly, the above discussions provide an overview for understanding how the intersection of ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’ creates cultural understandings of each that are highly conducive to sexual violence and, especially, to the normalising of rape motivations. However, whilst they are in themselves


\textsuperscript{554} Segal, \textit{Slow Motion}, p. 212.

\textsuperscript{555} Deborah Cameron and Don Kulick also make this point in \textit{Language and Sexuality} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 17.

\textsuperscript{556} For example, see: pp. 73–74.

\textsuperscript{557} Ibid.
significant issues, they truly become rape-motivating factors when both ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’ intersect with ‘domination’ and it is to this that the analysis now turns.

Patriarchal Power or Personal Power?: Exploring Domination Motivations

The previous discussion explored how the intersection of prevailing understandings of ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’ is central to rapists’ motivations and highlighted the fact that the motivation to commit rape is not aberrant but rather is a reflection of normative heterosexual masculine socialisation. The following section will suggest, however, that this is only the case because both ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’ intersect with, and have their cultural ‘meanings’ shaped by, prevailing understandings of ‘domination’ as ‘beneficial’ or rewarding that exist both within both prevailing understandings of gender and the dominant culture of the Anglophone West. As I will discuss throughout the closing sections of this chapter, this point is particularly important to the current discussion because it again highlights the fact that the social production of rapist mentalities does not occur in isolation but rather is an inevitable product of a culture that, I will argue, values, celebrates, rewards and in many respects revolves around domination. However, before arguing this point, it is necessary that we establish precisely how intersection with ‘domination’ shapes prevailing understandings of ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’ in a manner that makes them key factors in rapists’ motivations. As a route into this discussion, it is useful to consider an aspect of feminist rape theory that has long influenced understandings of rapists’ motivations: the image of rapists as what Brownmiller calls ‘front-line masculine shock-troops’ who commit rape in order to enforce the collective subordination of all women and secure the collective male power and patriarchal privilege of all men.558 As part of a wider radical feminist analysis, this understanding made an important contribution to how rapists and sexual violence more generally are understood in the Anglophone West. However, the conclusion it ultimately draws regarding why rapists commit rape is, I believe, erroneous for, although it recognises the three key elements of ‘masculinity’, ‘sex’ and

558 Brownmiller, Against Our Will, p. 209.
‘domination’, it is premised on a fundamentally inaccurate understanding of how masculinities are organised and interact, which undermines its overall argument. By critiquing these inaccuracies whilst still drawing on the strengths of the research, we are able to develop a clearer understanding of how ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’ intersect with each other and with ‘domination’ to motivate rape, and it is to this task that the analysis will now turn.

The contributions of the pioneering anti-rape scholars of the 1970s cannot be overestimated; through their more astute observations, they brought about a fundamental shift in the conceptualising of rape, providing a framework for treating sexual violence not as a matter of individual deviancy but as a social problem that could only be resolved through political action. Indeed, as Nicola Gavey notes, ‘[a]lmost overnight, it seems in retrospect, rape was politicized and became the target for revolutionary change.’ This politicising of rape has been of incalculable benefit to the struggle against sexual violence, paving the way for numerous activist responses that range from Rape Crisis centres to ‘Reclaim the Night’ marches (also known as ‘Take Back the Night’ marches) to the contemporary phenomenon of ‘Slut Walks’. However, whilst this shift in focus made a significant contribution towards undermining myths of rapists as deviant (although, as we have seen, one that is yet to be truly successful), it is important to note, as Segal reminds us, that ‘[t]here are other rape myths, however, which dominant strands of feminist thinking have not demolished. Indeed, they have underwritten them.’ Segal primarily directs this argument towards the assertion that, as we have seen, some early feminist anti-rape texts reinforced the notion that rape is a ‘natural’ male instinct; however, the point can be developed further to suggest that these texts not only underwrote pre-existing misconceptions but, with the very arguments that collapsed one set of myths, created new ones of their own. The notion that rapists are motivated by a conscious aim of securing collective male power over women

559 It is worth noting, for instance, that this thesis would not have been possible without the foundations provided by such analysis.
560 Gavey, Just Sex?, p. 30.
562 Segal, Slow Motion, p. 235.
is one such myth. Moreover, although the arguments discussed in this section were produced nearly forty years ago, this myth is a relevant contemporary concern for the early anti-rape texts in which it originally appeared remain highly influential and are widely (and uncritically) cited in everything from newspaper articles to Rape Crisis websites.\footnote{For example, see: Libby Brooks, ‘We must all counter the mood music of rape culture’ (7/1/2013) <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jan/07/rape-culture-libby-brooks?INTCMP=SRCH> [accessed 20 September 2013]; ‘About Us: History of the Rape Crisis Centre’ <http://www.rapecrisiscentre-glasgow.co.uk/index.php?id=134> [accessed 20 September 2013].}

Perhaps the key reason the myth is cited and replicated so frequently is that, whilst it is premised on conjecture and misunderstandings of masculinities, it still arises from a foundation of sound analysis. In particular, it has its roots in the notion that, regardless of whether or not they personally commit the act, all men benefit from sexual violence against women. As Brownmiller argues, ‘[a] world without rapists would be a world in which women moved freely without fear of men. That some men rape provides a sufficient threat to keep all women in a constant state of intimidation’.\footnote{Brownmiller, \textit{Against Our Will}, p. 209.} Brownmiller makes an extremely important contribution to the understanding of rape here: that the relationship between patriarchy and rape is reciprocal. That is to say, by focusing on how rape affects the lives of women (a consideration that was, incredibly, almost entirely absent from pre-feminist studies of sexual violence), Brownmiller highlights the fact that rape is not only a product of patriarchal social organisation but a means through which this patriarchy is maintained. The very existence of rape and rapists within a society—particularly when this existence is emphasised and revelled in by men and the male-dominated media—leads to many women perceiving a persistent, underlying threat to their safety and bodily integrity which, in turn, causes them to perceive themselves as reliant on male ‘protection’. In this sense, as Griffin suggests, rape ‘severely limits the freedom of women and makes women dependent on men’.\footnote{Griffin, \textit{Rape: The Politics of Consciousness}, p. 21.} What Griffin highlights here is that the generalised fear of rape discussed above is situational: it is structured by the belief that certain situations or scenarios increase a woman’s chances of being sexually assaulted. Despite the fact that most survivors are raped by
men that they already know, usually in a private, indoor space with which they are already familiar, several studies show that most women’s fear of rape is centred on the stereotypical attack, on what Lisa Jervis calls the ‘stranger-in-the-bushes-with-a-knife paradigm’.\textsuperscript{566} This fear—which, it should be noted, is greatly increased by media sensationalising of the relatively rare ‘stranger rape’ and the myth that women bring rape upon themselves by behaving ‘irresponsibly’ (a term which appears to indicate nothing more than behaving like autonomous beings rather than delicate, vulnerable victims)—limits, as Griffin suggests, the movements, leisure activities, work life and sexual expression of many women. Women may, for example, decide not to socialise in the evening due to concerns about walking home alone at night, or may avoid drinking out of a fear of alcohol or drug facilitated rape, or may restrict their sexual activities to set patterns, scenarios or relationships, afraid that other expressions may lead to date rape.

The curtailing of women’s freedom highlighted by Griffin confers a distinct collective power on men as a class over women as a class.\textsuperscript{567} Where women, as a result of a fear of rape and the conditioned belief that they are incapable of defending themselves, do not feel safe outside certain (usually private, often ‘male-protected’) spaces such as ‘the home’ without male ‘protection’, they become reliant on men: their ability to experience many aspects of their lives—indeed, their ability simply to live without fear—depends upon the ‘kindness’ of men, on men agreeing to accompany them, to ‘guard’ them from other men. In other words, through experiencing the threat of rape as ever-present, many women are conditioned to surrender their autonomy, their subjectivity, in exchange for male ‘protection’. They must, this conditioning dictates, accept that they are not subjects capable of independent action but objects to be acted upon by others, by men; their


\textsuperscript{567} Although Brownmiller, Griffin and many of their contemporaries do not raise the point, this is not to say that all men necessarily want this power or that some men don’t actively work to undermine it, becoming allies in the struggle to liberate both men and women from relationships based on power, coercion, dependency and paternalism but that, regardless of their personal views, this power is automatically conferred on all men living in the patriarchal West (albeit to differing degrees depending on their relation to other systems of oppression and place within other hierarchies).
choice is simply whether this action is rape or ‘protection’. Moreover, such
‘protection’ is conditional, reliant on the choices, the inclinations and fancies,
of the ‘protector’. Indeed, as Griffin argues, the ‘security’ offered in this
scenario operates like a mafia ‘protection racket which depends for its
existence on rape’: women must meet with the approval of the ‘protector’,
must please him and conform to codes of behaviour and appearance that he
approves of, or he will revoke his ‘protection’, reinstating the threat of rape by
other men.\textsuperscript{568} Furthermore, this not only operates on an individual,
interpersonal level but is enshrined in judicial and media responses to sexual
violence where the survivor’s account is disbelieved if she is seen as having
violated accepted codes of behaviour by drinking heavily, having
promiscuous sex or otherwise behaving ‘recklessly’.\textsuperscript{569}

Considered in light of the above analysis, the collective male ‘rewards’ of
rape are readily apparent: the fear of rape limits many women’s
engagements with public life and forces them into a position of subordinated
dependence, allowing men to take effective ‘stewardship’ of women, who
must then please them in exchange for protection. This is manifest in
everything from men who benefit from the domestic ‘duties’ fulfilled by
women who feel compelled to remain in the home or the sexual ‘duties’
fulfilled by women who feel obliged to repay the ‘kindness’ of their ‘protectors’
to men whose identities, sense of self-worth and masculine pride revolve
around serving as the paternalistic protector of ‘worthy’ women (or, indeed,
politicians and other public ‘servants’ who employ the promise of ‘defending
women from rape—that is, the threat of rape by other men—as a means of
achieving power and influence).\textsuperscript{570} In this, then, we find the accurate and

\textsuperscript{568} Griffin, \textit{Rape: The Politics of Consciousness}, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{569} For a particularly noteworthy discussion of this issue, see: Jaclyn Friedman, ‘In Defense
of Going Wild or: How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love Pleasure (and How You
Can, Too)’, in \textit{Yes Means Yes! Visions of Female Sexual Power and a World Without Rape},
\textsuperscript{570} For example, see: Griffin, \textit{Rape: The Politics of Consciousness}, pp. 10–14; Hilary Neroni,
\textit{The Violent Woman: Femininity, Narrative, and Violence in Contemporary American Cinema}
(Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), pp. 56–57; Pennie R. Quinton,
‘Women’s voices must be heard’ (12/5/2012) <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/05/201251123244870487.html> [accessed
16 September 2013]; Alex Meleagrou-Hitchens, ‘EDL “Exploiting Concerns About Asian
insightful assertion that that men collectively benefit from, and at least potentially have a vested interest in, sexual violence, an assertion which was, and remains, one of the most significant contributions to the struggle against rape in the Anglophone West. However, as noteworthy as this position is, it is transformed into a rape myth through one simple piece of reasoning that characterises many (although not all) such arguments: the conflation of the results of rape and the motivation to rape to suggest that, because all men benefit from rape, this is also the reason that rapists commit rape.

Brownmiller provides a clear example of this conflation in what is perhaps the most iconic and widely cited feminist depiction of sexual violence:

"Man’s discovery that his genitalia could serve as a weapon to generate fear must rank as one of the most important discoveries of prehistoric times, along with the use of fire and the first crude stone axe. From prehistoric times to the present, I believe, rape has played a critical function. It is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear." 

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this statement has proved highly controversial and provoked many critiques, not least from those who protest the idea that all men commit rape. Diana E. H. Russell counters these latter challenges to Brownmiller’s position, writing:

"If Brownmiller is saying [...] that all men consciously use rape to intimidate women, she seems to be guilty of overstatement [...] If, on the other hand, Brownmiller means that all men benefit from the state of fear that affects all women because some men consciously intimidate women by raping them, then she contributes a brilliant insight. Since Brownmiller makes the latter point elsewhere in her book, it seems to be the best interpretation of her rather ambiguous statement."

572 Many of the more virulent arguments can found on the increasingly popular websites of so-called ‘men’s rights’ and ‘masculinist’ groups (for example, see: John Hembling, ‘Rape culture is hate culture’ (27/10/2012) <http://www.avoicformen.com/feminism/feminist-lies-feminism/rape-culture-is-hate-culture/> [accessed 18 September 2013]; ‘The 100 Men’s Human Rights Sites Feminists Seek to Censor’ (10/2/2013) <http://therightsofman.typepad.co.uk/the_rights_of_man/2013/02/the-48-mens-human-rightssites-feminists-seek-to-censor.html> [accessed 18 September 2013]; ‘Feminism is a Hate Group’ <http://www.womenagainstm.com/media/feminism-is-a-hate-group.html> [accessed 18 September 2013].
573 Russell, Sexual Exploitation, p. 135.
Russell is right to suggest that Brownmiller is not arguing that ‘all men consciously use rape to intimidate women’: after all, as discussed in the first chapter, the understanding of rape found in Against Our Will is frequently undermined by the suggestion that rape is largely the product of specific ‘subcultures of violence’.

However, Russell’s suggestion that the above declaration is simply a modification of the assertion that all men benefit from rape is, I believe, less convincing and any ambiguity in Brownmiller’s ‘rather ambiguous statement’ is only there if one strongly wishes to find it. The notion of rape as ‘a conscious process’ is central to this point. Russell’s (re)interpretation of the statement rests on the idea that rapists ‘consciously intimidate’ only the women they rape, and that the intimidation of other women is an unplanned, unconscious side-effect that benefits all men. However, whilst this position would be far more defensible, it simply does not match Brownmiller’s argument: rape, in Brownmiller’s statement, is ‘a conscious process’ and one that is engaged in by ‘all men’. The stark implication here is that every stage of the ‘process’ of rape—of some women being raped by some men leading to all women being subordinated to all men—is consciously enacted, that is, enacted with and motivated by the ‘conscious’ aim of subordinating women.

What Russell describes, then, is at best an unconscious ‘process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear’ or perhaps more truly a series of intimidating occurrences committed by men who are conscious of their intimidating effect on their targets but do not relate this to, are not conscious of—and so are certainly not motivated by—any form of wider ‘process of intimidation’. Brownmiller, however, describes a scenario, apparently unchanging throughout world history, in which rapists consciously play their role as terrorists or ‘soldiers of patriarchy’, raping women with the express aim of creating a symbol of male authority and a warning for ‘all women’ of their vulnerability and the necessity of male ‘protection’, just as a burning watchtower, a desecrated temple, a crucified body declare the authority of a conquering army, the powerlessness of the conquered and the necessity of acquiescence. In other words, Brownmiller presents rapists as committing sexual violence in order to achieve a distinct political goal, the

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574 See: pp. 70–72 of this thesis.
effects of which extend far beyond themselves as individuals to benefit ‘all men’. The flaws in this position are highlighted by following the reasoning on which it is premised to its logical, if not necessarily intended, conclusion. The argument that rapists commit rape in order to secure a political victory for ‘all men’ ultimately relies on the unlikely assumption that rapists have some form of inclusive, fraternal ‘fellow feeling’ towards all other men and are motivated by a sense of responsibility, a belief that they, personally, should contribute to the collective gain of their ‘fellows’. This may seem a facetious proposition but it follows Brownmiller’s logic: Brownmiller not only presents rape as an act that is knowingly employed by rapists in order to achieve a political goal (‘a conscious process of intimidation’ directed at ‘all women’) but actually precludes the possibility of any other motivation, explicitly stating that rape is ‘nothing more or less’ than this specific politicised act. Of course, we might rework the notion of ‘fellow feeling’ to present rapists as zealous, extremist figures who assume the role of self-elected representatives of ‘all men’ and are motivated by the self-perceived responsibility to ‘fight’ for the political dominance of this same supposedly homogenous group. However, even this presents rapists as, within the confines of male homosocial relationships, curiously selfless figures, less concerned with their own gratification and gain than with the benefits they can ‘win’ for ‘men’ as a class. Such an understanding is, as I will now discuss, in direct conflict with how men and masculinities are organised and relate to one another in the dominant culture of the Anglophone West.

Although as a class men do, in different ways and to different degrees, benefit from patriarchal social organisation, just as they benefit from rape, this does not mean that ‘men’ can be considered to be a stable, coherent and unified group. For example, Connell observes that

Men’s interest in patriarchy [...] is fissured by all the complexities in the social construction of masculinity [...] Men’s interest in patriarchy, then, does not act as a unified force in a homogenous structure. Recognizing this, we can move decisively beyond the one-dimensional strategic thinking that flowed from earlier models of patriarchy.\textsuperscript{575}

\textsuperscript{575} Connell, Masculinities, p. 242.
As Connell indicates, ‘men’ are not a cooperative community working collectively towards a consistent shared goal; rather they are a large number of individuals with their own aims, priorities and self-serving interests organised in complex, often hierarchical, relationships with each other. That is to say, whilst all men share de facto unity in that they all benefit from patriarchy and all have a vested interest in the subordination of women, this does not imply that they share a unity of interest or are consciously working towards collective enterprises, even those that they all benefit from on some level. Indeed, it is perhaps more accurate to suggest that men as a group are characterised less by unity and more by isolation, insecurity and rivalry. This is particularly apparent if we consider the instability of masculine identity. As discussed above, masculinity is not the expression of an innate male ‘essence’ but an unstable performance that must be constantly displayed and ‘proven’ through social acts. Accordingly, masculine identity is always insecure, always open to questioning and interrogation, always balanced on the edge of being undermined and ‘disproved’. Kimmel makes this same point when he observes that ‘masculinity is a relentless test’ in which men are under great pressure to ‘keep trying, valiantly and vainly, to measure up’ in the eyes of other men who ‘watch us, rank us, grant our acceptance into the realm of manhood.’

As Kimmel suggests, despite shared privileges, other men are not necessarily co-conspirators and unproblematic allies in a collective patriarchal struggle to subordinate women but interrogators and judges who have the potential to undermine a man’s masculine identity and (at least some of) his social power.

Moreover, other men are not only judges but also fellow competitors, the ones against whom a man’s masculinity is measured. As Todd W. Reeser notes, ‘though masculinity might seem to function alone and on its own terms, it inevitably functions in implicit or explicit relation to a series of others. In fact, it is defined by that very dialogue.’

Perhaps the most obvious manifestation of this can be identified in the avoidance of, and indeed hostility towards, that which is culturally considered to be feminine or un-masculine.

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Premised on the dualisms of male/female and masculine/feminine discussed in the first chapter, this logic suggests that ‘masculinity’ can be displayed by simply not displaying ‘femininity’ for, in a dualistic culture, that which is not ‘feminine’ must be ‘masculine’. However, as Reeser suggests when he writes that masculinity functions in ‘relation to a series of others’, it is not only in dialogue with femininity that masculinity finds its definition. If one considers the fact, now largely understood to be axiomatic, that there are numerous different forms of masculinity, all created by gender’s intersection with race, class, sexuality, personal experience and countless other factors, all with different levels of social power/status, and all existing in complex relations to one another (in short, that ‘masculinity’ is better understood as ‘masculinities’), then this dialogic definition of masculinity becomes considerably more complex. The notion that there are many masculinities allows for the possibility that a man’s masculinity is defined not only in relation to ‘the feminine’ but also in relation to the masculinities of other men.

Reeser gives an example of this, observing that ‘white masculinity could be in dialogue with black masculinity in certain circumstances, for example, by virtue of a white man’s desire to imitate a black man’s relation to rap music or the way he moves his body.’ In this case, the white man relates his masculinity unfavourably to the black man’s, and seeks to remedy this through emulating aspects of this other masculinity. Numerous other examples can be readily identified: a white man might just as easily define his masculinity favourably in a racist dialogue with a culturally-feminised black masculinity; likewise, a straight man may define his masculinity in homophobic relation to a gay man or a male body builder may define his through relation to the masculinities of men of average build. Some such

579 The notion that ‘masculinity’ is comprised of many different masculinities, or models of masculinity, is the central thesis of Connell’s Masculinities, recurring throughout the text.
580 Reeser, Masculinities in Theory, p. 43.
comparisons may be favourable and others unfavourable but always a man’s masculinity is, in this manner, defined by and in relation to other men and other masculinities. Accordingly, masculinity in the Anglophone West functions as a complex hierarchy, an ever-shifting network of largely rivalrous relations in which each man’s masculinity is defined in relation to others within the network, and in which almost all men vie to have their masculinity favourably compared to others’. Accordingly, men as a class are not united in an all-motivating collective aim (to suppress women or otherwise) but rather fractured by insecurities and isolation, divided by relationships of competition where each man is driven to prove his masculinity against those of other men. In this sense, the notion that rapists are motivated by a desire for collective male benefit is, ultimately, untenable. Indeed, we can modify Connell’s discussion of men’s varying interests in patriarchy accordingly:

Men’s interest in rape [...] is fissured by all the complexities in the social construction of masculinity [...] Men’s interest in rape, then, does not act as a unified force in a homogenous structure. Recognizing this, we can move decisively beyond the one-dimensional strategic thinking that flowed from earlier models of rape/rapists.  

Given the disunity, conflict and competition that characterises masculinities, the Anglophone West’s rape problem cannot realistically be considered to be the collective enactment of ‘a unified force’, as Brownmiller’s analysis appears to suggest; likewise, although all men benefit, to varying degrees, from the Anglophone West’s rape culture and its support of Anglophone Western patriarchy, neither all men nor even all rapists can be said to be a ‘homogenous structure’ seeking to secure the domination of all women. Rapists do benefit from committing rape and this benefit does revolve around domination (intersecting with ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’). However, as I will now


Italics indicate my modification. For the original statement, see: Connell, Masculinities, p. 242.

It should be noted that observing that all men benefit from the Anglophone West’s rape culture (in that they benefit from the way in which rape helps to maintain male power, as discussed above) does not preclude the fact that some men also suffer as a result of the Anglophone West’s rape culture. A particularly noteworthy example of this is the ways in which white propaganda about ‘the black rapist’ has been (and continues to be) employed to support and ‘justify’ racist ideologies, oppression and violence (for discussion, see: Davis, Women, Race and Class, pp. 172–201).
discuss, it is not collective domination that motivates rapists but personal domination, both in the form of ‘proving’ masculinity through dominating rape survivors and as sexual gratification in a culture that conflates heterosex with conquest and coercion.

Displaying Dominance: Rape and Power

As noted previously, perhaps the most significant contribution made by the pioneering anti-rape feminists of the 1970s was the politicising of sexual violence; this conceptual shift presented rape as something intimately connected to and inseparable from normative patriarchal society and its prevailing heterosex practices and codes of masculine behaviour. Although, as argued above, the understanding of rapists’ motivations underpinning such arguments was premised on an inaccurate understanding of how masculinities are organised, the central point that the actions and motivations of rapists cannot be considered in isolation from the dominant culture remains highly significant. Reconceived in terms of individual domination rather than the collective domination of all men over all women, this understanding is central to understanding rapists’ motivation for, as suggested previously, there are multiple points of intersection between ‘masculinity’, ‘sex’ and ‘domination’, each of which shapes not only rape motivations but also normative ‘masculine’ motivations and normative ‘heterosexual’ motivations; indeed, the key point to consider in this regard is that these forms of motivation cannot be discretely separated into the normal and ‘acceptable’, and the aberrant and abusive, and that it is cultural understandings of ‘domination’ that unite these supposedly disparate groups. This point is clearly demonstrated by considering the role ‘domination’ plays in the previous examples of ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’ intersecting to motivate rape.

Whilst the intersection of ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’ does indeed, as demonstrated above, play a central role in producing the motivation to rape, it does so only because of the prevailing cultural understandings of both ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’ that are already profoundly shaped by cultural
understandings of domination. This is, I suggest, applicable to all rapists, despite the great diversity in individual’s motivations. Returning to Scully and Marolla’s exploration of these diverse motivations is a useful means of highlighting this point for, whilst it is true that rapists use ‘rape to achieve a number of objectives’, it can also be noted that each of the objectives revolves around domination and, specifically, personal rather than collective domination.\(^{584}\) If we consider the first example Scully and Marolla provide—the use of ‘rape for revenge or punishment’—this point is readily apparent. In broadest terms, there are two types of revenge rape, distinguished by a rapist’s choice of target: that is, a rapist may enact revenge against a specific woman he perceives to have wronged him or, as Scully and Marolla observe, against another, unrelated woman who, thanks to his belief in ‘collective liability’—the notion that all members of a ‘group’ or ‘category’ are accountable for the actions of their supposed peers—serves as a surrogate target.\(^{585}\) Beyond this, such rapes become even more diverse as the specific thought processes that constitute the rapists’ motivation vary from individual to individual, both within and across these two types of ‘revenge’ rape. Despite this diversity, however, there are commonalities that connect many such revenge or punishments rapes. Particularly common, and again discussed by Scully and Marolla, are rapists’ beliefs that ‘men have the right to discipline and punish women’ or that rape can serve “to put women in their place” and as a method of proving their “manhood”’.\(^{586}\) In this we can immediately see the significance of both ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’ as key aspects of the rapist’s motivation but, crucially, it is the significance of ‘domination’ to ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’ that makes this so. It is only because the rapist considers his masculinity to be reliant on his ability to dominate women and perceives ‘sex’ to be means of enacting such domination that these become motivational factors. As such, whilst masculinity and sex dictate the form of the ‘punishment’, the underlying motivation is ‘domination’ and specifically, the notion that domination is something positive, something that confers value upon the dominator. The same is, of course, true in cases

\(^{584}\) Scully and Marolla, ‘Riding the Bull at Gilley’s’, p. 254.
\(^{585}\) Ibid., p. 255. Another variation on this distinction are cases where, based on an understanding of women as the property of specific men, a rapist targets the survivor in order to punish a man associated with her (husband, father or similar) (Scully and Marolla, ‘Riding the Bull at Gilley’s’, p. 256).
\(^{586}\) Scully and Marolla, ‘Riding the Bull at Gilley’s’, p. 256.
where rape was seen by the rapist as ‘a source of power’. Likewise, in a variant form, it is domination that underpins motivations where ‘rape was used to gain sexual access to women who were unwilling or unavailable’. If the aim is to ‘access’ unwilling women then the true objective is to ‘dominate’ that woman, to overcome and nullify her lack of consent and take control of her body against her will. In other words, if the woman is unwilling then the ‘sexual access’ that is being sought is not motivated by a desire for connection, mutuality and shared experiences with an equal but a desire to occupy and control an object. ‘Masculinity’ and ‘sex’ again feature heavily but the root of the motivation is ultimately ‘domination’ and the individual rapist’s capacity to dominate others.

The role of domination in the other examples Scully and Marolla provide is perhaps less obvious but is ultimately no less central. The remaining motivations—cases where rape is ‘an “added bonus” [...] while committing another crime’, ‘sex without personal feelings’, ‘a form of recreation, a diversion or an adventure’ or simply ‘something that made these men “feel good”’—are all framed in terms of sexual gratification. That is to say, they are presented by the interviewed rapists as acts that are committed for purely ‘carnal’ reasons, to experience sexual pleasure. However, in none of these examples is this truly a motivation; rather it is simply the role the rape fulfilled in the rapist’s broader activities and understandings. The true motivation for these acts lies in the question of why rape makes the rapists ‘feel good’, or why it serves as ‘recreation’, enjoyable ‘sex’ (apparently ‘without emotions’) or a gratifying ‘bonus’. In other words, to understand why such rapists are motivated to commit rape we must understand why the act is rewarding for them, and I suggest that domination is again key to this. Even when presented as ‘sex without emotions’, sexual gratification is not purely mechanical; to the extent that they can be discretely divided, the ‘corporeal’ is always reliant to some degree on the ‘cerebral’, on, as Jerrold Greenberg and others notes, ‘the subjective feeling of pleasure’. In the above cases, it

587 Ibid., p. 254.
588 Ibid.
589 Ibid.
is an understanding of ‘sex’ as a form of domination, and of domination as rewarding (both in terms of masculinity and other cultural associations) that underpins the various motivations, making rape cerebrally and corporeally gratifying. After all, as noted in the previous chapter with regard to objectification, if one understands ‘sex’ to be a mutual, collaborative encounter between two or more autonomous, subjective individuals then rape cannot be gratifying; it can only be abhorrent and repulsive. To find rape rewarding (in the sense of making one ‘feel good’ or serving as a ‘recreation’ and so forth) one must understand ‘sex’ to serve as a form of domination and find domination to be gratifying or rewarding (again, in terms of one’s masculine identity as a ‘dominator’ or because of broader cultural connotations). Accordingly, whilst ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’ are highly significant to these forms of rape motivation, this is once again only the case because ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’ are seen through a lens of normalised and rewarding domination and, as such, it is domination that lies at the root of the motivations.

This even applies in cases where the rapist is not consciously seeking to commit rape but simply does not understand or refuses to recognise consent and its refusal. The obvious examples of this are the naive, self-absorbed teenagers Perry discusses, who are so fixated on ‘getting some’ that they, at least potentially, fail to consider whether this is actually what is wanted by both parties. Despite the fact that it is seemingly ‘just’ ‘sex’ that such individuals are seeking, rather than consciously attempting to dominate another person through rape, it is still domination that is central to the motivation in such cases. Domination, after all, does not necessarily imply physically overpowering an individual; it is just as applicable to an understanding of ‘sex’ as something that does not involve the survivor as an autonomous site of subjectivity but as an object or event that must be overcome or achieved for the rapist’s own benefit. Where someone is seeking ‘sex’ so fixedly that they are oblivious to the survivor’s consent or bodily integrity, they are truly seeking to conquer someone, to be able to say that they achieved a specific act, overcame specific obstacles: in short that

See: pp. 123–124 of this thesis.

Perry, ‘Hooking up with Healthy Sexuality’.

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they achieved dominion over the situation. This point is useful here because it leads us to the fact that such domination motivations are, as I will now discuss, not aberrant and deviant but rather are common throughout normative masculine socialisation and prevailing heterosexual scripts.

That ‘domination’ or power over others is central to hegemonic masculinity in the Anglophone West has been widely observed, although perhaps nowhere more succinctly than in Kimmel’s statement that: ‘the hegemonic definition of manhood is a man in power, a man with power, and a man of power.’\textsuperscript{593} This point is well demonstrated by returning to the notion that a man’s masculinity is never fixed, assured or entirely beyond question but rather exists in competition with other men’s masculinities and must be constantly asserted and reasserted through social action. We have seen how heterosexuality and homophobia play a central role in such displays (and, shortly, we will see how ‘domination’ is also central to the relationship) but there are also several other components that comprise prevailing understandings of what it means to ‘be a man’. As Eileen L. Zubriggen notes, the findings of enquiries into the key elements of Western masculinity are largely interchangeable, the different studies simply employing alternative phrases and criteria to describe what are, effectively, the same elements.\textsuperscript{594} For this reason, Zubriggen amalgamates the various studies to suggest that the key elements of contemporary hegemonic masculinity are: ‘femininity avoidance’, ‘status and achievement’, ‘toughness and aggression’, ‘restricted emotionality’ ‘self-reliance’, ‘non-relational sexuality’, ‘homophobia’ and ‘dominance/power/control’.\textsuperscript{595} However, whilst these concepts are indeed central to contemporary masculinities and do function as separate components of hegemonic masculine identity, I suggest that they are also all expressions of the centrality of domination to hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, each of the above elements can, in fact, be subsumed into the overarching element of ‘domination’ and is largely central to ‘masculinity’ precisely because it helps men to obtain or display ‘domination’.


\textsuperscript{594} Zubriggen, ‘Rape, War, and the Socialization of Masculinity’pp. 540–541.

\textsuperscript{595} Ibid., p 540.
Zurbriggen’s category of ‘status and achievement’ is, perhaps, the most obvious example of this: a man with a greater status (or higher achievements which confer greater status) gains more authority, more social capital, a greater ability to influence, control and dominate others. Indeed, a man’s status is routinely measured, as Susan Griffin observes, in the number of subordinates he has power over or in financial terms wherein money serves, as Ani argues, as ‘the representation of power’ over others.596 In short, the higher a man’s status and achievements the more power over others he has, and, as a result, ‘status and achievement’ may be considered to be significant to contemporary masculinities because it enables or represents a man’s domination of others. The same subsuming is applicable to the other elements. Cliff Cheng argues, for example, that ‘toughness’ (particularly in the form of physical strength) and ‘aggression’ are the traditional, long-celebrated means of dominating and securing power both over women and over other men.597 Associated with this, ‘femininity avoidance’ also equates to domination. In part this is because, in the Anglophone West, femininity is understood to be passive, weak and subordinate, and so to be the antithesis of the ‘toughness and aggression’ with which a man traditionally secures his dominance.598 Perhaps more importantly, however, are the relative social statuses of women (who are, in general terms, the cultural exemplar of femininity) and men. In a statement that mirrors Gayle Rubin’s discussion of the use of women as exchangeable objects in male power-relations, Kimmel observes that women are routinely treated as ‘a kind of currency that men use to improve their ranking on the masculine social scale’; as such, women under Anglophone Western patriarchy, are understood as the dominated property of the powerful, rather than as powerful dominators themselves.599 As such, in the understandings that prevail in the Anglophone West, to be seen as ‘feminine’ is to be seen as dominated—or at least as someone who it is possible to dominate—rather than as an indomitable dominator. ‘Restricted

596 Griffin, Rape: The Politics of Consciousness, p. 22; Ani, Yurugu, p. 385.
emotionality’ equates to domination for a similar reason: emotionality (particularly uncontrolled, ‘hysterical’ emotionality) has long been seen as a ‘feminine’ condition, a sign of ‘female’ weakness. Additionally, together with ‘self-reliance’, ‘restricted emotionality’ performs an image of dominance, of man with no weakness: after all, the performance suggests, who but a powerful, dominant man with no weaknesses could function without ever needing the assistance of others (‘self-reliance’) or emotional support (‘restricted emotionality’)? In this fashion, it is readily apparent that ‘domination’ is central to hegemonic masculinity in the Anglophone West, shaping the key characteristics that define how one successfully performs ‘manliness’. Moreover, this centrality also extends to the intersection of ‘masculinity’ and ‘sex’, allowing ‘sex’ to function as a vehicle for ‘masculine’ domination.

The significance of ‘domination’ to ‘sex’ is also well documented. This is particularly true in terms of the intersection of ‘sex’ and ‘masculinity’, that is, where heterosexuality is performed in order to ‘prove’ one’s manliness. Previously, we noted that such displays frequently rely on a particularly predatory and supposedly compulsive mode of heterosexual performance. We can expand this point here to note that it is the dominance component of such heterosexual modes that makes them both a highly common and a highly normative means of demonstrating ‘manliness’. The most obvious example of this is, as Kimmel suggests, the widespread ‘masculine’ practice of boasting about one’s ‘latest sexual conquest’: here, as in the previous discussion of rapists who are not conscious of their own transgression, the model of ‘sex’ at play is one framed around domination, not necessarily through physically overpowering women but through an understanding of women as a goal or achievement to be overcome rather than as a subjective being with whom to interact. Importantly, in this we can already identify the extent to which ‘domination’ shapes understandings of ‘sex’ as held by both ‘rapists’ and ‘non-rapists’ (to the extent that these categories can actually exist as truly discrete). We see this further in the fact that, as Nicola Gavey

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600 See, for example: Jack Sawyer ‘On Male Liberation’, in Feminism and Masculinities, ed. by Peter F. Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 25–27 (p. 26).
notes, dominant ‘discourses of sex and gender’ present and produce male and female sexuality in a manner that is conducive to sexual displays of male dominance: ‘women’s passive, acquiescing (a)sexuality and men’s forthright, urgent pursuit of sexual “release”’. Playing out the sexual script suggested by this understanding of male and female sexuality allows men to obtain and display power through the sexual act; indeed, this recalls Gilbert and Webster’s observation that ‘[m]any rapes merely extend traditional heterosexual exchanges’. Quite simply, without this understanding of gendered sexuality, this direct extension would not exist because there would be no foundation from which to perceive ‘male’ sexuality as conquering a supposedly passive and reluctant ‘female’ sexuality.

Likewise, it recalls Perry’s observation that men are not socialised ‘to expect and proactively ensure that every sexual interaction is marked by mutual enjoyment and respect’. In other words, prevailing models of heterosex are not concerned with ‘relation’ or ‘mutuality’; they are focused on the man’s accomplishment of an objective, and his conquest of an object. As suggested above, just because this does not follow the model of physical ‘conquest’ does not mean that its purpose and motivation is not domination: it still revolves around engineering the situation, controlling the other party’s response through pressure and coercion or other less obviously malevolent forms of manipulation in order to achieve ‘victory’. If heterosex is understood to be ‘relational’ or ‘mutual’, then it does not have the capacity to achieve or express domination in the same manner; conceived of as it is in the dominant discourses, however, it becomes what Perry calls an ‘adversarial climate’ of which ‘sexual violence is one of many inevitable negative outcomes’. In this manner, we again see that domination is a central component of normative heterosexual practices and understandings and plays a key role in motivating much ‘normal’ heterosex rather than only deviant sexual violence. This point is reinforced by looking briefly again at the homophobia that is so central to dominant models of both heterosexual identity and masculine identity. After all, if male sexuality is conceived of in terms of objectifying...

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602 Gavey, Just Sex?, p. 3.
603 Gilbert and Webster cited in Kelly, Surviving Sexual Violence, p. 74.
605 Ibid., p. 200.
domination—the act of penetration understood as a form of conquest—then homosexual sex, particularly the notion of being penetrated, is distinctly threatening to hegemonic masculinity, as Emmanuel Reynaud observes. He writes that

Homosexuality directly threatens man’s power, as it excludes him when it is between women, and when it is between men it represents the risk for him of being sexually appropriated ... the possibility of being used as a sexual object by a man usually causes him great anxiety.\footnote{Reynaud, ‘Holy Virility’, p. 146.}

Accordingly, homophobia (which, as Kimmel suggests, is essentially an expression of ‘the fear of being perceived as gay’) serves as a public display of a man’s heterosexuality, his impenetrability, his status as dominator not dominated: in short, as a display of his domination.\footnote{Kimmel, ‘Masculinity as Homophobia’, p. 191.} The above analysis all points towards the fact that rapists’ motivations, although diverse, revolve around the intersection of masculinity, sex and domination, the last of which provides the central motivation factor for sexual violence. We have also seen that such dominance motivations are far from aberrant and deviant but rather are deeply ingrained in both domination models of masculinity and prevailing understandings of heterosex. However, it is also crucial to realise that such dominance motivations extend far beyond these areas and that they are, as I will now demonstrate, perhaps the most common and significant motivation in the dominant culture of the Anglophone West.

Conquest and Control: Sexual Violence in a Culture of Domination

Although manifesting in different forms, flowing down different channels and being played out in different fields, dominance motivation—that is, being motivated by the aim of attaining power over others—is central to and extremely widespread throughout the dominant culture of the Anglophone West. Indeed, it is so widespread, so extensively normalised, that it is often almost invisible, but if we actually look for it, it is readily identified in numerous ‘everyday’ motivations and desires. Robert A. Emmons and Laura
A. King suggest the following as the key forms of power or dominance based motivations: ‘(a) establishing or maintaining power; (b) having impact, control, or influence over others; (c) seeking fame or public attention; (d) comparison and/or competition with others; (e) dominating, persuading, or convincing others; and (f) arousing emotions in others’. This is a relatively comprehensive list, although it is, I think, improved by including the desire for wealth because, as Ani reminds us, financial wealth is a representation of power over others. With this addition, we have a useful framework for considering quite how normative dominance motivations are in the Anglophone West; after all, manifestations of the above categories are almost self-evident. For example, a desire to climb in workplace hierarchies or to excel in business, politics and other competitive fields contains at least the first two examples and my addition of money as symbolic power, and has the potential to include all of the others too. Likewise, we can plot several of the motivation forms onto a desire to excel at sports and other activities that are framed around the notion of dominating both one’s rivals and the frailties of the human body. Other examples are also readily available, ranging from the wish to gain (and, especially, restrict others’ access to) knowledge for purpose of gaining power and influence to military adventurism at both the level of soldiers desiring to dominate ‘the enemy’ and officers wanting to dominate ‘the enemy’ and their own subordinates. At the very least, we can suggest that the vast majority of ‘successful’ figures in the Anglophone West embody at least one of Emmons and King’s dominance motivations, if only by virtue of the fact that, as we have repeatedly seen, these forms of motivation are required for one to excel in most activities.

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609 Ani, Yurugu, p. 385.
611 Michael Atkinson and Kevin Young, Deviance and Social Control in Sport (Champaign: Human Kinetics, 2008), p. 142; Connell, Masculinities, p. 64.
Anglophone Western culture recognises as significant. Indeed, as previously noted, (direct or indirect, symbolic) power over others is the cornerstone of the dominant culture’s definitions of ‘success’, which revolves around high social status, money and social influence. In this sense, dominating others is highly culturally rewarding: if one has power over others then one is perceived to be a ‘success’, to be an admirable, influential and inspirational figure (and with this, of course, comes further power and dominance).

Of course, such motivations are not always direct and conscious; that is, dominance motivations are not necessarily framed as a desire to control others and subjugate them to one’s own will. Even seemingly innocuous desires— aspiring to be more popular, knowledgeable or influential, for example—may ultimately function as domination. As Harold B. Barclay observes

the significant feature of power is how it readily becomes a matter of domination [...] For instance, in my argument to convince another person I may resort to domination by asserting my assumed greater knowledge, social position, or more sophisticated ability to express myself. In such cases, I am consciously or unconsciously seeking to dominate.

Indeed, one might not even desire domination per se and still find it to be central to one’s motivation. For example, an individual may desire to gain a promotion so that they can work fewer hours and have more money to buy services that increase the time available to enjoy leisure activities. This is a commonplace enough desire, and the motivation appears to be premised on a wish for personal autonomy rather than the domination of others. However, the tasks that this person wishes to avoid doing in order to enjoy greater personal autonomy must be performed by others, be they workplace subordinates or service providers. In this manner, whilst the individual’s desire may be focused on personal autonomy, when this is filtered through Western hierarchical organisation and monetisation of everything from food

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613 See: p. 198 of this thesis.
614 Indeed, this recalls Griffin’s point that ‘success’ is, in certain circumstances, actually measured in the number of subordinates one has power over (Griffin, Rape: The Politics of Experience, p. 22).
and water to leisure time and a place in which to exist upon the earth, it manifests as a dominance motivation. That is, the domination is indirect: it relies on the domination inherent to a socio-political system where if one does not devote a large proportion of one’s time to earning money then one does not have a place to live, food to eat and other necessities, and allows this to ‘force’ others to do undesirable tasks and provide more personal autonomy for those with greater power or dominance. In this sense, in the dominant culture, even a wish for ‘autonomy’ is frequently perceived to be reliant on having power over others and directly or indirectly compelling them to work for your benefit. Ani locates this as a component of Western individualist democratic organisation, arguing that, in the West, ‘[d]emocracy is envisioned as the system that guarantees the “freedom” of the individual to do what she must on behalf of her own self-interest, which in turn she interprets as the control of others’. In other words, the intense focus upon ‘the individual’ in Anglophone Western culture combined with hierarchical organisation creates a climate in which it is widely understood that the only way to serve one’s own interests—even seemingly innocuous interests such as ‘freedom’ and ‘autonomy’—is at the expense of, and by dominating, others. This is exacerbated by the rhetoric of ceaseless competition that frequently accompanies Anglophone Western individualism in the form of platitudes such as ‘it’s a jungle out there’ or ‘it’s a dog eat dog world’ which suggest that to survive one must dominate or be dominated by others. This understanding helps to create a society in which it is ‘normal’ to seek to dominate others; indeed, as the allusions to life in the West being ‘a jungle’ implies, such competitive domination is frequently presented as being an aspect of ‘human nature’.

However, as with many things I have discussed throughout these thesis, this supposedly ‘natural’ motivation is, in fact, the product of the dominant culture of the Anglophone West.

In a very significant sense, the Anglophone West embodies dominance motivation: it is ‘motivated’ by a ‘need’ to sustain and expand itself, to

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616 Ani, Yurugu, p. 382.
maintain and increase its global power. Indeed, one of the most fundamental aspects of ‘civilisation’ generally is a desire to dominate non-human ‘nature’, to subordinate it to civilised humanity’s own ends.\textsuperscript{618} Similarly, both the contemporary Anglophone West’s presence in the world and the history its adopts by presenting itself as the progeny of early ‘Western’ civilisations are profoundly shaped by the domination of other cultures, from the Roman Empire to the colonisation of America to the neo-colonialism and ‘oil wars’ of today.\textsuperscript{619} Likewise, both its current formation and those found throughout its adopted line of succession are characterised by extreme levels of social control and hierarchical dominance, maintaining the internal power structures and extraction of wealth, resources, and labour that shape its internal organisation.\textsuperscript{620} The crucial point here is that it is no coincidence that the ‘civilised’ Anglophone West engages in such practices: it requires these forms of dominance in order to exist and expand. Derrick Jensen observes that ‘[c]ivilization is not and can never be sustainable. This is especially true for industrial civilization’; he supports this point by noting that, by definition, ‘civilisation’ involves human population densities that exceed the amount of resources available from the local landbase, meaning that ‘civilisation’ cannot support itself in a sustainable manner without routinely gaining resources from other areas.\textsuperscript{621} However, Jensen also notes that the communities living in these other areas ‘do not often voluntarily give up [...] the resources on which their communities are based until their communities have been destroyed’: that is, acquiring resources from external sources in the quantities needed to keep ‘civilisation’ functioning (let alone in the quantities needed to support its excesses and extremes) requires the subjugation,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[619] For a detailed study of Western imperialism and the domination of other cultures, see: Timothy H. Parsons, \textit{The Rule of Empires: Those Who Built Them, Those Who Endured Them, and Why They Always Fall} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). For discussion of the contemporary Anglophone West’s perception of itself as the progeny of ancient civilisations, see: Thomas H. Greer and Gavin Lewis, \textit{A Brief History of the Western World}, 9\textsuperscript{th} edn (Belmont: Thompson Wadsworth, 2005), p xxiv.
\item[620] In conjunction with the previous point, this recalls Diamond’s observation, cited several times throughout this thesis, that ‘[c]ivilization originates in conquest abroad and repression at home’ (Diamond, \textit{In Search of the Primitive}, p 1).
\end{footnotes}
exploitation, and often colonisation of other communities.\textsuperscript{622} As such, ‘domination’ is integral to the ‘civilised’ Anglophone West, fuelling its continued functioning and constant expansion. Perhaps even more crucially, at least for the purposes of the current discussion, the Anglophone West needs individuals to enact this domination: ‘agents of civilisation’ who are motivated by and desire domination and, in acting on this desire, further the dominance of the Anglophone West.

Although ‘military intervention’ (largely a ‘Newspeak’ translation of ‘imperialist invasion’) still contributes significantly to the extraction of the resources the Anglophone West ‘requires’ from the Majority World, it does so largely by removing political obstacles (such as uncooperative ‘regimes’) and ‘opening up’ foreign markets, whilst the actual extraction takes more insidious, neo-colonial forms.\textsuperscript{623} Central to such forms (with or without military assistance) are the actions of West-centric institutions like the IMF and the World Trade Organization (WTO), who pressure Majority World governments into accepting SAPs that make their countries more ‘open’ to profiteering by Western corporations.\textsuperscript{624} Accordingly, the institutions of the Anglophone West are ultimately reliant on individuals whose dominance motivations tally with their own to staff and direct such institutions (as well as serve in corporations, militaries and so forth). In short, without such figures, the Anglophone West would not be able to maintain its primary function of sustaining and extending its own power.

This is not to say that these individuals have a personal desire to dominate the Majority World, but simply that their own desire for dominance within the internal hierarchies of their organisations and—through wealth, power and influence—in society more broadly corresponds to the aims of the Anglophone West. Importantly, the reason they have such desires and motivations is because they are normatively socialised and so, as discussed above, understand dominance to be culturally rewarding, the measure of

\textsuperscript{622} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{624} Michael Parenti, \textit{Democracy for the Few}, 9\textsuperscript{th} edn (Boston: Wadsworth, 2002), pp. 145−146.
success. As the above analysis has begun to demonstrate, domination has this cultural 'meaning' because it is of central importance to the dominant culture of the Anglophone West. That is, the discourses of civilisation place value on domination and so also assign value to those who enact such domination, which in turn becomes culturally recognised as a valued and rewarded 'characteristic' and is replicated and reproduced through normative socialisation. Moreover, the Anglophone West’s need for dominance-motivated individuals is by no means limited to its ‘leading figures’: it needs all or most of its subjects to keep seeking dominance, whether that takes the form of dominance-driven soldiers enabling civilised expansionism or workers seeking promotions and extra money and so maintaining the capitalist status quo and economic circulation or many other forms of dominance. Likewise, it needs individuals who have the psychological capacity to follow up on this desire for dominance—enabled by self-interest, lack of inhibitory empathy and a sense of entitlement—because simply wishing to dominate is of little real use to the dominant culture. Accordingly, as we have seen, the psychological capacity to dominate and abuse others also becomes part of the Anglophone West’s normative socialisation patterns. This means that the dominant culture socialises individuals (and particularly men, a point I will return to presently) to develop both the psychological capacity and the motivation to dominate others. In a society that also routinely objectifies women, reducing them to dehumanised capable bodies, this lays a significant foundation for widespread presence of rapist mentalities; indeed, it arguably makes the Anglophone West’s rape culture an all but inevitable component of the dominant culture. To rework Sanday’s statement yet again, we can note that where ‘domination is a way of life, domination frequently achieves sexual expression in the form of rape’, that where it is ‘normal’, ‘acceptable’ and highly rewarding to dominate others, this prevailing understanding will be manifest in numerous forms of ideology and behaviour, including sexual violence.625 The fact that these traits are culturally valued and culturally coded as ‘masculine’ does not necessarily imply a causal relationship brought about by the patriarchal dominance of society; rather, whilst patriarchal social organisation is central to associating these valued traits

625 Italics indicate the modified sections of this statement. For my earlier reworking, see: p. 106. For the original statement, see: Sanday, ‘The Socio-Cultural Context of Rape’, p. 61.
with masculinity, and helps to perpetuate this value in doing so, the actual roots of this value lie in the fact that characteristics such as dominance serve the Anglophone West.

In societies with different priorities, different modes of living that do not revolve around power, exploitation and abuse, traits such as a capacity and desire for dominating others are not valued. As Fromm notes:

> The primitive band society and probably prehistoric hunters since about fifty thousand years ago were fundamentally different from civilized societies precisely because human relations were not governed by the principles of control and power; their functioning depended on mutuality. An individual endowed with the passion for control would have been a social failure and without influence. 

Whilst Fromm’s statement is perhaps a little sweeping and generalising, the central point is still significant: in a society that does not value domination, the capacity and desire to dominate others is not be culturally valued, and individuals with these characteristics are not respected, celebrated or rewarded. In such a society, those with dominator mentalities, those with rapist mentalities, would truly be aberrant and deviant, their desires and behaviours marking them as dangerously antisocial. In contrast, for cultures such as the Anglophone West these traits are ‘normal’: interpersonal manifestations of a cultural drive to dominate, exploit, conquer and abuse. As the previous chapter demonstrated, rape survivors are not only survivors of patriarchal gender violence but of the dominant culture itself, ‘collateral damage’ in a culture that views the world as composed of consumable objects and rapable bodies. The same also applies to rapists: men who commit rape are not only enacting patterns of normatively socialised masculine violence but also one of the core behaviours of the ‘civilised’ Anglophone West, playing out the cultural logic of domination through their own desires and motivations. Challenging the patriarchal organisation of society, prevailing patterns of masculine socialisation and dominant models of heterosex are, of course, all central to undermining the Anglophone West’s rape culture and reducing the number of men who are psychologically capable of and motivated to commit sexual violence. However, this struggle

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cannot be treated as an isolated issue, unrelated to the dominant culture at large; to be truly effective, it must be located in the context of wider patterns of exploitation and abuse, of a culture that values, rewards and relies upon domination and those who pursue it. Only by seeing the capacity and desire to rape as deeply rooted in the ideologies and practices of the dominant culture can we understand the true extent of their cultural foundations, and only by doing this can we halt the social production of rapist mentalities and, ultimately, destabilise the rape culture of the Anglophone West.
Conclusion

On October 12th 1492, Christopher Columbus and a party of fellow Europeans arrived at an unknown island far from their homes and far from their intended destination of South Asia. In truth, Columbus was not the first Westerner to reach this land—Nordic and Celtic sailors had sailed to the continent centuries earlier—although he is the most celebrated and, in many respects, the most significant. Nor was this truly a ‘New World’ waiting to be ‘discovered’: when Columbus and his men came ashore, they were met by those who already inhabited the island, a people whose manner and behaviour, whose whole way of life, were starkly different to those of the visiting Europeans. Columbus described these people, the Arawaks of the Bahamas, as remarkably hospitable and generous, rarely disposed to conflict and with no apparent greed or covetousness; their societies were marked by relatively egalitarian cooperation, as opposed to the violently maintained hierarchies of Europe, and their gender relations were characterised by equality and by sexual and reproductive freedom. Faced with a people who offered no violence, who did not know swords and ‘cut themselves out of ignorance’ upon seeing them for the first time, a people who were gladly willing to share and trade freely with the Europeans, Columbus concluded that the Arawak ‘would make fine servants [...] With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want.’ Whilst this response might appear deplorable and disgusting to modern readers, it is important to realise that Columbus’ perspective was far from aberrant, in the context of fifteenth-century Europe. As Jack D. Forbes argues, ‘Columbus stands as a clear example of [...] a killer and a cannibal, a user and abuser of his fellow human beings. But, of course, Columbus was not unique, nor was he alone’. Rather, Columbus was acting within the bounds of accepted behaviour in a culture that routinely justified and celebrated the abuse,

630 Forbes, *Columbus and other Cannibals*, pp. 33–34.
exploitation and murder of those it deemed inferior and disposable. Indeed, as Forbes continues, "the “heroes” of European historiography, the heroes of the history textbooks, are usually imperialists, butchers, founders of authoritarian regimes, exploiters of the poor, liars, cheats and torturers". In his perception of the Arawak people as commodities and objects to be enslaved, traded and slaughtered at will, Columbus—like not only the ‘heroes’ of Western history but a great many ‘normal’ Westerners too—is expressing modes of perception and relation which are grounded in the twin beliefs that some lives are worth less than others and so may be consumed without regret or recourse, and that the domination of others is a great achievement, bestowing honour and ‘success’ upon the dominator.

In the days, months and years following this initial ‘contact’, the twin beliefs that it is acceptable to objectify and consume others and that conquest and subjugation are laudable and rewarding produced numerous atrocities: children cut open to test the sharpness of blades, babies killed and used as roadside markers, individuals used to feed Spanish hunting dogs or simply decapitated for the amusement of soldiers, to name only a few examples in a campaign that wiped out half of the 250,000 indigenous inhabitants in only two years. It is perhaps of no surprise that, amongst these violent expressions of ‘civilised’ Western culture, we can also find the routine rape of Arawak women. Michelle de Cuneo, a personal friend of Columbus who joined him on his second voyage to the Americas, provides the first record of such sexual violence:

I captured a very beautiful Carib woman [...] with whom [...] I conceived desire to take pleasure. I wanted to put my desire into execution but she did not want it and treated me with her finger nails in such a manner that I wished I had never begun [...] I took a rope and thrashed her well, for which she raised such unheard screams that you would not have believed your ears. Finally we came to an agreement in such manner that I can tell you she seemed to have been brought up in a school of harlots.

631 Ibid., p. 38.
632 Stannard, American Holocaust, pp. 83–84; Zinn, A People’s History of America, p. 5.
633 Stannard, American Holocaust, p. 84.
De Cuneo’s rape—and the innumerable other cases that occurred—is a manifestation of the cultural understandings that shape the colonisers’ actions more generally: the normalising of objectification and the celebration of domination. Of course, it is also a specifically gendered act that expressed a specific set of gender politics; after all, European society at the time was, as Andrea Smith notes, structured by a ‘thoroughly misogynistic [... ] Christian patriarchy [...] [which] was inherently violent’. However, both these gender politics and the rampant sexual violence of the invading Europeans were also part of a wider pattern and a manifestation of a prevailing understanding that some lives are worth less than others and so may be legitimately consumed and that domination is a mark of triumph and success. Without these underlying beliefs, there would have been no foundation from which to reduce the Arawak women to ‘rapable bodies’, nor from which to consider their domination through sexual violence to be ‘rewarding’ or, indeed, anything but a grotesque and reprehensible violation.

Of course, the response to these matters most favoured by apologists for Western civilisation is that these acts—the rapes, the mutilations, the genocide and colonisation more generally—were the product of a supposedly more violent age which the contemporary Anglophone West has outgrown and ‘progressed’ beyond. As reassuring as many may find this notion, it is far from the truth: the contemporary dominant culture of the Anglophone West is also characterised by routine exploitation, murder, colonisation and abuse, and it is marked by extremely high levels of sexual violence. Moreover, like fifteenth-century Europe before it, the contemporary Anglophone West is profoundly shaped by the understandings that some lives are worth less than others and so may be consumed with impunity and that dominating others is a laudable act that bestows honour and worth upon

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635 Conversely, apologists typically treat the ‘noble’ traits embodied by Columbus—bravery, determination, ‘pioneering spirit’, a hunger for ‘adventure’ and ‘exploration’, and so forth—as expressions of a stable, transhistorically constant ‘Western’ character; accordingly, many such accounts, as Howard Zinn notes, skip over the inconvenient genocide in favour of celebrating the ‘discovery’ and the great ‘progress’ it heralded (Zinn, *A People’s History of America*, pp. 7–9).

636 This includes the fact that America is still an occupied territory the indigenous inhabitants of which are routinely subjected to exploitation and abuse including extreme levels of sexual violence (for discussion, see Smith’s *Conquest*).
the dominator. As I have argued throughout this thesis, it is this that underpins the exploitation, abuse and violence that structure the contemporary dominant culture, and it is this, ultimately that provides the crucial foundation for the Anglophone West’s rape culture.

Dominant Culture as Rape Culture: The Case against the ‘Civilised’ Anglophone West

It is perhaps useful at this stage to reiterate the arguments presented in the preceding chapters, to clarify the argument that the Anglophone West’s rape culture is a deeply-rooted, inevitable and arguably inherent aspect of the dominant culture of the Anglophone West itself before going on to question how this might relate to future anti-rape scholarship and activism. A key foundation of this position is the refutation of the long-standing association of rape with ‘savagery’ (and the consequent disassociation of sexual violence and civilisation). In the first chapter we saw how this understanding exerts a pronounced influence on how rape is conceived of both in the dominant culture at large and in many feminist analyses. Perhaps the most immediately apparent examples of this can be found in the assumption that sexual violence is a far bigger problem in non-Western, supposedly more ‘primitive’ cultures. This perception is based on an implicit understanding of the West as a superior, ‘progressive’ society; as Christine Helliwell notes, ‘[b]ecause the practice is widespread in “civilised” Western countries, it is assumed to pervade all other societies as well, since these latter are understood as located closer to the savagery end of the evolutionary ladder. The implicit conjecture here is that rape is an ‘uncivilised’ practice, entirely at odds with the ideologies, ethics and practices of the ‘civilised’ West. This same conjecture, in a variant form, also pervades many feminist and non-feminist treatments of prehistory, a clear demonstration of which can be found in Susan Brownmiller’s assumption that, because rape is rife in the contemporary West, it must necessarily have been at least as widespread in the ‘the violent landscape inhabited by primitive woman and man’. As in

the treatment of non-Western cultures, the underlying understanding of rape here is again that it is something ‘savage’ and ‘natural’, something ‘uncivilised’ that a culture progresses past by becoming more civilised. These same basic understandings also routinely appear in the treatment of rape within the contemporary Anglophone West. Often this takes the form of an assumed tension between a man’s apparent ‘civilised’ erudition and refinement and his use of sexual violence (the apparent surprise that a sophisticated and successful man like Strauss-Kahn could commit rape being a case in point). In other cases, these ideas manifest in racist and classist stereotyping of men of colour and poor men which assume firstly that men in these ‘groups’ are more prone to rape, secondly that they are inherently less civilised or less successfully inculcated into the dominant culture and finally that this is the cause of their alleged predisposition to sexual violence. Such arguments suggest that there are ‘subcultures of violence’—‘savage’ cultural enclaves outside the civilising influence of the dominant culture—in which poor men and men of colour continue to enact their ‘natural’ instincts for rape because they have not been socialised to do otherwise by the supposedly rape-opposed dominant culture of the Anglophone West.

Although they are concerned with different contexts, each of the above examples makes the same basic arguments: that rape is a ‘savage’ drive rooted either in ‘human nature’ or in violent habits developed in more ‘primitive’ times and places, and that to end sexual violence requires ‘advancing’ away from ‘nature’ and ‘savagery’ by becoming more ‘civilised’. None of these arguments, however, actually have any reasonable grounding. For example, despite the attention paid to—and accusations levelled at—non-Western countries, the ‘civilised’ Anglophone West has some of the highest rates of rape incidence in the world, certainly remarkably higher than many supposedly ‘primitive’ cultures. Similarly, whilst we cannot claim that


640 This ‘subculture of violence’ theory was formulated by Marvin Wolfgang, first applied to sexual violence by Menachem Amir and popularised in this usage by Brownmiller (Brownmiller, Against Our Will, pp. 180–181).

641 For statistics (as well as an overview of some the key problems with statistical analysis of rape), see: Kyle Kim, ‘Which country has the highest reported incidents of rape?’ (18/3/2013) <www.globalpost.com/dispatches/globalpost-blogs/quick-click/which-country-has-the-
rape was not as common in prehistory as it is in the contemporary Anglophone West, there is also simply no evidence to support the suggestion that it was: Brownmiller and others’ arguments are composed entirely of supposition, the projection of contemporary Western understandings onto entirely unrelated cultures and the prejudiced assumption that ‘civilised’ Western culture is the most egalitarian and peaceful form of social organisation. The theories underpinning the notion of ‘subcultures of violence’ are similarly unfounded in that they are premised on the groundless belief that violence, including sexual violence, is somehow at odds with the ideologies and practices of the dominant culture, meaning that rape must be ‘learned’ in a subcultural setting. Accordingly, as soon as one explores the fact that the dominant culture is, in fact, rife with—and, indeed, founded on and structured, organised and maintained by—violence, exploitation, abuse and oppression, the argument that rape is solely the product of subcultural socialisation is shown to be untenable. In this manner, the first chapter worked to discredit arguments that rape is simply a ‘natural’ or ‘savage’ instinct that the dominant culture of the Anglophone West struggles to contain and control. This opened up the possibility, introduced at the end of the chapter and explored in more detail throughout the rest of the thesis, that not only do the ideologies, philosophies, practices and ethics of the dominant culture fail to prevent rape, they may actually be central to the widespread use of sexual violence throughout the the Anglophone West.

The second chapter was concerned with one half of the above argument: the normalising of objectification in Western culture and the ways in which this supports the Anglophone West’s rape culture. Central to this discussion is the argument that the civilised West has an underlying philosophy of objectification. Drawing on Forbes’ concept of the ‘cannibal psychosis’ of the civilised—the belief in the acceptability of ‘consuming [...] another’s life for one’s own private purpose or profit’—this argument suggests that there is a foundational acceptance of objectifying and using others that is deeply rooted in Western culture and which underpins all oppression and exploitation in the

highest-reported-incidents-rape-data> [accessed 12 September 2013]. For further statistics and analysis, see: pp. 12–15 of this thesis.
dominant culture of the Anglophone West.\footnote{Forbes, \textit{Columbus and Other Cannibals}, p. 24. Italics in original.} Of course, in its many manifestations throughout the dominant culture, objectification operates on vastly different scales and draws on different forms of ‘justification’ and different supporting traditions, systems and structures. However, as I have argued, underpinning all cases is the basic belief that some lives are worth less than others and so may be legitimately consumed by those who are more powerful and privileged. Without the core belief that it can ever be acceptable to use others as objects, specific forms of objectification and consumption would have no ideological base. Again, the actual ‘justifications’ for such practices take different forms but they are each founded on the same core belief that objectification is, in at least some cases, ‘normal’ and ‘justifiable’. In the same manner, it is this underlying philosophy of objectification that underpins the Anglophone West’s rape culture for, without the core belief that objectifying and consuming others is acceptable, there is no foundation for sexual objectification and ‘consumption’ through rape.

The above point is well demonstrated by contrasting the Anglophone West with other cultures. Peggy Reeves Sanday’s study ‘The Socio-Cultural Context of Rape’ is perhaps the most ambitious investigation of this issue and it provides us with a crucial point: that, by and large, cultures with low incidence of sexual violence share common characteristics that differ from those shared by cultures with a high incidence of sexual violence.\footnote{Peggy Reeves Sanday, ‘The Socio-Cultural Context of Rape: A Cross-Cultural Study’, in \textit{Gender Violence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives}, ed. by Laura O’Toole, Jessica R. Schiffman and Margie L. Kiter Edwards, \textit{2nd edn} (New York and London: New York University Press, 1997), pp. 52–66 (pp. 52–53).} Unsurprisingly, a culture’s gender relations are a key determinate of both rape incidence and associated cultural attitudes but, significantly, the correlations and trends revealed by the survey also extend beyond this.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 59, 65.} In particular, Sanday highlights a prominent relationship between violence in a general sense and sexual violence specifically, noting that ‘where interpersonal violence is a way of life, violence frequently achieves sexual expression’.\footnote{Ibid., p. 61.} In demonstrating this, Sanday presents rape as related to, and an expression of, cultural attitudes at large, rather than only those
relating directly to gender and sexuality, locating it within the broad matrix of culturally prescribed practices. Sanday’s findings also go beyond this to highlight further correlations such as the fact that cultures with low levels of rape incidence also have low levels of hierarchical social organisation or exploitative attitudes towards non-human nature. In this manner, it becomes readily apparent that in cultures where objectification in a general sense is rarely practiced, sexual violence rarely occurs, whereas, to modify Sanday’s previous statement, ‘where objectification is a way of life, objectification frequently achieves sexual expression in the form of rape’. The traditional cultural values found in many American Indian nations reinforce this point. As Forbes notes, the cultures of Native North America are characterised by a general lack of objectification stemming from a belief in ‘the sacredness, beauty, power and relatedness of all forms of existence’. This lack of generalised objectification correlates directly with the fact that, whilst, as Smith notes, ‘gender violence occurred prior to colonization’, it was rare and culturally unacceptable (certainly compared to the contemporary Anglophone West). Of course, a significant aspect of this can be explained by the generally egalitarian gender organisation of Native North America but this too is part of a wider pattern of cultural values that abhor the objectification and consumption of others. Indeed, as Forbes notes, ‘[t]he rape of a woman, the rape of a land, and the rape of a people, they are all the same. And they are the same as the rape of the earth, the rape of the rivers, the rape of the forest, the rape of the air, the rape of the animals.’ Each of these forms of ‘rape’ is premised on the same foundational belief in the acceptability of objectifying and consuming others; accordingly, without the foundation that normalises such objectification and consumption, sexual violence is rare, as in Native North America, whereas in the Anglophone West, where this foundation is provided by the underlying philosophy of objectification, rape is commonplace, normalised and often legitimised.

Importantly, this is more than a conceptual connection: many of the forms of objectification discussed previously not only share common roots in the

646 Ibid., p. 60.
647 Forbes, Columbus and other Cannibals, p. 15. Italics in original.
648 Smith, Conquest, p. 19.
649 Forbes, Columbus and other Cannibals, p. xvi.
West’s underlying philosophy of objectification but also intersect with sexual
development and contribute directly to the Anglophone West’s rape problem.
That is to say, it is not only sexual objectification that marks women as
culturally rapable; rather, as Thomas Macaulay Millar observes, ‘racism,
classism, and the prison-industrial complex, as just a few examples, create
circumstances under which some women can be and are raped with
impunity’.650 Indeed, the intersection of many such systems of oppression
produces some of the most virulent forms of objectification, marking
marginalised women as especially consumable. Sexual violence against
women of colour provides a particularly clear demonstration of this. Kimberlé
Williams Crenshaw notes that ‘the intersection of racism and sexism factors
into Black women’s lives in ways that cannot be captured wholly by looking at
the race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately.’651 That is to
say, women of colour are not only the targets of white-supremacist
oppression that presents people of colour as subhuman and ‘savage’, nor
only of misogynistic sexual objectification that marks women as rapable, but
of a distinct intersectional form of oppression that combines and, in many
respects, goes beyond both. This is highly significant to the issue of sexual
violence for, in this context, as Patricia Hill Collins asserts ‘[r]ace becomes
the distinguishing feature in determining the type of objectification women will
encounter. Whiteness as symbolic of both civilization and culture is used to
separate objects from animals’.652 In other words, the intersectional
oppression of women of colour not only objectifies but often entirely
dehumanises them; this, in turn, marks women of colour not only as rapable
but, in a sense, as ‘unrapable’ because, as Karen Michelle Bowdre
(summarising bell hooks) observes, in the dominant culture ‘animals cannot
be raped, hence, Black women [can] not be raped’.653 Moreover, it is not only
in the sense of not qualifying for ‘human’ rights that women of colour are

653 Karen Michelle Bowdre, Racial Mythologies: African American Female Images and Representation from Minstrelsy to the Studio Era (PhD dissertation, University of Southern California, 2006), p. 12 [retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses AAT 3236482].

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marked as rapable/unrapable. The same ‘animalising’ stereotyping presents women of colour as being inherently promiscuous, as having ‘bestial’ sexual urges. This alleged animalistic ‘hypersexuality’ means that, in the dominant culture, women of colour are understood to be always consenting to any sexual contact in any context and so to be effectively ‘unrapable’ in the sense that no sexual contact can be classed as rape because ‘consent’ is believed to be automatically given.

Similar intersectional oppression characterises the experiences of other marginalised women too and also serves to mark them as culturally rapable (often by presenting them as inherently unrapable). Women who have immigrated to the Anglophone West, for example, are routinely objectified and treated as not having the right to bodily integrity supposedly given to non-immigrant women by virtue of their ‘citizenship’. Likewise, sex workers are, almost by definition, seen as ‘always consenting’ as well as being treated as though they have forfeited their right to give or refuse consent because of their profession and as though they are so ‘tainted’ and ‘impure’ that they too are dehumanised (and so have no ‘human right’ to bodily integrity). Variations of these forms of objectification also characterise the experiences of other marginalised women such as queer women, trans women (and trans men) and disabled women, many of whom are subject to forms of intersectional objectification that marks them as culturally rapable. In this manner, objectification can be seen as frequently taking complex intersectional forms that need to be challenged not in isolation but as a complex, multifaceted whole.

The Anglophone West’s rape culture, then, not only has an ideological foundation in the West’s underlying philosophy of objectification, but is also shaped and structured by multiple, intersectional forms of oppression and objectification, each with its roots in the underlying philosophy. Crucially, however, these forms of objectification—and, indeed, the underlying philosophy of objectification itself—are not incidental: they are central aspects of Western culture and play a vital role in enabling the Anglophone West to maintain and extend itself. Because, as has been noted at several points in the thesis, the ‘civilised’ Anglophone West is unsustainable (not to
mention extremely avaricious), it is always reliant on taking from others both within and outside its borders; it requires the exploitation of other countries and cultures (especially those in the Majority World) and of marginalised communities within its own borders to fuel its constant consumption and constant expansion. In other words, the Anglophone West is reliant on objectification: without the notion that it is acceptable to consume others it could not have the resources, expendable labourers, exploitable communities and conquerable, colonisable lands that it requires. Accordingly, the foundations—and many of the structures—of the Anglophone West’s rape culture are actually highly significant to the ways in which the dominant culture operates. Whilst we cannot state conclusively that this means that the rape culture is inherent to the Anglophone West, it does raise the point that it is an inevitable expression of philosophies and ideologies that are currently integral to the dominant culture and which cannot be neatly removed from it without significant and widespread social change.

The final chapter reinforced this argument by exploring how the structures, systems, philosophies and ideologies of the dominant culture not only inevitably mark women as rapable but also inevitably produce men who are motivated to commit, and capable of committing, rape. This argument involved refuting two myths that shape popular and specialist understandings of rapists: that rape is a ‘natural’ instinct and that rapists are aberrant or deviant. Initially, this was focused on the psychological capacity to commit rape, one half of a ‘rapist mentality’. Contrary to prevailing assumptions, abusing other humans is not a ‘natural’ human ability; rather, as David Livingstone Smith notes, to abuse others, individuals must ‘overcome the very deep and natural inhibitions’ in order to so.654 This is well demonstrated by studying figures such as soldiers, torturers or concentration camp guards because the individuals taking these roles do not have an innate psychological capacity to abuse others but rather have to undergo significant periods of training and conditioning to overcome their inhibitions against inflicting suffering. Of course, central to this is the task of dehumanising the

target of the abuse—through propaganda, changes of appearance, derogatory language and so forth—but there is there is also much that must change within the psychology of the individual. A clear example of this is the Nazi Party’s great difficulty in finding ways to avoid ‘the animal pity’ that affected concentration camp guards ‘in the presence of physical suffering’: even with the extensive dehumanisation (indeed, ‘verminisation’) inflicted upon Jews and other Holocaust victims, concentration camp guards still had to develop the psychological capacity to abuse and murder others. This same point is applicable to the psychological capacity to rape: it is not an innate male ability but rather something that a rapist develops or ‘learns’. As in the above examples, this is partly achieved through the cultural presentation of women as rapable discussed in the second chapter but, also like the previous examples, it also requires that rapists develop particular modes of thought and relation: the rape-enabling component of a rapist mentality.

Drawing on Zygmunt Bauman’s analysis of concentration camp guards, I proposed that there are three core elements that must characterise a rapist’s modes of thought and relationality at least for the duration of the assault: self-interest, a lack of inhibitory empathy and a sense of entitlement. In conjunction with the objectification of women, these components make sexual violence personally acceptable to a rapist, if only for the duration of the rape itself (although such modes of thinking often extend before and after also). Unlike in the previous examples, where the capacity to abuse others is learned through specific, institutional training, these components are the product of broader patterns of socialisation into normative models of masculinity. That is to say, they are the ‘normal’ modes of thought and relation that ‘properly’ socialised men are expected, and conditioned, to have with regard to women. Under Anglophone Western patriarchy, ‘real men’ are expected to consider their own wants and needs above those of women (and, indeed, are routinely ridiculed and emasculated for not doing so), are taught not to register or be inhibited by ‘feminine’ emotions such as empathy, and are routinely told, in numerous ways, that they are entitled to use women

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however and whenever they wish. Importantly, however, such conditioning extends beyond masculine socialisation, for these are characteristics that are highly valued by and highly normative within the dominant culture at large. In other words, the three psychological characteristics that enable a rapist to commit rape are not only far from aberrant but are actually necessary components of interacting successfully within the dominant culture of the Anglophone West. As explored in the second chapter, great power disparities and the normalised consumption of others are a central aspect of both life in the West and the West’s relationship with the Majority World. Accordingly, to participate in the dominant culture in a normative manner requires accepting this abusive and exploitative dynamic as a way of life. This, ultimately, requires that one values one’s own interests above those of others, is not inhibited in carrying out ‘normal’ activities by the damage they cause to others, and considers oneself entitled to the luxuries of (most) Western lifestyles despite the fact that they come at a significant cost to other less privileged individuals in and outside the West, including non-human nature. In this manner, just as the underlying philosophy of objectification provides a foundation for the objectification of women which ‘justifies’ rape, so too does this core conditioning provide a foundation for the development of rape-enabling modes of thought and relation.

This same point is also applicable to the reasons why rapists commit sexual violence; like the psychological capacity, the desire or motivation to rape is widely presented both as ‘natural’ and as aberrant. However, also like the psychological capacity, it is in reality neither of these but rather is a socialised desire that is extremely common throughout the Anglophone West. The fact that sexual violence incidence rates vary so much between cultures provides a clear indication that the desire to rape is not ‘natural’ or an innate ‘male’ instinct: in simplest terms, if this were the case then rape would occur at universally high levels. Likewise, the simple fact that rape incidence in the Anglophone West is extremely high indicates that the desire to rape cannot be considered aberrant because rape is so widely committed. Going beyond this, however, we can also note that, again like the psychological capacity, the desire to rape is, in many respects, an aspect of normative masculine identity (particularly in relation to dominant understandings of
heterosexuality). Key to this is the fact that, on some level, all sexual violence motivation revolves around power and domination. However, contrary to influential arguments pioneered by Brownmiller and Susan Griffin, the form of domination in question here is not the collective domination of ‘all women’ by ‘all men’ (which may be said to be a result of, but not a motivating factor for, the actions of Western rapists) but rather individual rapists seeking to both ‘prove’ and gratify themselves by dominating rape survivors. Of course, this manifests in different forms—from a conscious desire to overpower and torture the survivor to an almost subconscious understanding of ‘sex’ as a form of conquest or victory that men must ‘acquire’ from reluctant women—but it remains at the core of all rape motivation. Significantly, this desire for domination is itself neither ‘natural’ nor aberrant; it is something that is learned through highly normative patterns of socialisation. Certainly, ‘power’ is central to contemporary understandings of masculinity to the extent that, as Michael S. Kimmel observes, ‘the hegemonic definition of manhood is a man in power, a man with power, and a man of power.’ A ‘real man’, this belief suggests, should be able to dominate everything around and in him: his emotions, his corporeal weaknesses, his surroundings, his ‘destiny’, the ‘natural world’, other men and, of course, women. Considered in light of this, sexual violence is, as Diana E. H. Russell notes, ‘not so much a deviant act as an over-conforming one [...] It is an extreme acting-out of qualities that are regarded as masculine in this and many other societies’. Likewise, domination is a common aspect of many normative heterosexual practices: understandings of ‘male’ and ‘female’ sexuality and normative heterosex scripts routinely frame intercourse as a process through which an assertive male initiator overcomes the obstacles put forth by a reluctant, passive female and so achieves a ‘conquest’ over her presumed inhibitions and displeasure at sex and, ultimately, over ‘her’. In this sense, then, rape can


also be seen as over-conforming to normative heterosex practices or, as Lucy Gilbert and Paula Webster phrase it, extending ‘traditional heterosexual exchanges, in which masculine pursuit and female reticence are familiar and formalized’. Accordingly, we find that the desire to dominate and commit rape, far from being aberrant, is an expression and inevitable result of prevailing understandings of gender and (hetero)sexuality.

Again, however, such dominance motivations are not limited to masculine socialisation and heterosex scripts: they are the key driving forces behind the dominant culture. As discussed above in relation to objectification, the Anglophone West is reliant on extracting resources, land, labour and wealth of various kinds from other cultures and landbases and from marginalised groups within its own borders. Because individuals are reluctant to give up the land on which they live or the resources on which they rely or to surrender their time, energy and, effectively, their lives for another’s profit (especially at the rate and in the quantities that the dominant culture requires), the Anglophone West is reliant on theft and force, conquering and dominating others to get the things it wants or needs. Accordingly, the dominant culture places a high value on both the psychological capacity and the desire to dominate others because the West’s way of life requires agents to manifest these dominance motivations in order to secure the resources and so forth that it requires. This valuing of dominance influences notions of worth and ‘success’ within the dominant culture, helping to shape normative socialisation by holding the powerful, the dominating and oppressive as cultural exemplars and rewarding competitive, self-serving, aggressive and power-orientated ideologies and practices. When this dominance motivation intersects with the Anglophone West’s patriarchal social organisation it produces understandings of masculinity that stress dominance and power as key ‘manly’ attributes, reinforces the understanding that one must dominate others in order to be ‘successful’ and contributes to the devaluing and objectification of women. In this manner, sexual violence can be seen not only as an expression of Anglophone Western gender politics but also as an inevitable manifestation of a culture that is driven by a need to dominate and

consume and which teaches individuals, and especially men, that the ability and desire to dominate others are not only acceptable but highly laudable and rewarding. As with the social production of rapable bodies, it is not possible to irrefutably claim that this makes the social production of rapist mentalities an inherent aspect of the Anglophone West; however, it does raise the issue that current configurations of the dominant culture are intimately entwined with the ideological foundations of sexual violence. This, in turn, reinforces the arguments that the Anglophone West’s rape culture is an inevitable expression of the way in which the dominant culture functions and operates, and that truly challenging sexual violence ultimately requires addressing not only gender organisation but broader issues of social justice and social change too. Without addressing the underlying belief that objectifying, dominating and consuming others is acceptable, necessary and laudable, the struggle to end sexual violence will always be undermined by it as it continues to reinforce patriarchal gender organisation and multiple intersecting systems of oppression, condition men to abuse and dominate others, and structure the dominant culture of the Anglophone West around the same core structures and ideologies that underpin rape.

A Holistic Analysis of the Anglophone West’s Rape Culture: Conclusions and Implications

The arguments summarised above and developed in detail throughout the thesis build upon a foundation of feminist analysis of sexual violence. They accept as a central tenet that rape is a gendered act that is deeply entwined in the patriarchal and misogynistic structures and systems that shape Anglophone Western culture. Likewise, they are in agreement with arguments that gender organisation in the Anglophone West must be radically altered if the incidence of sexual violence is to be reduced, let alone stopped altogether. In particular, they build upon intersectional forms of feminist analysis which relate the subjugation of women to other systems of oppression. Arising originally in the works of marginalised feminists—those for whom intersectionality is a lived experience—this approach is increasingly shaping feminist analysis more generally, as marginalised feminists gain
wider recognition and as other feminists recognise and challenge their own privileges. The significance of this approach is that it recognises that sexual violence—and the oppression of women more broadly—cannot be adequately addressed solely in terms of gender and sexuality: sexual oppression intersects with other systems of oppression in a manner which not only contributes to the rape of marginalised women but also influences the whole shape and makeup of the Anglophone West’s rape culture. To focus solely on gender issues, then, is to deny the privileges held by many Western feminists, to ignore the experiences and voices of marginalised women and, in some respects most importantly, to fail to engage with the ways in which rape relates to broader aspects of the dominant culture. This thesis both draws upon and contributes to this approach, incorporating key arguments, as well as adding further support and demonstrations. However, it also moves beyond this approach to consider an even wider perspective on sexual violence, and it is in this that the thesis makes its most significant contributions to the field and, potentially, to anti-rape activism.

The critical position employed in this thesis departs from the intersectional approach discussed above in two principal ways. Firstly, it not only examines those issues that relate to sexual violence on an immediate, direct level (such as the ways gender oppression intersects with other systems of oppression to make marginalised women rapeable), but also explores the shared foundations and cultural roots of these systems, and relates them to wider trends within the dominant culture. Extending from this, the second key departure is that this thesis treats all of these issues—the direct and the indirect—holistically, as existing within an overarching cultural framework; that is, it does not limit its analysis to relationships between sexual violence and aspects of the dominant culture but also examines those between sexual violence and the dominant culture itself. This represents a significant departure from existing studies, expanding the field of enquiry to engage critically with, and chart connections and relationships between, a much broader range of ideologies, philosophies, systems, structures, ethical codes and prescribed practices. In other words, many theorists explore how aspects of the dominant culture shape the role of rape in specific contexts or against specific groups—for example, the use of rape as a tool of colonialism or the
role institutionalised racism plays in sexual violence against women of colour; however, they do not use such analysis to explore how this shapes the Anglophone West’s rape culture as a whole, nor to explore how deeply rooted that rape culture is in the dominant culture. bell hooks comes closest to this position in her suggestion, cited in full earlier, that root cause of men’s violence against women is ‘the Western philosophical notion of hierarchical rule and coercive authority’.

However, this observation, although highly perceptive and highly significant, remains a largely isolated statement with very little supporting analysis of deeper exploration. In a sense, then, the arguments in this thesis seek to support and provide evidence for hooks’s position, but they also push beyond it, expanding it to consider not only hierarchy and coercion, but other central foundations of Anglophone Western culture. As well as bringing together different branches of feminist analysis, this task required setting feminist theories in dialogue with wider social criticism and, particularly, with studies that seek to critique Western culture in a broad, all-encompassing manner.

In many respects, these wider social critiques are as crucial to the critical position taken in this thesis as feminist analyses of sexual violence. This is particularly true of those studies that have a highly holistic approach to understanding Western culture, such as Forbes’ Columbus and Other Cannibals, Marimba Ani’s Yurugu and the works of Derrick Jensen. These texts all provide greater levels of intersectional analysis, covering a wider range of issues than the feminist analysis discussed previously; specifically, they treat Western culture (under names such as ‘European culture’ and ‘Western civilisation’) as a network of abusive ideologies, philosophies, moral systems and behavioural codes that both celebrates and is reliant upon exploitation and the consumption of others’ lives. However, they also lack specialised and highly detailed analysis of gender issues pertaining to the Anglophone West’s rape culture. This is not to say that they do not incorporate sexual violence into their broad, holistic approaches (indeed,
rape is a recurrent and highly significant theme in Jensen’s work in particular) but rather to note that their analysis rarely engages with the multifaceted complexities of the subject in the manner one finds in many feminist studies. Accordingly, setting these approaches in dialogue with detailed feminist analysis of rape expands both fields and contributes to greater understanding of the rape culture and the dominant culture of the Anglophone West, and the significant relationships between them. Indeed, it highlights the fact that, in some respects, a truly full understanding of how both the Anglophone West’s rape culture and its dominant culture operate must each account for the functions of the other. More specifically, because of the scale they operate on, the arguments in the thesis are able to explore the interrelation of the Anglophone West’s rape culture and the dominant culture in enough detail to raise the question of whether rape is actually inherent to the Anglophone West. The thesis does not seek to definitively answer this question (largely because it far too speculative to truly be answered) but in raising the issue it still pushes analysis of sexual violence forward into relatively unexplored areas. Moreover, by exploring the possibility that rape is inherent to the Anglophone West, the thesis is able to demonstrate that rape is at least an inevitable aspect of the dominant culture in its current form. This, in turn, points to the significant conclusion—or at least, the significant proposal—that challenging the Anglophone West’s rape culture requires not only changing contemporary gender organisation, nor only tackling the many intersectional systems of oppression highlighted in previous feminist studies, but considerable, wide-ranging and far-reaching social change across the entire fabric of the dominant culture.

This conclusion is, in many respects, bleak and challenging: the task of changing the Anglophone West’s gender relations—normally proposed as a solution to sexual violence—is already immense and daunting, and expanding it to include wider social change only increases this. Indeed, to suggest that ending the Anglophone West’s rape culture requires radical social change throughout the dominant culture and the undermining of key ideologies, philosophies and systems that are central to Anglophone Western life is potentially to court apathy and jaded defeatism. However, it is, I think, also a necessary consideration, particularly if one approaches this matter in
relation to the central role denial plays in the continuation of prevailing ways of life in the dominant culture. Consider, for example, the fact that contemporary Western civilisation remains reliant upon exploitation (from ‘expendable’ labourers in the Majority World’s sweatshops and mines to poorly-paid, overworked and often routinely abused workers in the Anglophone West itself), or that its wealth and resources result from warfare and imperialism (‘oil wars’ in the Middle East, for instance) or from neo-colonial activities organised by the likes of the IMF and the World Bank.\(^{660}\) Indeed, consider the fact that, although not the only contributor, the industrial civilisation of the Anglophone West is amongst the most responsible for environmental catastrophe and ecocide on an unprecedented scale that is, realistically, highly likely to destroy all life on the planet.\(^{661}\) In response to these and many other perennial issues, the dominant culture either denies the reality of what is actually taking place or constructs great fallacies with denial at their core. From ‘caring capitalism’, ‘eco-friendly’ consumption and the militarised ‘liberation’ of other countries to genetically modified crops, lab-grown meat and symbolic gestures towards ‘sustainable lifestyles’, arguments that the Anglophone West can maintain its decadent, consumptive way of life without invoking catastrophe or causing widespread suffering are near ubiquitous in contemporary culture.\(^{662}\) All of these notions


\(^{662}\) For discussion of such fallacies, see: Mara Einstein, Compassion, Inc.: How Corporate America Blurs the Line between What We Buy, Who We Are, and Those We Help (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Toby M. Smith, The Myth of Green Marketing: Tending Our Goats at the Edge of Apocalypse (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Parenti, Democracy for the Few, pp. 146–150; Michael Antoniou, Claire Robinson and John Fagan, ‘GMO Myths and Truths: An Evidence-Based Examination of the Claims Made for the Safety
seek to preserve the dominant culture’s integrity by denying its reliance upon exploitation, consumption, abuse, murder and environmental devastation, as though these components can be neatly excised without affecting the whole. However, as I have argued at various points throughout this thesis, these practices and ideologies are not incidental: they are inevitable products of the ways in which the Anglophone West is organised and operates and any effort to bring about change without addressing this fact is an exercise in futility and denial. Although perhaps to a lesser degree, this same point applies to the Anglophone West’s rape culture and efforts to challenge it without relating it to the overall culture in which it operates.

The particular significance of the findings of this research is that, like the other examples of exploitation, abuse, objectification and domination given above, sexual violence is not something that can be neatly removed from the dominant culture without changing the dominant culture itself. Rape is not something ‘savage’, a product of ‘primitive’ history that we can move beyond by embracing ‘progress’: it is profoundly entwined in the way the dominant culture functions, and specifically in the normalised objectification and domination on which ‘civilised’ life relies and from which, albeit often on vastly different levels, all ‘civilised’ Westerners benefit. There are incredibly important changes that can be, and are being, brought about through focusing on rape as a gendered act, and such work is both highly admirable and absolutely vital both to ending the Anglophone West’s rape culture and, in the mean time, supporting those who survive its nefarious practices. However, such work cannot be wholly successful in its aims without also treating the rape culture’s deepest roots, including those that extend beyond sexual and gender politics, and this, I propose, requires significant changes to the dominant culture of the Anglophone West as a whole. Because the philosophies, ideologies, ethical systems, prescribed practices and ways-of-
life that underpin the Anglophone West’s rape culture are the very same ones
that are central to how the dominant culture operates, sexual violence is, in
many respects, inseparable from ‘normal’ life in the West. To suggest that
citizens of the Anglophone West can maintain the comforts made possible
only through (directly or indirectly) objectifying and dominating others without
this influencing Anglophone Western culture in myriad ways including the
fortifying of the Anglophone West’s rape culture, is ultimately to engage in
further denial.

Of course, this is not to say that anti-rape activism should be subsumed by
wider political struggles: such a proposal has long been used by patriarchal,
usually left-wing political groups to co-opt feminist struggles, profiting from
women’s activism whilst diluting and defusing their challenges to male
dominance. Nor is it to suggest that anti-rape activists should stop treating
rape as a gendered act or stop working to undermine patriarchy and
misogyny. Rather it is to suggest that such activism, if it is to succeed in
ending rape, needs to relate this gendered activism to wider issues and
broader intersections, and to engage critically with the way sexual violence
relates to the culture as a whole, including those aspects they enjoy and
profit from. This is particularly true of the largely white, middle-class,
heterosexual, able-bodied, cis-gender dominated mainstream of anti-rape
activism, which is, by and large, the least aware of other systems of
oppression and privilege and the least willing to consider whether the
dominant culture or further ‘civilisation’ and ‘progress’ can truly serve as
solutions to, rather than central components of, the Anglophone West’s rape
culture. Perhaps even more importantly, however, other social justice
activists, campaigning against other manifestations of these same root
issues, must come to recognise the significance of gender politics in general
and sexual violence in particular. It is hardly surprising that meaningful and
effective alliances are rarely drawn between anti-rape activism and wider
social justice campaigning when such groups are almost exclusively
patriarchal in structure and, from ‘wikileaks’ supporters to the Socialist
Workers party (SWP) to the Occupy movement, routinely fail to address even
their own internal rape cultures. However, such alliances—allied analyses and allied struggles—are crucial not only to the success of anti-rape activism but also to other social justice causes because each of these issues has shared roots and shared structures that are ultimately grounded in a way of life, a way of thinking about and relating to others, that is central to the dominant culture of the Anglophone West. It is, I suggest, only in addressing this deeply-rooted core both through and beyond single-issue political struggles that lasting, wide-scale change can be achieved, to the Anglophone West in general and the its rape culture in particular. It is in relation to this that I will now briefly discuss the limitations of my study, areas of future research and the possibility of hope amongst the abusive networks of the dominant culture.

The ‘Global’ and the ‘Local’: Limitations, Further Research and Hope

Although the scale on which this thesis operates and its holistic approach are, in many respects, its greatest strength and the source of its strongest contributions, as discussed above, it is also its biggest limitation. To analyse the relationship between sexual violence and the dominant culture of the Anglophone West necessarily requires working in broad strokes, picking up the key trends and recurrent themes that are most directly relevant to the discussion. Whilst this is unavoidable when working from such a broad critical perspective, it does mean that some of the subtleties, inconsistencies and points of discord and opposition that occur within any society cannot be adequately considered. Of particular significance in this respect is that the

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fact the broad critical position adopted in this thesis examines only the
dominant culture and, though it does explore the oppression of marginalised
cultures within this framework, it does not offer substantial analysis of smaller
cultural groupings. That is to say, it obscures the fact that the dominant
culture is the prevailing, but not the only, culture within the Anglophone West,
and the fact that it is composed of and exists uncomfortably alongside other
smaller cultures and subcultures. The same is also true of the Anglophone
West’s rape culture: what this thesis discusses is what is effectively the
dominant rape culture but it is important to realise that every rape culture is
composed of ‘rape subcultures’, from the rape cultures of individual
countries, to those of specific communities, almost down to an individual’s
‘rape culture’ or the specific understanding individuals develop in relation to
their peers within a broader rape culture framework.

All such rape subcultures relate to, interact with and are components and
products of the overarching rape culture of the Anglophone West but they are
also discrete and diverse. Even within a country, or a region or a city, there is
great diversity amongst rape subcultures: for example, the rape subculture of
a wealthy, white-dominated college fraternity will be different from that of a
poor, racially-diverse neighbourhood, which will be different again from the
rape subculture found in an anarchist social centre, or in a particular music
scene or any other culture within or alongside the dominant culture. These
will all share common elements and common roots but they also take on
diverse forms with differing (and non-fixed) responses to specific aspects of
rape culture and its wider relations. Further explorations of such ‘rape
subcultures’—within a framework that relates them, on some level, not only
to overarching rape culture but to the dominant culture also—is, I believe, an
important direction for future research because it is on this scale that the
most significant social changes can be brought about.

The significance of exploring sexual violence on the microsocial scale of rape
subcultures, whilst still relating this to broad macrosocial analysis such as
that contained in this thesis, is that it is at this level that weakness in the
Anglophone West’s rape culture are most apparent and can be best
exploited. Understanding that this rape culture operates as a vast network of
self-supporting, mutually reinforcing ideologies, philosophies, socialisation patterns, ethical codes and prescribed practices that is at once deeply engrained in the foundations of the dominant culture and woven through its institutions, social structures and cultural outputs is important. However, it also means that the Anglophone West’s rape culture appears unassailable, as, on this scale, it most likely is. Broken down into its composite cultures, however, it is more readily apparent that the Anglophone West’s rape culture does not maintain comprehensive coverage, that there are chinks in the armour and weak links in the chains: points of tension between rape-supportive and rape-opposing ideologies at which pressure may be applied to greater effect. There are, within and outside of the dominant culture, communities and individuals who reject the ideologies of the dominant culture, who see, or could come to see, the correlations between forms of objectification and domination that they experience and those that they enact. There are marginalised voices that do not register within the dominant culture which speak of how rape is fought in their communities and in their lives and have important experiences and advice to share. There are men who reject the forms of behaviour prescribed and more who teeter on the edge of doing so, needing only further education on the realities of sexual violence. There are groups and individuals who do not yet realise—but, with contact and communication, could come to understand—that the structures and systems they oppose are the same as those that underpin the Anglophone West’s rape culture and that the struggles they are engaged in are inseparable from the struggle against sexual violence.

It is these areas that I suggest are key directions for future research, engagement and activism, for these potential connections are perhaps best achieved through exploring the microsocial level of specific rape subcultures within a holistic framework that relates them to a broader macrosocial understanding of the Anglophone West’s rape culture and its relationships with the dominant culture. In this respect, the directive, popular in recent years, to ‘think globally, act locally’ is apt: tackling the Anglophone West’s rape culture as whole on the ‘global’ scale is an unrealistic and most likely impossible task but addressing it at multiple ‘local’ sites, from the grassroots up, has a far stronger chance of achieving significant social change and
challenging both its manifestations and its roots. The overall ‘global’ perspective has the potential to help unite different sites of ‘local’ analyses and ‘local’ activism, and not only those which pertain to sexual violence but other social justice issues intimately connected by their shared roots in the dominant culture of the Anglophone West. In such unification, alliances can be drawn, perspectives exchanged, tactics shared and solidarity offered, under a general principle of refuting, challenging and overthrowing the principles of objectification, domination and consuming others on which the dominant culture is premised. It is, I believe, in this—in understanding sexual violence to be an inevitable manifestation of the dominant culture and so organising outside of and against the principles it espouses—that we find the greatest hope of ending the social production of rapable bodies and rapist mentalities and of ending the Anglophone West’s rape culture.
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