SCHOLARLY ESSAY

Masculinity in Crisis:

A Foray into the Dark World of Nonconsensual Pornography and the Indian Community in Malaysia

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Abstract

This essay discusses *typical* male behavioural patterns based on a 2020 news event that involved the consumption of nonconsensual pornography via Telegram (an end-to-end encrypted instant messaging app). The authors provide a brief literature review on the study of masculinities, from its initial male-centric focus to the more intersectional analytical frames that have been popularised by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) and Judith Butler (1990). This essay argues that masculinity operates beyond the physical attributes of men across the gender spectrum, foregrounding critical differences and hierarchical power relations between men themselves. It then delves into the need for a unique analytical lens vis-à-vis racialised Indians in Malaysia by adopting Urvashi Singh's relational dynamics of masculinity (2017): a critical intervention that privileges the often-overlooked significance of caste in India's complex social matrix. By casting light on the complexities of Malaysian Indian masculinity, this essay ultimately situates Indian male positionality within the contexts of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, caste, and class.

Keywords: Brahmanical patriarchy, caste, hegemonic masculinity, pornography, Tamil Malaysians, toxic masculinity.

By far the worst thing we do to males — by making them feel they have to be hard — is that we leave them with very fragile egos.

— Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

On October 1ˢᵗ 2020, Malaysians went to their dinner tables with news reports from *Says* (a popular Malaysian social news site) about a local Telegram group that was outed for distributing nonconsensual intimate images and videos. The journalist Arisha Rozaidee (2020) exposed a group of men who were utilising Telegram to share nude photographs of women without their consent. Her article also noted that group members could purchase membership access for child pornography. Section 509 and 292 of Malaysia's Penal Code criminalises the insult of a person's modesty and the possession or distribution of pornographic material (Youths.my, 2020). The pernicious nature of this on-going behaviour — even as this pleasure-seeking market was made public — also exposes the performance of male behaviour, a male sex drive that includes violence, rape and aggressiveness (Whitehead & Barrett, 2004).

In the hours that followed, many other online news outlets got onto the trail. This included *World of Buzz* (WOB), *Varnam MY* (a Malaysian Indian news site which provided various screenshots of the group chat), a statement from the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), and reactions from enraged Malaysian Twitter users. The evaluations in this essay were derived from a simple virtual ethnographic approach to the V2K incident (Caliandro & Gandini, 2017). Based on journalistic reportage and our observations of V2K Shout — the backup group the men created on Instagram (Velusamy, 2020, para. 6) — it appeared that the perpetrators were predominantly Malaysian Indian males. Most of the male names in the chat screenshots were of Tamil phonology (Velusamy, 2020); they probably make up the bulk of the V2K membership.

These men were actively participating in practices that many scholars have recently categorised as *online* gender-based violence (Hall & Hearn, 2019). Their various motivations and activities — to glorify sexual conquest of women and sustain a barter system of unconsented intimate materials — objectified Indian women as a compulsory expression of heterosexual activity. As Whitehead and Barrett (2004) argue, the social expression of heterosexuality remains a "key resource for the construction of masculine identity" (p. 22). After social justice warriors, undercover journalists, and male feminist allies took to the

internet to unearth the identities of the 38,000 members, the V2K members eventually morphed into splinter backup groups on the *grams* (Telegram and Instagram). Their determination to protect their amassed material, their identities, their 'right' to sexual pleasure, their egos, and their masculinity did not waver.

This essay will attempt to situate the concepts of masculinity within its nuances of "toxicity", and hegemonic masculinity as "inherently relational" (Connell, 2004, pp. 30-50), including the crisis it holds for racialised Indian men in Malaysia as recognised in the evidence we found online. By drawing from the work of Urvashi Singh (2017) and S. Anandhi et. al. (2002), we also foreground the significance of caste-based masculinities within the Indian socio-political landscape and South Asian diasporic communities. We agree with Singh (2017) on the following argument:

> masculinity [must cease] to be a coherent object […] not just in isolation, but that a particular hegemonic pattern in the slanted interplay between masculinity and what it contradicts, is crucial to the longevity of masculinity, as a stabilizing factor of multiple patriarchies in what Butler (2004: 196-197) calls a 'phallocentric worldview'. (p. 108)

The essay will further demonstrate the varied nature of masculinities, studied not in detachment, but through the hegemonic patterns that intersect masculinity and what negates it. Caste discussions are important to create a Bhabhian 'third space' for possibilities in the construction of masculinities that are not easily predictable, especially in Malaysia.

Defining Masculinities

Society has long misunderstood (some by choice) the terms *masculinity*, man and male, gender performance, gender and sex. Scholars such as R. W. Connell (1987, 2004) and Sonya O. Rose (2010) have argued that gender is a socially constructed idea and practice that is *not* simply a product of biological differences between the male and female sex. What it means to be a man, the definitions or understanding of masculinity, the characteristics of male identities, are all reducibly products of culture. It must be acknowledged that the concepts of *sex* and *gender* are not synonymous and should not be used interchangeably. Masculinity, therefore, traditionally refers to the "complex cognitive, behavioural,

emotional, expressive, psychological and sociocultural experience of identifying with being male" (Kahn, 2009, p. 2).

Research on masculinities began in the 1970s, as men started writing about how the identity of boys were being constructed by the general society to be rough and independent and how men are supposed to be reticent about their emotional dimensions (Nichols, 1975; Goldberg, 1976). They were largely confessional, therapeutic, and ignorant of the power dimensions of gender relations: "this style of research on men continued through the 1980s and well into the 1990s" (Coltrane, 1994, p. 24). Some writers focused on their personal experiences such as caring for a child (Clary, 1982), or on middle-aged men's longing for their fathers (Osherson, 1986). Many of these early studies emphasised how men suffered from confining masculine stereotypes and were misunderstood by women (Farrell, 1986). Men developed their sensitivities through these famous books, but the books paid little attention to those who suffered at the hands of dominant men in privileged positions.

As a response and support of the women's movement, a different group of male scholars and activists adopted an explicitly feminist perspective in their explorations of masculinity. Their attention to men's power over women was the defining feature of their approach to men's studies (Pleck, 1981; Sattel, 1976). Critical studies of men became more sophisticated in the 1980s. In *Gender and Power* (1987), Connell developed the concept of "hegemonic masculinity" to highlight the multiplicities of scope and socially constructed aspects of male dominance. Since then, studies of masculinity have drawn from feminist theories to highlight diversity in masculinities, include a focus on gay men, and promote an understanding of what Kaufman calls men's contradictory experiences of power (Brod, 1987; Hearn & Morgan, 1990; Kaufman, 1987; Kimmel & Messner, 1989).

In the field of masculinities, there are several reasons for adopting the employment of a feminist point-of-view. With reference to Enns & Sinacore (2005) and Kahn (2009), one of it is to "give credit where credit is due", for the concept of gender was put forth by feminist theorists such as Butler, Christensen, Jensen, and Crenshaw. In addition, these scholars have also been crucial in highlighting the detrimental effects of marginalization (Enns & Sinacore, 2005; Kronsell, 2005). Feminists (as well as scholars influenced by feminism) have made significant contributions to the field of masculinities (Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 1998). In *Gender Trouble*, for example, Judith Butler introduced the idea of gender

as performance. This prompted new perspectives to reformulate the category of women and, as a consequence, who it is that feminism purports to fight for (Ferber, 2020).

The Need for Intersectionality

When attempting to analyse masculinities and gender in the racialised Malaysian sphere, *intersectionality* is crucial. It prevents overgeneralising, or glossing over the racialised identities of men, and their identities outside Butler's (1990, p. 151) "heterosexual matrix." Therefore, an intersectional approach offers a better theoretical tool for analysing the complexities of differences and hierarchic power relations between men (Christensen & Jensen, 2014).

Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) to account for the specific oppression of African-American women. It then moved from academia into contemporary social media discourse. Intersectionality seeks to stimulate conversations and educate a general audience on racial justice and identity politics in this white supremacist world. Working in the spirit of intersectionality and the footsteps of Connell, Singh (2017) argues the following:

> masculinity — to the extent that the term can be briefly defined — is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices on bodily experiences, personality and culture. (p. 109)

Singh uses an inclusive methodology in defining masculinities by the use of *italics* (as above), which she considers as cardinal points of correlation, based on Connell's 1995 theory of masculinity. Firstly, *place* is the social location that a person occupies in the gender structure; as reiterated, Halberstam (1998) writes, "masculinity must not and cannot and should not reduce down to the male body and its effects" (p. 2). Secondly, the *practices* here relate to Connell's argument that "a configuration of *practice* is simultaneously positioned in a number of structures of relationship, which may be following different historical trajectories" (1995, p. 73). This would come to bring meaning to the nuances of reading Indian masculinities in Malaysia, as the *practices* of masculinity that entails social interactions taking place within particular social structures at local, regional, and global levels and bear spatiotemporal contingency (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Finally, *effects* "vary widely, from an individual to a collective level and have significant socio-cultural impact" (Singh,

2017, p. 109). Hence, masculinity "needs to be understood in relation to the particular gender relations, as well as various dynamics of the social structure that it exists within and in constant interaction to, such as race, class, religion, and caste" (Singh, 2017, p. 109).

Vitamin4Testicles (V2K): Men, Caste and Patriarchy

> Satapatha Brahmana holds that a woman, a sudra and a crow are the embodiments of untruth, sin and darkness. The congenital fickleness of women is pertinent to the problem of managing the overflowing and uncontrollable sexuality of women. (Chakravarti, 2003, p. 71)

The V2K group housed between 33,963 to 38,335 members (Rozaidee, 2020; Velusamy, 2020; Mangeshkar, 2020). Based on our virtual ethnography, we found that they were predominantly Malaysian Indian males of Tamil descent, ranging from ages 17 to 50. We also observed that the messages in the chat group were largely written in Romanised Tamil and Malaysian English (which includes code mixing and switching between English, Malay and Tamil). Besides the sharing of pornographic content, the men also shared images of women (in full attire, traditional clothing, and bikinis) that were stolen from their social media accounts and exposed their personal information (Rozaidee, 2020, para. 11). One survivor stated that she "started receiving a ton of follower requests and messages from men saying they [ejaculated] to my photos" (Rozaidee, 2020, para. 12) after uploading her photos on Instagram. Some members also offered CCTV footage for sale that included hidden cameras in hotel rooms and public toilets where women could be seen relieving themselves, taking a shower, or engaging in sexual intercourse. The popularity and thrill derived from such posts seemed to have further escalated the men's interest, which led them to either purchase, trade or distribute the images. In some cases, they were motivated to stalk particular women when their contact information was available (e.g., social media handles, home addresses and phone numbers). This often led to the extortion for personal, monetary and sexual favours. One of the survivors recalled that men from the group had contacted her directly and "said that he got [her] number from Telegram. And that he had called to ask for sex service" (Rozaidee, 2020, para. 16).

In November, the journalist Tashny Sukumaran (2020) reported on a community-driven sting operation. She revealed that an informant named Shalini, a 23-year-old Indian woman, infiltrated one of the Malaysian Telegram groups in question. Shalini stated that

"There was so much child porn being traded openly. There was a father who secretly filmed his own daughter and sent it to the group" (Sukumaran, 2020, para 2.). She also pointed out that "they were just women who had broken up with these men or not entertained their romantic advance" (Sukumaran, para. 4), divulging that some of the materials in question fell under the category of "revenge porn."

There were also groups formed by concerned family members and allies who confronted some of these men online after procuring their contact details. They attempted to gain access and seek justice for the abused women, only to be confronted with male-centric reasoning, popular with misogynists and *incels*. As explained by Beauchamp (2019), incels are overwhelmingly young men and boys with a history of isolation and rejection. After turning to the internet to make sense of their pain, they began to use a specific phrase to describe their romantic troubles: "involuntary celibacy."

In Mangeshkar's (2020) article, one screenshot revealed the reasoning of the V2K men. A member called Mithiran said "Exactly! When they record and send, it isn't wrong but when we watch it, we become the bad people?! F*****g C***s" (Mangeshkar, 2020). They judge and question women about their own sexuality and freedom of sexual expression, after consuming the same expression of female sexuality they idolised. In another community-driven effort, the V2K Sappis Instagram account was created [it is no longer active due to Instagram's bullying policy and multiple reporting by the perpetrators]. We began observing the online interactions between V2K members and the anti-V2K social justice warriors. The administrators of the V2K Sappis Instagram account would post screenshots of conversations they had with the V2K men. We include one of the most disturbing reactions from a V2K member, extracted from one Instagram post by V2K Sappis:

> I don't find anything disgusting in there, it's all the same as pornographic websites. Have you not watched porn in your life? Is watching porn wrong?... If having a group that shares pictures is wrong, then posting it is wrong too what...You know what is disgusting, posting half-naked pictures on social media for just a number of like[s] and followers. Exposing their body to gain attention, and now they got that attention. So why are the girls exposing everything if they want us to focus on their faces? And if a girl can't even keep her naked pictures safely or only sends them to a trustworthy person, then it's clearly her mistake...no one have rights to

ask me why am I seeing a girl's nude picture which has been released by herself. (V2K Sappis, personal communication, October 5, 2020)

The sheer male entitlement over women's bodies is evident. Many of the men displayed *Brahmanical* patriarchal beliefs (while also co-opting western ideas of masculinity). They did not seem to understand why it was problematic to possess unconsented intimate images, and in some instances, the illegality in sharing these images with other men. More importantly, they did not see how their actions were part of rape culture. Khatana (2020) describes rape culture as:

> an environment…in which rape and sexual violence is normalized due to the societal attitudes and actions about gender and sexuality. Such a culture extends from rape jokes, casual sexism, acceptance of toxic masculinity, victim blaming, and violent acts against womxn. (para. 1)

This event draws and reproduces a gendered argument to male violence, attaching itself to the concept of masculinity that we now come to understand as *toxic*. This form of toxicity has deeper roots in Brahmanical Patriarchy. Quoting from the Brahmanical text, Chakravarti (2003) observes that "a woman, a sudra and a crow are the embodiments of <u>untruth</u>, <u>sin</u>, and <u>darkness</u>" (p. 70). This may reflect the actions of the men involved with V2K groups who could have unconsciously internalised this ideology by linking the female body to an animal (a crow is associated with death), and a Shudra (people who belonged to the lowest ranking community in the Hindu caste system). When this caste lens is applied to the context of *nonconsensual pornography*, it is as if all products of women belong to the scrutiny of men including ownership. Hence a woman's body is to be treated as consensual material because men (upper caste) gave consent on behalf of women (lower caste), in that binary. Shudras are servants to the upper caste, and this relationship of master and servant simmers into contemporary gender discourse in South Asia.

On 30th September 2020, Nur Syakinah turned to Twitter to raise awareness of how her previous tweets had been met with threats from V2K members (or sympathisers). One of the screenshots she posted included a threat written in Romanised Tamil by "mr. joker": "We must catch all of them [women] and interrogate, harass [so they feel intimidated, violently]" (Syakinah, 2020). All these ideological acts correspond to the various stages in the rape culture pyramid (Khatana, 2020): the denial of abuse, the triumph of male virility, and use of violent force to subjugate. They are supported by Brahminical

Indian patriarchy and have fuelled men to treat women as lower than them for centuries, thus reinforcing the gender binary.

For the purpose of being thorough in any caste-centric analysis, it is pertinent to consider the historical context. Most Malaysian Indian communities originate largely from indentured labour backgrounds that can be classified as quasi-slavery (Arasaratnam, 1970, pp. 11-12). Their histories and present narratives hold weight from crude plantation cultures, and this is proven based on the immigration statistics and the possibility of the interplay of caste in these scheduled "labourer/coolie" positions that contributed massively to the colonial economy. According to Sandhu (1969), from 1786 up to 1941, the total number of Indian immigrants in British Malaya stood at 3,823,812, with 72.5% being classified as "labourers." South Indians made up the majority of the labourer category (92.3%). Within the South Indian population (herein referred to as "Indians" generally); in an effort to be specific, the ethno-linguistic composition of Indian labour immigration between 1844-1941 put the Tamils at a staggering 85.2 %. The Tamils were the bedrock of the colonial plantation economy, an exploitative structure that depended on an inhumane and casteist system of indentured labour. This is also the reason for the continuous mention of "Tamils" in the essay. The colonial government preferred Indians to work in the rubber plantations because they were obedient and docile. Therefore, a majority of these workers "were recruited from the largely untouchable castes of Tamils and Telegus" (Manickam, 2009, p. 47).

During the post-independence era, Malaysian Indians were displaced by economic policies fed by ultra nationalist agendas, including a nefarious ideology known as "Ketuanan Melayu" (usually translated as Malay Supremacy). According to Chin (2015), Malay supremacy is widely espoused by the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO). Chin (2015) argues that this *supremacy* is responsible for the many issues in Malaysia's governance: "Malaysia's vast system of institutionalised preferences for Malays, the majority of the population, grants them economic and other privileges over ethnic Chinese, Indians and other minorities" (Chin, 2015, para 2). Malay supremacy reared its ugly head in public procurement after the deadly riots of 1969, that saw many policies uplifting Malays, but also solidified long term political legitimacy for racial politics. It consolidated UMNO's position as the sole relevant political party for the Malays. In the research article "Malaysia: the 2020 putsch for Malay Islam supremacy", Chin (2020) opines that the ideology of Malay supremacy includes the manufactured fear that the

Malays and Islam were under threat and that "the Malays were told to be distrustful of the Chinese and non-Muslims because the latter, so the narrative went, wanted to dominate them" (p. 296). Chin (2020) notes that the Malaysian 'social contract' is understood as "a *quid pro quo* arrangement which provides non-Malays with citizenship in return for their recognition of Malay supremacy and the 'special rights' of the Malays" (p. 289). This ideological superiority also reinforces many racial epithets still in use today among non-Indian communities in Malaysia, but more significantly by Malay language speakers, wielded against Indian-Tamils. This racist lexicon includes the slurs "*Keling*", "*Pariah*", "*Hitam*"; translated and contextualised as the local slur for Indians, a low caste denotation, and the colour black.

This systemic prejudice and differentiation, which is understood in Foucauldian discourse as racism, "othered" (Spivak, 1985) the darker and black-skinned populations. This included anti-Tamil behaviour and racialised treatment by majoritarian groups. This resulted in a glaring disparity of ethnic wealth, dignity, and wellbeing of racialised Indians in Malaysia. There are various issues plaguing the Indian community (at large): housing, education, employment, romantic and sexual liberty. 41% of child beggars are of Indian origin, 54% of Indians work on plantations or as urban labourers, nearly half of 2.6 million Indians are at the bottom of the income ladder, and 46% of Indians face discrimination in the property market as renters (Msolidariti, 2020). While the Malaysian government does not institutionalise distinctions between Tamils and other Indian minorities (Ceylonese Tamils, Telegus, Sikhs, Malayalees, etc.), it is highly probable that most of the individuals represented in these statistics originate from the ethnolinguistic Hindu-Tamil community. This amalgamation of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition of the Malaysian Indian community may be a political survival strategy. Furthermore, the sexual disgust toward dark-skinned gay and Queer Indian men is most commonly exposed in gay social media applications, where racial preferences are used as a defence by non-Indian Malaysians to alienate and keep Indian men at bay from queer homoerotic desires and expressions (Backus, 2017b).

Furthermore, the most publicised cases of death in police custody are from the Indian ethnic group. Koh and Koh (2018) have examined the ethnic divide in custodial deaths. While official figures state 23.4% are Indian, Suara Rakyat Malaysia (Suaram), the country's leading NGO in tracking custodial death cases, presents a higher percentage of 54.8%. It must be made clear that when compared with the ethnic Indian population of

2,220.6964 (6.8%), the number of official and publicised statistics is disproportionately higher than the other ethnic groups in Malaysia (Koh & Koh, 2018). Even though Malays form the majority of victims who die in police custody, "Indian cases are most frequently reported in the media and to Suaram" (Koh & Koh, 2018, para 14).

This historical context and contemporary statistics provide a justification for contrasting "Indian Masculinities" in Malaysia vis-à-vis the differentially racialised masculinities of the Malay or Chinese communities. Hence, it is wise to ask: "Can oppressed classes of Indian men in racialised Malaysia subjugate women, and at the same time other racialised Indian men within the community?" The answer is yes.

Toxic Masculinity – Hegemonic Masculinity

What is toxic masculinity? To understand that we need to take a look at the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity was coined in 1982 by Connell and co-authors Dean Ashenden, Sandra Kessler, and Gary Dowsett in *Making the Difference: Schools, Families and Social Division*. "Girls, School and Society", an Australian government report in 1975, prompted the 1982 study, in which students, teachers, and parents in local schools were interviewed in order to explore social inequality (Roberts, 2019). It was used to explain the link between patriarchy and privilege. Borrowing the term 'hegemony' from political theorist Antonio Gramsci, Connell argues that hegemonic masculinity implies that men abide by social standards of masculinity by subjugating women and marginalizing men. However, this concept originated and was widely used in a field study of social imbalance among Australian high school students (Kessler & McKenna, 1978). The concept was used to study the dynamics of classroom life, the resistance to bullying and relationship between girls and boys. The concept is also now used in media research to study the media representation of males (Jansen & Sabo, 1994).

Over time, theoretical suppositions of "hegemonic masculinity" were heavily critiqued. Demetriou (2001) argues that Connell's hegemonic masculinities were incomplete as men do not constitute a homogeneous or internally coherent bloc. However, masculinity thrives in what we see in Paechter's (2006) dualistic relation. The dualistic relation between masculinity and femininity, "whether claimed by males or females, positions both extreme and normative femininity as without power, and, indeed, as pathological" (p. 257). This relation acts like a binary opposition that is dependable on each

other. The assumed failures of masculinity are seen as femininity. Thus, all that is not masculine is feminine. Rahul Roy (2013) argues that this fear of failure (of attaining masculinity) is also a fear of the feminine because failure represents the danger of slipping into a category that you have never respected and held as inferior to your kind. The journey from fear to hatred is very short; violence is a logical corollary.

Fundamentally, the concept survives. The dominant aspect of masculinity has somewhat a hegemonic nature as it supersedes all other masculinities around it,

> ...because the concept of hegemonic masculinity is based on practice that permits men's collective dominance over women, it is not surprising that in some contexts, hegemonic masculinity actually does refer to men's engaging in toxic practices — including physical violence — that stabilize gender dominance in a particular setting. (Roberts, 2019, para. 4)

when Connell and Messerschmidt addressed in their re-evaluation of the original theory.

The term toxic masculinity may have first appeared in mainstream discourse through Daniel Gross's 1990 *New Republic* article. Gross (1990) credited Shepherd Bliss with coining the phrase "to describe that part of the male psyche that is abusive" (para. 5). The research on (toxic) masculinity in the Indian context mostly examines incidents of domestic violence, gang rape, and sexual assaults (including caste-motivated sexual violence). This is partially applicable towards understanding the crisis in masculinities of racialised Indian men in Malaysia, with regards to the domination and harassment of Indian women, both ciswomen and transwomen generally. We concede that hegemonic masculinities — whether in a heteronormative or queer context (Backus, 2017a) — are, in Bhabhian fashion, *hybrid*. Borrowing from postcolonial studies, the concept of *hybridity* and hegemonic masculinity has a lot in common. Demetriou (2001) employed the use of "hybridity" and the Gramscian "dialectical pragmatism" to critique Connell's definition of hegemonic masculinity as "a configuration of gender practice which […] guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (p. 340). The dualistic conceptualisation of hegemonic masculinities as "oppressors" of "oppressed" non-hegemonic masculinities as the "oppressed" in binaries, is not only "incongruous but also makes us aware of the not so salient axioms of positivist, colonial logic" (Gopal, 2006, p. 810).

In essence, from the statistics, it is assumed that a significant portion of Malaysian Indian men (herein we recognise the complexities of the identity), has been slated to be oppressors of women within and outside the community, and are extrapolated to the larger racialised society as the "dark Tamil abuser" — in reference to Spivak's (1985) notion of Othering. The over-sexualisation, prejudices, microaggressions, and discriminatory practices tattooed on these men from the larger non-Indian community solidifies this stereotype. The cisgender, heterosexual, virile Indian male is again placed under the microscope when scenarios of gender violence occur. The V2K community is one of many public examples of Indian men continuing to objectify women online, despite the public outcry. However, this binary view distorts the reality of male Indian/Tamil positionalities in a multi-ethnic, multi-gendered environment, steeped in a form of anti-blackness in the global south. The homosexual Tamil *man*, the non-binary, non-gender conforming, trans-men; any identifying *man* under the umbrella of the LGBTQIA will never be able to hold as much power as a cis-heterosexual Indian male. How then do we address the "crisis" in masculinity? Whose masculinity?

In conclusion, hegemonic masculinity in Malaysia among racialised Indian men is produced through the act of resistance to Malay supremacy, a culture that adapts white supremacy, and the inheritance of a Brahmanical patriarchal upbringing. Cis heterosexual Indian men who are unable to break away from the need to perform their masculinity by dominating women remain aggressors. The critical act of conceptualising hegemonic masculinities within a spectrum nevertheless helps us comprehend how masculinities, specifically of the Indian/Tamil community, are socially constructed through hypermasculine and hyper-feminine (de-masculinised) ideals that intersect the axes of gender, sexuality, caste and class. The social dynamics of gender identity and sexual orientation provides a more intersectional understanding on the specific *toxicity* of this gender performance, while creating possibilities for contesting multiple patriarchies and tipping the spectrum to create the fluidity we all seek.

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