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University of Southampton

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Film Studies

Male Rape in Film Comedy: Representations in Contemporary Hollywood

by

Isaac Miles Gustafsson-Wood

Thesis for the degree of PhD

September 2019

University of Southampton

Abstract

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This thesis focusses on contemporary popular Hollywood comedy films and argues that the main way we can conceptualise male rape from its representation is through its comic framing. The aim of this thesis is to explore how films evoke humour from the sexual victimisation of men and the social context that allows and encourages comedic male rape. Male rape has been presented as a forbidden and hidden subject that is yet to be in public discourse. In the last 25 years, however, male rape has been represented more and more through comedy, making it the most common place to find a male rape representation. The comedy that frames male rape sets up suitable and deviant types of masculinity, where men are punished through rape. The comedic techniques used to represent male rape are analysed through textual analysis of case study films, which offers insight into how rapists and victims are represented and what male rape looks like. Contextual analysis and reception analysis discusses the social influence of the comedic rape representation. This thesis has found that in comedic representation, male rape is a punishment for deviant masculinity, which suggests it is justifiable and culturally acceptable.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name:	Isaac Miles Gustafsson-Wood
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Title of thesis:	Male Rape in Film Comedy: Representations in Contemporary Hollywood
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I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission

Signature:		Date:	
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Chapter 1 Introduction

We should not be tolerating rape in prison and we shouldn't be making jokes about it in our popular culture. That's no joke. These things are unacceptable.¹

President Barack Obama, addressing the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) on 14th July 2015 voiced the issue of the inappropriateness of male-on-male rape jokes to resounding applause. His acknowledgement that jokes about male rape are widely utilised in popular culture show there is a current social concern about the central role humour plays in male rape representation. Hollywood films have always presented widespread ideologies because of their commercial and cultural project of engaging as wide an audience as possible. They also produce a significant output of films creating a visual representation of comedic male rape in popular culture. An early example of male rape in comedy film, identified by Michael Scarce, is *Where's Poppa?* (Carl Reiner, 1970) though this may not be the first example.² This and other films such as *Trading Places* (John Landis, 1983), indicate that while comedic male rape was happening on screen in the 1970s and 1980s, it was rare and has become more common in films from 1995 to the present, where over 40 examples will be mentioned in this thesis. The increase of male rape representations in comedy since the mid-1990s suggests male rape became a contemporary social concern. Yet despite its prevalence there has been no lengthy academic text written on male rape in film comedy. Rape representation has largely been theorised by focussing on male-on-female rape and sometimes, dramatic depictions of male rape.³ This thesis argues that comedy is central to male rape representation, because the male victim of rape is not believed or valued.

What male rape *is* influences how it is represented, yet no clear definition exists, with legal interpretations varying through region and time, so male rape is universally undefinable, and even considered non-existent. There are also social definitions developed by feminist leaders and critics, namely Susan Brownmiller, yet these definitions rarely include male rape, marginalising it as a social problem.⁴ The term 'rape' is commonly used to refer to sexual assault of women and this is how it commonly enters public discourse. The intersection of comedy and male rape is a unique one, as it

¹ Barack Obama, NAACP National Convention, Philadelphia, 14 July 2015, *YouTube*, <www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8bKuzk-fDA> [accessed 18 July 2015].

² Michael Scarce, *Male on Male Rape: The Hidden Toll of Stigma and Shame*, (Massachusetts: Perseus Publishing, 1997), p.111.

³ Most notably Sarah Projansky, *Watching Rape: Film and Television in Postfeminist Culture*, (New York and London: New York University Press, 2001), Tanya Horeck, *Public Rape: Representing Violation in Fiction and Film*, (London: Routledge, 2004), and Michael Scarce, *Male on Male Rape: The Hidden Toll of Stigma and Shame*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Perseus Publishing, 1997).

⁴ Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975).

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is predominantly rape of men that features in the comedy genre, while female rape representation in contemporary Hollywood is usually considered a matter for more serious narratives. By textual analysis of key scenes from case studies, and looking at the broader context of the films through reception studies, this thesis will explore a selection of comedy films featuring male rape. The aim of this thesis is to explore how films evoke humour from the sexual victimisation of men and the social context that allows and encourages comedic male rape. The findings suggest that male rape is represented as a punishment for some kind of 'deviant' masculinity, being homosexual, too effeminate, or even too normal.

A popular contemporary example of comedic male rape in film is from *This Is The End* (Evan Goldberg and Seth Rogen, 2013).⁵ This film is about the rapture, which for certain evangelical Christians is the Second Coming of Christ where believers are sent to heaven. In *This Is The End* the rapture is adjusted to include the morally 'good' allowed to go to heaven and earth becoming hell. It is set in the actor James Franco's house during a party where the saved ascend to heaven and most guests remain to survive hell on earth. The film features several celebrities who play parody versions of themselves. Jonah Hill, as one of the six main characters who barricade themselves in Franco's house, is raped by the devil. As Hill sleeps the devil sneaks into his bedroom, pulls away his sheets and starts to tickle and scratch his legs with his claws. The devil leans over Hill with a visible erection as Hill opens his eyes. This scene is a parody of the horror/drama female rape scene from *Rosemary's Baby* (Roman Polanski, 1968) and has unmistakable cinematographic resemblances to it including intense close ups of Hill's and Rosemary's (Mia Farrow) face and the devil's claws scratching them on their arms and legs. As well as some identical shots (as seen in Image 1 and Image 2), Hill copies the line spoken in the scene in *Rosemary's Baby*, saying 'this is no dream, this is really happening', using the same tonality as Rosemary. The broken and fragmented editing makes both scenes dreamlike as does the sound of the slow glissando violin. This is a good example of a scene that relates to the central concerns of this thesis and my three main research questions. Firstly, what does male rape in film comedy look like? Secondly, what does comedic male rape represent? Finally, what is the social influence of the comedic male rape representation? As Jonah Hill's rape in *This Is The End* is almost a visual copy of the rape scene in *Rosemary's Baby*, what male rape in film comedy looks like is not dependent on visually comic attributes, rather, the gender of the victim. *This Is The End* uses actors associated with the comedy genre to locate the film and therefore its scenes in comedy. Aisha Harris' online review of the film argues that "this

⁵ The film's popularity can be gauged by its box office takings. *The Is The End* grossed overall \$101,470,202 domestically and \$24,571,120 worldwide and was ranked #2 in its opening weekend. '*This Is The End*', *Box Office Mojo*, <<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=roghilluntitled.htm>> [accessed 26 September 2016]

meta aspect of the gag...mitigate[s] the joke's insensitivity", parody itself excusing poor taste.⁶ Rosemary becomes pregnant with a demon child after her rape and Jonah Hill becomes sick and transforms into a demon himself showing a parallel of negative consequences from the rapes. These consequences from pregnancy to sexually transmitted demonization are representative of the dangers of sexuality in both films, though the gender of the victim and the genre create vastly different contexts for the films. Context is essential to how scenes can be read and will be part of my case study analysis. The research questions mentioned earlier will interrogate visual representations of male rape aesthetically and representationally and locate them within their comedy narratives and the socio-historical context of the representations, which will be explored through the reception of the films.



Image 1 *This is the End* (Evan Goldberg and Seth Rogan, 2013) screenshot



Image 2 *Rosemary's Baby* (Roman Polanski, 1968) screenshot

Visual representations of male rape have a complex relationship between visibility and invisibility. Visibility, in this sense, refers to visual and aural representation, whereas invisibility refers to the potential lack of acknowledgment that what we see and hear is a representation of rape. As it is

⁶ Aisha Harris, 'Are The Rape Jokes in This Is The End OK?', *Slate Magazine*, Browbeat blog, 21 June 2013 <http://www.slate.com/blogs/browbeat/2013/06/21/this_is_the_end_rape_jokes_do_they_pass_the_rape_joke_litmus_test.html> [accessed 25 April 2016]

extremely unlikely that any Hollywood film would feature explicit penetration, rape is always implied, yet no less significant in its representation. Though it is implied that Jonah Hill is anally penetrated in *This Is The End*, the understanding of rape as a horrifying act (as it is in *Rosemary's Baby*) is not apparently intended to be reached by the audience. Acknowledging what rape *is* has always been a problematic and contested subject, which contributes to a variety of social understandings of its definition, and furthermore, what a representation of rape might look like. This thesis will interrogate these representations to find a new way of analysing male rape in film. This introduction will first explore how rape is defined and represented on screen, then go on to look at comedy as a genre and a vehicle for representing male rape. Due to the ambiguity of rape representation, this thesis explores some definitions of rape from a legal and cultural standpoint in order to identify a general understanding (or narrative) of rape that permeates Western consciousness. The location of male rape in the comedy genre adds to invisibility through absurdity, such as coded representations using stylistic and narrative elements of comedy to obscure what is happening on screen from a common cultural understanding of rape, making it even harder to identify. This is useful for seeing how male rape is seen primarily as comic.

1.1 Defining Rape

The understanding of rape is not fixed and has had many definitions depending on era and location. This section will look at both legal and cultural discourses of rape as these contribute to representations by creating a contemporary social understanding of rape that is reflected in film. Firstly, rape is a legal term, with rape categorised as a criminal offence. The definition of rape used in law provides a distinction between what is legal and illegal sexual behaviour. My focus is on Hollywood cinema so I will therefore explore US definitions to best understand rape in its most basic legal terms. Though legal definition does not perfectly reflect social understandings of rape, it sets up a national regulation of what rape is considered to be in that country and thus helps shape the cultural context where rape discourse develops.

The basis of most rape law in English speaking and post-colonial countries comes from Sir William Blackstone, who in the late 16th Century Britain wrote his definition of rape as “carnal knowledge of a woman forcibly and against her will”.⁷ Blackstone’s commentaries ‘Of Public Wrongs’, only ever hint at male rape in the form of homosexuality and bestiality, though Blackstone distinguishes it

⁷ Kermit L. Hall, *American Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.736-738

from rape, targeting homosexuality as a crime, not male rape.⁸ Only mentioned as “the infamous *crime against nature*, committed either with man or beast” is not stated, rather described in Latin as “that horrible crime not to be named among Christians”.⁹ Blackstone’s definitions assume that only women can be raped, therefore does not acknowledge male rape as existent because it was understood to be homosexuality, and continued to be labelled under buggery and sodomy laws. In the UK this was true up until Sexual Offences Act of 1967, when homosexual sex was legalised.¹⁰ Blackstone’s definition also highlights ‘force’ as the only evidence of lack of consent and carnal knowledge being a penis penetrating a vagina. This definition is cited in a recent FBI Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) document from 2013 showing how durable and unchanging legal understanding can be. However, this UCR document redefines rapes as “penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim”.¹¹ According to the UCR document this definition came into effect on 1st January 2013, noting that Blackstone’s definition was used up until then. This very recent change in definition is far more open and inclusive, and reflects an understanding that carnal knowledge is not the only sex act that can constitute rape, women do not always have to be the victim, and force is not the only proof for lack of consent.

The FBI UCR, however, is only a collection of national crime statistics, not the law. As the US has 50 states which use varying legal practices and laws, there is no uniform definition used in the courtroom, so however progressive the crime statistic may be, Blackstone’s definition is still used to contextualise rape in a legal sense.¹² Though definitions are changing and expanding, representations of rape in film have always been broader than legal definitions. Noted by Yves Laberge in the *Encyclopaedia of Rape*, the 1929 German silent film *Asphalt* (Joe May, 1929) represents Else Kramer (Bette Amann) forcing herself physically onto Albert Holk (Gustav Fröhlich).¹³ This is a significant example as a sexual act is committed against the will of one of the

⁸ William Blackstone and St. George Tucker, *Blackstone's Commentaries: With Notes of Reference, to the Constitution and Laws, of the Federal Government of the United States; and of the Commonwealth of Virginia More Information (2nd ed.)*, (5 v. Philadelphia: William Young Birch and Abraham Small, 1803).

⁹ In Latin “Peccatum illud horribile, inter Christianos non nominandum”. Blackstone, p.215.

¹⁰ More can be read about male rape and UK law in Aliraza Javaid, ‘Male Rape in Law and the Courtroom’, *European Journal of Current Legal Issues*, (2014) 20(2).

¹¹ ‘Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR)’, *Reporting Rape in 2013*, Summary Reporting System (SRS) User Manual and Technical Specification (4 September 2014), p.3 <<https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/recent-program-updates/reporting-rape-in-2013-revised>> [accessed 16 December 2015].

¹² US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook 2004*, p.19 <<https://www2.fbi.gov/ucr/handbook/ucrhandbook04.pdf>> [accessed 16 December 2015].

¹³ Yves Laberge, ‘Films, foreign’, in *Encyclopedia of Rape*, ed. By Merril D. Smith (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), p.74. Else, a criminal, manipulates police officer Albert, playing upon his sympathy. When her manipulations fail, she jumps onto him several times and though he throws her to the floor she continues

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participants, yet does not fit within either Blackwell's definition or the 2013 FBI UCR definition, as it is a woman forcing a man to penetrate her. The majority of *Asphalt's* academic critique has regarded its aesthetic expressionistic style and before 2004, when Yves Laberge writes about *Asphalt*, the rape was not part of the academic discourse around this film showing that the rape has only recently been acknowledged as such.¹⁴ Throughout film history, rape has not relied upon legal definition to be represented but acknowledging a representation as rape requires a social and cultural understanding of what rape is. This thesis identifies what male rape can look like, which creates a discourse that shifts a previously unacknowledged action into a noticeable conversation.

Though legal definitions of rape establish a framework of illegal and morally dubious sexual behaviour, the relationship between legal and social definition is symbiotic as social consciousness influences law. Legal textbooks make reference to feminist scholars when acknowledging changes within the law, most notably referencing Susan Brownmiller who has a large influence on legal and social discourses of rape that shape contemporary understandings of what rape is.¹⁵ Brownmiller argues that rape is about power, not sex.¹⁶ This relocates discourses of rape from the libido to those of gendered power structures. That rape is something that happens to a woman is prominent in the influential feminist activism of the 1970s where Brownmiller was a key figure, and in the legal definitions mentioned. Brownmiller argues rape is a product of patriarchy that is utilised to sustain a power structure that privileges men and oppresses women.¹⁷ This desexualisation attempts to rid rape of female victim accountability, but also shapes the social interpretation of rape as a gendered crime against women.¹⁸ Rape discourse is entrenched within understandings of power dynamics between men and women that does not acknowledge male rape as a social issue with men not being conditioned to fear rape in everyday life.¹⁹ Rape is a feminist issue that has been framed to only include women in its victimology. This creates doubt about if male rape can exist which makes identifying representations of male rape problematic. As with definitions of rape, representations of it are equally discussed in the context of women as victims and men as perpetrators.

to cling to him, wrapping her legs around him, and though he is visually disgusted by her, Else's determination lets her succeed in forcing herself upon him.

¹⁴ For an example of aesthetic analysis see Lotte H. Eisner, *The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Cinema and the Influence of Max Reinhardt* (California: University of California Press, 1974), pp.266-268.

¹⁵ Hall, p.736.

¹⁶ Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975).

¹⁷ Brownmiller, p.15.

¹⁸ Ann Cahill, 'Foucault, Rape, and the Construction of the Feminine Body', *Hypatia*, Vol. 15. Issue 1. (Indiana University Press, 2000), 43-63 (p.44).

¹⁹ Cahill, p.45.

1.2 Representing Rape

Defining rape legally and socially frames how representations of the female victim are discussed in film discourse. The intersection between legal and social issues of rape are interrogated in the ground-breaking film, *The Accused* (Jonathan Kaplan, 1988). The film is a fictionalised version of a gang rape case that Tanya Horeck names “infamous” and a “media spectacle”.²⁰ Unlike other films, Horeck argues, *The Accused* “is a film that confronts, and fights back against, sexual violence” instead of showing it as a “sensational device”.²¹ In *The Accused* Sarah Tobias (Jodie Foster) seeks legal justice with the help of lawyer Kathryn Murphy (Kelly McGillis) after Sarah is raped by three men in front of a jeering crowd. Several points of the film show how legal and social perspectives of rape are incongruent with each other. *The Accused* highlights how much the law relies on social myths about rape to make a legal case, as interpretation of the law is a social practice. The first time we see Sarah in the film with any clarity is at the hospital immediately following her rape. Her treatment is clinical and unsupportive as the rape counsellor is not as prominent in her treatment as the doctor’s invasive procedures and the evidence collector’s picture-taking. This cold treatment continues as her lawyer, Kathryn, arrives commenting on Sarah’s drunkenness and drug use, immediately establishing a viewpoint that places blame upon Sarah for her rape. Kathryn continues in her accusatory tone, as she asks Sarah ‘did how you dress make those guys think they could have sex with you?’ The phrasing of this question puts Sarah in an impossible position as she is being held accountable for others’ interpretations of her. In a theory brought forward by Catherine MacKinnon regarding the interpretation of consent, MacKinnon argues that consent is rarely seen through the victim’s experience alone, and often the victim must prove lack of consent.²² *The Accused* emphasises this by placing Sarah in a position where she must defend her experience from everyone in her life, even those who are there to represent her interests. The overwhelming opposition to her viewpoint is that she was ‘asking for it’ because she was drunk, using marijuana, flirting with men at the bar and was scantily clad. *The Accused* represents and exposes myths about rape accountability that invariably accuses the American legal system and Western culture of reinforcing. Though, as an audience we know Sarah has been raped, her quest for justice is marred by others’ interpretation of what consent is.

Later in the film in a room with three lawyers defending the men who raped Sarah, Kathryn strikes a deal with them to avoid a potentially unwinnable trial that ensures the men go to prison, although

²⁰ Horeck, p.5.

²¹ Horeck, p.92.

²² Catherine MacKinnon, ‘Rape: On Coercion and Consent’, in *Sex, Morality, and the Law*, ed. by Lori Gruan and George E. Panichas (London: Routledge, 1997), pp.419-427.

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not for rape. The charge becomes 'reckless endangerment' which angers Sarah as it negates her experience and tells a story that does not include her rape. In *Rape and Representation*, Higgins and Silver argue that in representations of rape in literature and media, the rape victim is not in control of their own narrative, rather a detached (or participatory) male perspective tells a fantasy of female rape which disfigures any real narrative of rape.²³ The position of power in controlling narrative in the fictional world of *The Accused* is given to male lawyers defending Sarah's rapists. Sarah sees the news reporting her story disregarding her rape, enforcing a story from others' perspectives. Higgins and Silver argue that male narrative control omits the female perspective and replaces it with male fantasy about female sexuality.²⁴ The idea that male fantasy controls rape narrative is enforced in *The Accused*, as the initial legal narrative was that no rape occurred despite the audience's knowledge of it. The film follows these academic discourses about rape showing how intermingled the various cultural and legal understandings of rape are in both narrative and audience perception.

Even when Sarah is finally able to tell her story, the visual representation of the rape is located in the flashback of a male spectator who was in the bar at the time. The flashback is five minutes long and presents a horrific account of what had previously only been discussed in the film. In regards to rape representation Sarah Projansky argues there is a paradox where female rape representation is always exploitation, as even empathetic and sensitive portrayals add to an already abundant amount of female victim representation.²⁵ According to Projansky, there can be no female rape representation without projecting a narrative on screen of female subjugation because female victimhood is naturalised through its representation.²⁶ However, locating rape within social discourse does not overlook its representation as purely naturalising and invites audiences to acknowledge issues around rape. The visual representation of rape in *The Accused* places the audience as passive spectators, watching a rape we cannot prevent through the flashback sequence. Yet it allows us to engage with social and legal problems that the lack of acknowledgement of rape produces. This is key to my argument as male rape must be acknowledged as existent to be seen and consequently visually deconstructed on screen, and often, it is not.

²³ Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver, 'Introduction: Rereading Rape', in *Rape and Representation*, ed. by Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver (Oxford: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp.1-11, (p.7).

²⁴ Higgins and Silver, p.7.

²⁵ Sarah Projansky, *Watching Rape: Film and Television in Postfeminist Culture*, (London: New York University Press, 2001), p.96.

²⁶ Projansky, p.8

Visual representation requires knowledge of how consent can be interpreted, as who gets to decide what consent *is* can be located in audiences, filmmakers, and narratives to varying extents. The main crux of *The Accused*'s narrative is the question of spectator responsibility. After the rapists are given a lesser charge, Sarah and Kathryn agree justice has not been served and decide to prosecute the jeering crowd who witness her rape. Three men are charged with 'criminal solicitation' as their encouragement, it is argued by her lawyer Kathryn, incited the rape. Tanya Horeck argues that by framing rape within film it becomes a visual pleasure, is sexualised, and the audience is forced from passive spectator to complicit participant in female oppression through "the violence of civic identification".²⁷ *The Accused* uses this spectator participation to put the audience in a difficult position as potentially guilty for viewing the film. The closing statements of the prosecution and defence debate this position. The defence argues that the men encouraging the rape are innocent because 'to solicit a crime, you must first know that it is a crime'. This both accuses us, the audience, for viewing what we know is a rape, and voids responsibility of the jeering crowd as their opinion is that Sarah was 'asking for it'. This example highlights the injustice in viewing consent as an interpretation. The prosecution's closing statement argues that viewing is not participation, voiding audience responsibility and relocating Sarah's consent from others' interpretation of it to her experience. The jury agrees that actively inciting a rape to occur is an offence and finds the men guilty at the end of the film. The final shot of *The Accused* is of rape statistics in the United States, locating itself in close relation to the reality of rape, bolstered by it being based upon a true story. Tanya Horeck in *Public Rape* argues that because fantasy and intention are a part of reality and fiction "representations of rape are by no means separate or apart from the act of rape: they are a part of it".²⁸ This argument sees the female victim on and off screen as mutually inclusive, as one does not exist without the other. Fictional representations of women being raped are shaped by heteronormative conceptualisations of rape.

1.3 Representing the Male Victim

The male rape victim, however, is not necessarily acknowledged as a rape victim as the concepts of 'man' and 'victim' have a hard time overlapping. *The Accused* reflects many of the discourses around female rape representation and, as an example, shows that ambiguity and interpretation are the biggest factors of understanding and acknowledging a rape representation. If an audience cannot recognise male rape representation because they may not believe it even exists, this does not mar the intention of the representation. So far this thesis has presented arguments of rape

²⁷ Tanya Horeck, *Public Rape: Representing Violation in Fiction and Film*, (London: Routledge, 2004), p.11.

²⁸ Horeck, p.81.

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representation in regards to female rape, as the majority of discourses about rape representation regards the victim as female. Although the male rape victim has been theorised, mostly in criminological studies, it remains largely unexplored as a topic within film and media scholarship, especially in the comedy genre. Some specific films have been written about, such as *Pulp Fiction* (Quentin Tarantino, 1995) which will be discussed in Chapter One, and some blogs and *YouTube* videos have broached the subject, yet nothing large scale has focussed on comedic male rape representation.²⁹ These online media sources will be explored in the content chapters, mainly as the broader context sections for the case studies, as they give insight on analysis for some films and TV shows. There are certain preoccupations in theories of male rape representation, firstly with the relationship between reality and fiction, secondly, discourse surrounding male rape representation is confined to male-on-male rape, and thirdly male rape is seen as a homosexual practice that only happens to gay men, or makes victims gay and is consequently viewed as solely homophobic in its representation. This section will look at the way the male rape victim is constructed in theory and representation and how it is linked to conceptualisations of masculinity.

Social scientists Bufkin and Eschholz consider the frequency and tropes of rapes in film using an empirical study of the 50 top grossing films in the US released in 1996.³⁰ Their findings reveal five representations of rape in three films, compared to 30 sex scenes in the 50 films. They therefore conclude that the rape scenes are overrepresented despite there being no way of comparing the ratio of rape to sex that occurs in everyday life. They argue that all five rapes represent a hegemonic picture of rapists as “the offenders were portrayed as antisocial “monsters” who preyed on innocent children”.³¹ There were no representations of date rape, incest or acquaintance rape, in other words, the forms of rape that, Bufkin and Eschholz argue, most frequently form part of the reality of rape. They argue that such representations demonstrate the lack of victim validation due to inadequate links with reality.³² The ‘reality’ of rape however, is not in its representation, as representation is a construct with its own agendas and interpretations. Exploring the distinction between representation and reality assumes both terms have a singular definition. Focussing on the distinction between representation and reality is a popular way to explore male rape representation, as can be seen in a study by Eigenberg and Baro. Their study contains male-on-male

²⁹ For specific film analysis see Pat Dowell & John Fried, ‘Pulp Friction: Two Shots at Quentin Tarantino’s *Pulp Fiction*’ in *Cineaste*, Vol. 21. Issue 3 (1995) 4-7, Frances Pheasant-Kelly, *Abject Spaces in American Cinema: Institutional Settings, Identity and Psychoanalysis in Film*, (London: I.B. Taurus and co., 2013) and Angela Farmer, ‘The Worst Fate: Male Rape as Masculinity Epideixis in James Dickey’s *Deliverance* and the American Prison Narrative’ in *Atenea*. Vol. 28. Issue 1 (2008) 103-115.

³⁰ Jana Bufkin and Sarah Eschholz, ‘Images of Sex and Rape: A Content Analysis of Popular Film’, *Violence Against Women*, Vol. 6. Issue 12. (2000), 1317-1344.

³¹ Bufkin and Eschholz, p.1336.

³² Bufkin and Eschholz, p.1338.

rape in a prison film, one of the more common places to find male rape representation. Their aim is to determine whether depictions of male rape in prison reflect the level of reported male prison rape. Eigenberg and Baro conclude that film over represents male rape in prison, as they argue it is fairly rare in real life while it is represented in film as almost inevitable.³³ This echoes Bufkin and Eschholz's findings that rape in film is more pervasive than in 'reality'. Hollywood films often over- or under- represent a huge variety of subjects, however, my argument is located in why and how this might be.

Bufkin and Eschholz name *Sleepers* (Barry Levinson, 1996) as the only film in their study that feature male victims and that the two rape scenes make up 40% of all the rapes in their study. They find this problematic as they suggest that in reality the proportion of female victims is higher than the 60% represented in these films.³⁴ The representations of rape in *Sleepers* took place between adult men and young boys, something Bufkin and Eschholz label as 'homosexual' rapes. These paedophilic rapes are likened to homosexuality by this wording and shows that a distinction has not been made between paedophilic and homosexual acts, showing the extent that male rape is misunderstood. The terms 'male-on-male rape' and 'homosexual rape' are used interchangeably suggesting a significant preoccupation with sexuality when conceptualizing male-on-male rape.³⁵ The link between homosexuality, paedophilia, and male-on-male rape contributes to the social understanding of the male victim. In his book *Male on Male Rape: The Hidden Toll of Stigma and Shame* (1997), Michael Scarce explores the representation of male-on-male rape as reinforcing myths and stereotypes about gay men.³⁶ Scarce states that "no single factor is more responsible for the stigma attached to male rape than homophobia" because of the taboo associated with homosexuality.³⁷ Similarly, Joe Wlodarz argues that representations of male victims overlap with gay male stereotypes. According to Wlodartz Hollywood films paint the victim as homosexual in order to reinforce a 'correct' masculinity that does not allow heterosexual men to be victims.³⁸

Both Scarce and Wlodarz propose that the way films represent the male victim enforces a systematic oppression of gay men. Both Wlodarz and Scarce focus only on male-on-male rape representation, which, though common, is not the only form male rape representation takes. Male-on-male rape is the most recognised form of male rape representation as it has a place in social

³³ Helen Eigenberg and Agnes Baro, 'If you Drop the Soap in the Shower you are on your own: Images of Male Rape in Selected Prison Movies', *Sexuality and Culture*, Vol.7 Issue 14. (2003), 56-89, (p.86).

³⁴ Bufkin and Eschholz, p.1340.

³⁵ The term 'homosexual rape' is used interchangeably with 'male on male rape' in several academic texts, notably Brownmiller.

³⁶ Scarce, p.111.

³⁷ Scarce, p.57.

³⁸ Joe Wlodarz, 'Rape Fantasies: Hollywood and Homophobia', in *Masculinity*, ed. by Peter Lehman (London: Routledge, 2001), pp.67-80, (p.73).

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understanding, often classed as homosexual. Scarce identifies several films that feature male-on-male rape, including the comedy film *Where's Poppa?* This film depicts the protagonist's brother Sidney (Ron Leibman) being mugged and stripped by a gang of black men. Sidney only finds a gorilla suit to wear and is then accosted by the gang once again, detaining him by saying he is the guest of honour at their big dance night. They then abduct a woman walking in an underpass, they hold her down and talk him into raping her, encouraging him, and Sidney convinces himself that he has to. The woman is later revealed to be a male undercover police officer who buys Sidney flowers after the rape with a card that reads 'thank you for a wonderful evening'. This multifaceted representation is both homophobic and racist. One of the gang members says 'we always rape somebody the night of the big dance', and another says rape is 'part of my heritage'. It is revealed to be a prank played upon Sidney, as they leave him to get arrested and he becomes a target for homophobia. The raped officer later buys Sidney flowers, which Scarce suggests represents the idea that men who are raped are gay and that gay men enjoy rape.³⁹ The preoccupation with homophobia, though significant, narrows perceptions when trying to identify more coded representations which deviate from the legal/social definitions of rape and what we are accustomed to seeing.

Representation of the male rape victim is located in a battle between remaining hidden and the need for recognition. In her discussion of representing white men in literature and on screen Sally Robinson argues that invisibility is a privilege pertaining to groups who are not marked by their difference from a hegemonic social ideal.⁴⁰ This ideal of a heterosexual, white, middle class male becomes invisible due to his 'normality'. Retaining invisibility sustains a patriarchy where (specifically white) masculinity is hegemonic and where invisibility must be sacrificed for acknowledgement. Not acknowledging male rape plays into an understanding that men cannot be victims and sustains myths such as homosexuals are not 'real men'. This disassociates the male rape victims from the normative heterosexual male. However, acknowledgment allows men to write a male rape narrative where they do not require to place themselves in a permanently weak role by writing them into comedy. Robinson argues that the wounded white man is representative of the millennial crisis in masculinity in the US.⁴¹ The cultural narrative that white men use to represent themselves attempts to undermine the existence of male privilege, therefore reasserting patriarchal ideals of hegemonic masculinity. As Robinson states, "white masculinity, then, becomes fully embodied *through* its wounding".⁴² Male victims of rape are clearly wounded but men writing

³⁹ Scarce, p.220.

⁴⁰ Sally Robinson, *Marked Men: White Masculinity in Crisis*, (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2000), p.3.

⁴¹ Robinson, p.4.

⁴² Robinson, p.9 (italics in original).

those narratives as comedies allows the wounding to be temporary, gaining sympathy at the same time as refuting that men are or can be victims in the same way women can. Focussing on white masculinity Robinson identifies this group as *invisible* through its normative status, and *visible* through marking itself as wounded. There is a vested interest in retaining the male rape victim as invisible because sexual vulnerability and a hegemonic ideal are incongruent. As “one cannot question, let alone dismantle, what remains hidden from view”, identifying representations of male rape allows critical analysis into a previously invisible phenomenon.⁴³ Comedy is utilised to allow representation of male rape without locating it in a serious or ‘real’ narrative or discourse. Being able to occupy the victim role but not have it take over what defines the character, Projansky argues, is an exclusive male privilege, and is how male rape is represented.

Though comedy frames the films in this thesis, male rape representation does not need to be in the comedy genre to be seen as comic. This is evident in the actor Ned Beatty’s treatment after playing the character Bobby who is raped in *Deliverance* (John Boorman, 1972), a dramatic thriller about four city men battling the wilderness and the locals who reside there. In interviews after this role Beatty talks of being socially vilified and harassed on the street because he played a character who is raped in the film.⁴⁴ These interactions mainly revolve around jokes, using derogatory lines from the film such as being told to ‘squeal like a pig’ to make fun of Beatty in this new context. The interpretation of the film’s representation of male rape is one of comedy, despite its origins in drama, showing that the main social context of understanding male rape is through comedy. The standardisation of framing male rape as comic aids in separating its visibility and its believability as when male rape is represented as dramatic there is a strong comic backlash to relocate male rape in the realm of comedy. To refer once again to Brownmiller who argues that rape is not contained in the act of rape, rather it is a “conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear”.⁴⁵ If fear is what controls a culture that perpetuates ideas and representations of female rape, this thesis looks at how comedy defines perceptions of male rape.

1.4 Comedy as Genre

This section will firstly look at how comedy can be defined, before looking at how male rape fits into narrative and digression, finally discussing levels of taste. Comedy has no conclusive definition though Neale and Krutnik draw from the Oxford English Dictionary to inform their analysis.⁴⁶ The

⁴³ Robinson, p.1.

⁴⁴ See Scarce and Robinson for analysis of these interviews.

⁴⁵ Brownmiller, p.15.

⁴⁶ Steve Neale and Frank Krutnik, *Popular Film and Television Comedy*, (London: Routledge, 1990).

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OED's definition, though not explicitly outdated, was first published in 1374, and has remained practically unchanged since despite the various forms of comedy that have emerged. The two elements that make up comedy according to this definition is representation of everyday life and a happy ending. These two distinctions, however, are not conclusive to how Neale and Krutnik define comedy, as almost all Hollywood films nowadays demand a happy ending, whatever the genre.⁴⁷ A happy ending and representation of everyday life are factors within the narrative of 'comedy', which Neale and Krutnik differentiate from 'the comic', which, they argue, is what makes us laugh such as gags, jokes, pratfalls etc. Distinctions between the concept of comedy and aspects of comedy are often made. Andrew Horton and Joanne E. Rapf note the differences between the terms 'comedy' and 'humour' arguing they are not interchangeable due to their etymological origins and suggestive meanings.⁴⁸ 'Comedy' originating from the Greek *komos* meaning a drunken chorus, or ritual of festivities. 'Humour' coming from the four humors; black bile, yellow bile, phlegm, and blood, indicating "control [of] a person's temperament".⁴⁹ This distinction is between the communal act that comedy provides and the individual balance within a single person. In yet another way, Umberto Eco distinguishes comedy from humour as he argues comedy reinforces a dominant rule and is therefore a form of social control whereas humour liberates, as it gives reasons not to obey.⁵⁰ These differences show how comedy discourses relate to narrative, function, celebration and temperament. The term comedy has various forms and purposes though comedy as a film genre broadly encompasses funny moments within a comedy narrative.

A focal discourse in comedy as a film genre is between how funny moments fit (or do not fit) into the narrative.⁵¹ This spectacle/narrative discourse traces back to discourse around the invention of cinema with Tom Gunning's 'cinema of attractions'.⁵² To focus on the image, the moment, rather than the narrative. Gunning's argument is located more specifically within slapstick comedy but extends to all digressions from narrative. In comedy, the attraction or spectacle that deviates from the narrative is 'the comic' or funny moment. The digression from narrative, Crafton argues, is a prerequisite for all jokes.⁵³ Male rape in film comedy is represented as a joke, gag or otherwise

⁴⁷ Neale and Krutnik, p.17.

⁴⁸ Andrew Horton and Joanna E. Rapf, 'Comic Introduction: "Make 'em Laugh, Make 'em Laugh"', in *A Companion to Film Comedy*, ed. by Andrew Horton and Joanna E. Rapf (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp.1-11, (p.5).

⁴⁹ Horton and Rapf, p.5.

⁵⁰ Umberto Eco, 'The Frames of the Comic "Freedom"', *Carnival!*, ed. by Thomas A. Sebeok (Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1994), pp.1-9.

⁵¹ Henry Jenkins, *What Made Pistachio Nuts? Early Sound Comedy and the Vaudeville Aesthetic* (Oxford: Columbia University Press, 1992), p.2.

⁵² Tom Gunning, 'The "Cinema of Attractions": Early Cinema, its Spectator and the Avant-Garde', *Wide Angle*, No 8. Issue 3. 1996, pp.63-70.

⁵³ Donald Crafton, 'Pie and Chase: Gag, Spectacle and Narrative in Slapstick Comedy', in *Classical Hollywood Comedy*, ed. by Kristine Brunovska Karnick and Henry Jenkins (London: Routledge, 1995), pp.106-119

funny moment that does not necessarily require narrative interaction. However, a character can be defined by their place in, or reaction to that funny moment. This thesis will both focus on the themes and concerns the funny moment represents in the film as a transgression and the narrative function of representations of male rape.

The significance of comedy discourse on the representation of male rape has not previously been explored, despite it being the most prominent form of male rape representation. Steve Neale discusses the importance of focussing on film comedy as a genre and funny moments in particular in *Genre and Hollywood* (2000).⁵⁴ Jokes, gags and other funny moments are specified and designed as a point of laughter “and can therefore act as a focus for ideas, theories and debates about laughter and humour”.⁵⁵ There is a great deal of power in the funny moment as it is a vehicle for ideas or criticism of any kind, including that of social self-reflection of the world. Representing male rape as a funny moment in a film narrative is a potent message about context within a wider social frame that male rape exists in with regards to acceptability. Finding humour in awful situations and events can be seen to displace trauma related to those events, yet the films this thesis explores mostly follow a pattern of humour at the expense of the victim.⁵⁶

However ‘out there’ a joke may be, it must only transgress certain limits of what the audience finds socially acceptable. Jenkins describes this within the politics of taste as “it is the nature of popular entertainment to provoke strong emotions by transgressing social expectations, there remain limits of acceptability, thresholds of shame that cannot be crossed without negative reaction”.⁵⁷ There are things so abhorrent to popular audiences that however transgressive, comic or anarchistic it is, there will be no place for it in audiences’ mind-set. Male rape is prevalent as a joke and is therefore something the mainstream audience suspends their decency for. Hollywood’s popular narrative cinema casts a wide net for audience numbers and attempts to appeal to the largest amount of people possible, crossing cultural and national borders. Hollywood cinema can be seen as a forerunner in manufacturing products of popular culture and as one must possess cultural knowledge to be able to decipher the code (re)presented, the understanding of male rape as funny is not unusual but rather it is part of cultural understanding.

As mentioned earlier, one of the first definitions of comedy requires representation of everyday life, suggestive of a reality or authenticity portrayed. *Film* comedy, however, has its roots in

⁵⁴ Steve Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, (London: Routledge, 2000).

⁵⁵ Steve Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, (London: Routledge, 2000), p.61.

⁵⁶ Sarah W. Craun & Michael L. Bourke, ‘Is Laughing at the Expense of Victims and Offenders a Red Flag? Humor and Secondary Traumatic Stress’, *Journal of Child Sex Abuse*, Vol.24 Issue 5 (24 August 2015), 592-692.

⁵⁷ Jenkins, p.21.

vaudevillian implausibility and outlandishness of the joke or situation.⁵⁸ This departure from normality does not signify the lack of everyday life, rather presents extraordinary circumstances within a recognisable world. The anarchistic history of film comedy, lets the audience engage in suspension of disbelief to make something astonishing believable and represents audiences' relevant social concerns. As a genre in Hollywood film, comedy is a break from verisimilitude and/or aesthetics to such a degree that the unreal becomes plausible and expected.⁵⁹ Normality, then, within film comedy is the unpredicted.

1.5 Comedy as Transgression

The overarching argument in Neale and Krutnik's *Popular Film and Television Comedy* (1990) is that all film comedy is transgressive. Geoff King is in alignment with this understanding of transgression and says comedy relies on departures from 'normality'.⁶⁰ It is precisely this incongruity, which dictates the rules of comedy as a contemporary film genre that breaks from either verisimilitude, aesthetics or both to create something unexpected. When the unreal becomes plausible and expected, the context of comedy presupposes its own transgression and invites the audience to a theatre of disbelief. As transgression is inherent to the comedy genre, specific signifiers are used to set-up and explain situations, actions and characters. These can be known as 'cheap shots' or obvious jokes and here, male rape jokes flourish. Stereotyping means "that comedy often perpetuates prejudice or draws uncritically on racist or sexist stereotypes, since they provide a ready-made set of images of deviation from social and cultural norms".⁶¹ Deviating from social norms is expected yet done in ways that are recurring and identifiable and therefore do not subvert stereotypes, rather reinforcing them, showcasing that transgression in comedy is not necessarily progressive. Comedy is, however, given more leeway than other genres to deviate and undermine social norms because, as King states, it is not taken too seriously.⁶² This flippancy allows comedy to explore topics other genres must handle with fragility or avoid altogether. Male rape not only is featured in comedy more than other genres, it is a stereotype in itself, exemplified perfectly by 'don't drop the soap' jokes.

The discourse between subversion and transgression in film comedy theory is often traced back to Mikhail Bakhtin's interpretations of Rabelais' art. The Bakhtinian standpoint being that Rabelais works are a liberating blow against the hierarchical social structure of the Middle Ages, as his

⁵⁸ Jenkins, p.22.

⁵⁹ Neale and Krutnik, p.3.

⁶⁰ Geoff King, *Film Comedy*, (London, Wallflower Press, 2002), p.5.

⁶¹ Neale and Krutnik, p.93.

⁶² King, p.2.

comedy reverses and undermines the class system.⁶³ The principle of this subversion is degradation, the lowering of the high, ideal and abstract to the material level of earth and body.⁶⁴ This reversal of a social order where state and church dominated with seriousness and dogma placed the value usually attributed to the 'high' of the mind, government and religion, into the body of the people. This made the borders of the human body ethereal, granting access between the internal and external and undermined what society valued most sacred. This comedy was celebrated precisely because it was not allowed within 'civilised' society. The idea of opposing the status quo with comedy is rooted in the Bakhtinian carnivalesque subverting oppressive order.

In opposition to this standpoint Umberto Eco argues that Bakhtin's carnival theory cannot be true liberation because it reaffirms the rules that make up the oppressive order. The common theme between comedy and tragedy is the violation of 'the rule', which can be anything from criminal behaviour, like murder, to social etiquette (often used by comic figures).⁶⁵ It is important that the rule broken is adhered to at all other times otherwise the transgression cannot be enjoyed. A lengthy time of ritual observance allows a small deviation. Comedy does not spell out the rule, in fact it presupposes it; one must know the rule for the joke to be understood. Eco enforces that the ancient upside-down comedy of the lower and marginalised people "is only an instrument of social control and can never be a form of social criticism" because it showcases and reinforces our confines by reminding us of the existence of the rule.⁶⁶ Eco's position that comedy is a force of oppression relies on transgressions reinforcing what they claim to subvert. Both Bakhtin's theory and Eco's rebuttal require a homogenized view of all comedy, its purpose and function. By closely analysing case studies, this thesis will dissect representations of male rape and their relations to transgression in both subversive and repressive ways to discover the social context of how male rape is understood. How male rape jokes are enjoyed and how they enter into public discourse will also locate their position in terms of transgression and everyday life.

Transgression can manifest itself aesthetically in grotesque ways, something which one does not want to see but cannot help but look at. The ambiguity in this laughter comes from the visually disgusting, but hilariously performed. Geoff King describes this phenomenon in contemporary Hollywood film as 'gross-out', a term so widely used it can be seen as its own genre.⁶⁷ The following example will show how representations of male rape can be both transgressive and expected. *EuroTrip* (Jeff Schaffer, 2004) is an example of a film which uses gross-out comedy to represent

⁶³ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1984).

⁶⁴ Bakhtin, p.19.

⁶⁵ Eco, p.1.

⁶⁶ Eco, p.5-7.

⁶⁷ King, p.67.

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male rape. Cooper (Jacob Pitts), is an American tourist in Amsterdam who ventures to a brothel to fulfil his fantasy of having sex with a prostitute. Surrounded by several topless women, one woman in a long red leather coat greets him and beckons him to another room. In the next room, 3 topless women rub Cooper's chest, he is ecstatic as his fantasy is becoming reality. The woman in red is the only one who speaks, saying 'Sometimes our clients are so overwhelmed with pleasure they sometimes scream out "no" when they mean "yes". That's why we have a safe-word'. This explanation echoes a myth about consent, that 'no' does not mean 'no', and can be used as a justification of rape as a protest, in this sense, is not believed nor is believable. The film deliberately misunderstands the nature of safe-words in BDSM and how they link to consent, fostering a position that facilitates rape. Cooper is confident in his ability to handle the 'pleasure' about to happen, so does not read the safe-word but places the scrap of paper it is written on in his shirt pocket. Enthusiastic when the women handcuff his wrists and ankles to the corner of a metal bed-frame, Cooper's joy turns swiftly to confusion as the topless women leave and two large and muscular men enter wearing only skimpy PVC aprons and reposition the frame he is handcuffed to vertically. His jeans and underwear are ripped off him as the now apparent dominatrix in the red leather coat shouts "administer the testicle clamps". He reaches for the safe-word in his pocket to stop the abuse but cannot pronounce the excessively long, made-up word written down, and therefore is subject to electrocution of his testicles. It is clear the safe-word is not meant to be pronounceable making his objections futile and ignored, as is his distressed body language. Consent, here, is a fallacy and the pleasure of the scene is purely for the audience's amusement. Still trying to pronounce the safe-word Cooper accidentally says 'flugelkremphengel', which here, is a demand for one of the men to get a large petrol-powered machine with 3 vibrating dildos on it.

Cooper is repositioned again, bent over as a red dot from a sight laser of the machine hones in on his anus. A cut to his screaming face indicates forced anal penetration. Those operating the machine have no clear motivation to force anal penetration on Cooper and the scene seems to feature in the film purely for the amusement of the audience, as it has no relevance to the plot. Several issues are brought up by this representation, such as consent, ethnocentrism, and fetish practice. Dutch stereotypes around prostitution are exploited, consent is clearly ignored, and male anal penetration is fetishized and painted as torturous. The absurdity of the transgressions present in this scene does not align with a narrative that is usually interpreted as rape and is therefore not easily acknowledged as such. From the definitions explored earlier, there is no doubt that what we see is under a current legal definition of rape as there is forced anal penetration with an object. The ludicrousness, however, masks the definition and creates a disparity between the seriousness associated with rape, and the comedy presented. Acknowledging male rape in film comedy is often

not done, in either audience consciousness or academic discourse despite its presence, a gap this thesis will address.

Not all representations of sexual transgression in comedy are neglected, seen in William Paul's work on comic transgression, drawing upon Mikhail Bakhtin's work to argue that the lower body stratum, especially the libido, is a natural and primary physical drive. Paul explains the body itself as grossly physical and animalistic, as it is only the mind and intellect which civilises us as humans.⁶⁸ The lower he explains as 'natural' tendencies, especially sexuality and finds the grotesque celebratory of human nature and representative of freedom from all rules implemented by society.⁶⁹ Paul's interpretation of Bakhtin assumes an unequivocal knowledge of what is natural. This assumes there are clear differences between what is inherent and what is taught, and that everyone knows and agrees upon these differences, or the joke would not be understood. According to Paul, when a character transgresses they represent what is instinctual, unchanging, and innate. As male rape is transgressive in its representation, the argument could be made for rape as part of a natural order of sexuality and dominance. Paul mainly writes about the libido as a natural animalistic force which liberates us from sexual repression. This is problematic for three reasons: 1; Films are purposefully artificial, the filmmakers control the images we see, conveying certain opinions and moralities, and they can only make *claims* to what is natural. 2; The understanding of what is natural in terms of sexuality has been constructed over centuries and debated about in continuing fever, with no definition agreed upon.⁷⁰ 3; Only socially acceptable transgressions are represented in film comedy. As mentioned earlier, taste must be adhered to for comedy to be popular and consumable by a vast Hollywood audience. What ties the three previous points together is the interpretation of nature and how to represent the natural. The liberation Paul finds in the comedy of the lower bodily stratum is tied to what the filmmakers know to be natural and therefore has human influence. If these comedy sequences represent subversion of, and liberation from the social order simply by showing or saying something untoward, then by framing opinion within transgression one can make claims to what is natural. So whatever is framed outside of the aesthetically polite has the preconception that the content is subversive to social norms therefore providing a context where one can make an artificial claim to natural order. As established previously, rape representation goes beyond the act and represents social conflict and issues, which can then, by association be naturalised. Though it is true that transgression is used in comedy to represent controversial issues,

⁶⁸ William Paul, 'Charlie Chaplin and the Annals of Anality', in *Comedy/Cinema/Theory*, ed. by Andrew S. Horton (Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), pp.109-130 (p.112).

⁶⁹ William Paul, *Laughing Screaming: Modern Hollywood Horror and Comedy*, (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1994), p.77.

⁷⁰ As we can see from the changing definitions of rape throughout time, as an example.

its subversive potential is in the individual representation. The literature of comedy as sitting between liberation and suppression and how that manifests on screen.

1.6 Masculinity – how rape and comedy intersect

In 1997 in his book *Male on Male Rape: The Hidden Toll of Stigma and Shame*, Michael Scarce says “the powerful depiction of male-on-male rape in popular media has only recently begun to change for the better”.⁷¹ The upward trajectory of positive and sensitive representation of male rape that Scarce predicted did not come to fruition as more comedies than ever have represented male rape as a joke. The timeliness of this statement comes at a crux of renegotiating masculinity in the public sphere. The vulnerability and powerlessness associated with being a victim of rape is undermined through comedic representation. Rape represents a power dynamic where, for the victim, complete loss of power is at stake. Men and masculinity have been continually associated with power to an extent where “power and masculinity are virtually synonymous”.⁷² This section will highlight some significant feminist, queer and masculinity theories to outline the relationship between rape, power and masculinity.

Peter Lehman writes about penis-sized jokes and argues that they give power to the thing they claim to undermine.⁷³ The penis is held up as the epitome of what makes a man and is intrinsically linked to the phallus, a symbol of men’s power. By centralising the male sexual organ as a joke, the phallus seemingly does not require any further critique beyond its fleeting screen time. As Lehman quotes from artist Barbara DeGenevieve, “to unveil the penis is to unveil the phallus is to unveil the social construction of masculinity. And *that* is the real taboo”.⁷⁴ In comedy, masculinity can remain stable while being made fun of. Masculinity and the cultural anxieties surrounding it extend to other sexually demeaning situations for men. A moment of vulnerable masculinity is preceded and followed by a stable and powerful masculinity. To make a joke of male rape enhances male rape as a joke. This section will explore the relationship between theories around masculinity and contemporary film representation. We can divide the historical periodization of masculinity in recent years broadly in decades that led up to the proliferation of comedic male rape.

⁷¹ Scarce, p.125.

⁷² Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumim, ‘Me Jane’ in Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumim (eds.), *Me Jane: Masculinity, Movies and Women* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1995) pp.11-35 (p.18).

⁷³ Peter Lehman, *Running Scared: Masculinity and the Representation of the Male Body* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2007) (originally published 1993), p.137.

⁷⁴ Barbara DeGenevieve, ‘Masculinity and its Discontents’, *camerawork*, 1991, 18:3-4, 3-5. (In Lehman, p.5).

R. W. Connell traces masculinity studies back to the 1970s as a backlash itself from anti-feminist men's rights movements.⁷⁵ This questioned the dominance of men over women and understood masculinity as something that could be studied, rather than accepted as naturally dominant. Masculinity as a social construct and a learned behaviour opened up new ways of analysing men and masculinity. Since the cultural acknowledgement and the development of masculinity as a subject of study, academics have charted the changing masculinities in film in recent years. Yvonne Tasker details the dominant form of masculinity in 1980s Hollywood action cinema citing the muscular body as the visualisation of this masculinity. The masculinity on offer in the 1980s was a resurgence of traditional physical strength. The popularity of the muscular bodies of 1980s action cinema can be seen as a backlash against 1970s feminism as a resurgence of traditional sexual and political values.⁷⁶ At the same time discourse about representations of masculinity in crisis were also emerging. Pam Cook introduced the idea to the analysis of 1980 hit film *Raging Bull*, arguing that there "is a masculine crisis defined entirely in terms of male Oedipal anxieties" in the film.⁷⁷ The jealousy and sexuality that underpins the anger and violence of the protagonist Jake La Motta (Robert De Niro) that propels him to success, inevitably causes his demise and isolation.⁷⁸ When Jake rejects his anger and violence he becomes someone to be pitied for he "has lost all the attributes necessary to masculinity".⁷⁹ For audience's watching, the 'loss' of masculinity is a tragic event, despite it causing damage to himself and others. The hardness of 1980s masculinity showed physical strength as an assertion of power but it also highlighted the anxiety of such coveted male bodies, making them destructive instead of protective.

As masculinity changes through time, so does the representations of how masculinity in crisis changes. Susan Jeffords uses *Kindergarten Cop* (Ivan Reitman, 1990) as an example of the development of masculinity between the 1980s and 1990s.⁸⁰ Arnold Schwarzenegger's hard masculinity that solidified the surge of muscular masculinity of the 1980s is softened and made paternal in this film.⁸¹ This is an example of how masculinity became "internalized" in the 1990s.⁸² This internalized masculinity allowed men to 'discover' themselves through their emotions.⁸³

⁷⁵ R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley, University of California, 2005) 2nd Edition, p.4.

⁷⁶ Yvonne Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, genre and the action cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993) p.1.

⁷⁷ Pam Cook, 'Masculinity in Crisis?', *Screen*, 23(3-4), 31-46 (p.44).

⁷⁸ Cook, p.42-42.

⁷⁹ Cook, p.46.

⁸⁰ Susan Jeffords, 'The Big Switch: Hollywood Masculinity in the Nineties', in Jim Collin, Ava Preacher Collins and Hilary Radner (eds.) *Film Theory Goes to the Movies: Cultural Analysis of Contemporary Film* (London: Routledge, 1993) pp.196-208 (p.198).

⁸¹ Jeffords, 1993 (p.200). For further context of 1980s hard masculinity see Yvonne Tasker, 1993.

⁸² Susan Jeffords, 'Can Masculinity be Terminated?' in Steve Cohan and Ina Rae Hark (eds.) *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp.245-262 (p.245).

⁸³ Jeffords (b), 1993, p.254.

Jeffords identifies fatherhood as the situational dynamic that allows for such a personal discovery. Men could then become carers rather than providers, as masculine power could come from beyond the economic front and could be gained in the home.⁸⁴ Masculine power being gained from men excelling in spaces traditionally reserved for women expanded what men could do yet continually required power to be the result of such an endeavour. Cohan and Hark argue that Hollywood continued to make masculinity more visible through the 1990s.⁸⁵ Rowena Chapman explore the 'new man' as an idealised masculinity that has adopted historically feminine attributes by getting in touch with his emotions.⁸⁶ Rejecting hardline masculinity is not the welcome change it seemed to be for women, as Chapman argues, "one of the features of patriarchy is its resilience, its ability to mutate in order to survive, undermining threats to its symbolic order by incorporating the critique, and adjusting its ideology".⁸⁷ Just because 'new' masculinity incorporates emotion, does not mean the value of emotion in women would be the same. To retain the normalcy of masculinity and "in order to lay claim to a stance of moral superiority, men were forced to disavow their masculinity, and to take up a feminine subject position" which confirmed their retention of power.⁸⁸ This 'new man' masculinity, however, did not come anxiety free, in fact, it gave more space to be self-reflective, and lay claim to a victimized stance. Fintan Walsh argues that "the defining feature of masculinity became its dysfunction" in the 1990s.⁸⁹ Masculinity was socially adapting to a more sensitive formation and male rape representation developed as a backlash against remoulding of traditional gender roles.

Millennial masculinities show even more self-reflection and continuously attempt to revise what it means to be a man in rapidly changing circumstances. Citing the terrorist attacks on 11th September 2001, the first US state to make gay marriage legal in 2004, and Barack Obama becoming the first African American president in 2009, Timothy Shary argues that "American men in the past generation have arguable faced more radical questions about themselves than at any other time in history".⁹⁰ Upon these factors, the financial strain, culminating in an economic crash in 2008 threatens what Shary calls "perhaps the most customary marker of authority – wealth, or the ability

⁸⁴ Jeffords (b), 1993, p.258.

⁸⁵ Steve Cohan and Ina Rae Hark, 'Introduction' in Steve Cohan and Ina Rae Hark (eds.) *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993) pp.1-8 (p.8).

⁸⁶ Rowena Chapman, 'The Great Pretender: Variations on the New Man Theme' in Rowena Chapman and Jonathan Rutherford (eds.) *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1988) pp.225-248, passim.

⁸⁷ Chapman, p.235.

⁸⁸ Chapman, p.247.

⁸⁹ Fintan Walsh, *Male Trouble: Masculinity and the Performance of Crisis*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) p.4.

⁹⁰ Timothy Shary, 'Introduction' in Timothy Shary (ed.) *Millennial Masculinity: Men in Contemporary American Cinema* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2012) pp.1-16 (p.2).

to earn it”.⁹¹ Negra and Tasker argue that the recession has amplified the discourse of male failure.⁹² The timeframe that sees the upsurge of male rape in comedy representations coincides with postfeminist media culture and millennial postfeminism.⁹³ In the late twentieth century and early twenty first century postfeminism has emerged in discourse in a variety of contexts. Film Studies has been instrumental in analysing media representations as postfeminist text. The crisis of masculinity most evident in an age of postfeminism is concerned about inability. Genz and Brabon argue that the postfeminist man is “defined by his problematic relationship with the ghost of hegemonic masculinity”.⁹⁴ The failure comes from the inability to be both a modern and traditional man who epitomizes hegemonic masculinity, being unable to complete the multiple roles he must play within the context of contemporary global capitalism of the 21st Century. The postfeminist man “is more self-aware, displaying anxiety and concern for his identity while re-embracing patriarchal responsibilities...[and] slightly bitter about the ‘wounded’ status of his masculinity, which has been affected by second wave feminism”.⁹⁵ In films that feature comedic male rape, the victim or ‘wounded’ status is amplified when a character is raped as he is lacking in sexual control of his own body. Despite postfeminist masculinity being an amalgamation, which Ganz and Brabon call a “melting pot of masculinities”, the films focussed on in this thesis reinforce specific types of masculinity where deviations are punishable by rape.⁹⁶ The individual case studies will explore masculinity of the characters involved and how they deviate from the idealised masculinity the films purport.

As well as taking on more traditional feminine traits, postfeminist masculinity in the context of the new millennium also reinvigorates traditional male roles. One such revitalization of traditional masculinity has been through the representation of the action hero, who in the postfeminist context, shows this through his paternalism.⁹⁷ The protective father figure can be both caring and cold-blooded killer in pursuit of rescuing or protecting (usually) a daughter. Further, any failure to be the loving and affectionate father is forgiven when reinvigorating the

⁹¹ Shary, 2012, p.3.

⁹² Diane Negra and Yvonne Tasker, ‘Introduction: Gender and Recessionary Culture’ in Diana Negra and Yvonne Tasker (eds.) *Gendering the Recession: Media and Culture in an Age of Austerity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014) pp.1-30 (p.15).

⁹³ For a detailed timeline, see Appendix 1.

⁹⁴ Stephanie Genz and Benjamin A. Brabon, *Postfeminism: Cultural Texts and Theories* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009) p.143.

⁹⁵ Genz and Brabon, p.143.

⁹⁶ Genz and Brabon, p.143.

⁹⁷ Sarah Godfrey and Hannah Hamad “Save the Cheerleader, Save the Males: Resurgent Protective Paternalism in Popular Film and Television after 9/11”, in Karen Ross (ed.) *The Handbook of Gender, Sex, and Media* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) pp.157-173 (p.157-158). Also see Hamad, Hannah, *Postfeminism and Paternity in Contemporary U.S. Film: Framing Fatherhood* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014).

violent protector role, validating this masculinity as ideal.⁹⁸ As paternalism is one of the saviours of representations of postfeminist masculinity, it is not a surprise that the characters involved in comedic male rape are not parents.

A defining feature of postfeminist masculinity is its relation to second-wave feminism and the undeniable influence the movement had on American culture.⁹⁹ As the traditional role of women changed, the role of men had to adapt. What makes a man susceptible to rape in the films this thesis covers, is his inability to be a 'man' in the context of the film. Tasker and Negra argue that "postfeminist representation typically celebrates women's strength while lightly critiquing or gently ridiculing straight masculinity".¹⁰⁰ Films representing comedic male rape do not celebrate women, rather, side-line them, centralising masculinity, therefore making the films seem like a backlash to changing gender roles. The men are victimized but not necessarily by women, rather the rules men must follow and their inability to do so. This thesis will explore a variety of postfeminist masculinities represented in the case study films, and what makes them susceptible to victimization.

Judith Butler argues that acknowledging gender as a performance is a form of resistance because it denaturalises gender.¹⁰¹ Therefore, the study of masculinity as a construct allows for the expansion of masculinity beyond its gaining of power, which to some is a contested topic. Wisconsin Senator Stephen Nass wrote an email 28th December 2016 to Wisconsin legislators entitled "UW-Madison Declares War on Men and their Masculinity — Not a Joke" urging them to either ban a course on masculinity or withdraw state funding to the University of Wisconsin - Madison.¹⁰² The

⁹⁸ Godfrey and Hamad, p.161.

⁹⁹ Elizabeth Abele and John A. Gronbeck-Tedesco, 'Introduction' in Elizabeth Abele and John A. Gronbeck-Tedesco (eds.) *Screening Images of American Masculinity in the Age of Postfeminism* (London: Lexington Books, 2016) pp.xiii-xxiv (p.xiv).

¹⁰⁰ Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra 'Introduction: Feminist Politics and Postfeminist Culture' in Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra (eds.) *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture* (London: Duke University Press, 2007) pp.1-25 (p.21).

¹⁰¹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.x.

¹⁰² News articles written about the letter: Todd Richmond, 'GOP legislator rips UW program questioning masculinity', *AP News*, 4 January 2017 <<https://apnews.com/383f4b3061e74c90b7683317f20e92d9>> [accessed online: 6 January 2017]. Aimee Lutkin, 'Wisconsin Republicans Now Upset About University Course on Masculinity', *Jezebel*, 4 January 2017 <<https://jezebel.com/wisconsin-republicans-now-upset-about-university-course-1790766844>> [accessed online: 6 January 2017]. Edward Helmore, 'Republicans condemn university's masculinity program as a 'war on men'', *The Guardian*, 9 January 2017 <<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/09/university-of-wisconsin-masculinity-program-republicans>> [accessed online: 17 February 2019].

course 'BROS, DUDES AND MEN ON CAMPUS: Unpacking Masculinity At UW-Madison' states that men having conversations about masculinity "help us better understand ourselves and empower men to work as allies to promote gender equity and social justice".¹⁰³ Stephen Nass labelling the critical attention the course brings to masculinity as a 'War on Men' shows his objection to such a discourse. Nass describes that teaching masculinity will have a negative impact on men and undermines parental teaching of how to be a man that has been done in a family setting. This backlash against a discourse around masculinity is labelled 'not a joke', as discussing masculinity is serious yet its unacknowledged and invisible existence in everyday life is not. Backlash against the study of masculinity is not new but is also not diminishing. This powerful opposition to the study of masculinity is significant as, referring back to Peter Lehman, the power of masculinity comes from invisibility by not addressing it. One of the ideological stakes in this thesis is concerned with comedic representations of male rape as a subtle and unacknowledged backlash against gender equality.

1.7 Methodology

The methodology of this thesis has two main approaches, textual analysis and reception analysis. I will textually analyse key sequences in significant films that feature male rape in a comedy context and explore the discourses around these case studies to locate them within a wider social and historical context which will both interrogate what is present and absent. The social context will be explored through critical reception of the films, online forums, how the stars and filmmakers talk about the films in interviews and social media, and other relevant sources based upon the individual case study. Rape or penetration of actors does not occur making what happens implicit (like most violence or sex scenes in film) and can therefore represent similar events in various ways, with differing degrees of clarity. Film is an immersive visual medium that encompasses more than just images, including lighting, sound and mise-en-scène to create a world that can frame male rape in a comic way. Film representation differs from other forms of comedic male rape in popular culture, such as jokes among friends, as it envelops audiences into a narrative world that can visually represent male rape.

The films I will analyse are, *Dirty Work* (Bob Saget, 1998), *Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* (Jon Hurwitz and Hayden Scholssberg, 2008), *Horrible Bosses* (Seth Gordon, 2011), *Get Him To The Greek* (Nicholas Stoller, 2010), *Nutty Professor 2: The Klumps* (Peter Segal,

¹⁰³ U-W Madison, <<https://msc.wisc.edu/unpacking-masculinity-with-the-mens-project/>> [accessed online: 26 January 2017].

2000), and *Bruce Almighty* (Tom Shadyak, 2003). These films are all made in the last 20 years and utilise many forms and contexts of comedy to represent male rape, from parody to gender role reversal and the 'comedian comedy' sub-genre.¹⁰⁴ I will analyse the films through the theoretical frameworks of comedy and rape representation which were set up in the previous subheadings. Each film is loaded with themes which will be explored in relation to the research questions mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Though there are other contemporary Hollywood comedy films featuring male rape, the examples I will analyse cover many cross-sections of representation and can therefore be considered both typical examples of comedic male rape and ones that explore a variety of themes.¹⁰⁵

The selection of these films is based on them being popular, often very successful at the box office, and can be classified as contemporary Hollywood, being made and distributed by Hollywood studios, and all receiving a national cinema release (and international in most cases). These films are the best examples of male rape in comedy as they are clear in their visual representation rather than ambiguous or merely referenced. The films were all rated by ratings boards across the world as suitable for a wide audience which allowed distribution and exhibition of the titles.¹⁰⁶ Reviews or other forms of reception, such as internet parental guides regarding the appropriateness of certain films for children, also neglect to mention or acknowledge comedic male rape.¹⁰⁷ When male rape is identified, for example, in the IMDb parents' guide for *Nutty Professor 2: The Klumps* it continues to be coded and referred to as sodomy, ignoring the question of consent and makes an implicit parallel with homosexual sex due to the history of the word's usage.¹⁰⁸ This discourse analysis will be used to interpret reviews, box office response, and articles on the rape scenes/exclusion of discussing the rape scenes to explore the wider social implications of these representations. I am also implementing critical reception to look at how the theme of male rape in film comedy is received, interpreted and ignored. As I have mentioned, the 'invisibility' of male

¹⁰⁴ The comedian comedy genre will be explained and explored in Chapter Three.

¹⁰⁵ A timeline of films that feature a visual representation of male rape can be found in Appendix A. This shows the increasing occurrence of male rape representation from 1994.

¹⁰⁶ The rating of NC17 in the USA prohibits some forms of advertising and all audiences under 18 from viewing the films, which none of my examples were rated. Kevin S. Sandler, *Naked Truth: Why Hollywood doesn't make X-rated movies*, (London: Rutgers University Press, 2007), pp.2-3.

¹⁰⁷ IMDb parent's guide neglects to mention an implicit forced 'mating' behind a bush between a gorilla and a man in *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls* (Steve Oedekerk, 1995). 'Parents Guide for *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls* (1995)', *IMDb Parents Guide*, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0112281/parentalguide?ref_=tt_stry_pg> [accessed 4 May 2016]. The website Kids in Mind does mention a monkey jumping into a man's pants in *Bruce Almighty* (Tom Shadyak, 2003) but does not acknowledge it as penetration or name it as rape. This event is categorised under violence/gore, ignoring any sexual elements that may be interpreted. '*Bruce Almighty*', *Kids in Mind*, <<http://www.kids-in-mind.com/b/brucealmighty.htm>> [accessed 17 July 2016].

¹⁰⁸ 'Parents Guide for *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* (2000)', *IMDb Parents Guide*, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0144528/parentalguide?ref_=tt_stry_pg> [accessed 4 May 2016].

rape is both in the coded representation and in the lack of direct acknowledgement. I have demonstrated that definitions of rape are broad and representations even broader so identifying an act on screen as a representation of rape is contentious. I am using current definitions as guidelines, though not exclusively, looking both for what a representation of a potential sexual act and how consent/lack of consent is represented. Doing so will allow me to identify representations of comedic male rape without limitations but broadly encompassed within a common understanding of what rape is or could be.

I will analyse specific case studies to highlight a broad phenomenon interrogating what the representations mean and how they can be interpreted. As seen in the criminological studies of Eigenberg and Baro and Bufkin and Eschholz, the data collected does not interrogate an industry or culture where comedic male rape representation thrives. As Steve Neale states about comedy film, “as is the case with most genres, comedy is ideologically significant and impact varies from film to film, cycle to cycle, and audience to audience, and is probably best assessed at specific and local levels rather than through universal generalisations”.¹⁰⁹ The rape scenes in the case studies will be analysed to investigate general themes that the individual examples generate. As there is no sole definition of what rape is and in turn what rape can look like, in the coded representations of comedy, interpreting rape from individual examples creates an understanding of how films represent comedic male rape and how we as an audience can interpret them. Notable in this Introduction’s ‘Representing the Male Victim’ subheading, a common approach to male rape representation by social scientists compares reality and representation. Comparing reality and representation to find differences/similarities between truth and fiction assumes the two are distinct. Figures are often used to identify or estimate the number of ‘real’ instances of male rape, which themselves are a subjective source of information due to changing legal definitions and doubt that male rape even exists. Occurrence then, assumes a definition that can be easily interpreted through the implicit medium of film. With a focus on how scenes are constructed, studying representation of comedic male rape, rather than occurrence, interrogates the meanings that the films can both reinforce and question.

1.8 Thesis Structure

¹⁰⁹ Steve Neale, ‘Comedy’, in *The Cinema Book*, ed. by Pam Cook, 3rd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp.270-272 (p.272).

Chapter 1

This thesis is organised into five chapters, including the introduction and conclusion, and will examine six focus films. The structure of each chapter will set up what kind of rapist is represented and what kind of comedy is used. The themes I will focus on are derived directly from the focus films, as what the films align with rape is key to how it is represented and received and what the meanings behind these representations are. Chapter two is entitled 'Male-on-Male Rape' and discusses the films *Dirty Work* and *Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay*. The unique points in this chapter are that the rapist is male, the rapes occur in a prison setting and the comic framing is primarily parody from prison drama tropes. The location of prison is significant, as it is an inescapably gendered space purely occupied by men, where social roles are allocated through strength and power.¹¹⁰ The prison micro-society represented in these films portray the protagonists as outsiders and unaccustomed to the rules which makes them victims of rape. The focus films represent the consequences of and the unavoidability of rape in the prison setting and portray unwritten rules of prison life by how rape is framed. Prison dramas are a common place to find male rape representations, making them ripe for parody which these case studies exploit. This chapter will help in supporting my overall aim by looking at how parody uses the tropes of prison drama to represent male rape as comedic and naturalising it.

Chapter three will focus on 'Female-on-Male Rape' and discuss the films *Horrible Bosses* and *Get Him To The Greek*. Though rape through unwanted penetration occurs here, other types of sexual assault will be explored as well, identified by lack of consent and some form of sexual engagement. This chapter will focus on the female rapist and the workplace as a battleground between men and women as the films use gender role reversal as the source of comedy. The women who rape men in these films are represented as unruly and aggressive, suggesting female sexual agency is problematic and disorderly. It also enforces the myth that male consent is constant and unwavering making female-on-male rape impossible due to men's constant readiness for sex. The location of the workplace is an example of how rape represents issues related to a gendered social status such as that of career and financial independence. The role reversal comedy frames these gender stereotypes to naturalise female sexual subordination. Chapter three will help in supporting my overall aim by looking at gender reversal comedy to compare male rape narratives to female ones, which will identify the social concerns created by the power dynamics between female-on-male rape.

Chapter four interrogates *Bruce Almighty* and *Nutty Professor 2: The Klumps* and is titled 'Animal-on-Male Rape'. This chapter argues that the case study films use animals as representational

¹¹⁰ SPEARIT, 'Gender Violence in prison and Hyper-Masculinities in the 'Hood: Cycles of Destructive Masculinity', *Washington University Journal of Law & Policy*, 37 (2011), 89-148.

phalluses to penetrate antagonists on behalf of the narrative interests of the protagonists. This chapter deviates from the previous two as it is the antagonist, not the protagonist who is raped. In addition, the films are targeted towards a family audience rather than a teen and adult audience that the other case study films are geared towards. The rapes are framed as justifiable punishment and are celebrated from the point of view of the protagonist and audience. Animals are essential for male rape representation in family films as they disassociate the act of rape away from the protagonists' bodies, obscuring it and can represent more natural and uncivilised desires. This heroic rapist is framed within slapstick, carnivalesque and comedian comedy to excuse and justify the rape through comic positioning of a protagonist as key comic figure. This comic context is the aesthetic factor in these films that makes male rape available for children to view. Family films depend on a level of morality making them suitable for broad demographic appeal.¹¹¹ The morality that frames animal-on-male rape representation not only says it is acceptable to show to children but also celebrate as a justifiable punishment.

¹¹¹ Noel Brown, *The Hollywood Family Film: A History, From Shirley Temple to Harry Potter* (London: I.B Taurus, 2012), p.8.

Chapter 2 Male-on-Male Rape

This chapter will explore how integral prison is to male-on-male rape representation. Tropes from the prison genre position male-on-male rape as inevitable and well known. Parodies of these tropes make male rape the punch line and subvert the horror the films they parody portray. This chapter will focus heavily on prison as a setting of male-on-male rape representation because it is so often represented there, not only in film but in academia. It will also discuss the rapists and victims and their socio-political position in the fictional worlds of the films they appear in and in their reception.

Kehrwald argues that “with the notable exception of *Deliverance* (John Boorman, 1972), male rape is hardly ever depicted outside of prison”.¹ In *Deliverance*, four men from the city of Atlanta take a boating trip in a countryside river before it is destroyed by the construction of a dam. The men are visibly outsiders from the rural environment and the journey becomes one of revenge and survival when one of the men, Bobby (Ned Beatty) is raped by a hillbilly while another holds a shotgun and the four men must escape from the wilderness and kill the two hillbillies. Sally Robinson argues that the rape in *Deliverance* is “a demasculinization that mirrors that threatened by the damming of the river”.² Rape and the river are closely linked in the film, with Lewis (Burt Reynolds) mournfully describing the men from the city’s impact on the river by saying earlier in the film, ‘we’re gonna rape this whole goddamned landscape’. Bobby embodies and represents the middle class industrialisation of poor rural America and is raped for it. The film *Deliverance* is a prime example to use to discuss the ways that male-on-male rape can be interpreted and represented as comedic precisely because its rape scene is iconic as a horrific and dramatic moment in cinema history. This is because the scene is not comic, but its legacy is. In 1989, Ned Beatty who played Bobby in the film wrote an article for the *New York Times* saying he has been stigmatised for nearly 20 years by people shouting ‘squeal like a pig’ at him in the streets.³ The public’s enjoyment of ridiculing Beatty shows a lack of relation between the emotional draw of the scene and the memory of it in everyday life. Described by Pamela E. Barnett as a “broadly shared cultural joke”, it does not matter how horrific the representation, how tense and drawn out it is, its context has become more significant as people know the joke without necessarily knowing the film.⁴ Another example of how the rape scene in *Deliverance* is remembered and represented as comedy is from the TV show *South Park*.

¹ Kevin Kehrwald, *Prison Movies: Cinema Behind Bars* (London: Wallflower Press, 2017), p.89.

² Sally Robinson, ‘Emotional Constipation’ and the Power of Dammed Masculinity: *Deliverance* and the Paradoxes of Male Liberation’ in Peter Lehman (ed.) *Masculinity: Bodies, Movies, Culture*. (New York: Routledge, 2001) pp.133-147 (p.143).

³ Ned Beatty, ‘Suppose Men Feared Rape?’, *New York Times*, 16 May 1989, p.27.

⁴ Pamela E. Barnett, *Dangerous Desire: Sexual Freedom and Sexual Violence Since the Sixties*, (London: Routledge, 2004) p.59.

South Park uses its position as edgy comedy to copy the entire rape scene, using the mise-en-scène and dialogue to imitate the scene for comedy purposes. George Lucas and Steven Spielberg rape Indiana Jones in this parody, where rape is an allegory for the destruction of the Indiana Jones franchise.⁵ This overt parody, using the same famous ‘squeal like a pig’ dialogue and rural landscape is one way that *Deliverance* has been made comedic after its release.

The music of *Deliverance*, especially the sound of the banjo, has become closely linked with the film and is another way in which the rape is represented as funny. Josh Sopiartz identifies the significance of the perception of the banjo changing in American society because of *Deliverance*. As well as ‘duelling banjos’ becoming one of the most financially successful bluegrass songs of all time, and winning a Grammy Award, it also “cement[ed] the five-string banjo as the symbol of hillbilly inferiority and depravity”.⁶ He is not alone in this perception as John Hartigan writes, “just the first few notes of its theme music, the ‘duelling banjos’ melody, are enough to summon the film’s depiction of classed sexual fears dramatized in a nightmarish scene”.⁷ The rapists are hillbillies and the music immediately separates them from modern city dwellers. The mountain they inhabit is liminal as it is about to be swept away by industrialisation of the area. The differences between the hillbillies and the city dwellers are most clearly identified by the music. Sopiartz comments on the Appalachian origin of banjo music and its association with the working class, regionalising the events of the film even more. The relation between the sound of the banjo, specifically the song ‘duelling banjos’, class disparity, and sexual assault is not only clear in *Deliverance*, but also repeated in other forms of media. Because of this repetition in other media, “sexual violation at the hands of a hillbilly follows the sound of the banjo...[which] still registers with viewers more than 40 years after *Deliverance*”.⁸ Sopiartz cites internet memes as proof of its persistence beyond the film. The joke ‘paddle faster I hear banjos’ references the connection between hearing the banjo and male rape, playing upon the fear of male rape.⁹ Comedy has been central to the legacy that *Deliverance* has in relation to rape, and ‘duelling banjos’ continues to make that connection. The song is used in an attempt to reference the fear of hillbillies in cartoons, such as *Tiny Toon Adventures*, *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy*, where they inevitably reference male-on-male rape when doing this. As Geoff King argues in *Film Comedy*, “nothing, ultimately, is safe from becoming comic at some future date”.¹⁰

⁵ ‘The China Problem’, *South Park*, S12 E08, 2008.

⁶ Josh Sopiartz, ‘Dueling Perceptions: The Five-String Banjo in Contemporary American Popular Culture’, *Popular Music and Society*, (2018) 41:1, (1-15), p.4.

⁷ John Hartigan, *Odd Tribes: Toward a Cultural Analysis of White People* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2005) p.137.

⁸ Sopiartz, p.12.

⁹ Pictured in **Error! Reference source not found.** on a placard from a local Southampton bookshop.

¹⁰ King, p.201.



Image 3 *Deliverance* placard in The Bookshop Alehouse (Southampton, UK)

Male rape has been historically represented in prison films, including *Johnny Holiday* (1949), *Exodus* (1960), *Fortune in Men's Eyes* (1971), and *Escape from Alcatraz* (1979), all of which set prison as the location of male rape. They are all either out of sight or merely suggested, such as in *Exodus* where Dov Landau (Sal Mineo) describes how he escaped Auschwitz, saying 'the Germans used me -- like you would use a woman'. *Johnny Holiday* is more visual, as a boy is taken into the reformatory's showers by other boys as a punishment for revoking their yard time; he emerges dishevelled, his head slumped down. These films are dramas, yet prison as the location for male rape is such a standard that it features in other genres such as documentary and comedy as well. The documentary *Turned Out: Sexual Assault Behind Bars* (Jonathan Schwartz, 2004) exposed the apparent inevitability of male rape in prison, the intentions of the rapists, the feelings of victims, and the understandings of rape from those working in the prison system. As told by one of the rapists, relationships can begin with rape and result in love, blurring the line between rape and consensual homosexuality. In documentary, fiction film, and in academia, rape in prison has historically been documented with a similar correlation to homosexual sex. Joseph Fishman wrote *Sex in Prison* in 1934 with limited ways of differentiating homosexuality from male-on-male rape.¹¹ As noted by Catherine D. Marcum, the power relationship established in Fishman's piece, where effeminate men would be a submissive partner to "top men", has continued as the core scenario of rape in prison.¹² The terms are gendered, enforcing the hyper-masculinity of the rapist and emasculation of his victim.¹³ Marcum explores how this argument has been extended but

¹¹ Joseph F. Fishman, *Sex in Prison* (New York, National Library Press: 1934).

¹² Catherine D. Marcum 'Examining Prison Sex Culture' in Catherine D. Marcum and Tammy L. Castle (eds.) *Sex in Prison: Myths and Realities* (Bolder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014) p.4.

¹³ Kim Shayo Buchanan, 'E-race-ing Gender: The racial construction of prison rape', in Frank R. Cooper and Ann C. McGinley (eds.) *Masculinities and the Law: A Multidimensional Approach* (New York: NYU Press, 2012) p.188.

syntactically remains using homosexual language, such as “fag”, used for rape victims, and “studs” for rapists. This framing has been limiting to the study of male rape, as consensual homosexuality and rape for power and control have been merged. Fishman correlates consensual homosexual sex and rape by discussing rape and homosexual sex as one and the same. Prison has been in the narrative of male-on-male rape just as long as homosexuality has, and they have an intertwined history in both academia and representation. Male-on-male rape has been called ‘homosexual rape’ in academic publications, which also isolate the discussion as something that happens in prison.¹⁴ Susan Brownmiller uses the term ‘homosexual rape’ to describe male-on-male rape in *Against Our Will*.¹⁵ Brownmiller argues that rape is about power and not sex yet aligns consensual homosexuality with violence in this phrase. She establishes that those in prison are fighting to be a ‘man’ (the penetrator) and not a ‘woman’ (the penetrated).¹⁶ Using this mock heterosexual format to describe both male-on-male rape and homosexuality she identifies that a hierarchy of strong over weak is established but in doing so suggests that homosexual relationships are inherently pseudo-heterosexual.¹⁷

The marginality of men who are raped is often discussed in reference to homosexuality. Michael Scarce uses testimonials and film representation to argue that men who are raped are seen to be homosexual. James W. Trivelpiece argues that, in films featuring male-on-male rape, “male victims are shown as being at risk of becoming homosexual”.¹⁸ Homosexuality as a way to marginalise victims places blame upon them for not being normative in society. Scarce states that “no single factor is more responsible for the stigma attached to male rape than homophobia” because of the taboo associated with consensual homosexuality.¹⁹ The stigma attached to homosexuality, however, is enveloped in a larger social understanding of gender normativity. Deviation from gender normativity can result in a violent backlash and devalue someone’s credibility. Scarce goes on to say that “the true culprit is a patriarchal culture that perpetuates the hatred of all things feminine, enforces rigidly defined gender roles that place men in positions of power over women, and punishes nonconformity to these exploitative relationships”.²⁰ Feminisation is thus seen as destructive and emasculating to male rape victims, revealing the stigma, associated with

¹⁴ Brownmiller, (1975); Bufkin and Eschholz, (2000). In Brownmiller’s work she uses homosexual rape to describe male-on-male rape in prison, and Bufkin and Eschholz use the term to when discussing *Sleepers* (Barry Levinson, 1996) where boys are raped by guards of the reformatory they are in.

¹⁵ Brownmiller, *passim*.

¹⁶ Brownmiller, p.267.

¹⁷ Brownmiller, p.264.

¹⁸ James W. Trivelpiece, ‘Adjusting the Frame: Cinematic Treatment of Sexual Abuse and Rape of Men and Boys’, in Mic Hunter (ed.) *The Sexually Abused Male: Prevalence, Impact, and Treatment Volume 1* (New York: Lexington Books, 1990) pp.47-71, (p.63).

¹⁹ Scarce, p.57.

²⁰ Scarce, p.245.

womanhood in a patriarchal culture. Masculinity is not only significant for male rapists, but also crucial for victims. Noreen Abdullah-Khan argues that “the construction of masculinity is central to understanding male rape because the problem of rape is a problem of masculinity”.²¹ Gregory and Lees argue that hegemonic masculinity benefits from rape, as “enforcing and maintaining the dominant (or hegemonic) form of masculinity is not only achieved through violence towards women but violence towards other subordinated and marginalized groups”.²² Abdullah-Khan shares this viewpoint as rape subordinates marginalised masculinities.²³

To understand how male-on-male rape is constructed in the collective subconscious, it is important to establish the cultural, social and historical contexts of its representation. Much like the literature that discusses male-on-female rape, discourse on men who rape men is largely located within psychology, criminology, and other social sciences. Using surveys of men who have raped men Nicholas Groth comments on the psychology of the offender, arguing that they equate “manhood with being in control, the offender compensates for his feelings of vulnerability by gaining physical and sexual control over another”.²⁴ The male rapist who rapes men is described in terms of gaining power, relating to masculinity. This is similar to the way the male rapist who rapes women is discussed, citing power and control as motivations. Gregory and Lees argue that like men who rape women, men rape men to maintain and reinforce their masculinity.²⁵ The type of masculinity spoken of here is a toxic and desperate one that requires power by dominating others. Conceptualising rape as dominance serves to enhance and enforce the masculinity of the rapist. Masculinity is focal in the discourse about the male rapist, dominance, control, and degradation being common themes here. Yet this does not translate to representation as the victim is often the protagonist and must maintain his masculinity.

2.1 Prison

Prison is the central location to depict male rape on screen. *The Shawshank Redemption* (Frank Darabont, 1994) represents Andy (Tim Robbins) as repeatedly raped. As the narrator Red (Morgan Freeman) puts it, the rapes are ‘part of Andy’s routine’. Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1979) speaks of imposing control over an individual by treating them as part of a mass through structure and discipline. Routine is part of the “discipline [that] produces

²¹ Abdullah-Khan, p.71.

²² Gregory and Lees, p.131.

²³ Abdullah-Khan, p.71.

²⁴ Nicholas Groth, A. with Jean Birnbaum, H., *Men Who Rape: The psychology of the offender* (New York: Plenum Press, 1979) p.140.

²⁵ Gregory and Lees, p.131.

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subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile bodies'".²⁶ That Andy's rapes are part of his routine suggests that the repeated rape of men in prison is a method of control among inmates to shape action and behaviour and inflict a power dynamic. What disrupts this enforcement in *The Shawshank Redemption* is that Andy does not become docile but works actively against the rapes. This results in his liberation in the plot, as Andy does not become docile in prison even after his long term is served. Docility would equate to submission and consent in Andy's mind, which is how he retains his power, even when being raped. This film has been well received from critics and audiences as a significant film for the genre and male-on-male rape is a significant part of the narrative and character development.²⁷

Male-on-male rape has other significant connections to prison, which can be found in its representation. Foucault outlines the changing ways punishment functioned to create the modern prison. He argues that prior to the modern prison punishment was "torture as a public spectacle", which later turned into a hidden punishment behind the prison walls.²⁸ Loss, or suspension of certain rights such as liberty and movement are rules placed upon the prisoner by the state.²⁹ Exploring rules placed upon prisoners by other forces, such as other prisoners, and the social gender rules in a confined and single gendered space is also part of the discussion of rape in prison. Despite prison being an isolated and segregated space, punishment is still known in society. Foucault argues that this is essential for how prison functions as the penalty for each crime is stable, inevitable, and known, meaning the punishment precedes the crime through knowledge of it.³⁰ Common knowledge tells us that prison is a consequence to crime, and the worse the crime the longer the punishment. Male rape, however, is an unofficial punishment that can be expected yet is not a formal legal punishment. This expectation moves away from potential rehabilitation and back to sensory torture. In law enforcement films and TV programmes it is not uncommon to see a police officer threaten or tell the man they have arrested to expect rape in prison. Despite this being an illegal police technique, characters from TV shows such as *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* threaten suspects with rape, which sometimes causes them such intense fear that they immediately confess or give information they were withholding.³¹ *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* is a programme about arresting and prosecuting people for sex crimes, which branched out to

²⁶ Foucault (1979) p.137.

²⁷ *The Shawshank Redemption* tops the IMDb Top 250 user-generated films of all-time list. <<https://www.imdb.com/chart/top>> [accessed online: 28/11/2018].

²⁸ Foucault, (1979), p.7.

²⁹ Foucault, (1979), pp.11-16.

³⁰ Foucault, (1979), p.106.

³¹ For example, *Law and Order: Special Victim's Unit* (1999-). 'Perverted'. S11 E09. NBC. 18th November 2009. *Law and Order: Special Victim's Unit* (1999-). 'Intent'. S19 E08. NBC. 6th December 2017.

advocacy, with lead actors, such as Mariska Hargitay starting a charity against sexual assault.³² Kehrwald describes a scene from *Escape from Alcatraz*, where “the guard’s inaction, in either preventing the rape or stopping the beating signify rape as a kind of sanctioned initiation ritual”.³³ Male rape as punishment is so embedded in the unofficial function of prison that even programmes such as *Special Victims Unit* use it. Documentary has also been used to boost the power of sexual assault, the fear of which is used as a deterrent against committing crime. In the documentary/reality TV show *Beyond Scared Straight* teenagers who are at risk of being incarcerated are supposedly scared out of criminal behaviour. In one episode, a teenage boy is told he looks pretty by a prisoner, threatening him by saying ‘you’re going to be my bitch’.³⁴ With the prison guards and TV crew observing and encouraging this behaviour, they acknowledge the fear of male rape as a powerful one, at the same time as normalising it. Despite punishment only being meant to be seen by those inside prison, representations of punishment are far reaching. It is commonly known that it is part of the unofficial punishment that going to prison has in store for the convicted.

2.2 Comedy about Prison

Some films and TV detectives make references to rape to intimidate, get suspects to confess or divulge information. This is an illegal tactic, yet is normalised in the following examples. The British comedy film *The Parole Officer* (2001) shows the antagonist police officer threatening the protagonist with prison, saying ‘you’re going to end up with an arsehole like a clown’s pocket’. Other references are less direct, hinting more towards any form of physical harm, allowing the viewer to decide exactly what violence may befall the potential inmate.³⁵ Elizabeth Stoker Bruenig calls this “rape theatre”.³⁶ It is not just in fiction where the ‘unofficial’ dangers of being an inmate is acknowledged by the authority. High profile cases, certain crimes such as rape or paedophilia, and inmates who are weak, young or homosexual are seen as targets and therefore often not put into cells with other inmates. This segregation for their own protection is well-known. In an episode of the franchise *Lock Up*, the chief deputy explains that two inmates in jail for murder and hate crimes are in solitary confinement because ‘they were already so sensationalised, they would not

³² *The Joyful Heart Foundation*, [accessed online: <http://www.joyfulheartfoundation.org/> 26/06/2018].

³³ Kehrwald, p.87.

³⁴ *Beyond Scared Straight*. ‘St. Clair County, IL’. S02 E07. A&E. 15 December 2011.

³⁵ Examples include but are not limited to *Criminal Minds* (2005-). ‘The Boogeyman’. S02 E06. CBS. 2006 and *Law and Order: Special Victim’s Unit* (1999-). ‘Perverted’. S11 E09. NBC. 18th November 2009.

³⁶ Elizabeth Stoker Bruenig, ‘Why American’s don’t care about prison rape’, *The Nation*, 2nd March 2015, [accessed online: <https://www.thenation.com/article/why-americans-dont-care-about-prison-rape/> 7th August 2018].

have stood a chance'.³⁷ Not standing a chance speaks to the dangers they would face in general population. What inmates do to one another is seen as both an unofficial punishment and an unfortunate but inevitable consequence of housing criminals together. Fights, beatings, and rapes are all seen to be part of the prison structure and hierarchy, which the authorities in film and TV not only acknowledge but condone as part of the unofficial punishment of prison.

To talk about how prison, comedy and male rape intersect, I will analyse the film *Get Hard* (Etan Cohen, 2015). *Get Hard* is about James King (Will Ferrell), an investment banker falsely convicted of fraud and Darnel (Kevin Hart) a car wash owner who becomes James' 'prison coach' who aims to help him avoid being raped in prison. James' mansion is transformed into a prison for training purposes; the tennis court becomes 'the yard' and his pantry a cell that he cannot leave. His home becoming a faux prison extends the structure of prison to the outside world and the punishment he expects to receive into the open as well. The film brings the fear and constant reiteration that male-on-male rape in prison is inevitable mainly through his prison coach Darnel. As soon as Darnel hears James is going to be sent to San Quentin prison he exclaims 'they be fucking in San Quentin. Everybody gets the dick. They might as well call it San Fuckin' man'. Eigenberg points out that "fear of rape is a central defining characteristic of the prison experience".³⁸ The references are continual, including subverting the context of prison slang, as James is made fun of for wanting to unionise 'all the bitches'. The references to prison being synonymous with rape also come from blending elements from other media, creating a fictionalised version of reality by featuring a fake episode of *The Tonight Show Featuring Jimmy Fallon* in the film. James' favourite singer, John Mayer, who plays himself as a guest on the show sings a song with the lyrics 'James will fall, against the prison wall, choking on a mouthful of balls'. James's presupposed victimisation and deservedness of rape is assumed to such an extent that it is represented as a topic on one of the world's longest running talk shows. The audience of the talk show laugh at the song's lyrics and the presence and engagement of well-established celebrities Jimmy Fallon and John Mayer signify that the TV and music industry also endorse the joke.

Male-on-male rape representation is understood to be a trope of prison comedy because of the drama that preceded it. Parody is a popular form of comedy and because of the common knowledge of 'what happens in prison' the setting is used to represent male-on-male rape in a film. When differentiating parody from pastiche, Richard Dyer says that parody is comical and critical.³⁹ Parody

³⁷ *Lock Up: County Jails* (2005-). S17 E5. 'Tulsa, OK: Extended Stay - The Bad Good Friday'. MSNBC. Aired 2013.

³⁸ Helen M. Eigenberg, 'Correctional officers' definitions of rape in male prisons' in *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 28, 2000, 435-449, p.445.

³⁹ Richard Dyer, *Pastiche* (London: Routledge, 2007), p.40.

is similar to pastiche because they both acknowledge they are an imitation.⁴⁰ But unlike pastiche, parody implies a negative or positive evaluation.⁴¹ Parody uses the image of the prison in an attempt to undermine the male fear of rape behind bars to a joke. Like an homage, parody has a reference point, in the cases this thesis discusses it is prison as a synonymous location to mean male-on-male rape. Even 'drop the soap' jokes rely on the prison context of group showers. Representations in prison drama create the visual content that is parodied.

A common visual gag is that of meeting the new cellmate. Someone convicted will have their new cell mate intimidate them, flutter their eye lashes or make a sexual remark at them, as the bars shut, enclosing them in the cell with the sexual predator. This is so common that children's TV shows such as *The Powerpuff Girls* and *Looney Tunes* have featured this regularly with their respective characters Mojo Jojo, and Yosemite Sam.⁴² This forced relationship trope displays as a type of wooing. An example of such a relationship can be found in the film *Let's Go To Prison* (2006, Bob Odenkirk) where one prisoner makes romantic advances on another. Barry (Chi McBride) attempts to woo Nelson (Will Arnett) by washing his hair and setting up 'dates' on his bunk by hanging silk sheets and flowers, lighting candles, and offering him wine made in the toilet. Yet the romance is cut through with Nelson's fear and lack of consent, while Barry makes threats, holds a knife to Nelson's throat and tells Nelson he owns him. This representation is indicative of a faux relationship based upon what some prisoners have to endure. The pretence of courting is the source of comedy. This film is also centred around suggestions of male rape in its marketing, having the title of the film appear on a block of soap on the ground on the promotional material.

Male-on-male rape does not only exist in parody, nor does it need to be represented in the comedy genre for it to be considered comedic. A scene known as 'the gimp scene' in *Pulp Fiction* is one such example, where despite easily being seen as horrific, many elements of the scene suggest a comedic leaning. Enemies Butch (Bruce Willis) and Marcellus (Ving Rhames) stumble upon a pawn shop while they are fighting. It is owned by a sadist, Maynard, who interrupts their fight by cocking his shotgun and imprisoning Butch and Marcellus in the basement, they are tied to chairs and forced to wear bright red ball gags. Maynard phones Zed, who arrives and demands 'the gimp' be brought out. Dressed in a full body leather zentai Maynard brings this man on a leash from the hole in the ground where he is kept to partake in the activities. Marcellus is chosen by Zed and is taken to a back room. As Butch sits listening to Zed rape Marcellus the song 'Comanche' by The Revels is playing, Butch manages to get free of his restraints and escape. Once upstairs he decides to go back

⁴⁰ Dyer (2007) p.23.

⁴¹ Dyer (2007) p.23.

⁴² *Carrotblanca*, *Looney Tunes*, (1995). *The Powerpuff Girls*. S.02 E.09 – 'Cootie Gras'; S.03 E.6B – 'Monkey See Doggie Two'; Season Specials 2008 E.01 – 'The Powerpuff Girls Rule!'.

down with a weapon taken from the pawn shop to save Marcellus. Butch choosing the weapon is described by Gavin Edwards as similar to *Looney Tunes* as a similar scene plays out in *The Rabbit of Seville*.⁴³ From claw hammer to baseball bat, then to chainsaw, Butch finally picks up a samurai sword to kill Maynard with. The cartoonishness of him searching for the most damaging, and noticeably largest weapon has also been described as “a sort of condensed parody” by Dana Polan, as the weapons correspond to genres such as horror with the chainsaw, and Japanese Yakuza film with the samurai sword.⁴⁴ Described as “part of the fun of *Pulp*” by the director Quentin Tarantino, this scene’s intent is certainly comical.⁴⁵ To add to the intention of comedy to *Pulp Fiction*’s rape scene, the song Tarantino initially wanted playing in the background was ‘My Sharona’ by The Knack. According to Tarantino it “has a really good sodomy beat to it. I thought, oh, God, this is just too funny not to use”.⁴⁶ Not being able to use the song because of licencing issues, Tarantino thought it was best, as he said it would have been too overtly comic, instead of subtly so, which was his aim.⁴⁷ Described as black comedy, Tarantino often mixes comic elements with extreme violence, which does not cancel out the tragedy, rather can leave an audience with an “unstable and contradictory emotional response”.⁴⁸

One way male-on-male rape in prison can be understood is in relation to male-on-female rape outside of prison, as Canadian comedian Peter White says “if you’re a man, don’t say anything to a woman on the street that you wouldn’t want a man saying to you in prison”.⁴⁹ This quote has been repeated by Jeremy Clarkson, who specifies the place as the ‘prison shower’, adding more sexual assault overtones.⁵⁰ These statements assume that the only place men do and should fear being sexually assaulted is prison. A study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, The National Crime Victimization Survey, found “that a prisoner’s likelihood of becoming a victim of sexual assault is roughly thirty times higher than that of any given woman on the outside.”⁵¹ Comparably, in terms of numbers, prison is much more dangerous than the outside world, yet in terms of anticipation and fear, the prison, or the prison shower, for men, is as scary and dangerous as the whole world

⁴³ Gavin Edwards, “‘Get The Gimp’: Breaking down *Pulp Fiction*’s most notorious scene’, *Rolling Stone*, 2014 <<https://www.rollingstone.com/movies/news/get-the-gimp-breaking-down-pulp-fictions-most-notorious-scene-20140521>> [accessed online: 30th December 2017].

⁴⁴ Dana Polan, *Pulp Fiction* (London: Palgrave Macmillan and BFI, 2009) initially published 2000, p.29.

⁴⁵ Gavin Edwards, 2014.

⁴⁶ Gavin Edwards, 2014.

⁴⁷ Gavin Edwards, 2014.

⁴⁸ King, p.196.

⁴⁹ Peter White, *CBC Comedy*, (clip accessed on *YouTube*) 7 July 2017 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QY_u7yFe70> [Accessed 17 December 2018].

⁵⁰ Jeremy Clarkson, ‘Don’t say anything to a woman you wouldn’t want a bloke saying to you in a prison shower’, *The Sun*, 28 October 2017, <<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4783951/sexism-harvey-weinstein-allegations-jeremy-clarkson-opinion/>> [Accessed 17 December 2018].

⁵¹ Stoker Bruenig.

for women. *Big Stan* (Rob Schneider, 2007) is a comedy film that plays on the notion that women do not understand the constant fear of rape. The film is very similar to the plot of *Get Hard* as it is about a banker Stan (Rob Schneider) sentenced to prison who is afraid of being raped so hires a guru to teach him how to avoid rape in prison. The film shows Stan running into his bedroom where his wife Mindy (Jennifer Morrison) is asleep, waking her up and telling her there is a man in the house who says he is going to rape her. Mindy panics and cries until Stan reveals he made up the story so she could feel how he would feel in prison to get her sympathy. This scene in *Big Stan* disregards any fear women may have about rape by solely locating the fear of rape as an experience for men. This problematic representation makes fun of a woman's fear of rape, prioritising the trauma of male-on-male rape over male-on-female rape. Another way male rape in prison is compared to female rape in the outside world is through arguments of deservedness. For Stoker Bruenig, "the notion that prisoners who are raped should have behaved better to be less deserving is the apotheosis of the 'asking for it' or 'had it coming' arguments so commonly employed to dismiss victims of rape in the free population".⁵² *Big Stan* also represents an unusual preventative tactic to avoid rape in prison, an anus tattoo, which is met with terrified reactions. Such preventative measures are not uncommon in films and can be seen in *Naked Gun 33 1/3* (Peter Segal, 1994) where the protagonist Frank Drebin (Leslie Nielsen) wears a cast iron chastity belt when in prison, an apparent necessity for protection.

In both *Get Hard* and *Big Stan* the stereotypes of weak, rich and effeminate white men are the victims of a black, hyper-masculine culture. Kim Shayu Buchanan argues that "the black on white myth that states black men assault white men at a disproportionate rate is incorrect and based on stereotype and inaccurate data".⁵³ The perception and representation, however, perpetuates this stereotype. In an episode of the documentary franchise *Lock Up*, a young man who is new to jail explains his expectation of what jail would be like before he was inside himself. He laughs about how naive he was, saying he expected a "guy in the shower named Bubba".⁵⁴ The name Bubba is not arbitrary, rather references specifically a large black man from the American South. Buchanan argues that prisoners, policy makers and academics all believe the black on white prison rape myth.⁵⁵ White men are often threatened more with rape than black men, which can be seen in media representations.⁵⁶ Buchanan argues that "the racial retelling of the story of prison rape tends to eclipse the gendered and institutional factors that are known to contribute to prison rape".⁵⁷ The

⁵² Stoker Bruenig.

⁵³ Buchanan, passim.

⁵⁴ *Lock Up* (2005-). S09 E04. 'Maricopa County Jail: Extended Stay - High Stakes'. MSNBC. Aired 2010.

⁵⁵ Buchanan, p.194-196.

⁵⁶ Buchanan, p.202.

⁵⁷ Buchanan, p.202.

idea that male-on-male-rape in prison is prominently committed by black men on white men erases the demand of hegemonic masculinity in prison, that thrives on power over others.

Spearlt summarises how prison, especially the act of prison rape, reproduces destructive masculinity.⁵⁸ Attempting to recreate, the apparently obligatory, gender binary in a homosocial institution, the importance of violence and sex are exaggerated.⁵⁹ To discuss how masculinity is represented in prison films containing male-on-male rape, *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994, Frank Darabont) will be discussed. A hallmark of contemporary prison film, *The Shawshank Redemption* features the protagonist Andy (Tim Robbins) repeatedly raped by a group known as 'the sisters'. Yet in this film he can retain his masculinity, autonomy, and respect in the eyes of the audience because of the way he handles the situation, by fighting. Daniel LaChance argues that *The Shawshank Redemption* shows how white men gain therapeutic renewal from rape.⁶⁰ As Andy remains stoic, he avoids humiliation. Andy fights back and avoids being forced to perform fellatio by threatening to bite off the ringleader's penis. *The Shawshank Redemption* shows that submission is what creates victims, and Andy's refusal to submit saves his masculinity, his sanity, and his respect in the eyes of the audience.

Male-on-male rape represents masculinity in complex, multifaceted ways. In the next two case studies male-on-male rape will be explored in more detail, drawing themes from the chosen films. *Dirty Work* makes a joke of someone not understanding that rape happens in prison, representing rape as inevitable as soon as one walks into a communal jail cell. *Dirty Work* highlights the prevalence of the joke, and how it is located in prison. The second case study is *Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* where a broader political context will inform how the film could be perceived.

2.3 *Dirty Work* (Bob Saget, 1998) Case Study

"It's what prisons are most famous for" – Mitch (Norm MacDonald) in *Dirty Work*.

Dirty Work is a film about a man, Mitch, who cannot keep a job or a romantic relationship. His only companion is his lifelong best friend Sam (Artie Lange), who is also out of work and both men are considered losers. Sam's father, known as 'Pops' (Jack Warden), becomes ill and needs a heart transplant but is not at the top of the list because of his age. His gambling addicted doctor (Chevy

⁵⁸ Spearlt, p.106.

⁵⁹ Spearlt, p.106.

⁶⁰ Daniel LaChance, 'White Masculinity and Harsh Punishment' in Charles J. Ogletree, Jr. and Austin Sarat (eds.) *Punishment in Popular Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2015) pp.163-196 (p. 163).

Chase) tells Mitch and Sam that if they pay him \$50,000 within two weeks, he will make sure Pops is put at the top of the donor list as this will repay the loan sharks and save the doctor's life. The two try a few jobs to make the money but are unsuccessful. Mitch's philosophy in life is "not to take crap from anybody", and while reminiscing about his childhood he realises he and Sam are both skilled at enacting revenge on people, so decide to open a 'revenge for hire' business to make the \$50,000 quickly. They are successful but make an enemy, ruthless developer Travis Cole (Christopher MacDonald). They put popcorn in a bulldozer's engine to help an old woman keep her house, which interrupts Cole's business and creates negative publicity for him. For this, they end up in jail for a short amount of time before being released on bail by Cole himself. During the two-minute screen-time the film dedicates to jail, male rape is centralised into their experience. By looking at the scene, the rest of the film, and its broader context in relation to the rest of MacDonald's comedy career, male-on-male rape will be explored as an inevitable consequence in jail, and a universal joke. The joke acknowledges and depends upon the audience's expectation of male-on-male rape in prison to function. The context of the film highlights how male rape can fit into this comedy and how it does not stand out from the rest of the film. The scene analysis will look closely at what happens in the jail cell, specifically focussing on the dialogue, as it is telling about prisons and reactions to rape in prison. Finally, the context beyond the film, including some reviews, Norm MacDonald's career, and where this joke fits into the politically charged #MeToo movement will be analysed.

There is no narrative reason why there is a rape in this film, the joke being self-contained; it does not even require any visual cues to function. Before the film was released, Norm MacDonald's stand-up routine featured a version of the joke, explaining male-on-male rape in prison. He said "I'll tell you something about getting raped, it's not all it's cracked to be. That's why I don't wanna go to prison, man, getting raped, goddamn." He later goes on to use phrases that his character says word for word in the film, the punchlines unchanged between the two mediums. The joke becomes part of MacDonald's persona in a way, since it appears in his stand-up routines, his podcast, the film he stars in, and his fictional book loosely based upon his career.⁶¹ His popularity is not universal and his type of comedy has made him a controversial figure, making his career inconsistent. From 1993-1998 MacDonald hosted his news-focussed 'Weekend Update' segment on *Saturday Night Live* where he often referred to rape of both men and women, his humour being described as "volatile".⁶² Norm MacDonald was fired from *Saturday Night Live* in 1998 allegedly for making jokes

⁶¹ Norm MacDonald, *Norm MacDonald: Based on a True Story [Not a Memoir]*, (New York, Spiegel and Grau, 2017).

⁶² Rob Harvilla, 'Norm Macdonald Has a Show, but Does It Have a Point?', *The Ringer*, 19 September 2018, <<https://www.theringer.com/tv/2018/9/19/17878812/norm-macdonald-netflix-show>> [accessed online 13 January 2019].

about the OJ Simpson trial.⁶³ MacDonald's personality has been described as "acrid", and he has found it hard to break through to Hollywood stardom and keep jobs in the mainstream market.⁶⁴ Explaining MacDonald's draw Dan Brooks argues his "anachronistic approach might be limiting his audience, but it could also explain his enduring appeal, because it lends him a kind of moral authority".⁶⁵ MacDonald prefers punchlines to sympathetic narratives, standing by his same jokes and themes throughout his career, his persistence gaining his credit. His jokes have been consistent, marking his brand of comedy as anti-political correctness, yet more recently, he is facing considerably more backlash for his comedy.⁶⁶ Yet, MacDonald's own TV show *Norm MacDonald Has A Show* premiered on Netflix in September 2018, showing his career has not been severely affected by this.

In one episode of *Norm MacDonald Has a Show*, he reads "prison rapes are delicious", then correcting himself with "prison crepes" to raucous laughter.⁶⁷ Using male-on-male prison rape as a topic in his comedy for over 25 years, it is part of MacDonald's edgy appeal and very much centralised to his brand of comedy. Brooks describes "Macdonald's sense of humor, [as]... centred on an assumption widely held but politely denied".⁶⁸ MacDonald's jokes that centre victims as a punch line are more in line with an anti-political correctness stance, told to evoke a shock, laughter coming from the outrageous. Male-on-male rape jokes are very much part of an accepted and mainstream culture, yet the way they are told changes the reaction. MacDonald's flippant and purposefully shocking approach causes controversy. He has a running theme, clearly finding humour in male-on-male rape twenty years after *Dirty Work* was released. The increasing outrage could be seen as a change in attitude towards male rape jokes, acknowledging they are not as acceptable in contemporary culture as they may have been twenty years previously.⁶⁹ As we will see in the rest of this thesis, male rape jokes are not becoming less frequent, less accepted or less controversial, rather it is the context that dictates how the jokes are perceived. In Norm

⁶³ Matt Wilstein, 'Norm Macdonald Was Fired From SNL Over O.J. Jokes. Now He's 'Not Completely Sure' He's Guilty', *The Daily Beast*, 24th July 2017, <<https://www.thedailybeast.com/norm-macdonald-was-fired-from-snl-over-oj-jokes-now-hes-not-completely-sure-hes-guilty>> [accessed online: 3rd August 2018].

⁶⁴ Aaron Hutchins, 'All joking aside', *Maclean's*, 19th January 2015, Vol. 128, Issue 2. 'Norm MacDonald - SNL Monologue', *YouTube*, uploaded by user Idy1973 on 21st February 2013 [accessed online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofXxinOtPiQ> 3rd October 2018].

⁶⁵ Dan Brooks, 'Norm MacDonald, Still in Search of the Perfect Joke', *New York Times*, 30 April 2018, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/30/magazine/norm-macdonald-still-in-search-of-the-perfect-joke.html>> [accessed 17 December 2018].

⁶⁶ Harvilla; Jeremy Henderson, 'Auburn factors into Jane Fonda joke on Norm MacDonald's new Netflix show', *Alabama Entertainment*, 20th September 2018, <https://www.al.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2018/09/auburn_factors_into_jane_fonda.html> [accessed online: 9th October 2018].

⁶⁷ 'Norm MacDonald has a Show', Netflix, 2018, S01 E07.

⁶⁸ Brooks.

⁶⁹ Harvilla; Henderson.

MacDonald's case, his jokes about women being raped has gained him negative attention, his male rape jokes merely another example of his lack of concern, and they alone clearly do not warrant outrage from society by themselves.

The comedy in *Dirty Work* is in the same vein as the rest of MacDonald's career, which includes homophobia and sexism. The rest of the humour in the film does not highlight the rape scene as an outlier within the context of the film. Sexism and homophobia are central to how the characters behave in the film, for example by addressing women by saying things like "listen here prostitutes" and denying male emotion and touch. Most women in the film are nameless sex workers, who, by the end of the film are referred to as Mitch's "loyal army of prostitutes". In one scene, Sam places his arm around Mitch, thanking him for helping his father, to which Mitch says "keep your distance there Liberace". Sam gets defensive and moves away from him. The suggestion that Sam is romancing Mitch because he expresses sentiment and touches him shows a fear of seeming gay. Mitch and Pops call other characters the homophobic slur 'fruits' often. In an attempt to ruin a film premiere, Mitch and Sam switch out *Men in Black* (Barry Sonnenfeld, 1997) with a gay pornography version. Not only do they turn away from the screen, they close their eyes and cover their ears to avoid seeing or hearing the film while the entire audience stampedes from the cinema screaming in horror. Parodying the iconic 'theatre run out' scene using shots reminiscent of *The Blob* (1958, Irvin S. Yeaworth Jr. and Russell S. Doughten Jr.), *Dirty Work* magnifies the horror that ordinary cinemagoers would be faced with if watching gay pornography. These jokes, among others, create their idea of an audience who find homosexuality something to be disgusted by and to laugh at. Women are either potential love interests or prostitutes, which all reflect back onto how the men at the centre of this film view themselves. They are losers with hidden potential who do not need to change their behaviours or viewpoints; rather they are appreciated for their latent success.

2.3.1 Scene Analysis

Mitch and Sam are arrested for helping a revenge client and are taken to a jail cell with at least eight other inmates. Sam is walking confidently, talking about how he does not want to end up rotting in prison while Mitch is skittish, hunched over and speaking quietly. They sit down on a bench and Mitch tells Sam that he is not afraid to rot in prison rather he is afraid of something else which he whispers silently to Sam. Sam reacts with confusion, saying he had "never heard of that" to Mitch's surprise. Mitch answers with "how could you have never heard of that, it's what prisons are most famous for". Immediately three men come over and loom above the seated Mitch and Sam, the camera looking up at them filling the screen. The middle one says, "get up" and both men abide, he then pushes down Sam calling him a "fatty" and escorts Mitch to a part of the cell that is unseen, opposite a bench of the other inmates who become spectators of the event. The scene cuts

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to the villain Travis Cole watching the news that Sam and Mitch had been arrested. The news states that Travis is being slated as a billionaire real estate mogul, while Sam and Mitch are being praised as heroes for opposing his construction efforts. The film cuts back to the prison where Sam is waiting on the bench. Mitch walks towards him pulling his trousers up over his underwear. He turns back towards the camera, supposedly where the three men are and points his finger to just right off screen and rants:

'You fellas have a lot of growing up to do, I'll tell you that. Ridiculous. Completely ridiculous. [Mitch looks around at the rest of the inmates]. Can you believe these characters? [He looks back, pointing at them, the other hand holding up his trousers]. Way outta line, way outta line. I have a good mind to go to the warden about this. You know what hurts the most is the lack of respect [he says as he holds his bottom with his hand]. You know? That's what hurts the most. Except for, except for the other thing, that hurts the most but the lack of respect hurts the second most. Ridiculous.'

Mitch and Sam are then immediately called by the guard as they are being released. This scene shows the inevitability and immediacy of rape in prison. The points this section will focus on are Mitch's 'ridiculous' rant reminiscent of a telling off, what prisons are most famous for, and how rape is never mentioned, despite the whole scene being structured around it by discussing how the prison cell functions in the scene, as well as the other prisoners and the jail guards.

This scene comments on how prisons are seen in popular culture, how rape in prison is an immediate and inevitable part of prison, and provides a comedic reaction to such an event. Sam not knowing about 'what prisons are most famous for' is a telling joke, as we do not see rape or penetration, or even hear it mentioned, yet we are supposed to know that a rape is about to happen. Human Rights Watch published results of several investigations into male-on-male rape in prisons in the United States and named it *No Escape* in 2001.⁷⁰ Despite not affecting everyone in the judicial system, the title refers to rape as inevitable in prison; to avoid rape would be as difficult as breaking out of prison. This acknowledgement of existence influenced action and implementation of the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003.⁷¹ Yet, in popular culture, the acknowledgement of male-on-male rape in prison is much older. So much so, that *Dirty Work* acknowledges not just the apparent inevitability of prison rape, but also the common knowledge of this inevitability. The film uses prison as a location to make this joke as it would not function

⁷⁰ Joanne Mariner, *No Escape: Male Rape in US Prisons* (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

⁷¹ Brenda V. Smith, 'The Prison Rape Elimination Act: Implementation and Unresolved Issues' in *Criminal Law Brief* (2008).

anywhere else; it is presented as a well-known fact that the only place where men can be raped is prison.



Image 4 *Dirty Work* (Bob Saget, 1998) screenshot



Image 5 *Dirty Work* (Bob Saget, 1998) screenshot

The prison formulates a familiar backdrop for male-on-male rape jokes because of the public understanding that prison is a place where male rape can happen. A segregated space devoid of women where men must enact violence not to become victims themselves.⁷² The guards in *Dirty Work* are only there to put Mitch and Sam into the cell and take them out a few minutes later. It seems whatever happens in the cell is none of their concern. In the film, the authority that restricts inmates' rights does not protect or control what happens between inmates. In documentaries, Riofrio argues that "by largely obscuring or downplaying issues of race, sexism and homophobia

⁷² Spearlt, p.106.

while rationalizing the brutality of prison punishment, prison shows function to actively normalize both incarceration and its subsequent attending violence".⁷³ Representing images of inmates being punished provides what Riofrio calls a "spectacle of incarceration", a rationalisation and normalisation of prison punishment.⁷⁴ Repeating these images provides further normalization, and as the joke in *Dirty Work* requires previous knowledge of prison imagery, this is acknowledged here. The spectatorship of the act is reserved for the rest of the prisoners and is not for the film audience. The stoicism and almost boredom on the other prisoners' faces adds to the acceptance of what they are seeing is normal in that context. Riofrio discusses TV prison documentaries, arguing that they create a reality where "we fetishize [inmate] bodies as a means of assuming our own control over a social group that we don't understand, that we actively fear and yet find intriguing".⁷⁵ Comedy films that feature prisons as a backdrop for male-on-male jokes also project a "spectacle of incarceration", using the location to fill in the blanks the audience need to understand a rape took place. In *Dirty Work* we do not see the rape, it happens off camera and remains invisible. Yet through the context of prison, the 'blanks' are filled in.

Mitch's monologue projects an unlikely point of view, adding the unexpected to the scene, which is the main source of comedy. Mitch states the worst part about the rape he just endured was the lack of respect, acknowledging the emotional toll. Immediately backtracking, he says 'the other thing', presumably the physical pain, actually hurts the most. Visibly Mitch is not injured physically from the experience, undermining both the physical and emotional trauma by listing them in order of pain, yet is clearly not hurt by either. He evades distress completely and when he leaves the cell, there is no lingering memory of it. Having served its purpose as a joke, the scene fades into insignificance. Mitch's reaction allows him to retain power in the scene. The rape happens completely off screen and the only context for it the audience gets is from Mitch's perspective. Controlling the narrative of the event, he starts the joke by commenting about how he fears rape, and then comes out the other side as a stand-up comedian infantilising and telling off the rapists, like he would a heckler. By controlling his reaction to the rape, Mitch can avoid being labelled as a victim by others. His stoicism shows not only his strength but also the lack of trauma men who are raped 'should' have.

⁷³ John Riofrio, 'Spectacles of Incarceration: Ideological Violence in Prison Documentaries', *Symploke*, (2012) 20:1, 139-152 (p.145).

⁷⁴ Riofrio, 145.

⁷⁵ Riofrio, 151.

2.3.2 Broader Context

To make the film receive a PG-13 rating in the US it was cut and redubbed according to actors Artie Lange and Chevy Chase.⁷⁶ The script was praised by the actors who enjoyed its crudeness and its potential to “turn political correctness on its side”.⁷⁷ Though it is not clear what the exact differences would be between the higher R rated version and the released PG-13 rated film, one instance surely occurs during the above-analysed scene. During Mitch’s speech, his mouth says the words “anal rape”, which is later dubbed over with “the other thing”. Being direct about what happens off screen explains what we already know, yet not being explicit allows for a lower rating and a younger potential audience. The dubbing makes the scene more implicit, yet the location of prison is the main factor that offers no alternative action but male-on-male rape. The scene is to be clear that male-on-male rape is the joke, even without the specific words. This shows that implying male rape is acceptable for a younger audience when naming it is not. It also does not object to the content of male rape in a PG-13 rated film, as long as it is not mentioned in the dialogue.

The power of phallic penetration introduces the film by Mitch telling a story about a first revenge plot he had when he was a teenager. A Doberman chased him and Sam so he borrowed his cousin’s German Shepherd who Mitch says “also happens to be gay”. We see the German Shepard chase the Doberman, then ‘humping’ it from behind, the camera looking upwards showing only the faces and shoulders of the dogs. Mitch narrates that he “taught that Doberman some humility”, lessening his power over him by subjecting him to anal penetration. This theme is revitalised later in the film as Travis Cole’s beloved dog is subject to the same penetration as before but by a skunk. The camera angle is the same as before and we hear wincing sounds from the dog. The implication of defeat is also the same. Mitch has beaten his enemy, getting Cole arrested for fraud and made the money to help Pops, and Cole’s dog being penetrated symbolises his downfall. Reviews of the film do not explicitly remark on these power dynamics, as they are entrenched in common narrative of good defeating evil. In a *New York Times* review, the symbolism of these animal scenes is not mentioned, rather included in a list to exemplify how lowbrow the comedy is and surprise at its PG-13 rating. Lawrence Van Gelder writes that the film “includes crude language, beatings and simulation of sex between a skunk and a chihuahua”.⁷⁸ Ignoring the symbolism of the power play that phallic penetration has when framed as revenge and defeat is common in the reception of films in this thesis and will be revisited throughout. Bringing up this encounter and ignoring the prison rape

⁷⁶ *Howard Stern On Demand: Chevy Chase*, (Sirius Satellite Radio: November 2007).

⁷⁷ *Howard Stern On Demand: Chevy Chase*, (Sirius Satellite Radio: November 2007).

⁷⁸ Lawrence Van Gelder, ‘FILM REVIEW; Lurching Into Comedy With a Heart Attack’, *New York Times*, 13 June 1998, <<https://www.nytimes.com/1998/06/13/movies/film-review-lurching-into-comedy-with-a-heart-attack.html>> [accessed online: 19 February 2019].

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when commenting on the inappropriateness of the PG-13 rating of the film is understandable when the prison rape does not stand out. Not only it is insular and unnecessary for the narrative of the film, it fades into the background as just another joke. A skunk and Chihuahua is unique, yet, as established, male-on-male prison rape is a well-known joke.



Image 6 *Dirty Work* (Bob Saget, 1998) screenshot

Reviews of the film critique the quality of the comedy and look to the surrounding careers of the actors to explain this. The amount of comedy stars that make an appearance in *Dirty Work* is an ode to classic comedy stand-up, specifically from *Saturday Night Live* (SNL). As well as Chevy Chase, minor roles, credited and uncredited, and cameos are performed by Don Rickles, Gary Coleman, Adam Sandler, John Goodman and Chris Farley. The cast is described as “comedy-fraternity participants” and as a “boys’-club” in a review by *Entertainment Weekly*.⁷⁹ Their insult humour, crudeness, and infantile comedy seem to foster a misogynistic, homophobic, and recycled comedy. Jim Whalley described early SNL humour as “concentrating on sexual and juvenile humor from a male point of view”.⁸⁰ In the mid-1990s, SNL changed direction, adding younger comedians to the bill, *Dirty Work* being an ode to the old humour that used to be on the show. The reviewer James Sanford rhetorically asks, “Why does Hollywood think that everyone who ever appeared on “Saturday Night Live” deserves a film career as a reward?”⁸¹ A clear critique of MacDonald and the influence of SNL to promote and give opportunities to performers despite fluctuation of popularity. SNL’s self-contained jokes format is used in *Dirty Work* for jokes such as the prison rape scene. Citing SNL as how MacDonald achieved fame, the reception of the film has been critical of this. Joel Stein in *Time* magazine calls *Dirty Work* “disastrous”, arguing the transition from SNL to film was

⁷⁹ EW Staff, ‘Dirty Work’, *Entertainment Weekly*, 1 March 1998, <<https://ew.com/article/1998/03/01/dirty-work/>> [accessed online: 19 February 2019].

⁸⁰ Jim Whalley, *Saturday Night Live, Hollywood Comedy, and American Culture: From Chevy Chase to Tina Fey* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.160.

⁸¹ James Sanford, ‘Dirty Work Reviews’, *Rotten Tomatoes*, 23 June 2002, <https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1083480-dirty_work/reviews/?sort=> [accessed online: 19 February 2019].

not a successful one.⁸² *Dirty Work* has also been described as a “cult classic”, epitomising this type of offensive humour in a nostalgic package.⁸³ The film is very much associated with Norm MacDonald, scarcely mentioning director Bob Saget in related pieces and interviews about the film.⁸⁴

As mentioned earlier, Norm MacDonald’s career has a history of using rape jokes, which are praised by his fans. It is not unheard of to make male-on-male rape jokes in mainstream stand-up, which can be seen in acts by Dave Chappelle and Joe Rogan.⁸⁵ However, MacDonald’s fan base is invested in him consistently making jokes on themes such as rape. Fan made *YouTube* compilations of MacDonald’s jokes such as ‘Norm MacDonald is Obsessed with Prison Rape’ and ‘Norm MacDonald Rape Jokes Compilation’ collate his jokes thematically over his career.⁸⁶ They feature clips from *The Weekend Update*, audio from his stand-up routines, and a radio interview where he is a guest. The *YouTube* compilations are made and moderated by the creator of Norm MacDonald social media fan pages on *Facebook* and *Instagram*.⁸⁷ Featuring clips, fan art and comments posted by the fan community, these pages not only show a community that enjoys seeing the works of Norm MacDonald but also participating in the creation of his brand. Henry Jenkins writes about fan culture, saying fans are “producers and manipulators of meaning”.⁸⁸ They do not only absorb what is produced, rather they are “active participants in the construction and circulation of textual meanings”.⁸⁹ Though MacDonald makes many male rape jokes, the presentation of them in a thematic collection is created by fans. His edgy humour, which his fan

⁸² Joel Stein, ‘Macdonald Buys the Comedy Farm’, *Time*, 29th March 1999, Vol. 153, Issue 12.

⁸³ Hutchins.

⁸⁴ Guy McPherson, *What’s So Funny? Bob Saget Interview*, 4th July 2014, <<https://wsf1027fm.blogspot.com/2014/07/bob-saget-interview.html>> [accessed online: 3 August 2018]. ‘Comedian Bob Saget on loss, returning to sitcoms and his clashing personas’, *CBS News*, 18th November 2017, <<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/comedian-bob-saget-returning-to-sitcom-life-and-maintaining-his-edge/>> [accessed online: 3rd August 2018].

⁸⁵ Dave Chappelle, ‘Dave Chappelle | Man Rape | Stand-Up Comedy’, *YouTube*, published by user *Laugh Factory* on 14 April 2010 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLWlBgi0uOc>> [accessed online: 11 January 2019]. Joe Rogan, ‘Joe Rogan 2015 Stand Up UFC & Man Rape’, *YouTube*, published by user *Nothing But Comedy All Stars* on 15 February 2018 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=molUbRsOW8Y>> [accessed online: 11 January 2019].

⁸⁶ ‘Norm MacDonald is obsessed with prison rape’, *YouTube*, uploaded by user ‘I’m Not Norm’, 8 September 2018, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVQdNPSvpyc>> [accessed online: 2 October 2018] and ‘Norm MacDonald Rape Jokes Compilation’, *YouTube*, uploaded by user ‘I’m Not Norm’, 5 June 2018, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZzUj8LIPJbg>> [accessed online: 9 July 2018].

⁸⁷ @imnotnorm, *Instagram*, <<https://www.instagram.com/imnotnorm/>> [Accessed online: 19 February 2019]. @imnotnorm18, *Facebook*, <<https://www.facebook.com/imnotnorm18/>> [Accessed online: 19 February 2019].

⁸⁸ Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (London: Routledge, 2012 – Updated 20th Anniversary Edition) Originally published 1992, p.23.

⁸⁹ Henry Jenkins, p.24.

base was made from, influences his brand by ignoring jokes he made about other themes and centralising rape as a focal topic.

Participation can also be found in interviews with MacDonald, such as with *Conway & Whitman*, where MacDonald was a frequent guest.⁹⁰ In one episode, a caller refers to a mutual event they both attended, which featured a male-on-male prison rape survivor telling his story. MacDonald retold the survivor's story from his comedy brand perspective, repeating the phrase 'made sweet love to him against his will'. The caller laughed in an eager and anticipatory tone as she reminded MacDonald of the story where retells a rape survival story intentionally avoiding the word 'rape', making jokes at the expense of the man and the situation. MacDonald says he felt bad for him but his concern and sympathy seeming insincere, here, as he is exploiting the event. The fan caller urging on this story shows his appeal and reflects what people want to hear from him. He reworks the stories, retelling it not from a survivor's point of view but from a comedian's point of view, which interrupts the authentic narrative and ... MacDonald explains the man was "trying to assert his manhood [so] he made sweet, sweet love to a lady against her will". Acknowledging the feeling of loss of masculinity after male-on-male rape, he also excuses and makes fun of male-on-female rape. MacDonald presents his jokes as equal between genders, using the phrase 'making sweet love against their will' for both women and men, undermining trauma and highlighting the different way society speaks about male and female rape.

Norm MacDonald has come across criticism for his rape jokes more recently, his appearance on *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon* being cancelled because of his comments about the #MeToo movement. He remarked an accusation could ruin someone's career, and he minimised the trauma of victims, sympathising with and defending those accused.⁹¹ The #MeToo movement had vast publicity in 2018, exposing sexual misconduct in Hollywood and how ingrained it is in the industry. The movement has been mainly focussed on female victims of male aggressors, with some male actors speaking out, namely Anthony Rapp and Terry Crews. Interestingly, *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon* was the show presented in *Get Hard*, where relentless male prison rape jokes were made. Sympathy to victims of sexual assault and rape has not seemed to extend to excluding male rape from the cache of jokes told. The #MeToo movement has been described as a "modern reckoning", influencing individuals, society, lawmakers, and business owners.⁹² The #MeToo

⁹⁰ *Conway & Whitman*. 97.13 FreeFM (KLSX). CBS Radio.

⁹¹ Kevin Burwick, 'Tonight Show Cancels Norm Macdonald Appearance After Controversial #MeToo Comments', *TV Web*, 12th September 2018, <<https://tvweb.com/norm-macdonald-tonight-show-appearance-canceled-me-too/>> [accessed online: 19th September 2018].

⁹² Meera Jagannathan, 'This is how #MeToo is impacting sexual assault survivors' mental health', *Moneyish*, 2nd October 2018, <<https://moneyish.com/ish/this-is-how-metoo-is-impacting-sexual-assault-survivors-mental-health/>> [accessed online: 5th October 2018].

movement is grounded in the lack of belief, women not being believed that they have been raped, the lack of belief that so many women are sexually assaulted, and that so many men sexually assault women. They are believed to the extent that it is not socially acceptable to completely write them off and joke about female rape without consequence. This is not the same for male rape, as it is less believed and therefore less 'real'.

2.3.3 Final thoughts on *Dirty Work*

Peter Lehman argues that in general, "one of the most important functions of comedy in cinema is to sneak in a joke almost unnoticed, make us laugh, and then allow us to forget that we ever thought something was funny".⁹³ *Dirty Work* successfully convinces us to laugh at male-on-male rape and then forget about it. The lack of visual explicitness helps with unrecognizability, shown by the rape happening off screen. It can also be seen in the words 'anal rape' being dubbed over to give the pretence of ambiguity. However, why the rape is so easily forgotten is to do with its familiarity. Evidenced in the reception of the film, the comedy was not universally enjoyed but the male rape representation was not out of what was expected within the style of comedy present. Male-on-male prison rape is a well-known joke, which *Dirty Work* takes from Norm MacDonald's career and locates within a style of anti-political correctness comedy reminiscent of the male-centric, *Animal House* antics of early *Saturday Night Live*. This case study has shown the universal knowledge of male-on-male prison rape used as a basis or fact to form a joke. The next case study will further explore how films locate themselves within a broader discourse about male rape.

2.4 *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* (Jon Hurwitz and Hayden Schlossberg, 2008, USA: New Line Cinema) Case Study

Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay (2008) is the second film in a trilogy about two friends, Harold (John Cho) and Kumar (Kal Penn), who are following a love interest of Harold's to Amsterdam when they are mistaken for terrorists on the plane and taken to Guantanamo Bay.⁹⁴ Harold being of Korean descent and Kumar from Indian descent, their friendship is interpreted by the racist homeland security agents as Al Qaeda and North Korea working together. The film follows their escape, adventures travelling from Cuba to Texas, and finally clearing their names. Though the two only spend 4-minutes of screen time in Guantanamo Bay, the detainment camp is centralised

⁹³ Peter Lehman, *Running Scared: Masculinity and the Representation of the Male Body* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2007) (originally published 1993), p.138.

⁹⁴ The first film in the trilogy is *Harold & Kumar go to White Castle*, Danny Leiner, 2004, USA: New Line Cinema with the alternative title *Harold & Kumar get the Munchies*. The third in the trilogy is *A Very Harold & Kumar 3D Christmas*, Todd Strauss-Schulson, 2011, USA: Warner Bros.

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through the title and the poster, which features Harold and Kumar behind a fence dressed in orange jumpsuits. In the film, Guantanamo Bay is a location used to represent the targeting and criminalisation of Asian people in post-9/11 United States. Shilpa Dave describes it as a political film “about the experiences of racial profiling and security for Asian Americans, particularly South Asian Americans during the George W. Bush era (2000-2008)”.⁹⁵ In 2008, when this film was released, detaining untried people indefinitely in Guantanamo Bay was becoming increasingly unpopular in public opinion, leading to plans to close the site in 2009.⁹⁶ In the film, the site of Guantanamo Bay takes on issues of stereotyping, racism in the government, and prisoner abuses by representing rape of prisoners by guards. Harold and Kumar, detained terrorists, and the guards all speak from their positions, the guards as rapists, the terrorists as victims, and Harold and Kumar as near victims, who only escape because another prisoner bites one of the guard’s penises. This case study will discuss male-on-male rape in the context of post-9/11 America in terms of race relations to discuss how male rape can be a baseline of comedy to highlight other issues. The case study will also discuss how the comedy engages with popular debates on male-on-male rape, taking a stance on the motivations of male rape. The way the site of Guantanamo Bay is used in the film makes a link to films about prison through representing rape, expanding what rape representation can mean through the lens of the War on Terror.

⁹⁵ Shilpa S. Dave, *Indian Accents: Brown Voices and Racial Performance in American Television and Film* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2013), p.128.

⁹⁶ Mark Mazzetti and William Galberson, ‘Obama Issues Directive to Shut Down Guantánamo’, *New York Times*, 21/01/2009, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/22/us/politics/22gitmo.html>> [accessed online: 29 August 2018].

Image 7 *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* (Jon Hurwitz and Hayden Schlossberg, 2008) poster

Discussed so far in terms of prison as a setting for male-on-male rape the specific institution of Guantanamo Bay will be elaborated on in this case study. Differences between Guantanamo Bay detainment camp and US prisons and jails, despite being numerous are not differentiated in this film. Rather tropes from the cinematic prison genre and the public's view of Guantanamo Bay are mixed to construct a satiric setting which is familiar to audiences. Despite the highly politicised and racialized focus on Guantanamo Bay, the filmic devices rely on the audience knowing prison film tropes to locate the comedy. The tag line on the poster reads "this time they're running from the joint", a play on 'joint' meaning both a cannabis cigarette and a prison. Behind them is a guard tower behind a tall barbed wire fence, reminiscent of the high surveillance of a panopticon, a staple in prison architecture, but they are essentially military towers. This "typical prison movie iconography [of] fences...razor wire and guard tower", here, both refer to prison film and the publicised images of Guantanamo Bay.⁹⁷ Though Guantanamo Bay is completely outside of the

⁹⁷ Kehrwald, p.9.

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prison system of the United States, promotional material for the film makes visual reference to prison. The DVD cover image again shows Harold and Kumar in orange jumpsuits, this time the fence behind them. There is a guard, both resembling a soldier, by wearing green, and corrections officer, by having handcuffs and a jailer's key ring hanging from his belt. This hybrid reflects how the film perceives this place, as both a prison and an example of institutionalised racism. This is a running theme in the Harold and Kumar trilogy, such as in the first film, where they are briefly in a jail where African Americans are brought in though they were clearly innocent. The military aspect is there to show that they are not profiled as criminals like the African Americans of the first film but as terrorists because of their complexion. From the first Harold and Kumar film, racial profiling by small town police was key concern of the film, here; the consequences to racial profiling are more severe, as officials, the American government and the justice system are the ones persecuting them now, not just local cops.

Image 8 *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* (Jon Hurwitz and Hayden Schlossberg, 2008) DVD cover

Annalisa Jabaily analyses how racial profiling and stereotypes appear in common consciousness and argues

“For the Arab American, Muslim Arab difference plays out primarily in the international theater: on international flights, on the international pages of the newspaper, or in casual and professional foreign policy discussions. In contrast, discourse about African Americans

often arises in a highly localized context: racial profiling on American highways, newspaper stories about metropolitan housing or voting rights, law enforcement relations, and the War on Drugs.”⁹⁸

In the first film, Harold & Kumar’s cannabis use was criminalized in the domestic sphere, being in trouble with small town police. By the second film in 2008, this escalated to being branded international terrorists, purposefully representing the increased level of fear the US has for Asians during the War on Terror. By conflating the War on Drugs and the War on Terror, Jabaily makes a link between African American cannabis criminalization to target minority ethnic people and the targeting of Asian men as terrorists.⁹⁹ In this film, Harold & Kumar’s cannabis use connects them to the War on Terror through the misunderstandings of homeland security and members of the public. Todd Shack argues that the drug and terror wars both produce an endless amount of enemies, which “serves the very useful ideological function of producing a constant state of fear in which the State is authorized in the use of surveillance, policing, and violence”.¹⁰⁰ The war on terror, just like the war on drugs has used racial profiling has targeted these wars towards ethnic minorities. It is significant then, that prison is the primary known location of male-on-male rape in public discourse because of how it is seen as a black-on-white crime, and the terrorists in *Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* are raped. Male-on-male rape seemingly a consequence of this public fear.

Guantanamo Bay took on new significance after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York City. Initially a naval base, in January 2002 Guantanamo Bay became synonymous with the War on Terror, by housing hundreds of suspected terrorists in the newly formed detention camps: Delta, Echo, Iguana, and X-Ray. Without formal charges and suspected of being in al-Qaeda detainees were not protected under the Geneva Convention that establishes the rights of prisoners of war. The detention camps were controversial, not only because of what they were, but the secrecy and torture the detainees went through. Under the presidency of George W. Bush enhanced interrogation became a legal military euphemism for torture. A link has also been drawn between how Guantanamo is represented in *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* and the Iraqi Abu Ghraib prison photographs.¹⁰¹ These photos showed prisoners being abused, naked,

⁹⁸ Annalisa A. Jabaily, ‘Ships Passing in the Night: Mapping the Trade Routes Between the War on Drug and the War on Terror’, *Temple Political & Civil Rights Law Review*, Vol. 15, Issue 1 (2005), 1-32, (2).

⁹⁹ Jabaily, *passim*.

¹⁰⁰ Todd Schack, ‘Perpetual Media Wars: The Cultural Front in the War on Terror and Drugs’, in Andrew Schopp, and Matthew B. Hill (eds.) *The War on Terror and American Popular Culture: September 11 and Beyond* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP) 2009, pp. 65-89 (p.65-66).

¹⁰¹ See Nina Seja, ‘No Laughing Matter? Comedy and the politics of the terrorist victim’, in *Continuum* (2011) 25:02, 227-237; Shilpa S. Dave, *Indian Accents: Brown Voices and Racial Performance in American Television and Film* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2013); Shuyler W. Henderson, ‘Disregarding the suffering of others: Narrative, comedy, and torture’, *Literature and Medicine*, 24(2), 2005, pp.181-208; and Alex Adams,

electrocuted, and the guards smiling and posing for the pictures. The iconography of the Abu Ghraib photographs are seemingly copied in the film “by visually depicting Harold and Kumar in the same orange jumpsuits and black masks as the infamous photographs, and subjecting them to sexually demeaning punishment by the guards”.¹⁰² Making overt links to the horrors of how suspected terrorists are treated by army guards, the film aligns what Harold & Kumar experience in this fictional world with specific images of torture that made international news four years earlier. Harold and Kumar’s presence and treatment in Guantanamo amalgamates sites where Asian people are detained and imprisoned in the fight on the War on Terror. The wider political agenda of criticising the race relations in America becomes an attack against the international policies of the Bush administration. As well as images of torture at Abu Ghraib, the American soldiers who torture the prisoners were controversial because of their smiling, which Henderson argues shows their inability to recognise the suffering of others.¹⁰³ In an interview with Abu Ghraib investigator, one of the guards, Charles Graner said “The Christian in me says it's wrong, but the corrections officer in me says, ‘I love to make a grown man piss himself’”.¹⁰⁴ This separation of his moral self, referencing his religion, from his institutional self, referencing his job is the position of authority is telling as the role of prison guard, in his mind, revels in the degradation of others. Noreen Abdullah-Kahn argues the Abu Ghraib photographs added a fear of male rape to the discourse of terrorism, a fear *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* use and borrow tropes from prison films to represent.¹⁰⁵

Alex Adams argues that *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* puts the audience in the same position as the guards at Abu Ghraib, namely Charles Graner who was arrested for prisoner abuse.¹⁰⁶ Adams writes that “enjoyment of the film ultimately requires us to uncritically inhabit the viewpoint of those who find prison rape funny: to laugh with Graner, at the spectacle of prisoners undergoing traumatizing sexual violence”.¹⁰⁷ In our participation in that act of dehumanising people, we condone male-on-male rape as a deserving punishment. Adams conflates the laughter at this joke to how Graner smiled in the Abu Ghraib photographs, the similarity being the light-hearted participating in their suffering. However, the rape in the film is never seen, it happens off screen and does not become vivid enough to disturb the comedy. As an audience, we do not view male rape as torture because of the context it is presented in. There is no national

‘Graner’s laugh: The Conceptual Architecture of the Guantanamo Rape Joke’, in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 2018, 44(1), 107-130.

¹⁰² Dave, p.138.

¹⁰³ Henderson, p.191.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph Higham and Joe Stephens, ‘Punishment and Amusement: Documents Indicate 3 Photos Were Not Staged for Interrogation’, *Washington Post*, 22nd May 2004, <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A46523-2004May21.html?noredirect=on>> [accessed online: 16 September 2018].

¹⁰⁵ Abdullah-Khan, p.1.

¹⁰⁶ Adams, passim.

¹⁰⁷ Adams, p.125-126.

outrage or upheaval, male-on-male rape is usually a non-controversial joke, that here, uses Guantanamo Bay to politicise and racialize this standard joke. The film combines “a ritual punishment that draws from both the squeamish homophobia of frat-boy comedy and the sexual humiliations now associated with Abu Ghraib”.¹⁰⁸

2.4.1 Scene Analysis

Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay begins where the previous film ended, with Harold and Kumar deciding to follow Harold’s love interest Maria (Paula Garcés) to Amsterdam. When on the plane we see Kumar from the perspective of an old woman, who imagines him with a long beard, robes and a turban, his smile and friendly wave transformed into his hand performing the action of a plane crashing while he laughs.¹⁰⁹ He is a terrorist in her eyes, a reflection of the paranoid state of mind the film shows as post-9/11 America. On the plane Kumar decides to smoke cannabis in a bong he smuggled on board. Because of the judgements made based upon his skin colour, it is mistaken for a bomb so Kumar and Harold are immediately arrested and taken to Guantanamo Bay. When they arrive, they are introduced to rape of detainees by guards by forced fellatio, where the so-called ‘cockmeat sandwich’ incites fear among inmates. The scene analysis will discuss how patriotism spares Harold and Kumar from the fate of rape. It will also discuss how the film deals with the homosexuality, by discussing male rape through the lens of the perpetrator and victim roles. This section will explore how dialogue is used to engage with the concepts represented, interrogating audience assumptions whilst enforcing others through comedy. This tells us about how male rape functions comically, socially, and how sexual assault is an allegory of a country’s need for hegemonic masculinity.

The first interaction Harold and Kumar have in Guantanamo Bay is with two other detainees who admit to being terrorists and express a loathing for American life, naming doughnuts as a symbol of their consumerism. Harold and Kumar object to this, defending doughnuts and America, proving their patriotism. Dave argues that the film presents the only similarity between Harold and Kumar, and the terrorist is skin colour.¹¹⁰ However, they are put in the same position as the terrorists by the American authorities, in the same jumpsuits and in cages beside each other. The terrorist who engages with Harold and Kumar the most has a long, unkempt beard, a representation just as

¹⁰⁸ Dennis Limm, ‘Mining Post-9/11 America for Laughs’, *New York Times*, 20 April 2008, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/20/movies/20lim.html>> [accessed online: 12 December 2018].

¹⁰⁹ For more on the significance of the turban and ‘turban profiling’ see Jaspir K. Puar and Amit S Rai, ‘Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots’, *Social Text*, 72, Vol.20, No.3 (2002) 117-148.

¹¹⁰ Dave, p.140.

stereotypical as the misconception of Kumar from the woman on the plane. The stereotypical look of a terrorist is not wrong, rather just misplaced when the authorities look at Harold and Kumar. Dave argues the film feeds into stereotypes of Asians who have not adopted American style, accents, or patriotism.¹¹¹ The excess in Harold and Kumar's nationalism mitigates some of the injustices they must go through. Their love of, and defence of the USA is what differentiates them from the terrorists, and is what saves them from having to endure rape. When the terrorists make their presence on screen, the music is distinctively Middle Eastern, using characteristics such as a lack of a strict time signature, female vocals singing both ascending and descending glissandi and melisma, grace notes, and heterophonic improvisation.¹¹² These musical characteristics evoke an immediate connection to an Islamic call to prayer. The low-pitched drone underlying the piece is synthesised and the violin is layered in harmonic thirds at some points, which implies a Western tonal centre making the music more of an imitation, or even a pastiche of Middle Eastern music. Described as a "lithe Arabic vocalist intoning over threatening string chords", this musical shortcut evokes a stereotype for the audience as well as connecting Islam to terrorism.¹¹³ Despite the undeserved labelling of Harold and Kumar as terrorists, the film makes it clear that 'legitimate' terrorists that deserve to be in Guantanamo Bay are foreign, Muslim, and have accents and beards. According to Seja, the directors have no moral objection to rape of prisoners in Guantanamo, and argues, "Hurwitz and Scholssberg's [the writer/directors] concern seems to be not necessarily that implied sexual/violence is occurring at these sites, but that innocent (and heterosexual) Americans could end up imprisoned there".¹¹⁴ The rape and torture is still a joke because it only happens to the 'actual' terrorists, not the innocent Asian American men.

After the interaction with the terrorists, a guard enters the terrorist's cell and tells them to get on their knees. In fear one of the terrorists whimpers "but they just got here", pointing to Harold and Kumar. They are told, "Big Bob's taking care of them". Hearing this the terrorists physically relax, laugh and taunt Harold and Kumar about Big Bob, then kneel down to the guard's crotch. The terrorists being prepared to fellate the guard is seen by Adams as "eagerly lowering themselves in the hierarchy of prison masculinity".¹¹⁵ This interpretation of being 'eager' and 'willing', rather than conditioned and victimized is seen in how the film frames the event. The guard is facing away from

¹¹¹ Dave, *passim*.

¹¹² With thanks to Abaigh McKee from the Abaigh McKee Education Network (AMEN) for identifying the musical terms. Written by George S. Clinton for the *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* (Original Motion Picture Score), the song is titled 'Cockmeat Sandwich'.

¹¹³ Jonathan Broxton, 'Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay – George S. Clinton (Original Review)', *Movie Music UK*, 25th April 2008, [accessed online: <https://moviemusicuk.us/2008/04/25/harold-and-kumar-escape-from-guantanamo-bay-george-s-clinton/> 4th December 2018].

¹¹⁴ Seja, p.234.

¹¹⁵ Adams, p.122.

the camera his bare buttocks exposed, both terrorists obscured behind him on their knees. At this point, the music is drowned out by visceral slurping sounds. The camera cuts to Harold and Kumar's disgusted faces, lingering on their reaction. The willingness of the terrorists to fellate is part of the joke as the terrorists' masculinity is questioned as they deviate from "the expected, "appropriate" response to being required to fellate somebody in power, and the ridiculousness of those characters who embrace sexual receptivity".¹¹⁶ The 'appropriate' response, here, being refusal or at least reluctance. *Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* represents both the heroic survivors who escaped and makes fun of the men who did not. Adams argues, "an event that places men in the position of voluntary sexual receptivity is a privileged moment for particularly intense comic revulsion".¹¹⁷ The act being fellatio is significant because it requires participation, intensifying the apparent enthusiasm, casting doubt on the legitimacy of their victimhood. Through the terrorists' willingness to fellate and their disdain for American nationalism, Dave argues the film is "exaggerating the sexual deviance and foreign nature of the inhabitants [which] is the driving force of the humor in the scenes at Guantanamo".¹¹⁸ The academic interpretation of 'willingness' in their actions helps justify their otherness and continues to reinforce stoicism and refusal as the 'proper' masculine reaction to male-on-male rape. As well as representing the 'lesser' masculinity of terrorists/terrorist stereotypes, it also creates a dialogue about male rape, locating itself within a context of dictating what appropriate masculinity is.

As the two terrorists fellate the guard, heavy footsteps ring out as an even larger and more intimidating guard enters. Harold's eyes are closed and he is whispering repeatedly to himself, "please don't let it be Big Bob", dreading the unknown character. The guard introduces himself as Big Bob and confirms Harold and Kumar's fears that they will be forced to fellate him. The dialogue in this scene, as well as being graphic, also enters the discourse of homosexuality and its relationship to male rape as Kumar asks if all the guards at Guantanamo are gay because they demand fellatio from men. In reply Big Bob says "Fuck, no! Ain't nothing gay about getting your dick sucked! You're the ones that's gay for suckin' my dick! In fact, creeps me out just bein' around you fags". This short interaction engages with how homosexuality is ingrained within male rape discourse at the same time as revealing the absurdity of it. In the dialogue, Kumar assumes that someone who forces men to perform fellatio on them is homosexual. Therefore, an element of attraction is assumed because for a man to want to rape another man, the guard's sexual orientation influences his desire to rape men. Kumar's attitude is not intended to be out of the ordinary as he is a character we identify with in the film. Big Bob becomes enraged at the accusation

¹¹⁶ Adams, p.111.

¹¹⁷ Adams, p.123.

¹¹⁸ Dave p.139.

and assumes that performing fellatio is the homosexual act, therefore making all the inmates gay. This attitude stems from the dichotomy between penetrated and penetrator roles. Joe Wlodarz argues when a film has “no stake in indicting patriarchy or masculinity, and thus the target of attack is shifted from their own bodies to those of gay men, who are conveniently situated “outside” of traditional masculinity and patriarchy”.¹¹⁹ Accusing the inmates of being homosexual because they are forced to perform fellatio is taken further when Big Bob shows disgust for them because of his interpretation that they are homosexual. Big Bob’s homophobia is shown to be firstly, ill placed, and secondly exposing his point of view that only gay men can be raped by men. Adams argues that “the comedy comes from this blatant double standard, in which the rapist displaces homosexual desire onto his victim: in a familiar victim-blaming rhetorical motif, the victim is despised for their receptivity by the one who forces it upon them”.¹²⁰ This discussion is deliberately not politically correct, centralising homosexuality as a requirement in male-on-male rape. The film engaging directly with discourse of male-on-male rape speaks to the level of self-reflection used in the comedy. Dialogue lends itself to self-referentiality as one statement can directly oppose another.¹²¹ Engaging with a broader political discourse of male rape, the film is knowing in its link to reality and still encourages audiences to laugh at it.

Big Bob intimidates Harold and Kumar onto their knees despite Harold asking if he can “just kick our asses instead”. Both are reluctant but see no other option than to get down, the camera shows them move their heads slowly towards Big Bob’s genitals. The preference to be victims of physical violence rather than sexual violence is also evident in their escape. As one of the terrorists incapacitates the other guard by biting his penis, Big Bob is distracted and beaten by the other terrorist. Harold and Kumar’s chance to escape is briefly discussed between the two, Harold fearing they will be killed trying to escape. Kumar quickly answers that they must leave since potential death is a risk worth taking when the other option is to fellate men inside Guantanamo Bay. Angela Farmer describes male rape as a “fate worse than death”, because masculinity is presented as the most important thing in the world for men, and being raped is seen to feminize men, leaving death to be a better option.¹²² Both *Shawshank Redemption* (Frank Darabont, 1994) and *American History X* (Tony Kaye, 1998) present the same idea. Both raped protagonists in those films put themselves in more danger from beatings by other inmates for not submitting to rape, and physically fighting. Their stoicism proves beneficial and they are rewarded in the films for it. The everyday torture and routine of being forced to fellate Guantanamo Bay guards is quickly dismissed and made into just

¹¹⁹ Wlodarz, p.75.

¹²⁰ Adams, p.124.

¹²¹ Don Hauptman, ‘Is Anal Retentive Hyphenated? Self-Referential Humor’, *Word Ways: The Journal of Recreational Linguistics*, 2004 Nov; 37 (4): 256-57.

¹²² Farmer, p.107.

another hurdle the protagonists must overcome, leaving the terrorists there to relive the indefinite torture. Harold and Kumar are not raped, leaving their characters intact. Dave argues that because Harold and Kumar are not what the film sees as ‘deserved’ victims, they can escape “literally over the dead body of the nameless terrorist” who was electrocuted on the fence when trying to escape himself.¹²³ *Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* shows that submission is ‘worse’ than death and it makes fun of the men who did both.

2.4.2 Broader Context

The rest of the film follows their journey of escape, evading authorities, and finally falling from a plane and accidentally parachuting in to George W. Bush’s hunting lodge. At Bush’s request, they all smoke his marijuana and bond over their accomplished and strict fathers. While high, Bush laughs about them being sent to Guantanamo Bay and says, unprompted, “tell me you didn’t eat that cockmeat sandwich”, then excitedly yelling “that cockmeat sandwich, that’s my favorite”. His knowledge and enthusiasm for guard on prisoner rape in Guantanamo shows not just that rape is a known tool used in the War on Terror, but also that this degradation is funny to those who implement it. Their interaction with Bush is surprisingly positive, given the character’s previous disdain for the president. In an earlier scene Kumar wears a t-shirt with the slogan ‘I *heart* Bush, the pussy not the president’ (Image 9) and in Bush’s cabin they are impressed with the pictures of almost nude women on the walls. The film attempts to find commonality between enemies through their equal love of America, yet what ties these characters together is more like frat boy misogyny and cannabis.

The differing legal consequences of using cannabis is discussed in *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay*, from criminalising African Americans, making terrorists of Asian Americans and having no consequence for rich white Americans in power. Cannabis has been used in other films to link racial minorities to the white elite of politically influential men. In *How High* (Jesse Dylan, 2001) the ghost of Benjamin Franklin introduces the world to the ‘Liberty Bong’ in an inauguration for a mostly African American university fraternity.¹²⁴ This tradition of patriotism and marijuana coming from an official place, a founding father in *How High*, and a president in *Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay*. The power of cannabis in the film is both their burden and their saviour. The bong being mistaken for a bomb on the plane lands them in Guantanamo Bay, but finding powerful white men who share their love for cannabis changes their status from criminal to

¹²³ Dave, p.140.

¹²⁴ With thanks to Thomas Ellis of the Thomas Ellis Learning Institute (TELI) for pointing me towards *How High* (Jesse Dylan, 2001).

citizen, highlighting the difference between the criminality of cannabis for different ethnicities in the United States.



Image 9 *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* (Jon Hurwitz and Hayden Schlossberg, 2008) Screenshot. Kumar wearing an 'I heart Bush the pussy not the president' t-shirt.

As well as acting, Kal Penn, who plays Kumar is also a politician, notably serving as the Associate Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement in the Obama administration from 2009-2010. Then in 2013 he was appointed onto the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, resigning in 2017 with other member of the committee, citing President Donald Trump of "attacking...inclusion...[and] free press".¹²⁵ This resignation was in the aftermath of Trump's "refusal to quickly and unequivocally condemn the cancer of hatred" after the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville.¹²⁶ Neo-Nazis and white nationalists took to the streets, which ended with a man deliberately driving his car into counter-protestors killing one person and injuring at least thirty-four others.¹²⁷ Penn's political career crossed over with the character of Kumar when he and John Cho reprised their roles for a short advert featuring then-president Barack Obama.¹²⁸ They used the

¹²⁵ The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities to President Donald Trump, 18 August 2017, <<https://twitter.com/kalpenn/status/898547257062174724?lang=en>> [accessed online: 11 December 2018].

¹²⁶ The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities to President Donald Trump, 18 August 2017, <<https://twitter.com/kalpenn/status/898547257062174724?lang=en>> [accessed online: 11 December 2018].

¹²⁷ Maggie Astor, Christina Caron and Daniel Victor, 'A Guide to the Charlottesville Aftermath', *New York Times*, 13 August 2017, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/13/us/charlottesville-virginia-overview.html>> [accessed online: 11 December 2018].

¹²⁸ Kal Penn Takes Call from President Obama, *YouTube*, uploaded by user *The Young Turks*, 4 September 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_XHKfL8TN4> [accessed online: 11 December 2018].

characters as an advertising tool for a political campaign. Obama has expressed his objection to prison rape jokes when addressing the NAACP yet uses characters from a film that makes a joke of male-on-male prison rape.¹²⁹ The political position of opposing President George W. Bush connects the character, the actors and Democratic Party members including Obama. Jokes about male rape, rampant misogyny in the film, and boycotts by organisations such as Amnesty International campaigning against human rights violations are forgotten.¹³⁰

2.4.3 Final thoughts on *Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay*

Adams argues that the shared values required to make the joke funny are based upon us believing that prisoners are deserving of rape.¹³¹ In this case study, and chapter, male-on-male rape has been discussed as a form of punishment for behaviour that threatens law abiding citizens. That lack of desirability for a man to be sexually intimate with another man feeds the lack of pleasure in the act. The film explores the outright dialogue about male rape, locating it not within a plethora of film asides that litter our screens without being remembered; rather it discusses outright the myths of homosexuality around male rape. Coining the graphic and quotable term ‘cockmeat sandwich’ to mean fellatio, the guards have seemingly normalised the experience as a part of being imprisoned there. This interaction touches upon inevitability of male-on-male rape in enclosed institutionalised spaces. Yet, unlike the previously discussed concept of rape as an ‘unofficial punishment’ that occurs between inmates in prison rape representation, here rape is perpetrated by military officials as part of everyday torment. This exemplifies the difference in rights inmates in the US prison system seem to have compared to detainees at Guantanamo Bay.

2.5 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how film uses male-on-male rape to locate themselves within a broader discourse about male rape and how male rape as a topic can be used to comment on social issues to do with power, race, and (in)justice. The films in this chapter have used the location of prison to reiterate the knowledge that male-on-male rape occurs in prison, while denying its existence outside of prison. Neither case study spends more than a few minutes of screen time in a prison, the location only being necessary for the joke. These comedies parody themes of prison dramas, using the spectator’s understanding of the prison genre to build their comedy. The prison setting

¹²⁹ Barack Obama, NAACP National Convention, Philadelphia, 14 July 2015, *YouTube*, <www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8bKuzk-fDA> [accessed online: 18 July 2015].

¹³⁰ Information on the Amnesty International campaign can be found in Dave, p.129; Seja, p.223.

¹³¹ Adams, p.125.

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gives male-on-male rape the context of punishment and in some ways rehabilitation, these being the two pillars that the understanding of prison is based upon. Similarly in film, “rape scenes often appear early in prison films as key moments that test a character’s ability to survive behind bars”, to attempt to show the masculinity and strength and stoicism of the protagonist.¹³² Referring to drama films here, the lack of trauma transcends genre, as trauma is not acknowledged in comedy, and rarely in representations of male rape. A reward, such as freedom, or moral superiority can be bestowed upon the victim if he retains his indifference to the act.

The *Dirty Work* case study has shown that representations and jokes about male-on-male rape do not have the same public concern and backlash that male-on-female rape has. The film requires audiences’ previous knowledge of male-on-male rape occurring in prison for the joke to make sense, which is easily achieved, since it is common knowledge. For audiences’ to laugh, the reality of male rape is unseen by avoiding trauma, and making the reaction as unexpected as possible. This case study demonstrates the prevalence of the joke and that we all know the joke. Harold and Kumar are spared male rape because they do not ‘deserve’ the punishment because they are not real terrorists. This case study uses male rape to comment on US race relations and the War on Terror. *Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* shows the breadth of what male-on-male rape representation can do by exposing racism within the US government during the Bush administration. At the same time, the film minimises the impact of male rape by exposing only the ‘real’ terrorists to it. This chapter has exposed our own participation in male-on-male rape as comedy.

Together the case studies have shown that male-on-male rape is represented in comedy as a punishment. Either as a universal penance, that happens to all prisoners regardless of their innocence, or a specific brutalisation that targets those who appear to be deserving of it. If punishment is a “representation of public morality”, prison male rape is a condoned practice and laughing at it is our reward.¹³³ What these case studies have done is introduced a way to situate comedic male rape based upon a general understanding of what rape is. This chapter has explained the requirement for male rape to be believed then be dismissed. The next chapter will re-examine definitions of male rape and perceptions of what it can entail by exploring how female-on-male rape is represented.

¹³² Kehrwald, p.86.

¹³³ Foucault, p.110.

Chapter 3 Female-on-Male Rape

This chapter will explore representations of female-on-male rape by looking at contemporary films that involve a sexual scenario between a man and a woman where there is a clear lack of consent on the man's part. Sexual acts and consent are significant to this chapter as the case study films both discuss and dismiss female-on-male rape as possible or worthy of attention therefore the interpretation of these two factors will help identify whether what takes place can be seen as rape. In other academic fields such as criminology, female-on-male rape has been discussed within the discourse of domestic abuse as part of an intimate relationship, thus constructing the attack as domestic abuse rather than rape locating the female rapist within the domestic sphere. Female-on-male rape is rarely discussed and it does not have its own solid conceptualisation, rather it is looked at through the theoretical frames of male-on-female rape. From numerical data of arrests for domestic violence to evidence from focus groups on filmic representation, comparison to male-on-female rape is relied upon in the relevant literature around it to discuss female-on-male rape.¹ This chapter will examine how female-on-male rape is represented to find out how we might be able to acknowledge and conceptualise it unhindered by the proof of existence. In the films referred to in this chapter, the female rapist's sexuality is dangerous and targets the protagonist. Because of the centrality of the relationship between men and women, the kind of comedy that the female rapist exists within has origins in romantic comedy. The offshoot of contemporary romantic comedy, the so-called bromance, also contextualises female-on-male rape through the focus topic of masculinity. The bromance genre is highly attuned to masculinity and shapes the type of man who is raped by a woman. The case studies, *Horrible Bosses* (Seth Gordon, 2011), and *Get Him To The Greek* (Nicholas Stoller, 2010) will look in depth at how these films represent female-on-male rape and the context they use to make it comical.

3.1 The female rapist

In a review of literature about female-on-male rape, Fisher and Pina look to myths about male rape and their relation to legal definitions. They give an overview which states that women are acknowledged as rapists of men but that the law does not acknowledge it as rape.² As mentioned in the Introduction, the law is gendered in definitions that explicitly regulate that women are victims

¹ For example see Nicola Gavey, *Just Sex? The Cultural Scaffolding of Rape* (London: Routledge, 2005).

² Nicola L. Fisher and Afroditi Pina, 'An Overview of the Literature on Female-Perpetrated Adult Male Sexual Victimization', *Aggression and Violent Behavior* (2013) 18 (1) pp.54-61.

and men are perpetrators.³ Fisher and Pina consider myths drawn upon in discussions of male rape and how the victims of female-on-male rape are viewed. They argue that common myths are that only weak men are raped, that they enjoy and initiate it, that men should always want sex and that promiscuous men get raped.⁴ These myths follow a similar pattern of victim blaming to those surrounding female rape victims. Scholars such as Graham, Fisher and Pina, and Scarce, argue that male victims are more stigmatised as being raped affects their masculinity.⁵ Fisher and Pina argue that legal systems that negate female-on-male rape discourage its reporting and reinforce the myth that it does not and cannot exist.⁶ That men cannot be raped by women is an idea that is common in films and follows the myth that men always want sex. Films such as *That's My Boy* (Sean Anders, 2012) and *Behaving Badly* (Tim Garrick, 2014) exemplify how statutory rape is presented as teenage sexual fantasies from the boy's perspective about having sex with attractive older (but not elderly) women which "are not characterized as abuse narratives ('statutory rape') but as initiation fantasies".⁷ Described as sexual initiation films by James W. Trivelpiece, the teenage protagonist gains notoriety and loses undesirable traits by losing his virginity.⁸ Comparing this to a fantasy from the perspective of a teenage girl, the status boys get "by having sex with an older woman [is] something girls do not get".⁹ The myth that female-on-male rape is not real translates to the representations explored in this chapter as many myths are revisited in these representations.

The older woman fantasy is not limited to teenage boys but gains different significance when adult men are subject to the sexualities of even older women. Films such as *Van Wilder: Party Liaison* (Walt Becker, 2002) and *Yes Man* (Peyton Reed, 2008) both contain elderly women forcing themselves on the adult male protagonist. These older women are made-up to look more elderly than they are, adding certain physical stereotypes associated with age, such as hearing, eyesight, and hair loss. This exposes an assumed consensus about sexuality and attractiveness of older women, that once they become too old to be considered attractive, they stop being sexual and if they do present any kind of sexuality, it is unpleasant and at an extreme, dangerous. In *Van Wilder* Doris Haver (Cynthia Fancher) is missing a tooth and she wears and takes off a grey wig, exposing her thinned 'natural' hair. Tillie (Fionnula Flanagan) in *Yes Man* wears large glasses and a flowery housecoat, her short height, striking white hair, and sweet demeanour all make her look like she

³ Ruth Graham, 'Male Rape and the Careful Construction of the Male Victim' in *Social Legal Studies* (2006) 15 (2) pp.187-208 (p.198).

⁴ Fisher and Pina, 2013.

⁵ Graham, 2006. Fisher and Pina, 2013. Scarce, 1997.

⁶ Fisher and Pina, p.60.

⁷ Joanna Bourke, *Rape: A History from 1860 to the Present* (London: Virago Press, 2007), p.217.

⁸ James W. Trivelpiece, 'Adjusting the Frame: Cinematic Treatment of Sexual Abuse and Rape of Men and Boys', in Mic Hunter (ed.) *The Sexually Abused Male: Prevalence, Impact, and Treatment Volume 1* (New York: Lexington Books, 1990) pp.47-71 (p.59).

⁹ Bourke, p.242.

was cast for her grandmotherly appeal. These features present the women as undesirable and the man's lack of consent is assumed to be believable. In *Yes Man*, the 'universe' does not allow Carl (Jim Carrey) to say 'no', so when propositioned by Tillie he must oblige or terrible things will happen to him. As he tries to leave his shirt becomes trapped in the door, pulling it out means he falls down a long set of stairs to be greeted at the bottom by a ferocious barking dog. Knowing the universe will not allow him to escape he returns to Tillie to say 'yes' to her offer of 'a sexual release'. To Carl's horror, Tillie removes her fake teeth and performs fellatio on him as he shouts 'oh God' and 'oh no'. The camera focuses on Carl's face as Tillie disappears from the screen, her physicality no longer central, as her abilities to perform fellatio becomes the focus. Carl begins to enjoy it, impressed at her skills, his lack of consent is transformed to feelings of pleasure and feeds into the idea that all men will enjoy sex, even if initially hesitant. This allows the comedic tone to continue, rather than divide and put off audiences. The physical traits of Tillie's age are used to evoke horror and comedy because it becomes a pleasant surprise for Carl. In this case, the myth that men will enjoy sexual contact with a woman no matter the context is adhered to. The basis of the comedy requires the audience to be complicit in the thought that older women's sexuality is disgusting and horrific. The ideological stakes of In *Van Wilder* the protagonist Van (Ryan Reynolds) flirts to persuade the university administrator Doris to set him up a payment plan so he can stay at the university. Parodying the most famous 'sexual initiation' film *The Graduate* (Mike Nichols, 1967) Ms. Haver says 'Mr Wilder, are you trying to seduce me?' He giggles flirtatiously but when she gets close to him and licks her lips he becomes alarmed and tries to leave. She takes off her grey wig, takes a swig of liquor and smiles, showing her missing teeth. He tries to back out, saying he has a cold sore coming on, to which she replies 'shut up bitch, give me some sugar'. All of her actions and dialogue add to the comedy of the scene, as the stern administrator is transformed into a lustful and sexually aggressive woman. She sits on his lap, straddling him and kissing him, muting his protests. We then see a sad and dishevelled Van leaving the office with messy hair and shirt hanging off his shoulder. These examples use the trope of the older woman to show it is possible for men to not want sex if the woman is elderly and considered not attractive. Myths and tropes from the 'older woman fantasy' such as references to 'sexual initiation films', and the man's enjoyment because she is sexually experienced are part of the comic framing. Her age is a large part of the comic context as it functions as a caricature to disgust the audience, purposefully portraying old women as wig-wearing and false teeth-bearing people, mixing stereotypes of misogyny and ageism. When outside of the male sexual fantasy, in comedies where "male characters are forced to have sex with a woman against their will... no critic named these acts sexual assault".¹⁰ Tropes of the older woman

¹⁰ Bourke, p.217. Bourke names *40 Days and 40 Nights* (2002) and *Wedding Crashers* (2005) as films that show comedic female-on-male rape.

Chapter 3

are played with to create a female rapist who is overtly sexual and is unable to acknowledge consent, which also sees audiences unable to label it rape.

A less common trope of how a female rapist can be represented can be found in *Swordfish* (Dominic Sena, 2001), where the woman does not act from her own incentives, rather she is a tool for a man to manipulate another man. Stanley (Hugh Jackman), a computer hacker, is asked by Gabriel (John Travolta), a mysterious criminal to hack into the department of defence. He refuses but Gabriel gives him some “incentive” and orders his henchmen to hold Stanley’s arms behind him while one of his acquaintances, Helga (Laura Lane), fellates him. Gabriel tells him to hack into the computer in sixty seconds and starts the countdown. Stanley’s arms are released and he immediately tries to get the woman away from his lap, telling her to get up. A henchman then puts a gun to Stanley’s head, putting him in an even more compromising position, so he begins to hack. He stops on occasion, stifling moans, as it is clear he is straddling the stress of a life and death situation while being sexually stimulated uncontrollably. Even though Helga is the one physically assaulting Stanley, Gabriel is controlling both of them. Here, Helga is a way to expose Stanley and to get his penis into Gabriel’s control.

The female rapist has been discussed in scholarship by locating her within patterns of abuse such as domestic abuse. Martin S. Fiebert lists academic literature on women abusing men.¹¹ These statistical surveys and articles examine domestic abuse of men by women including rape. Located primarily in the social sciences, discussions of female-on-male rape and sexually aggressive women are often spoken about within the home and in a relationship narrative. Rape is not the driving force of these arguments, rather it is one of many symptoms of a volatile relationship with an abusive woman. Though comedic domestic violence is not common in films containing female-on-male rape, a notable exception is *Norbit* (Brian Robbins, 2007), where a mild-mannered man finds the love of his life and tries to escape his abusive and domineering wife. Eddie Murphy plays both husband and wife Norbit and Rasputia, where he wears a fat suit to play the outspoken and abusive Rasputia. The representation of Rasputia is an animated stereotype of an overweight Black American woman. This stereotype introduces Blackness into the misogynistic and offensive representation by relying “on tropes about Black women being ghetto, uncivilized and unattractive”.¹² Rasputia hits and demeans Norbit and his fear of her sexuality is comically undermined by her breaking the bed because of her weight every time she jumps onto his much

¹¹ Marin S. Fiebert, ‘References Examining Assaults by Women on Their Spouses or Male Partners: An Updated Annotated Bibliography’, *Sexuality & Culture* (June 2013) 18 pp.405-467.

¹² Sesali Bowen, “The Problematic History of Men Playing Fat Black Women”, *Refinery 29*, 26 October 2017, <<https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2017/10/178660/fat-black-women-characters-men-drag-movies-madea>> [accessed online: 19 August 2019].

smaller body. Sesali Bowen argues that “Black women are villainized or caricatured unless they fall into an extremely narrow window of desirability. When you add the size component, the result is a dehumanizing performance of disgust, shame, and malice towards fat Black women”.¹³ Rasputia’s sexuality is dangerous because she is undesirable, not just because of her looks but also her mannerisms that come from the misguided stereotype of ‘uncivilized’-ness because of her being a black woman.

As stated, scholarly research on male victims of rape by women does not focus on rape as the sole contention. As seen in Philip Hook and Tammy Hodo’s book *When Women Sexually Abuse Men: The Hidden Side of Rape, Stalking, Harassment, and Sexual Assault*, rape is a part of abuse but not its key feature.¹⁴ The surrounding factors do not point to rape as a focal problem rather an example of abuse in intimate relationships. In *Abused Men: The Hidden Side of Domestic Violence* rape of men is located in the home, in a relationship, and alongside other forms of abuse.¹⁵ When talking about sexually aggressive women, the discussion is primarily located in patterns of abuse. The power relation is personal and domestic and often compared to statistics on male-on-female domestic violence. Stay Brave UK is a charity whose mission is to fight for fair and equal access for those who suffer from abuse, specifically men, LGBT and non-binary people. Using documents from organisations such as the NSPCC and the Department of Children, Society and Family and documents like the ONC BCS Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 they create statistics based posters. On one such poster the figures state that “38% of domestic abuse victims are male: for every five victims, three will be female, two will be male”.¹⁶ They use statistics to show they have researched the topic and come to mathematical and exact conclusions. This tactic of putting male with female victims side by side serves to highlight the number of men who suffer from domestic abuse compared to women.¹⁷

Patterns of abuse emerge as a theme in films and one way it is represented is through manipulation, with the female rapist exerting control by influencing the mind and the situation of the male victim. A common understanding is that men are stronger than women so should be able to stop any unwanted sexual encounter with physical force.¹⁸ Yet in representation we see a combination of

¹³ Bowen.

¹⁴ Philip Hook and Tammy Hodo, *When Women Sexually Abuse Men: The Hidden Side of Rape, Stalking, Harassment, and Sexual Assault* (Oxford, Praeger, 2013).

¹⁵ Philip Hook, *Abused Men: The hidden side of domestic violence* 2nd edition (Oxford, Praeger, 2009).

¹⁶ This poster can be found on the home page of their website <<https://www.staybraveuk.org/>> [Accessed 7 November 2017].

¹⁷ For more statistical based work see the website for the organisation 1in6 who rely on the statistic that one in six men have had “unwanted sexual experiences, including abuse and assault” in their lives. *1in6*, <<https://1in6.org/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/>> [Accessed online: 7 November 2017].

¹⁸ Fisher and Pina p.58.

physical force and manipulation as a way to visually depict female on male rape. As mentioned previously, a very early example of this is from the 1929 silent German drama film *Asphalt* (Joe May, 1929), which shows a woman manipulating and forcing herself onto a man, using her sexuality for personal gain. *Asphalt* follows the protagonist Constable Albert Holk (Albert Steinrück) as he attempts to transport criminal Else Kramer (Else Heller) to the police station. She pretends to cry in front of him for sympathy, then for the camera turns her head to apply makeup. Presented as comical, Kramer's manipulation of Holk's sympathies convinces him to take her home before going to the police station. When there, she attempts several times to seduce Holk unsuccessfully before forcing a kiss upon him and jumping up on him, wrapping her legs around his waist. He throws her to the ground several times but loses the fight and, implicitly, intercourse occurs. This forced encounter is enveloped within the themes of manipulation and aggressive physicality. Holk's defence of throwing Kramer to the ground is unsuccessful and is an example of how female physical overpowering can be visually represented on screen. Having looked at how the female rapist is framed, from the older woman fantasy to domestic abuse and manipulation, how audiences can interpret such visuals will next be explored.

One way that female-on-male rape has been conceptualised has been through the lens of male-on-female rape. Nicola Gavey's chapter 'Turning the Tables? Women Raping Men' discusses male victims of female rape following a focus group discussion of the film *White Palace* (Luis Madnoki, 1990).¹⁹ *White Palace* depicts Nora Baker (Susan Sarandon) forcing oral sex on the unconscious Max Baron (James Spader) after he had previously rejected her advances. A point brought forth when justifying or trying to comprehend what happens in the film is to imagine a gender swap between victim and perpetrator. The participants of the focus group asked themselves how they would view what happened in the film if it were a man doing it to a woman, instead of a woman acting upon a man.²⁰ Asking how they would interpret the scene if the genders were swapped identifies male-on-female rape as the main way to conceptualise rape.²¹ There is not a standard way to understand female-on-male rape and the participants had to relay how to think about it through their understanding of male-on-female rape, something they all had a background knowledge or understanding of. Without using the gender swapping framework, the participants disagreed whether what happened was rape at all.²² Gender played a huge part in whether something was considered rape or not.

¹⁹ Gavey pp.193-213.

²⁰ Gavey, pp.203-204.

²¹ Gavey, pp.203-204.

²² Gavey, p.210.

Gavey asserts another of the points raised is that female sexual aggression and initiation are seen to be one in the same by some participants of the focus group.²³ The character's actions are interpreted as sexual agency, in line with 'making the first move' instead of sexual assault.²⁴ Nora's sexuality is praised for being forthcoming and Max's lack of consent is not acknowledged as legitimate. One of the reasons that female-on-male rape is not believed to be real is the idea that men do/should always want sex. The myth that men always want sex allows for female sexual aggression to be conflated with agency as with no option to say 'no', rape becomes interpreted as initiating sex. Gavey argues that the gendered paradigm of male as active and female as passive allows the line between sexual initiation and sexual aggression to be blurred.²⁵ This is the reason, Gavey purports, that gender neutrality cannot be used in analysing any form of rape. Gavey argues that rape is gendered so the same paradigm used to perceive and interpret women being raped cannot be used for male rape.²⁶ Awareness of the gendered understanding of rape allows for disbelief of female-on-male rape in its representations.

3.2 Romantic Comedy

The films explored in this chapter feature comic depictions of women raping men. This phenomenon is rooted in comedies depicting the relationship between men and women, which I will refer to as the romantic comedy. Tamar Jeffers McDonald charts the formulations of romantic comedy over time, going through the screwball, sex comedy, radical romantic comedy and the neo-traditional romantic comedy.²⁷ This section will similarly map the chronology of the changing relationships between women and men in these films to understand the context of female-on-male rape. The romantic comedy is a platform to depict a power struggle between women and men. Who controls sexuality is played out in a familiar location like the home or workplace. The two main manifestations of this male/female power struggle are done primarily through a love and romance narrative where the woman's work life is contended with. I will focus on the progression of these two conflicts as they appear throughout the history of the genre and are central to how romantic comedies feature male rape in contemporary films as these conflicts surface. The origins and development of how men and women interact in romantic comedies will inform how recent depictions of women raping men have come to be.

²³ Gavey, p.211.

²⁴ Gavey, p.210.

²⁵ Gavey, p.211

²⁶ Gavey, p.201.

²⁷ Tamar Jeffers McDonald, *Romantic Comedy: Boy meets girl meets genre* (London: Wallflower, 2007).

1930s screwball comedies, as explored by Tina Olsen Lent reconceptualised “the ideal love relationship between men and women” by redefining the “image of the woman...view of marriage and... cinematic comedy”.²⁸ Unlike previous depictions of women in screwball comedies they were represented as independent, married for love, and were funny. This was concurrent with the social movement of feminism and sexual freedom that developed through the 1920s and 1930s.²⁹ Women in screwball comedies reflected the growing number of women who worked and earned their own money. An example of this is *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (Frank Capra, 1936) which depicts a successful and independent reporter, Babe Bennet (Jean Arthur), in a romance plot with Longfellow Deeds (Gary Cooper). As part of the labour force, women had a degree of economic freedom and were on a more level playing ground with men socially. This allowed for films to represent two independent bodies unified despite their apparent urge for freedom.³⁰ Marriage, and with it sex, “reconciled the sexual and ideological tensions” between them.³¹ Olsen Lent argues that screwball comedies upheld the ideology that marriage was about love instead of a social and economic institution because of the newly formed freedoms women had in choosing a sexual partner and having the capability of being financially sustainable themselves.³² This early conception of the romantic comedy highlights the two main areas of contention that are still fought over in these types of films today, sexuality and economy.

The themes of the screwball comedies continued in the sex comedies of the 1950s and 1960s where Jeffers McDonald argues clashes between men and women were inevitable because the films maintained that “all men and all women were perpetually in conflict because nature had set them up – or society had inspired them – with different goals”, so much so that Jeffers McDonald also refers to these films as ‘battle of the sexes’ comedies.³³ At the start of this period, the different needs were that men wanted to be bachelors and women wanted to be wives. Sex is central to the conflict in these films, as it is men and women’s only shared goal, yet women require (at least the promise of) marriage while men want to retain the bachelor lifestyle and have pre-marital sex.³⁴ These films showed that a woman ‘getting her way’ was her becoming a wife through outwitting

²⁸ Tina Olsen Lent, ‘Romantic Love and Friendship: The redefinition of gender relations in screwball comedy’ in Henry Jenkins and Kristine Brunovska Karnick (eds.) *Classical Hollywood Comedy* (London: Routledge, 1995) pp.314-331 (pp.314+316).

²⁹ Olsen Lent, p.317.

³⁰ Olsen Lent, p.327.

³¹ Olsen Lent, p.315.

³² Olsen Lent, p.321.

³³ Jeffers McDonald (2007) p.38.

³⁴ Jeffers McDonald (2007) p.45.

her male love interest and entrapping him.³⁵ Films such as *Pillow Talk* (Michael Gordon, 1959) and *The Apartment* (Billy Wilder, 1960) follow this narrative and a traditional couple is formed by the end. Despite the women in these films having job security, their motivation was to have a secure relationship above all else. This conflict also revolved around romance and economy, as the workplace continued to represent financial freedom. Women's financial independence from men was a cause for contention in these narratives but as these films ended with matrimony, work became secondary as the marriage union became the central narrative resolution. Yet by the mid-1960s, Jeffers McDonald argues, attitudes had changed and women were no longer waiting for marriage to have sex.³⁶ This, she argues gave way to romantic comedies focussing more on men, as they no longer had to battle and outwit women for sex, rather "the marshalling of his resources...[became important], with so many willing women around".³⁷ Jeffers MacDonald looks to *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice* (Paul Mazursky, 1969) as a film that attempts to capture the pushing of sexual boundaries in a romantic comedy. The workplace became less focal as the domestic space was where sex and 'free love' could be expressed.

These conflicts were not just in film but were common in television of the same period. Sit-coms made in this period also maintained work and sexuality as focal issues in the relationship between men and women. Judy Kutulus explores the connection between representations of female sexuality and economic freedom as she argues these sitcoms were marked by capitalist liberation.³⁸ Women in the 1950s sitcoms were "*family consumers*", buying the necessary items for the home, her husband and children.³⁹ By the 1970s women who worked could buy for themselves and the workplace became a substitute home and colleagues a substitute family.⁴⁰ However, this ambitious woman could not have both a family and a career as she existed in a capitalist world where financial liberation required independence and was thus incompatible with having a family. The workplaces Kutulus discusses are far from a meritocracy as "it is not hard work that pays off, but aggressiveness and cunning for men and sexuality for women".⁴¹ This disparity between genders is notable because women's sexuality is their only strength but also the most exploited thing in the workplace. The workplace is a central location that explores the intersection between sexuality and economic

³⁵ Jenna Weinman, 'Second Bananas and Gay Chicken: Bromancing the Rom-Com in the Fifties and Now' in Michael DeAngelis (ed.) *Reading the Bromance: Homosocial Relationships in Film and Television* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2014) pp.29-51 (p.39).

³⁶ Jeffers McDonald (2007), p.43.

³⁷ Jeffers McDonald (2007), p.55.

³⁸ Judy Kutulus, 'Liberated women and new sensitive men: Reconstructing gender in the 1970s workplace comedies', in Mary M. Dalton and Laura R. Linder (eds.) *The Sitcom Reader: America viewed and skewed* (Albany, State University of New York, 2005), pp.217-225.

³⁹ Kutulus, p.218.

⁴⁰ Kutulus, p.220.

⁴¹ Kutulus, p.225.

freedom through showing interactions between women and men in this space. In the structure of romantic comedy, sexuality of the two leads is both the problem and resolution in the narrative while the workplace is a backdrop where something must be sacrificed. As Kutulas says, women can't "have it all" as romance and marriage and a successful career cannot coexist.⁴²

The back and forth between men and women in romantic comedy is seen to represent progression and tradition. Amelia Jones describes a new form of romantic comedy in the 1980s she calls the "new woman film".⁴³ These films "normalize the rise and fall of career women in contemporary American life and work to punish these deviant women or reinscribe them within traditional familial structures".⁴⁴ These traditions, Jones argues, were from 1940s noir films about women's sexual and social roles.⁴⁵ The roles of wife and mother, and career woman were incompatible and held terrible consequences for the women in these films. The conflicts that arise from representing women's freedom have not disappeared but have become specifically more in line with the working world. This can be attributed to the timeliness of industrial capitalism, limiting the male labour force as women and machines occupied traditionally male jobs.⁴⁶ In this way, women became a threat to men's livelihood. Jones describes this contention as a backlash against working women and women's sexual liberalisation.⁴⁷ Jeffers McDonald describes romantic comedies from the same time period as 'neo-traditional romcoms' as they reaffirm a conservative view of traditional gender roles.⁴⁸

The relationship between men and women charted in this section has been aimed more towards how the changing roles women fulfil has effected relationships. Kathleen Rowe Karlyn argues that in rom coms women get to win as "romantic comedy is often structured by gender inversion, a disruption of the social hierarchy of male over female through what might be called the *topos* of the unruly woman or the 'woman on top'".⁴⁹ They show women deviating from their prescribed passivity with comic and positive results. The 'woman on top' in a comic heterosexual union is not new, yet the changing social and sexual roles of women and men have opened up female-on-male

⁴² Kutulas, p.218.

⁴³ Amelia Jones, "'She was bad news': Male paranoia and the contemporary new woman', *Camera Obscura* (1991) 25-26, pp.297-320 (p.297).

⁴⁴ Jones, p.297.

⁴⁵ Jones, p.297.

⁴⁶ This idea has been developed by Richard Dyer in *Heavenly Bodies* (London: Macmillan Education Limited, 1986) and Yvonne Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre, and the Action Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993) in terms of class and muscular masculinity.

⁴⁷ Jones, p.314.

⁴⁸ Jeffers McDonald, 2007, p.85.

⁴⁹ Kathleen Rowe Karlyn, 'Comedy, Melodrama, and Gender: Theorizing the genres of laughter' in Henry Jenkins and Kristine Brunovska Karnick (eds.) *Classical Hollywood Comedy* (London: Routledge, 1995) pp.39-59 (p.41).

rape as a way to represent 'women on top'. In the film *40 Days and 40 Nights* (Michael Lehmann, 2002), Matt (Josh Hartnett) gives up sex for lent and his ex-girlfriend Nicole (Vinessa Shaw) schemes to ruin his stretch of abstinence. Matt does not trust himself to not masturbate on the last night of lent so handcuffs himself to his bed. While he sleeps Nicole sneaks into his house and rapes him. Nicole is the adversary in the way of the 'true' heterosexual union between Matt and his new girlfriend, yet she achieves her goal using her sexuality. Sex is the focus of this film, specifically Matt's desires, making him that film's only protagonist. Instead of the feeling of success when women achieve their goals, *40 Days and 40 Nights* does not focus on the positives of female sexuality, rather the damaging influence such a changing sexuality has on men. The next section looks at men and how they have reacted to the romantic comedy and the creation of a new genre founded in men's responses to women's sexuality.

3.3 Bromance

Alongside romantic comedies that explored the relationship between women and men, friendships between men surfaced as a focal element in this and other genres. This section discusses how male friendships in romantic comedies impact on the representation of masculinity and explores the origins of what we see today. Comedy films featuring female-on-male rape do not fit into one solid sub-genre of comedy but amalgamate tropes and standards of many. Despite naming this section bromance, referring to a recent popular formulation of the romantic comedy, writers use subtle differences in its definition and have many names for such comedies that revolve around a male/male relationship. Among the terms that have been used to describe this genre are bromance, homme-com, brom-com, lad flicks, beta male comedies and dude cinema.⁵⁰ Though described slightly differently there are commonalities in these classifications. They are contemporary films which centralise male heterosexual friendships, in a pair or group and marginalise women. Put simply, they are rom-coms for and about men. These comedies are perfect vehicles for representing female-on-male rape because they are consumed by exploring masculinity. The focus is completely

⁵⁰ In order listed: Michael DeAngelis 'Introduction' in Michael DeAngelis (ed.) *Reading the Bromance: Homosocial Relationships in Film and Television* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2014) 1-26. Jeffers McDonald (2013). Jenna Weinman, 'Second Bananas and Gay Chicken: Bromancing the Rom-Com in the Fifties and Now' in Michael DeAngelis (ed.) *Reading the Bromance: Homosocial Relationships in Film and Television* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2014) pp.29-51. David Hansen-Miller and Rosalind Gill, "'Lad Flicks": Discursive reconstructions of masculinity in popular film', Hilary Radner and Rebecca Stringer (eds.) *Feminism at the Movies: Understanding gender in contemporary popular cinema* (London: Routledge, 2011) pp.36-50. David Greven, *Ghost Faces: Hollywood and Post-Millennial Masculinity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016). John Troyer and Chani Marchiselli, 'Slack, Slacker, Slackest: Homosocial bonding practice in contemporary dude cinema' in Murray Pomerance and Frances Gateward (eds.) *Where the Boys Are: Cinemas of Masculinity and Youth* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2005) pp.264-276.

on men and how they navigate their own masculinity to find a meaningful connection to another man. Such emotional friendships expose their vulnerability and leaves them open to rape when women are introduced who have sexual agency.

A character type that is manipulated and changed in bromance films is the playboy. The playboy was a suave, financially sustained pleasure seeker in the 1950s, the single man in comedies today however, through idiocy or laziness are not held in such high esteem. Jenna Weinman explores the origin of the bromance relationship in the 1950s and 1960s sex comedies. The contemporary phenomenon she names “brom-coms” retain similarities with the sex comedies, namely with problems accessing adulthood, the privileging of immaturity and a strong homosocial bond between the central two male characters.⁵¹ Embracing adulthood is narratively related to marriage and work and the themes of sexuality and economy continue in Weinman’s analysis. In the sex comedies morality is maintained by marriage preceding sex, despite the playboy protagonist resisting the breadwinner role for as long as he can before he finally submits to those patriarchal responsibilities.⁵² These narrative conclusions, Weinman argues, are timely for the 1950s and 1960s as the financial prosperity of the post-war era allowed for lifestyles in conflict with ideologies of the time.⁵³ Financial and sexual freedom was in conflict with traditional values, yet marriage ‘saved’ the playboy from immorality. The main relationship outside of the films’ love interest is what Weinman labels as the ‘second banana’ and is the neurotic best friend to the playboy protagonist. Most likely homosexual, the second banana is not as masculine as the playboy and does not have a female love interest.⁵⁴ The film *Send Me No Flowers* (Norman Jewison, 1964) featured a love story between George (Rock Hudson) and Judy (Doris Day), with the second banana being Arnold (Tony Randall). The men’s relationship precedes the film and is representative of the playboy’s disinterest in marriage.⁵⁵ The bromance values the maintenance of immaturity far more and is continuous which is seen through the unbreaking homosocial bond. In bromance, the hero is “no longer the debonair playboy...[but] is now more of a schlubby, infantile slacker revelling in his arrested development”.⁵⁶ *I Love You, Man* (John Hamburg, 2009) concludes in the wedding of Peter (Paul Rudd) and Zooe (Rashida Jones), yet is more focused on the relationship between Peter and Best Man Sydney (Jason Segal). Sydney rushes to the wedding to support and reunite with his friend, he arrives just in time to have an emotional reunion while Peter and Zooe are at the altar. Despite it being his wedding day, Peter is thrilled when Sydney arrives late on a moped, disrupting the wedding. No

⁵¹ Weinman, p.31.

⁵² Weinman, passim.

⁵³ Weinman, p.35 + 37.

⁵⁴ Weinman, p.40-41.

⁵⁵ Weinman, p.31.

⁵⁶ Weinman, p.31.

matter how much the bromance narrative is “propelled by the redemptive promises of the heteronormative paradigm”, they cannot break away from their perpetual adolescence.⁵⁷ Though the initial wants of the playboy and the contemporary “man/boy” are similar, their conclusions are disparate as the playboy becomes the heteronormative ideal, while in bromance this remains elusive.⁵⁸

Another form of male/male relationship popular in comedy is in the buddy film. Buddy films were popular during the 1980s and 1990s and were a heavy feature in the action and comedy genres. Sometimes initially at odds, two men must join together to overcome the antagonist which also solves conflict between them and solidifies their bond. The relationship between two men in the buddy film, Tasker argues, is representative of a reactionary masculinity to 1970s feminism.⁵⁹ This locates buddy films within a specific time period where masculine bonding was an essential resurgence of traditional masculinity. Hilary Radner calls the bromance an “updated version of the buddy film”, binding the two through idealised masculinity.⁶⁰ For Radner the male/male relationship reinforces the central role of normative masculinity, and aims to “preserve heterosexual masculinity in the face of its waning privileges”.⁶¹ The perceived decline of male privilege is described by Michael Kimmel as a social space, ‘guyland’, which includes the insecurity and indeterminate direction of masculinity.⁶² From certain social changes, such as women having more of a presence in public spaces and there being less economic security due to unstable working environments, Kimmel argues that male identities are in a suspended space between youth and responsibility.⁶³ In the films of the ‘80s and ‘90s, just as currently, threats to masculinity manifested in female-on-male rape in the buddy film. *The Rookie* (Clint Eastwood, 1990) is discussed by Cynthia Fuchs as showing masculine vulnerability and simultaneously asserting it.⁶⁴ The film depicts a non-comic but sexualised scene where Nick Pulovski (Clint Eastwood) is handcuffed on a chair as Liesl (Sonia Braga) threatens to kill him if he does not get and retain an erection as she rapes him. Fuchs discusses this scene as performative as the rape is constructed in the film to show Nick’s vulnerability, allowing him to embody several roles and therefore several masculinities.⁶⁵ As Nick’s

⁵⁷ Weinman, p.44.

⁵⁸ The term ‘man/boy’ became a popular way of describing this kind of man in Michael Kimmel, *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men* (London: HarperCollins, 2008).

⁵⁹ Tasker (1993) p.1; also see Greven, p.36.

⁶⁰ Hilary Radner, ‘Grumpy Old Men: “Bros Before Hos”’ in Michael DeAngelis (ed.) *Reading the Bromance: Homosocial Relationships in Film and Television* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2014) pp.52-78 (p.53).

⁶¹ Radner, p.72.

⁶² Kimmel, passim.

⁶³ Kimmel, passim.

⁶⁴ Cynthia J. Fuchs, ‘The Buddy Politic’ in Steve Cohan and Ina Rae Hark (eds.) *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993) pp.194-210 (p.203).

⁶⁵ Fuchs, p.204.

vulnerability is shown, so his masculinity is asserted, as Fuchs argues “his exposure...is performative, false, perverse; her penetration is no match for his ‘real’ one”.⁶⁶ According to Fuchs, as Nick penetrates Liesl an assertion of masculinity is implied as she only threatens him with penetration (with a knife and bullet) while he actually penetrates her. Aligning penetration with power despite Nick being passive and in fear of his life disregards penis/vagina female-on-male rape as ever possible. Fuchs using quotation marks around the word rape solidifies her view that the rape in the film could not be ‘real’, or at least not as real as representations of female rape. Though *The Rookie* does conclude in violence, reasserting the bond between the two protagonists and glorifying and resurrecting masculine power, the rape scene expresses an anxiety of how power could be lost. *The Rookie* sets a precedent for how male rape can be represented as a narrative conflict and emasculation in the buddy film. Female sexual agency has been classed as dangerous to men and in *The Rookie* the rape highlights a fear which in later years manifests more frequently.

This chapter so far has showed how film and scholarship has contextualised the female rapist and male rape victim. By looking to myths and representations of female-on-male rape, the understanding of what it is and what it can look like has been explored. There is no singular way a female rapist can look or act, yet what is clear is the number of ways there are possible to disguise and not acknowledge female-on-male rape. The context of representation has been charted through the foundations of the romantic comedy, a genre that uses the relationship between a man and a woman to represent an ideal heterosexual union and the gendered problems that attempt to prevent it. How men and concerns with masculinity have become the focus in more contemporary romantic comedies and bromance films highlight the concerns surrounding female sexuality and the need for reinscription of traditional gender roles. The case studies that follow feature very different forms of female-on-male rape which are discussed in terms of genre, gender and sexuality. How the masculinity of the victim and the femininity of the rapist squares with the society they live in will also be explored.

3.4 *Horrible Bosses* (Seth Gordon, 2011) Case Study

Horrible Bosses is a comedy film about three friends whose employers make their lives too difficult to tolerate so they decide to kill each other’s bosses to eliminate their problems, while not implicating themselves, and bring in a murder consultant to help out. This case study will focus predominantly on the relationship between dentist Julia (Jennifer Aniston) and her assistant Dale (Charlie Day) specifically analysing a scene where Dale realises he has been raped by Julia. Drawing

⁶⁶ Fuchs, p.204.

from the film, and this key scene in particular, themes of abusive relationships and blackmail, women's sexual and economic freedom, who gets to decide what rape is, and sexual subjugation of the body, will be the points this case study covers. Representations of female-on-male rape rely on and propagate myths to showcase female sexuality as dangerous and are comically framed to dismiss the existence of female-on-male rape. Firstly the context of the rape will be established as linked to American economy and masculinity. The key scene will then be analysed before a broader contextual examination of the discourse surrounding the film and scene. This will examine reviews of the film as well as online and magazine discussion, drawing out how the female rapist is constructed through Jennifer Aniston's character and performance. This case study will show that representation of female-on-male rape stresses the rapist as desirable and undermines the existence of female-on-male rape.

The promotional poster for *Horrible Bosses* features a picture of the character Julia's face with the word 'maneater' written in pink beside her. This description refers to her as a woman who sexually dominates men with disregard for them, taking the literal meaning from killing and eating prey. Before even seeing the film, the marketing links Julia's sexuality to negative traits and it is clear that this character is not only sexually dominant but dangerously so. Much like a contemporary femme fatale, she is connected with "sexuality, femininity, danger, violence and deceit".⁶⁷ Katherine Farrimond looks to the femme fatale as being "read both in terms of conservative anxiety and feminist empowerment", able to use her sexuality for personal gain but at the expense of men's choice and consent.⁶⁸ Julia's persona demonstrates the dangers of her sexuality and the negative impact her satisfaction has on men. This is clearly different from the men Julia is pictured between, Dave Harken (Kevin Spacey) and Bobby Pellit (Colin Farrell) whose written descriptions are 'psycho' and 'tool'. Tool is sometimes used as slang for penis and masculinises negative association to ego. Below them the smaller faces of the three distressed protagonists, it is clear there are many central roles in this film and the problematic relationships between the bosses and the protagonist workers are due to the written descriptors beside them. An alternative poster and DVD cover is similar but has replaced the word 'maneater' with 'nympho' while the words next to the other bosses faces remain the same. Short for nymphomaniac, a nympho refers to a woman with an insatiable appetite for sex and here is interchangeable with maneater, suggesting women's sexual desire, however phrased, is destructive, ruthless, and dangerous. They are also all sexually titillating terms and only refer to female sexuality. The poster for the sequel, *Horrible Bosses 2* describes her as 'the sexpot', with other advertising calling her 'sex-crazed'. All of these descriptions focus on her sexuality as

⁶⁷ Katherine Farrimond, *The Contemporary Femme Fatale: Gender, Genre and American Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2018) p.2.

⁶⁸ Farrimond, p.1.

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both her main characteristic and the cause of friction in the employee and employer relationship that drives the narrative.

Image 10 *Horrible Bosses* (Seth Gordon, 2011) poster

The pre-viewing build-up to the film continues with the trailer which further portrays Julia's sexuality as problematic. Julia is in three of these scenes. Firstly she sprays Dale's crotch with water from a dental tool as Dale protests and Julia comments that he is circumcised, implying she can see his penis through his dental scrubs. This cuts to Dale and his friends in a bar where they say this experience is not 'that bad'. The second scene is part of the sequence this case study will unpick and analyse further which features Julia showing Dale photos of his unconscious body entangled in sexually suggestive positions with Julia. Finally, Julia in her underwear, is shown to be sensually eating three "penis-shaped foods" in an unusual order, a popsicle, banana and a hotdog, seen through Dale's friend Kurt's binoculars. The themes brought up by the trailer mirror the themes of the film and what this case study will explore; a focus on Jennifer Aniston's body, harassment and sexual abuse as context, lack of acknowledgement of rape, and Dale's friend's lack of sympathy. It is a green band trailer, meaning that despite the film being R rated in the USA, the trailer is not and is noted as 'approved for appropriate audiences' and is shown before screening of PG-13 films. Since its release in 2011 the MPAA and filmratings.com have made their green band more explicit stating "Trailers approved to run with compatible features" with the trailer tag being 'approved to

accompany this feature'.⁶⁹ The appropriateness of the audience is based upon the context of where the trailer is screened, linked to the film it is shown before in the cinema. The scenes described in the trailer that showcase Julia's sexual harassment, drugging and raping of Dale are within these boundaries. Significantly, what seems to make the film R rated is not the drugging and apparent raping of Dale.

The film introduces us to Dale being driven to work by his new fiancé, Stacy (Lindsay Sloane), his voice narrating that ever since he was a child he always wanted to be a husband, yet his dream does not pay so he must work. Wishing to define himself by his relationship marks Dale as less masculine than his single 'playboy' friends as the pursuit of marriage in film comedy is traditionally reserved as a female one. Frequently subtle occurrences, such as his fiancé driving him to work, show how easy it is for Dale to give up control. Dale, himself, states that it sounds 'weird' and that 'most boys want to be firehouse chiefs or personal trainers'. These job aspirations he associates others with require physical strength and again lessen his links to 'ordinary', more conventionally masculine men. Economy and masculinity are inextricably linked and has long been established through the breadwinner narrative. Dale, however, prioritises being a husband as this is where he finds his identity, a career coming second. His lack of passion for the traditional breadwinner role makes him a target, as his aspirations are marked as more feminine than masculine. Masculinity and economy are the two main themes *Horrible Bosses* builds upon, yet the protagonists are caught between the idealised expectation of the working world, and a recession economy.

The film was released in 2011, making it a product squarely centred in an economic recession, discussed in the film as something that impacts the day to day lives of American men. Negra and Tasker argue that "the compelling rhetoric of masculine crisis [suggests]... that men are the primary victims of recession".⁷⁰ *Horrible Bosses* feeds into this rhetoric by making the protagonists utmost victims of an exploitative world of work. The film is explicit about the role the recession following the 2008 economic crash has had on not just the protagonists but all men like them. Secure salaried work is valued as such a necessity that without it one would regress to giving other men 'hand-jobs' in bar toilets for money. This is the fate of Kenny (P.J. Byrne), an old friend of the protagonists from high school they meet while drinking at a bar. After graduating from Yale Kenny worked for the Lehman brothers before the economic crash which put them out of business and he is now living with his mother. After revealing himself as unemployed for two years and begging for money, Kenny offers them 'hand-jobs' for \$40 which the protagonists refuse. Resorting to prostitution, men are

⁶⁹ 'Guide to Ratings', *filmratings.com* [accessed online: <http://filmratings.com/RatingsGuide> 25th June 2017].

⁷⁰ Diane Negra and Yvonne Tasker, 'Introduction: Gender and Recessionary Culture' in Diana Negra and Yvonne Tasker (eds.) *Gendering the Recession: Media and Culture in an Age of Austerity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014) pp.1-30.

made into sexual objects and consequently feminised. This scene serves as a lynchpin to locate the protagonists' struggles in the contemporary financial crisis in America and how that interacts with masculinity. For the protagonists, becoming a murderer is more appealing than becoming unemployed, or worse 'a Kenny', revealing the misogyny and homophobia underlying these constructions. This lays the groundwork for how the film creates a male victim of rape, as Dale is economically vulnerable with no aspirations for traditional breadwinner masculinity.

3.4.1 Scene Analysis

The key scene I will analyse is when Dale acknowledges that he has been raped. Dale's fiancé Stacy is invited to Julia's office for free dental treatment. When Stacy is unconscious from gas Julia throws herself at Dale demanding sex. In an angry rage Dale quits his job but Julia threatens him in return, saying that if Dale does not have sex with her, she will tell Stacy that she and Dale had sex. For proof of this fictional affair Julia shows Dale pictures she took when Dale was in his second week of employment. The pictures were taken when Dale was unconscious, again from gas, which show him and Julia in compromising positions. The first picture simulates oral sex with Dale sitting in the dentist chair and Julia's head over his crotch, her hair covering his genitals so it is unknown if she is fellating him. However, fellatio is implied and Dale's face expresses a feeling of violation. The second picture shows Julia on a chair with him slumped down his head between her legs. As we know he is unconscious, this photograph is a display of Julia's fake enjoyment shown on her face. Julia flicks through the images casually, while Dale's eye widen and he realises the severity of her vendetta. The third picture is an above head selfie from Julia of them both naked, her on top of his laid down body in the 'cowgirl' sexual position with her thumb in his mouth. Again, she is addressing the camera with her facial expression, acting more like a porn star than someone having sex because of the theatricality of it. This is significant for her characterization, as she plays up to the camera for the validation of her beauty. The fourth and final picture (seen in Image 11) that Julia exclaims is her favourite, shows her on all fours on the dentist chair with Dale lying slumped on top of her. In all of the pictures Dale's face can be both interpreted as unconscious (as we know he is) and as being comically overwhelmed with sexual pleasure.



Image 11 *Horrible Bosses* (Seth Gordon, 2011) screenshot. Julia showing a picture of Dale's unconscious body on hers on her tablet

With a surprised face Dale finds the words to express his feelings saying “rape, rape, rape. That’s a rape. This is what raping people is. You’re a raper. You’ve raped me. That’s a rape”. Getting louder and more confident in his ability to recognise what happened to him as rape, Julia retorts with “just relax there Jodie Foster, your dick wasn’t even hard”, her crude language adding to the comedy of the scene. The Jodie Foster reference is significant and alludes to her role in *The Accused* (Jonathan Kaplan, 1988) which will be examined in the analysis below. The points this scene raises are firstly, blackmail and manipulation, as rape is part of a larger harassment narrative. Secondly acknowledgment and interpretation of rape, as Dale is certain a rape took place, yet Julia and the film dismiss and undermine this conclusion. Finally, Julia’s exposed body and what role her nudity plays in the reception of the film.

Horrible Bosses locates rape as part of an abusive relationship using blackmail as a form of coercion. Threat and manipulation veils rape within a discourse of abuse, focussing on harassment rather than rape as the problem in the narrative. Scholarship on female-on-male rape is often located within literature on domestic violence where arguments are developed through understandings of male-on-female domestic abuse.⁷¹ Drawing from these theories, the researchers translate domestic violence from male-on-female to female-on-male, often arguing for the existence of female-on-male domestic abuse by citing numbers of occurrence.⁷² Martin S. Fiebert lists academic literature on women abusing men which does not necessarily include rape.⁷³ These statistical surveys and articles examine domestic abuse of men from women which can include rape. Located primarily in

⁷¹ Marin S. Fiebert, ‘References Examining Assaults by Women on Their Spouses or Male Partners: An Updated Annotated Bibliography’, *Sexuality & Culture* (June 2013) 18, pp.405-467.

⁷² See Hook and Hodo, 2013 and Hook, 2009.

⁷³ Fiebert, 2013, pp.405-467.

the social sciences, discussions of female-on-male rape and sexually aggressive women are often spoken about within the home and in a relationship narrative. As Julia is Dale's boss they have a day-to-day relationship that follows this pattern of abuse. Female-on-male rape is buried in a storyline of sexual harassment which opens up the ability to dismiss representation as rape because it is only acknowledged as harassment. In both scholarship and in the film, female-on-male rape does not have an autonomous understanding which serves to limit its acknowledgement. Focussing on harassment and not rape functions in the film by projecting a narrative that can easily bury rape within an abuse and blackmail framework so as to make it not become a focal issue.

After being shown the pictures Dale shouts 'rape', identifying Julia's actions as rape, yet dismissed as such by her. The film allows for the debate of 'did a rape occur?' through exploring what can be considered rape and who decides what rape is. Penetration is so focal in definitions of rape because of the power related to the roles of penetrator and penetrated.⁷⁴ As mentioned in the introduction, definitions explicitly regulate women as victims and men as perpetrators. The male victim is constructed using this binary as it is assumed the one being penetrated is always the victim, so for a man to be penetrated adds stigma to him because of the association with occupying a feminine role.⁷⁵ This is reversed in *Horrible Bosses*, as if Dale were to embrace the role of penetrator, he would submit to Julia's coercion and therefore solidify his position as rape victim. Julia uses phrases such as "you're gonna have to fuck me" and "you're gonna fuck my slutty little mouth" to confuse traditional definitions of rape. As well as being central to the comedy of the scene, Julia's crude and forceful demands of what he should do to her places all power onto her, subverting what the roles of penetrator and penetrated mean. Dale is stuck in a paradox where accepting the role of penetrator would violate his consent and take away his masculinity, yet rejecting the role of penetrator also demasculinises him because he refuses to occupy this traditionally male role. Encouraging Dale to be more masculine, Julia ends up proving he is not and makes Dale continuously victimised. This convoluted idea is still from Julia's point of view, as Dale does not require active penetration to identify rape. But for Julia the pictures do not represent a rape as she says Dale was not erect and therefore (supposedly) penetration did not take place. As we do not know if penetration has taken place, Julia holds power over us as well because of the information she chooses not to share with the audience. The focus on penetration in the definition of rape limits how Julia can interpret what she has done, despite consent being the larger issue that she disregards.

⁷⁴ Graham, p.198.

⁷⁵ Graham, p.198.

Julia mentioning Jodie Foster when dismissing Dale's allegation of rape is crucial in how the film frames rape and how important perception is to the acknowledgement of it. The reference is to Foster's role in *The Accused*, mentioned in the Introduction, where her character Sarah is gang raped in a bar while jeering bystanders cheer on the rapists. As discussed in the Introduction, the debate around who is to say a rape occurred, whether it is the victim, the rapist or an audience or jury is considered in *The Accused* and referencing it here brings the issues of definition and acknowledgment to the foreground. *The Accused* explores how the legal system values interpretation of consent more highly than a victim's experience. Despite Sarah knowing she has been raped, the rapists, lawyers and spectators of the rape at the bar do not agree and try to undermine her experience. As an audience viewing *The Accused* we know Sarah has been raped and the film plays with our frustration at the court's disbelief. *The Accused* ends with Sarah being acknowledged as a rape survivor, locating consent as something for her to give, not for others to interpret. The film exposes the incompetency of a system that focusses on interpretation of consent as the way to decide if a rape took place. Described by Tanya Horeck as "Hollywood's first feature-length film on rape", *The Accused* opened new ground to discuss the representation of sexual violence.⁷⁶ From the development of the screenplay to differing audience reactions, Horeck identifies the film as confronting sexual violence as an issue to be discussed and its representation to be reflected upon.⁷⁷ *Horrible Bosses* takes a different stance, as it encourages the spectators to disbelieve Dale, despite his identification.

Contrarily, *Horrible Bosses* entices the audience to participate in doubting Dale, extending disbelief of whether a rape occurred to if female-on-male rape can ever occur. *Horrible Bosses* portrays female-on-male rape as uncertain and non-existent. Catherin MacKinnon considers how consent is interpreted from a US legal standpoint.⁷⁸ She argues that the law does not view rape from a victim's point of view and instead considers how the rapist interprets consent.⁷⁹ Perception of consent overwhelms a victim's declaration as a myriad of people must interpret what lack of consent is, including police, a judge, a jury, lawyers etc. MacKinnon says that by law, if the rapist believes it was consensual, it was not rape.⁸⁰ The victim's account becomes irrelevant as it is only of importance if it is believed. By referencing *The Accused*, *Horrible Bosses* puts itself within a debate about perception of consent. Dale's identification that he has been raped is almost inconsequential as the prevailing attitude is that he was not. Whether what Julia does to Dale is interpreted as rape by her is valued higher than his declaration of rape, which is immediately dismissed. When

⁷⁶ Horeck, p.91.

⁷⁷ Horeck, p.92.

⁷⁸ MacKinnon, passim.

⁷⁹ MacKinnon, p.424.

⁸⁰ MacKinnon, p.424.

complaining to his friends that he is being sexually harassed, his friends reply that his predicament “doesn’t sound that bad” and “you’ll never get any sympathy for this”. They do not disbelieve that Julia is acting this way but they do not see it as a problem, marking Dale as the outsider.

Both Dale’s friends, Nick (Jason Bateman) and Kurt (Jason Sudeikis) sleep with Julia in the course of the film and its sequel. They, unlike Dale are incapable of being raped by Julia because they want to have sex with her. They represent a type of masculinity that is always ready and willing for sex. This places the problem onto Dale, who, if he shared the mind-set of his friends, would not and could not have been raped. This myth of masculine virility is cited in Fisher and Pina’s study of views of female-on-male rape.⁸¹ Men always wanting sex is a prevalent myth and *Horrible Bosses* marks Dale as unusual and less of a man because of his lack of willingness to have sex with Julia. Despite the film introducing Dale as a man in a committed relationship with hopes of becoming a husband, this ideal is not valued. The family man breadwinner Dale wishes to be is not understood by his friends nor Julia as a legitimate masculine pursuit as their ideas are more in line with casual sex as part of a bachelor lifestyle. Rowena Chapman discusses the ‘new man’ as a contemporary manifestation of masculinity that has changed with the times to retain power.⁸² In the 1950s, the breadwinner was what men were told to achieve, as marriage and fatherhood were necessary masculine life goals.⁸³ A figure that resisted this ambition was the playboy, who evolved as a counter-culture to conformity, where more recently the concept of the new man emerged.⁸⁴ Being a husband and father in *Horrible Bosses* is seen as such an abnormal masculine pursuit that Dale cannot occupy the same masculinity his friends do leaving him susceptible to mockery and abuse. Hannah Hamad argues, “postfeminist fatherhood is the new hegemonic masculinity”.⁸⁵ This film does not necessarily reject such a masculinity but does represent Dale as unable to fulfil this role because of his meek character. At the end of the film Dale can finally become the husband and later, father, he wants to be by proving his masculinity through being derogatory of Julia. At this point, however, Dale’s viewpoint is not valued as his (lack of) consent is not as important as others’ perception of what he should consent to.

Julia’s representation straddles the line between strong independent female sexuality and rapist. As established, in the minds of Dale’s friends, she cannot be a rapist as all men should want to have

⁸¹ Fisher and Pina, *passim*.

⁸² Rowena Chapman, ‘The Great Pretender: Variations on the New Man Theme’ in Rowena Chapman and Jonathan Rutherford (eds) *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1988), p.235.

⁸³ Chapman, p.233.

⁸⁴ Chapman, p.234.

⁸⁵ Hannah Hamad, *Postfeminism and Paternity in Contemporary U.S. Film: Framing Fatherhood* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), p.1.

sex with her. Dale protests Julia giving his fiancée Stacy dental treatment but feels he cannot say why so says it is because he does not want to take advantage of Julia, to which she retorts “you could never take advantage of me, ever”. Staring at him and emphasising the word ‘ever’, Julia acknowledges that she could not be raped, giving her power over Dale, as she cannot be sexually manipulated. In the pictures shown to Dale, Julia is the main attraction, occupying the majority of the frame, her body and facial expression being the focal point of the shot. She creates the appeal others have for her by exposing and presenting herself as desirable. She says inappropriate things and flaunts her sexuality for comic effect, linking her representation to that of the unruly woman. Kathleen Rowe’s monograph on the *Unruly Woman* highlights a staple in the comedy genre. The unruly woman “unsettles social hierarchies” by being hyperbolic and she “creates a disruptive spectacle of herself”.⁸⁶ Rowe sees this character as subversive, as women’s laughter and women creating laughter challenges “the social and symbolic systems that would keep women in their place”.⁸⁷ Yet the unruly woman’s feminist appeal does not have an uncontrollable or dangerous sexuality like the one Julia displays. In *Horrible Bosses* the unruly woman is constructed by and for the male imagination and also to represent male anxieties. This is problematic as it conflates the contemporary unruly woman’s sexuality with rape.

3.4.2 Broader Context

Julia’s incessant sexual harassment of Dale often includes her own nudity, the camera lingering over her semi-clad body. It is clear the feeling of violation is for Dale alone as the audience can participate in a voyeuristic fantasy where they can enjoy looking at her without being subject to abuse. Crucially, Julia is played by Jennifer Aniston, whose body is the one the audience gazes upon. In a scene of workplace harassment between Julia and Dale, a pan from high heel-clad feet to her expectant face flaunts Aniston’s barely covered body, concealed only by a pair of knickers and an open white doctor’s coat. As Jennifer Aniston’s sexual attractiveness is the reason for this, the idea is extended beyond the character and the film so the audience can participate in sexual fantasy narratives that feature Jennifer Aniston. Doubting that Dale has been raped goes beyond the characters in the film and to the reception, which will be discussed below. This next section will focus on how the scene and the film have been understood in reviews and interviews.

Starting with the casting of Jennifer Aniston, I will explore the creation of the acceptable female rapist, as well as the fetishization of the female body. Described as ‘America’s Sweetheart’ by Allie

⁸⁶ Kathleen Rowe, *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter*, (Austin, University of Texas Press: 1995), p.19 and p.31.

⁸⁷ Rowe, 1995, p.3.

Merriam in an interview in *PopSugar* just after the film's release in 2011 with *Horrible Bosses* director Seth Gordon, Aniston's persona and preceding fame are seen as wholesome.⁸⁸ Gordon explains that Aniston's role is different from what people are used to seeing from her and that the aim is to shock.⁸⁹ Most famous for her role as Rachel from *Friends* (1994-2004), Aniston was chosen specifically for this role to expand her 'sweetheart' persona. During her time on *Friends* and the years following, Aniston played several leads in romantic comedies, continuing to centralise the endurance of her beauty. The character Julia is described as sexually aggressive, rude, and foul-mouthed, deviating from how Aniston was seen when in *Friends*.⁹⁰ Aniston herself said it was hard to break away from *Friends* in audiences' minds, saying "you have to do something really dark to be taken seriously".⁹¹ This is referring to her role in *Cake* (Daniel Barnz, 2014), made three years after *Horrible Bosses*, drawing away from her Rachel character even more. In Aniston's personal life, she gained much media attention for her relationship with and divorce from Brad Pitt in 2005 and being childless in her 40s, painting her as a tragic figure compared to her previous sweetheart persona.⁹² In the 2000s and 2010s unsubstantiated rumours about Aniston having plastic surgeries to revive her "sex symbol" status also painted the star as rather tragic, holding onto a youth she no longer has.⁹³ This, however, has maintained Aniston's physical beauty as a significant factor in how she is presented and received.

Aniston's casting was described in one review as a problem because someone refusing sex with her is unbelievable as it is implied she is too attractive.⁹⁴ This conflates the character with the actress and argues that every heterosexual man would want to sleep with Jennifer Aniston at any opportunity. This argument is continually mentioned in the reception by fetishizing Aniston's body

⁸⁸ Seth Gordon interviewed by Allie Merriam, 'Video: Horrible Bosses' Seth Gordon Only Imagined Jennifer Aniston For His Racy Role', *PopSugar* (8th July 2011) <https://www.popsugar.com/entertainment/Horrible-Bosses-Director-Seth-Gordon-Jennifer-Aniston-Racy-Role-Video-18107153> [accessed 30th March 2017].

⁸⁹ Gordon and Merriam, 2011.

⁹⁰ Gordon and Merriam, 2011.

⁹¹ Frank Bruni, 'Putting 'the Cloak of Rachel' to Rest: Jennifer Aniston Has Something to Prove With 'Cake'', *New York Times*, January 7th 2015 <<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/11/movies/awardsseason/jennifer-aniston-has-something-to-prove-with-cake.html>> [accessed online: 18th July 2017].

⁹² Information and interview from her following the divorce can be found in Leslie Bennetts, 'The Unsinkable Jennifer Aniston', *Vanity Fair*, September 2005, <<https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2005/09/aniston200509>> [accessed online: 9 April 2019]. More on children and Aniston can be found in Amy de Klerk, 'Jennifer Aniston on why she doesn't need a husband or kids to fill "a void"', *Harpers Bazaar*, 10 December 2018 <<https://www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/celebrities/news/a25453277/jennifer-aniston-doesnt-need-husband-kids/>> [accessed online: 9 April 2019].

⁹³ Georgia Mars, 'Jennifer Aniston's \$200,000 divorce makeover', *New Idea*, 3 May 2018, <<https://www.newidea.com.au/jennifer-aniston-cosmetic-surgery-makeover>> [accessed online: 9 April 2019].

⁹⁴ Kirk Honeycutt, 'Horrible Bosses: Film Review', *The Hollywood Reporter* (5th July 2011) <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/horrible-bosses-film-review-208021> [accessed online: 30 March 2017].

in images plucked from the film.⁹⁵ Despite there being many main characters, Aniston is chosen to feature in these singular images sometimes alone and other times biting Charlie Day's ear as he presents an alarmed facial expression. An *Economist* review argues that it is ridiculous that "the viewer is expected to believe that being propositioned by Jennifer Aniston is so traumatic that it would drive a man to plot her murder".⁹⁶ The belief that every man in the world regardless of marital commitments, sexual arousal or any other factor would want to sleep with Jennifer Aniston at any and every point in time is so strongly held by the writer that for them the film lacks plausibility. However, this interpretation is not one-sided as a reply to *The Economist* from a reader, Dinesh Panch, states that the character "Charlie is not traumatised by being 'propositioned' by a woman but rather by having been drugged and sexually assaulted".⁹⁷ Panch rephrases the events of the film in line with his understanding of what occurred. His interpretation removes Aniston and replaces her with 'a woman' and reinscribes sexual assault over 'propositioning'. Despite the majority of the characters in the film and many reviews not viewing Julia's actions as problematic, there is some acknowledgement that sexual assault took place. Panch uses the character's name, Charlie, identifying with his position and sympathising with his emotions. Unlike the original review, Panch does not use Aniston's name which distances the occurrences in the film from assumptions about male sexual desire. Keeping a distance between any potential desire for a specific woman and the actions represented in the film help to identify what happens as a 'sexual assault'.

The view that Jennifer Aniston is too attractive to commit rape is not unusual as reviewers as well as the writer of the film express disbelief in a way that invites the reader to fill in the gaps as to why not wanting to sleep with Aniston is strange. Citing an interview with the screenwriter of *Horrible Bosses* Michael Markowitz reminisces about an overtly sexual female boss he had, saying "she looked more like Cruella De Vil. It was like flirting with a cobweb".⁹⁸ The difference between Julia and the memory, is the attractiveness of the female employer. Adding to the misogyny of this comment, it is phrased to point fun at specifically older women who are apparently unappealing. Age factors into this as using the word cobweb evokes a lack of care with appearance, motionlessness, even dust and a suggested repulsion. Accusing her of resembling Cruella De Vil also suggests her apparently unappealing looks are linked to moral dubiousness or even evil. Her sexuality becomes hostile because of his lack of interest in her. The severity of the harassment is seen to be mitigated through Jennifer Aniston's attractiveness. The suggestion that the audience hold the same idea as the writer feeds into two mythical absolutes; that for men, consent is

⁹⁵ Nick Pinkerton, 'Horrible Bosses', *Sight & Sound*, September 2011, 21(9) pp.63-64. Nigel Andrews, 'Horrible Bosses', *Financial Times*, 23rd January 2011, p.16.

⁹⁶ 'Truth is nicer than fiction', *The Economist*, 30 July 2011, Vol. 399 Issue 8744, pp.58.

⁹⁷ Dinesh Panch 'Comedy of errors', *The Economist*, 6 August 2011, Vol. 399 Issue 8745 pp.14.

⁹⁸ Joe Pompeo, 'This Guy Kills Me', *Bloomberg Businessweek* (4th July-10th July 2011) pp.98-99 (p.99).

assumed by default, especially with an attractive woman such as Jennifer Aniston attractive. Just as within the film, the reception plays upon the same tropes, showing that a large amount of the audience would hold similar opinions.

The interest in discussing *Horrible Bosses* in business-related publications is primarily concerned with the contemporary ideas of working conditions featured in the film. The focus of these opinion pieces and reviews are the link between functional business relationships and productivity, and how this is reflected in the film. Though having problematic employers is not considered new, the concerns brought up by the film are considered contemporary. One reviewer blames a new sensitivity of employees and praises negative reinforcement and fear to produce productive workers.⁹⁹ Others have used the debate around employee satisfaction that has been spawned by the film to criticise negative working conditions. Both, Rosabeth Moss Kanter for the *Harvard Business Review* and Joe Pompeo for *Bloomberg Businessweek* refer to the same study on workplace dissatisfaction, linking the occurrences in the film to day to day events and problems people face at work. Pompeo argues that “horrible boss syndrome has become a full-blown workplace plague” as a large number of employees can relate to the disgruntled and targeted feelings of the film characters.¹⁰⁰ Kanter notes that the community the protagonists in the film create through their shared struggles can, just as in the film, defeat the social problem of ‘horrible bosses’ in distressing work conditions.¹⁰¹ This links the exaggerated anxieties of the protagonists to everyday life.

3.4.3 Final thoughts on *Horrible Bosses*

Horrible Bosses creates a female rapist as a danger to men and masculinity, while simultaneously representing her as a fetishized object. The type of man who gets raped is one who deviates from the myth of constant willingness for sex. As the audience participates in a sexual fantasy with Jennifer Aniston’s body as subject, the film urges us to dismiss Dale. In a film that has the potential to add to an emerging discourse, the reliance on gendered stereotypes and myths leaves female-on-male rape as elusive as ever. When undermined and unacknowledged even in its own representation, female-on-male rape barely has a discourse outside of the question, ‘does it exist?’ Through analysing visual representations of female-on-male rape we can see how films build this discourse yet offer only speculation, allowing female-on-male rape to go on unacknowledged.

⁹⁹ ‘Truth is nicer than fiction’, *The Economist*, 30 July 2011, Vol. 399 Issue 8744, pp.58.

¹⁰⁰ Pompeo, p.99.

¹⁰¹ Rosabeth Moss Kanter, ‘The Cure for Horrible Bosses’, *Harvard Business Review* (1st October 2011) 89(10): 42.

3.5 *Get Him To The Greek* (Nicholas Stoller, 2010) Case Study

Get Him To The Greek is about Aaron (Jonah Hill), a man who works in the music production company Pinnacle who has three days to transport Aaron's idol, a rock star named Aldous Snow (Russell Brand) to The Greek Theatre for a ten year anniversary show. Aaron's boss Sergio (Sean 'P Diddy' Combes) belittles and threatens him and builds up the successful transportation of Aldous as a make or break for Aaron's career. The trip begins directly after Aaron has a fight with his doctor girlfriend Daphne (Elisabeth Moss). The casting of these main characters draw differently sexualised contexts, such as Moss being known for playing powerful women and Brand's sex addicted stand-up persona. The casting will be discussed as part of the scene analysis and broader context of this chapter as female and male sexuality are represented as having differing goals. As Daphne's job is stressful and tiring, she and Aaron have little time to spend together, so Daphne demands they move to Seattle where she will have better working conditions. This conflict causes Aaron to believe they have broken up. With Aaron's job and relationship in jeopardy, the film follows romantic comedy and road trip narratives to resolve his problems. Constantly being distracted by Aldous's erratic personality which pushes Aaron into the rock and roll lifestyle of parties, drinking, taking drugs, and having sex with strangers, Aaron and Aldous's trip becomes a journey of discovery for Aaron to figure out what is most important in his life. Along the way Aaron is forced into many situations he does not want to be in and is made to do degrading things, anal insertions being what he objects to the most. Female-on-male rape features briefly and is quickly forgotten about as Destiny (Carla Gallo) forces a dildo in Aaron's anus in a fleeting encounter. The film ends with successful resolutions to Aaron's conflicts. Aaron and Aldous's friendship leads to Aaron quitting his job and becoming Aldous's producer, taking control of his own career. Aaron moves to Seattle with Daphne where they can have a better and more stable relationship. *Get Him To The Greek* has tropes of differing comedy subgenres which intermingle to form the context for representing female-on-male rape. Throughout the film sex and sexuality is central to the comic tone, represented in hyperbolic innuendoes, such as full-length songs about anal sex. *Get Him To The Greek* is a spin off film from previous hit *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* (Nicholas Stoller, 2008). The generic expectation being romantic comedy but more volatile as the only remaining character is Aldous, who is known to be a sexually voracious rock star. This next section will explore how the film uses genre and gender to create the context that allows for a male victim and a female rapist.

Get Him To The Greek uses travel to represent instability, the road becoming a place for Aaron to explore the idealised masculinity of Aldous, to discover himself, and follow the narrative of getting Aldous to The Greek Theatre in time for his show. Aaron's journey is one steeped in conflicting masculinities as he explores the carelessness of non-monogamy by being enveloped in Aldous's rock and roll lifestyle. Discussing how space and scale relate to masculinities in road movies, Aitkin

and Lukinbeal argue that both location and social boundaries are transformed in such films, as both geographic location and gender hierarchies are unstable.¹⁰² The stability of a monogamous relationship is not conducive to the transient masculinity that exists on the road. The narrative that allows for Aaron's journey also pushes him away from monogamy and towards a masculinity that values promiscuity. As Aitkin and Lukinbeal argue, in road movies men experience hysteria when on the road as they are separated from a stable masculinity.¹⁰³ Aaron's relationship with Daphne shows his loyal and subservient self, and the road represents the transient and transgressive rock and roll lifestyle of Aldous. The journey Aaron takes is one of gender exploration shown through his experiences outside of his relationship with Daphne, but as the *Sight and Sound* reviewer Henry K. Miller argues, *Get Him To The Greek* "winds up extolling the virtues of monogamous relationships over no relationship".¹⁰⁴ This ultimately hegemonic and conservative ending is almost masked by the chaos, drug use, and sex throughout the film, yet, as in many of the films mentioned in this thesis, stable and traditional gender roles are acclaimed. This praise of a stable heterosexual relationship is also a praise of compromising masculinity as Aaron must submit to Daphne's demand and move to Seattle for her career. *Get Him To The Greek*, like many road movies, end in one locale, representing a reinscription of stable masculinity. Ultimately being rather conservative films, the road is unsustainable because of its lack of stable gender identities. Aitkin and Lukinbeal argue "if male hysteria is mobility away from the status quo, the cure is a reinscription into hegemonic space and place...marriage, family, and *productive* employment".¹⁰⁵ Like the road movie narrative Aitkin and Lukinbeal describe, *Get Him To The Greek* concludes with Aaron back in a relationship and gaining a better job as Aldous's producer and owning a music label when he enters the space of Seattle. Aaron's distress at being on the road shows his inability to live up to the virulent masculinity Aldous presents, instead choosing to settle with Daphne in Seattle.

As well as a road trip aspect to the film, the romantic comedy plot between Daphne and Aaron breaks them up and reunites them. Elisabeth Moss as Daphne was mostly known at the time for her roles in the long running television shows *The West Wing* (1999-2006) and *Mad Men* (2007-2015). Often playing powerful women, Moss is seemingly continuing this trend in *Get Him To The Greek*, as an independent doctor. At the start of the film Daphne's clear exhaustion from her job impacts on their relationship. On a break from work she sits in the canteen of the hospital in her scrubs as Aaron visits. Here they have a fight that jeopardises Aaron and Daphne's relationship. This

¹⁰² Stuart C. Aitkin and Christopher Lee Lukinbeal, 'Disassociated Masculinities and Geographies of the Road' in Steve Cohan and Ira Hark (eds.) *The Road Movie Book* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp.349-370 (p.353-354).

¹⁰³ Aitkin and Lukinbeal, p.353-354.

¹⁰⁴ Henry K. Miller, 'Get Him To The Greek', *Sight & Sound* (August 2010) 20(8) pp.57-58 (p.57).

¹⁰⁵ Aitkin and Lukinbeal, p.354 (emphasis in original).

argument is steeped in gender conflict as Daphne's desire for them to move to Seattle is interpreted by Aaron as an attempt to emasculate and castrate him. In response to Daphne snapping "we're moving to Seattle" Aaron rants "do you want me to cut off my balls and put them in your pocket so you don't just metaphorically own them, you can physically hold them in your pocket? I mean I feel like a '50s housewife right now, like my dreams don't count. You're like Michael Jackson's dad. You're abusing me right now". Aaron translates the lack of power he feels in the relationship to a lack of masculinity, referencing his testicles as the source of masculine power that is being taken from him by Daphne. Castration and control are linked here as Aaron prioritises being male as a natural source of power. The reference to a 1950s housewife suggests gender roles have been reversed and that Daphne now holds the same power as men in a generalised view of a sexist time past. He escalates his feelings once again referencing a famously physically and emotionally abusive relationship between a father and son. For justification for Daphne's unreasonable behaviour, Aaron then asks whether she is on her period, relating forceful behaviour with what Aaron perceives as a gendered problem. He does not acknowledge her exhaustion as the reason for her abruptness, rather gendering his response once again. For Aaron, moving to Seattle means a lack of masculinity as Daphne would control his movements. Aaron wants both heterosexual monogamy with Daphne and masculine power but the film constructs the two as incompatible.

Daphne's career and sexuality are constructed both as problems and solutions in the film. The romantic comedy narrative described by Kathleen Rowe argues that the genre "builds the feminine into both its narrative conflict and the resolution of that conflict".¹⁰⁶ Daphne's career causes a near break up and a fresh start for both of them in Seattle. Her sexual explorations are limited and unfulfilling as she realises Aaron is the only sexual partner she wishes to be with. Women having careers in romantic comedies has been historically problematic, tied to the conflict between being a woman and being a worker, seen in the film by Daphne excelling in the traditionally male workplace of medicine. Daphne uses her sexuality to manipulate Aaron showing the gender differences with regards to sexual desire between them. An encounter where Aaron wants them both to go to a concert and Daphne wants them to stay in, she says "if you stay I'll have sex with you". This playful comment shows how aware Daphne is of how to use her sexuality and femininity to manipulate Aaron to make them do what she wants. Their relationship presumes what Catherine Hakim coins the "male sex deficit", arguing that men naturally have more sexual desire and therefore women have "erotic capital", a source of power based upon others' desire of them.¹⁰⁷ This is present in Aaron's reply to Daphne as he reverses the promise and says "if you don't go to

¹⁰⁶ Rowe (1995) p.107.

¹⁰⁷ Catherine Hakim, *Honey Money: The Power of Erotic Capital* (London: Penguin, 2011) p.3.

the concert you don't get any of my penis tonight" to which Daphne immediately says she will stay home. This interaction showcases the differing sexual appetites of men and women and the power women have to control men through sex. The film portrays women as being inherently less interested in sex than men. Historically this idea has been built into romantic comedy as a genre, as men try to have sex, while women try to get a husband.¹⁰⁸ Though *Get Him To The Greek* offers an array of sexualities, there is an obvious power that women possess in this regard.

Tasker and Negra argue that the assumption that women have achieved equality in sexuality and work also assumes a loss of power for men.¹⁰⁹ For example, the assumption that men crave more sex than women leads to women using their sexuality to manipulate and control men. *Get Him To The Greek* uses this assumption to construct the possibility of female-on-male rape. Represented as the impact that women's sexual independence has on men, the next section will explore a key scene from the film where Aaron is anally penetrated by a dildo-wielding woman.

3.5.1 Scene Analysis

The rape scene begins at a hotel party where Aaron's boss Sergio gains the attention of a passing drunk woman, Destiny, asks her name and tells her to go into a bedroom to have sex with Aaron. She agrees in a blasé tone while Aaron comments that Sergio's behaviour was disrespectful. A cut takes us to Aaron and Destiny lying fully clothed on a bed facing one another, Destiny telling Aaron her life is music and that she is in a Pussycat Dolls cover band, suggesting that she is clueless and vacant. Destiny and Daphne show the misogyny of the film, by only having female characters that are strict and bossy, or exaggeratedly dim. Starting out as an exploited character she takes control of the situation even though it seems accidental since she is so absent-minded. Destiny asks if Aaron can "hook her up" with Aldous which Aaron agrees to indifferently as it is clear he is too tired to engage in conversation. With this Destiny straddles Aaron and takes his tie off as he protests with sudden energy from the shock. Destiny then lifts her dress up and points to her crotch urging Aaron to "look at the pubic hair". Aaron reluctantly looks at her microphone shaped pubic hair as she taps it and asks if Aaron wants to sing "haireoke". Aaron is clearly shocked and tells her to put her clothes on but she continues to ignore his protests and pulls his trousers off. Most of this scene is filmed using over the shoulder shots from Destiny, so we are also looking down on Aaron. As Aaron calmly tries to reason with Destiny she lifts her handbag from the floor and pulls out a translucent dildo. Stopping mid-sentence Aaron looks shocked and disgusted exclaiming "you carry that around with you?" In a close up on Aaron's face he struggles as she rubs it on his mouth and chin saying "kiss it,

¹⁰⁸ Jeffers McDonald (2007) p.45.

¹⁰⁹ Tasker and Negra, p.4.

you like it". In a teasing childish voice Destiny then sings "this is going inside of you", then reaches behind her while still straddling Aaron and inserts it into his anus as he screams. Looking up at Destiny, the camera is from Aaron's perspective when the dildo is inserted. The force it would take for Destiny to put in the dildo is underplayed, as it is done quickly and minimises physical harm. The scene then cuts to Aaron's girlfriend Daphne at work on her phone listening to the exchange as it becomes clear that Aaron has accidentally called her. Daphne rolls her eyes and hangs up the phone in irritation, as if interpreting what she hears as Aaron cheating on her. The scene ends with the dildo still inside Aaron as he shouts "why does it have balls?" Cutting to Aldous at the party Aaron enters looking dishevelled and says "I think I've just been raped". To this Aldous offers him a 'Jeffery', a joint containing a cocktail of drugs. The scene then descends into chaos as Aaron panics, is injected with epinephrine and a large fight breaks out. The rape is never mentioned again and becomes just another adversity Aaron must overcome on his disaster of a journey.

The main focus of the scene analysis will be deciphering the significance of the dildo as it is inserted into Aaron, which will cover phallic symbolism and postfeminist female sexual agency. Firstly, I will explore the phallic connection, drawing links between the dildo's implicit likeness to male genitalia and then the dildo as a postfeminist object, representative of female sexuality independent from men. Aaron's dialogue of "why does it have balls?" will interrogate the function and aesthetics of testicles on a dildo arguing for its falsity. Destiny's ownership of the dildo complicates the notion that dildos are just penis substitutes. Destiny's dialogue shows her lack of understanding of consent, which will lead to a discussion of this attack as unplanned and random. Finally, this section will cover the reactions to the rape from Daphne and Aldous where Daphne's reaction as lack of acknowledgement of rape is discussed. Aldous offering Aaron drugs serves as a way to examine the reaction of others. Overall this section will explore the intricacies of a scene that shows a woman raping a man, exposing how humour is created by playing on gendered assumptions and allow for the inclusion of female-on-male rape in this comedy film.

A comprehensive understanding of the multiple arguments about what the dildo can represent can be found in queer feminist discourse, named by Heather Findlay the 'lesbian dildo debates'.¹¹⁰ This regards lesbian identity and dildo use, informing how dildos are discussed as gendered.¹¹¹ The two main strands of this debate are that the dildo is either a phallic substitute or it is an object women use to appropriate penetration out of the hands and control of men. Aprita Das describes that "one of the major contentions with the dildo has been its likeness to a penis and therefore its investment

¹¹⁰ Heather Findlay, 'Freud's "Fetishism" and the Lesbian Dildo Debates', *Feminist Studies*, 1992, 18(2): 563-579.

¹¹¹ Heather Findlay, pp.563-579.

in phallic symbolism".¹¹² In this instance, the dildo, just as the penis, is a representation of the phallus. Peter Lehman discusses the link between the penis and the phallus, one being a body part and the other the privileged position of power men have under patriarchy.¹¹³ The two are joined in the male body and become synonymous. Being penetrated by a dildo as a phallic object, Das argues, is to be "symbolic of being subjected to the phallic order which is oppressive to women".¹¹⁴ In this argument any penetration by a penis-like object is equal to gendered oppression as the binary of man/woman, penetrator/penetrated and oppressor/oppressed being upheld. Initially a reversal of gender roles can be understood from this, Aaron is penetrated and therefore is subject to the "phallic order", holding the same significance as if he were raped by a penis. As Aaron is a man, the symbolism cannot simply be reversed as male rape does not have the same cultural significance as female rape does. This strand of argument also sees the dildo as phallic as women use the dildo to reclaim power. As part of a phallic appropriation it can be argued that "if a woman claims the dildo as gender transgression 'she becomes a male body'".¹¹⁵ Jeanne E. Hamming summarises the binary aspect of female use of a phallic substitute here, as it symbolically changes her sex as she uses a penetrative phallic object. To say the same gendered subjugation is put onto Aaron would be to disavow the significance of his gender, Destiny's gender and the comedy context that frames the rape in the film.

Though the penis is tied to the phallus, the dildo is independent from the male body so has a more complex relationship with phallic symbolism. From this scene in *Get Him To The Greek* the dildo is both likened to and differentiated from the penis in Aaron's comment of "why does it have balls?" Functionally, dildos have bases below the shaft, yet shaping them like that is an aesthetic choice to make it look more like male genitalia. Testicles on a dildo can act as a base to make sure the dildo does not wholly enter a person but the dildo in the film has shaped the base to form faux testicles which is commented on. Aaron making reference to their presence draws attention to the falsity of the dildo and the absurdity of purely aesthetic testicles. The film has previously placed masculine power in the testicles as evidenced when Aaron correlates Daphne controlling him to castration. Identifying the dildo as a deviation from male genitalia by attempting to copy it undermines the dildo's phallic power while the penis's power is retained.

¹¹² Aprita Das, 'The Dildo and a Transformative Political Tool: Feminist and Queer Perspectives', *Sexuality and Culture*, 2014, 18:6, pp.688-703 (p.694).

¹¹³ Peter Lehman, *Running Scared: Masculinity and the Representation of the Male Body* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2007) (originally published 1993) p.39.

¹¹⁴ Das, p.695.

¹¹⁵ Jeanne E. Hamming, 'Dildonics, Dykes and the Detachable Masculine', *The European Journal of Women's Studies*, 2001, 8(3): 329-341 (p.335).

Destiny owning and carrying around a dildo in her purse allows for exploration of the second strand of discourse, that the dildo is representative of female empowerment. Minge and Zimmerman see women using dildos as reclaiming power with women being in control of their own sexuality.¹¹⁶ This idea is related to the postfeminism presented by Das, “the use of sex toys including dildos is considered to be a signifier of increasing capitalism and commodification with feminism”.¹¹⁷ The idea that female empowerment can come from buying products aligns sexual independence with purchasing power. Here, the dildo is still phallic but women have the potential to co-opt some of this phallic power for themselves. The emphasis on reclaiming power and subverting the dominance of masculine sexuality in Minge and Zimmerman’s work suggests that the dildo has redemptive qualities and the power is for the wielder.¹¹⁸ The way Destiny uses this subversive power makes her dangerous, as she is not using the dildo to reclaim her own sexuality, rather to violate others. This suggests that if women are armed with an object representing their own sexual empowerment, the dildo could be used as a weapon. For a gendered item, the dildo has many contradictions in the lesbian dildo debates framework. It is inescapably representative of a penis, masculinity and phallicism whilst being used to empower women as independent from needing men and making them moot to sexual pleasure. The dildo is both representative of the phallus and an object of female independence.

As established, the dildo is a complex object with different meanings ascribed to it. Das argues that “the multiple ways in which the dildo performs complicates the notion of sexual and gender binaries of the penetrator versus the penetrated, the active versus the passive, the dominant versus the submissive and the masculine versus the feminine”.¹¹⁹ Binaries are disrupted when women can act in a penetrative position and men in a penetrated role. That *Get Him To The Greek* unsettles these gender binaries to rape both complicates the representation and adds humour to it as it is vastly outside of what is expected. Louise O. Vasvari looks to medieval folklore to examine how penetration of men by women is represented. Vasvari argues that “in these narratives, anxious males are sexually degraded by virilised females who have appropriated male gender roles and disguises, along with powerful – if prosthetic – penile attributes”.¹²⁰ This appropriation of the phallus is similar to using dildos to rape men, yet Destiny is not appearing as a man to do so, rather she is characterised as a fame hungry party girl. As an undeveloped character, played as drunk and

¹¹⁶ Jeanine Minge and Amber Lynn Zimmerman, ‘Power, Pleasure, and Play: Screwing the dildo and rescripting sexual violence’, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2009, 15(2), pp.329-349 (p.335).

¹¹⁷ Das, p.696.

¹¹⁸ Minge and Zimmerman, p.332.

¹¹⁹ Das, p.698.

¹²⁰ Louise O. Vasvari, ‘Women Raping Men: The Sexual-Textual Violence of the Anti-Pastourelle’ in Manuel de Costa Fontes and Joseph T. Snow (eds.), *Entra mayo y sale abril: Medieval Spanish Literary and Folklore studies in memory of Harriet Goldberg* (Newark, DE: Juan de a Cuesta, 2005), pp.375-419 (p.375).

potentially on drugs, Destiny's vacancy appears as usual for her but unusual for Aaron and the audience. She has no agenda of her own, making her dangerous because she is unpredictable. According to Vasvari the penetration in these stories leaves men 'open' to other victimization, which is anal rape by other men and even death.¹²¹ Throughout the film, Aaron's anus is in jeopardy of violation, forced to be a drug mule for Aldous by transporting heroin in his anus through the airport, then Aldous reaching into his anus to retrieve it. Aaron comes across as being controlled by his girlfriend, his boss, Aldous and random women such as Destiny.

It is not only Destiny's sexuality that influences the way *Get Him To The Greek* frames female-on-male rape as Aaron is framed as victim in contrast to Aldous. Aldous typifies an idealism of the sex, drugs, and rock and roll lifestyle. His status as rock star allows for partying, drinking and drug misuse as well as flings with slews of adorning fans. This fantasy of hedonistic excess is represented as Aldous's masculinity, tied directly to his music and life as a rock star. Sara Cohen argues that rock music and the 'scene' surrounding it "is socially and actively produced as male, a process shaped by local and national conventions and institutions".¹²² Aldous as a character is constructed as masculine through the music industry, his personality an ode to the "hedonistic late-'60s stars...who just didn't care", as Russell Brand says about his character.¹²³

Russell Brand's public persona as former drug addict and current sex addict influences the audiences' perceptions of Aldous. In a book about Russell Brand as celebrity, Arthurs and Little describe Aldous Snow as a "self-parody" of Brand, referencing his sexuality, physical gestures, ego and Britishness.¹²⁴ The producer of *Get Him To The Greek*, Judd Apatow, goes so far to say that "Aldous is actually a toned-down version of Russell".¹²⁵ The sexual voracity of Brand feeding into how the character is perceived. Aldous expresses himself through performing his sexuality, such as thrusting his crotch in tight trousers into a camera filming him singing. In Cohan's analysis of the rock scene she argues that rock "presents a spectacle of male power and offers a musical means through which men can demonstrate their manhood".¹²⁶ Aldous's lyrics are overtly sexual and continually reference sex with women, such as 'I need to be inside of you' and 'shagging five birds

¹²¹ Vasvari, p.375.

¹²² Sara Cohen, 'Men Making a Scene: Rock music and the production of gender' in Sheila Whitley (ed.) *Sexing the Groove: Popular music and gender* (London: Routledge, 1997) pp.17-36 (p.24).

¹²³ Cortney Harding, 'Russell Brand is a Man on Infant Sorrow', *billboard*, 11 June 2010, [accessed online: <http://www.billboard.com/articles/news/957796/russell-brand-is-a-man-of-infant-sorrow> 13 September 2017].

¹²⁴ Jane Arthurs and Ben Little, *Russell Brand: Comedy, Celebrity, Politics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p.67.

¹²⁵ Joshua Winning, 'The Story Behind Get Him To The Greek', *gamesradar*, 24th June 2010 [accessed online: <http://www.gamesradar.com/the-story-behind-get-him-to-the-greek/> on 28th November 2017].

¹²⁶ Cohen, p.29.

in the back of me limousine'.¹²⁷ Along with lyrics, clothes and movement, Aldous uses rock to express a specific masculinity defined by promiscuity, which is at the crux of the rock and roll lifestyle presented in the film.¹²⁸ As part of the road trip aspect of *Get Him To The Greek*, Aaron's attempts to placate Aldous and assimilate into his lifestyle prove difficult, especially with Aaron's desire for monogamy and stability. The genre blending of road trip film, signified by the relationship between Aaron and Aldous, both fan and star, and later friends, and the romantic comedy seen in Aaron and Daphne's relationship offer conflicting masculinities for Aaron. Reluctant to follow in Aldous's footsteps when he thinks there might be a chance to reconcile with Daphne, Aaron offers an alternative masculinity to Aldous, which the film uses to open him up to manipulation and anal abuse.

Image 12 Russell Brand as Aldous Snow in a promotion for the band Infant Sorrow

The rape scene ends with Aaron walking back into the room where Aldous is. Aldous and his father are arguing about Aldous's career as Aaron sits down with a concerned look on his face. Aaron then interrupts them to say "I, err, I think I've just been raped". Aaron is unable to say for sure if what occurred was rape, yet using the word 'rape', he implies the severity of what happened. He feels he has been raped without knowing for sure if what happened is under the definition of rape. To

¹²⁷ *Inside of You* is a song in Aldous Snow's band *Infant Sorrow*'s extra-fictional discography, first heard in *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* where the character Aldous first appears. 'Shagging five birds in the back of me limousine' is a line from *Yeah Yeah Oi Oi*, another song which features on *Infant Sorrow*'s discography.

¹²⁸ Arthurs and Little argue the body gestures Brand uses in the film are the same as ones used in his stand-up routine, p.67.

this exclamation, Aldous says in an unsympathetic and dazed voice “what’s that? Raped? Here you go mate that’ll take the edge off” as he hands him a ‘Jeffrey’ joint. His reaction is nonchalant, as if rape were not a significant event. As Aaron smokes some of the cocktail of drugs within the joint he begins to panic, thinking he is having a heart attack. Aldous then injects Aaron in the heart with epinephrine, making him manic with energy. There is then a fight between Aldous’s father and Sergio and the hotel room is destroyed, followed by Aaron and Aldous running down the corridor away from the crazed Sergio. Whatever trauma or aftermath the rape might have had was immediately replaced with drugs, aggression and action. The film itself forces away emotion and melodrama and substitutes it for action comedy and aggressive masculinity. Though Aaron may require conversation about the rape, as shown by him raising it with Aldous, the film does not allow for sympathy and dismisses his claims, never to be spoken of again.

3.5.2 Broader Context

Much of the dialogue from *Get Him To The Greek* was improvised yet the script still features an implicit rape scene where Aaron is tricked into spending time with a prostitute Aldous has hired, Krissy, who forces fellatio upon him.¹²⁹ Whilst the film removes trickery, it replaces it with overpowering strength, penetration, and acknowledgment of rape. In the screenplay Aldous talks Aaron into getting in a compromising position with Krissy, hoping for Aaron to get over his (believed to be ex-) girlfriend by having sex with Krissy. Alone in the bedroom the stage directions say “Krissy’s ‘nice’ shtick suddenly drops and she becomes a voraciously sexual”.¹³⁰ This is consistent with the way Destiny behaves in the film as she suddenly rolls on top of Aaron and is deaf to his disinterest in her. In the stage directions, Nicholas Stoller writes, “she goes down on Aaron. We can’t tell what she’s doing”.¹³¹ The intention here is to obscure the act of fellatio but retain the knowledge of it happening, as the script gives us the option to assume forced fellatio. The script does not involve a dildo but does have oral sex with an uneasy and unsure Aaron. The scene in the script ends when Aaron sees Krissy’s pubic hair shaved into a lightning bolt. He interprets this to mean she is a prostitute (a correct assumption) that he confronts Aldous about it. This is very upsetting to Aaron as he feels he has been tricked. The joke is still rape, yet the means and implications of how the rape came to be differ. Sergio still tells Destiny to have sex with Aaron, but in the film, she does not profit from sex like in the script. In addition, Aaron hears Sergio say this in the film, so is not tricked into sex, rather he escorts her to the bedroom with no intention of having sex with her. The joke in

¹²⁹ Nicholas Stoller, *Get Him To The Greek*, 2008, <<http://www.joblo.com/scripts/Get%20Him%20To%20The%20Greek.PDF>>.

¹³⁰ Stoller, p.82.

¹³¹ Stoller, p.82.

the script is that Aaron would nearly be raped but Aaron is not overpowered and he is able to stop what is happening before intercourse takes place.

The restricted trailer for the film contains part of the rape scene and an extended dialogue from it that does not feature in the final film. From the film, Aaron's shock is evident from the line "You carry that around with you?!" when she pulls out the dildo though the rest is cut from the cinematic release. In the trailer Destiny is straddling the horizontal Aaron who is pinned down on the bed. She holds the dildo at eye level aimed at Aaron's face and says "here comes the airplane" and motions it towards his mouth. This line is a well-known saying used by parents to get infants to eat what they are feeding them, making a game of a potentially arduous task. The mother/baby dynamic mixed with the sexuality of the scene functions as a juxtaposition where the outrageousness of these contradictions is the source of comedy. Aaron says "Urg, what is wrong with you? When's the last time you purred that thing?" which is accompanied with squishing noises as she rubs it on his face.¹³² The comment about sanitation of the dildo implies it has been used before without washing it, a statement, which in addition to his first suggest this is part of Destiny's usual sexual practices. The penetration of the dildo in Aaron's mouth is implied but not shown, and anal penetration is not mentioned here. The context of the rape is less important in the trailer as we see only limited parts from the film, but enough to establish the genre as comedy. The trailer using cut dialogue from the film suggests it is one of the funnier jokes that can be understood out of the narrative context. As the context of the whole film is not required to understand this joke, audience participation in understanding why it is funny is required. As the film gained over \$91,000,000 worldwide at the box office audiences were not fazed by the rape in the trailer.¹³³

Get Him To The Greek is a spin off from the film *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*, based upon the character Aldous Snow who played a minor role in *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*. As producer of both *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* and *Get Him To The Greek*, Judd Apatow has been credited as a quintessential bromance film director and producer.¹³⁴ Adam Sternbergh compares Apatow with Todd Phillips, another bromance film director, arguing "in Apatow, the enemy is adulthood, which ruins life; in Phillips, the enemy is women, who ruin men".¹³⁵ The stunted adolescence of Apatovian bromance, however, does have reductive and fearful views on women, evidenced in scenes like the

¹³² Purell is a brand of hand sanitiser referred to here.

¹³³ *Get Him To The Greek*, *Box Office Mojo*, [accessed online: <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=gethimtothegreek.htm> 28th November 2017].

¹³⁴ DeAngelis, p.1.

¹³⁵ Adam Sternbergh, "'The Hangover' and the Age of the Jokeless Comedy' in *The New York Times Magazine*, 25th May 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/29/magazine/the-hangover-and-the-age-of-the-jokeless-comedy.html> [accessed 23rd February 2017]. Todd Phillips is known for producing and directing films such as *Old School* (Todd Phillips, 2003) and *The Hangover* (Todd Phillips, 2009).

one described in this case study. In a review by Henry K. Miller, *Get Him To The Greek* contains this bromance characteristic which “also includes what has become an Apatovian hallmark: the parodically demeaning cameo from Carla Gallo”.¹³⁶ As Carla Gallo plays Destiny, the scene Miller refers to is the rape scene. Describing her role as demeaning is true but this ‘Apatovian hallmark’ is not just the presence of Gallo, rather it is archetypal of Apatow’s fixation with humiliation, emasculation, and a fear of women.

As well as Apatow being central to how *Get Him To The Greek* is received, Jonah Hill has pulling power when it comes to box office figures. First working together in *The 40 Year Old Virgin* (Judd Apatow, 2005), Apatow and Hill have made many collaborations as producer and actor. Along with *The 40 Year Old Virgin*, *Superbad* (Greg Mottola, 2007) and *Knocked Up* (Judd Apatow, 2007) Hill and Apatow work together on all these films that are considered to be genre defining films for the new bromance genre.¹³⁷ Jonah Hill has a specific masculinity tied to his persona, particularly unusual is that *Get Him To The Greek* is not the last time he has been associated with male rape in films. In the introduction of this thesis I examined *This Is The End* where Jonah Hill is raped by the devil. Another reference to male rape appears in *22 Jump Street* (Phil Lord and Christopher Miller, 2014) where Mr Walters (Rob Wriggle) forces Eric Molson (Dave Franco) to penetrate his new surgically constructed vagina in a forced prison relationship setting, which is revealed to Hill’s character. That Hill, Apatow and the bromance genre coincide with the theme of male rape makes this trio a specific phenomenon. As well as establishing male rape as a definite concern for the genre and the makers of it, Hill’s anxious and often loud rants paint him as a typical example of what one might expect a victim of male rape to look like. As David Greven says about these films, “the beta males of Judd Apatow comedies would appear to reflect hyper-contemporary concerns with male sexuality, male bodies and postfeminist challenges (and capitalism) to male rule...[but] have their roots in a longstanding American tradition of male disaffection”.¹³⁸ In some ways female-on-male rape is a new phenomenon but in others it is just a contemporary manifestation of masculine discontent.

3.5.3 Final thoughts on *Get Him To The Greek*

Get Him To The Greek uses female-on-male rape narratively to create tension in Aaron and Daphne’s relationship. Thematically it degrades Aaron, making his assault a punchline, using dialogue to increase the comedy. Aaron is a compliant employee and submissive boyfriend, and the

¹³⁶ Miller, p.57.

¹³⁷ DeAngelis, passim.

¹³⁸ Greven, p.34.

rape acts to emphasise his meekness. The context of Russell Brand's rock and roll persona and Judd Apatow's 'bromantic' style sets up idealised yet flawed masculinities that frame and inform how we view the rape scene. The dildo straddles the line between masculine (it being a phallic object) and feminine (an object wielded by a woman that can replace the male anatomy). Destiny's lack of awareness makes her actions not come across as cruel, rather as absurd playing up the comedy through ludicrousness. She is a tool used by the film to highlight an anxiety, which is mitigated by being made fun of.

3.6 Chapter Conclusion

The case studies in this chapter project male anxieties of what it is to be a man in the 21st Century. Describing masculinity in 'dude cinema', as they call it, Troyer and Marchiselli argue that the men of the films are hapless, incompetent and heroic and reflect a masculinity that rejects responsibility and idolises apathy.¹³⁹ There are two extremes in this rejection of responsibility, firstly the American utopia of dudeness by "privileged fraternal stupidity" and secondly apocalyptic catastrophe if the phallus is lost.¹⁴⁰ Both of these exist in the case study films, from Dale's friends who ignore his pain and sleep with Julia, and Aldous Snow whose drunken excess causes Aaron immense stress. The loss of the phallus is experienced by Dale and Aaron through their rapes, as a symbolic emasculation. All Aaron and Dale want is a stable romantic relationship to build a family, which they must fight for by proving their masculinity in the plot. Aaron reclaims masculinity through compromise, as he moves away from his home and job for the sake of his girlfriend's career. Dale regains it by shouting, blackmail and calling Julia "a bitch", a gendered degradation that enables him to feel power over her.

This chapter has seen gender role reversal as the source of comedy, the unexpected virile and sexually aggressive woman that suggests female sexual agency is problematic and disorderly. The female-on-male rapes mentioned in this chapter are a comeuppance for men who have been deemed to have fragile or weak masculinity. The theme of masculinity will continue through to chapter four, yet in chapter four, the deviation in masculinity is not from the protagonist, rather the antagonist, whose rape is presented as celebratory.

¹³⁹ Troyer and Marchiselli, p.276.

¹⁴⁰ Troyer and Marchiselli, p.275.

Chapter 4 Animal-on-Male Rape

Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls (Steve Oedekerk, 1995) is the second Ace Ventura film, starring Jim Carrey as Ace, a pet detective who solves crimes through his ability to connect with animals. His mission in the film is to locate a sacred lost white bat of an African tribe, who, without it, would be at war with a neighbouring tribe. The bat was stolen by Vincent Cadby (Simon Callow), the antagonist of the film, so he could use the lands once the tribes had killed one another. Near the end of the film, when Cadby is running from a herd of animals, following the will of Ace, a gorilla catches up with him and gives him a flirtatious smile before taking him behind a bush and raping him. This is the last we see of Cadby and is a moment that signifies the final defeat of good over evil. Narratively this defeat saves a tribe from being slaughtered by another as Cadby's plan to steal the peacekeeping mascot of a white bat is foiled. This life-saving rape can only be told from the perspective of the rapist as a victim's narrative could not have such positive consequences. In *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls* and other films which this chapter will analyse, animals who rape men act on the behalf of the protagonist as their representational phalluses. Through helping the protagonist achieve their narrative or personal interests, in films such as this one, animals share the protagonist's desires, acting them out in the form of anal penetration. In the Hollywood family films I explore in this chapter, animals are substitutes for the protagonist's penis used for penetration as an act of punishment. This chapter will argue that hyperbolic comedy frames an animal within a heroic rapist narrative, making it possible to represent male rape in family films.



Image 13 *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls* (Steve Oedekerk, 1995) screenshot



Image 14 *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls* (Steve Oedekerk, 1995) screenshot

Animals that rape men in family films are extensions of the protagonists both narratively and psychosexually. Protagonists' affinity with animals comes from their position as outcasts with an unfettered attitude towards social conventions. The inability to conform to social norms most markedly by not being able to function in a heterosexual relationship is the primary connection and justification for the transgressive behaviour they perform. When this is mixed with sexuality, the animal comes to represent what the protagonist himself cannot perform. In the *Ace Ventura* films, the animals are primarily instinctual but because Ace (Jim Carrey) is so similar to them in his behaviour his narrative objectives are obtained with the help of animals, including defeating the antagonist. In *When Nature Calls*, Ace is able to create a stampede of wild animals by using a mock call, rousing the animals into action. The childishness and lack of awareness of polite behaviour is what frames the protagonist in these films. The type of comedy that allows animal on male rape in family films will be explored through looking at traditions in the carnivalesque, grotesque and slapstick. The performer himself is also significant to the type of comedy that frames animal on male rape as he is self-referential and controls the narrative, inviting the audience to participate in creating the illusion of reality in the fictional world of the film.¹ The audience helps create the humour by suspending their knowledge of what is fictional and extra-fictional. By analysing the animal as a representational phallus of a protagonist rapist as well as slapstick and comedian comedy, this chapter will explore how and why male rape appears in family films.

After setting up the type of rapist and type of comedy that frames animal on male rape, key scenes from two case study films will be analysed, *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* (Peter Segal, 2000) and *Bruce Almighty* (Tom Shadyak, 2003), as they both depict an anal penetration of a man by an animal in a family film. This is done by either the penis of the animal, as in *The Klumps*, or the entire animal

¹ Steve Seidman, *Comedian Comedy: A Tradition in Hollywood Film*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1979) p.8.

being forced into the man's anus, as in *Bruce Almighty*. The common factor in these scenes is anal penetration signifying rape, despite the unfeasibility of the acts as sexual practice. The scenes look very different from one another and display the representation of animal on male rape as significantly non-uniform. The reception of these films will then be analysed in the form of reviews and online parents' guides, written by parents to inform others about potential offensive or risqué material, to see how the rapes are spoken of, if at all. This gives the context of how a child-focused audience interprets what occurs on screen. The vagueness and outright omission of the rape scenes from these reviews and guides show they are not received as controversial because they are not understood as rape. It is precisely the way they are represented that make the scenes unrecognisable as rape and consequently gives the appearance of them as unproblematic. The hyperbolic comic framing and affinity the audience has to the heroic rapist undermine any serious connotations that could be interpreted in the scenes.

4.1 The Unfettered Comedian

The films explored in this chapter fit within Steve Seidman's concept of the comedian comedy. Seidman identifies comedian comedy as a genre with origins in Vaudeville and other show business media that is based upon a key comic figure who is both a fictional and extra-fictional presence.² Within film the comic figure uses their imagination and creativity to control the fictional world that allows them to resolve their personal journey narratively, however they are unable to change the rigid society they are forced to live in.³ Their powers of imagination allow them not just to manipulate their environment but also transcend bodily limitations so they can move in extraordinary ways.⁴ Jim Carrey is a perfect example of this comic figure as, for example, in *When Nature Calls* he is able to control wild animals' movements with simple commands. Extra-fictionally the comedian is known beyond the film and uses their presence to point out the film as fiction by using classic comic styling such as breaking the fourth wall and referencing aspects of their real (or perceived real) life.⁵ This, Seidman states, is only possible when the audience participates in forgiving inconsistencies by making the connections between the fictional and extra-fictional, purposefully blurring their comprehension of what is real and part of the filmic universe.⁶ This participation recognises that for a joke to be understood by audiences they must understand and accept its social context.⁷ Seidman identifies two groupings that categorise the comic figure,

² Seidman, p.8.

³ Seidman, p.8.

⁴ Seidman, p.7.

⁵ Seidman, p.15.

⁶ Seidman, p.8.

⁷ Seidman, p.157.

disguise and childishness. Disguise is a symptom of neurosis or psychosis, as the comic figure is confused about their identity and how it fits into the world and is displayed by changing physical appearance, corporeal eccentricity and character deviation.⁸ Ace Ventura incorporates himself into monkey, hippo, and lion societies as well as putting on a mask to try and blend into a tribe. The comic figure's childishness is seen in the regressive tendencies they portray that Seidman argues manifests in "intentional destruction and sexual aggression".⁹ As well as Jim Carrey, this can be seen in contemporary figures such as Eddie Murphy, Rob Schneider, and Adam Sandler, all of whom act out regressive and neurotic behaviour manifesting in the use of male rape as punch lines in a variety of their films.¹⁰ A reason male rape can be used as punch line in the comedian comedy is because of the comic figure's manipulation of the fictional and extra-fictional world (the persona the comedian brings to the role), their inability to act within polite society, and their neurosis and regression that manifests in inappropriate sexuality.

This neurosis and regression point to a figure who cannot exist in civilised culture, an outside figure that is either an outlaw or a loner whose behaviour causes them to be rejected from society.¹¹ The conflict between the comic figure and the world they inhabit is narratively resolved either through individual evolution and cultural initiation, or the comic figure being ousted and unable to become a normal member of society.¹² This can be seen in the character of Ace Ventura who lives in a liminal space between animals and humans and because he cannot relinquish his eccentricity or affinity to animals he cannot assimilate into human society. In both conclusions there is a reaffirmation of the initial social order which Seidman argues "celebrate[s] what a culture values most" and is in line with a patriarchal family structure in Western society.¹³ The films resolve the central figure's conflict by reinforcing the social rules most comfortable for the culture for which the films are made. The marriage ceremony in *When Nature Calls* is ruined when the bride is discovered not to be a virgin, as Ace had previously had sex with her, causing him to be chased out of the village, demonstrating the great value marriage and female 'purity' has on society. The disconnect between the protagonist's personality and societal rules causes conflict and centralises the rules by depicting an uproar when they are broken. These films are often family films aimed at both adults and children, so by showing what deviation from social norms look like, they reinforce that which they transgress.

⁸ Seidman, p.7.

⁹ Seidman, p.7.

¹⁰ These include but are not limited to *Norbit* (Brian Robbins, 2007), *Big Stan* (Rob Schneider, 2007), *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls* (Steve Oedekerk, 1995), *That's My Boy* (Sean Anders, 2012), and *Little Nicky* (Steven Brill, 2000) as well as the case study films.

¹¹ Seidman, p.5.

¹² Seidman, p.64.

¹³ Seidman, p.157.

A similar tradition in film comedy is in the carnivalesque as comedy's required transgression can be seen as a liberating blow against the seriousness of social order and polite society.¹⁴ As discussed in the Introduction regarding transgression, Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque is particularly relevant in this section because of how it is rooted in a dogmatic hierarchical social order, subverted by folk humour.¹⁵ This is central to the type of comedy present in the films discussed in this chapter as disrupting the world order is how the protagonist expresses himself in the films explored. Bakhtin merges subversion with liberation as comic transgressions reverse a social order that prioritises an oppressive hierarchy, making it possible to ridicule oppressors and mock the system that favours them.¹⁶ He argues that this freedom from official truth is sanctioned and controlled by a hierarchy that is maintained before and after the transgression.¹⁷ Though Bakhtin acknowledges the return to social order, carnivalesque comedy is still seen as a liberation from rules instead of a way to reinforce them. Animal-on-male rape certainly subverts what is expected to appear in a family film, yet when male rape is presented as a liberating cause for celebration, it does not acknowledge rape representation as problematic in itself. In line with the Bakhtinian definition of the carnivalesque, the rapist is represented as the liberated oppressed and the act of rape is a justified punishment with positive outcomes. The social order in these films that is subverted through these representations cannot see rape as an oppressive act in itself hence its liberating potential. This shows how these films can fabricate a social order where male rape does not exist within a serious domain. The case studies will explore what social order is being subverted and how animal-on-male rape can be represented as liberating. This idea is present also in the comedian comedy, as Seidman states, the pleasure felt by the audience is in both the transgressions the comic figure performs and the reassertion of cultural values.¹⁸ The transgression is not only male rape, rather the vulnerability of the male body, something that is reasserted when the film ends.

The aesthetics of slapstick are evoked to reinforce the absurdity in representing the physical act of penetration and to obscure what rape looks like on screen. Writing on physicality in slapstick Muriel Andrin argues that slapstick bodies are elastic and therefore invulnerable so cannot be penetrated or die.¹⁹ However, they are not exempt from oral and anal penetration as those orifices seem to be as physically resilient as the rest of their immortal bodies. The examples in this chapter of animal

¹⁴ Film comedy studies also uses Bakhtin to explain a tradition of understanding film comedy. For example see Geoff King, *Film Comedy* (London: Wallflower Press, 2002).

¹⁵ Bakhtin, p.11.

¹⁶ Bakhtin, p.7.

¹⁷ Bakhtin, p.166.

¹⁸ Seidman, p.136.

¹⁹ Muriel Andrin, 'Back to the "Slap": Slapstick's Hyperbolic Gesture and the Rhetoric of Violence' in *Slapstick Comedy*, ed. by T. Paulus and R. King (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 226-235 (p.227).

on male rape in family films contain anal penetration, applying a tradition of anal and backside related humour based upon violence. Seen in another Bakhtinian concept of the grotesque, the principle is degradation, where the boundaries of the body are exaggerated to allow the 'low' of the earthly body to transcend boundaries.²⁰ Slapstick is also known as a 'lower' form of comedy with a propensity to enact violence on the backside.²¹ William Paul praises the vulgarity of the lower body stratum by exploring Charlie Chaplin's affinity to what Paul calls 'anality' in his comedy.²² Paul defines anality as a freedom to express physical drives of the body, especially the libido, and how these drives are repressed for the sake of society and civility.²³ Paul argues the grotesque is a freeing form of comedy because it lacks an agenda and does not reinforce certain behaviours, rather allows repressed behaviours to be expressed.²⁴ This is problematic as it assumes an unequivocal view of what is 'natural'. The gorilla in *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls* is sexually attracted to Cadby and therefore rapes him which results in the prevention of a slaughter. The gorilla's sexual instinct does not recognise consent as a 'natural' part of sexuality, reinforcing consent as a social constraint that apparently does not exist in the animal kingdom which is a wilful oversimplification of how mating functions in nature. The animals in these films both represent a 'natural' form of sexuality and are anthropomorphised allowing them to act as an idealism of what human sexuality could be. By degrading the man, the rape has a narrative and moral purpose in the film defeating the antagonist and undoing his negative impact, thus depicting rape as a way for good to triumph over evil. By representing rape as a natural part of sexuality and a justified punishment for bad behaviour, it is far from a neutral representation of sexuality. Comedian comedy uses transgression as a moral lesson, where the rapes have an agenda and therefore deviating from Bakhtin's and Paul's understanding of complete freedom. Viewing anality as uninhibited sexuality that rebels against a repressive society requires a universal understanding of what is natural and what is a social norm. Representing rape as narratively useful undermines the argument for liberation, as the purpose is not merely to represent uninhibited sexuality but for rape to function as a moral plot point.

4.2 Animals and Animality

When comedic male rape is visually represented to a family audience, animals are used as penetrating objects, therefore I will explore the use of animals in family film, what they represent, and how that is reflected in animalistic qualities of the human characters. Amy Ratelle writes about

²⁰ Bakhtin, p.19.

²¹ King p.26.

²² Paul (1991), pp.109-130.

²³ Paul (1991), p.127.

²⁴ Paul (1991), p.113.

connections between humans and animals in children's literature and film and argues that the representation of "the civilizing process that children go through has been mediated by the animal body".²⁵ In stories aimed at children, animals are used to facilitate teachings of values and ethics.²⁶ As animals are not required to follow the rules of human society they occupy a similar space as children, as 'blank-slates' for adults to impose their values upon.²⁷ The protagonist comic figure is regressive and can be thought of as a child in a man's body.²⁸ This along with children being likened to, and having an affinity towards fictional animals creates a bond between animals, children and the comic figure as they all occupy a space bordering but not integrated into the adult world. As animals have values imposed upon them, their represented behaviour becomes a lesson in civility.²⁹ Being unable to exist on par with humans, animals, children, and the comic figure are used as a teaching tool for moral codes. Visually representing animal on male rape in family film displays behaviours that children can (and should) identify with.

Animality is a term used to describe behaviour that resembles characteristics of animals and, in film, animalistic performance as well. Outside of comedy, animality can be seen as a negative otherness, condemning oppressed groups to be akin with animals thereby debasing them further.³⁰ The animal is a being that can be seen as primitive and uncivilised, something that humans transcend and that comedy exploits to demonstrate the ridiculousness that occurs when civility is absent.³¹ However, animality is often linked with intrinsic behaviour and used to describe desires and instincts that are inside humans which are untamed by social repression and therefore seen as freedom from this repression.³² In both instances animality lays claims to what is natural through marking certain behaviours and desires as innate. The celebration or degradation associated with these 'intrinsic' needs are based on the value placed upon them. The type of comedy described in this chapter celebrates breaking rules and conventions of civilised culture, making animality a desirable quality for protagonists. The films explored here extend the animality of the protagonists' into the bodies of animals to act out what the human body cannot. This disassociation between the protagonist as a rapist is necessary for visual representation, as the lack of acknowledgement that rape is occurring is key to why and how animal-on-male rape can exist in family film. The animals

²⁵ Amy Ratelle, *Animality and Children's Literature and Film* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.10.

²⁶ Ratelle, p.17.

²⁷ Ratelle, p.10.

²⁸ Seidman, p.100.

²⁹ Ratelle, p.17.

³⁰ Christopher Peterson, *Bestial Traces: Race, Sexuality, Animality* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), p.2.

³¹ Eco, pp.1-9.

³² Paul (1994) p.77.

Chapter 4

then, represent the protagonists' (and our) most innate desires, rectifying wrongs and punishing the wicked.

The gorilla who rapes Cadby in *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls* does so through apparent sexual desire, smiling and tilting his head, his body language suggests flirtation. In *Bruce Almighty* the penetrating monkey has no sexual desire and is rather a tool with no bodily agency of its own used merely to rectify a power imbalance. Though supposedly innate, representing the desires of libido and degradation in film are not spontaneous or instinctual as they are meticulously planned as film itself is a construct. Forming animalistic representations creates and maintains myths about what is natural and what is social, giving leeway to certain behaviours such as aggressive male sexuality. In *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls*, consent is represented as inconsequential as the desire for sex does not require it. The gorilla is unconcerned by the fear in the man's eyes and the simpler he lets out when the gorilla places his giant hands on his shoulders, with the result that consent is represented as a frivolous human rule that does not exist in nature. The desire to humiliate and punish others also manifests itself through animal-on-male rape, making it a versatile metaphor for claims to what is natural. Both punishment and libido are represented as natural urges that demonstrate a freedom from oppressive social structures. As Murial Andrin argues, our pleasure in comedy comes from our innate desire to humiliate others.³³ Humiliating the greedy man who wants to destroy villages for his personal gain and who displays the heads of his hunting kills on his walls is a form of liberation for the animals and what they represent in the film. As animal on male rape is represented as a freeing act that liberates someone from a repressive social order we must ask who the rapists are, how animals can free us from certain ethical concerns, and how rape can come to symbolise an event to celebrate.

Through the central comic figure, comedy becomes a liberating blow against a rigid social order by punishing the serious and oppressive antagonist. As this is done by an animal raping a man, the animal is an extension of the protagonist's animality so despite the animal being the penetrator, the hero's desire is the reason the rape occurs. This desire is a convoluted mixture of unfettered sexuality, humiliation and punishment. These desires are represented as an intrinsic part of humanity, making claims to what is natural, and represents rape as a desire in us all to conquer others. In the context of comedy, the rape is visually distant from the hero's body yet is part of his narrative so to explore what the rapes mean, I will now look at what the rapist gains from the rape, exploring how one can simultaneously be the hero and the rapist.

³³ Andrin, p.227.

4.3 The Heroic Rapist

Representations of rape are often conflated with power relations, narratively making it an effective tool to subvert or reassert a hierarchy. This section will discuss the hero as rapist in narrative and representation in addition to the way animals influence these representations. As mentioned in the introduction chapter the majority of analysis of rape and its representations focus on male-on-female rape and similarly how the heroic rapist functions in narrative. Greek myths contain several stories about Gods transforming into animals to enact rape, setting up a tradition of using animals as penetrative objects in rape stories.³⁴ These myths explore the links between heroic rape narrative, animal sexuality and Gods which contemporary family film remodifies for the 21st Century. In ancient tales, Gods had natural superiority which deserved subordination, but in contemporary narrative the hero is represented as oppressed, an underdog the audience can identify with. The hero's domination over someone else is still justified but under the veil of rectifying a wrong, overall heroic rape is represented in this chapter as a way to punish someone. The justification of this punishment is done through representing the protagonist as oppressed and rape itself becomes reattribution.

The heroic rapist has been described as a man who is entitled to a woman's body as a prize because of his heroism.³⁵ As Susan Brownmiller argues "as man conquers the world, so too he conquers the female".³⁶ Brownmiller looks to myths to argue that systematic ownership of women is narratively upheld using stories of women as prizes for a heroic man to 'win'.³⁷ Narratives where women are accessories to men lack acknowledgement of and are dismissive of female sexual agency. Furthering this point, Scott Nelson argues how in heroic rapist myths women are not in control of their own destiny or narratives but can only enhance or be detrimental to a man's status based upon her sexuality.³⁸ The heroic rapist narrative sets up a value system where the one raped is powerless and deserving while the rapist is justified and in control. Froma Zeitlin argues that Greek myth naturalises male-on-female rape by men by invoking "the prestigious authority of their entire culture to try to persuade us of the way things are and have always been", reinstating a patriarchal

³⁴ Most famously Zeus transforming into a swan and raping Europa. See J.E. Robson, 'Bestiality and Bestial Rape in Greek Myth' in *Rape in Antiquity: Sexual Violence in Greek and Roman Worlds*, ed. by Susan Deacy and Karen F. Pierce (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co, 1997), pp.65-96.

³⁵ Brownmiller, p.320.

³⁶ Brownmiller, p.320.

³⁷ Brownmiller, p.376.

³⁸ Scott Nelson, 'Against their Will: Deconstructing the Myth of the Heroic Rapist in Ariosto's Orlando Furioso and Machiavelli's La Mandragola', *Gender/Sexuality/Italy*, No. 1 (2014) .<<http://www.gendersexualityitaly.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Nelson-Against-their-Will.pdf>> [accessed 26 May 2016].

dominance of men over women.³⁹ In contemporary Hollywood family films where animals rape men, this is extended and rape becomes a metaphor for other 'natural' states of being. Returning to the example of *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls*, the man who was raped (Cadby) was a hunter of exotic animals who displayed his taxidermied and mounted heads of his prey around his mansion. His desire to conquer nature by killing animals is seen by Ace as an imbalance of wealth and power, rectified by rape. The narrative of the film is reflective of colonialism as Cadby is a white man exploiting Africa and its peoples and animals. The 'natural' state of affairs is then put into place recreating a balanced environment between animals and humans and the two tribes who were set out for civil war. The defeat of the antagonist by rape becomes a metaphor for rectifying the unnatural practices he was engaging in and bringing peace to tribal cultures giving balance to the environment and society.

J.E. Robson argues that the narrative function of animal on female rape in myths is to control women's sexual agency and their movement.⁴⁰ As women and girls were seen as more primitive than men and Gods, their sexuality was likened to animal sexuality and there was a social responsibility to 'tame' it.⁴¹ In some myths Gods transformed into animals to commit rape to show the connection between female and animal sexuality. 'Taming' female sexuality was narratively done firstly by having the victims of rape be women who travelled outside of the city and away from their family to make sure women did not travel from their fathers/husbands. Secondly, if she over-enjoyed the rape or resisted too much, negative consequences would befall her, such as an unwanted physical metamorphosis.⁴² Submission was the ideal and resulted in positive consequences such as the tale of Helena and Zeus who raped her in the guise of a swan, and her submission made her children then become heroes and she was integrated back into society, rather than being an outcast.⁴³ Myths involving animals who raped women did so to make narratives that ensured the continuation of a specific kind of society where men were superior to women. The role of women in society was to bear healthy offspring, and to uphold men and women's relationships with the Gods.⁴⁴ Gods were symbols of civilisation so stories where they changed into animals to rape was because animal sexuality was seen to be closer to women's sexuality. Animals, then also connote a natural 'lesser' status of sexuality which is transferred to those raped by them. The rape of Ganymede by Zeus shows how this 'lesser' state relates to male rape as it shares a similar power

³⁹ Froma Zeitlin, 'Configurations of Rape in Greek Myth' in *Rape*, ed. by Sylvana Tomaselli and Roy Porter (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp.112-151 (p.123).

⁴⁰ Robson, p.76.

⁴¹ Robson, p.75.

⁴² Such as Asteria resisting Zeus and is consequently metamorphosed into the island Delos. Robson, p.76.

⁴³ Robson, p.78.

⁴⁴ Robson, p.90.

relationship that existed between boys and older men.⁴⁵ Ganymede is given the gift of immortality for his submission, which Andrew Calimach argues parallels boys in Cretan society who, by sexually submitting to older men, gain social standing.⁴⁶

These narratives are about male control of those with less social power than others, mainly women. Rape was sometimes excused by libido or anger but control and power are the common theme in these ancient tales and in the narratives of the contemporary comedy films with animal on male rape in them. The common understanding of the reason for rape is power, which is not deviated from these examples. The comic figure's personality and masculinity are seen as deviations from normality both identifying him as outcast and hero. Ace is described as a 'sissy girl' by the Wachutu tribe when he is trying to fight, undermining and minimising his masculinity. Despite Ace being the protagonist he is painted as the 'underdog', the one who the world rejected and forgot. Ace is white, American and travels through and exploits all cultures, yet gains empathy for being a loner comic figure with likenesses to animals and children. The rape in *When Nature Calls* allows him to regain a masculinity he has lost and believes he is owed. I argue that in my case studies the male comedian feels victimized because of his status, perverting privilege to appear as oppression.

4.4 How does masculinity fit into all this?

The animal acts as a substitute for the penis, becoming the representational phallus of the protagonist as he cannot show his penis. The penis is rarely seen in contemporary Hollywood films, which Gwendolyn Foster explores as deriving from a variety of reasons, including a reluctance to accept female fetisization of male bodies.⁴⁷ In addition, Foster calls male nudity a taboo because it is seen as subversive and therefore "invested in a power that is thought to be dangerous and is thus marginalized".⁴⁸ Peter Lehman argues that withholding visual representations of the penis adds to its power by not acknowledging any negative conceptualisation of it.⁴⁹ If the penis is exposed then it can be deconstructed. This is detrimental to patriarchy as it examines what exactly is powerful/powerless about it.⁵⁰ The phallus however is infallible and is both synonymous with power and masculinity. The animal as phallus allows a visual manifestation of phallic power as invincible,

⁴⁵ Andrew Calimach, 'The Exquisite Corpse of Ganymede: A Cursory Overview of an Ancient Gender Studies Discourse', *Thymos: Journal of Boyhood Studies*, 1:2 (2007), 117-137.

⁴⁶ Calimach, p.123-124.

⁴⁷ Gwendolyn Audrey Foster, 'No Male Frontal Nudity: The Denial of Female Fetishism in Hollywood Cinema', *The Mid-Atlantic Almanac: The Journal of the Mid-Atlantic Popular/American Culture Association*, 1994 (4) 32-42, p.33.

⁴⁸ Foster, p.36.

⁴⁹ Peter Lehman *Running Scared: Masculinity and the Representation of the Male Body* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007), p.5.

⁵⁰ Lehman, p.5.

reflecting its endurance and durability. This is especially present in comedy as the animal is as resolute as the comic figure's slapstick body. By representing the phallus as indestructible a patriarchal social structure that synonymises masculinity with power is upheld. The ability to impose power by non-consensual penetration naturalises and values sexual aggression as a masculine pursuit. The comic figure is not as hyper-masculine as other Hollywood character types, such as the cowboy or action hero, however, their power is still located in the commonality of the phallus, making it a significant focal point suggesting that despite variations of masculinity, an undercurrent of phallic power remains.⁵¹

Scott Balcerzak sees the comic figure's conflict with social orders as an othering process that differentiates them from stars of other genres that display a more traditional hegemonic masculinity.⁵² The social significance of the comic figure comes from their ability to act out exaggerated metaphors for audience's fears, for example the threat of losing dignity by slipping on a banana.⁵³ Balcerzak argues that the comic figure "proves transgressive in its execution, exposing the fragilities of the phallic structures often defining masculine dominance" by undermining stereotypical masculinity.⁵⁴ Though the comic figure can expose the phallus as a construct, the use of rape as an affirming act centralises phallic power. Rape is used as a significant part of narrative and character development serving to reassert phallic masculinity. Despite the potential for undermining and expanding a hegemonic Hollywood masculinity, the animal phallus confirms the significance of using the phallus to dominate. The gorilla in *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls* is a powerful presence on screen, that, when representing phallic power, has its size as an advantage.

4.5 Family Film as Context

Family films have the widest audience base by targeting both children and adults and are the most commercially successful category of film.⁵⁵ Both *Bruce Almighty* and *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* had an international release and were some of the most profitable films of their release years, being more financially successful than other hotly anticipated family films such as *Elf* (Jon Favreau, 2003)

⁵¹ Scott Balcerzak, *Buffoon Men: Classical Hollywood Comedians and Queered Masculinity* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2013), p.5.

⁵² Balcerzak, p.5.

⁵³ Balcerzak, p.12.

⁵⁴ Balcerzak, p.20.

⁵⁵ Brown (2012), pp.1 and 14. Peter Kramer looks at the statistics of the history of film going and argues that *Airport* (George Seaton and Henry Hathaway, 1970) became "the model for a new kind of big-budget family entertainment" (p.66) which grew a new market for family film from then on. Peter Kramer, *The New Hollywood: From Bonnie and Clyde to Star Wars* (London: Wallflower, 2005).

and *Chicken Run* (Peter Lord and Nick Park, 2000).⁵⁶ Noel Brown argues that family films transcend genre and cultural barriers, which makes them the most commercially-successful mode of production in the world.⁵⁷ There is a focus on comfort and nostalgia that attracts all ages and the films are tested and/or known to be morally suitable for a broad demographic appeal.⁵⁸ Though the family film continually adapts to the morality of the changing audience, according to Brown, some formal characteristics are constant, such as the American dream and the avoidance of potentially offensive material.⁵⁹ Pleasing the broadest demographic possible with non-offensive material shows how broadly accepted male rape representation in family film is. It also shows that the North American values that Hollywood family entertainment reflect are widely accepted across other nations.⁶⁰ Financial success is not the only factor that determines reception of a film, especially since it does not reflect any moral objections audiences may have. Reviews and parents' guides give an overview of the reception these films received which will be explored in the case studies.

This chapter has so far set up the protagonist as heroic rapist and the animal as the vehicle for rape. The comedian comedy genre frames the comic figure's hyperbole and affinity to animals making it the main context of how comedic male rape is represented in the following films. The case studies that follow explore different visual representations of animal on male rape. Both feature anal penetration of the antagonist by an animal acting as the protagonists' representational phallus, all played for laughs. The specific ideologies that these representations broach will be explored to find not only what male rape can look like but also what it can mean and how these underlying meanings are conveyed to its family audience. The chapter will then be concluded, summarising how *Bruce Almighty* and *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* reflect a culture that does not find comedic male rape representation problematic or controversial.

4.6 *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* (Peter Segal, 2000) Case Study

This case study will firstly explore the background of *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps*, then analyse the rape scene in the film, and finally explore the broader context and reception of the scene and film. I will use the initial background of the film to introduce the themes of sexuality, Eddie Murphy

⁵⁶ 'Yearly Box Office: 2000 Domestic Grosses', *Box Office Mojo*, <<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/yearly/chart/?yr=2000&p=.htm>> [accessed 19 September 2016]. 'Yearly Box Office: 2003 Domestic Grosses', *Box Office Mojo*, <<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/yearly/chart/?yr=2003&p=.htm>> [accessed 19 September 2016].

⁵⁷ Brown (2012), p.1.

⁵⁸ Brown (2012), p.8.

⁵⁹ Noel Brown, 'The "Family" Film and the Tensions between Popular and Academic Interpretations of Genre', *Trespassing Journal: an online journal of trespassing art, science, and philosophy*, 2 (2013), 22-35 (p.29).

⁶⁰ Brown, 2012, p.4.

as a comic figure and some reception of the film. The scene analysis will consider the comedic representation of a man being raped by an animal in a family film and how male rape is specifically aimed at family audiences. This will explore the comedy context as a significant factor that frames an otherwise controversial representation. By decoding representations of problematic sexuality, the scene analysis will delve into what is happening in this rape scene. The context of the film establishes how the scene is interpreted and located within broader social concerns, seen in parental guides outlining appropriateness of events.

In 1996 a film adaptation of the novella *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* titled *Mary Reilly* (Stephen Frears, 1996) flopped at the box office and attained disappointing reviews. The same year a comedy film with narrative and character foundations in the same book topped the weekend chart.⁶¹ The box office disappointment *Mary Reilly* was criticised in a review for lacking in genre definition and this being seen as an explanation for its poor performance.⁶² The success of *The Nutty Professor* (Tom Shadyac, 1996) however, starring Eddie Murphy, is solidly based in the comedy genre targeted at a family audience. The successful *The Nutty Professor* sparked a sequel four years later with similar financial success. *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* also stars Murphy as the Jekyll/Hyde characters of Professor Sherman Klump and Buddy Love. When analysing Jekyll/Hyde adaptations, Cynthia Baron suggests *Mary Reilly* was one of the last in a resurgence of big budget 19th century novel adaptations of the 1990s due to its bad reviews, specifically targeting John Malkovich's problematic performance of Jekyll/Hyde as libido-crazed and psychosexual.⁶³ Performance criticism was not a problem in the Nutty Professor films, as Murphy was praised for his versatile performance not only of Sherman Klump and Buddy Love but as several members of the Klump family, disguised in various fat suits, also with sexualities that could be described as libido-crazed and psychosexual. The genre and style of storytelling varies significantly between these films yet the story remained and was adapted out of the dark underworld of Victorian London to the sphere of American light family entertainment.

In a review of *Mary Reilly* for *Sight and Sound* magazine Chris Savage King suggests the main theme of the Jekyll/Hyde character in *Mary Reilly* is interior psychodrama and sexual repression, which is

⁶¹ 'Weekend Box Office: June 28-30, 1996', *Box Office Mojo*, <<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/weekend/chart/?yr=1996&wknd=26&p=.htm>> [accessed 18 May 2016]. 'Mary Reilly', *Box Office Mojo*, <<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=maryreilly.htm>> [accessed 18 May 2016].

⁶² Chris Savage King, 'Mary Reilly', *Sight and Sound*, 6:5, 1 May 1999, p.55 <<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1305509013/fulltext/7705346ED3134D13PQ/1?accountid=13963>> [accessed 20 May 2016].

⁶³ Cynthia Baron, 'From Tormented Genius to Sexual Adventurer: Stars and Masculinity in the Jekyll and Hyde Films', in *Contemporary Hollywood Stardom*, ed. by Martin Barker and Thomas Austin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp.215-228 (p.223).

paralleled in the Nutty Professor films.⁶⁴ This theme of personal conflict due to libidinous desire manifests itself as the Jekyll/Hyde character, especially in *The Klumps*, representing sexuality as the battle between good and evil and the duality of man. The sexuality that is repressed is represented in the form of natural, uncontrollable and universal urges. The sexuality in these films is represented through a single male character, who Baron argues in the case of Jekyll/Hyde has its conflict between brutish and intellectual masculinity.⁶⁵ This is evident in *The Klumps* as Sherman Klump is a professor obsessed with knowledge and his alter-ego, Buddy Love, is a hedonist whose narrative aim is to steal Sherman's youth formula to become rich. Both *The Klumps* and *Mary Reilly* suggest an implicit narrative about men's 'natural' sexual aggression manifesting in two characters occupying the same body. Baron describes John Malkovich's performance as Jekyll/Hyde in *Mary Reilly* as giving "full expression to the idea that masculinity finds its true manifestation in threatening, destructive behaviour".⁶⁶ This specifically references the drama genre, though destructive behaviour is a cornerstone in the hyperbole and slapstick of comedy and prevalent in Buddy Love's character. The linking of hedonism, destructive masculinity, and sexuality make both films contain problematic sexual material, evidenced in my focus scene in *The Klumps* where a giant genetically-mutated hamster anally rapes a man.

Nutty Professor 2: The Klumps is about a scientist, Professor Sherman Klump, whose attempts to woo a fellow colleague Denise (Janet Jackson) are interrupted by his sex-crazed alter-ego Buddy Love. To solve this problem Sherman extracts part of his DNA that he has isolated as Buddy, however, when this is later mixed with DNA from a dog hair Buddy is reborn in the flesh. At the same time Sherman must prepare to display the youth formula he has made at an event for investors that the Dean of the University, Dean Richmond (Larry Miller), has organised. As Buddy has been extracted from Sherman this unfettered libido leaves him but his intelligence also begins to fade. Sherman stores the formula with his family, where Buddy steals it in order to sell it, but not before mixing the remainder with fertiliser, thereby tainting the formula. Fertiliser itself is suggestive of growth and becoming in plants and nature and has the same etymology as to fertilise through sexual contact, hence linking nature and sex throughout the film. The rape scene is a tangent where the antagonist from the first Nutty Professor film, Dean Richmond, is punished for his greed at the failed investors' event as he is raped by a hamster given the tainted youth formula. When Sherman and Buddy are finally reunited Sherman regains his intelligence and Buddy's libido, making the point that 'we all have a little Buddy Love inside us'. In other words, we cannot hide

⁶⁴ Chris Savage King, p.55.

⁶⁵ Baron, p.216.

⁶⁶ Baron p.224.

from our innate sexuality without giving up who we are. Innate sexuality is aligned with rape in this film and is the factor that makes this film of interest here.

Eddie Murphy's career as a comedian is significant to how the film represents and frames the rape scene as the sexualities represented in the film are directly related to repression and expression embodied by Murphy's performance. Murphy's famed stand-up tour *Eddie Murphy Raw* in 1987 demonstrated his attempts to deflect his fears about his own emasculation by being misogynistic and homophobic.⁶⁷ These fears continue through his film career, making masculinity and fear of losing it a key theme for his extra-fictional persona.⁶⁸ *The Nutty Professor* jump started Murphy's transition to family films, as he could be both his crude and family-friendly self. As Charles Taylor puts it, with his alter-ego, "Murphy's Buddy Love was his worst nightmare of himself: a loud-mouthed narcissist, Love was almost an exaggerated version of the persona that made Murphy a star".⁶⁹ In the Nutty Professor films Murphy begins to address a family audience and there is a clear transition towards acting in family films such as *Dr Dolittle* (Betty Thomas, 1998), *Shrek* (Andrew Adamson and Vicky Jenson, 2001) and *Daddy Day Care* (Steve Carr, 2003). A comedian protagonist who fights against himself, quite literally in the Nutty Professors, falls within the comedian comedy genre.⁷⁰ This comic figure is extra-fictional as he is a recognisable performer who acknowledges the narrative world as fictional.⁷¹ Murphy, playing most of the main characters in the film, is narratively in control and self-referential by playing almost a parody of himself. The recurring formal elements Seidman identifies in comedian comedies are neurosis (identity confusion) and regression (childishness), both central to the Nutty Professor films.⁷² This is not just evident in the Jekyll/Hyde (Sherman/Buddy) characters Murphy plays as his inner conflict is projected into other elements of the films. Sherman's affinity to hamsters can be seen through subjecting them and himself to his experiments, mirroring his own concerns about weight loss and intelligence, narratively functioning as an extension of himself. Buddy is Sherman's repressed sexuality and like him, the hamster is a representational phallus as it extends Sherman's body to act out the repressed desires his body cannot. Through this case study I will explore rape represented as a natural part of the male libido, displacement of the phallus, and how comedy and rape can merge.

⁶⁷ Herman Beavers, "'The Cool Pose': Intersectionality, Masculinity, and Quiescence in the Comedy and Films of Richard Pryor and Eddie Murphy', in Harry Stecopoulos and Michael Uebel (eds), *Race and the Subject of Masculinities* (London: Duke University Press, 1997), pp.253-258 (p.264).

⁶⁸ Beavers, "'The Cool Pose'", p.264.

⁶⁹ Charles Taylor, 'Nutty Professor II: The Klumps', *Sight and Sound*, 10:11, Nov. 2000, 59-60, (p.59).

⁷⁰ Seidman, p. 6.

⁷¹ Seidman, p.8.

⁷² Seidman, p.82.

4.6.1 Scene Analysis

The rape scene begins with Sherman Klump presenting his newly invented youth formula in front of a crowd and television cameras broadcasting live. He demonstrates the formula by giving it to Petey, an aged hamster, successfully making him young again and consequentially lustful. Youth and libido are linked throughout the film assuming a biology that suggests lust, youth and sexual aggression are synonymous and an ideal. The young Petey immediately starts ‘humping’ a female hamster, Molly, who is in the same cage, to the embarrassment of Sherman who excuses the behaviour by saying ‘hamsters will be hamsters’, amusing the crowd. Buddy Love’s previous tampering with the youth formula by adding fertiliser causes Petey to grow into a towering monster which the crowd and Molly run away from. Dean Richmond, Sherman’s boss and adversary, stays in his front row chair shouting to the security guard to ‘shoot him’ but Petey bends over and fires faeces incapacitating the security guard. In fear, Dean Richmond covers himself in a fur coat owned by the woman who was sitting beside him and attempts to crawl away. In an act of mistaken identity, Petey visibly calms down and bats flirtatious lashes at the Dean anticipating an attraction. The Dean looks back and as he grasps the situation and says “I’m not that kind of guuuuuuuuy”. The last word is elongated and shouted as it is clear he is being penetrated at this point. The scene ends with a cut to the Klump family’s reactions as they watch it live on television. This is a loaded scene, so I will focus separately on the fur coat, Sherman’s ‘hamsters will be hamsters’ comment, the ‘I’m not that kind of guy’ quote and the Klump family’s reactions.



Image 15 *Nutty Professor 2: The Klumps* (Peter Segal, 2000) screenshot



Image 16 *Nutty Professor 2: The Klumps* (Peter Segal, 2000) screenshot



Image 17 *Nutty Professor 2: The Klumps* (Peter Segal, 2000) screenshot

'I'm not that kind of guy' leads us to ask what 'kind of guy' enjoys anal penetration by a giant genetically-mutated hamster, as this is what we are essentially seeing. As the specificity of this act is truly unbelievable, it suggests that all anal penetration is what *that* kind of guy enjoys, no matter who or what the penetrator is. Not being 'that kind of guy' can be seen as a coded response to suggest homosexuality, assuming the audience presupposes a link between anal penetration and homosexuality. Joe Wlodarz suggests all male on male rape is represented as homosexual because anal penetration is symbolically coded as homosexual.⁷³ Therefore when the Dean is anally penetrated, despite the penetrator being a hamster, the anality implies homosexuality. Coding like this is a common form of marginalising homosexuality by perpetuating stereotypes and misinformation.⁷⁴ This sets up a catch-22 where if a man is raped he is immediately coded as

⁷³ Wlodarz, p.68.

⁷⁴ Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies*, revised edition (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), p.153 .

homosexual. However, the scene goes further in marginalizing homosexuality by using a hamster as the representational phallus. The hamster is a significant animal in this context both because of its affinity to Sherman, as hamsters mirror his narrative progression in both films (such as his weight-loss formula from *The Nutty Professor*) and because of its links to jokes about gay male practices. Christie Davies in *Jokes and Targets* makes note of a thriving joke in the 1980s and 1990s America involving a “gay man inserting a declawed gerbil into the rectum”, made into popular culture and urban legend by the myth that actor Richard Gere engaged in this practice.⁷⁵ Both hamsters and gerbils are comparably sized rodents that have similar connotations in this context. The dialogue of ‘I’m not that kind of guy’ in this scene correlates unusual/downright impossible sexual practices to myths about homosexuality as a synonym for transgressive sexuality. Michael Scarce argues that a pervasive myth in narrative film is that only gay men are raped as “men who are raped are not ‘real men’, men who are raped become gay and gay men both desire and enjoy being raped”.⁷⁶ This creates a paradox where male rape does not exist because the ‘enjoyment’ of it would negate the existence of rape. It also feeds into the idea that being penetrated is a passive position and subsequently feminine because of it, while the penetrator still acts as the ‘dominant’ and therefore manly participant. The paradox determines gay men as both the only victims of male rape and simultaneously nullifies the existence of male rape, taking away culpability. This idea is played upon in the film as Dean Richmond’s quote denies homosexuality but in the final scene of the film *Petey*, who has shrunk back to normal size, winks at the Dean who blushes with flattery as the Dean then feels a fondness towards his rapist. The Dean’s affection for *Petey* post-rape supports Scarce’s argument but goes further to demonise homosexuality by inextricably linking it to bestial practices.

While it is suggested that this act is a homosexual practice, *Petey* is purposefully established as a heterosexual hamster. By placing Molly in the same cage as *Petey* with no intent of giving her the youth formula, her sole purpose in the film is to exemplify *Petey*’s sexuality by having her as an object for his libidinous desires. After *Petey*’s transformation Dean Richmond hides under the poorly chosen, hamster-resembling disguise of a woman’s fur coat, becoming a substitute for the female hamster. The Dean crawls away, as Molly does, but he cannot escape as *Petey* now obviously does not recognise him as the man who just called for him to be shot, rather as a more appropriately sized hamster for the now massive *Petey*. The fur coat could be seen as a form of inter-species cross-dressing since the Dean is no longer seen as human and is wearing a woman’s coat and becomes a sexual object for the heterosexual hamster, crossing gender boundaries as well as

⁷⁵ Christie Davies, *Jokes and Targets* (Bloomington, U.S: Indiana University Press, 2011), p.169.

⁷⁶ Scarce, p.120.

species. Petey is not indiscriminate in choosing a partner as the Dean was not a sexual candidate before he resembled an (implicitly female) hamster, by wearing a woman's fur coat. The correlation that aligns Petey with heterosexuality and the Dean with homosexuality is grounded in the concept that gender and identity are coupled with the roles of penetrator and penetrated. The penetrated male, Wlodarz argues, becomes homosexual as he is representative of the male sexual 'other', as being penetrated does not align with stereotypical straight masculinity.⁷⁷ In representations of male on male rape Wlodarz correlates the penetrator as heterosexual and the penetrated as homosexual because of the gendered assumptions about sexual roles.⁷⁸ *The Klumps* suggests homosexuality in the penetrated position not only through the role of penetrated but solidifies this concept with the dialogue and the choice of animal.

Another part of the dialogue that exemplifies problematic representations of sexuality is Sherman's comment that 'hamsters will be hamsters'. Petey's surge of sexuality brings the discussion to what is considered natural sexual behaviour, as a young hamster Petey is a seemingly uncontrollable sexual presence. The line is a play on the classic 'boys will be boys', a saying used in contemporary culture to justify behaviour as a natural part of being male. This saying originated in the Latin proverb 'children are children and do childish things' yet has been adapted to refer to solely male behaviour.⁷⁹ It is specifically used in this context to reiterate excuses for committing rape which are used to justify and naturalise male sexual aggression.⁸⁰ In *The Klumps* Petey's sexuality is youthful, uncontrollable, and unconcerned with consent which implies his actions are a natural part of male sexual desire. As a hamster, Petey embodies another claim to what is natural as he does not need to abide by the same human codes that restrict Sherman's sexuality. Being an animal puts Petey in a unique position to distance his actions from what an audience might understand as rape and place it within the idea of mating or mindless humping. Simultaneously this suggests that human male sexuality is animalistic, again linking sexual aggression to natural male behaviour. The film aligns the libido with a lack of consent and claims that consent is a manufactured, social concept, one which the film celebrates transgressing. This part of dialogue confirms the film's assertion that there is a link between a natural, intrinsic sexuality, and rape.

It is not just this scene that exemplifies that consent is opposed to instinctual sexuality, as Sherman's constant obligation to repress his sexuality is the cornerstone of his conflict with his

⁷⁷ Wlodarz, p.68.

⁷⁸ Wlodarz, p.72.

⁷⁹ Christine Ammer, *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms*, Second Edition (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), p.52.

⁸⁰ Karen G. Weiss, 'Boys Will Be Boys and Other Gendered Accounts: An Exploration of Victims' Excuses and Justifications for Unwanted Sexual Contact and Coercion', *Violence Against Women*, 15:7 (2009), 810-834, (p.811).

alter-ego Buddy Love, whom he spends two films battling. *The Klumps* takes a psychoanalytical point of view as it explains that the impulses exemplified in Buddy Love's behaviour are innate and instinctive, the film itself looking to Freud, presupposing its own interpretation and analysis. In the opening scene of *The Klumps* Sherman describes a nightmare of his to a therapist where Sherman is marrying his love interest Denise, when Buddy, headfirst, appears from Sherman's crotch, climbing through his fly, picking up the fainted Denise and essentially stealing her away from him. The therapist explains that Buddy Love is the separated notion of the id, free from moral and social consequence. It is repeated throughout the film that there is 'a little bit of Buddy Love' inside us all, as an inherent resistance to repressive civilisation. Inseparable from the libido, Buddy Love represents all of our deepest, most repressed but purest desires. Petey is similar to Buddy in the sense that he does not understand repression and only acts on impulse, the same impulse that Sherman represses. The main narrative charge is the balance between the serious and the comic, the repressed and expressed. Mikhail Bakhtin argues that comedy requires rules because deviation from them are what makes comedy; social order must be broken and reinstated as comedy would not be able to exist without the breaking of rules.⁸¹ The narrative drive in *The Klumps* is the comic transgression from the repressed as Buddy Love is born from Sherman's repression. Many film comedy theories around transgression have roots in Bakhtin's carnivalesque theory where Bakhtin argues that this is liberation and freedom from dogmatic social order and celebrates the expression of earthly wants and needs.⁸² The rape scene in *The Klumps* is a prime example of such comic transgression, enforcing the idea that to celebrate unfettered male sexuality there must be dominance over a usually oppressive figure. The Dean of the university has a straight-laced and domineering personality in both Nutty Professor films and he often threatens Sherman with joblessness. Despite not being his direct enemy, he represents the rigidity of the rules of the world Sherman inhabits that he simply cannot follow.

Having analysed the significance of the fur coat and the lines of dialogue, the final point of contention I will discuss in the scene is the perception of the rape from the Klump family. During the focus scene, the Klump family is watching a live televised broadcast of the event, not only providing us with reactions to the event but also mirroring the family audience who could be watching the film at home. Their comments provide comic interludes informing viewers what is unfolding from the perspective of *this* audience, allowing us to mirror their reactions. Granny Klump says "that man ain't never gonna be right again" and "something like that'll ruin a man". Both quotes suggest that the rape will cause his masculinity to be permanently damaged and is

⁸¹ Bakhtin, p.166.

⁸² Bakhtin, p.166.

consequently the worst part of the experience. Some studies that explore representations of rape argue that the narrative in media perpetuates myths around male rape such as deservedness, homosexuality, and immediate and continual loss of masculinity.⁸³ This scene does all of these things and reaffirms perhaps the biggest myth of all, that male rape is inherently funny. The Klumps are there to represent a certain family archetype, representing the diversity that might be expected in a contemporary extended and intergenerational family unit while exemplifying the strength and unity of such a family. With the mother, father, uncle, teenage son, grandmother and grandmother's boyfriend all sitting in front of the television, the family represents 'normality' in contemporary family life. As Noel Brown argues family entertainment is a brand name for North American values and as such is reflective of its audience, at least in terms of ideals.⁸⁴ Being representative of the audience is essential for family films as a genre because the films are "characterized by their relationship with audiences" as when the family changes, so does the genre.⁸⁵ The Klumps are African American, and though the audience is presumably made up of a variety of races, it does not seem to be a barrier for identification. African American characters can be seen to be "racially defused" by intersecting with other classifications such as being middle class, or in *The Klumps* case, having a genius for a son.⁸⁶ Hannah Hamad identifies a succession of films post-2000 starring Eddie Murphy that create non-threatening characters through positioning Eddie Murphy in a middle-class family entertainment environment.⁸⁷ Reflecting universal family values through the Klump family begins to relocate Murphy as a family entertainer. *The Nutty Professor*, as one of his first PG-13 rated films kick-started his transition from films aimed at teen and adult audiences to family audiences. Charles Taylor describes Murphy's representation of the Klump family as an "heir to a tradition in African-American comedy of loving, observant humour about family life that never turns homiletic".⁸⁸ Murphy relies upon this familial comic tradition without drawing upon more negative racial stereotypes such as fatherlessness in African-American families thereby creating a non-threatening way of representing African-American families in the context of the family film.⁸⁹ The Klumps family is not only accessible to racially diverse audiences, but they also reflect a sensibility about the rape of Dean Richmond that is 'universal'.

⁸³ Eigenberg and Baro, pp.56-89; Bufkin and Eschholz, pp.1317-1344; Jessica A. Turchik and Katie M. Edwards, 'Myths About Male Rape: A Literature Review', *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, 13:2 (2012), 211-226.

⁸⁴ Brown (2012), p.4.

⁸⁵ Brown (2013), p.24.

⁸⁶ Hamad, p.124.

⁸⁷ Hamad, p.124.

⁸⁸ Taylor, p.60.

⁸⁹ Hamad, p.124.

The rape scene itself is not the end of the film's comic treatment of male rape as each subsequent appearance of the Dean makes reference to it, perpetuating the idea that it is not an insular event but will continue to affect him. Dean Richmond, furious about both the rape and the financial failure of the youth formula fires Sherman. The Dean's trauma is veiled in comedy as he explains his new legacy after the rape, encapsulated by the story of a young boy seeing him and saying to his mother 'look mommy, there goes the hamster's bitch'. The story serves two purposes, firstly as it suggests that being raped is to be feminised and secondly makes it clear that children have knowledge of the Dean's rape and make the connection between being raped and being a 'bitch'. The terminology synonymises being placed in a submissive sexual position with derogatory understandings about women. Ann Cahill argues that the implicit womanizing of men who are raped is fundamental to the shame attached to it.⁹⁰ Though Cahill is referencing male on male rape here, *The Klumps* uses the dialogue to demonise not just homosexuality, as it does in the rape scene, but furthers the sexual 'othering' of the Dean by feminising him in this later scene. The phrase is also in reference to the commonly known prison slang where 'bitch' is used to mean the subservient man (often in a forced sexual relationship). The Dean was called 'the hamster's bitch' by a young boy, undermining the potential argument that children would not understand that they have witnessed a rape. The audience is explicitly told through this and the Klump family reactions not just what they have seen but what the universal response is. As Dean Richmond tells this story of his encounter with the young boy he turns away from the camera, revealing the back of his suit which has huge gashes ripped all over, another punchline showcasing the violence of the rape. As said by many scholars, shame and stigma are the key components that drive male rape narrative.⁹¹ By having witnesses of the event from the live televised broadcast and us as an audience, public humiliation is a necessary aspect of the Dean's anger and trauma. The shredded remains of the back of Dean Richmond's suit serve as a reminder that his victimisation will follow him always. This is reinforced again by the Dean being unable to sit down due to the pain and when he comments to Sherman that he will not leave his side until the youth formula and money is found, 'I'm gonna be on you like a giant hamster on my a-'. He stops himself before he can say 'ass' as he is shamed yet cannot help but bring it up. Having analysed the scene in detail the context of the film explores the depth of understanding drawn from the rape and latter scenes.

⁹⁰ Cahill, p.45.

⁹¹ For example see Scarce, Wlodarz, Cahill and Angela Farmer, 'The Worst Fate: Male Rape as Masculinity Epideixis in James Dickey's *Deliverance* and the American Prison Narrative', *Atenea*, 28:1 (June 2008), 103-115 (p.103).

4.6.2 Broader Context

To further understand the role of children as viewers of the film, I will look at online parental guides as they detail specific film content for the purpose of the protection of children. By looking at online resources for and made by parents, such as the internet movie database (IMDb) parental guide, I will consider the ways in which the rape scene in *The Klumps* is received. This is a community that created itself in reaction to films and the current American rating system. The sites mostly contain information on children's films (not necessarily) with a focus on protecting children, from a moralistic standpoint. This chapter will look at three major parents' guides from IMDb, Kids in Mind and Common Sense Media. Both Kids in Mind and Common Sense Media are suggested as additional resources for parents from the CARA website (the official rating agency for the MPAA). Unlike other suggested sources from the CARA website such as the Parent Teacher Association who advocate the benefits of parents watching films with their children, these two have specific film by film information and guidance for parents. This community is made through a shared idea of parental responsibility and protection of children, a shared ideology that presupposes themes in films. Both IMDb and Kids in Mind use categories to frame their comments, namely sex and nudity, violence and gore, and profanity. Individualism of parent and child is identified as significant, yet this categorisation suggests a universal parental concern with these topics. The morality that identifies these categories as problematic is made by this community to represent the cultural position of the American parent.

The IMDb Parents Guide is a communal space for parents to add, edit and update descriptions of film content they find problematic that some parents claim should be considered before allowing children to view a film.⁹² This, like other guides, broadly categorise areas of contention, namely Sex and Nudity, Violence and Gore, Profanity, Alcohol/Drugs/Smoking as well as Frightening/Intense Scenes, one of which must be chosen before a comment can be made, making these the only classifications of problematic material on IMDb.⁹³ *The Klumps* features the warning under frightening/intense scenes, "It's possible that young kids might find the site of a gargantuan and menacing-looking hamster (bigger than a grizzly bear) unsettling or scary (although it's all played for laughs)".⁹⁴ The omission of the hamster raping a man as part of the frightening or intense aspect of the scene and adding that 'it's all played for laughs' shows how comedy can undercut any

⁹² 'Help Page', *IMDb Parents Guide*, <<http://www.imdb.com/swiki/special?ParentalGuideHelp>> [accessed 22 June 2016].

⁹³ Such categories can also be found on *Parent Previews*, *Common Sense Media*, *Kids in Mind*, *Parental Guide*, and *Movie Guide*. Also see *CARU, PTA: watching movies with your children*, *American Association of Pediatrics: Media and Children* for more warnings.

⁹⁴ 'Parents Guide for *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* (2000)', *IMDb Parents Guide*, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0144528/parentalguide?ref_=tt_stry_pg> [accessed 4 May 2016].

unsuitable implication this rape representation might have. It also shows the complete absence of acknowledgement of what happens. When male rape is identified, it continues to be coded and referred to as sodomy, ignoring the question of consent and makes an implicit parallel with homosexual sex due to the history of the word's usage.⁹⁵ Similar emphasis on actions being played for laughs is present in the Christian parent's guide website *Kids in Mind*, where, again, the hamster's appearance is commented on; 'A giant hamster roars and people stampede out of the room; it's implied that the hamster rapes a man'.⁹⁶ The rape is mentioned twice on this website yet both times the rape is stressed as implied. This is unlike other scenes mentioned on the website from the film such as the killing of a parrot, which is not described as implicit despite all we hear is a few squawks and nothing is visually represented. As the death of the parrot is very much implied, yet the (more visually explicit) rape is described as such serves to palliate the rape and open up the possibility of further disassociated interpretations of what happened in the scene.

Reviews of *The Klumps* similarly mention the hamster rape in brevity or do not mention it at all despite the focus on sexuality and perversity in such reviews. Roger Ebert describes it as "giant hamster sex" but later explains the Dean is "assaulted by a giant hamster", declaring sex and assault indistinguishable.⁹⁷ Charles Taylor omits it from his *Sight and Sound* review to focus on the impressiveness of Eddie Murphy's performance, as do many reviews from the website *Meta Critic*.⁹⁸ When it is mentioned, the rape is underplayed as a throwaway example of the film's vulgarity and lack of plot, such as in David Ansen's review for *Newsweek*.⁹⁹ Though the reviews tend to acknowledge what happens in the scene as rape they marginalise it as insignificant to the plot, a mere example of vulgarity, or frivolous expression of comedy. Ebert argues that "how [the rape] happens and why is immaterial; what is important is the way it leads up to the line, 'Do you think he'll call?'" post rape.¹⁰⁰ This line is screamed by the Dean and is just one of the examples of his subsequent trauma from the rape. The significance of this line is not expounded upon by Ebert but the review firmly describes the rape scene itself as insignificant. From analysing this case study, the rape scene, nor its following scenes involving Dean Richmond are irrelevant to either plot, characterisation, or devoid from the broad themes of the film. The flippancy with which the rape is

⁹⁵ 'Parents Guide for *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* (2000)', *IMDb Parents Guide*, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0144528/parentalguide?ref_=tt_stry_pg> [accessed 4 May 2016].

⁹⁶ '*Nutty Professor II: The Klumps*', *Kids in Mind*, <http://www.kids-in-mind.com/n/nutty_professor_ii_the_klumps.htm> [accessed 23 June 2016].

⁹⁷ 'Review of *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps*', *Roger Ebert* (28 July 2000) <<http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/nutty-professor-ii-the-klumps-2000>> [accessed 29 June 2016].

⁹⁸ Taylor, p.59-60; '*Nutty Professor II: The Klumps*', *Meta Critic*, <<http://www.metacritic.com/movie/nutty-professor-ii-the-klumps>> [accessed 29 June 2016].

⁹⁹ David Ansen, 'Thin Story about a Fat Man', *Newsweek*, 136:6, 7th August 2000.

¹⁰⁰ 'Review of *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps*', *Roger Ebert* (28 July 2000) <<http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/nutty-professor-ii-the-klumps-2000>> [accessed 29 June 2016].

mentioned in these reviews reflects an audience that does not understand representation of male rape as anything other than a vulgar joke. One of the necessary tools for solidifying a family audience is a rating that allows people of all ages to view a film. The MPAA rated *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* a PG-13 for crude humour and sex-related material out of their flagged content that is violence, sex, language and drug use. This was reiterated by ratings boards across the world, with most ratings allowing 12 year olds and over to see the film.¹⁰¹ The rape in *The Klumps* is firmly in the context of excess, slapstick and carnivalesque transgression managing to disguise itself as suitable for and accessible to minors.

As with a rating, a trailer announces a film before it can be entirely viewed, and further introduces the broad themes of the film without giving away the plot or the 'best bits'.¹⁰² The trailer for *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* features snippets of the rape scene interspersed with scatological humour and Eddie Murphy's multiple characters. According to the BBFC website the trailer featuring part of the rape scene was given a PG rating, a lower rating than the film itself, suggesting that the rape scene was not a factor that determined the higher rating of 12 in the UK.¹⁰³ The BBFC, along with the MPAA did not consider rating the film above a PG for the rape scene as featured in the trailer as it is both acknowledged as unproblematic and child-appropriate. Though one parental guide's review says because of the overt sexuality represented *The Klumps* is not appropriate for children despite the PG13 rating, audiences to other PG13 or even PG rated films, or children with internet would have access to this scene.¹⁰⁴ From *The Klumps* trailer, sexuality is set up as a major theme of the film in aggressive, problematic ways.

4.6.3 Final thoughts on *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps*

The rape scene in *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* reaffirms a joyous satisfaction through sexual victimisation. The absurdity strips the act of horror and relocates it into the sphere of light entertainment. This scene walks a line between just enough surrealism and abnormality to not obviously relate to dramatic rape scenes, and enough sexual content and obvious lack of consent to be classed as rape. Though comedy excuses this representation of rape, the reception does so as well by insinuating it as implicit and undermining its significance. This example illustrates that

¹⁰¹ *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* was rated 12 in the UK, Germany and Switzerland, with younger rating of 7, U and K-8 in Sweden, Malaysia and Finland respectively.

¹⁰² Finola Kerrigan, *Film Marketing* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2013), p.141.

¹⁰³ '*Nutty Professor II: The Klumps*', BBFC, <<http://www.bbfc.co.uk/releases/nutty-professor-ii-klumps-2004-0>> [accessed 18 September 2016].

¹⁰⁴ '*Nutty Professor II: The Klumps*', *Common Sense Media*, <<https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/nutty-professor-ii-the-klumps>> [accessed 29 June 2016].

the social order that makes male rape funny is fundamental to nature and that male rape is naturally funny.

4.7 *Bruce Almighty* (Tom Shadyak, 2003) Case Study

This section will firstly focus on Jim Carrey as an actor and performer to establish him as a prime vehicle for comedic male rape. As Carrey has been in several films with instances of male rape, his specific relationship with comedy and how he uses his body and the world around him to his advantage creates this context. This will locate comedic male rape in the realm of reality and representation, slapstick as obscuring potential reality, questions of masculinity, and performance. The case study *Bruce Almighty* will then be analysed to look at how comedy and male rape interact in the film. This film was chosen to be the case study as it is the clearest and most popular example of Carrey's films of a man being raped by an animal in a mainstream contemporary family film.¹⁰⁵ *Bruce Almighty* serves as a moralistic tale, using comedy and biblical righteousness to justify its transgressive content. Disguised as morally just, comedic male rape is used in *Bruce Almighty* to control a social order where the protagonist is all powerful. Finally, this chapter will explore the reception of the film and its context in broader culture to see how the scene resonates with viewers.

4.7.1 The Jim Carrey Context

When discussing sex and violence in film there is tension between reality and representation as there is ambiguity about what reality is and how 'real' a representation can be. Though this thesis aims to discuss why and how comedic male rape is represented, understandings of films are still integrated within this discourse between reality and representation. After Jim Carrey filmed *Kick-Ass 2* (Jeff Wadlow, 2013) a mass shooting occurred in the US in a primary school, the event named after the school, Sandy Hook. After the film was released Carrey used his twitter account in a rare bout of sincerity to say "I did Kickass a month b4 Sandy Hook and now in all good consciousness I cannot support that level of violence".¹⁰⁶ This tweet shows Carrey perceives a link between violence and representations of violence, and that supporting one could imply condoning the other. From a comic actor who has been involved with many acts of violence on screen for over 20 years the gun violence in *Kick-Ass 2* was understood by Carrey to have a special connection with reality that other

¹⁰⁵ *Bruce Almighty* is a PG-13 in the USA and similarly rated in other countries. It topped the box office charts both domestic and foreign, making it the 5th top grossing year of 2003. 'Weekend Box Office: May 23-25, 2003', *Box Office Mojo*, <<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/weekend/chart/?yr=2003&wknd=21&p=.htm>> [accessed 10 August 2016]. 'Yearly Box Office: 2003 Domestic Grosses', *Box Office Mojo*, <<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/yearly/chart/?yr=2003&p=.htm>> [accessed 19 September 2016].

¹⁰⁶ '@JimCarrey', *Twitter*, 23 June 2013, 12:33pm. Later deleted.

forms of violence do not. The comedy of *Kick-Ass 2* is not in the vein of slapstick that many of Carrey's other films are, rather the film contains straightforward and gory violence which Carrey sees as having an immediate connection with this specific school shooting. The merging of gun violence and the 'realism' represented through the bloody deaths in *Kick-Ass 2* creates a context, as Carrey sees it, where representation could sanction atrocities.¹⁰⁷ Carrey's objection to representations of gun violence positions him as someone who can perceive how 'real' a representation is and how acceptable and appropriate it is. Carrey identifies the kind of violence in *Kick-Ass 2* as resembling real violence thereby defining other representations in his films as far removed and consequently unproblematic. As I am deciphering coded representations of male rape, the reality of such events are not acknowledged but are a significant part of what we find acceptable to represent. Jim Carrey has never acknowledged any form of male rape in his films, not only removing the concept of reality from them but also removing them from any potential discourse about appropriateness of representation.

In a 2013 comedy skit for *Funny or Die*, a website for comedians to showcase their work, Jim Carrey stars in a mock song performance in the fake country chat show 'Hee Haw'.¹⁰⁸ It is a protest song against gun violence where Carrey impersonates Charlton Heston (among others) and performs a song under the name Lonesome Earl called 'Cold Dead Hand', a reference to Heston's 2000 speech at an NRA (National Rifle Association) convention where Heston stated that the only way he would give up his gun is if it were taken from his cold dead hand.¹⁰⁹ The significance of this song in this thesis is the way it links gun violence with masculinity, ultimately saying that men who feel the need for guns do so to compensate for the size of their small penises. This sentiment can be seen to either mock the masculine ideal which needs to assert power through the representational phallus of the gun or it can be seen to perpetuate the idea that those with big penises are naturally more masculine and therefore do not need guns to assert this claim. Writing on representations of masculinity, Peter Lehman explores the relationship between the phallus and the penis, where the phallus represents power and masculinity and the small, flaccid penis represents a weak and failed

¹⁰⁷ Example of two newspaper articles written about Jim Carrey's earlier mentioned tweets. Vincent, Alice, 'Jim Carrey condemns Kick-Ass 2 after Sandy Hook shooting', *The Independent*, 24 June 2013 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/film-news/10138766/Jim-Carrey-condemns-Kick-Ass-2-after-Sandy-Hook-shooting.html>> [accessed 21 July 2016]. Ben Child, 'Jim Carrey condemns violence in his own movie Kick-Ass 2', *The Guardian*, 24 June 2013 <<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2013/jun/24/jim-carrey-violence-kick-ass-2-sandy-hook>> [accessed 21 July 2016].

¹⁰⁸ 'Cold Dead Hand with Jim Carrey', *Funny or Die* <http://www.funnyordie.com/videos/0433b30576/cold-dead-hand-with-jim-carrey?_cc=__d___&_ccid=04f1f615-d1ba-4133-a800-048d72d83b29> [accessed 25 July 2016].

¹⁰⁹ 'Charlton Heston, From My Cold Dead Hands, Long Version', *YouTube*, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ju4Gla2odw>> [accessed 26 July 2016] Posted by a fan of Heston, later deleted.

masculinity.¹¹⁰ The focus on the relationship between violence and masculinity in the skit does not necessarily undermine an idealism of masculinity that Charlton Heston glorifies, that of the masculine power of the gun, rather it idealises a version of masculinity which does not need the bodily extension of a gun to be seen as a man but one whose body (especially his penis) can enact all masculine potential. As Lehman puts it, “penis-size jokes affirm the importance and centrality of the very thing they question”.¹¹¹ By making fun of phallic-centred masculinity, Carrey acknowledges and sustains the power of the penis and the phallus. This is a crucial theme in comedic male rape as the phallic representation is central to the comedy and the power play presented. In the tradition of slapstick, the absolute control of the body is necessary and a powerful display of masculinity.¹¹² Jim Carrey, as a man who has an outlandish amount of control over his body, constantly breaking expectations of corporeal ability, enacts the specific ideal of masculine expression that controls both body and narrative. Linking his thoughts around gun violence to the phallus shows how fundamental enacting power is to masculinity.

Jim Carrey is foremost a comedic actor whose film narratives often align with Seidman’s concept of the comedian comedy, the ultimate narrative conundrum being that the socially non-conforming character must either change to fit in as part of society or continue to be an outcast.¹¹³ Many of Carrey’s films follow this narrative, making a point to exclude his characters from the obligation of social conformity, allowing him to act in ways no one else could. The comic figure functions as a fictional presence by taking control of the filmic universe/narrative with his imagination and creativity.¹¹⁴ He cannot socially conform, instead he manipulates the world around him to his own moral codes throughout the film until he must choose between remaining isolated from society or to integrate. This control solidifies him as protagonist and outcast. The comic figure exposes the artifice of the filmic world while reflecting the moral norms and social order of the world outside of the film.¹¹⁵ *Bruce Almighty* is self-referential in this sense as when Bruce (Jim Carrey) has God’s powers he is quite literally in control of everything in the entire universe. This is limited by free will which he cannot control, meaning he cannot make his girlfriend love him, the one thing he really wants. This is narratively resolved by Bruce relinquishing God’s powers and regaining his girlfriend, aligning with Seidman’s narrative conundrum. Despite this resolve, throughout the film Bruce manipulates the universe to his advantage including controlling the movements of a monkey to help him enact revenge by forcing it into a man’s anus. Jim Carrey’s power and narrative control

¹¹⁰ Lehman, p.10.

¹¹¹ Lehman, p.137.

¹¹² Lehman, p.113.

¹¹³ Seidman, p.8.

¹¹⁴ Seidman, p.8.

¹¹⁵ Seidman, p.57.

comes from refusing to socially conform to polite society, making him able to perform outlandish acts.

In a 1999 interview with *Vanity Fair* Jim Carrey emphasised that he knows what comedy is and why audiences are drawn to certain things.¹¹⁶ He goes on to say that jokes are judgments, directly naming Sigmund Freud as the source, despite this concept being developed by Kuno Fischer and only quoted by Freud in *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1989). Freud's work is well-known, at least on a superficial level, and he has certain common understandings associated with him, especially his work on sexuality. When Freud writes about jokes as judgments it is in relation to the freedom of bringing the unspoken to the foreground, representing and expressing what is usually repressed.¹¹⁷ As jokes cannot escape the social context they are told within, comedic male rape is still framed within a culture and understanding that does not have the ability to acknowledge male rape as a mainly serious subject. Freud's work on sexuality has been used to analyse Carrey's comedy, an affinity that goes beyond jokes as judgments.¹¹⁸ Jim Carrey's comedy is closer to Freud's concept of the 'pre-Oedipal' as his childishness, especially in regards to sexuality, means he cannot navigate the world as an adult.¹¹⁹ Carrey using Freud to defend and define his comedy is telling as he considers himself a judge that exposes a hidden truth and presents it to an audience. The childlike freedom outside of social obligation and rules that defines the pre-Oedipal supposedly represents a level of truth from a place of innocence, yet Carrey is an adult who performs this way, aware of his positioning to audiences and comedy theory.¹²⁰

I have identified five films featuring Jim Carrey that have featured comedic male rape, namely *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls*, *Me, Myself & Irene* (Bobby Farrelly and Peter Farrelly, 2000), *Yes Man* (Peyton Reed, 2008), *Dumb and Dumber* (Bobby Farrelly and Peter Farrelly, 1994), and my case study film *Bruce Almighty*. There are also threats and allusions towards male rape in other films, such as *The Cable Guy* (Ben Stiller, 1996). The concept of *Yes Man* is that a man has to say yes to everything despite his will, forcing him into having sex with an elderly woman when he clearly does not want to so he can avoid karmic retribution. In *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls* a gorilla rapes a man, as described earlier. In *Me, Myself & Irene* we see a chicken flap its wings against a man's backside as its head is inside his anus while he is tied to a tree and screams 'would somebody get this goddamn chicken out of my ass please'. In the same film Jim Carrey's dual personalities of

¹¹⁶ Steven Daly, 'Split Personality', *Vanity Fair*, (November 1999), 128-134 + 181-185 (p.183).

¹¹⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, trans. by James Strachy (London: Norton, 1989), p.5.

¹¹⁸ King, p.77-78.

¹¹⁹ King, p.77.

¹²⁰ King, p.78

Charlie and Hank share a body so when Hank inserts a dildo into his anus, Charlie finds out and feels violated. *Bruce Almighty* will be analysed later but a brief summary of the rape scene is that a monkey is forced into a man's anus. It is arguable what can be classified as visual representations of rape but the intention in these representations is a physical violation that mixes lack of consent with a form of sexual act, usually in relation to the anus (however obscure and impossible). These occurrences set up a model of comedy that Jim Carrey subscribes to where a sexual act towards a man without his consent is a punchline. Three of these four examples feature animals as the penetrating objects which removes what an audience might consider representing 'reality' from such acts. This, like *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* uses animals as representational phalluses of the protagonists, penetrating an antagonist as punishment. This phenomenon, not just in family films but ones specifically featuring Jim Carrey, is focused on the comic figure, requires slapstick, unfettered sexuality, and a mutual relationship between masculinity and power.

4.7.2 Scene Analysis

In *Bruce Almighty*, Bruce is a man who is given God's powers after blaming God for feeling his life is unfair. Before he is given these powers, Bruce's mortal self is beaten up by a group of Latino men when he antagonises them after defending a homeless man they are teasing. The gang make fun of him for trying to play the man's saviour and vandalise his car with the same sentiment, etching 'hero' on the side. When Bruce acquires God's powers, he comes across the gang again in an alleyway and decides to take revenge for his previous attack. When demanding an apology from them he combines stereotypically biblical dialogue with mock 'gangster' speech highlighting the divide not only between speech patterns but also the righteousness of their actions. Bruce says:

"Yo brethren, what up with thee? ... Surely, I say unto you dudes, I do not wish to fight. So, as soon as you apologise and make a full reckoning of your transgressions, I shall absolve you and continue along the path of righteousness"¹²¹

When one of the gang says he'll apologise "the day a monkey comes out my butt" Bruce materialises a monkey from the man's anus, causing him to faint from pain. Bruce then scares the rest of the gang away with a swarm of locusts that fly out of his mouth, giving the scene a sense of biblical judgement. As the man awakens and stumbles to his feet holding his buttocks, Bruce orders the monkey to return into the man and with this the monkey hurtles back into the man's anus. There is a short chase where the man attempts to climb up a fence away from the pursuing monkey

¹²¹ *Bruce Almighty*. Dir. Tom Shadyak. Universal Pictures. 2003.

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followed by a succession of quick shots. It is half from the point of view of the monkey speeding towards his backside as he clings to the fence, and half of close ups of the man's changing facial expressions, culminating in a crescendo of triumphant music as he slides down the fence wide eyed with mouth agape as the monkey has penetrated him. Though the man is in obvious pain and fear, the scene is played from the joyous perspective of Bruce, who is delighting in his power. Links to the bible are frequent in the film and a crucial way the film legitimises this penetration as just and righteous. This section will analyse this scene by considering its narrative function, how rape is used to act out power relations, the films links with Christianity, the race of the gang, and audience perception, starting with the scene's immediate aftermath and the significance of the monkey as the penetrating object.



Image 18 *Bruce Almighty* (Tom Shadyac, 2003) screenshot



Image 19 *Bruce Almighty* (Tom Shadyac, 2003) screenshot



Image 20 *Bruce Almighty* (Tom Shadyac, 2003) screenshot

Directly after the rape scene Bruce stands on top of the Empire State building generating lightning in a climactic display of his power shouting 'I am Bruce Almighty, my will be done', showing that even mother nature is under his control. As he plays the role of God, his actions become divine as they relate to a power and morality that is absolute, he controls what is acceptable to do and represent in the film. Using a monkey to penetrate emphasises his ultimate power because it eliminates the animal's free will, showing Bruce's control over will and agency. The monkey also serves the purpose of detaching Bruce's body from the act itself which in turn disengages reality from representation as it presents an impossibility. The removal of the penetration from the human body disguises and makes what we see ambiguous and easily disconnected from what could traditionally be described as rape. This is aesthetically how family films and films aimed at a child audience represent rape, as a nebulous, fantastical, and detached excursion of power. Structures of power and hierarchy in human society are sometimes attributed to animal societies. However existing social hierarchies can be projected onto natural relationships to justify certain structures that benefit those upholding that structure. For example, justifying male-on-female rape as a natural occurrence based upon biological differences between men and women.¹²² The monkey gives the feel of both debasement and links to Jim Carrey's fictional and extra-fictional affinity towards monkeys as this monkey is the same breed of white headed Capuchin that Carrey has as a side kick in the Ace Ventura films. Bruce benefits from the monkey raping this man as it solidifies Bruce as superior to the men who had previously hurt him. This is seen as a rectifying, putting a social hierarchy in place that is pleasing to the audience.

Narratively the film illustrates how Bruce abuses his powers for personal gain causing damaging repercussions, such as when Bruce throws a lasso round the moon and pulls it towards earth to

¹²² Randy Thornhill and Craig T. Palmer, *A Natural History of Rape: Biological Bases of Social Coercion* (London: The MIT Press, 2000) .

create a romantic setting for a date, it causes a tsunami in Japan. The rape, however, lacks negative consequences, the 'moral of the story' so to speak, is not represented in this scene. Rather when Bruce penetrates a man with a monkey, the man and his friends are erased from the plot, having outlasted their usefulness they have no place left in the narrative. This is not a lesson for Bruce to appreciate what he has but a scene to re-establish Bruce as in control of his own life by enforcing his superiority over others. His perception that God is prejudiced towards him informs his perception that the things he does are justified. The spectacle of rape in this scene is more in line with character development than narrative as Bruce is the focus of the scene as he regains the power he lost when the gang beat him up. What happens in the scene is overlooked which devalues male rape as just a punch line and makes it a 'non-event' because male rape remains unacknowledged and insignificant to the narrative. Jokes as asides to the plot have a tradition in early slapstick cinema of displaying a series of gags that do not connect to the larger narrative but whose purpose is to disrupt it.¹²³ While this tradition has not continued in the same vein after the introduction of sound cinema, gags for pure spectacle have not disappeared or become less significant.¹²⁴ The scene can be taken out of context and still be understood as it is an insular short story of good defeating evil, the punch line being forced anal penetration of a man.

Using rape to establish dominance over a person or group is well established cultural understanding of how rape functions in society.¹²⁵ Bruce fits the model of the heroic rapist from ancient bestial rape myths not only because he is the protagonist who uses an animal to rape someone but is all powerful, like the Gods of the ancient tales.¹²⁶ Froma Zeitlin argues heroic rapist narratives are used to naturalise gender hierarchy as something older than society so that it is framed as the will of the Gods.¹²⁷ This narrative then places sexual aggression and the dominance gained from rape as a celestial state that influences social order. Like the narrative structure of the comedian comedy, there must be sacrifice to be accepted within society. In ancient bestial rape stories women must submit to sex, lest they be outcast from society.¹²⁸ In both *Bruce Almighty* and *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls* the raped men are never heard from again, suggesting their lack of consent and unwillingness to submit to the new order created by the comic extravagance of the protagonist ousts them. Bruce controls sexuality like the Greek Gods did in myths, despite not physically becoming the animal himself, animals represent the extension of his personality and he uses the

¹²³ King, p.25.

¹²⁴ Frank Krutnik, 'General Introduction' in *Hollywood Comedians: The Film Reader*, ed. by Frank Krutnik (London: Routledge, 2003), pp.1-18, (p.16).

¹²⁵ See Brownmiller and Zeitlin.

¹²⁶ See the stories of Eupora, Asteria, Ganymede and Philyra and for detailed analysis see J.E. Robson.

¹²⁷ Zeitlin, p.123.

¹²⁸ Robson, p.76.

figure of the animal to rape. Instead of the purpose being to reinforce the idea of a society that demands certain sexually submissive roles of women, he uses the rape to situate himself as the dominant man over all other men.¹²⁹ The rape affirms his position as all powerful and proves how useful rape can be as a narrative tool to create unquestionable dominance.

Bruce Almighty is located within a contemporary Christian American context, differing from the beliefs in multiple Gods in myths from antiquity, yet there is common ancestry in the purpose of the narratives. In relation to the type of comedy present here, Bakhtin argues there is a divide between the 'higher' (spirituality) and the 'lower' (the body) which comedy transcends.¹³⁰ Bruce acts as God in the film and is representative of the higher order of being while the monkey acts out the lower and the earthly. The body and the spiritual is merged by Bruce using his powers to violate the human body. The biblical connections in *Bruce Almighty* are metaphors for morality, social order, and justice which are evident in tales of godly intervention in antiquity. Rape in the bible, however, is more focussed on male responses to the violation of women.¹³¹ Rape in the bible, Frank Yamada argues is followed by a response of excessive violence and then social fragmentation.¹³² Rape is such a powerful narrative tool that not only does the power structure between rapist and victim change but so does society.¹³³ Susan Brownmiller states that in the heroic rapist narrative a woman's value is dependent on a man's 'ownership' of her.¹³⁴ Her degradation 'really' happens to him because it is a right for all men to claim a (virgin) woman and a violation of that by rape unbalances this system.¹³⁵ The heroic rapist narrative disregards the agency of all who are not the protagonist. Bruce is trying to prove himself as God and create a world which structurally favours him and reverts to ancient tropes to do so. The film as a whole reflects the American Christian target audience through its moral positioning while the analysed scene is reminiscent of narratives used to control actions and social status through rape. Combining omnipotence with the use of rape for personal gain re-establishes rules of acceptability to allow rape to be a celebration.

The raped man and his friends are the only Latino characters in the film and represent a gang counterculture. All are nameless in the film and the raped man known as 'Hood #1' in the script and played by Noel Gugliemi, a Latino actor typecast in many films as a gangster. From the bandito of Hollywood Westerns to the gangster in contemporary film, Latino men have been portrayed as a

¹²⁹ Robson, p.75.

¹³⁰ Bakhtin, p.19.

¹³¹ Frank M. Yamada, *Configurations of Rape in the Hebrew Bible : A Literary Analysis of Three Rape Narratives* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008), p.2.

¹³² Yamada, p.2.

¹³³ See the story of Dinah, as her brothers' retaliation to her rape converges on the entire city of Shechem. Analysis in Yamada p.27-66.

¹³⁴ Brownmiller, p.17.

¹³⁵ Nelson (2014) passim.

collective criminal stereotype.¹³⁶ In *Bruce Almighty* they have this racial stereotype imposed on them through the way they speak, dress, the alleyway they spend time in, and how they interact with each other and Bruce. These things position them within a violent masculine subculture where the white middle class Bruce does not fit within. Cast as hoods they are represented not as organised criminals but a group of purposeless vandals who pick on those they see as inferior to them, such as a homeless man and Bruce. The first scene they are in, noticing they are being observed, the gang meander away from the homeless man they are picking on when Bruce yells after them 'yeah, you better keep walking', antagonising them into chasing and beating him. Bruce takes credit for their departure causing this violent reaction as he takes their agency away and positions himself as someone who is able to control their actions, something that is quickly undermined with the beating. This scene demonstrates the power these men have in the alleyway and that encroaching on their space and authority will not go unchallenged. Bruce sees himself as the one unfairly victimised in all aspects of his life, including the beating which he sees as a consequence for his good deed. The beating portrays Bruce as the unjust victim of an imposing force, skewing the known power imbalance between marginalised impoverished Latino men in American and the white, middle class 'everyman' Bruce represents.¹³⁷ The white Bruce as the victim of domineering Latino 'hoods' functions to showcase that power is unevenly distributed between them and must be rectified by the hero, Bruce. The rape scene is not just a defeat of one man but a whole group that imposes their power on everyday people. Bruce inflicting his power on one of the gang by raping him destabilises the institution of the gang, revokes the gang's authority, and makes a stride towards justice for the normal man who has run out of luck. In the film the 'hood' is not allowed to be more of an outcast than Bruce as he is the 'bad' part of rejected society, whereas Bruce is the unjustly marginalised. Using rape, Bruce demeans him, rectifying Bruce's feelings of unjust marginalisation and believes he is improving society by ousting what he sees is a bad part of it. This section explored the way that animal-on-male rape in *Bruce Almighty* functions within the film and what it represents. The next section will explore the broader context of the film in popular culture and its reception, examining how discussion of the rape is avoided.

4.7.3 Broader Context

Though not in the final edit of the film, the original script of *Bruce Almighty*, written by Steve Koren, Mark O'Keefe and Steve Oedekerk (writer and director of *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls*), references a monkey earlier in the storyline. In a rant about the cruelty of God Bruce shouts

¹³⁶ Charles Ramírez Berg, *Latino Images in Film: Stereotypes, subversion, and resistance* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2002), p.2.

¹³⁷ Richard Dyer, *White* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p.10.

“Every time we cure a disease he comes up with a new one! [Goes into God character] Yeah, is this the lab? Yeah, it's God. They've just come up with a treatment for syphilis down there. I think it's time to release the tainted monkey.”¹³⁸ As Bruce is using the example of sexually transmitted diseases to show the callousness of God the tainted monkey in this context is a reference to HIV. As well as drawing upon the popular understanding that monkeys were the original carriers of HIV, it associates the monkey with HIV previous to the penetration. The ‘tainted monkey’ being synonymous with HIV gives the rape scene an intention that is obscured in the final cut of the film, that of sexually transmitted disease. Also mentioning syphilis as another sexually transmitted disease, the nineteenth century reportage of syphilis focussed on promiscuous women (more specifically prostitutes) as an insatiable sexually destructive group.¹³⁹ Leo Bersani in ‘Is the rectum the grave?’ argues the representation of the AIDS crisis targeted at homosexuals likens it to the understanding of an unappeasable sexual urge.¹⁴⁰ Linking homosexuality with HIV gives the scene a context that aligns with Scarce’s, Wlodarz, and Bersani’s understanding that the relationship between homosexuality and AIDS with regard to heterosexual gender dynamics in the 1980s, as those penetrated were thought of to be expressing female sexuality.¹⁴¹ The ‘death’ Bersani associates with the rectum is then both real and metaphorical as AIDS caused death while expressions of ‘female’ and ‘passive’ sexuality caused the death of masculinity.¹⁴² As masculinity is intertwined with power in *Bruce Almighty*, after the monkey penetrates the gang leader, his metaphorical death is in the narrative, as he does not appear in the film again. Despite the final cut of the film omitting this line, the script linking the monkey to HIV pre-empted a comic context to situate HIV. This highlights an anxiety that male rape representation skirts around. As Peter Lehman argues, “in contemporary Western society these culturally determined anxieties deal primarily with venereal disease, homosexuality, and castration”.¹⁴³ Being a victim of male rape infers these anxieties, yet the script of *Bruce Almighty* directly faces and manipulates the fear of venereal disease to bolster its humour. The reasons why the connection with HIV did not appear in the final film is up for speculation, yet the inclusion of this dialogue would have directly engaged the film with such anxiety, rendering it less subtle.

¹³⁸ Steve Koren, Mark O'Keefe and Steve Oedeker, *Bruce Almighty*, 30 July 2002 [Screenplay], p.19.

¹³⁹ Leo Bersani, ‘Is the Rectum the Grave?’, in *Is the Rectum the Grave? : And other essays*, (London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp.3-30 (First publ. in *October*, 43 (1987), 197-222.

¹⁴⁰ Bersani, p.24.

¹⁴¹ Bersani, p.24; Scarce, p.27; Wlodarz, p.68.

¹⁴² Bersani, p.29.

¹⁴³ Peter Lehman, *Running Scared: Masculinity and the Representation of the Male Body* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2007) (originally published 1993), p.120.

The actor who played Hood #1, Noel Gugliemi, has expanded his acting career into stand-up comedy.¹⁴⁴ In a performance he did soon after his role in *Bruce Almighty* he comes on stage in stereotypical Latino gangster garb, the usual dress for his film characters. He holds a bottle in a paper bag in one hand, due to its size and shape it is most likely a '40', a colloquial term for a cheap malt liquor commonly associated with gangsters or impoverished black and Latino Americans.¹⁴⁵ In the other hand he holds a Corona, the most popular Mexican beer in the US market, making his physical appearance a comment on how race is perceived, from the hidden subculture represented by the '40', to its visible marketisation represented by the Corona, the same line he walks as an actor who mainly plays stereotypical roles. Though Gugliemi in this stand-up routine talks about being on the set of *Bruce Almighty*, he limits his description of the actions in the aforementioned scene. He describes his thoughts and feelings about the monkey coming out of his anus but does not mention its reinsertion. Gugliemi explains that Jim Carrey announced that the monkey was to emerge from his anus on the day, which Gugliemi exclaims comically was 'not in the contract' and correlates the violation of his character to how he felt as an actor having to play this scene. The omission of the monkey being forced back into his anus in the story demonstrates a self-censorship of what is represented in the scene as the materialisation of the monkey is as clear and explicit as the reinsertion. Though Gugliemi jokes that he was 'handicapped for 2-3 weeks' afterwards, he does not associate this incident with the penetration, rather repeats that Carrey 'made a monkey come out my ass'. This could be seen as him turning rape humour into scatological humour. Penetration is a topic purposefully avoided and solidifies the lack of acknowledgement of rape in the scene by omitting it from his story. Putting the emphasis on the materialisation of the monkey allows Gugliemi to joke about the scene without placing himself in the role of rape victim, as the connection with rape is tactfully avoided.

Associations between rape and what is represented in the scene have been obscured in the reception of *Bruce Almighty*, particularly in parent's guides, whose purpose is to inform parents about potentially troubling film content. In the IMDb parent's guide there is no mention of the monkey materialising or penetrating, and the characters present in this scene are only mentioned as gangsters who punch Bruce in their previous encounter in the 'violence' section of the guide.¹⁴⁶ There are many scenes mentioned under the sex & nudity subheading, including how Bruce uses his powers to cause a gust of wind to blow a woman's skirt up exposing her underwear. Though this

¹⁴⁴ 'That Mexican Guy From Every Movie!', *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5kfLG_qNml> [accessed 29 July 2016].

¹⁴⁵ '40', *Urban Dictionary*, <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=40>> [accessed 2 August 2016].

¹⁴⁶ 'Parents Guide for *Bruce Almighty* (2003)', *IMDb Parents Guide*, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0315327/parentalguide?ref_=tt_ql_stry_5> [accessed 17 July 2016].

online space of the IMDb parent's guide is explicitly there to describe facts, the writer interprets this occurrence to mean that Bruce is touching her genitals. This reading acknowledges Bruce's powers as an extension of his body despite it being quite a reach to interpret a gust of wind as synonymous with touching genitals. This also sets up Bruce as someone who disregards others' personal space and sexual will at the expense of his own pleasure. From Gugliemi's comments it is evident that harm can be interpreted from the rape scene, yet it is excluded from the violence subheading. Another parent's guide, Common Sense Media briefly mentions the scene but again, only the monkey's emergence from the man's anus, not its reinsertion.¹⁴⁷ Unlike Gugliemi's stand-up performance where he carefully renegotiates what occurred in the scene and tells a different story, the omission of penetration here signifies a lack of acknowledgement. Despite the camera cutting between the monkey hurtling towards and jumping up to Gugliemi's rear to a close up of his astonished and pained face, this implication of penetration that does not resonate the same as the materialisation of the monkey does. The Christian parents' guide Kids in Mind is the most descriptive of the scene, describing the monkey 'passing from his backside' then 'jumping back into his pants'.¹⁴⁸ Though it is vague, it does note that the monkey jumps *back into* where it emerged from, despite implying a penetration the description avoids and obscures the rape enough to deny it. The omission and ambiguity in these guides around describing what happens in the scene speaks to the lack of acknowledgement between what is seen and what is understood.

4.7.4 Final thoughts on *Bruce Almighty*

Jim Carrey in *Bruce Almighty* combines his skills as a comedic actor with the character type of the heroic rapist to represent male rape as comic and just. The omission of acknowledgment that a penetration occurs both speaks to the lack of understanding of what rape could look like and the purposeful censorship of controversial material. This film both obscures and expands what male rape can look like as even the actors in the scene do not acknowledge what occurs as rape despite the forced anal penetration. Overall, animal on male rape is represented in *Bruce Almighty* as a noble, justified and heavenly cause.

¹⁴⁷ 'Bruce Almighty', *Common Sense Media*, <<https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/bruce-almighty>> [accessed 17 July 2016].

¹⁴⁸ 'Bruce Almighty', *Kids in Mind*, <<http://www.kids-in-mind.com/b/brucealmighty.htm>> [accessed 17 July 2016].

4.8 Chapter Conclusion

Heroic rapist myths containing animal on male rape and comedian comedies have similar narrative arcs that work in symbiosis in contemporary Hollywood to elevate the comic figure to godly proportions. As J.E Robson explores, bestial rape in heroic rapist myths relate the ideal in female sexuality through narrative consequences based upon a woman's reaction to rape.¹⁴⁹ Resistance results in excommunication from society while submission yields positive outcomes such as reintegration and birthing heroic children (as women were valued based upon the men they were associated with, this was represented as an ideal). Comedian comedy narrative requires the abandonment of eccentricity to be integrated into society as the rules of the culture must be abided by in order to assimilate.¹⁵⁰ Like the heroic rapist narrative, comedian comedy makes a distinction between social integration and expulsion. In comedian comedy the marginalisation from polite society relates primarily to the protagonist, yet it has been applied in these cases to antagonists for a brief period of the films as the protagonist creates his own rules that the antagonist deviates from. As Seidman argues, the key comic figure uses his imagination and creativity to control the fictional world, sometimes quite literally, such as in *Bruce Almighty* where he uses God's powers to do so.¹⁵¹ The antagonist follows this narrative path of either integration or expulsion based upon their reactions to their rapes. In *Bruce Almighty*, the antagonist deviates from his position as 'less than' and more of an outcast than Bruce, resists the rape, and is completely erased from the plot. In *The Klumps*, the Dean submits to his role as subordinate to the hamster after the rape by smiling at and approaching the hamster in the last scene and is narratively rewarded with financial success for the university, his ultimate personal goal. The Dean's submission reflects both the narrative of the heroic rapist myth and the comedian comedy's narrative as there is reward for following the social rules put down by the protagonist. Further correlation between ostracism and animal on male rape can be seen in *When Nature Calls* as the antagonist, Cadby is erased from the film after being raped. As well as Cadby being a personal affront to Ace because of his views towards animals, he commits morally dubious acts by enticing one tribe to slaughter another. He deviates both from Ace's world order but he also commits colonialist crimes and therefore cannot be integrated into the 'normal' society he was previously a member of. Like the moral lessons in ancient myths, animal on male rape is used in these contemporary family films to convey messages of good and bad behaviour through either allowing or rejecting someone's social integration, reflecting what is socially acceptable for people to do. Rape, in this sense, is seen as neutral to society as it is used as an

¹⁴⁹ Robson, p.76.

¹⁵⁰ Seidman, p.8.

¹⁵¹ Seidman, p.4.

effective narrative tool to exemplify other morally corrupt actions without the act itself being represented as problematic.

Animal on male rape is represented as an event that does not require engagement in discourse. In contemporary family film, the rape scenes described in the case studies are not acknowledged as rape, allowing them to be dismissed and not become part of the discussion that frames these scenes. The reception of the films does not engage with the rapes as a significant part of the scenes they are present in. In these films this is done in several ways, firstly by the comic framing of slapstick, making the representations of rape distant from what could be understood as a realistic representation. Secondly, the rapes are comically framed in the comedian comedy genre, which excuses all the main comic figure does as purposeful deviance. Thirdly, the heroic rapist narrative justifies the rapes as righteous punishment with the protagonist being represented as an underdog that is deserving of superiority over others more morally corrupt than himself. Finally, the animal as penetrative object distorts traditional representations of sexuality, showing impossible acts that obscure the link between what we see and what we understand as rape. This chapter has analysed how animal on male rape is made ambiguous through its visual representation and context in comedy and narrative. Through my analysis I have found that representations of animal on male rape are far from neutral or unproblematic. Represented as justified punishment, rape is used in these films to correct a power imbalance between the protagonist and antagonist, showing that rapists gain power through rape and that it can and should be celebrated. Animals are thought to rely on their instincts as sexual beings when humans are bound by civility. Therefore animals are used to represent an instinctive and untamed sexuality that make them perfect vehicles to carry claims to what is natural. Using animals to enact the rapes naturalises rape by linking it with an innate sexuality, representing consent as an oppressive concept. Relying on the representational phallus as a source of power reaffirms a hierarchy that values male sexual aggression. The lack of acknowledgement by audiences shows how male rape does not have a prominent place in a serious consciousness, therefore able to serve as a comic aside without protest.

The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) strongly focuses on parental responsibility when rating films, making a point to only have parents on the board of raters specifically deciding on what is appropriate for America's children to view from a moralistic standpoint. The content of male rape is a transgression that in dramatic representations is given a higher rating and is therefore less accessible for children to view. The context of comedy allows for transgressions that would not usually be so accessible in drama, because, as Geoff King states, comedy itself is not taken too seriously, giving it licence to deal with usually off-limits subjects.¹⁵² More people then, especially

¹⁵² King, p.2.

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the young, have access to comedic representations of male rape than ones in other genres such as drama. This can be attributed to discourse around realism, as dramatic representations can be horrifying, yet as previously stated, no more explicit, as Hollywood films are all implicit in their representations as penetration is never seen. Jenkins argues that some transgressions are too abhorrent to survive comedy as audiences have “limits to acceptability”.¹⁵³ Representing male rape does not fall outside these limits and, in the films explored in this chapter, are not acknowledged as something worthy of discourse.

¹⁵³ Jenkins, p.21.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

This thesis has argued that male rape is represented via comedy in mainstream media to regulate gender roles. It has explored male rape representation and found that certain masculinities are punished through rape and can be framed as comedic because male rape is generally not believed or believable. The social context that allows comedic male rape representation to be so prevalent is based upon the inherent societal perception that victimhood demasculinises male “victims” and subsequently believes that “victims” must have done something to deserve their treatment. Scarce argues the culture we live in finds male rape to be a “laughable impossibility”, silencing men and erasing their narratives rather than acknowledging masculine vulnerability.¹ When we do stop to look at male rape, we find that it is everywhere. What male rape looks like reveals how it can be shown yet hidden: visible through suggestion but invisible because we cannot identify what we have seen. Our brains have the knowledge necessary to identify it, yet the context does not let us accept what we see as rape. Overlooking the prevalence of comedic male rape in popular culture is not wilful, rather inherent because we do not identify that something like a forced anal penetration of a screaming man is rape. In comedic representation, male rape is always dished out as a punishment for deviant masculinity in one way or another. Male rape representation functions to control the narrative of the victim; to control and regulate masculinity. Each chapter of this thesis has looked at a different rapist, the commonality being the male victim. Male rape is intrinsically linked to comedy for several reasons. Male rape requires comedy to exist in our imaginations. Comedy controls a culture that perpetuates ideas and representations of male rape, defining its perceptions.

Altogether, Chapter One argued that male-on-male rape is perceived as a justified and accepted punishment for criminals. From *Dirty Work*, we learned that male rape is a known phenomenon where audience knowledge is required for the joke to function. From *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* the discussion revolved around how male rape can be a baseline of comedy, while exploring how it might represent other issues, such as homosexuality and US race relations. The location of prison suggests someone has committed the kind of deviant behaviour, which makes the punishment culturally acceptable. In *Horrible Bosses* disbelief was discussed: despite the ownership of victimhood, the characters disbelieve that rape can be perpetrated by an attractive woman, which the film assumes in the viewpoint of the audience also. *Get Him To The Greek* explored how important the phallus is to rape and how to complicate it with masculine and

¹ Scarce, p.9.

Chapter 5

feminine connotations. The films here punish what they consider weak and fragile masculinity. The men raped in this chapter do not dominate women; they become dominated themselves. *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* paints rape as a natural animal instinct. The final case study comes full circle, as *Bruce Almighty* sets the tone for justifiable rape by the hand of God. The heroic rapist celebrates the rape of their enemy. They create a world for their deviant masculinity and punish those opposed to it by using animal surrogates as representational phalluses. Summarising the individual interventions from the chapters, the theme of male rape as punishment repeats through this thesis. In Chapter One it is reserved for criminals, Chapter Two punishes men through being raped by women because of their 'modern' (fragile) masculinity, and in Chapter Three, villains are raped. Male rape is a punishment for personal failings in a structure that justifies it.

Thinking about what male rape looks like has expanded from the *mise-en-scène* of the individual scenes to how the memory of the scene exists in the broader imaginary. This has been looked at through posters, trailers, reviews, parents' guides, secondary academic sources, and accidental findings, such as a plaque in a local independent bookshop. The expansive reach of the male rape joke has few limits on its influence. Further along in this thesis, male rape was mentioned less in the case study films and audience acknowledgement declined. The characters in the films mentioned in Chapter One all spoke about male rape in the dialogue and the joke continued after the film. Here, male rape was accepted as true and the seriousness of it was undermined using the power of comedy. In Chapter Two, male rape was intermittently acknowledged by the victims but not universally believed by other characters or audience members. Films in Chapter Three sometimes hint towards male rape but never name it, and despite some acknowledgment of 'sodomy' or 'assault' in the reception, it is forgiven because of the comedy context. The analysis in the thesis covers films that interrogate male rape and those that celebrate it; from adult-only audiences to children and families.

Revisiting the research questions, some conclusions and further questions have been found. Firstly, what does male rape look like? This question transformed beyond the descriptive basis of representation on screen and onto interpretation of what is shown, what can be considered male rape and how. Here, the lack of evidence is as powerful as acknowledgement, as male rape is either not seen or is seen as so insignificant that there is no need to comment on it. From the examples and case studies explored in this thesis, what male rape looks like is varied, is usually implied, and desexualised. What male rape can be in visual media is vast and can be completely separate from what we can comprehend as rape. An example can be drawn from the concept of the "monstrous feminine" and the film *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979), through Barbara Creed's influential analysis of

Kane's (John Hurt) death as a 'birth' of an alien inside him.² *Alien* and the notable scene where an alien forces its way out of Kane's stomach represents "one of the major concerns of the sci-fi horror film...the reworking of the primal scene, the scene of birth in relation to the representation of other forms of copulation and procreations".³ The birth follows a time of gestation, where Kane acts as the womb for this parasite to latch onto. How Kane became 'pregnant' is through the facehugger alien (as seen in Image 21), who jumped and latched itself to Kane's face. Though this looks nothing like what we might expect a rape to look like, a violent 'impregnation' is happening symbolically.



Image 21 *Alien* (Ridley Scott: 1979) screenshot

The second research question asks 'what does comedic male rape represent?' Again, there are multiple answers, such as the impregnation anxiety in *Alien*. They correlate by having an underlying connection with punishment, specifically for deviating from an idea of traditional masculinity. It is rare to have a comedic male rape be essential to the plot of a film, or to have a straight analogy of rape standing in for another event. This, for example, can be seen in the correlation between the rape of Bobby and the industrialisation of and therefore destruction of the river in *Deliverance* (as discussed in Chapter One). A very different example, with a more ambiguous representation is the horror-parody comedy *Scary Movie 2* (Keenen Ivory Wayans, 2001), where Ray (Shawn Wayans) rapes a clown doll. When asking what this scene represents, the context of the 'Scary Movie' franchise and the type of comedy used is significant because of the recycling of stereotypes, such as Ray, the over sexual and camp, yet closeted gay man with internalised homophobia. The simple reverse of what is expected is a classic comedy trait, which here, can be seen with the 'killer clown' becoming a victim instead of Ray. This representation is making fun of Ray's latent and suppressed

² Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1993), passim.

³ Creed, p.17.

homosexuality. It also shows the dangerous influence of his sexuality, as it is able to disrupt the killer clown narrative and end up dominating the natural order of horror.

The final research question asked what is the social influence of comedic male rape representation? This has been explored mainly through reviews and some online community comments of the case study films, but can also be found in the jokes themselves, as they anticipate reaction and deem them an acceptable taste level. An example that was not used in this thesis but could be a fruitful resource for further research into audience reception studies for this topic is YouTube comments. These can be problematic as they can be written by bots, be spam, or comments having nothing to do with the video.⁴ In addition, they produce a mass amount of data, which would benefit from a study with different methodologies, rather than the close textual analysis employed in this thesis. However, the following examples show that similar conclusions could be made. Based upon the top 50 comments on a YouTube clip titled 'Bruce Almighty – monkey in ass', 16 quote lines from the film, 10 make other jokes or general approval of the film or scene, another 13 make reference to the characters or actors, especially what other films they've been in and the final 11 have no relevance to the clip.⁵ Rape is not mentioned in these comments, yet the context of the quotes show the comment writers are aware of the forced anal penetration and make light of it. One user writes "That guy's voice when he said 'Did that monkey just come out you're crack man?' LOL" while another says, "And Bruce didn't pull a gorilla out of the guys ass. That would have been even more hilarious".⁶ The YouTube community have a similar level of acceptability, at least in this case, as other audience reactions. YouTube comments could be used to enhance our understanding of the audience reception/social influence of these films, if employing a quantitative methodology.

On the other hand, there has been increasing discourse emerging about comedic male rape in a few online communities from blogs and vlogs. With the increase of representation of male rape, it is not unusual that those who create content about popular culture have noticed. Especially after Terry Crews gave testimony about his sexual assault before the Senate Judiciary in June 2018, which has invigorated a discourse about male sexual assault in the film and TV industry.⁷ Recently, people have taken it upon themselves to advocate against the problematic nature of comedic male rape

⁴ Mike Thelwall, 'Social media analytics for YouTube comments: potential and limitations', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 2018, 21(3), 303-313 (308).

⁵ 'Bruce Almighty – monkey in ass', *YouTube*, uploaded by user DJDANNYBG, 28 July 2009 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lPruGs4lyK4&t=1s>> [accessed online: 15 April 2019].

⁶ 'Bruce Almighty – monkey in ass', *YouTube*, uploaded by user DJDANNYBG, 28 July 2009 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lPruGs4lyK4&t=1s>> [accessed online: 15 April 2019].

⁷ Ryan Parker, 'Terry Crews Condemns "Toxic Masculinity" in Senate Testimony on Sexual Assault', *The Hollywood Reporter*, 26 June 2018, <<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/terry-crews-senate-testimony-sexual-assault-1123360>> [accessed online: 30 April 2019].

using public forums. One such form of media is *YouTube*, where the prevalence of certain types of depiction of male rape can be seen in videos made up of clips of male rape jokes from film and TV, placed side by side.⁸ Hosted by Jonathan McIntosh, the *YouTube* channel ‘Pop Culture Detective’ aims to look “at media through a critical lens with an emphasis on the intersections of politics, masculinity, and entertainment”.⁹ The two video essays ‘Sexual Assault of Men Played for Laughs’ (part one released 11 February 2019 and part two not released at time of writing) collate clips from films and TV where men being sexually assaulted is presented as a joke.¹⁰ Part One concerns male-on-male rape, while Part Two focusses on female-on-male rape. One week after the first video was posted it had already gained over 1,000,000 views and over 2000 comments. These comments are mainly supportive of the intention of the video, many saying they had never realised before, and that this is an important issue. Videos such as this raise awareness about the prevalence of male sexual assault as a joke. Audiences are engaging with this topic and seeing it as problematic. When male rape clips are collated and explored through a critical lens, encouraging and affirmative comments are left. The willingness for people to engage in the discourse shows an outrage towards a media who sees male sexual assault as funny. Beyond the context of the film or TV show that cloaks the male rape joke, it gives audiences the ability to identify these jokes as unacceptable. This one video has influenced many people and will undoubtedly influence more to speak out about how inappropriate comedic male rape is, 1 million viewers at a time.

The video mentioned above focusses on jokes made about male rape, not necessarily looking at visual representation. Other media platforms are more likely to make a joke about male rape, rather than visually representing it. Stand-up comedy, for example, is (usually) one person telling a story with limited visual context. Television has the capacity for visual male rape representation yet does not show it as much as it makes jokes about it. From the 1990s sitcoms, *Friends* and *Seinfeld*, to cartoons made for adults such as *The Cleveland Show* and *The Boondocks*, male rape jokes in TV are widespread yet rarely pretend to depict the act. Looking at the visual representation has allowed this thesis to explore the aesthetics of comedic male rape. Visual representation has more nuance and ambiguity than a straight joke where male rape is the punch line, providing an opportunity to discuss the invisibility – that is to say – its unrecognizability. During the process of researching and

⁸ ‘Sexual Assault of Men Played for Laughs’, *YouTube*, uploaded by ‘Pop Culture Detective’, 11 February 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uc6QxD2_yQw&fbclid=IwAR1z1QFbEkPb9y_Zhn_ehSfOk6BJxEvrZhvIkIrEOf09qAK2DAhmhID3PrQ> [accessed online: 22 February 2019].

⁹ ‘About - Pop Culture Detective’, *YouTube*, <<https://www.youtube.com/user/rebelliouspixels/about>> [accessed online: 22 February 2019].

¹⁰ ‘Sexual Assault of Men Played for Laughs’, *YouTube*, uploaded by ‘Pop Culture Detective’, 11 February 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uc6QxD2_yQw&fbclid=IwAR1z1QFbEkPb9y_Zhn_ehSfOk6BJxEvrZhvIkIrEOf09qAK2DAhmhID3PrQ> [accessed online: 22 February 2019].

writing this thesis, more critique over what constitutes visual representation of rape has emerged. In January 2019, the BBFC announced that no film *depicting* rape would be rated under a 15 from then on.¹¹ Many films in this thesis are rated 12 or 12A from the BBFC and only time will tell if the consideration of what rape looks like will be extended to comedic male rape.

Further relevant research that could lead on from this study includes that of other kinds of rapists such as devils, demons, ghosts, aliens, angels and others that all are part of the comedic male rape canon. Furthermore, other genres such as sci-fi that use comedy to frame alien 'probing'.¹² An example from television includes *Supernatural*, where the angel Gabriel is thought to be a trickster, responsible for punishing university students in creative and 'light-hearted' ways, including giving a bully memories of being abducted and anally probed "over and over and over again".¹³ The devil, as seen in *This Is The End* is a figure who tortures souls of the damned, and is one to dole out eternal suffering to those in hell. Hell, and the devil are featured in *Little Nicky* (Steven Brill, 2000) with the important task of balancing good and evil. This film features the devil and his minions forcing Adolf Hitler (who is dressed in a French maid's costume) to choose a pineapple which will be forcefully inserted into his anus. *Little Nicky* begins with a peeping tom falling from a tree and dying. He is condemned to hell where he is immediately raped by a daemon and later on in the film, he is again raped as punishment for his actions on earth. The seemingly endless torture of hell brings religious justification to male rape showing a moral stance where rape is not just a deserved punishment on earth, but a divine one.

Dark comedies that blur the line between horror and comedy is an area not strictly covered in this thesis, which can be further developed by looking more into the correlations between horror and comedy. Kevin Smith's *Vulgar* (Bryan Johnson, 2002) is an uneasy watch and is only referred to as comedy by the filmmakers but considered "envelope pushing", "not for all tastes" and made its audience "walk out in disgust".¹⁴ As well as different kinds of rapists and genres of comedic male rape, cult classics can also be looked at for how horror is later seen as comedy. *The Evil Dead* (Sam Raimi, 1981) features both a man and a woman raped by a possessed tree. Known as a 'video nasty'

¹¹ Mark Brown, 'Rape scenes no longer allowed in films rated suitable for under-15s', *The Guardian*, 16 January 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/jan/16/scenes-rape-banned-uk-films-rated-suitable-under-15s?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook&fbclid=IwAR3_5RTPsKV5rpXQJ-XS2zJb7esof8OjsUXuETVrJUxq-BeQvGq_mjQ1LzU> [accessed online: 17 January 2019].

¹² This can be seen in *Independence Day* (Roland Emmerich, 1997) where Russell Casse (Randy Quaid) is laughed at by other men in a bar as he claims he has been abducted by aliens.

¹³ 'Tall Tales', *Supernatural*, TNT, 15 February 2007.

¹⁴ Lou Lumenic, 'Extreme *Vulgar*: Director defends stomach-turning comedy', *New York Post*, 21 April 2002, <<https://nypost.com/2002/04/21/extreme-vulgar-director-defends-stomach-turning-comedy/>> [accessed online 7 January 2019].

The Evil Dead appealed to cult audiences because of the moral panic about the film.¹⁵ Its dated visual effects and repetition changed the position the film is viewed from, making it evolve from a horror to a comedy.

Foucault argues that the relationship between sex and power is characterised by repression as power and is enacted by controlling who can and how one speaks about sex.¹⁶ Silence then becomes part of this control as all discourse that frames how people talk about sex is managed.¹⁷ The power that controls the discourse of rape renders male rape invisible through its comedic context. The laughter that male rape induces is not the maniacal laughter of a captured and restrained serial killer taking pride in his brutality, rather, it is a thoughtless laugh, one that cannot connect the comedy to the brutality. This thesis has explored male rape representation and has found that it is more likely to be in films that put masculine crisis anxiety at the forefront. This is because what male rape looks like, what it represents, and the social influence of its representations all support the idea of 'correct' and 'incorrect' masculinities.

Over twenty years ago, Michael Scarce hoped that more sensitive representations of male rape in film and media would emerge based upon society acknowledging the existence of male rape and being sympathetic towards it. However, this did not come to fruition and more male rape jokes than ever before litter our screens. Perhaps sensitivity is not as powerful a catalyst for change as outrage. Movements such as #MeToo utilise the ownership of the narrative of sexual assault to change the Hollywood system from the inside. New levels of taste and appropriateness evolve constantly but the masculine anxiety that produces such representations will surely remain. Until the current masculinity crisis transforms into something that requires differing representations of its anxieties, comedic male rape will surely continue to be present on our screens. This thesis contributes to a larger discourse of gender representation in Hollywood by shining a light how comedic male rape is depicted, so when we look, we can interpret male rape despite its comedy cloak.

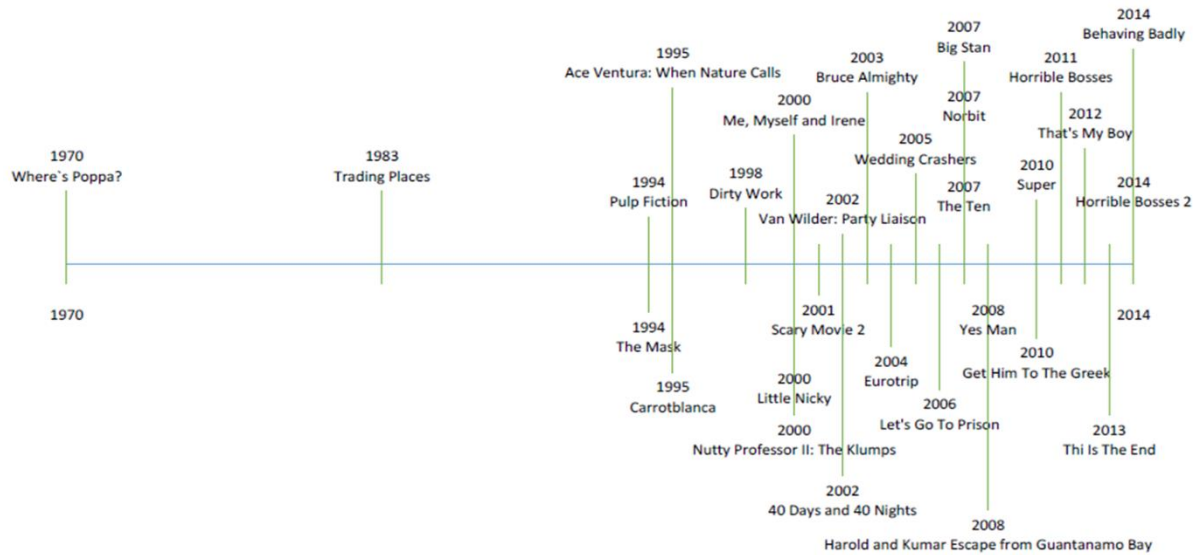
¹⁵ Mark Jankovich, 'Cult Fictions: Cult movies, subcultural capital and the production of cultural distinctions' in Ernest Mathijs and Xavier Mendik (eds.) *The Cult Film Reader* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2008) pp.149-162 (p.161).

¹⁶ Foucault, p.8.

¹⁷ Foucault, p.11.

Appendix A Timeline

Timeline of Hollywood films featuring comedic male rape representation mentioned in this thesis. This image shows the increase of films featuring male rape representations in the mid-1990s and the sparse amount of representations in previous decades.



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[15s?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook&fbclid=IwAR3_5RTPsKV5rpXQJ-XS2zJb7esof8OjsUXuETVrJUxq-BeQvGq_mjQ1LzU](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/jan/16/scenes-rape-banned-uk-films-rated-suitable-under-15s?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook&fbclid=IwAR3_5RTPsKV5rpXQJ-XS2zJb7esof8OjsUXuETVrJUxq-BeQvGq_mjQ1LzU)> [accessed online: 17 January 2019].

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