

5-5-2014

Beyond Consent: Exploring Sexual Violence Prevention at Macalester through a Framework of Sexual Subjectivity and Sexual Ethics

Nola Pastor
Macalester College

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/wgst_honors



Part of the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Pastor, Nola, "Beyond Consent: Exploring Sexual Violence Prevention at Macalester through a Framework of Sexual Subjectivity and Sexual Ethics" (2014). *Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Honors Projects*. Paper 3.
http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/wgst_honors/3

This Honors Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at DigitalCommons@Macalester College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Honors Projects by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Macalester College. For more information, please contact scholarpub@macalester.edu.

Beyond Consent:
Exploring Sexual Violence Prevention at Macalester through a Framework of
Sexual Subjectivity and Sexual Ethics

Nola Pastor

Professor Corie Hammers, Adviser

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

May 5, 2014

Introduction

For decades, the high incidence of sexual assault on college campuses has been a matter of great public concern. In response, many institutions, encouraged both by the demands of students and increasingly stringent federal regulations, have increased the scope of their sexual violence prevention efforts. Colleges and universities employ a range of foci and formats for educational programs addressing sexual violence, and social science research suggests that at least some of this programming results in positive attitudinal change around the issue of sexual assault (e.g. Barone, Wolgemuth and Linder 2007; Coker et. al. 2011; Currier and Carlson 2009; Flores and Hartlaub 1998; Lee et. al. 2007; Smith and Welchans 2000). In other words, student beliefs (around understandings of rape and consent, expressed support for survivors, critiques of rape culture and gender norms, etc.) are measurably different after being exposed to program content. However, it is less clear whether these changes in attitude are long-term shifts, as well as to what extent attitudinal change results in behavior change (Carmody 2005, Coker et. al. 2011, Flores and Hartlaub 1998, McMahon 2010). Sexual violence remains prevalent on campuses nationwide: multiple studies have found that 20 to 25 percent of college women will experience attempted or forced assault during their years in college, and that number appears to be consistent over time (National Institute of Justice 2001, Carr 2005). This suggests the need for ongoing investigation into the content of prevention programs and the principles that guide them. Special attention should be paid to oversights and assumptions that may either fail to address certain dynamics of sexual violence as an

individual and social phenomenon or inadvertently collude with societal norms themselves complicit with, if not responsible for, widespread sexual victimization. It is also important that prevention programs be analyzed in the context of the individual campus cultures to which they belong in order to determine their resonance with local themes, dynamics, and concerns. This project, which uses theoretical frameworks of sexual subjectivity and sexual ethics, aims to explore the underlying philosophies of sexual violence prevention programs by examining the prevention efforts at my school, Macalester College.

I begin by reviewing the development of sexual assault prevention programs on campuses nationwide. This first section lays out what I see as the four main themes in sexual violence prevention programming: risk reduction (generally aimed at women), “men can stop rape” messages, bystander intervention, and the promotion of consent. I explore how each of these discourses positions the sexual subject and offer what I see as the potentials and limitations of each approach. I then explore sexual violence prevention at Macalester College through 21 face-to-face interviews with students and staff members who are involved in efforts to prevent sexual violence on campus, as well as other students who were interested in sharing their thoughts on the subject. Drawing from these interviews, I aim to discern themes that characterize the understandings of sexual violence underlying Macalester’s prevention programs. I attempted to elicit student and staff perceptions of the effectiveness of these programs and their relevance to campus culture and student experience. In short, I went into the process wanting to know what individuals at Macalester see as the strengths and

weaknesses of existing prevention efforts as well as potential means of improvement, especially among those who play a direct role in shaping and implementing the existing programs.

My interpretation of interviewees' narratives is grounded within a theoretical framework that explores the connections among sexual subjectivity, vulnerability, violence, and ethics. To this end, I draw especially on work by Jessica Benjamin, Adriana Cavarero, Judith Butler, Michel Foucault, and Moira Carmody. Moreover, I use feminist theory, particularly that of Andrea Dworkin, to explore how these dynamics are structurally gendered. This approach emerged from the intersections of my own literature review and thinking with my conversations with interviewees. I seek to explore sexual violence prevention efforts not only at individual, interpersonal, and community levels, but also at the subjective level. Throughout the paper, I use the term "subjectivity" to refer to an individual's *own sense of self* in relation to their physical, emotional, and relational experience in any given context. Thus, subjective experience differs from an individual's conceptual perceptions of reality, in that it is grounded in an immediate concern for how one's own being is situated in the world. By focusing on how the sexual subject is positioned in prevention discourse, I aim to make a contribution and potentially an intervention into the existing discourses around sexual violence prevention. That is, I contend that sexual violence prevention efforts often fail to account for this subjective dimension and in doing so fail to comprehensively address some of the roots of sexual violence. I suggest that an investigation of sexual subjectivity in its emotional and relational components is

central to understanding and preventing sexual violence. Recognizing the sexual subject's vulnerability to a partner and to situational dynamics, I affirm that sexual encounters always contain an emotional dimension and the potential for relational confusion. Thus, sexual encounters are potential sites of ambiguity. Engaging in sexual interaction problematizes the idea of a coherent individualist subject because all sexual participants are necessarily and immediately vulnerable to the desires and actions of their partner(s). Therefore, I argue that effective prevention programming must recognize that the desires and needs of an individual sexual subject are shifting, relational, and not self-evident. I suggest that a philosophy of sexual violence prevention that is attentive to these dynamics would frame educational efforts as the promotion and open-ended exploration of sexual ethics. Such an approach would present ethical sexual action as dependent on the thoughtful negotiation of multiple and shifting needs and desires. It would involve recognizing that the content of sexual ethics cannot be universalized or predetermined. I draw on theoretical work by Adriana Cavarero (Murphy 2011) and Judith Butler (ibid, Butler 2010) that frames ethical action as the ability to respond to vulnerability with openness and care. I also explore Michel Foucault's theorizations of ethical subjectivity as critically dependent on processes of self-reflection (Foucault and Rabinow 1997). Integrating these understandings, I develop a conception of sexual ethics as both reflexive and relational.

The first part of this paper lays out these connections among sexual subjectivity, vulnerability, violence, and ethics, as well as their gendered implications and bases. I suggest that sexual violence perpetrated by men against

women is so widespread because men are socialized to reject their vulnerability through the assertion of power over women, who are presented as wholly vulnerable sexual beings. This section pays particular attention to the strengths and limitations of a message of consent in addressing the (inter)subjective nature of sexual violence. I conclude by proposing a framework for sexual violence prevention grounded in a conception of sexual ethics, which would foreground a vulnerable and relational sexual subject with great capacities for self-reflection, negotiation, and care. I suggest that by troubling the coherent, individualist sexual subject and proposing a more subjective and relational understanding of sexual ethics, this model addresses existing limitations and gaps in sexual violence prevention discourse. I argue that these conceptual shifts are necessary to ground sexual violence prevention in a broader vision: the development of student sexual cultures embedded within greater safety and accountability, as well as pleasure and freedom. In later sections, I use this theoretical framework to engage with the sexual violence prevention programs of Macalester College through my interview data. I conclude by recognizing ways in which I believe existing prevention programs at Macalester already engage with sexual subjectivity and sexual ethics in meaningful ways. I also suggest ways in which I believe the college, as well as other institutions, could further integrate such a framework in the interests of more effective and resonant sexual violence prevention programs.

Background: Recent History and Trends in Campus Sexual Violence Prevention

The high incidence of sexual assault on college campuses has gained much visibility in recent years (Gonzales, Schoefield and Schmitt 2005). Student demands and feminist activism have focused attention on the ways in which colleges and universities conduct sexual assault intervention and prevention. This has led to greater federal oversight of campus policies and the passing of multiple laws governing procedures for reporting and responding to sexual violence. The Violence Against Women Act, passed in 1994, required the study of campus victimization (Carr 2005). The 1998 Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, originally passed in 1990 as the Student Right-To-Know and Campus Security Act, mandates that all schools that receive federal funding make annual reports of statistics of crimes in and around campus, including specific categories of sexual violence (Nobles et. al. 2010, Carr 2005, 9). This legislation also requires schools to describe the scope of their crime prevention efforts, including programs geared towards behavioral change (Carr 2005, 9). In 1992, the act was amended to include the Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights, which requires schools to implement prevention measures and provide support to victims/survivors of assault according to certain measures (Gonzales, Schoefield and Schmitt 2005, 1). A milestone in federal oversight came in 2010 when the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights issued a "dear colleague" letter reminding schools of their broad responsibilities under Title IX (Galles 2010, 20). Title IX requires schools to ensure an educational environment free of gender discrimination and sexual harassment. The "dear colleague" letter makes clear that how sexual violence is addressed on campus,

both in individual cases and in the general campus climate, has implications for gender equality. The letter lays out concrete responsibilities that colleges and universities have in relation to sexual violence: for example, it requires the position of a Title IX coordinator, who is responsible for oversight of the implementation of Title IX and for addressing any patterns they see in the processing of complaints (Office for Civil Rights 2010, 7). In terms of prevention, the letter directs schools to take “proactive measures to prevent sexual harassment and violence” in the form of orientation programs, trainings for residence assistants and coaches, and campus presentations (14). These programs are supposed to incorporate information on what constitutes sexual violence, review relevant campus policies and the consequences for violating them, and encourage students to report experiences of violence (15). In 2013, the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act, or Campus SaVE Act, was passed, which consolidates information from the Title IX Act, the “dear colleague” letter, and the Clery Act to create more streamlined guidelines for colleges around sexual violence prevention and intervention (CampusClarity 2013, Clery Center for Security on Campus 2013). The act went into effect in March 2014. According to one interviewed staff member, Macalester already adheres to the vast majority of expectations put forth by the Act, but the institution may have to increase ongoing prevention efforts that target upperclass students in order to fully comply.

Many institutions have responded to the “dear colleague” letter with new or expanded sexual violence prevention programs. Based on my observations of trends in sexual assault prevention programming in higher education and at

Macalester specifically, I propose that the content of this programming can largely be understood to reflect four main themes: risk reduction (generally aimed at women), “men can stop rape” messages geared towards potential perpetrators, bystander intervention, and the promotion of consent. While I see each of these approaches as containing useful aspects, I argue that each situates the sexual subject in a way that limits its power to prevent sexual violence.

For instance, programs based on risk reduction can provide an important opportunity for individuals to think about their safety and be encouraged to advocate for their own interests. However, feminist activists and scholars have criticized risk reduction programs for placing the burden of prevention on potential victims and re-entrenching the assumption that victims will be women – and that women will be victims (Marcus 1992). By teaching women that the key to not being assaulted is to avoid dangerous situations, these programs perpetuate the assumption of women’s vulnerability. As such, they reify dominant gender norms of women’s sexual passivity and men’s sexual dominance that feminist scholarship has identified as foundational to the prevalence and normalization of sexual violence (e.g. *ibid*). While well intentioned, the normatively gendered sexual subject assumed in these programs is irreconcilable with goals of sexual violence prevention:

It is not only misleading to represent all men as ‘dangerous’, it tends to assume that all men are either biologically, socially or culturally prescribed hetero-sexed creatures of patriarchy regardless of the multiple pathways and sexualities associated with masculinity. The flip-side of a totalizing concept of masculinity, is an equally totalizing concept of femininity which robs women of any agency or ability to exert power, express desire, take control, resist, prevent or avoid their victimization in intimate sexual encounters with men. Prevention is a virtual impossibility

within this theoretical framework. Women are 'in waiting' to experience violence and that men are forever paused to engage in it. This approach reflects a fixed subjectivity in which power relations between men and women are deterministically constructed as oppressive and exploitative to women and in which men are all powerful. (Carmody 2005, 468)

In parallel, programming directed at potential perpetrators almost exclusively targets men, which similarly assumes men's capacity for violence and naturalizes their power over and against women. In Michael Murphy's analysis of the national organization Men Can Stop Rape's "Our Strength is Not For Hurting" campaign, he critiques what he sees as a contradictory message that valorizes male strength while condemning rape, which can itself be understood as an assertion of that presumed strength. Similar issues characterize the American College Health Association's report "Shifting the Paradigm: Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence," which suggests that young men can "Be Bold, Be Strong, Take Action!" to address sexual violence even as they are supposed to be critical of pop culture's messages about manhood (2008, "10 Ways Young Men Can Prevent Sexual Violence"). Such messages do not account for the sociological reality that sexual violence is, at least in part, a result of men trying to be bold, strong, and active (Messerschmidt 2000).

This is not to say that prevention programs should ignore the fact that in the vast majority of reported incidents of sexual violence, sexual assault perpetrators are men while women are overwhelmingly the victims of sexual violence. Because men are systemically responsible for so much violence, programs that encourage attitudinal change in male students are potentially important interventions into rape culture. There is some evidence that such

programs are effective in shifting young men's beliefs, if only in the short term (Barone, Rogemuth and Linder 2007; Flores and Hartlaub 1998; Smith and Welchans 2000). However, it is dangerous for these programs to draw on, rather than problematize, the assumed masculine strength and invulnerability of their male participants. It is important that in recognizing the structural reality of gender inequality, we do not reify the sexual subject as dichotomously gendered, as a binary model of sexual power is itself responsible for widespread sexual violence. Combating violence requires an alternative, more critical, and more nuanced vision of the relationship between gender and sexual violence. By grounding structural power differentials in individuals' emotional realities and senses of self, a lens on sexual subjectivity provides such a framework. Such an approach affirms the systemic nature of gendered inequalities but also asserts the reactive as opposed to inherent nature of that inequality. In other words, it recognizes both the social reality and the illusory nature of masculine supremacy and, in doing so, suggests that alternative gender relations are possible.

Gender differences in the social locations of sexual subjects appear to be sidestepped in programs that emphasize bystander intervention, which suggest that anyone can intervene to stop sexual violence from the outside (American College Health Association 2008, "Preventing Sexual Violence through Empowering Campus Bystanders"; Coker et. al. 2011; Green Dot 2010). In this sense, bystander intervention provides a more inclusive and accessible approach to prevention. In addition, there is much value in its focus on creating caring and accountable communities. At the same time, the failure to address individual

subjects' experiences as potential perpetrators and victims of violence makes bystander intervention an incomplete approach to preventing sexual violence. Participants in bystander prevention programs are generally told that there are multiple ways to intervene, both directly and indirectly, in situations that have the potential for sexual violence. This suggests that there are ways to intervene without necessarily engaging in conflict and respects individuals' limitations and inhibitions around intervention, which can be an empowering message. However, in failing to distinguish between direct and indirect methods of intervention, this valuation of immediate action can come at the cost of addressing the ideologies at play in sexual violence. A recent New York Times article on the topic explains that "[i]n the best of circumstances [in which a bystander intervenes], a drunken aggressor won't realize he's been had" (Winerip 2014). While the potential perpetrator is prevented from committing violence in the present moment, his violent subjectivity is left completely unproblematized. Moreover, it is telling that failing to raise awareness in an aggressor is considered *the best of circumstances*, as opposed to an unfortunate but occasionally necessary outcome of prioritizing the immediate safety of potential victims. Of course, an intervention that addresses the underlying dynamics of sexual violence (e.g. a conversation about gender dynamics and sexual entitlement) is not always possible. However, it is worth noting that direct and indirect interventions have different implications for complicating as opposed to normalizing the subjectivities of those involved. Thus, they are not equally capable of instigating cultural change as opposed to (re)normalizing sexually violent attitudes. Bystander intervention programs

address their audience as composed of individuals whose role in sexual violence prevention is not defined by their gender. This is in contrast to traditional programs that address (implicitly or explicitly female) potential victims and (implicitly or explicitly male) potential perpetrators. By not relying primarily on a (hetero)normatively gendered model of the sexual subject, the philosophy of bystander intervention programs is able to address sexual violence without necessarily re-entrenching problematic gender norms. At the same time, these programs leave the actions and subjectivities of individuals uncomplicated. In contrast, I contend that effective sexual violence prevention programs must account for sexual subjectivity and its relationship to sexual violence. In the next section, I expand more on the idea of sexual ethics and its potential for re-framing the discourse around sexual violence prevention.

The fourth main theme in sexual violence prevention programming, and the one on which I focus most in this paper, is the promotion of consent. Messages around consent have played a substantial role in campus prevention programs in recent years. Across the nation, students have led efforts to institutionalize educational programs around consent. These programs propose that sexual violence can be prevented if the person who initiates sexual interaction receives an affirmation of their partner's willingness before any sexual contact begins and at each point before it escalates (American College Health Association 2008, "The Importance of Consent"). This approach is built on the understanding that what makes sexual violence "violent" is that it is nonconsensual – in other words, sexual violence is sexual activity that is unwanted by one of the

individuals involved. Ideally, then, asking for and receiving consent before sexual activity assures that both parties are interested in and comfortable with any interaction that takes place. A focus on consent grounds sexual violence prevention in the needs and desires of the sexual participant who is the least interested in or the least comfortable with the sexual interaction. A model of consent prioritizes the feelings of the sexual respondent as opposed to those of the sexual initiator. As such, it requires that potential perpetrators (initiators) express a level of concern with their (potential) partner's comfort and desire or lack thereof. A model of consent disrupts the potential for individuals to commit sexual violence, either consciously or unconsciously, by promoting communication as central to nonviolent sexual activity. Because programs based in consent encourage individuals to think about the relationship between their own desire and that of their partner, I see such programs as potentially effective interventions into the (inter)subjective context of sexual violence.

However, consent can also be instrumentalized in ways that deeply limit its potential to interrupt sexually violent social scripts. When consent is presented as something to “get” from a partner, especially when the scenario assumes a male sexual initiator and female sexual respondent, it perpetuates the idea that sexual respondents (implicitly if not explicitly women) are responsible for enforcing sexual limits and “gatekeeping” (Murphy 2009, 120; Pastor N.d.). I am concerned that “asking for consent” is sometimes understood as a box for sexual initiators to check off before making a move, as opposed to an opportunity to share thoughts, desires, and concerns with a partner. As such, it can be

communicated as an individualist act as opposed to a relational experience, which greatly limits its ability to pose a meaningful intervention into the (inter)subjective dynamics of sexual violence. In addition, the discourse around consent assumes coherence between what an individual wants and what they are willing to do and between what they are willing to do and what they say they are willing to do. Telling individuals to get consent “at every step of the way” requires that there are discernable “steps” between different levels of sexual interaction and assumes that sexual subjects already know what they want at each point along the way. It also ignores or minimizes the cultural context in which sexual communication is seen as “unsexy” and sexual actors, especially women, are conditioned not to speak to their fear and discomfort in sexual situations. In fact, in the cultural context of compulsory heterosexuality that privileges male desire and assumes women’s sexual accessibility, “heterosexual encounters can easily be narrated in ways where the absence of a woman’s desire and pleasure is not only permissible, but almost unremarkable” (Gavey 2011, 142). Consent discourse also assumes that the exercise of power in sexual encounters is uncomplicated, whereas qualitative studies of young women’s sexual experience demonstrate that sexual relationships can be simultaneously agentic and coercive (Phillips 2000). For instance, Lynn Phillips’ analysis of her interviews with young women suggests that the ability of those who have experienced sexual coercion to maintain a sense of themselves as legitimate subjects, not just passive victims, may depend on being able to recognize their own strategic exercise of choice, acquiescence, and resistance within coercive situations (ibid.). In essence, the

concept of consent largely treats sexual encounters as sites of neat and unproblematic subjectivity. This supposes that one's desires and discomforts are predetermined, evident to oneself, and easily communicated, as opposed to relationally contingent, continually evolving, and often difficult to express in the context of personal, relational, and cultural constraints.

Thus, while I believe an understanding of consent as communication (as opposed to permission) is central to sexual violence prevention efforts, I contend that a simplistic message of consent can be counterproductive. In my analysis, messages of consent are limited in that sexual negotiation is presented as an easy solution informed by a binary model of violence. In contrast, we need to interrogate and incorporate a model of sexual ethics that foregoes neat, objective concepts of sexual violence and sexual consent in favor of non-binary, nuanced, and subjectively-grounded understandings. A more simplistic model of consent potentially alienates individuals who understand their experiences and desires in more complex ways, such as saying "yes" to something they didn't want or wanting something they didn't say "yes" to. In addition, this "yes/no" dichotomy does not aid people in imagining how to navigate the cultural forces that make sexual communication so difficult. I argue that in order to resonate with the experiences of actual sexual subjects, prevention programs must recognize that sexual negotiation is often a site of conflicted feelings and contradictions. I believe this means contextualizing consent within a broader vision of sexual ethics, one that grounds violence prevention in the complex realities of participants' sexual desires and experiences. Affirming that sexual violence is a

subjective experience of violation, I argue that preventing it requires that individuals be fundamentally concerned with their partners' feelings, as well as their own. Thus, the approach I propose focuses on sexual encounters in their emotional and relational respects, especially as these include feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability. I suggest that sexual violence prevention programs encourage personal reflection on one's own sexual practice and desires through open-ended dialogue around the concept of sexual ethics.

Following this line of argument, then, each of these four approaches – risk reduction, “men can stop rape”, bystander intervention, and promotion of consent – fails when it does not address the subjective context of sexual violence in the interest of articulating a framework of sexual ethics. Thus, while I believe each of these approaches has something to offer within sexual violence prevention discourse, I see them as limited in their ability to create healthy campus sexual cultures – that is, cultures in which students have the tools to act as accountable and caring sexual subjects. In my analysis of sexual violence prevention programs at Macalester, I see aspects of each of these four main themes but find a focus on consent to be most prevalent, with a message of bystander intervention just beginning to enter the campus discourse. In the final section, I discuss what I see as the possibilities as well as the limitations of existing programs for encouraging the development of ethical sexual subjectivity in the context of Macalester.

Shoring up the Self or Being Beyond Ourselves: Sexual Violence, Subjectivity, and Ethics

Traditional sexual assault prevention programming tends to take for granted the existence of a stable, coherent, and separate individual subject. In my analysis of these programs, I find that ideals of personal responsibility, respect for one's own boundaries and those of others, and advocacy for one's own interests underlie such programming (see also Diprose 1998). They stress a focus on individual agency and self-possession, which are indeed meaningful components of sexual violence prevention efforts. However, the ontological assumptions implicit in messages of self-control and sexual boundaries ignore the limits and dangers of atomic individualism and the self-determining subject.¹ Here, feminist theory provides a crucial intervention by suggesting that these (masculinist) ideals are themselves implicated in sexual domination. In this section, I build on scholarship that explores how discourses of individualism and self-control have been used to justify violence as a means of maintaining subjective boundaries. Using this scholarship, I argue that sexual violence prevention discourses that take an individualist subject as their center are limited in their capacity to effectively address violence. Instead, I suggest that we need to frame sexual violence as a response to subjective vulnerability and relational complexity. I then turn to theories on ethics to discuss how reflection on vulnerability and relationality could prove to be solid grounds for a sexual ethics that addresses the subjective

¹ The inadequacy of such a model is well documented in phenomenological as well as feminist psychoanalytical accounts of the subject (see Merleau-Ponty 1962, Chodorow 1989).

roots of sexual violence. I propose that such an approach would mediate the dangers and limitations of a model focused solely on individual action by adding emotional and relational context to the conversation around sexual violence. This approach, which foregrounds a model of sexual ethics, is a potential intervention into the existing discourse around sexual violence prevention. In particular, I see the interrogation of sexual (inter)subjectivity in the context of sexual violence and prevention as a contribution to literature in this area.

The traditional subject of Western thought is expected to be capable of self-mastery and to maintain the boundary between self and others. Substantial feminist scholarship illuminates the misogynist foundations of such a subject, which universalizes a masculinist concept of personhood and denigrates the relationality and emotionality associated with the feminine. According to Susan Bordo, this model of the subject dates back to the Enlightenment (1986). She argues that the idea of a separate self, in control of itself and the world around it, arose in response to the anxiety of living in an era of uncertainty, characterized by plagues, famines, and natural disasters. In other words, the idealization of individualism came about as a way to reject and to erase a sense of vulnerability.

Similarly, Jessica Benjamin suggests that sexual violence can itself be an attempt to achieve the ideals of control and independence when faced with ambiguity in the sexual relationship (Benjamin 1983, 282). While her article “Master and Slave: The Fantasy of Erotic Domination” is based on erotic dominance as fantasy and ritualized practice rather than nonconsensual domination/assault, it provides a useful framework for thinking through the

subjective dynamics of sexual violence. According to Benjamin, the appeal of sexual violence is fundamentally linked to the cultural ideal of rational and separate individualism. Sexual encounters involve the desire for recognition. As such, they reveal one's dependence on and vulnerability to an other, leading the subject to realize that it is not self-contained or self-sufficient (281). Sexual intimacy problematizes the ideal of a contained and self-evident subject by presenting it with internal contradictions and multiplicity: "The erotic experience is one that most poignantly discloses to human beings the ambiguity of their condition; in that they are aware of themselves as flesh and as spirit, as other and as subject" (Beauvoir in Diprose 1998, 10).

This ambiguity poses great challenges to a rational, individualist ideal of the subject. It is especially problematic for men, who are conditioned to aim for a separate, coherent, and masterful sense of self. In large part, patriarchy has functioned through the insistence on and idealization of male invulnerability. This entails rejecting the dynamics of dependence and connectedness associated with the feminine and with a loss of control (Benjamin 1983, 294). Dworkin describes how the objectification of women is a means by which men "distract themselves from their own nakedness," which is to say their own vulnerability (1987, 33). Violence against women emerges as a response to the simultaneous desire for and fear of intimacy and the "ego loss" that necessarily accompanies it:

The men, civilized, in shells of identity and abstraction, are imprisoned in loneliness, unable to break out of their self-preoccupation. They look, but what they can see can only be known through undefended touch, the person naked inside and out. The women are the escape route from mental self-absorption into reality: they are the world, connection, contact,

touch, feeling, what is real, the physical, what is true outside the frenetic self-involvement of the men, the convulsions of their passionate self-regard. Wanting a woman to be naked with, wanting to be skinless with and through her, inside her with no boundaries... ..wanting fucking without barriers and wanting preservation of self at the same time leaves men “*surfeited with loneliness.*”...Unable to transcend ego, to be naked inside and out, or being left alone...the men use violence—capture, murder, violent revenge... (33-34)

Taken together, Benjamin’s and Dworkin’s analyses suggest that systemic sexual violence perpetrated by men against women can be understood in terms of a traditionally masculine inability to reconcile individualist selfhood with the relational requirements of sexual intimacy and its inter-subjective implications. Under a patriarchal power arrangement, women’s bodies and subjectivities come to compensate for this contradiction. That is, the vulnerability and dependence inherent in sexual intimacy are relegated to women, while the cultural mandate of masculine self-control is displaced in the form of control over women. This allows men to situate themselves as masterful subjects even as they experience relations in which their capacity for control is fundamentally compromised. Positioning women as always already sexually disenfranchised facilitates the pretense that only women are vulnerable in sexual interaction. This reassures men that they can experience the fulfillment provided by intimacy without bearing its accompanying risks. However, when men find themselves to indeed be physically and emotionally vulnerable in situations of sexual intimacy, resorting to violence becomes a way of reaffirming their supremacy and independence. Men (re)assert themselves as dominant precisely in the moments where their invulnerability appears to be at stake. Therefore, sexual and other intimate relationships between

men and women are sites of such pernicious violence precisely because they elicit male vulnerability and dependence, which men learn to repudiate through acts of misogynistic domination. Ironically, this reading suggests that the normalization of men's power – in the form of a social discourse that automatically affords them an active and dominating subject position in relation to supposedly passive and subordinate women – has its roots in a visceral fear of powerlessness.² This suggests that men are the primary perpetrators of sexual violence because they are least able to confront their own vulnerability. Because of different experiences of socialization, women have historically had greater capacities for navigating emotions and maintaining relationships (see, for example, Gilligan 2010). In other words, they have been more able to recognize their own and others' vulnerability and respond with care.³

Sexual domination is the assertion of one's own will and desire without regard for, or deliberately against, the will and desire of the other. According to the above analysis, this violence serves as a way to avoid engaging with one's

² For a historical analysis of the role of masculine insecurity in the formation of a dominant white masculinity based in physical power in the transition to modernity, see Kimmel 1994.

³ However, Benjamin's analysis suggests that as masculine ideals are increasingly universalized and applied to women as well as men, modern women's sexuality is expected to reflect these same principles of independence and self-interest:

To an increasing extent this form of individuality is becoming de-gendered... The traditionally female side of selfhood—stressing dependency, connectedness, yielding over separateness, difference, assertiveness, and above all stressing nurturance over control—is derogated whether or not it is associated with women directly. (1983, 294)

This idea was reflected by one of my interviewees, who said that in trying to “have sex the way a man is expected to have sex”, she ended up “being mean” and disregarding her partners' feelings.

own complex and vulnerable subjectivity: “It may be, then, that the primary motivation for maintaining inequality in the erotic relationship, and ultimately for establishing the master-slave constellation, is the fear of ego loss—the boundless” (Benjamin 1983, 290). In essence, what Benjamin’s analysis suggests is that at the subjective level, ideals of independence, individual boundaries, and self-control can potentially *encourage as opposed to mitigate the development of a sexually violent subjectivity*. Dworkin also speaks movingly to sex as an occasion of vulnerability that can elicit either empathy or violence, depending on one’s willingness to be vulnerable or, as she puts it, to “be seen” (Dworkin 1987, 32). Without the courage to risk connection “past the boundaries of identity,” (33) the insecure sexual subject resorts to objectification and violence (Benjamin 1983 288).

It is important to understand sexual violence in relation to (inter)subjective vulnerability. This suggests that sexual violence prevention must in part require the acknowledgment of subjective risk. In their work on embodiment, Judith Butler and Adriana Cavarero assert that the recognition of one’s own vulnerability and the vulnerability of others can provide the grounds for a relational ethics that “recognizes, and honors, the dependence of self on other” (Murphy 2011, 578). Butler explains that by virtue of our physical embodiment, we exist in a constant state of vulnerability to others. While this “fundamental sociality of embodied life” (548) is often the occasion for violence, it is also the foundation for the creation of ethical relationships and the pursuit of social transformation (551). Similarly, Cavarero explains that the reality of vulnerable embodiment can elicit

responses at any point between the “two poles of...wounding and caring” (Cavarero 2007, 20).

These theorizations of interdependence not only articulate embodied vulnerability as universal to human experience, but also suggest that subjective vulnerability and disorientation can be relationally and ethically productive. For Butler, engaging responsibly in social life “requires a certain openness and unknowingness” (Butler 2010, 552). Being with others – mutually and morally – entails the courage to be beyond ourselves as fixed subjects. This view exists in powerful contrast to societal (masculinist) ideals of individualism and self-containment, and it has especially provocative implications for men. Sharon Marcus argues that recognizing that men are also vulnerable bodies, capable of experiencing as well as inflicting injury, has the potential to interrupt rape scripts in which men are assumed to be capable of rape and women are assumed to be rapable (Marcus 1992). In other words, the assumption of male invulnerability is central to the normative rape script. In contrast, scholarship around male embodiment suggests that recognizing the male body’s vulnerability to the world around it has ethical implications for creating caring relationships (Hamington 2002, Lorentzen 2007).

The recognition of embodied interdependence has the potential to generate ethical relationships, but only if individuals choose to respond to vulnerability with care. Michel Foucault articulates an ethics in which caring for oneself provides the foundations to care for others (Carmody 2005, 469). For Foucault, the development of ethical subjectivity depends on the relationship one has with

oneself, a relationship in which self-reflexivity is crucial (ibid). Self-knowledge is the keystone to the ethical negotiation of power:

[I]f you take proper care of yourself, that is, if you know ontologically what you are, if you know what you are capable of...if you know what things you should and should not fear, if you know what you can reasonably hope for and, on the other hand, what things should not matter to you, if you know, finally, that you should not be afraid of death—if you know all this, you cannot abuse your power over others. (Foucault and Rabinow 1997, 288)

His analysis implies that self-awareness serves to prevent interpersonal violence through the mediation of subjective vulnerability (the fear of death). It is the process of self-reflection that makes this awareness possible and lays the grounds for ethical action (284).

I propose that effective sexual violence prevention efforts should encourage participants to reflect on their own sexual desires and experiences. This reflection could provide the background for a shared exploration of how to ethically navigate the vulnerable and complex nature of sex. In “Ethical Erotics: Reconceptualizing Anti-Rape Education”, Moira Carmody argues that sexual violence prevention efforts should take into account the “many and varied ways in which people negotiate intimate sexual encounters” (2005, 478). In Carmody’s qualitative interviews with 26 women and men, individuals reported a range of strategies for negotiating their own needs and ethical sexual conduct that “included verbalizing clear expectations and limits, non-verbal bodily movements, trial and error, time, taking risks in self-disclosure, trust, flexibility and receptiveness of a partner, self reflection and monitoring their own responses” (473). Carmody’s analysis suggests that effective approaches to sexual violence

prevention would aim to help individuals imagine a similarly expansive range of possibilities for ethical sexual interaction. It would also help them envision how to navigate the slew of barriers to comfortable ethical negotiation that arise in sexual encounters.⁴

In “Sexual Ethics and Violence Prevention,” Carmody uses Foucault’s understanding of sexuality as composed simultaneously of desire, acts, and pleasure to contend that ethical sexual subjectivity requires “a consideration of the interrelationships” among the three (2003, 211). This must involve asking how the initiator’s subjectivity and desire might be implicated in ethical as opposed to violent conduct. It also means focusing on the non-initiating partner’s subjective experience of desire, or lack thereof. In addition, prevention discourse largely fails to ask what it means to pursue pleasure in an ethical way, or at what point a focus on pleasure might compromise sexual ethics (or vice versa). Posing these questions will not result in easy judgments about what is or is not ethical sexual conduct. However, I believe that examining sexual desires, pleasures, and acts in concert is necessary to account for the many interdependent and potentially conflicting factors involved in sexual encounters. It encourages individuals to frame their decisions about sexual actions in terms of their own and their partners’ desires and pleasures, thus grounding sexual ethics in a relational context of care for oneself and the other. In addition to grounding a conversation about desire in a

⁴ Carmody found these barriers to include “[p]erformance anxiety and shame, self-consciousness regarding their body, fear of rejection, anxiety about certain acts, lack of experience or bad previous experiences, pressure to please others and changing levels of desire,” few if any of which are ever addressed in sexual violence prevention efforts (2005, 473).

framework of ethics, extending the conversation about sexual ethics to a consideration of desire also opens the sexual encounter up to interrogation and accountability before sexual interaction begins.

There are many implications of applying this model of sexual ethics to sexual violence prevention programs. I pay special attention here to interrogating the concept of consent as it is traditionally presented in educational prevention efforts. A clear-cut definition of consent as the line between assault and consensual sex is a necessary tool with which to hold perpetrators accountable, and it provides a way to recognize the experiences of survivors. The message of consent speaks to the fact that, fundamentally, the prevention of sexual violence depends on individual accountability for ensuring that one's acts do not violate another's integrity. In addition, a concept of consent has the potential to encourage individuals to reflect critically on their sexual experience, while also promoting communication between sexual actors and in doing so implying a degree of mutuality. This makes it a central vehicle for ascertaining the affinity or disconnect between one's own sexual subjectivity and that of an other. As such, it is a necessary component for ensuring ethical sexual action.

However, in order to feel relevant to individuals' complex experiences with sex, consent must be contextualized within a broader conversation around the subjective nature of sexual negotiation. I assert that, unfortunately, consent can be used to shut down conversation rather than open the door to discussion around sexual complexity. This is evident in Carmody's "Ethical Erotics: Reconceptualizing Anti-Rape Education," in which she takes issue with a

simplistic “code” of consent that seeks to predetermine individual sexual behavior (2005, 478). Carmody’s analysis suggests that sexual violence prevention efforts that position the line between ethical sexual negotiation and coercion as self-evident and categorical, thus easily overcome in practice, ignore relational complexities that inhere in sexual interaction. As such, this approach does not address how one might go about navigating this sexual terrain.

I agree with Carmody that without greater context, a message of consent leaves individuals with a teaspoon with which to gauge and address the ocean of ethical, as opposed to violent, sexual possibilities. Telling individuals that avoiding perpetrating assault is easy – all you have to do is ask – denies the difficulty of sexual negotiation and the vulnerability it requires to initiate, as well as to accept or reject, sexual interaction. It also forecloses a multiplicity of questions individuals might have about consent, especially in regards to desires and comfort levels that are not static or self-evident, either to one’s partner or one’s self. I suggest that when the complex and subjective nature of sexual negotiation is collapsed into a unified concept of consent, it becomes possible for individuals to “learn” the idea without understanding the practice. In other words, individuals exposed to consent-based programming might very well be able to demonstrate an attitudinal shift by expressing what consent means at a conceptual level, without necessarily having any idea how to communicate effectively or comfortably with a partner in any given sexual situation. I believe that this disconnect could be addressed by grounding prevention programming in a

framework of subjectivity: that is, one based in participants' personal experiences and senses of themselves as sexual subjects, individually and in relationship.

In contrast, a simplistic focus on verbal consent privileges the absence or presence of a "yes" from the non-initiating partner, often without demonstrating concern for their subjective experience of desire or lack thereof. This is not to say that an individual's spoken expression of willingness/desire or discomfort/disinterest is not important, but it should not be the only measure by which a sexual initiator measures the ethicality of their acts. In addition, a simplistic message of consent fails to explore the potential vulnerability or discomfort of sexual initiators themselves. A more open-ended conversation respects the validity of individuals' potential questions and concerns about consent and creates space to collectively generate answers. At the same time, such a dialogue recognizes that ethical sexual interaction is determined by the subjective experience of the individuals involved and is thus context-dependent.

Moreover, a focus on subjective reality also allows us to recognize experiences that individuals have trouble identifying as either violent or consensual. That is, the binary conceptualization of assault as it is currently conceived largely marginalizes sexual encounters that contain elements of domination, force, or coercion in addition to desire, pleasure, or agency (see Phillips 2000 and Gavey 2005). For instance, the familiar refrain in sexual violence prevention discourse that "rape is not sex" may lead individuals to feel alienated if they experienced sexual pressure, discomfort, or fear in an encounter that also involved moments of attraction, agentic choice, or pleasure. This is

particularly troubling in the context of a heteronormative culture in which sexual coercion in many forms – especially when practiced by men against women – is normalized to the point where some level of sexual pressure is taken to be inherent to sex.

Thus, I suggest that sexual violence prevention efforts should be grounded in the complex realities of individuals' sexual interactions. Drawing understandings of violent behavior from the subjective experiences of sexual actors would make the content of prevention more relatable to participants; furthermore, it would allow us to generate more concrete and personal visions of ethical sex. It would also make room for individuals to share painful or confusing experiences and receive support, whether or not they identify themselves as a victim/survivor of violence.

A comprehensive approach to prevention would involve a shared exploration of what sexual violence means *subjectively*: the similarities and differences in how it feels to different individuals, the range of situations in which someone might feel violated, the specific actions of partners/perpetrators that cause discomfort and fear, etc. Given the presence of victim-blaming attitudes in society at large as well as in prevention discourse (for example, within risk reduction programs), we must ensure that a consideration of the complex subjectivities of survivors of assault does *not* situate them as responsible for their own experience of violation. Conversely, I suggest that incorporating a subjective lens on sexual violence will work to validate survivors' subjective experiences. In addition, it points to a model of sexual ethics in which initiators (potential

perpetrators of violence) are accountable to the desires and pleasures (or lack thereof) of their partners. This would facilitate dialogue around what ethical sex might look like in practice by investigating conditions in which individuals experience safety, mutuality, and pleasure. Ideally, sexual violence prevention programs would promote an understanding of consent as concern for oneself and one's partner and a commitment to communication as a means of reconciling multiple, variable, and potentially conflicting needs and desires. It would then engage participants in imagining the concrete practices and relational contexts that make this possible.

Recognizing the subjective vulnerability and relational complexity of sexual encounters means committing to a sexual ethics that is not self-evident and cannot be easily summarized. It entails creating supportive environments in which individuals are encouraged to reflect on their sexual desires and experiences, as well as how sexual "subjectivity and desires are shaped by cultural norms and expectations and how we can choose to accept or resist them" (Carmody 2003, 211). Carmody's research speaks to the importance of shared dialogue around concrete questions about sexual relationships and behavior:

[W]e need to hear much more from women and men who engage in ethical sexual relations, how power relations are negotiated and how our subjectivities are influenced by cultural norms and social practices. How do differently sexed and gendered women and men negotiate casual, short-term and ongoing relationships? Given the myriad of influences that shape our subjectivity, how is it that some of us are able to resist using violence in intimate relations while others do not? (2003, 212)

These questions will likely make many people uncomfortable, and they do not have easy answers. However, the sexual ethics I propose and discuss here

suggests that the capacity for ethical action, perhaps especially in sexual encounters, relies on the ability to experience vulnerability and confusion without resorting to violence.⁵ I suggest that open-ended reflection allows individuals to imagine ways of responding to vulnerability and ethical indeterminacy before they encounter situations in which these skills are immediately necessary. It also creates a context for processing and learning from our complexities, joys, and injuries of past encounters that may be missing in the community at large. In addition, it creates a conversation around sex that, as opposed to focusing solely on what should not be done, elicits and affirms the positive possibilities of sexual interaction – connection, intimacy, pleasure, exploration, learning and growth, etc. As such, this approach may be more resonant with participants’ sexual desires, hopes, and experiences. While individuals must exercise their own ethical self-reflection, we need to foster this process in community practices and relationships, so that all can learn from the thoughts and experience of others.⁶ Certainly, there will be moments in which some individuals feel frightened, confused, or guilty by frank dialogue around the challenges of sexual negotiation in their own and others’ experience. However, I argue that the significance of

⁵ That the presence of vulnerability in intimate relationships has the potential to facilitate sexual equality and ethical relating is also supported by qualitative data on adolescent experience (Giordano, Longmore, and Manning 2006; Holland et. al. 2004; Korobov and Thorne 2006).

⁶ Jean Keller suggests a dialogical model of autonomous decision-making, in which friendships can provide the context for an individual to “*envisage* a variety of solutions to the problem at hand and to *imagine* the likely results of carrying them out” aided by the reflections of an other (1997, 161). This suggests the use of dialogical relationships for the development of individuals’ ethical subjectivity and sexual decision-making.

such conversations cannot be understated. We must create spaces where individuals can engage and discuss the emotional and physical contours of sexual intimacy and the potential dangers, risks, and possibilities therein.

To reiterate, the sexual ethics I propose includes the affirmation of verbal consent as a crucial means of negotiating ethical sexual interaction. However, it also recognizes that the development of ethical sexual subjectivity is a broad and nuanced process that extends well beyond the sexual encounter itself. The complex relationships between one's own desires and pleasures must be navigated continuously, self-reflexively, and with care by sexual subjects who are willing to risk their own subjective (in)security in the interest of nonviolent negotiation. Efforts towards sexual violence prevention, then, must support individuals in imagining and evaluating a wider range of possibilities for ethical sexual interaction. In part, this involves interrogating how sexual assault prevention programs position the sexual subject. I assert that in order for sexual assault prevention programs to interrupt violent sexual scripts effectively, they must engage the sexual subject as vulnerable, self-reflexive, and relational. This approach affirms that sexual violence is problematic precisely in that it is experienced subjectively as violation; this refocuses prevention as concern for all parties, as opposed to concern with adherence to sexual limits and rules.

In my interpretation of interview data that follows, I draw on interviewees' perceptions of Macalester's sexual culture(s) to investigate the role that vulnerability plays in sex and sexual violence on campus. I also explore to what extent the content of Macalester's sexual violence prevention programs addresses

subjective and relational dynamics of sexual experience and, in doing so, reflects a framework of reflexive, relational, and contextual sexual ethics. In the concluding section, I reiterate what I see as the ways in which sexual violence prevention at Macalester successfully utilizes a framework of sexual ethics and engages themes of subjective vulnerability and caring relationality in the promotion of ethical sexual interaction and negotiation. I close by offering potential suggestions regarding how Macalester – as well as other institutions – could (re)frame sexual violence prevention through the lens of sexual ethics and, thus, contribute to the creation of student sexual cultures that are safe and accountable as well as open and affirming.

Sexual Violence Prevention at Macalester

Methods and methodology

For this project, I was interested in speaking to those involved in sexual violence prevention on campus as well as other students who were particularly interested in sharing their thoughts on this topic. This is an IRB approved study. All participants were given pseudonyms so as to protect confidentiality, and data was stored in a secure location.⁷ My data comes out of 21 in-depth, face-to-face interviews with staff and students at Macalester College, and also includes written responses I received via email from a few participants who responded to follow-up questions. Staff participants were recruited through personal emails. I began by

⁷ However, when interviewees mention the names of individuals on campus in relation to work they do in sexual violence prevention and/or response, I do not use pseudonyms to disguise the identity of these individuals. This is due to my belief that transparency in participants' perceptions of different efforts, which can at times only be identified in relation to those who implement them, is important to their meaningful evaluation.

contacting individuals involved in sexual violence prevention on campus and then asked them for suggestions of other staff to speak to. Student participants were recruited via word of mouth, email, and notices I put in the college's electronic daily newsletter. I sent emails to those involved in the peer sexual health education program (SEXY) and others who had expressed interest in informal conversations about the project. At the end of each interview, I encouraged the participant to give my contact information to those they thought might be interested in participating in this study.

The 21 interviews I conducted included one joint interview with two participants. Of 22 participants, nine are staff members in the Dean of Students Office, Campus Life, the Department of Multicultural Life, Health and Wellness Center, and Residential Life. Four of these individuals are trained facilitators of the Green Dot bystander intervention trainings, while three participants are members of the college's Sexual Assault Support Team. These staff members are trained to support students who have experienced sexual harassment or violence (Macalester College 2013, "Sexual Assault Support Team"). Finally, three are members of the college's harassment committee, which receives and processes harassment complaints (ibid., "Macalester College Harassment Committee").

Among staff participants, four identified as white, two as black and/or African-American, and one as "of color, a Latina". The other two staff members did not explicitly identify themselves in terms of race and ethnicity, although one spoke of European immigrant grandparents. In terms of gender, six identified as a woman or female, including three who identified themselves as cis-gender; two

identified as a man or male; and one did not directly address their gender identity. Five staff identified as middle class, either now or in general, and four spoke of coming from lower middle class and/or working class backgrounds. Two individuals did not directly speak to their class identities. Six individuals identified as straight, heterosexual, and/or in a heterosexual relationship. Of the others, one identified as gay, one as “mostly straight queer”, and one did not address their sexual identity.

Due to my recruitment methods and my interest in the perspectives of those involved in sexual violence prevention programs on campus, my sample of 13 student interviewees is very skewed towards those who already had experience with the topic of sexual violence and prevention. Four are educators in the SEXY peer education program that coordinates presentations on sexual health for first year students; four work in Health Promotions with the “Consent is Mac” and “Stop at Buzzed” education campaigns (which aim to raise awareness about the importance of consensual sex and responsible drinking, respectively); four had experience facilitating conversations about consent with first year students as Orientation Leaders or mentors in International Student Programs; and three had participated in Green Dot bystander intervention training. One student had been involved in a sexual assault task force on campus made up of both students and staff members. My interview sample includes eight seniors, three juniors, one sophomore, and one first year. The fact that this sample is very skewed towards upperclass students reflects my own status as a senior and the role that my social connections played in helping me find students interested in participating in this

project; I believe it also reflects that upperclassmen are more likely to occupy positions of leadership and were thus more likely to hear about the project through the more targeted outreach I conducted. That said, it would have been beneficial to have a more representative sample of student perceptions across class years.

Of the 13 students I interviewed, 10 identified as white and/or Caucasian. One participant identified as “mixed race but I appear Caucasian”, one identified as a person of color, and another individual identified as Mexican-American. This proportion of students of color to white students in my interview sample reflects Macalester’s predominantly white student population: in the current year, 21% of the student body is made up of students of color (ibid., “Fact Sheet 2013-2014”). The lack of racial diversity in my student sample might also reflect my own position as a white student at Macalester, and that my recruiting methods began from my own circle of friends who are mostly white. It was not until partway into recruitment that I became more intentional about finding a more diverse sample by, for example, sending out information about the study to listservs of the Department of Multicultural Life and International Student Programs. As far as I am aware, none of my participants found out about the study through these channels. Multiple participants brought up in interviews how themes such as hookup culture are racialized and classed discourses that are themselves exclusive of students of color, working class students, and first generation college students; I imagine that having a more racially-diverse student sample would have contributed important depth to my understanding of Macalester’s sexual culture(s)

in relation to sexual violence and prevention. Two students identified their class background as upper middle class, two as middle class, two as lower middle class and/or working class, and one as “privileged”. Two students spoke about experiences of class fluidity or mobility, and three did not identify their class background. Two students identified themselves as female, five as male or a man, three as cis-gendered, and one as a “more or less cis-identified female”. Two participants did not speak explicitly to their gender identity. Six student participants identified as straight or heterosexual; two as queer; one as gay; one as homosexual; and one as “sort of...bi-curious”. Two students did not identify themselves in terms of sexuality.

The interviews ranged from about 30 to 80 minutes and were all recorded (except in the case of one participant who asked me to turn the recorder off partway through) and transcribed using audio transcription software. They were all conducted on or near campus. Interviews with staff members were conducted in their offices. Interviews with students took place in a range of locations, including empty rooms in the student center, isolated hallways and spaces in the library, the dining hall during non-meal hours, and students’ apartments near campus. The format of the interviews was semi-structured. I went in with a set of potential questions and themes, such as the role of gender in sexual violence, the relationship between alcohol and sexual violence, and the dynamics of Macalester’s sexual culture(s). While I had a list of questions, my foci also evolved as new topics surfaced and patterns emerged during the interview process.

I used qualitative methods, specifically in-depth face-to-face interviews, as I see participants' experiences and subjectivities as critical to this project. I wanted this project to reflect a commitment to feminist methodology, allowing each interview to form around the interviewee's unique position and what each wanted to share. Qualitative research is essential to feminist inquiry more broadly as it illuminates that emotional life and relationships, long discounted by masculinist thought, are sources of meaningful knowledge (see Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). My use of qualitative methods, then, is in concert with a feminist theoretical framework that privileges the subjective dimensions of knowledge production and social realities. In short, this project is one of feminist praxis within social research. Given my feminist foundation, this project is meant to challenge social injustice by bringing a more comprehensive and critical understanding of the dynamics of sexual violence and prevention. In doing so, I hope that it aids each of us in imagining how we might participate in the creation of a safer, more caring, and more accountable sexual culture.

I come to this project self-reflexively with preexisting beliefs and experiences about the possibilities and limitations of the world and sexual violence prevention more specifically. My own foundation and identities – as a white (cis)female middle class sexually unidentified senior at Macalester – also inform my own engagement with this project and broad approach to sexual violence discourses around prevention. My proximity to the programs and campus sexual culture with which I engage made me especially invested in attempting to create a research process that was thoughtful and accountable. Finally, this paper

is not an objective or exhaustive analysis of sexual violence prevention. Rather, I sought in this project to explore what I see as missing links in the discourse around sexual violence prevention in terms of how it positions the sexual subject.

In the section that follows, I explore sexual violence prevention programs and how they address the subjective and relational dynamics of sexual experience in order to lay out the way such programming reflect – and could better reflect – a framework of sexual ethics. I then turn to my interview data discussing key themes that emerged around gender, alcohol and hookup culture, and consent.⁸ I conclude by identifying how I see Macalester’s sexual assault prevention programming engaging sexual subjectivity as an arena of vulnerability, relationality, and nuanced ethical possibility. I also suggest ways in which I believe the college could further address these themes within sexual violence prevention in the hopes of untangling the (inter)subjective dynamics of sexual violence.

Sexual Violence Prevention Efforts at Macalester

Sexual assault is a widespread reality on campuses nationwide, and Macalester is no exception. During the 2012-2013 school year, there were 13 reported sexual assaults on campus (“This Matters @ Mac” 2013). The college addresses sexual violence with a range of prevention-oriented programs. In this section, I briefly review the “Unless There’s Consent”/“Every Choice Matters” modules for incoming first years, “This Matters @ Mac” orientation presentation, SEXY peer education program, “Consent is Mac” campaign, Green Dot trainings,

⁸ Where interviewees’ thoughts appear in italics, the emphasis is my own.

keynote speakers, and “This Matters @ Mac: Continued Conversations series”. The realm of sexual violence prevention at Macalester can be seen to include a much broader range of programs, such as passive programming (e.g. bulletin boards) and the efforts of student organizations. In addition, my interviews illuminated a slippage between prevention and intervention: supporting students who have experienced sexual violence, whether in a counseling capacity or by assistance with adjudication, can be viewed as a preventative measure in that it may contribute to the safety of individual students. It may also help to create a campus climate in which there is awareness around sexual violence and support for survivors is valued. I want to make clear that by not addressing the topic of response to sexual violence at Macalester in this paper, I do not mean to imply that there is not work to be done in this area. I wish I could do justice to the stories I heard of direct and indirect experiences with response procedures, but I feel that is outside the scope of this project.

While I consider all of the above efforts to be important, I chose to focus on institutionalized programs that have a broad target audience and where the primary aim is prevention. Honing in on formal prevention efforts allows me to examine institutional capacities as they relate to sexual violence prevention policies. My review of these programs here is intended to provide basic context for my interview data.

A series of online modules viewed during the summer before freshman year is the first vehicle through which Macalester students encounter sexual violence prevention education in the context of the college and its values. Until

this current academic year (2013-2014), the college used a module program called “Unless There’s Consent”, which was replaced this year by the “Every Choice Matters” modules. As the name suggests, the “Unless There’s Consent” modules are largely dedicated to explaining the concept of consent and the importance of clear sexual communication (Student Success 2009). The language of the program is grounded in gender differences. The modules include an analysis of gender differences in communication styles, sexist language used to talk about sex, and gendered cultural norms that pressure men to be sexually active and women to be sexually attractive. Significantly, this program has separate sections for female and male viewers.

While both address intimate violence prevention, the content of the Every Choice Matters modules, an initiative of the organization Green Dot, is substantially different (Every Choice Matters 2013). This program covers the prevention of sexual violence, domestic and dating violence, and stalking, including definitions of and statistics about each category of violent behavior. The central idea behind the modules is bystander intervention, seeking to empower viewers to intervene actively in situations that are violent or have the potential to be violent. The videos advocate three different types of intervention: direct, distract, and delegate.

When first year students arrive to campus, they encounter the topic of sexual violence prevention again during their first week at Macalester through an orientation program called “This Matters @ Mac”. “This Matters @ Mac” is a mandatory aspect of orientation, and one staff interviewee estimated that 90 to 95

percent of first year students do attend. The program's content includes definitions of personal power-based violence, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. It also covers the various channels through which these behaviors can be addressed (anonymous reporting, campus disciplinary proceedings, legal charges) and on- and off-campus resources available for individuals who have experienced violence. A large portion of the program is dedicated to the topic of consent; it also provides information about alcohol and drug use at Macalester and the impact on the wider campus community. This year, the concept of bystander intervention was introduced, modeled off of Green Dot's promotion of the three types of intervention (direct, distract, and delegate).

During the first month of the school year, first year students are also exposed to sexual health education through the SEXY program. SEXY, which stands for "Students Educating X's and Y's", is a program through which peer educators do one-time presentations on sexual health concepts on each first year dorm floor. The curriculum begins by defining and affirming the importance of consent in all sexual interactions. Like "This Matters @ Mac", SEXY provides statistics of recent sexual violence incidents on campus and covers what to do if you experience sexual violence. SEXY educators also go over bystander roles and ways to intervene in potentially dangerous situations, as well as the impact that alcohol can have on sexual decision-making. Finally, the program communicates the importance of using language that is inclusive to all people's sexual and gender identities. It ends with a review of sexual health resources available on

campus, a chance for students to anonymously ask questions, and an opportunity to sign the “Consent Pledge.”

The Consent Pledge consists of a list of sexual rights and responsibilities (Macalester College 2012). It is a component of the “Consent is Mac” campaign. Today, the campaign is organized by student workers in Health Promotions, who design consent-themed posters and table for the campaign by giving out free “Consent is Mac” T-shirts, buttons, and tattoos (with the hope of expanding to include consent-themed boxers) and encourage students to sign the “Consent Pledge.” In line with the introduction of Green Dot bystander intervention trainings, “Consent is Mac” is also in the process of adopting content on bystander intervention.⁹

This current academic year (2013-2014) is the first during which Macalester has implemented Green Dot bystander intervention trainings. The daylong training includes extensive conversation around how to intervene in situations of power-based personal violence. Because Green Dot is grounded in a research approach that requires consistent collection of data around students’ responses to the program’s content, the curriculum is relatively predetermined by the national organization. However, staff participants who have been involved in the implementation of Green Dot said in interviews that steps had been taken to make the content more relevant to the cultural context of Macalester (for example,

⁹ The Health Promotions student workers who lead this campaign also organize “Stop at Buzzed”, which involves a poster series and tabling campaign to encourage students to drink safely and responsibly, a message that definitely intersects with the promotion of consent.

changing language and scenarios to be more inclusive of non-normative gender identities and dating relationships).

As evidenced above, much of Macalester's sexual violence prevention programming is directed at first year students. As a way to continue the conversation among older students, the college hosts a presentation each fall by a speaker who in some way relates to the topic of sexual health and sexual violence prevention. Each year, one of Macalester's staff members, Keith Edwards, a nationally recognized speaker in the area of sexual assault prevention, conducts a presentation titled "Ending Rape." Edwards' talk emerged frequently and powerfully in interviews, which testifies to its impact on students. The presentation explains the concept of rape culture, gives examples of ways in which rape culture is perpetuated, and explains the importance of consent. It addresses how men are also hurt by rape culture as well as how they can be involved in the struggle against sexual violence.¹⁰ In a further attempt to expand the conversation across class years, a series of events was introduced this year such as "This Matters @ Mac: Continued Conversations" which consists of three lunches on the topics of healthy relationships, supporting a friend who has experienced sexual violence, and bystander intervention.

Each of the above programmatic efforts addresses sexual subjectivity and sexual ethics in that they ask participants to engage with emotional and relational aspects of sexual interaction. However, aspects of these programs also perpetuate

¹⁰ Other keynote speakers have included Lisa Wade, a sociologist at Occidental College who studies college hookup culture, and organizations such as I Heart Female Orgasm and Men Can Stop Rape.

problematic gender norms, contain simplistic understandings of violence, and offer an instrumental idea of consent. As will become clear in my discussion of interview data, these components limit our ability to intervene in an area I deem central to sexual violence prevention: that of (inter)subjectivity. In the sections that follow, I highlight both the strengths and the weaknesses of existing programs through my interpretation of interviewees' thoughts on gender, alcohol and hookup culture, and consent.

Gendered contradictions in sexual violence prevention discourse at Macalester

Gendered norms in relation to sex and sexual violence constitute a central theme of the interview data. In part, this is a result of the fact that I approached the project as a feminist researcher well read in feminist theory on the gendered foundations of sexual violence. However, the focus on gender also grows out of the Macalester campus ethos, in which “heteronormativity” is a buzzword and awareness of gender inequality widespread. Participants affirmed that at Macalester, “we are better at gender” (Mark, staff member): that is, there exists a general critique of sexism. That said, many also spoke to the fact that the college exists within a broader culture from which we are not separate, and that sexist victim/survivor-blaming and slut-shaming attitudes definitely exist on campus. Interviewees also identified attitudes that place limits on men’s sexual expression and their ability to step forward if they experience sexual violence.

When asked about the role of gender in sexual violence, all interviewees articulated a concept of rape culture, patriarchy and/or gender dominance and seemed to believe, at least in part, in the social reality of these ideas. They were

aware that the vast majority of reported assaults involve men as perpetrators and women as victims. Many participants identified the social pressure women face to be sexually attractive but also the expectation to resist sex, as well as the belief that men will always want sex, as factors in the normalization of sexual violence. Some framed sexual violence as a matter of male power and entitlement. I will return later to how students saw these gendered sexual pressures playing out in their personal experience.

Some participants used a feminist critique to recognize rape as a learned behavior in a sexually violent culture, rather than isolated incidents committed by perverse individuals or brought on by victims themselves. In contrast to the “stranger in the bushes” theory of rape, interviewees repeatedly referenced the fact that the majority of assaults are committed by a partner, friend, or acquaintance of the victim. Some participants used this view of rape as an effect of a sexually violent society to frame perpetrators of sexual violence as products of rape culture and not necessarily bad people.

Most interviewees recognized the utility of including a gendered lens on sexual violence in prevention programming, and a few spoke to the value of exploring the impact of gendered socialization around sex in single-gender groups. But some also appreciated approaches to sexual violence prevention, such as bystander intervention, that are able to sidestep a gendered script. Liz, a staff member, expresses this view:

[W]hat I really like about the program is that it takes a different approach to the prevention efforts I see happening nationwide...on campuses, it doesn't take the blame the victim or the...blame the men approach...it really steps back and says, *this isn't about...you know, creepy men who*

hang out in bushes and jump out and attack people. This also isn't about women who drink too much and wear short skirts and then this happens to them, right. This is about everybody.

There is a clear tension in the discourse around sexual violence prevention at Macalester: that of emphasizing and minimizing a gendered reading of sexual violence. In part, this is due to the difficulty of affirming the existence of non-binary gender identity and queer sexual experience while recognizing the systemic nature of hetero- sexual violence. Interviewees spoke to the reality of violence against queer and trans* bodies as a social punishment for not fitting into the heteronormative gender binary. They also asserted the need to recognize that rape is not always committed by men against women and that the assumption that it is can make it harder for queer and trans* people to come forward and seek support after experiencing violence. For instance, Mila, a senior, expressed her disillusionment with the “Unless There’s Consent” in regards to how they depicted gender:

Because it was like the stupid bro who was like, I don't need to think about this...and the woman who was like I'm so victimized! And I was like, oh, come on, we can do better than that...And then the other thing I remember was like most of the time feeling so freaking alienated by them as a queer woman. Because, at the beginning they did a disclaimer that was like, we recognize that sexual assault can occur in a lot of different circumstances. That said, we're only gonna be talking about violence that men commit against women. And I was like, the fuck! Like, having a penis and having a vagina...does not change any of the dynamics here. Like, yes this is embedded within a lot of things about structural sexism and power dynamics, but, the fact is, no matter what body parts you have, no means no, yes means yes.

Mila was not alone among interviewees in her frustration with gender stereotypes in the “Unless There’s Consent” program. However, she appreciated the use of gender-neutral language and what she saw as general inclusivity in the recently-

introduced “Every Choice Matters” modules. Eva, a junior, was especially concerned with what she saw as cis-genderism within the “Consent is Mac” campaign, with which she has been involved. Many staff also described frustration with what they see as a heteronormative prevention narrative on campus and the exclusions that entails, such as expressed by Ella, a staff member:

[I]f...we talk about sexual violence within queer and trans communities...it seems to just be like oh and it happens here too...And so it seems to be minimized, so I think we really need to work on a more all-inclusive message about, like, sexual violence in the human community.

Both staff and students talked about Keith Edwards’ annual presentation on “Ending Rape” as very heteronormative but also extremely valuable. I return to interviewees’ thoughts on the power of this presentation later.

That said, many participants also spoke to the various ways in which gender inclusivity is already enacted within prevention programming. For example, gender-neutral language is used throughout the SEXY program, “Consent is Mac” posters feature a range of couples, and the national Green Dot curriculum was adapted to be less gendered and thus more appropriate for a Macalester audience. However, some, like Liz, a staff member, also indicated the ease and “efficiency” of using a traditionally gendered framework to talk about sexual violence: “I think the easy way to talk about this is through a heteronormative gendered lens... And sometimes the easy way gets us to the message faster.”

Another difficulty of talking about gender in relation to sexual violence at Macalester is the question of how a feminist critique positions women’s agency. Some staff members, such as Mary, recognized the value of awareness raising and

risk reduction elements in prevention programming, “with caveats that we’re not blaming the victim”. They also spoke to the need for bystander intervention content that encourages individuals to watch out for each other. At times, these aims of self-protection and protection of others in the context of a rape culture were presented as in conflict with feminism’s focus on women’s sexual self-determination, as Mark, a staff member, articulates below:

I also think...there is this sort of thread that can come up at Macalester...there’s this sort of neoliberal, we live in a post-sexism...America, right? And so...women owning their sexualities is an empowering feminist thing, which is true, but if you’re not gonna recognize that you do that in the toxic culture of...patriarchy and sexism and how women are socialized to value themselves, it’s not like you just independently decided you wanted to be sexually empowered. You’re deciding to be sexually empowered in the context of a culture that says that’s the only power that you really have that’s legitimate. So how do you know what you’re choosing and what you are being complicit with?

Thus, feminism is framed as potentially at odds with a social constructionist lens on gender. In particular, the affirmation of women’s self-determination and agency is positioned as in conflict with the recognition that gendered cultural norms shape individual women’s decision-making.

On the other hand, feminism was also positioned within many interviews as a structural critique of gender that was more exclusive and less easily grasped than, for example, a bystander intervention model focused on individual empowerment. I was struck by the recurring perception among interviewees that bringing a feminist lens on gender to sexual violence prevention can make the content of these efforts inaccessible. Both staff members and students spoke to the need to make prevention programs accessible for students who do not possess a critique of structural sexism: “If you try to get everyone to talk about sexual

violence as a cultural phenomenon in a patriarchal context that is reinforced by the gender binary, you're gonna miss a ton of people" (Mark, staff member). As a feminist researcher, there were moments in interviews when I was surprised by the strength of the language used to express this idea of the inaccessibility of a feminist critique. For instance, one staff member, Mary, spoke about the risk of falling into "radical, leftist...intellectual elitism", even as she asserted her own valuation of and affinity for a gendered lens on sexual violence. Ultimately, then, feminism was constructed across some interviews, albeit often subtly, as a double-edged sword: too individualist to account for the impact of gender socialization on one's behavior and the risks of rape culture, but too abstract a social critique to resonate with individual students. While I am interested in the implications of these views for perceptions of feminism in sexual violence prevention work and in higher education more broadly, I forego that train of inquiry to focus on how I see a framework on sexual subjectivity as a potential bridge across these contradictions.

The embodiment of and resistance to structural gender norms in sexual subjectivity

Some student participants spoke about how gendered expectations and scripts inform their own sexual lives and subjectivities. I read their articulate insights into the internal and relational contours of gendered sexuality to suggest that a feminist framework on sexual violence *can* be communicated in a way that is understandable and feels relevant to students when it is grounded in a lens on embodied subjectivity. It is important to note that all of the students cited here

were voluntary participants in a project that they knew to be a product of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies department, and most of them had some training in sexual health or violence prevention. Thus, it is likely that a broader range of students would have provided less reflective responses to questions about gender. However, I believe that the kinds of gendered experiences described here are not uncommon or hard to uncover in individuals' sexual experiences. I suggest that grounding a feminist structural critique in concrete emotional and relational experiences to which participants could relate would address the issue of inaccessibility. This would provide a means of reconciling a gendered analysis of rape culture with one that is relatable and immediate to students' experiences.

I see the possibility for such an approach in several narratives in which individual students demonstrate an understanding of, and often a resistance to, structural gender norms through a description of their lived experience in relation to their sense of self. Sara, a senior, talks about how her subjective understanding of consent is fundamentally gendered and influenced by cultural norms:

I guess I have very...stereotypical views of what males want...so I just assume that guys always want sex, like that's what culture tells us, always. And so as a female, when you talk about consent, it feels like the burden is on you to define the boundaries, right, guys will go as far as they want, and it's up to the girl to set the limits. So consent really doesn't feel like a two-way conversation in that sense, it's just, you decide and that's gonna be what the end is, and so, you're compromising...what is gonna happen between you and your partner, because you're the one who has to say no, or has to say stop. And they're always gonna be disappointed. So that's kind of a challenging, like I don't know how you fix that expectation. That's what it feels like.

In this narrative, Sara privileges "what it *feels* like" to her to negotiate consent as a woman in a straight relationship. In doing so, she weaves a social critique on

gender norms and the discourse around the masculine sexual drive into her own lived emotional and relational experience. Lucy, also a senior, talks about similar experiences with sex in which she felt the burden of female “gatekeeping” with sex, which she felt was “reinforced” by the “Unless There’s Consent” modules:

So like I would almost be counting down, to like okay, like now it’s going too far... So instead of being like, what do I want to do tonight it was like this is inevitably what’s going to happen, what do I not want to do... So, it kind of sucked... that I got that message sort of reinforced by those modules [...] I just never thought of women as having agency... I always believed the myth that it’s like, men wanna have sex all the time, and like, sex is just not that good for girls. Because I never heard anything to the contrary from any of my friends. Like I understood the like desire to have sex, but I had never had it really fulfilled. Like I’d never come away from sex being like, that was amazing. And I was like, why, like what is wrong with me? Why doesn’t it feel good... And I think a lot of what was holding me back is like a) like high schoolers are just terrible at sex, and b) like I was just spending all my time being really scared about when I would need to stop the sexual encounter. And being really like nervous, like so nervous I don’t think I like necessarily was feeling, like pleasure from sex.

Like Sara, Lucy describes how cultural narratives about women’s lack of agency and men’s insatiable desire can become embodied in one’s own physical experience of pleasure or lack thereof, as well as in one’s sense of self (“I was like, why, like what is wrong with me?”). She identifies similar ways that gendered scripts intersect with herself as a subject in her decision to stop using the word “bitch” and her frustration with the idea that as a woman, she is supposed to be “chased after” by guys. Significantly, in these two examples, she also frames her own experience in relation to cultural norms as one of resistance:

I feel like a lot of times people complain about Macalester, like dating, hookup, sexual scene or whatever, by saying that like, the guys here aren’t, like, man enough to like, go and ask a girl out. And that’s really frustrating because... I like to pursue people, and I like to have it be more equal. I like to make my own decisions, like I don’t wanna rely on someone, like coming up to me and asking me out on a date. ‘Cause like,

maybe that's not what I want... I feel like people are like yeah, sex positivity! And then complain that like, men aren't stepping into their gender roles, because like the women are all here, like we're all waiting, but like why can't you, you just make the move, you know?

Mila, another senior, speaks to the implications of gendered sexual scripts as she sees them playing out in one of her past relationships. In doing so, she also problematizes the dominant narrative about who holds power and initiative in sexual encounters:

[A]s someone... who identifies as queer, has never slept with a guy but who has made out with folks who identify as guys, I've noticed that when I'm in that situation with someone who identifies as a cis-male, the way they behave to me is very, very different... Like I was with one guy for awhile who, it was awesome, it was really fun, I liked it, but his instinct was, when we were making out to like pick me up and, you know, kind of toss me around a little, and I really liked it, I was into it, but... but that also is definitely part of the social script, this idea that as a female-identified person I am to be manipulated in this scenario. And I can definitely see how that is such a slippery slope, to-to failing to ask consent because that's not how lots of young men are trained, and to failing to realize in the moment that your consent is not being asked on the part of the woman, because we're trained to accept that kind of behavior.

From a male perspective, Adam, also a senior, talks about his subjective relationship to masculine ideals and at the same time provides a cultural critique of gender as constructed:

I think a lot of it has to do with an idea of dominance and competitiveness which is, uh, extremely important in our society in a lot of ways... Speaking as a privileged white male who exists in a society that is dominated by such types like, being dominant is a constant underpinning of... a lot of my thoughts and a lot of what I want to accomplish. And, I view that conquering over a different sex is seen as like, sort of a glorious thing. And in reality, it really shouldn't be. Like, we should be much more caring... And I think a lot of that gets lost... I think the way that the sexes are portrayed in the media, there's not that much difference between men and women. There's not that much difference, and I'm simplifying this, obviously, but gender is performed, so.

Adam goes on to describe his perceptions of Keith Edwards' "Ending Rape" talk:

[H]e talks about sexual violence from a male perspective, um, which doesn't happen that often...men are the most often the perpetrators of sexual violence...and so usually it can be alarming to talk about such issues because you're the oppressor. And talking about any issue as an oppressor is difficult...But for me it was kinda nice, 'cause, it opened it up in a way, it opened a dialogue in my mind.

In this provocative train of thought, Adam implies that what is powerful for him about Edwards' presentation is that it "opens up" the possibility of a self-reflexive male subjectivity that can talk about and act against, not just perpetrate, rape. This is in stark contrast to norms of rape culture that would position every man as a potential rapist with few other viable subject positions.

While Adam's seeming identification with an anti-rape masculine subjectivity leads to an subjective "opening up", the number and nature of available subject positions presented in sexual violence prevention discourse can also lead to a shutting down of subjective possibilities. Dylan, a sophomore, talks about how his identification with the "bro" of the "Unless There's Consent" modules that Mila critiqued earlier led him to feel alienated from the program as a whole:

[I]n all honesty, and this isn't in keeping with your WGSS background and all that, but...there was this one, you know typically kind of macho guy, really, pretty like conservative ideas on everything, very like, quote unquote traditional, whatever, and then there was...a man and a woman...you know kind of like educating him about, well actually, it's much more nuanced and this and this...he's saying these things that are like pretty widely thought but actually hold no value in this way...and *you know it's supposed to be this kind of intellectual you laughing at him, like aha you're just ignorant, you don't understand this, and I just agreed with him really wholeheartedly on some of these things*, like yeah that's a really reasonable thing to say, and then their point didn't really touch it at all [...] it was just like somebody kind of told me their opinion for awhile and wasn't really willing to hear the other side, *it was like oh, okay, great, I don't really care that much* in all honesty... So...I don't know how effective that was for me.

When the subject position of a “typically kind of macho guy” with which he identified was framed as ignorant, Dylan felt frustration around not having his own opinions and those of people in his hometown validated, and this emotional reaction made it difficult for him to take the modules’ content seriously. Like Adam, he found Edwards’ presentation to be much more meaningful and effective than the modules:

[M]aybe not everyone got the same thing out of it that I did because, you know because I am a white straight male...But you know there’s nothing I can do about that so *it’s trying to figure out how I can, you know, responsibly navigate my own world* and I think that was really important for me to hear...from Keith...*all the different aspects and different nuanced perspectives that can come out of just having that identity in this larger thing [...]* [H]e used a really good example of him...you know him so well known on campus and still there are times when he’s walking at night with, and there’s like, a young student woman who passes him, or is walking in front of him or something, and you know...he can just tell from body language that she’s you know just kind of uncomfortable, if it’s not a well lit area or anything like that, his presence makes her uncomfortable, and *there’s not a whole lot you can do*...because that’s just...kind of the nature of it...*there was just a lot of perspective to hear that seemed a lot more relatable*...

As it did for Adam, Edwards’ talk provided Dylan with a subject position that was responsible, nuanced, relatable, and, importantly, leaves room for vulnerability and a sense of powerlessness (“there’s not a whole lot you can do”). Edwards’ example about his own discomfort with being seen as a threat on campus gives male viewers the opportunity to frame themselves as individuals who experience the negative effects of rape culture, not just subjects who perpetuate it (Edwards and Headrick N.d.). As such, it is both easier to access and more empowering than “this kind of black and white thing that I kind of got from the module.” Significantly, this approach allows Dylan to not have to apologize

for his identity. Similarly, Nelson, a senior, talks about the conflict between his multiple identities and the subject positions available to him within prevention discourse:

...it's hard to be in a position where...I'm trying to change...rape culture, but, I'm getting part of the blame at the same time, you know, it wears out even my patience. It's hard to say like well hold on, first of all, I'm on the good guys side...and secondly I'm a survivor!

Nelson's lived experience and his analysis of gender dynamics within the discourse against sexual violence speak to the need to create inclusive, flexible subject positions that allow individuals to embody multiplicity as simultaneously victims and advocates, privileged and oppressed.

This section on the role of gender in sexual assault discourse at Macalester is intended to demonstrate that a structural critique of gender can be made accessible to students through reflection on their own lived experience. Moreover, it affirms that an approach grounded in the nuances of subjective experience is more effective than one that prescribes (hetero)normative gender roles in sexual prevention. In contrast, “[p]revention is a virtual impossibility” when programming presumes a binary “fixed subjectivity” that positions women automatically as potential victims and men as potential perpetrators (Carmody 2005, 468). In addition to being true at the level of social reality, this resonates with my findings on individual subjects’ ability to find a place within (gendered) prevention discourse. In order for students to take up a critical, empowered, and accountable subject position, they must feel validated in their own sense of self. In the case of female students, this empowered subjectivity can form through “talking back” to and actively resisting an oppressive culture, as we see in Lucy’s

deliberate choice to stop using the word “bitch” and Mila’s incisive critique of gender normativity in the “Unless There’s Consent” modules. When it comes to male students, facilitating the adoption of resistant and accountable subjectivities means making room for a subject position other than that of the oppressor. Like Dworkin, participants in this project affirmed the reality of male vulnerability and the fear and loss that can come with “being seen” (1987, 32). We see this literally in Edwards’ analysis of men being seen as a threat on campus at night: “In that moment we are being feared as potential rapists. We are not being seen for our intelligence, our caring, or our humanity” (Edwards and Headrick N.d., 167). Moreover, these narratives demonstrate that the affirmation of one’s vulnerability can be pivotal in the development of ethical subjectivity. Nelson talks about the power of the willingness to be vulnerable as a survivor, in order to facilitate understanding and positive change in others:

I’ve spoken to a hyper-masculine close friend of mine who used to make rape jokes in my presence. And it took me awhile to have the courage to do so, but I said to him, look I want you to stop making rape jokes, and he [said] rape culture’s not a thing blah blah blah, the response you might expect. And I said actually it is, and I’m a survivor, and it was, if not the worst, one of the worst experiences of my entire life, and I need you to stop. And I didn’t say you’re a bad person, I didn’t say shame on you...I just said hey I’m in your life, it means a lot to me, please stop.

This mirrors Cavarero’s and Butler’s understanding of the recognition of vulnerability as central to ethical relating (Murphy 2011). I suggest that Edwards’ presentation’s engagement with vulnerability resonates with Adam and Dylan because as (white, hetero) men (who, as far as I know, have not experienced assault) they are searching for a viable place in sexual violence prevention discourse. Incorporating a similar lens on vulnerable subjectivity into other sexual

violence prevention programs, particularly ones that address gender norms and gendered roles in sexual violence, could make them more relatable and, thus, more effective.

The next section covers the role of alcohol and hookup culture as a vehicle through which to explore the role of (in)vulnerability in Macalester's sexual culture(s) and the implications for sexual violence and prevention.

Intentional carelessness and subjective vulnerability: Alcohol, hookup culture, and sexual violence at Macalester

The themes of drinking and hookup culture surfaced repeatedly throughout interviews. Hookup culture is understood by participants in this study, as well as in the sociological literature, as a realm of sexual activity largely inseparable from substance use, especially alcohol (Wade and Heldman 2012). In addition, interviewees speak to the compulsory nature of casual sex, especially drunk casual sex, within hookup culture. Lucy, a senior who spoke thoughtfully about both the empowering potential and the pressures of the discourse around "sex positivity" on campus, describes it thusly:

[T]his, like, expectation that like, you have to be hooking up with people all the time. I don't know if other people interpret it that way, but...I certainly feel that a lot...like if I don't go home with someone at the end of the night...I've failed. But like why do I feel like that? Like I don't think anyone's ever been like, you need to hook up with someone every weekend, or you haven't done college right. But it's just something about it.

Amelie, also a senior, agrees: "I've felt- feel this pressure of everyone is having sex, and if you're not having sex at a period of your life or a semester, that's something you better get on it, you know." This sense of active participation in

hookup culture as the only “right” way to do college was echoed time and again in interviews.

Additionally, interviewees described drinking as a way to construct a persona of casualness and carelessness in a party context. Their thoughts echo the findings of sociologists about “the role of alcohol in maintaining the meaninglessness of sexual activity. More than simply disinhibiting students, alcohol functioned to establish the illusion of carelessness required by the hookup script” (Wade and Heldman 2012, 129). By mandating that individuals hide or deny their own desire and investment in a potential hookup partner, this expectation within hookup culture forecloses open communication. Susan, a staff member, and Amelie, a senior, expressed this perspective in a joint interview:

Amelie: [T]hat respectful, continued, sustained, just communication beyond the act itself...whatever that may be, is absent. And is lost and not expected...both partners don't feel that responsibility.

Susan: Yeah, what does that teach you...about being human and connecting as a human?

Moreover, many interviewees connected this deliberate lack of investment to a sexual environment of “meanness”, in which it is appropriate if not encouraged not to acknowledge your hookup partner the next day, since the hookup mandates “not only that you enjoy casual sex but also that you have an active *disinterest* in your sexual partner” (Wade and Heldman 2012, 129). In contrast, participants described casual sex as “different” from a hookup due precisely to its greater relationality, in which partners are able to stay friends and to “acknowledge the fact...that you have some kind of sexual interaction” (Amelie).

Importantly, participants identified the combination of alcohol, sex, and purposeful lack of investment as a way to reject one's own vulnerability:

[T]o me it says something about the intentionality of the role of alcohol, the intentionality of, *I don't have to be vulnerable...* whether or not I was drunk... I can say I was so that if I'm rejected I'm not vulnerable... or we can use it as an excuse, we don't even really remember, or when he doesn't remember my name, I was drunk too – *there's something there about deflecting the emotional...* it sanctions... mistreatment... (Mary, staff member)

Mistreatment of a sexual partner by way of “deflecting” emotional responsibility thus acts as a cover for one's own vulnerability and investment in another person. This investment does not necessarily constitute the desire for emotional commitment or a “relationship” but rather reflects the fact that – as put forth in my theoretical framework – sex is always a relational and emotional affair. Linda, a staff member, describes this inherently interpersonal and subjectively deep nature of sex:

[T]here's a lot involved with sex in terms of, you know, *your whole person is kind of in there*, so it's kind of not really meaningless... And the relationship doesn't necessarily have to be this is my, you know, soul partner... But there's some sort of relationship where you're not ashamed to see the person the next day, kind of a thing... *you just had this encounter with someone... it's hard to make that meaningless...*

Emma, another senior, also talked about the emotional implications inherent in sex and the difficulty of maintaining sex as casual: “for emotional involvement, I think sex like brings a level of intimacy for two people... which can get complicated really fast even if it's set up to be in a detached manner, just for my experience that's been the case.” These participants' understanding of sex as inherently relational and emotionally-invested echo Benjamin's analysis that sex

always involves subjective (inter)dependence and “the hope of being recognized” (1983, 287).

Interviewees also articulated how deliberate carelessness about sexual interaction, fueled by alcohol, sets the stage for sexual violence. This is reflected in the fact that the great majority of reported sexual assaults on campus involve substance use, as both staff and students were aware. Mark, a staff member, tells us that: “I don’t know that I can name one report of sexual assault [at Macalester] that didn’t involve alcohol or drugs by one or both...of the individuals involved...And that’s not uncommon.” The majority of participants identified that being drunk impedes one’s ability to give consent. I suggest that just as importantly, deliberate intoxication in the name of casualness or carelessness is almost antithetical to being invested in your partner’s needs or wants, or perhaps even your own. As Delia, a staff member, articulates, in hookups, “the investment looks a little different, I think that care for another person looks a little different” – in fact, that care appears to be taboo in the context of a normative hookup. Rather than locating the root of sexual violence solely in the moment of drunken sexual encounter, I would argue that the seeds of violence begin with the intention of unaccountability and the lack of concern for the other that this almost necessarily entails.

One interviewee had experienced assault on campus by someone she knew and trusted. Diana describes the context of her assault:

When I was sophomore I was...very drunk at a Kagin dance. And one of my friends was going to walk me home but he had to go and...find one of our other friends to tell him that we were leaving, and while I was waiting someone else who I trusted...who was a year older than me, came and

offered to walk me home himself, and I was like okay great. And then we ended up, I don't really remember much of it, but I ended up at his house instead of my own... And, I feel like, what happened was not what I wanted, and not what I had anticipated, and going into that night, and like accepting a walk home... And not what I ever thought that he would do. Because, I knew that he was someone who had taken all these sexual assault modules and also he, he was sober, he doesn't drink... But I know that like, I know that he did not intend to hurt me... But I felt very violated...

Her narrative grounds sexual violence in the subjective emotional reality of feeling violated, which may not find validation in the existing conceptual understandings of assault that hold social weight:

I had...no intention of reporting it, *I just wanted to like, know if I was allowed to feel the way that I felt*... Because no one ever talked about that. And I was like, you know, comparing myself to the stories that I heard about, like a woman gets raped in South Africa every seven seconds or whatever. And it's like that's not, that's not really what happened to me but something happened and it wasn't what I wanted... So what does that make it? [...] I want people to know that they're entitled to feel like they're *allowed to feel hurt*... And they're allowed to feel like something bad happened to them.

Moreover, it illuminates weaknesses in existing Macalester sexual violence prevention programs. In particular, it brings home the need for programs that promote concern with one's partner's subjective experience over and above commitment to "consent" as a concept or sexual rule:

...I don't think that he intended to hurt me. I just think that he didn't realize that like I wasn't able to give consent. Which is sort of ridiculous because, because of the job that he has, I know that he's gone through like all of the trainings... So, I was kind of surprised that he didn't understand why I was upset. And that he didn't see it the same way that he like, *he thought that he had covered his bases, is how he put it*...

While the perpetrator of assault in this narrative was not intoxicated, he acted – both in the moment of assault and when Diana confronted him afterwards – with disregard for her physical, emotional, and subjective state. Most significantly,

when confronted with the knowledge that his actions violated her integrity, he said he felt that he had “covered his bases”, a response which shows a complete lack of self-reflexivity or empathy. I present this story to frame the relationship between alcohol and sexual violence as problematic not solely because intoxication impairs decision-making – as so many interviewees identified stridently – but more poignantly because it facilitates the evasion of responsibility for another. The fact that Diana was drunk made it possible for the perpetrator to push forward an encounter without her consent or interest – but the root problem is not that she was drunk, nor that he was sober, but *his denial* of her subjectivity, emotions, and desires. The promotion of sober as opposed to drunken sex, as Mark proposes as a way to prevent sexual violence, would certainly make it more difficult for individuals to act out violent subjectivities – desires and self-concepts that do not account for the other – in ways that do harm, and this is a worthy aim in and of itself. However, the discourse around sober consent does not fully interrupt the role that purposeful carelessness plays in hookup culture and in its participants’ subjectivities. Pursuing sex while claiming a lack of investment leads to an understanding of sex as a-relational. This implies if not necessitates a lack of concern for one’s partner as a subject, as literature on hookup culture has found: “More than simply casual, students reported a compulsory carelessness: norms of sexual engagement required students to have sex without caring for their sexual partner” (Wade and Heldman 2012,128).

At the same time, this ethos of unaccountability appears to have its appeal, as multiple interviewees attest. Sara describes her own interest in party culture:

[P]eople use alcohol as an excuse to get out of accountability for their actions. And that should be unacceptable. But it happens anyway. I do this myself to some extent. *Sometimes I get tired of being so controlled and want to just 'let go'* and use alcohol to be less concerned about dancing at a party (or at Kagin¹¹).

Other students' narratives also illustrate how this need for "release" as a motivation to participate in drinking and hookup culture plays out in their own experience. Importantly, participants explained the desire to participate in a space where "the rules don't apply" not as an isolated phenomenon, but in direct relation to the high level pressures, academic and otherwise, that students face at Macalester. Ella, a staff member, describes this connection:

[S]ometimes I think it's about entitlement. I've worked really hard, I deserve to get...what I want right now, and what I want is some...*physical release of whatever stress I'm feeling*. And I don't think that that awareness really goes beyond, here's where I am right now... *I don't think it really extends to the other person...* ...there's this sense of immediacy and the need...for instant gratification... I think of how hard I see students working and how focused they are and like, I just gotta get this done and once I get this done then I can X, like, I'm gonna pull two all-nighters and then I'll be able to sleep... So there's...this degree of discipline...that is around all of these academic things... And...maybe that stretches that discipline to its absolute limits. *And we aren't good...at living balanced lives... So no limits with as hard as I'm gonna work, no limits with as hard as I'm gonna play.*

While staff narratives often focus on the relational "meaninglessness" and carelessness that students are pursuing in hookup spaces, Lucy's analysis of

¹¹ "Kagin" is the colloquial term for the club-like dances held regularly in the Kagin building on campus, which are notorious for being sexually "loose," if not predatory, spaces. Mark described Kagin dances as a "kind of toxic cesspool" that on bad nights generate vomit, harassment of staff, transports to the hospital, and sexual assault reports. In addition, many interviewees said they had heard stories of students who were groped in Kagin and who responded with a sense that that harassment was inevitable in the space.

Kagin dances illuminates how underlying these problematic social scripts is the desire, not for casualness, but for connection:

I also just feel like it brings up this underlying issue: that people think that the best place to hook up, even if it's with someone they genuinely like and want to pursue further, is at a place where they're inebriated...like there's no option of just kissing someone while you're studying. Even the concept of asking someone out for a drink—do you see the problem behind that? *That everyone's trying to get their defenses down, to relax a little bit just to connect emotionally and physically to a potential partner?* That's weird, man. But I totally do it.¹²

Sara also talks about the contradictions of the hookup script as a vehicle simultaneously for release and for closeness:

Nola: Or what do you think people are looking for?

Sara: I don't know. Easy sex?... Especially because we're all so stressed, right?... But at the same time... I don't want to discount the fact that people are looking for connections. You know, *they want that connection with another person, they want to feel close to them, at least for a little bit...* I'm not so pessimistic to say that people only want to just have sex with...as many people as possible. I don't think that's true... But I think that's another thing that people probably don't feel okay talking about with a partner...I mean could you imagine? Like, stopping and being like let's talk! (laughs) Nnnoo! Nobody does that! *Especially if you go to hookup culture, then you're not supposed to talk, you're not supposed to feel anything except for passion in the moment.*

Like Lucy and Sara, who lament the lack of alternative ways to “connect” through conversation and other means, multiple participants talked about how a dating culture is largely absent at Macalester, and some identified a stigma against long-term relationships. According to some interviewees, this is not because people

¹² It is important to note that some interviews also expressed positive associations with hookup culture. Adam believed that Macalester's hookup culture was much less predatory than on other, larger campuses where there is a presence of Greek life. Other interviewees were less convinced, seeing Macalester more as a microcosm of toxic cultural patterns.

aren't looking for intimacy, but rather because a dating script would entail the willingness to act deliberately and intentionally, go out on a limb, and risk rejection from a potential date. As such, presenting oneself as actively interested in dating involves going up against social norms that marginalize taking this kind of relational risk (Wade and Heldman 2012, 129). Mila talks about her straight female friends who feel they "can't want to be in a relationship." Jordan, a senior, articulates a similar perception that dating is off limits at Macalester:

...Lisa Wade¹³ was like, at the end she was like, you can change it! like just change it by yourselves, like you make up the school, like 90 percent of you don't really want to participate in hookup culture, why are you doing it, and it's like, that's so hard, like *you can't just like, fall outside the dominant narrative*. On your own... Like you can not participate in it, that's hard too...but, *you can't actively be like, I wanna date someone*, I mean I'm trying do that, I'm trying to like actually date people...but that's hard. That's so hard.

Together, participants' perceptions paint a picture of an anti-relational concept of sex within hookup/party culture that denies subjective vulnerability and, in doing so, leads to sexual violence. Diana's experience with assault on campus led her to feel disillusioned with existing prevention efforts, particularly the "Consent is Mac" campaign. In a brilliant set of insights, she suggests that the key to prevention lies not in traditional prevention programs but instead in a holistic promotion of emotional health, grounded in a principle of self-reflexivity:

I don't think that many people are aware of what they want, I think that it's about like, expectations and what they think that they should want based on like movies and TV and the Internet. And there's not much encouragement to like explore your own sexuality and your own sexual desires and needs and like...emotional desires and needs, because we're

¹³ Lisa Wade, a sociologist at Occidental College, came to Macalester to speak about her research into hookup culture in the fall of the current school year (2013-2014).

all too busy doing things like getting involved in KWOC¹⁴...I think that...the emphasis should not be on prevention. As much as it should be on, like, health and awareness... 'cause if you're trying to do prevention, then you're sort of, you know, survivor blaming or victim blaming, 'cause it's like oh it's up to you to prevent this from happening to you. When sometimes, you were trying to prevent it from happening to you but it happens anyway. And I think that like, if *we can promote...just like...sexual and emotional health on campus with people like, being more aware of their...state, like, am I drinking because I'm having fun with my friends or am I drinking because I have that test on Monday that I really don't want to think about right now* and like...*I think it all goes together emotional health and sexual health and assault prevention [...]* think that a lot of like, what would be good [for sexual violence prevention], would be...something really hippie, like, how to get in touch with your feelings and your emotions and like, manage stress levels and manage things like missing home and like, *do you wanna sleep with that boy because he's really cute, or do you wanna sleep with him because you're really lonely?... Like what is, like what is happening right now, can you take a minute, take a breather, and think about it...*

By framing sexual violence prevention as a matter of emotional health facilitated by thoughtful self-reflection, Diana foregrounds an awareness of the sexual subject's vulnerability (to academic anxiety, loneliness etc.) as central to healthy sexual decision-making. Like Cavarero and Butler, she understands an awareness of one's own vulnerability to be a cornerstone of ethical subjectivity. Moreover, the emphasis she places on self-reflection in relation to emotional health echoes Foucault's concept of *rappor a soi*, in which care of oneself is necessary in order to care for the other (Carmody 2005, 469). Adam agrees that "self-knowledge" can contribute to ethical sexual subjectivity: "Being able to know yourself, and I

¹⁴ KWOC stands for Kick Wells Fargo Off Campus, a highly-visible and contentiously-received student activist group during the 2012-2013 school year that advocated for Macalester to cut ties with financial ties with Wells Fargo as a way to protest the bank's responsibility for high rates of foreclosures and predatory loans, especially those directed at people of color.

think that helps with the blurred lines a lot...if you're honest with yourself I think you can help create a consensual sexually safe campus.”

In contrast, Diana's analysis suggests that the denial of subjective vulnerability and relational investment (a theme so prevalent within hookup culture) sets the stage for sexual violence, just as Benjamin articulates in “Master and Slave.” This lens on sexual violence demands a focus on subjective wellbeing as essential to its prevention. In the following section, I explore the implications of such an approach for the concept of consent.

Implications for and contradictions within sexual violence prevention: Consent in theory and in practice

Throughout these interviews, the majority of participants stressed the importance of the concept of consent for sexual violence prevention. It is significant that some of the interviewees least invested in the concept of consent were Diana and Nelson, the only two who identified themselves to me as having experienced sexual violence on campus. Below, I engage the range of definitions and conceptualizations of consent that participants offered in order to explore what I see as the possibilities, limitations, and contradictions of a sexual violence prevention discourse focused on consent.

A significant tension that emerged across interviews was the idea of consent as a rule as opposed to consent as a guideline. While there were many overlaps among participants' definitions of consent, important differences also came into play. Mark presented one of the most concise and clear-cut definitions of consent, which echoed those given in official programs:

I define consent as informed consent, consent is clear, unambiguous, affirmative consent at every step of the way. And, informed consent means that you're able to make an informed decision, without coercion, without intoxication, without being drugged, without developmentally incapacitated, without being unconscious.

This view of consent appears straightforward and unproblematic. Mary offers a slightly more nuanced definition:

[C]onsent is a affirmation of a yes, not an absence of no...it is...intentional, it is...the responsibility of the person initiating the next course of physical activity, to ensure that they have the consent, that it has to be mutually understood so...*I'm not saying it has to be words*, but if it's not words then you're making an assumption that there's mutual understanding and, certainly among partners that might be the case, that there's signals and so I don't want to deny that isn't the case but, the assumption is around the mutually understood...that you can't give consent if you are incapacitated to do so and *that's a really difficult one*, so the responsibility...should [be] the party involved...should they have known that that person was incapacitated because if they weren't with them when they were drinking...if the other person isn't exhibiting signs of incapacitation...so I think there's a lot of misinformation about that because people might be saying the words yes, but the next morning they don't remember that 'cause...they were blacked out...and that's the really scary...component...

While this definition is thoughtful and thorough, it is already clear that points of indeterminacy exist. For one, Mary tells us that consent and communication might look different in long-term as opposed to one-time relationships, a theme that is echoed by other interviewees, especially students. Lucy articulates “more nuanced ways to say yes” can apply:

[I]n a somewhat long-term or consistent relationship in which you and your partner are comfortable enough with one another to have established *ways of communicating, which, to the outside, may not be textbook "consent" but do work for you*. For example, in my last relationship...there was a lot of rough sex and types of role playing (power dynamic stuff) in which we had figured out how to determine our limits each time—there were ways of saying "yes" "no" and "do it like this instead" that fit perfectly into what we were doing. We got to know each other so well that we could make those decisions without breaking the mood/flow. So

maybe examples are "that feels so good" "I really want you to do that to me" "I love when you do that"... That, to me, is the danger of the other context: without knowing the other person, there is a fear of being awkward or "ruining the mood", or knowing what they will respond to in your various understandings of "yes".

In addition to being relationship-dependent, consent depends upon an undetermined level of sobriety, an issue that recurs in interviews as consistently slippery. Delia describes the tension between respecting nuance and communicating a clear message of consent: “[S]o there’s folks who’s like...so I can’t have sex when I’m drunk...and so I’m like no you can...but, you know...And...I think that it’s not a bad thing to have that [nuance] but then it’s like when you try to give a presentation...” Dylan recognized the potential for alcohol to act as a “social lubricant” that makes it easier for individuals, especially those who are shy, to make connections. At the same time, he expressed concern about the role that alcohol can play in sexual violence, either in terms of a deliberate tool to “get her really drunk and take her back home or whatever” or in the context of miscommunication and “blurred lines”. Already, consent appears as somewhat contextual and contingent within participants’ understandings.

This complexity exists in tension with how consent is sometimes presented in programming such as “Consent is Mac.” Many interviewees, such as Amelie, referenced how the simplicity of the phrase has allowed it to become “colloquial” to the point of being “taken lightly.” Yet most valued how integrated the idea of “Consent is Mac” has become on campus and believed that due to its omnipresence it would trickle down into individuals’ sexual subjectivities, as Andrew, a first year, describes:

...it definitely helps to sort of solidify it in the minds of everybody within the community, so that at the very least it pops into their mind when they're performing a sexual act. Because people could very well just refer to it jokingly which they kind of do, but at the same time it's still there, you still know, consent is Mac. Even if it's referred to in a joking sense...it's still there and it's still in people's minds, it's not forgotten. *And that's kind of the power of it, is its simplicity. That's what makes it so potent...* I just think that it would find ways to...work itself into healthy relationships...even if [a] couple doesn't make a habit of constantly asking each other for consent.

Andrew goes on to articulate the potential contradiction between consent as a neat “rule” and consent as a flexible “guideline”:

I think it's the role of the institution to inform students about sexual violence, to give them very strict guidelines of what can constitute for it. Because it's important to know as young adults what actions can get us in jail...what's gonna end my life. What's gonna to decrease my chances of getting a career that pays well...what can I do that would make me say, for the rest of my life I really wish I didn't do that. And while the consent guidelines are in practice very vague and sometimes unrealistic, at the same time, you do know, in principle, if you don't get a yes while you're unhooking this girl's bra, and she decides to pursue some kind of legal action, you're kind of screwed. And just knowing that, adds a level of responsibility, that you have to take a little bit more seriously. Just like people know, if I have this fifth shot, I'd better find a bus home. I'd better call a taxi. Because if I drive, I'm gonna get pulled over, I'm gonna get a DUI, and it's gonna be really shitty. I mean, it's not perfect. And it never will be. Because people have one or two beers and they'll still drive, and most of them will get home fine. Some people will be in relationships where they're not required to ask at every step of the way, and it'll be fine. But these laws are in place to protect situations where it's not...where someone's taking advantage of another person in a terrible way... *so I think the conversation should be less about the applicability of these vague guidelines, and more just, making sure people understand it. And how, and how if you don't understand it and you act in disaccordance with it, it can land you in a whole lot of trouble.*

Here, Andrew's understanding of consent illuminates another recurring contradiction: consent as self-interest in the form of legal protection as opposed to interest in the other in the form of compassionate concern. I argue that a concept of consent as “rule” dovetails disconcertingly with consent as self-interest: as

Andrew says above, breaking a law has implications primarily for one's own life and freedom. Similarly, Linda articulates consent as "rule" as a means of self-protection for the sexual initiator: "[Y]ou kind of just gotta keep a contract in your pocket", because if you misread your partner's signals as consensual when they are not, "you're not gonna be believed".

Delia expresses concern with framing assault this way in that it is "policy-heavy. Like you should do this 'cause these are the consequences if you don't. Rather than like here are the moral and ethical implications." As she points out, consent as "rule" is substantially different from ethical concern for a partner's feelings, which Andrew also frames as central to consent: "It's a guideline that, I know if I do this, I'm getting consent and, it's not in any way taking advantage of a person. Because I don't want to take advantage of a person, that's like ultimate goal number one." Interestingly, he uses the word "guideline" when he talks about consent as concern for another. I suggest that this is because a more flexible vision of consent is in fact more amenable to maintaining a focus on subjective wellbeing and the integrity of one's sexual partner. This is because a practice of consent that is contingent on context requires that an individual pay attention to the contours of their situation in a way that refocuses the encounter as subjective and relational. Consent as "guideline" pushes sexual actors to invest themselves in determining what is needed for their partner and themselves in any given moment, and thus elicits more accountability than consent as "rule" which frames the implications of assault in terms of an infraction, not an injury. Thus, I claim that

the promotion of ethical sexual subjectivity is better served by a more nuanced framework of consent, like the one described by Sara:

I think it's more of an understanding of being open about what you're comfortable with, in a relationship or with a partner. And so if that's your baseline of being respectful, being open and being open to talking about it, and respectful of other people's boundaries, that that is what I take as consent.

This concept of consent emphasizes its situational and relational components; it also incorporates the need for vulnerability in order to be “open” with another about one's own subjective needs. At one point, Dylan illuminates how this quality of “respectful” care can, ironically, be framed as different from, rather than central to, an idea of consent:

[B]efore coming here I would never, never dream of like making it a priority or a necessary step to, like ask if something's okay, you know. And sometimes you can catch yourself doing that *but that's more just out of... kind of a personal relationship with someone, like ooh, you seem uncomfortable with something and is everything okay, 'cause you don't want to...be a jerk or whatever...*

Here, consent is contrasted with concern for a partner, as if a relationship of care and concern – whether this applies to a long-term partner or a hookup buddy – were not always the primary motivation for asking for consent. Distinctions such as these cast doubt on the potential of formal consent to contribute to culture change in which sex is viewed as complex, relational, and caring.

This is not to say that a more “precise” view of consent is never necessary, relevant, or useful. Emma's experiences with sex on campus highlight the positive role that a traditional, rule-bound understanding of consent can play in sexual relationships:

I like have been with partners who've really embraced the values of consent at Mac...I've been like really pleasantly surprised with all of my sexual partners from Macalester...As far as asking for consent every step of the way, making me feel completely comfortable...with whatever decision I make. And...not assuming that because I've consented once means I'll consent anytime in the future, I think that's really important...So I think it is being effectively addressed...At least in my experiences. It's getting there...But I also know way too many of my friends who've had negative experiences on campus. So, there's obviously work to be done.

At the same time, the experiences of her friends indicate that there are students for whom the presence of "Consent is Mac" does not translate into experiences of sexual safety and respect on campus. My interviews with Nelson and Diana both spoke to the unsettling reality of assailants who have watched the sexual assault modules, listened to Keith Edwards' presentation, and worn "Consent is Mac" T-shirts:

Nola: [O]ne of my last interviews actually was somebody saying... you know the person who assaulted me was in a leadership position at Macalester...and has a consent shirt...

Nelson: I know other people...Who said the exact same thing to me...I mean it's hard for survivors not to feel betrayed no matter the circumstances...you know we know it's someone not jumping out of the bush, but we don't really absorb what that means. So many people...when they hear the words, people who commit rape are people that you know, I don't know what impact it has on them, I don't know if it makes a difference, I don't know...if it was heard by my assailant or if it was heard by...others who have committed rape. I don't know if they thought about it, I don't know if they still think about it...*There's only so much that you can do with, like, don't do it campaigns...before it really takes I think more nuance to talk about...where the lines are...*

As Diana puts it, "I would love for consent to be Mac. But in my experience...it like hasn't been." In fact, she sees consent as potentially another way to create a legitimate subject position and elide vulnerability:

Something that we're eager like a mask that we're eager to put on like oh...like I'm totally like international and multicultural and consent is Mac and I believe that everyone should have like you know free health care or whatever and it's like this whole like, liberal arts student like face. But we're expected to just like know what it means immediately, and everyone's afraid to ask.

This suggests the potential need for consent to be framed differently in campus sexual violence prevention discourse, in ways that consistently reaffirm that consent is important precisely in its implications for communication across subjective difference. As Nelson tells us, promoting nonviolent relationships may take a greater degree of "nuance" than some existing programs currently offer. In contrast, when consent is framed in more black-and-white, "policy-heavy" terms, it can alienate students who want their sexual experience to leave room for complexity, spontaneity, and pleasure; this sense of distance can itself be counterproductive. When Andrew distances himself from a formal "rule" of consent, the more flexible "guideline" he adopts fails to gauge ethical action in relation to the other person's subjective state:

I don't completely subscribe to every step of the way you need to say yes. Like sometimes, and I hate to be...overly dramatic, but sometimes you just need to kiss a person 'cause it makes sense, and to get a yes would just sort of spoil the moment. But in those situations it's because it makes sense.

Dylan articulates a similar conflict between official terms of consent and those that feel relevant to the lived experience of sex as positive and "organic":

[M]aybe it's not the point that it's always taken so seriously, like *maybe it shouldn't be taken so strict all the time*...because when it's actually in that situation you know sex...can be a very fun experience and a very, like, playful thing sometimes...and that's good...*You know it doesn't all have to be like, robo-cop, strict...and you know like...I have to, is this okay, is this okay...is everything good, make sure every single, like protocol is followed like you're going down...a chemistry lab or something, like...it's*

much more organic than that, so maybe it's almost better that it's not taken...quite as seriously all the time, but the point is that people get it in their head that like, oh this is something that...you should...at least have in mind...and, you know, preferably be like discussing it...But at least, you know even if there's no discussion about it, like even if no one actually asks for consent... I would still hope that because...they've exposed to the whole consent is Mac thing so frequently...both or more I guess parties would be constantly thinking about that, and have that in the back of their heads and like check it with themselves...is this okay with me, yeah... I guess, the ideal situation with that...would be that the individual would then be, you know open to saying yeah you should've asked for this or actually this isn't okay, you didn't ask, or, or I want you to ask, or you know whatever it may be.

In contrast to Andrew, however, Dylan's broader vision of consent encourages self-reflection in relation to a partner as opposed to uncritical action based on one's own view of what "makes sense". By grounding the importance of consent in what each sexual subject wants and is comfortable with, Dylan puts forth a vision of consent that honors the complexities of subjective and relational experience. According to him, the practice of consent can include an internal dialogue or a conversation after the fact in addition to the affirmation of verbal consent at the moment of sexual initiation. Adam also talks about the meanings of consent as complex and subjective, and he advocates for the value of group dialogues that build on individuals' multiple and conflicting perceptions of consent:

I feel like these concepts have such broad definitions, and such varied definitions depending on where we're coming from. Even like the words up on the screen don't mean the same thing to every person, you know like Saussure 101 of like what all these words really mean. What does it mean like ask for permission every step of the way? Ask for consent every step of the way? What's every step means, starts in different place for people. And when they hear holding hands, like phhh! I can't even hold hands without asking them, that's so awkward, I wanna hold their hand, you know?...but you really discuss that, like alright, why is that important... You know if you're in a group of ten people, someone's like I

don't think it's important at all, I think it's stupid. And say alright, does anybody disagree? And then someone comes up and disagrees...

Similarly, Sara talks about how powerful it could be to hear how other people negotiate sexual relationships:

I think it would do more if we saw more students talking to each other about how they define consent, how that works in their relationships, and especially coming from men and women, different sexual orientations, talking about how dynamics are supposed to play out stereotypically and how that does or doesn't fit with what they actually do. Because this is a private issue, right? I think part of the problem is that people don't talk about it because it's private, and so you make assumptions about what everybody else is doing. And in those assumptions you play into stereotypes.

The open-ended collective exploration of consent that Adam and Sara describe makes room for, as Carmody puts it, the “many and varied ways in which people negotiate intimate sexual encounters” (2005, 478). This is exactly the kind of consent I believe can pose an intervention into the scripts of rape culture as well as those of traditional sexual violence prevention discourse. In contrast, these narratives provide testimony to the fact that consent as a “code” may fail to be applicable to individuals' sexual experiences. Moreover, the relationship between consent as a “rule” and uncritical self-interest is concerning because of how it consolidates, rather than troubles, the individualist, self-contained, and self-controlled subject. In contrast, Benjamin's analysis suggests that what is needed to interrupt sexually violent scripts is the promotion of a relational sexual subject comfortable with its own indeterminacy and vulnerability. By reframing sex as an opportunity to negotiate multiplicity and ambiguity, rather than a chance to reaffirm one's neat and dominant subject position, a more nuanced understanding

of consent gets to the roots of sexual violence; it also proposes that a different kind of sexual personhood is possible.

Conclusion: Vulnerability, self-reflexivity, and sexual ethics in practice

Going into this project, I was interested in exploring the possibilities and limitations of existing sexual violence prevention discourse(s), especially in the context of Macalester. In particular, I wanted to interrogate how sexual violence prevention discourse positions the sexual subject and how this interacts with prevention programs' effectiveness. Feminist theory on sexual subjectivity locates some of the foundations of sexual violence in the rational, self-sufficient, and in-control subject. De-normalizing sexual violence, then, must involve the promotion of emotional awareness, relationality, and vulnerability. By incorporating different ethical theories, I developed a vision of ethical sexual subjectivity as dependent upon practices of self-reflection on one's own vulnerability and investment in the subjective state of one's partner. Self-reflexivity is the grounds for ethical sensitivity because engaging with our own vulnerability reminds us of the vulnerability of others and thus of our responsibility towards them (Murphy 2011). We must recognize that our personal desires, motivations, and needs are implicated in our treatment of others. I suggest that these processes of self-reflection can and should be fostered in institutional programming in the format of dialogue circles and story-sharing campaigns through which individuals can learn from each others' experiences and practice open communication and self-disclosure in safe settings.

My interpretation of interview data confirms the importance of engagement with vulnerability, relationality, and self-reflexivity in sexual violence prevention discourse. I found that some components of Macalester's sexual violence prevention programming already incorporate these themes to varying degrees. The varied rights and responsibilities of the Consent Pledge, for example, demonstrate the multidimensionality of consent in practice. This document also grounds consent in a simultaneously subjective and relational context by highlighting responsibility to both oneself and one's partner. As Adam put it, Keith Edwards' presentation was meaningful precisely "cause he [Edwards] was willing to be the vulnerable person": this demonstrates the resonance of the concept of vulnerability within sexual violence prevention discourse, at least for some students. There are also events that, while less institutionalized, provide spaces to reflect collectively on the risks and possibilities of sexual experience. This year, a new event series began called "Let's Talk About Sex", which aims to create dialogue around sex at Macalester. By including an event on healthy relationships, the new "This Matters @ Mac: Continued Conversation" series grounded sexual violence prevention in a relational ethic of care. A pamphlet produced several years ago by the "Because We Are Not Alone" sexual assault support group shares survivors' thoughts and feelings, bringing home the subjective reality of sexual violence. The "This Matters @ Mac" orientation and Green Dot trainings both use instant polling to engage participants in reflecting on their own experiences and practice, encouraging self-reflexivity. "This Matters @ Mac" also includes a segment

during which Orientation Leaders act out a range of “sexy” ways to ask for consent, say “yes”, and say “no”, which illustrates the potential richness and breadth of consent as a vehicle for ethical sexual practice. Macalester’s version of Green Dot training also incorporates visuals that demonstrate how the same behaviors can be present in both violent and ethical intimate relationships, depending on the situation; this reminds participants that violence is subjective, and that we are responsible for checking in with ourselves and each other when we are not sure if everyone feels safe. A forthcoming student-produced publication called “The Ways We Drink at Mac” shares student narratives that express a range of relationships to alcohol use at Macalester. Efforts such as these, that elicit students’ subjective experiences and value their multiplicity, have especially great potential for furthering and deepening a campus conversation on preventing sexual violence.

While these efforts are meaningful, my interview data also illuminated existing limitations and contradictions within sexual violence prevention discourse at Macalester. Particularly poignant were conflicts between a feminist analysis of gender norms and programs’ relevance to lived experience; hookup culture as a practice of intentional carelessness and the desire for connection; and unambiguous consent in the interest of self-protection as opposed to contextual consent as a means of practicing concern for a partner. These tensions suggest that there is a need for greater dialogue on the role of gender in sexual violence prevention, the relationship between emotional health and sexual violence, and what consent looks like in practice. I affirm the importance of providing increased

opportunities for dialogue and story sharing that draw on individuals' sexual experiences, hopes, and fears in the service of an open-ended exploration of what sexual ethics might look like in practice. In addition, given the relationship between emotional wellbeing and responsible sexual behavior explored in this paper, I urge the college to see sustained support for general mental and emotional health resources as essential to sexual violence prevention.

By exploring how the sexual subject is positioned in sexual violence prevention discourse, I hope I have shown the need for sexual violence prevention programs to attend to subjective reality in its emotional and relational dimensions and to promote the ethical negotiation of vulnerability and ambiguity through practices of self-reflection and dialogue. I suggest that further scholarship in this area delve further into the implications of subjective (in)vulnerability in a range of contexts: within (violent) masculine subjectivities; the relationship between emotional health and alcohol use; and (un)ethical sexual practice among individuals who have received sexual violence prevention education, especially around consent. In addition, I agree with Carmody that sexual violence prevention programs would do well to gently investigate – rather than foreclose or attempt to predetermine – relationships among desire, pleasure, and ethical sex (2003, 211). Like social life and sex itself, any meaningful understanding of sexual ethics will always be contextual, contingent, subjective, and relational. While this involves ambiguity and risk, I suggest that it is precisely this indeterminacy that gives a concept of sexual ethics its power. Practicing ethical sexuality means a constant willingness to explore, reflect, and communicate “past the boundaries of identity”

(Dworkin 1987, 33). While it takes great courage to go “beyond oneself” in a culture that values masterful individualism, it may be that the key to unraveling (inter)subjective violence rests in the willingness to be “undone by each other”: to face vulnerability, not as a liability, but as a site of great sexual, relational, and ethical possibility (Butler 2010, 546).

Acknowledgements

I want to close by expressing my gratitude to all of my participants, whose openness, thoughtfulness, and generosity of spirit made gathering data such a joyful, provocative, and meaningful process. I am especially indebted to Diana and Nelson, who graciously spoke to me about experiences with sexual violence and emotional pain on campus and whose insights are essential to the crux of this paper, as well as to the development of my own understanding more broadly. This paper attempts to ground the importance of sexual violence prevention in the affirmation of emotional reality and in the web of relationships through which we are all implicated in an ethic of care; in doing so, I hope it in some way honors all that they shared.

Works Cited

- American College Health Association. 2008. *Shifting the Paradigm: Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence*. Baltimore: ACHA.
- Barone, Ryan P., Jennifer R. Wolgemuth and Chris Linder. 2007. "Preventing Sexual Assault Through Engaging College Men." *Journal of College Student Development*. 4 (5): 585-594.
- Benjamin, Jessica. 1983. "Master and Slave: The Fantasy of Erotic Domination." Pp. 280-299 in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, edited by Ann Barr Snitow, Christine Stansell and Sharon Thompson. New York: Monthly Review.
- Bordo, Susan. "The Cartesian Masculinization of Thought." *Signs* 11.3 (1986): 439-56. JSTOR, 3 Mar. 2012. Web. 3 May 2012.
- Butler, Judith. 2010. "Beside Oneself: On the Limits of Sexual Autonomy from *Undoing Gender*." Ed. Frances Bartkowski and Wendy K. Kolmar. *Feminist Theory: A Reader*. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education. 413-25.
- Campus Clarity. 2013. "The Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act of 2013." <http://campussaveact.org/>
- Carr, J. L. 2005. *American College Health Association Campus Violence White Paper*. Baltimore, MD: American College Health Association.
- Carmody, Moira. 2003. "Sexual Ethics and Violence Prevention." *Social and Legal Studies*. 12 (199): 199-216.
- Carmody, Moira. 2005. "Ethical Erotics: Reconceptualizing Anti-Rape Education." *Sexualities*. 8 (465): 465-480.
- Chodorow, Nancy. 1989. *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Clery Center for Security on Campus. 2012. "The Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act." <http://clerycenter.org/campus-sexual-violence-elimination-save-act>
- Coker, Ann L., Patricia G. Cook-Craig, Corrine M. Williams, Bonnie S. Fisher, Emily R. Clear, Lisandra S. Garcia, and Lea M. Hegge. 2011. "Evaluation of Green Dot: An Active

- Bystander Intervention to Reduce Sexual Violence on College Campuses.” *Violence Against Women*. XX (X): 1-20.
- Currier, Danielle M. and Jessica H. Carlson. 2009. “Creating Attitudinal Change Through Teaching: How a Course on ‘Women and Violence’ Changes Students’ Attitudes About Violence Against Women.” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 24 (10): 1735-1754.
- Diprose, Rosalyn. 1998. “Generosity: Between Love and Desire.” *Hypatia*. 13 (1): 1-20.
- Dworkin, Andrea. 1987. *Intercourse*. London: Martin Secker and Warburg Limited.
- Fischer, Bonnie S., Francies T. Cullen and Michael G. Turner. 2001. *Sexual Victimization of College Women*. National Institute of Justice.
- Edwards, Keith and Troy Headrick. N.d. “She Fears You: Teaching College Men to End Rape.” *Napsa Journal About Women in Higher Education*. 1.1.
- Flores, Stephen A. and Mark G. Hartlaub. 1998. “Reducing Rape-Myth Acceptance in Male College Students: A Meta-Analysis of Intervention Studies.” *Journal of College Student Development*. 39 (5): 438-448.
- Foucault, Michel and Paul Rabinow. 1997. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. New York: New Press.
- Galles, Kristen. “Title IX and the Importance of a Reinvigorated OCR.” *Human Rights*. 37 (3): 18-21.
- Gavey, Nicola. 2005. *Just Sex?: The Cultural Scaffolding of Rape*. London: Routledge.
- Gilligan, Carol. 2010. “Images of Relationship.” Ed. Frances Bartkowski and Wendy K. Kolmar. *Feminist Theory: A Reader*. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education. 312-18.
- Giordano, Peggy C., Monica A. Longmore, and Wendy D. Manning. 2006. “Gender and the Meanings of Adolescent Romantic Relationships: A Focus on Boys.” *American Sociological Review*. 71 (2): 260-287.
- Gonzales, Alberto R., Regina B. Schoefield and Glenn R. Schmitt. 2005. *Sexual Assault on Campus: What Colleges and Universities Are Doing About It*. National Institute of Justice. U.S. Department of Justice.
- Green Dot. 2010. Retrieved March 10, 2014. (<http://www.livethegreendot.com>)

- Hamington, Maurice. 2002. "A Father's Touch: Caring Embodiment and a Moral Revolution." Ed. Nancy Tuana, et al. *Revealing Male Bodies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Holland, Janet, Caroline Ramazanoglu, Sue Sharpe, and Rachel Thomson. 1998. *The Male in the Head: Young People, Heterosexuality and Power*. London: Tufnell.
- Keller, Jean. 1997. "Autonomy, Relationality, and Feminist Ethics." *Hypatia*. 12 (2): 152-164.
- Kimmel, Michael S. 1994. "Consuming Manhood: The Feminization of American Culture and the Recreation of the Male Body, 1832-1920." *The Male Body*. Ed. Laurence Goldstein. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 12-38.
- Korobov, Neil and Avril Thorne. 2006. "Intimacy and Distancing: Young Men's Conversations About Romantic Relationships." *Journal of Adolescent Research*. 21 (1): 27-55.
- Lee, David S., Lydia Guy, Brad Perry, Chad Keoni Sniffen, and Stacy Alamo Mixson. 2007. "Sexual Violence Prevention." *The Prevention Researcher*. 14 (2): 15-20.
- Lorentzen, JØrgen. 2007. "Masculinities and the Phenomenology of Men's Orgasms." *Men and Masculinities* 10 (1): 71-84. Sage Publications.
- Macalester College. 2013. "Fact Sheet 2013-2014."
<http://www.macalester.edu/communications/downloadcenter/factsheet/20132014factsheet.pdf>
- Macalester College. 2013. "Sexual Assault Support Team."
<http://www.macalester.edu/sexualassault/support/sast/>
- Macalester College. 2012. "Consent Pledge."
<http://www.macalester.edu/studentaffairs/forms/consent-pledge.pdf>
- Marcus, Sharon. 1992. "Fighting Bodies, Fighting Words." Ed. Judith Butler and Joan Wallach Scott. *Feminists Theorize the Political*. New York: Routledge.
- McMahon, Sarah. 2010. "Rape Myth Beliefs and Bystander Attitudes Among Incoming College Students." *Journal of American College Health*. 59 (1): 3-11.

- Merleau-Ponty, M. 1962. *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Messerschmidt, James W. 2000. "Becoming 'Real Men': Adolescent Masculinity Challenges and Sexual Violence." *Men and Masculinities* 2 (3): 286-307.
- Murphy, Ann V. 2011. "Corporeal Vulnerability and the New Humanism." *Hypatia*. 26 (3): 575-590.
- Murphy, Michael J. 2009. "Can 'Men' Stop Rape? Visualizing Gender in the 'My Strength is Not for Hurting' Rape Prevention Campaign." *Men and Masculinities* 12 (1): 113-130.
- Nobles, Matt R., Kathleen A. Fox, David N. Khey and Alan J. Lizotte. 2012. "Community and Campus Crime: A Geospatial Examination of the Clery Act." *Crime and Delinquency*. 59 (8): 1131-1156.
- Office for Civil Rights. 2010. *Dear Colleague Letter*. Department of Education.
- Pastor, Nola. N.d. "Compulsory Dominance and Conflicted Subjectivities: Young Men, Vulnerability and the Discourse Around Sexual Violence."
- Phillips, Lynn M. 2000. *Flirting with Danger: Young Women's Reflections on Sexuality and Domination*. New York: New York UP.
- Ramazanoglu, Caroline and Janet Holland. 2002. *Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Smith, Poco and Sarah Welchans. 2000. "Peer Education: Does Focusing on Male Responsibility Change Sexual Assault Attitudes?" *Violence Against Women*. 6 (11): 1255-1268.
- Student Success. 2013. *Every Choice Matters*. <http://www.every-choice.com/>¹⁵
- Student Success. 2009. *Unless There's Consent: Sexual Assault Prevention*. <http://public.studentsuccess.org/web/programs/sexual-assault-prevention/>¹⁶
- "This Matters @ Mac." 2013. Presented at Macalester College, August 3, St. Paul, MN.

¹⁵ I was able to access these videos through an access code provided to me by the Office of Student Affairs. This website provides general information on the company and modules but does not allow access to the videos themselves, as they must be purchased by a school in order to be more widely distributed.

¹⁶ See above.

Wade, Lisa and Caroline Heldman. 2012. "Hooking Up and Opting Out: Negotiating Sex in the First Year of College." *Sex for Life: From Virginity to Viagra, How Sexuality Changes Throughout Our Lives*. Eds. Laura M. Carpenter and John DeLamater. New York: New York University Press.

Winerip, Michael. "Stepping Up to Stop Sexual Assault." *The New York Times*. February 9, 2014.