Ambivalence in a Liquid Post-#MeToo Era:

Exploring ambivalence in meaning-making surrounding social situations containing mansplaining, reactions to this ambivalence and how this reflects changes in society.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to explore participants' ambivalence in meaning-making surrounding social situations containing mansplaining, reactions hereto and how this reflects changes in society throughout the #MeToo era. This is sought to be answered based on the analysis of eleven qualitative vignette-based interviews with unfinished stories using an explorative approach. The vignette stories included mansplaining scenarios in a gender-flipped design. The focus on ambivalence was chosen after listening trough the interviews and comparing nine participants in their 20s with one participant in her 40s and one participant in her 80s. To analyse these responses an analysis process, inspired by Bartlett, was developed with a focus on single case analysis as well as aggregate analysis. The aim was to make it possible to look both at individual differences and similarities between participants' responses, thereby looking at each participant separately as well as in comparison to the other participants.

The relevant research literature is presented. This literature is primarily focused on the phenomenon of mansplaining and the societal and personal effects of the #MeToo movement. Furthermore, research on the role of humour in online activity and the function of laughter. In addition to this, literature on experiences of fear in relation to the #MeToo movement is presented. This is followed by a brief presentation of intersectionality and Queer Theory as a feminist theory framework for the #MeToo movement. Theoretical perspectives include aspects of Zygmunt Bauman's theory on Liquid Modernity, George Herbert Mead's theory of the self and Gordon Allport's theory on categorisations, prejudgements and the function of groups. These theoretical and research perspectives are used to discuss the findings from the analysis.

In the analysis excerpts from the interviews are presented and shown in relation to different topics that the participants showed ambivalence toward. This includes responses surrounding masculinity and femininity, the participants' own utterances of prejudgements, and the meaning-making while finishing the unfinished vignette stories about mansplaining scenarios. The participants' use of humour and laughter is further used to highlight passages that show ambivalence, as well as the participants' own utterances about a new post-#MeToo discourse. Furthermore, three examples were chosen and presented using a model based on Mead's theory of self in society.

This showed how the participants navigated their ambivalent attitudes and slowly solved the ambivalence after hearing their own utterances out loud. Generally, the younger participants seemed to show ambivalence while navigating between pre- and post-#MeToo discourse surrounding these topics. The responses of the two participants in an older age group are presented as well, showing how these responses differ from the younger participants, specifically showing less to no ambivalence. The younger participants also showed resistance towards categorisations surrounding topics such as gender, gender norms, and stereotypes, as well as a heightened sensitivity to issues of consent and agency. It is discussed how this is in accordance with a post-#MeToo discourse and feminist theory framework, specifically intersectionality and Queer Theory. A careful approach to utterances about these topics and created ambivalence when in contrast to learned categorisations, which in part was mentioned by the participants themselves. Bauman's theoretical perspective is used to show how the lack of static categories, and therefore increased liquidity, leads to an increase in uncertainty and anxiety on a societal level.

It is discussed how the ambivalence on the individual level relates to these broader changes in society. In addition to this Allport's theory is used as a perspective to discuss these societal changes in relation to the need for categorisation in meaning-making. It is concluded that a change in meaning-making, in accordance with post-#MeToo discourse, can be observed in the younger participants. In addition to this, the participants' resistance towards categorisations appears to fit feminist theories' aim to deconstruct categories, as well as Bauman's perspective on an increasingly liquid and category free society. Lastly, how Allport's theory on the function for categorisations and prejudgements fits the inner tensions and resulting ambivalence of the participants, when navigating a lack of categorisations and avoiding stereotyping. The results are argued to be of relevance in both practical and research capacity, although more studies are needed.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND DELIMITATION

#MeToo is here to stay. This global movement has shifted the focus to a more critical and political interest in how sex and power intersect and how this systemically has an effect on the world. However, this movement has not been the only one, for it gave spark to other social movements and mobilizations such as Slut Walk, #BlackLivesMatter, #StopAsianHate The Women's Room and Everyday Sexism. This means not only a focus on the misuse of power against women but also against people of colour and less privileged minorities in society (Gill & Orgad, 2018, pp. 1317-1318). The Hashtag MeToo was coined in 2008 with the purpose of giving women a voice on social media against sexual harassment and making the problem visible and advocating change. This led to several events and changes in the different countries that joined all over the world. All of this raddled the social norms in society (Rasmussen & Yaozis, 2019, pp. 273-274). This has sparked a research field on #MeToo and its effect over the last 5 years (Ibid.; Velleda & Ceccoli, 2020; Revers & Traummüller, 2020; Rose, 2021; Pellegrini, 2018; Soklaridis, Zahn, Kuper, Gillis, Taylor, Whitehead, 2018; Knepper, Scutelnicu, Tekula, 2020). Throughout this thesis, this whole era from about 2008 until now will be mentioned as the #MeToo era.

Social Media in particular has been an important medium for activism and getting the message out through hashtags and the support of celebrities (Gill & Orgad, 2018, p. 1314) as well as outing and undermining the status of several public figures and their misuse of power through harassment of others (Pellegrini, 2018, pp. 262-263). One of the biggest changes of the #MeToo era has been the language especially used and developed on social media as a new form of democratic power platform for the public. Before, and even still, many grey areas of harassment resulted in a lack of suitable language for people experiencing harassment and discrimination and hindered confrontation and justice (Pellegrini, 2018, p. 263). This is however one purpose of the famous hashtags and "talk-able" words flourishing after the #MeToo era.

"Mansplaining" is one of such talk-able words. *Mansplaining is the word describing a social phenomenon where a man explains something to a woman without her asking, assuming she does not know or understand* (Joyce, Huma, Ristimäki, Ferraz de Almeida & Doehring, 2021, pp. 2-4). As two female researchers coming of age within

the #MeToo era we have been formed by the changes in society because of it and cannot help but feel a responsibility to contribute to the growing research field. To us, it seems that research, like with all other power holders in society, has been formed by the interests of an overrepresentation of white men. After the #MeToo era society seems to play catch up by focusing on topics that were formerly neglected. This has resulted in more critical thinking in general that shifts the power dynamic in society (Bauman, 2007, p. 2) as well as making the formerly trendy conformity very last season (Ibid., p. 4).

1.1. DEVELOPING THE FOCUS OF THIS THESIS

To introduce our focus in this thesis, we have to rely on our own development over the years of studies. Hence, we briefly introduce both our bachelor project and our 9th semester project. The bachelor project first ignited our common interest in phenomena surrounding everyday sexism; catcalling and slut-shaming in particular (Hove, Ruggaard & Sørensen, unpub.). Mansplaining was another phenomenon that we considered for the bachelor thesis, yet did not choose, due to a lack of research on this phenomenon since the focus of the bachelor project is mainly on theoretical and empirical research articles. However, said lack of research inspired our focus for the 9th semester project going into this thesis. For our 9th semester project, we focused on creating a method using a methodology that focuses on exploration, transparency and an open mind to the process of studying a phenomenon. We chose to use the 9th semester project as a form of groundwork for our thesis. It should be noted that these two projects are different and completely separate in focus, but the 9th semester project was used to make some preparation and gather our data for this thesis. When developing the method, the main interest was to explore the meaning-making process while reading social interactions containing mansplaining. It is seen as a highly debated phenomenon on social media, yet very little research has been devoted to this phenomenon. This is why it was decided to construct a method with a very explorative approach that left room for many different interpretations. During this process, we discovered what we at first described as navigating and monitoring a new discourse with the participants in their 20s. This especially became evident in comparison to the two interviews done with a woman in her 40s and a woman in her 80s. We seemed to

discover an ambivalence between a discourse with gender norms as well as stereotypes and a new discourse purposely trying to dissolve these prejudgements.

1.2. DELIMITATION OF TERMINOLOGY IN THIS THESIS

For this thesis, we need to clarify how the terms that are commonly used in everyday life, such as stereotypes, will be used in this thesis. Even though we recognize differences between *prejudgements* and *stereotypes***,** they will be used synonymously in some parts of the thesis because of how the participants use these terms interchangeably. Allport's understanding of prejudgements will later be elaborated. In this thesis, we will be using terms such as *pre-#MeToo* and *post-#MeToo***.** Inspired by Sundén & Paasonen (2020). This is chosen, as the #MeToo movement represents a shift in how we talk about sexual harassment, and broader topics arisen from discussions from this movement, such as agency, discrimination and shame. Pre-#MeToo will be used to signify a discourse with less attention to gender issues in everyday life, such as phenomena like mansplaining. *Post-#MeToo* will be used to describe a heightened sensitivity to issues of harassment, agency, consent and gender and sexuality in general. This heightened sensitivity includes gender roles and norms that are not seen as factual but rather individually chosen by each person and how they choose to perform their gender and/or personhood. When we describe a *pre-#MeToo* discourse in this thesis, it will be with words like "traditional gender roles" meaning a binary and fixed view of how each gender is expressed, not taking personality or context into consideration. In the traditional sense *gender roles* contain a certain expectation, and within said expectation a compulsion, to live the socially identifiable gender according to social standards (Hansen, 2010, p. 351). The word *discourse* will be used to describe how the participants talk about the subject to fit their understanding of societal discourse. The word discourse is relevant for this thesis because, when describing a change in society, as well as the development of self in a reciprocal relationship with society, how we talk about things is of significance. Therefore, the term discourse will be mentioned several times in relevance to this but is not to be understood as a discursive focus for the analysis. It will be called the *post-#MeToo discourse*. One word in particular that had an uprising with this post-#MeToo

discourse is *mansplaining*. For this thesis, the word mansplaining will also be used when talking about the gender-flipped stories where women are in the position of over-explaining something to a man. So, even though per definition mansplaining is an action done by a man, it will also be used for women because the vignette for the interviews contains a gender-flip element in which the woman says the exact same thing as the man in non-gender-flipped versions. In this respect, mansplaining is possible for both genders. Central for this thesis is *ambivalence* which is often at the core of human issues mediated through language in everyday conversation, literature and theories on the subject. For our purpose it will be defined as follows:

> "Ambivalence can be described as a unitary tension-fraught attitude toward something or someone. It can also be described in terms of a person's having two opposing attitudes to one and the same thing." (Razinsky, 2017, p. 5)

So, ambivalence describes two coexisting and contradictory feelings or attitudes about a thing or a person, that create tension in the individual. It can also be the same attitude towards two oppositions. In addition to this, theories with their own terminology will be used, however, these will be presented, or in the case of prejudgements further elaborated, later in the theoretical framework.

1.3. THE PURPOSE OF THE THESIS AND THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the ambivalence, that occurs when our participants create meaning surrounding social situations containing mansplaining, and the reactions to this ambivalence, as well as how this reflects changes in society throughout the #MeToo era. The ambivalence explored in this thesis occurs when our participants need to navigate traditional gender norms and the new language formed within the #MeToo era, also called the post-#MeToo discourse. The analysis for this project is not a standardized analysis with a focus on specifically language as we know it from discourse analysis, narrative analysis etc. As mentioned earlier, while discourse will be mentioned in this thesis it is not the focus of the analysis. For the analysis, selected and elaborated parts of *George Herbert Mead's* theory of the development of

self will be used to explore the process of personal meaning-making between the self and the generalized other. Presented parts of *Gordon Allport's* theory of prejudice will be used to describe and discuss the function and differences between prejudice, prejudgements and norms. Thirdly, *Zygmunt Bauman's* rich work on liquid modernity will be used to describe and discuss the visible changes in society and their effects hereof. In this thesis, relevant research will be presented to support the assertion that the #MeToo era, and herein intersectionality and Queer Theory, has indeed had an effect on society. In addition to this, we present research describing the word mansplaining as a relevant example of these effects. However, first we will need to give a brief summary of the method and methodology that are the basis for this thesis.

2. Method and Methodology

In the following paragraph the method development, piloting and testing will be summed up, as it has already been described thoroughly in an earlier, 9th semester project (Hove & Ravn, unpub.). The aim was to create and test a unique interview method. When developing the method, the main interest was to explore the meaning-making behind mansplaining, as it was seen as a highly debated phenomenon on social media, yet very little research has been devoted to this phenomenon. Which is why it was decided to construct a very explorative method that left room for many different interpretations. The result was a microgenetic method, using vignette stories to make the interview less personal to the participants, as well as a gender-flipped design to explore the effect that the gender of the protagonist in the stories had on the participants' interpretations and thought processes. Inspired by Wagoner (2009), the stories were left incomplete, and followed by exploratory questions, to help the participants finish the stories as well as double-blank-sentences to sum up the extensive answers, inspired by Valsiner (2017). Each participant was given a baseline story inspired by Wagoner on Bartlett's methods (2009), followed by three incomplete stories. *Vignettes* are fictional short stories with a relevant topic. The vignette form was chosen because it is suitable for sensitive topics. Hence, the participants can include personal information or decide not to (Hove & Ravn, unpub., p. 6). *Microgenetic methods* are designed to trigger, record and analyse the immediate process of emergence of a phenomena (Hove & Ravn, unpub., p. 8). *Sentence completion tasks* are pre-structured sentence stems that encourage the participants to complete the sentence by their meaning-making. The researcher therefore uses the sentence stem as a guide in which way a completion proceeds (Hove & Ravn, unpub., 9). In *everyday thinking*, as opposed to experimental thinking, people tend to fill in the gaps with conventional principles experienced in other social settings. To study this process the subject can be given the task of completing a narrative containing the topic of the study. Essentially asking the participants to continue the narrative with their idea of the most likely outcome (Hove & Anne, unpub., p. 10).

2.1. THE METHODOLOGY CYCLE

The methods developed in both the former 9th semester project and the current project is based on Valsiner's (2017) focus on methodology. Aim was to construct a method that could still make it possible to see the phenomenon of mansplaining in context, as well as reveal its ambivalence and complexity, since the phenomenon is seen as an open system in constant interaction with its environment. Valsiner (2017) describes a *methodology cycle* that consists of basic assumptions, phenomena, constructed theory and constructed method as well as derived data. These four parts are in constant exchange and influence each other. Together they are seen to make up the researcher's intuition which is seen as central to all scientific inquiry. Meaning, that the intuition is not naïve or uninformed but rather based on the interaction between the four parts of the methodology cycle. This understanding of methodology was seen as fundamental for the method development, as the researcher's intuition played a significant part in navigating in a very explorative approach to research and the process of piloting and testing the method (Hove & Ravn, unpub., p. 3).

2.2. PRESENTING THE STORIES

Two versions of the interview were created, one with just a single gender-flipped story and the second one with two gender-flipped stories. Which stories were gender-flipped, was the same for every participant with the same version of the interview. The stories and double-blank-sentences, as laid out in Hove & Ravn (unpub., pp. 22-27) will now be presented. *The first incomplete story* contained a stereotypical male topic, puncturing a tire, as the mansplaining. The non-gender-flipped version can be seen below.

Morten, Laura, Anders and Sofie are in a car and are on their way to a concert together. They are in the middle of a lively discussion about which song is best, when all of a sudden, they hear a sound from underneath the car and the car starts slowing down

Laura: I think one of the tires punctured.

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Anders: Yes, I think so too, there's a spare tire in the back, I'll pull over here. I can change it.

Sofie: I can help you.

They all get out of the car. While Anders and Sofie go about getting the spare tire and changing it, the other two are standing around talking.

Morten: We must have driven over something sharp.

Laura nods.

Morten: Tires puncture when you drive over something sharp and because of the weight of the car, the air escapes very fast.

Laura rolls her eyes.

After 15 minutes Anders and Sofie walk over.

Anders: I changed the tire, what were you talking about?

Laura:

(cf. Appendix, p. 1)

The story was summed up through this double-blank-sentence:

Laura: Morten ___ and I ___. That made me feel____.
(cf. Appendix, p. 1)

In the gender flipped version of this story the names of Sofie and Anders are exchanged as well as the names of Morten and Laura. *The second incomplete story* was written in a stereotypical female context, changing a diaper, and can be seen below in the non-gender-flipped version.

__Thomas__ and __Camilla__ have just started going out as a couple, they met each other through their job at a day-care. Camilla is meeting Thomas' family for the first time and his sister __Line__ is joining for dinner and bringing her new-born daughter __Emma__.

Line: I promised mum I'd help with dinner. Would you mind watching Emma for a bit?

Camilla: Of course!

Thomas: No problem at all.

Camilla and Thomas are sitting, with Emma in their arms, looking after her. After a while, Camilla notices that Emma needs a diaper change.

Camilla: I think we need to change her diaper; I can just do it.
Thomas: I'll go with you.

Camilla puts Emma on the changing table and starts removing the dirty diaper.

Thomas: Remember to wipe front to back, and not the other way around, so Emma doesn't get an infection.

Camilla:

(cf. Appendix, p. 3)

This was followed by these double-blank-sentences:

Camilla: Yes, ___ and when you say that it makes me feel ___.

Thomas: I said ___ because___.

Camilla: Yes ___ but ___.

(cf. Appendix, p. 3).

In the gender flipped version the names of Thomas and Camilla are exchanged; the name of the sister and niece stay the same. *The third and last incomplete story* contained a different type of mansplaining than the first two stories.

Maria, Kasper and Charlotte are sitting at a café and enjoying a cup of coffee. They are talking about their day and in the middle of a lively discussion. After a while, Charlotte notices that the man at the next table looks at them often. She turns to her friends to see if they have noticed this as well.

Charlotte: I feel like that guy over there is looking at us a lot.

Maria: Yes, I think he's looking at you.

Charlotte: You think? That's pretty uncomfortable.

Kasper: Why is that uncomfortable?

Maria: Well, it doesn't feel great to have someone staring at you.

Kasper: Take it as a compliment, I mean, you women like it when men notice you.

Charlotte:

(cf. Appendix, p. 5)

This was summed up through the following double-blank-sentences:

Charlotte: I think ___ and ___. That makes me feel ___.
Kasper: I think ___ and ___.
(cf. Appendix, p. 5)

As seen above, this story contained mansplaining in the sense that a man (Kasper) explains to a woman (Maria) how she should be feeling in the given situation. This was different from the first two stories, where the mansplaining was factual. This story therefore provoked more emotional responses. All participants with interview version one, had the second story gender-flipped, and all participants with version two had the first and third story gender-flipped. For further elaboration on the structure of the interview see Hove & Ravn (unpub., pp. 18f.).

2.3. MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

To gain an understanding of the participants' understanding of gender, double-blank-sentences, designed to trigger ambivalence, were included. These were the following:

"I feel feminine when ___ and that makes me feel ___."
 "I feel masculine when ___ and that makes me feel ___."
(cf. Hove & Ravn, unpub.)

All participants were asked to complete both sentences (Hove & Ravn, unpub., p. 20).

2.4. PARTICIPANTS

In the context of the method project ten interviews were conducted, of which two were transcribed for the purpose of the method project. Participants were recruited via social media, with the only criteria being that they be over 18 years old. Age and occupation

varied, although most participants were between the ages of 23-27. Half of the participants identified as male and the other half as female (Hove & Ravn, unpub., p. 18f.). An eleventh participant (S4) had asked for an interview later on and was therefore conducted after the conclusion of this earlier project. As we knew the baseline story did not produce the hoped depth of response, and would not be used in this project, this participant only received the unfinished stories as well as double-blank-sentences. For a short overview over the participants' gender, age, respective version of the interview received and Initial, see the table below (cf. figure 1).

Initial	Gender	Interview Version	Age
B	female	version 2	24
J1	male	version 2	26
J2	male	version 2	25
L	female	version 2	40
M1	female	version 1	26
M2	male	version 1	23
R	male	version 1	27
S1	female	version 1	27
S2	female	version 1	26
S3	male	version 2	24
S4	female	version 1	83

FIGURE 1 OVERVIEW OVER THE PARTICIPANTS

2.5. THE PRESENT PROJECT

In the current project focus will be on the analysis of the data derived from the interviews using this method. As the method has already been described and discussed thoroughly it will not be taken further into consideration. Aim will instead be to look at the data derived and to construct a form of analysis that is in accordance with the methodology described earlier. Meaning that it is based on the researcher's intuition and being open to seeing the phenomenon in the participants' context. Even though this project did not have a focus on writing about mansplaining per se, we had hypotheses and expectations about the subject and what we were likely to find. As it

is a gender sensitive topic, we expected to see at least a slight difference in men and women's perceptions and meaning-making surrounding this phenomenon. Our method had a gender flipped design, which was a decision based on the assumption that gender would play an important role. After completing all of the interviews, we had an intuitive general overview of the findings without having executed any analysis that would show a more detailed and nuanced picture (Hove & Ravn, unpub., p. 28). We were surprised that we did not observe a more distinct difference either between male and female participants or between the gender flipped and non-gender flipped version. The differences we did observe were very subtle and the overall consensus seemed to be that the behaviour exhibited in the stories was wrong or at least socially awkward. We did however observe some interesting differences between the two participants that were older than the rest and who generally seemed to have a different understanding of the stories. In addition to this what caught our attention with the remaining participants was their constant monitoring of themselves when giving answers and negotiation between first impressions and generally more carefully formulated answers. It seemed that these participants, who were all in their 20s, were more aware of the specific nature of the issue in the stories, mansplaining and therefore approached their answers differently. So, while the focus at the beginning of the 9th semester project was to create a unique method to explore the meaning-making behind mansplaining, the ambivalence that participants seemed to exhibit surrounding how to narrate a clearly gendered topic, quickly caught our attention when trying to decide on a focus for this thesis. We will underline again that the focus for the 9th semester project was not to analyse the data and these thoughts and reflections on the data above are not the findings of the 9th semester project. It is merely transparent reflections on an intuitive creation of coherency between the interviews gathered in the 9th semester project and this thesis. These reflections on our observations, from conducting the interviews, were made before the analysis. It did however very much change the trajectory of the focus in this thesis.

2.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this paragraph the ethical considerations surrounding this thesis will be laid out and discussed. Many of these considerations were especially important when constructing the method and conducting the interviews, these will only shortly be summed up, as a

more elaborate explanation hereof can be found in Hove and Ravn (unpub., p. 16-18)

Five ethical guidelines to consider in qualitative research are, according to Brinkmann (2015, p. 466f.) the following:

1. that the research needs to hold itself to high scientific standards
2. that groups and individuals participating as well as being portrayed throughout and influenced by the project need to be considered
3. confidentiality and anonymity need to be guaranteed for all participants, as well as respect for sensitive information
4. informed consent needs to be given by all participants, and they need to be aware that participation is completely voluntary
5. to live up to general scientific principles, the research should be made available publicly in one way or another

It will now be elaborated how each individual point has been considered during analysis and writing of this thesis. Considering the *first point,* the method used to collect data was unique, and it was the aim to remain open during the analysis process, not choosing a specific and standardized approach but rather to approach the data exploratively. Our aim is to be as transparent as possible with this process to make the steps taken in the analysis easily retraceable and thereby securing scientific standards. Seeing the methodology, described earlier in this thesis, as the scientific standards for this project, it is of utmost importance to us, to remain open to new findings, explanations and interpretations throughout this project. Furthermore, it is important to see the phenomenon in context, both inter-, intrapersonally and culturally, which our method allowed us to, and which our theories aim to do as well. In addition to this we use our researcher's intuition, consisting of the methodology cycle, as a central tool throughout the work on this thesis.

Concerning the *second point*, the groups represented in this project are very broad, men and women, as well as very broad age groups. For this reason, no minority groups are affected by this project. On the individual level, it has been very important not to misrepresent participants, which is why only rather obvious examples of ambivalence have been chosen for transcription. More obscure or vague examples are not included. This is done to minimize the likeliness of misrepresenting the participants, by misinterpreting vague examples. It can be argued that only choosing excerpts to be

transcribed decreases transparency and therefore opens an ethical discussion. However, given the timeframe of this thesis, as well as the vast amount of data collected, it was decided that only the relevant parts of the interviews would be transcribed. It is important to mention, that this does not mean that ambivalence is not present in other parts of the interview, the chosen excerpts are however the most obvious examples without the context of the entire interview. Furthermore, ambivalence is not present throughout all interviews in their entirety, but this is not mutually exclusive. So, there are other topics and phenomena in the interviews that could be interesting to examine and where the participants are not ambivalent, however this is not relevant for the focus of this thesis. For this reason, only, the parts of the participants' responses that are relevant to the focus of this project are included, and this does not misrepresent the participants, as ambivalence is present in one way or another in all of the interviews.

Considering *the third point*, only transcribing excerpts further increases participants anonymity, as it leaves out unnecessary information about the participants. It has been the aim throughout working on this thesis to report participants' answers as accurate and as true to the participant as possible. All participants gave their informed consent to participate in the interviews as well as to their responses being used, both for our 9.th semester project and this thesis. It could be discussed if the change of focus in this thesis, from the original focus during the 9th semester project, makes the use of the participants' responses ethically questionable. This is because they were informed that the topic of this thesis would be mansplaining. However, they were told at the beginning of the interview that the stories were about social interactions and agreed to their responses hereof being used. This is a much broader focus that also includes the current focus of this thesis. They did consent to their responses being used, meaning that the change of focus, due to what was most interesting to us, based on our intuition, makes very little difference. In addition to this, the overall topic of this thesis is still close to the original focus, it is not a completely different topic, it is just a change in the perspective of looking at it. In this way it can be argued that the informed consent was given by all participants. Confidentiality has been secured, as the names of the participants are replaced by letters, as well as cities, places and names of partners, children, etc, being replaced by letters too. In this way any sensitive information, that

would make the participant recognisable has been left out of the transcription and project as a whole.

Concerning *the last ethical guideline*, as customary with this kind of thesis, it will be available on the universities project database, making the findings publicly accessible.

4. FINDING A NEW FOCUS

To increase transparency, the following paragraph will be used to describe the process of finding the focus of our thesis. Furthermore, A brief description of aggregate-, single-case analysis and Wagoner's (2009) description of Bartlett's use hereof will be presented.

After finishing the 9th semester it became our mission to find a definitive focus for this thesis. We took inspiration from the legacy of Frederic Bartlett in creating our unique interview method. A natural following of this was to be inspired by Bartlett in our way of analysing the interviews as well. What we found relevant and productive about Bartlett's way of looking at his data was the way he combined *aggregate analysis* and *single case analysis*. These two stem from different scientific approaches and seek different outcomes but they are both relevant for answering any problem or question in research.

Wagoner (2009) describes the differences between aggregate analysis and single case analysis as well as how Bartlett used these two to complement each other. *Aggregate analysis* was invented for analysing data from questionnaires to be able to find the distribution of inter-individual difference variables in a population. The scientific value with the aggregate analysis is to find results in a larger social context, to give answers that are relevant on a societal level and to be able to say something about a population or a specific group in general. This method can reveal general trends and give us some overall answers about most people. *What aggregate analysis is not useful for is showing individual psychological functioning on its own. We cannot take these general trends and assume that they are applicable to a single individual.* Using an aggregate analysis, we lose the possibility of seeing the cases that contradict and might falsify or change the theory for the better. Lastly, the aggregate analysis does not acknowledge that individuals are not the sum of different parts, rather these different

parts can have different outcomes depending on time and context (Wagoner, 2009, pp. 112-118).

Idiographic science is the focus on the particular—yet a focus of the kind that allows generalization. It is the focus on a phenomenon, as it is described by the individual, in that particular context, at that point in time. Every second of a human life is irreversible and unique and therefore idiographic, but we produce knowledge from these unique experiences by comparing, storing and classifying them in a system that seeks to generalize (Salvatore & Valsiner, 2010, p. 819).

The practice of *single case analysis* follows naturally from the premises of idiographic science. Single case analysis gives us qualitative data that tells us something about one or a few specific cases and the systemic functioning of individuals. The use of multiple participants is to try and reproduce what was found in the first case and see what might be different and why. Analysing every individual case gives us the opportunity to falsify the general trends and theories. It is more inclusive of different factors and parts to an individual that might be relevant for a discussion of the outcome of an analysis. It also means that you have to look at all participants of a sample and, unlike aggregate analysis, especially deviating cases should catch one's attention and should not be seen as an outlier that does not comply with the general findings (Wagoner, 2009, pp. 115-117).

As mentioned above we were inspired by Bartlett for the creation of the method for our 9th semester project and we are equally as inspired for the method of analysis for this thesis. When analysing, Bartlett first looked at each interview and answers to see how they responded. Then, after going through all of the participants' answers, he would have discovered some general trends and things that many of them had in common. But it did not end there. He would then look at the answers that were unique and did not fit into the general trend and he would have to consider why. So, the two different ways of analysing data will give you different answers. However, Bartlett combined them, or rather, went back and forth between them. By doing this, a theory of general human psychology, in case of Bartlett - remembering, can be created. A theory is made even stronger by also examining when the expected behaviour does not occur. By looking at the variations as part of the theory, instead of a flaw, the deviation is incorporated and considered which ultimately makes the theory more thorough

(Wagoner, 2009, 117-118). This meant that the first step towards defining a relevant focus for this thesis was to listen to every recorded interview as a single case. Then it was discussed how they each perceived the interactions containing mansplaining.

Questions to be discussed while listening to each interview were: "How do they make sense of the mansplaining?" - "Why do they use these words?" - "Are they using stereotypes? If yes, how? If not, what is that showing us?" - "Are they using the word mansplaining?" - "What is especially interesting about the interview?". As a reminder, this was not an elaborately prepared or a standardized procedure for analysis. After listening and discussing each interview as a single case, we started discussing the patterns or trends we were seeing throughout all of the interviews. This first step was what drew our attention to the ambivalence in the younger participants' interviews. Multiple times, stereotypes led to the participants spontaneously correcting their explanation so as to avoid stereotyping. This inevitably meant that the focus went from exploring the difference in meaning-making of mansplaining to exploring the ambivalence occurring in meaning-making of these social interactions with a post-#MeToo discourse. After these first analytical steps towards defining the purpose of this thesis a period of finding relevant theories and research papers about this change in society began.

5. RELEVANT RESEARCH LITERATURE

This paragraph introduces relevant research and literature for the purpose of this thesis. First beginning with literature on the role of social media in feminism in the #MeToo era. In this paragraph, articles with a focus on specifically mansplaining and the use of humour in relation hereof will be presented. In addition to this, the role of humour as a tool for social feminist activism online will be mentioned. Furthermore, two articles with the focus of studying the effects of the #MeToo movement with a main focus on fear will be laid out. Lastly, a broader perspective on the feminist theoretical framework, in which the #MeToo movement is embedded, will be given.

5.1. FEMINISM ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has been of increasing importance for social movements, in that it can be used as a platform to facilitate change (Li, Turki, Izaguirre, DeMahy, Thibodeaux & Gage, 2019, p. 854). Social movements now are created online and lead to social action, most commonly with the goal of changing society. Earlier social movements such as the suffragettes in 1917 or the civil rights movement in the United States in the 50ies and 60ies as well as the LGBTQIA+ rights movement and stonewall protests took place physically. Newer social movements such as #BlackLivesMatter or the #MeToo movement can take place virtually, by sharing experiences on social media platforms. This is seen to be a much faster information exchange that can be spread to a much wider audience (Li et al., 2019, p. 856). Yet, these movements do not only take place virtually. Social media also contributes in making the organization of and spreading awareness about real world events easier. For example, with the slut walk, a demonstration against victim-blaming and rape-culture. Here social media has been crucial in spreading awareness of rape culture in various institutions and hence getting new individuals to join the movement (Li et al., 2019, p. 856). The hashtag MeToo (*from here on #MeToo*) can be seen as a kind of heading, connecting individual posts on social media, in a global conversation of sorts (Sundén & Paasonen, 2020, p. 20). This hashtag increased rapidly in popularity, with the Harvey Weinstein scandal in 2007. Hereafter it led to investigations into claims of sexual harassment in a variety of contexts (Sundén & Paasonen, 2020, p. 19). The #MeToo movement is often

mentioned as a sudden change in discourse, however Sundén and Paasonen (2020) describes how this movement was based on a much broader scale of feminist activism, such as the women's march in The United States (pp. 19f). Yet, #MeToo has had a hitherto unseen visibility in media, and the hashtag has been translated into a variety of languages (Sundén & Paasonen, 2020, p. 20). The #MeToo movement can be argued to have grown beyond its social media origin, as it became part of television debates, and other media, as well as discussions in everyday life. Thereby, it has moved from personal accounts of shameful experiences of sexual harassment, to an internationally known, and recognised movement against inequality and silence about sexual harassment (Sundén & Paasonen, 2020, p. 22).

5.2. Mansplaining with Humour on Social Media

Addressing and using the word "mansplaining" is one way to challenge systemic sexism. Looking through research about the subject of mansplaining and the mentioning hereof it becomes obvious that it is a problem almost any field of work recognizes, from fishing, through gaming and brewing, to academics (Burkett & Carter, 2020; McKinnon-Crowley, 2020; Frankel, Benjamin & Stephens, 2021; Bourabain, 2021; Armitage & Thornham, 2021; Turesky & Warner, 2020). Mansplaining became a visible and talk-able phenomenon after author Rebecca Solnit addressed the problem in her essay "Men explain things to me" (Solnit, 2012). After this it has become the most popular word creation and hashtag on social media compared to others like "manspreading" and "manterruption" (Lutzky & Lawson, 2019). Dular (2021) argues that mansplaining is a form of epistemic injustice. She, as well as Lutzky and Lawson (2019), Bridges (2017) and Kidd (2017), tries to describe why mansplaining is a deep-felt problem in society and for women. They show through data from social media how the term mansplaining is used, by women, to gain back power and speak up against sociocultural sexist behaviour. Naturally, the researchers all address the problem from a linguistic and discursive point of view to describe the effects and reasoning behind the use of the word mansplaining.

Similar to the above-mentioned studies of mansplaining, Joyce's et al. (2021) empirical data is taken from social media platforms. It consists of video clips

specifically from live interaction on television programs where accusations of mansplaining occur. They analyse these different interactions and make up three categories for accusations of mansplaining. These consist of the following:

1) Exposing a man's patronizing conduct assuming the woman has less knowledge or ignoring the unquestionable knowledge equal to them.

2) Challenging a man's epistemic authority over knowledge in general, here the example is with gendered subjects like women's reproductive healthcare.

3) Dispute about who has epistemic authority over a specific domain of knowledge where the person with the direct access has the superior rights.

However, one of the live interaction examples showed that what the woman was referring to as mansplaining was actually the man's disagreement with her assertion. The mansplaining accusation seen here was actually a way of silencing the man in this interaction and undermining the credibility of his words (pp. 7-20). In sum, Joyce et al. (2021) finds that talk-able words like mansplaining indeed give women the power to speak up against discriminating behaviour. However, in situations with no transgression it can be used to silence a person, most likely a man (p. 21).

Bridges (2017) is interested in studying how the word "mansplain" is used as a metapragmatic utterance in online discourse and how it is used to take a stance. Here she looks into how people manage and monitor their own and others' language. 200 posts from Twitter and Facebook went through a Critical Discourse Analysis and findings showed that the two genders used the word mansplain very differently (p. 96). Not only do people use the word mansplain online but they also talk about the word mansplain. Bridges (2017) interprets this as:

1) That women still feel repressed and ignored.

2) No matter the topic, male-dominated, gender neutral, or inherently lived by women, women feel they are talked to in a patronizing way.

3) A gendered term that is perceived susceptible to misuse is in consequence silencing men and discrediting their speech.

4) A word like this can easily be reappropriated to other social groups in new contexts (p. 101).

Bridges (2017) concludes that discourse is vital in transmitting, reproducing and maintaining social norms and practices and they find that these social values are connected to the way they respond meta pragmatically to the language we use. In this study they find that the word mansplain is used in many different ways to take a stance on this gender issue. As one might expect, women use the word to speak up against online repression, and mostly light-heartedly or with thick sarcasm. Men mostly evaluated the term as being hostile and unnecessary with the focus of accusations of mansplaining becoming a weapon to create a universal flaw for the male gender. However, some men - just like women - used the word with humour to show that they were aware of the problem and to somehow manage the responses they might receive for their comments online (Ibid.). This is obviously a tool for monitoring one's language and role in the "new" discourse around gender subjects. In general humour was a highly used tool to address critiques of society and in a very creative way "cleverly recontextualize other users' language to repurpose its function" (Ibid.). This use of humour either by addressing mansplaining or addressing the use of the word mansplain also distanced the speakers from the negative characteristics connected to the act of mansplaining. Characteristics like arrogance and ignorance (Ibid.). No matter the stance the speakers take in this debate, it shows that some users are aware of a change of discourse and norms in society and they have to monitor either themselves or others - preferably with humour. A term like mansplaining is forcing people to reflect on their own language and how they use it as well as why and what it ultimately says about their values and how they fit into the new ideologies coming forth within the #MeToo movement (Ibid.).

In their book *Who's laughing now, feminist tactics in social media* Sundén and Paasonen (2020) describe how something as serious as the #MeToo movement is redirected through humorous coping strategies online. The role of laughter and humour in overcoming shame and feeling overwhelmed with sexist structures is discussed. Sunden and Paasonen (2020) argue that humour is central to catching attention online and creating a platform with outreach, which subsequently can lead to activism. (p. 2) Laughter is described as a tool to redirect negative affect or shame (Sundén & Paasonen, 2020, p. 3). It is argued that humour can be divided in three categories;

incongruity, relief and superiority. The latter is argued to be very common online, and is often based on sexism or racism, more generally at the expense of minorities seeking to maintain a power hierarchy that may or may not exist anymore. Incongruity, much like ambiguity, refers to the combination of incompatibles. Lastly, with relief humour laughter is seen as a release of social tension, for example in situations where a group of people feels uncomfortable or overwhelmed (Sundén & Paasonen, 2020, p. 12) It is further argued that sarcastic, or ironic use of humour in online feminist activities, can be seen as based in absurdity, making it relief humour, where tension is reduced. It is also said that laughter does not necessarily have to be based on happiness, it is seen as a more general reaction to inhibition of affect, thereby a tool to regulate emotion. Examples mentioned are: "The frightened nervous laugh, the dirty laugh of contempt and hostility, the ashamed laugh, the surprised laugh, the laugh of enjoyment, the laugh of excitement and the laugh of distress, the substitute cry" (Sundén & Paasonen, 2020, p. 13). This way laughter is not necessarily happy, but can also be a sign of nervousness, fear or distress.

5.3. FEAR AFTER THE #METOO MOVEMENT

Soklaridis et al. (2020) describes the fear that has arisen amongst men in positions of power in the medical field after the #MeToo movement. In the field of medicine women have experienced sexual harassment and gender discrimination at all levels of training and practice. #MeToo has therefore created a platform for women in this area of work amongst others to be able to challenge gender related treatment. Another finding was men reporting fear as a barrier for them to engage in initiatives for gender equity. It has been reported that some men have stopped meeting with women they do not know well or who are considered to be their subordinates. These men report that they fear false allegations that potentially could have huge consequences for their career and reputation. This response from their male colleagues can have consequences for women's future careers as well. If men are holding back mentorships and other career expanding experiences this will only further expand the gender gap in the medical field (Soklaridis et al, 2020, p. 2270). Soklaridis et al. discusses this reaction by saying that it is probably not the only field where this fear from men will have the same effect. This "fear", that the #MeToo movement might have cultivated, is not new to human behaviour. Humans have a social history of responding to change

with fear and it tells us something important about ourselves and our connection to each other. This fear is a natural response to the changing gender landscape in the field of medicine, where people in power are more aware of making the field more inclusive and diverse for the rapidly growing enrolment of women (Ibid., 2271). Even though this change is logical and reasonable, a natural response to change is to expect the worst and see the change as a risk; That women's advancement can only come at the expense of men. This can create "benevolent sexism" which can manifest itself in many nuanced ways but primarily to punish women for challenging the status quo. Soklaridis et al. (2020) proposes that the men's fear as a consequence of the #MeToo era builds on the presumption that women are not able to distinguish between a mentor's good and bad intentions (p. 2272). Not only is this reaction about fearing false accusations from women, but it ultimately also discredits the women who speak out against sexual assault and harassment (ibid.). Soklaridis et al. (2020) proposes that potential mentors and other people in positions of power use self-reflection and analyse their own fear reaction to get to the bottom of the reasons behind them and the consequences these reactions will have in the long run (p. 2273).

Revers and Traunmüller (2020) find that the changes by the #MeToo movement, what has transpired from that and the last decade in general, might affect how students on campus speak and monitor themselves and others. Universities are important for creating research and teaching of reflective and well-founded opinions and how to defend them with factual arguments. However, universities have been under the radar for issues like forced resignation and firing of professors as well as disinvitations and violent protests against controversial speakers (p. 472). Revers and Traunmüller (2020) find that there seems to be a political division. Those with conservative views who think that the university is filled with left-leaning members who strongly speak up against discriminative and dissenting views. These conservative students are afraid of a stifling atmosphere where members have to be careful of everything they express publicly. The left-leaning students, accused of stifling free speech, think that the conservative students reinforce an unnecessary attention to the universities. In their opinion conservative students seek to discredit attempts to fight discriminatory behaviour and with these attempts create a more diverse environment (p. 473). In this study they are interested in answering questions on what is considered offensive speech, if there is a pressure to be politically correct as well as if this affects the free

discussion on campus. Furthermore, they want to answer the above in relation to individual political standpoint (Ibid.). They do this based on survey data from a university in Frankfurt. They found that left-leaning students were more likely to be offended by homophobic, misogynistic and sexist comments as for example mansplaining. Up to 56% of students would not allow people with controversial opinions to speak on campus depending on the opinion. Several radical opinions were used as examples in the survey from 'being critical of Islam' (31%) to 'thinking homosexuality is a sin' (56%) with other radical opinions in between. Even higher percentage of students would not allow a lecturer with such opinions to work on campus (Revers and Traunmüller, 2020, pp. 485-487). One-third of students reported that they would be reluctant to openly express their political opinion on campus. In addition, they found that men in general were less worried about consequences when giving their political opinions. However, men were significantly more likely to be personally criticized for their opinions (Revers and Traunmüller, 2020, pp. 488-489). Notably, men on both sides of the political spectrum felt dismissed as men (Revers and Traunmüller, 2020, p. 485).

In sum, the literature so far emphasizes how the language is an important part of the #MeToo movement and how we speak about other people, in particular women, has changed and has had a cultural effect in society, globally. It shows how the use of words like mansplaining can be used differently and how especially humour is an important factor in monitoring, how you address topics of gender as well as making precautions for other peoples' comments and views of your opinion. The above also sheds light on the negative effects the #MeToo movement might have, especially with the pressure of being politically correct and following a new discourse as well as men fearing the accusations addressed to their gender.

5.4. INTERSECTIONALITY AND QUEER THEORY: A FEMINIST THEORY FRAMEWORK FOR THE #METOO MOVEMENT

When looking at the #MeToo movement and gender it is necessary to look at feminism as a movement and how concepts of gender, sexuality, ethnicity and class are

intertwined. A feminist movement with special focus hereon is *Intersectional Feminism*. According to Petsko, Rosette & Bodenhausen (2022) intersectionality as a psychological concept has its origin in black feminist academics, as a concept for describing mutual reinforcement between various oppressive systems, especially systemic racism and systemic sexism, and how this is perceived. In psychology this concept of intersectionality is often used to describe how phenomena are differently characterized for different people, based on their social identities (p. 2). According to Cole (2009) the effects of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and social identities etc. are becoming increasingly present in psychological research. Yet, how these categories influence outcomes together, seems to be less documented. Since every single person is part of multiple categories, intersectionality is considered especially important (p.107). Cole (2009) states that intersectionality is a very important contribution of feminist studies and can be used to examine both how discrimination and privilege can be understood. Joint categories and intersectionality are therefore seen as significant to how people's experiences are shaped (p. 171). Overall, intersectional feminism seeks to recognising that these inequalities do not represent separate problems, but instead are interconnected in societies power dynamics and people's everyday life. It can be argued that this necessitates to think more between categories by looking at multiple social identities at the same time.

Queer Theory has many parallels to intersectional feminism. According to Jagose (2009) non-categorical thinking as well as refusal of norms and identities is often seen as a key concern of Queer Theory. This has long been of interest to feminism, for example in redefining and deconstructing the category of woman (p. 160). Jagose (2009) describes the origin of Queer Theory as a way of counteracting dominant discourses, surrounding sexuality but also in relation to race, class etc (p. 157f.). The author refers to how Judith Butler describes that feminism had long been for white heterosexual women and that in an effort to broaden feminism, categories could not be used, since categories would always lead to exclusion of some individuals. Therefore, any specific identity would be in contrast of the very core value of feminism; equality. To some extent, oppression therefore lies in the categories themselves (Jagose, 2009, p. 163). It is argued that much of the interest in feminism is also the interest of Queer Theory, making a distinction between both critical traditions very difficult (Jagose p. 172). Valocchi (2005) argues for the inclusion of views on

gender from Queer Theory into sociological research, as the categories of masculine/male and feminine/female or heterosexual/homosexual are here often used as starting points to examine gender differences or inequality in general. These categories are often viewed as fixed and lifelong. It is said that this neglects the way in which discrimination is constructed through categorisation. When taking Queer Theory into consideration, with the emphasis of deconstructing these binaries, the much more complicated social processes at play can better be examined. This necessitates new ways of thinking about gender and sexuality in research (p. 752f). To sum up, both Queer Theory and feminism are interested in deconstructing categorisation as this would often lead to exclusion, even the distinction between feminist theory and Queer Theory can be seen as fluid or liquid and this has important implications for how gender and sexuality should be viewed in research as well.

Overall, the #MeToo movement can be said to have put feminism back into popular debate, in a way similar to the feminism of the 70ies. It is largely seen as the reason for a rebloom of feminism, repopularising concepts such as the patriarchy and focus on female collectiveness and togetherness. (Sundén & Paasonen, 2020, p. 150). Social media has given a platform for many movements such as #BlackLivesMatter, queer rights (#pride), and feminism (#MeToo, #whyididntreport #everydaysexism), with information and a base of support accessible to everyone. Furthered by the platform of social media, the concepts of feminism, discrimination, sexuality and gender have become more dynamic and open. And concepts like intersectionality, as well as theories such as Queer Theory have received increasing attention in academics but also in popular debate as part of the #MeToo era.

6. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: FROM SELF TO SOCIETY

For this thesis it was considered important to highlight different levels of human life. We see the individual level in each of our interviews. However, discussing a subject that involves norms, morals, rules and roles in society, we found that it is necessary to look at the systemic and structural frames that surround each individual and seeing it as a reciprocal relationship between the two. In this paragraph there will be a presentation of selected parts of theories of the following: Gordon Allport, Zygmunt Bauman and George Herbert Mead.

6.1. ALLPORT'S DESCRIPTION OF CATEGORISATIONS, GROUPS AND PREJUDGEMENTS

As mentioned in the research literature, feminism seeks to deconstruct and refuse norms and identity, so the question of why these norms exist lends itself. Why do we, as humans, feel the need to categorize, to divide humans into gender, level of education, race or sexuality? What importance do these categories have? Gordon Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* concerns itself with these questions. According to Allport (1979) prejudgements are natural and normal, as the creation of groups is necessary and creates a common set of values and norms (p. 19). As humans we have the need to categorize our surroundings, since it is easier to observe the world in broad categories than to evaluate each event separately. These categories often make sense and are based on probable outcomes, for example when going to a doctor you expect to be treated in a certain way, because experience and probability suggests so. Even when we experience a situation contrary to these expectations it does not erase the categorisation, as it is instead treated as a sort of outlier to the data available to us (Allport, 1979, p. 20f). The categorisation further helps with recognising related objects and adjusting actions accordingly, as for example an aggressive person with a knife is recognised as dangerous without having to ask the person why they are holding the knife and what they plan to do with it. This allows us to quickly avoid a dangerous

situation. Within a category the assigned values are often the same, for example flowers are something you like, it does not matter that there are many different types of flowers (Allport, 1979, p. 21). However, the categories vary in how rational they are. Rational categories are based on evidence and hence necessitate more data or information (Allport, 1979, p. 22). For example, assumptions about siblings' behaviour will often be correct, as you know them very well, whereas if you assume all siblings act the same, this is not based on evidence, since you cannot know all siblings in the world.

6.1.1. PREJUDGEMENT, PREJUDICE AND THE FUNCTION OF GROUPS

Prejudice is hostility against a certain group or members of this group and exists because it fulfils an irrational function for the prejudiced person (Allport, 1979, p. 12). *Prejudgements* are unwarranted judgments that are not based on evidence (Allport, 1979, p. 7). These become prejudice only when static, hence unchanged when confronted with evidence. Therefore, there is a difference between errors in prejudgement and prejudice (Allport, 1979, p. 9). Once categories or attitudes are formed they are rather difficult to change, as they have a specific function for the individual (p. 22f). Allport (1979) further describes how prejudice and prejudgements do not necessarily have to be negative, for example a new parent will be much more likely to see all the wonderful things they attribute to their child. These prejudgements are not seen as problematic since they do not lead to social problems (p. 25). Allport (1979) refers to philosopher Spinoza who describes love-prejudice as loving something without sufficient base therefore and notes that this is often the root of problematic prejudgements. As you like yourself or a group you belong to more than would make sense, and therefore react strongly to anything threatening these beliefs, attitudes and prejudgements (p. 25). The categorisations and prejudgements therefore have a specific function and often help rationalize individuals' beliefs (Allport, 1979, p. 12f). Prejudgments can further be a tool to align yourself with a group yet at the same time the specific beliefs can vary between individuals in a group (Allport, 1979, p. 37). Wanting to belong to a group is fundamental to human nature, and often being part of the group and identifying with it is so important that leaving the group would have to be caused by a long period of unhappiness or a very unpleasant event, and even

then, it might not be enough. In some of the groups an individual belongs to, every member of the group is well known. In others the knowledge of the other members is purely symbolic, as you do not know all the other members of the group. For example, you can see yourself as part of the group women, yet your prejudgements on this group are not based on knowledge of how every other woman is, as you cannot know every woman. Yet identifying oneself as part of that group is useful.

6.1.2. THE PROBLEM: DISCRIMINATION

In short, prejudgements and categorisation make a complex world manageable and understandable and allow us to navigate the flood of information that everyday life represents. This does not sound problematic. So, when do problems occur? According to Allport (1979) being part of a group and aligning yourself with its values makes a lot of sense with static groups. In today's society defining an ingroup is much more difficult (p. 31). If you belong to a minority you might find yourself caught between the group you belong to and your reference group, the group you might not belong to but wish to identify with, which can be argued to be a difficult situation (Allport, 1979, p. 31). Prejudgements occur because any given group has attitudes, beliefs and enemies that are adjusted to the needs of the group (Allport, 1979, p. 39). To change a person's beliefs, you would often have to change the group, which is also difficult (Allport, 1979, p. 40). Yet, the real problem occurs when prejudice leads to discrimination. Discrimination is defined by hostile or excluding behaviour because the person being discriminated against belongs to a specific group (Allport, 1979, p. 5). Allport (1979) further argues that discrimination and prejudgements only exist when the object of the prejudgement deviates from cultural norms. Something cannot be seen as discrimination if all parts involved view it as normal. This makes it difficult to distinguish between discrimination and rational prejudgements (Allport, 1979, p. 10f.) So, all in all, it is argued that prejudgements become problematic when they lead to discrimination and behaviours that causes social problems.

6.2. RELEVANT ELEMENTS OF BAUMAN'S THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON LIQUID MODERNITY

Zygmunt Bauman's perspective is relevant to start a discussion about changes in society and the effects it has on human beings living in that society. As a well renowned sociologist his perspectives on modern society changing from solidity to liquidity was relevant to support our assertion that society is indeed changing. Our assertion is that the society has slowly evolved to contain a freedom from definitions, and rapidly in the last 10 years, with several movements, we have seen a change in discourse and formal changes in society with politics and law. The word mansplaining is an example of change in discourse and an example of more formal change is that in 2020 the law of consent was ratified (Justitsministeriet, 2020).

Bauman (2012) writes that he would assert that we (without discussing who 'we' are) find ourselves in interregnum where we are highly evaluating the old because it is not fitting for the changes in society and the human condition (p. Vii). We have gone from a solid modern society with social forms that limit individual choices and create patterns for acceptable behaviour into a liquid modern society where these social forms lose their shape and do not stay the same for long and thereby cannot serve as frame of reference (Bauman, 2007, p. 1). This is however problematic because time changes so quickly that we have not yet acquired the necessary tools for dealing with the new challenges coming along with the time and society changing. Bauman (2012) describes an unclear image of the destination towards something that looks like a global society, global economy, global politics and so forth. This unclear image is an opposition to how our ancestors very clearly laid out a map for what they would like the future to look like and what needed to change (p. Vii). An example could be the feminist waves throughout history that had very clear or specific agenda for example the right to vote or get an education. Bauman (2012) argues that instead of "post-modernity", which indicate some kind of ending of a modern world, it should rather be called "liquid modernity" as a contrast to the more solid modernity we find years back in history. This former more solid modernity was made up of more rules, roles, norms and power hierarchy where there was an actual final state of perfection to be chased and desired (pp. Viii-ix). This goal of perfection meant no further improvements, ending strain and hard work, and change was an irritant and could only mean a move downwards to a worsened state (2012, pp. x-xi). This has however been replaced with an infinity of possible improvements with no final state. Perfection has been replaced with flexibility as the ideal (Bauman, 2012, pp. Viii-ix). Society is treated as a network rather than a

structure (Bauman, 2007, p. 3). This ideal flexibility and liquidity of society of course oozes into the economy, politics, power and communities (Bauman, 2012, pp. Viii-ix). With the purpose of this thesis only the consequences of liquid modernity into human social life will be elaborated further, even though everything of course is tied to each other which Bauman brilliantly ties together with his work. With Bauman's perspectives the goal of this paragraph will be to show the effect that this so-called liquidity has on society and our social lives and how we as humans deal with this or potentially might have to adapt in the future. So, in this way Bauman's perspective supports our assertion that the culture has changed how we talk about gender, sexuality, race etc. to become more fluid or at least a discourse trying to be more inclusive for all individuals in society.

The fluidity and resolution of norms might for example result in not being able to follow gender guidelines. The script for how to be a man or a woman has dissolved, and the individual is now allowed to individually define that. In short individualization is a process of transforming human identity from something that was already established, a given, into a lifelong assignment of performing and creating one identity and at the same time having the full responsibility for the consequences and side-effects of that performance (Bauman, 2012, pp. 30-32). Thus, it also eliminates the possibility of defining other people by standardized norms. Norms that in a society regulates, dictates and reassures everyone about what is what and who is who (Bauman, 2012, pp. 20-22).

Bauman (2012) describes how we need to find a balance to feel free from constraint. This balance means not letting the endless possibilities of society be greater than and influence what you actually want. At the same time not letting the endless possibilities and your desires be impossible to achieve (p. 17). Essentially, Bauman recommends not reaching higher than your wings can carry you. There is a long way to fall. Throughout history human beings have been striving towards the goal of freedom. However, Bauman (2012) addresses this liberation from dependence as having a downside to it. In modern society there is a reciprocal conception. The society shapes the individuals in it and the individuals through their actions shape society. None of these two stays put for long and so the meaning of individualization keeps changing and now looks very different than it did 100 years ago (pp. 30-32). With the liberty of individualization also comes a tie to the capitalistic and political game. Being

responsible for yourself and your actions at all times means living in and managing fear of failure. There are groups in society that need the structures to take responsibility for them otherwise they are not of value to the society. If for example you lose your job and are unable to provide for yourself or create yourself through consumerism, you are not valid in society and your opinion on politics becomes invalid and there is no motivation for engaging in the decision making, when one's opinion holds no power (Bauman, 2007, pp. 65-66). We can accept, respect and praise minorities as long as they can afford to stay in the game of individualization and capitalism. The transgender person is accepted, respected and praised if they can afford looking like the gender they identify with and thereby creating themselves the way they want people to see them. The immigrant is accepted, respected and praised if they provide for themselves and do not end up in the environment of criminality.

We live in a world where knowledge is spread out via technology and this knowledge is available to everyone. We are able to watch each other at all times and this creates further reflections of the endless possibilities and worries about our own choices (Bauman, 2007, p. 5). This however does not show the whole picture, but only fractions that were carefully chosen to be shared. We do not know these people, but we know of them (Ibid.). This uncertainty about other people makes more people strangers. "Do not talk to strangers" becomes something that is not only for kids with unfinished cognitive ability of judgment, but something everyone lives by because the uncertainty of strangers becomes somewhat like the uncertainty of pathology, a virus entering our system. We can talk to each other, but we talk with routine and familiar phrases, not saying the wrong thing thereby not creating controversy thereby not committing. By commitment you open yourself up to critique, which means you have to take responsibility (Bauman, 2012, pp. 107-109). Human bonds become comfortably loose, but this makes them unreliable. Solidarity is thereby hard to grasp and practice (Bauman, 2007, p. 24).

6.2.1. SUMMARY: BAUMAN'S THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN RELATION TO A POST-#METOO DISCOURSE

Liberation ultimately creates uncertainty. Freedom means endless possibilities for you as an individual as well as every other individual in that society. This means

uncertainty about what you should choose, as well as uncertainty about other people's choices. When you meet a person that looks like a woman and acts like a woman is she then a woman unless she definitely defines herself as such? If you fail in this society you are responsible for that and take on all of the consequences. There are no formal social structures to save you. An example could be the use of "oh that's just how men are" - "you should change X because you know how men are" which has been highly debated and challenged during the #MeToo movement. It has been criticized that men who had inappropriate and harmful behaviour could hide behind the normative frames of how men are. With a liquid society there has indeed been a path to freedom for those who did not fit into normative representations of a gender, race, age etc. But this liquidity also consequently means that you do not necessarily find the answers for your identity and behaviour within a solid framework. You cannot excuse or explain your hurtful behaviour with the statement "oh that's just how X are". This forces these people who have committed harassment to take responsibility. Furthermore, with the virtual world of today more people are watching.

6.3. DEVELOPING THE SELF IN SOCIETY WITH MEAD'S THEORY

After looking at society and prejudgements on a group level, the question of how the individual navigates in this remains. To look at this selected parts of George Herbert Mead's theory will be used.

To begin, we will give an overview over some of Mead's terminology. Mead describes the self as not only being in constant exchange with its surroundings, but also with the self-understanding hereof. In this way the self makes sense of the surroundings based on experience and is not isolated from outer factors. Inner processes of the self, while not directly accessible to others, are often brought into the surroundings, for example through language, thereby making the relationship between self and environment reciprocal. The individual's response to the surroundings is just as important in forming the self (Mead, 1934/2005, pp.192-194). This process also helps society develop and change. So, there is a part of the self that consists of qualities, attitudes, and experiences and a part of the self that is self-reflective and in constant reaction to its surroundings (Mead, 1934/2005, pp.195-196). The self is divided into an organized

set of attitudes and experiences which Mead calls the *Me* and the self-reflective and observing *I,* which is a response to others attitudes (Mead, 1934/2005, pp. 202). The reflective part of the self, I, thereby navigates between the social and the own experiences and attitudes. The experiences help predict others and form reactions (Mead, 1934/2005, p.198). The *generalized other* refers to practices and common attitudes in a specific group or society that impact a person's experience hereof. The individual person does not copy or mimic the group, instead experience shapes the understanding of norms and attitudes and thereby creates a reciprocal relationship between the self and the generalized other. The person constantly and continuously observes, relates to and evaluates both the general attitude of the group as well as the individual attitudes that make part of the group. It is through this process that a person develops their self or is able to maintain the current state of self. It is important to emphasize that individuals are always part of this process even though the outcome is not necessarily a change of the self to match the specific group (Mead, 1934/2005, pp. 182-183). According to Dodds, Lawrence and Valsiner (1997) the generalized other emerges when the individual is self-conscious and is going through transforming activities. The generalized other is described as a special form of role-taking. The individual can become this generalized other by taking on common attitudes, rules and roles and adjust/readjust to them and that is how we participate in the social world and in many different social interactions and domains (pp. 495-498).

Dodds et al. (1997) describe the process of developing the self or the meaning creation between the generalized other and the self which is the movement of meaning from the interpersonal to the intrapersonal. Dodds et al. (1997) also describe the process from concrete social interaction to cultural and global attitudes. Mead's generalized other is not just about taking in what goes on in a static social world, nor is it about the individual constructing meaning on the basis of social perspectives. It is about a person achieving a sense of self within the social context. This process starts with social action that goes through organized adjustments within the person, including the person's assumptions and interpretations of what goes on in the social world (p. 485). Mead's concept of the "I" enters social relations, creating meaning, which in the situation is not a conscious process. Therefore, to be self-reflective we need memories of the social interaction, because the process of self-reflection cannot happen at the same time as action is occurring. We need to be able to look at ourselves and we do that through

memory, consequently seeing ourselves in interaction with the generalized other. We can then become or take on the attitude of the generalized other and thereby organize a meaning between other and self. In short: The "Me" is observing the "I". This changes the "I" from being a subject (acting, agent) to an object that is being observed (remembered, reflected upon) by the "me". This creates a reorganization of the self. The "I" and "Me" are not two separate parts of the self. It seems they are two different entities, but in reality, the two separate terms created by Mead are supposed to show a process going back and forth between the two which creates a whole person, the self. (Dodds et. al., 1997, pp. 490-491).

Language is seen as a form of gesture (action) and it is through this action of language that a connection between the "I" and the "Me" is created. We hear ourselves talk just as we hear others talk and this is used to readjust/re-establish meaning. Meaning arises when another person responds to our actions (language) and this can only later be used in conversation with others or with oneself (self-reflection) if we are able to remember or recreate the attitude of the other person in connection to our actions, words, body language etc. (Dodds et al., 1997, pp. 490-492). The following model shows the process of meaning-making in the relationship between Me, I and generalized other, through language/dialogue and the interpretation hereof:
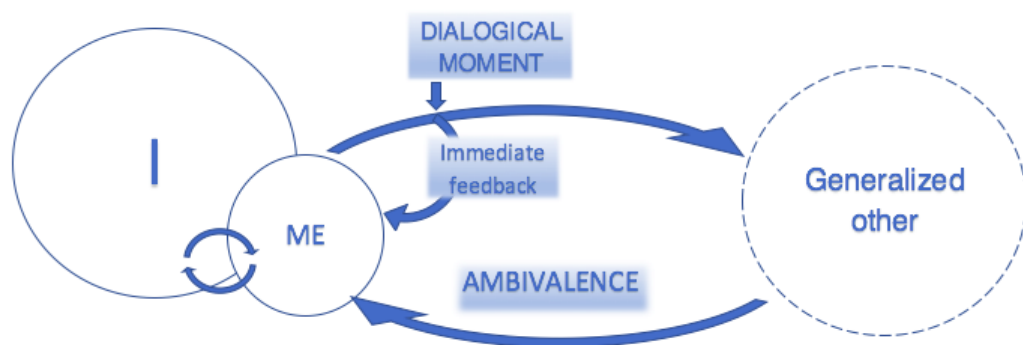
FIGURE 2 MEAD MODEL

For this thesis we constructed this model with inspiration from Nedergaard, Valsiner and Marsico (2015). Originally the model was used for a different topic as well as with the purpose of showing the border between an inner and external dialogue between the self and the generalized other. In our version of the model the dialogical moment is directed by the vignette stories as well as our interview questions. Different from the

original model is also the importation of an ambiguous message. The original model shows how the results of a dialogue with the generalized other is imported into the self, but our model shows how the process in itself creates ambivalence (centre) and this ambiguous message is then imported into the self for evaluation and new meaning-making. This model will be used as a tool to clarify the analytical points in the analysis of this thesis. In the model the I and Me overlap and through the arrows it is shown how the I interact with the generalized other through a dialogical moment. During this dialogical moment there will be an immediate feedback as the words are being said, then there is a message from the generalized other that the Me receives and imports to then develop the self through the process between Me and I. This creates a new meaning or understanding about the world and oneself within the individual hence lies the development of self. It should be noted that the dialogical moment can be with oneself (through remembering) as well as others. The generalized other can also be represented by something other than an actual person (Book, TV etc.). For example, in the interviews gathered for this project the incomplete stories become a dialogical element that the participants need to answer to. The generalized other is then a combination of the stories read by the participant and us as interviewers asking specific questions directing the participant. However, because of the context of an open and explorative research interview, the interviewer does not challenge the dialogue from the participants but listens and asks elaborative questions. At the same time the immediate feedback happens when the participants hear their own words as they are being said. Through this process, we as interviewers become the embodiment of the participants' own ideas of a generalized other with the cultural and social values that affect them in their meaning-making in everyday life.

To sum up, Mead's theory shows the individual, the self, in constant negotiation with society, the generalized other. We have also described how according to Bauman society has become more liquid, as well as how we see this liquidity. Allport describes how prejudgements are a natural part of human social life, which can be seen as an argument for the necessity of labels. In this way the theories presented in this thesis, move from the individual level (Mead) over the group (Allport) to society (Bauman).

7. FINDING EXAMPLES OF AMBIVALENCE - THE TRANSCRIPTION PROCESS

After having selected the theoretical background for this thesis, and with our new focus in mind, we turned to our interview responses once again. All of the interviews were listened through thoroughly with a few initial categories to create structure. The focus was on finding examples that would be relevant to show ambivalence. Ambivalence here, meaning between a more solid pre-#MeToo and a liquid post-#MeToo way of thinking. The interview was divided into five parts with four repeated categories for each:

1. Double-blank-sentences about masculinity and femininity
2. The first incomplete story
3. The second incomplete story
4. The third incomplete story
5. Final words and closing comments

Subcategories to each of the categories above, were the following:

1. The participants using stereotypes but correcting their own words
2. Ambivalent statements
3. Directly speaking about a change in discourse/society
4. Use of normative representations

To be true to our methodology of being explorative these categories were only used for the purpose of having a theoretical focus, but we were very aware of being open to any speech that did not fit the categories or directly contradicted them. What was also different from the first time listening to the interviews, was the order of going through the interviews, by first listening to all participants' answers to part 1, then all participants' answers to part two, and so forth. We expected to find many normative representations in the first part of the interview asking the participants to talk about when they felt feminine and masculine and how that made them feel. This part was great for showing how easily the participants were able to find any activity that for them was feminine or masculine but at the same time forcing them to create the contrast between femininity and masculinity triggering ambivalence. The second part

was in a normative male domain with changing a tire. The third part however was in a normative female domain by changing a diaper, so we were curious to see if any domain was triggering more ambivalence for the participants than the other, especially when the stories were gender-flipped. We chose to also use the final and closing part of the interview for the sake of not leaving anything out that might be relevant or contradictory to the purpose of this thesis. Also, we expected that some participants would "come up for air" in this part of the interview where they were able to speak more freely and comment on the interview and the content. This might reveal any held back reflections or opinions on the experience of doing the interview that might be useful for this thesis.

After listening to all of the interviews for a second time, relevant examples were transcribed. This was done in the following way. Of the eleven interviews concluded for this project three were transcribed completely. Two of them were already transcribed during the 9ᵗʰ semester project, as excerpts were used to discuss the method. An additional interview was transcribed, because this interview was between the age groups. The remaining 8 interviews were not transcribed in their entirety, but only the relevant parts. For transcription, it was therefore noted during time in the voice recordings the relevant information was mentioned. The transcription was done using the program Express Scribe. To make reading as comprehensive as possible it was decided to transcribe the examples accurate but partly translated into written language, as colloquial terms and grammatical contractions were written out, e.g. Won't was written down as will not for longer pauses "…" was used to signify approximately one second. Audible reactions were written in brackets, e.g. (exhales audibly) or (laugh). Words interrupted were marked with "/", e.g. "I wa/ I had not thought about that". Participants were given an Initial, and a number if that initial was already present, e.g. S1, S2, S3, etc, securing anonymity, and the interviewer was written down as "I" instead of the initials "A" and "C", to make reading easier.

This explorative process by which we wanted to be able to both study single cases and the importance of individual details as well as finding general trends among the participants that might show a societal change. We began by gathering the interviews and getting an intuitive feeling of the language and meaning-making of the stories. Next, we again studied every single case, but at the same time discussed how they were alike and how they were different from each other, seeing somewhat of a pattern

and discussing the reasons for two participants in particular being different in their answers. From these reflections and discussions came an assertion that was seen in theoretical work and research as well. This ultimately created the purpose of this thesis from mainly studying mansplaining as a phenomenon to focusing on exploring ambivalence occurring when navigating between a pre- and post-#MeToo discourse. Again, we went back to single cases but cut down to smaller parts to be able to aggregate the interviews while making differences even more visible. Hopefully, this summary shows the emphasis on reflections, discussions and exploration incorporating both a focus on single cases and aggregate analysis throughout the process of working on this thesis.

8. ANALYSIS

After the method, relevant research and theoretical background for this thesis have been presented, the analysis of this project will dive into the participants' responses using examples of ambivalence from the eleven interviews. We have divided the analysis into overarching categories to make reading more cohesive. However, these categories are fluent, as there can be overlap. For example, how the participants expressed ambivalence surrounding masculinity and femininity, can be very closely related to addressing their own prejudgements, to their use of humour and laughter, or to using the word mansplaining. The sole purpose of the categorisation is therefore to make the analysis clearer and not to differentiate between different types of ambivalence. The ambivalence is present in all categories and differentiates from participant to participant. We will start by firstly presenting examples where the participants use the word mansplaining. Secondly, different categories of ambivalence will be examined further, including ambivalence about masculinity and femininity, addressing prejudgements, laughter and tension release, using post-#MeToo discourse and two trajectories. After this an analysis on the differences between the generations in our sample. Third and lastly, we will present three examples where Mead's theory will be used to analyse the participants' meaning-making of the mansplaining stories. We can see the ambivalence emerge and how this is handled. As we have given all of the participants initials to secure anonymity it might be difficult to remember which participant is which, for an overview over participants' age, gender, and which version of the interview they had, see figure 1, p. 11. In this analysis the words stereotype, prejudgement and prejudice might be used somewhat synonymously, because our participants used these words synonymously. This can be done because it is of less importance to the participants' experience of ambivalence if a prejudgement is based on evidence or not. What is important is that the existence of these leads to ambivalence and creates tension when contrasted by a post-#MeToo discourse.

8.1. THE PARTICIPANTS' USE OF THE WORD MANSPLAINING

When beginning the interviews, the participants were told that the stories contained social interactions which we were going to question them about. They were not informed of anything that indicated gender topics, sexism or specifically mansplaining. However, multiple participants chose to use the word mansplaining to explain what was happening in these social interactions. Three different participants mention mansplaining and use this term both as a phenomenon and a verb. The first example is M2 who uses the word mansplaining in the following:

> M2: ... ud fra det at , jeg ville sige, sådan et mo/ lidt moderne synspunkt er bare lidt, ku kun læser det der kun står, så ville jeg sige et er meget sådan *mansplaining øjeblik*
>
> (cf. Appendix p. 27, ll. 19-20)

but also changed as a verb as M1 does here:

> M1: øm, Laura hun siger at, øm "Morten er ved at *mansplaine* hvordan et dæk kan punktere
>
> (cf. Appendix p. 70, ll. 9-10)

This shows that these three participants are familiar with the word and the definition of the word. Not only do they know when to describe a situation as being "mansplaining", but they use it by changing it into a verb that grammatically fits into a sentence. This might indicate that it is a word they are comfortable with and that they meet or use it regularly in their everyday life. M1 and B go deeper into the description of mansplaining. M1 not only uses the word mansplaining to describe the situation but also uses it to give examples from her daily life with her boyfriend:

> M1: Ej det er også fordi jeg bliver provokeret af det selv
>
> (begge griner)
>
> M1: så jeg ville nok selv blive sådan "hvorfor har du behov for at fortælle mig det? tror du ikke jeg ved det?"

I: ja

M1: og så ville der komme en lille diskussion af det og så ville fyrene være sådan "åh det var ikke det jeg mente og det var ikke sådan ment og" ja

I: det, det lyder lidt til at det er baseret på egen erfaring

M1: mh mh ja

I: ja?

M1*: Ja, jeg har en kæreste der har en tendens til at mansplaine a lot*

I: ja?

M1: så det er sådan noget vi diskuterer meget, sådan "hvorfor har du behov for at fortælle mig det her?" ja

(cf. Appendix p. 71, ll. 2-15)

B also draws from her own experiences and describes a date she was on:

B: æhm ... og også generelt sådan .... på emner hvor jeg godt ved ting, for eksempel så, jeg var på date for ... en uge siden eller sådan noget, og æhm jeg strikker rigtig meget og har rigtig meget styr på det

I: mhm

B: og på garnkvalitet og alt den slags ... hvor han bare sådan lige slutter daten af med at sige "jeg forstår egentlig ikke helt folk der strikker, fordi det er meget dyrere og det er dårligere kvalitet" ... (tense silence)

I: (griner)

B: (griner) jeg var bare ved at gå amok (griner) det var der jeg ligesom fik lukket af at han skulle ikke ha en anden date

I: jaer

B: *fordi det er sådan, det der med at komme ind og være sådan "skal jeg lige mansplaine dig noget, som du har virkelig meget styr på?"*

I: ja

B: det synes jeg, jeg oplever relativt ofte ja

(cf. Appendix p. 14-15, ll. 21-2)

Both of these participants are reminded of their own experiences with mansplaining and clearly describe that it happens regularly. B also continues the story by having the man that is mansplaining use the word mansplaining himself:

> I: Hvordan tror du så samtalen udvikler sig?
>
> B: ... ... hvis han er sød, (griner) så tænker jeg at, så er det bare det
>
> I: mh
>
> B: eller så siger han *"ej undskyld at jeg sådan forsøgte lidt at mansplaine hvordan man tørrer en baby*
>
> (cf. Appendix p. 13, ll. 12-16)

In this example she says that if he is "sweet/nice" he would say sorry for mansplaining. So, he would be able to admit and be aware of his own behaviour and be able to use the word mansplaining himself to apologize for this behaviour. Even though these three people are the only ones that use the word mansplaining to describe the social interactions, they do not otherwise differ from the rest of the participants in the same age group. They all have the same overall explanation and meaning-making of the situations with a few variations of how much they use gender norms and stereotypes. However, when stereotypes are used they are also many times noticed and commented on by the participant. The next paragraph will show how we see examples of this ambivalence between the participants' use of stereotypes and them not wanting to use these stereotypes.

8.2. EXAMPLES OF AMBIVALENCE IN THE INTERVIEWS

Many examples of the participants showing what was interpreted as ambivalence was transcribed for this analysis. It should be noted that the examples of course belong with the context of what is said in the interview, but it has been of importance to find examples that would not be misinterpreted out of context. All of the examples of ambivalence are categorized as follows:

o Masculinity and femininity
o Participant's utterance of prejudgements
o Laughter and tension relief
o Using post-#MeToo discourse
o Two trajectories

8.2.1. The Understanding of Masculinity and Femininity

To get an understanding of our participants' perception of gender, and their awareness of the difference between gender and masculinity and femininity, we asked all participants at the beginning of the interview to complete two double-blank-sentences. This was meant to show us where they stand in their understanding of gender. As we changed focus, when starting on this thesis, these understandings became increasingly important, as the sentences were deliberately written to embrace ambivalence by having both men and women fill out the sentences, regardless of which gender they identified as:

> I feel masculine when ___ and that makes me feel ___.
> I feel feminine when ___ and that makes me feel ___.
> (cf. Hove & Ravn, unpub.)

The reactions to this varied, some participants found this very difficult, others did not like answering them, as they felt it did not represent how they viewed themselves. In the following paragraphs this will be examined further.

8.2.1.1. The Men on Masculinity and Femininity

The participants who identified as men, seemed to vary much in how easy or difficult they found it to fill in the blanks. J1, filled out the blanks rather quickly:

> J1*: Jeg føler mig maskulin, når min kæreste beder mig om at åbne en eller anden form for glas hun ikke selv kan åbne* (griner)
>
> I: okay
>
> J1: og beder mig om hjælp, og det for mig til at føle, jeg ved ikke, brugbart, set i lyset af den specifikke kontekst
>
> I: ja
>
> J1: (inhales audibly) *jeg føler mig feminin når jeg ... (exhales audibly) det ved jeg ikke, hører en god sang og begynder at græde*
>
> I: ja?
>
> J1: *fordi jeg synes det er smukt, og det får mig til at føle ... at peace with myself*

I: ja

J1: I don't know, får mig til at føle at jeg er i ro med mig selv, og jeg kan godt lide det

(cf. Appendix, p. 16, ll. 9-20)

J1 here says that he feels masculine when helping his girlfriend, for example by opening a jar, she cannot open herself, and it makes him feel useful in that situation. He feels feminine when he is touched emotionally by a beautiful song and starts crying, and he then feels at peace with himself. J1 usually talks very fast and without a lot of breaks, so it is interesting that when asked about when he feels feminine, some breaks occur. However, he has no problem talking about being emotionally vulnerable, quite the opposite, feeling emotional makes him feel calm and content. This seems to be in accordance with a post-#MeToo discourse, where a focus on gender issues has also led to discussions about stereotypes that negatively impact men. For example, toxic masculinity is a way to describe men who cannot show emotions and act out, from a fear of being seen as feminine. Similar to J1, J2 needs to think a bit more when filling out the blanks in the second sentence about femininity:

J2: Jamen jeg tænker egentlig at det med... som jeg i hvert fald lige fra toppen af hovedet kan mærke, altså jeg føler mig maskulin når jeg for eksempel træner

I: mhm

J2: og det får mig til at føle jeg, altså at føle en styrke

I: ja

J2: *sådan generelt set, æhm, jeg føler mig feminin når jeg for eksempel ... ... (exhales audibly) pff jamen det det den synes jeg kan være lidt svært, men jeg tænker sådan at det er når jeg konverserer og J2: sådan generelt set, æhm, jeg føler mig feminin når jeg for eksempel ... ... (exhales audibly) pff jamen det det den synes jeg kan være lidt svært, men jeg tænker sådan at det er når jeg konverserer og snakker om nogen lidt dybere ting ikke sådan nogle overfladiske ting og det gir mig en følelse af noget ro*

I: ja

J2: og node op/ optrapning, nej æh opløsning så oplø/ altså, hvad skal man kalde det ... æh ... opløft/ opløfte op/, op/ æh opløftning, opløft, sådan et eller andet

I: mh

J2: altså at man, man ligesom kommer lidt dybere ind tror jeg

45

I: ja

J2: det æh det tror jeg er den første der lige springe rmig i hovedet

I: så det er noget med at dykke ned i følelser forbinder du

J2: ja!

I: med det, noget inden i?

J2: ja lige præcis, og det, det er jo lidt en tænker en generalisering som sådan, men det er sådan jeg per/ altså

I: det er den følelse det giver dig?

J2: det er den følelse det giver mig

I: ja, foregår de samtaler oftest med kvinder, eller med mænd?

J2: ja ... det, det er jo hovedsagen her, tænker jeg, det er sådan mere

I: mh

J2: æh ... kvinder der konverserer på den måde

I: ja

J2: hvor drenge det er bare sådan noget, det er gutterne

I: sjovt

J2: ja præcis (begge griner)

I: okay, super, tak

(cf. Appendix, p. 19-20, ll. 9-9)

J2 mentions that he feels masculine when working out, and this makes him feel strong. He feels feminine when engaging in deeper conversations and exploring feelings, and this makes him feel calm. When asked about it, he says that these conversations are often with women as he has more superficial conversations with his male friends. J2 is very reminiscent of J1 here. Both feel masculine when being strong, and both feel feminine when being emotional. Both very quickly come up with when they feel masculine and both need to consider a bit before being able to answer when they feel feminine. Yet, both feel very content and at peace with being emotional and feminine. R has a very similar understanding of feeling masculine, but his take on when he feels feminine is different:

R: æhm, nu har jeg jo lige den anden, den første historie der i baghovedet, så der vil jeg jo nok sige, jeg føler mig maskulin når jeg æh k/ k/ Kan gå til hånde, noget håndværk, kan hjælpe med noget fysisk, der

I: mh

R: æhm ... og det får mig til at føle, ja hvad gør det, til gavn er vel
ikke en føle/ følelse, men, men, men æh, enten glæde eller måske
selvtilfredshed afhængig af hvem man ikke lige er der

I: mh?

R**:** æh, at hvis man skaber noget produktivt øh, øh**,** *jeg føler mig*
feminin når at, æh, har anskaffet sig noget øh nyt, i det her tilfælde
med forhistorien igen så ville jeg sige lampen her, æh ligesom
brikkerne i det større puslespil, for eksempel stue faldt på plads, æh,
og det, det giver også noget selvtilfredshed, glæde og ro, fordi som at
man selv har tilrettelagt hvordan ting skal se ud

I: ja

R: yes

(cf. Appendix p. 29, ll. 9-23)

Here R says that he feels masculine when helping with something physical, or handy,
he feels feminine when creating something productive, buying something, connecting
small puzzle pieces into a bigger picture. An example he mentions is when the living
room was done. This makes him feel at peace with himself as well. The living room
example necessitates a little context. When R was interviewed, he had just moved into
a house, this was explained before the interview. R's understanding of femininity
seems very interesting, to him it is not being emotional but rather to be productive, and
to finish and organize things. This is very different from the other participants, as it
connects femininity to softer actions and attributes. However, the example that R gives
here, the living room, is more traditionally feminine, by decorating and making the
home comfortable. So, these three participants vary a bit in when they feel masculine
and feminine, but they have no difficulties finding examples and explaining how this
makes them feel. They do not seem to have an issue with embracing both, being able
to feel both masculine and feminine. The participant who had the most difficulties
answering these blanks was M2:

M2: ... (griner) æh ... ... fuck det er (griner) ... jeg skal lige
tænke, æh ...

I: *det er ret svært faktisk at komme på*

M2: Ja! ... ... fordi, det er jo svært at sige, hvad, hvad der er
maskulint og hvad er feminint

I: mh

M2: ... ...

I: det kan også være du bare ikke føler det er noget du sådan lægger mærke til? Det ved jeg ikke

M2: Så jeg kan go/ jo, det er no/, hvis jeg skal lave det så er det nok, at når, *jeg føler mig mest maskulin når jeg er sammen med ølklubben og vi spiser sådan det vi betegner som herremiddag,* det ..

I: mh

M2: og sidder og får øl og alt sådan noget og

I: mh

M2: (inaudible sound) ja, hvor vi gør det så drenget som muligt kan man vel kalde det

I: ja?

M2: (exhalles)

I: det er måske også meget, når det hedder herremiddag, så er det måske også sådan en ja, ja det giver meget god mening

M2: ja, det, det, det er jo lige det

I: ja ... ... er dere nogen situationer hvor du føler dig feminin?

M2: ... ja

I: hvad kunne det være?

M2: jeg laver håndbevægelser, tit (griner)

I: ja

M2: *ja, jeg er rigtig god til at ha et sli/ slattende håndled (begge griner) æh ... ... æhm ... ... det, det, det er, hvad kan man sige, jeg har lidt make/ har sådan neglelak på*

I: mh

M2: åh, det, der (mumbled) ... (griner) ... ikk/ ig/ ... igen jeg er ikke særlig god til at beskrive hvad forskellen på mand/ mandeligt og ... (stadig grinende)

 (cf. Appendix p. 25-26, ll. 9-9)

M2 here has a lot of breaks and filler sounds. While this is generally the case in M2's interview, it is interesting to see where in these blanks most of these fillers are located. M2 seems to have a lot of difficulties coming up with anything gendered to begin with. He says it is very difficult to say what is masculine and what is feminine. He then needs a lot of time to come up with something masculine. A gentleman's dinner with what he calls the beer club ends up being his choice. He is much faster in describing when he feels feminine, he does a lot of arm and hand movements when talking, and he wears nail polish. After coming up with these examples he reiterates that it is difficult for him to describe the difference in what is masculine and feminine. This

shows an ambivalence that is not present in the other male participants. On the one hand he can mention clear examples of when he feels feminine and masculine on the other hand he is very hesitant to do so and mentions repeatedly that he does not see it as being feminine and masculine, he only mentions examples because it is asked of him. It is very clear that he does not like saying this but has a clear idea of what is stereotypical masculine and feminine. In this way he seems to show much more ambivalence, possibly because he does not seem to conform to stereotypical gender roles. It is possible that he has therefore been confronted more often with not fitting in the stereotypical category of man, and therefore has a more ambivalent relationship with masculinity and femininity. This also shows a very clear post-#MeToo discourse, as he does not like the categorisation of masculine and feminine and prefers to not answer these blanks as the categories themselves do not make much sense to him.

8.2.1.2. THE WOMEN ON FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY

The participants who identify as female also vary in how they describe what is feminine and masculine. Most female participants seem to have more difficulty mentioning when they feel masculine than when they feel feminine. One of these participants is S1:

S1: okay, æhm ... ... mh ... jeg føler mig maskulin når jeg ... mh ... ... ja, når jeg fff, det ved jeg ikke, *når jeg fortæller min kæreste hvordan han skal gøre noget*

I: mhm

S1: og det får mig til at føle mig ... bossy? (griner)

I: ja?

S1: Jeg føler mig femi/ feminin *når jeg ... æh hjælper mine veninder*

I: mh?

S1: og det får mig til at føle mig godt tilpas

I: ja? super, hvordan var det at skulle udfylde dem?

S1: jamen det er svært at tænke i, altså hvad der lige sådan specifikt er maskulint og feminint, ikke?

I: mh, ja

S1: fordi det er jo, begge ting er mig kan man sige (griner)

 (cf. Appendix p. 36, ll. 9-21)

S1 feels masculine when she tells her boyfriend how to do something and it makes her feel bossy, she feels feminine when helping female friends and that makes her feel well at ease. She then is asked how it is to fill in the blanks and says that it is difficult to say what is feminine and masculine, because both are part of her. This shows that S1 does not see masculine and feminine as important categories, she just sees both as sides of herself. Yet, she feels more comfortable saying when she feels feminine than when she feels masculine and has a rather clear idea of which situations she feels this way. This shows an ambivalence, as S1 clearly feels masculine and feminine in very comparable but opposite situations, but she does not like to say that this is how she feels. S2 is very different from S1 and much more comfortable in explaining when she feels masculine and feminine, but the situations in which she feels masculine are rather negative to her:

S2: okay, mmmmh ... ... jeg føler mig nok lidt maskulin når jeg skal bruge ... æhm ... *sådan lidt hårdere magt, for eksempel når jeg føler, lad os sige ..."jeg bliver ikke hørt når jeg bare er mig" men skal jeg tænke ude af boksen, så er jeg sådan okay så bliver jeg nødt til at hive fat i nogen lidt mere ... måske lidt hårdere metoder*

I: ja

S2: som man måske ville kunne genkende lidt i en mand, sådan lidt mere kort og kontant og ikke mere sådan 100 ord for at beskrive en ting, altså sådan en kvindetanke, ikke?

I: nemlig

S2: æhm og hvad får det mig til at føle?, jamen hvis det lykkes? sejer. Og hvis det ikke lykkedes så er det måske sådan lidt mere ... ... nå ... så må vi finde på andre muligheder

I: ja

S2: æhm og *jeg føler mig feminin når ... mmmh ... når jeg ser rigtig godt ud*

I: mh?

S2: mh... og det får mig til at føle mig g/ glad tror jeg? ja?

I: ja

S2: kvinde, som kvinde, sådan nice

 (cf. Appendix p. 37, ll. 9-26)

S2 says that she feels masculine when she has to use harder power, when she is not being heard just being herself and she has to use more extreme measures to make

others listen. She has to be shorter and to the point in what she says instead of the "typically female" way of using 100 words to describe one thing. She says that if she succeeds in this it makes her feel good, if not she has to look for yet another way. She feels feminine when she looks good. And this makes her feel happy. So here S2 mentions a very broad and stereotypical female example of femininity, looking good. Her description of masculinity is much more interesting. While she says that it makes her feel victorious if she succeeds in making herself heard using masculine ways, she also says that she only does this when being herself is not enough. So, on the one hand this seems like an example that is specific enough, that it can be assumed she has taken it from experience and seems like a rather common occurrence. At the same time, she does not see it as being herself. Therefore, there seems to be a lot of ambivalence surrounding masculinity for S2. S2 can be interpreted to say that she does not identify with masculinity, which is very different from S1 who says that the two are both part of her and thus has a harder time distinguishing between them. The next participants are also slightly uncomfortable when feeling masculine but for different reasons:

B: .. jeg synes den første er svær

I: ja?

B: Æhm... fordi jeg tror aldrig ... jeg sådan rigtig tænker at nu føler jeg mig maskulin

I: mh?

B*: Måske når jeg spiser kød? (griner)*

I: ja?

B: *men det får jeg så dårlig samvittighed af, fordi jeg sådan (griner) egentlig har været vegetar (stadig grinende) vil gerne blive vegetar*

I: mh

B: æhm ... så jeg tror sådan ... ej ikke skamfuld men sådan lidt dårlig samvittighed tror jeg jeg kommer til at føle

I: ja?

B: ja

I: ok

(begge griner)

B: *æhm jeg tror jeg føler mig feminin når jeg ... ... det tror jeg ik/ når jeg sådan har det godt i min krop*

I: mh

B: *altså sådan det kan være ha/ efter at have løbet en tur det kan have været efter at have lagt make-up eller sådan, det kan være*

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mange situationer egentlig, det er ikke en gang, altså det behøver ikke at være overfladisk men bare den der med at være veltilpas, så føler jeg mig feminin

I: okay

B: æhm ... og ja, det får mig jo så til at føle mig veltilpas tror jeg, selvsikker især

I: ja, fint

(cf. Appendix p. 11-12, ll. 9-2)

B seems to find it rather difficult to come up with an example of when she feels masculine and says that eating meat makes her feel masculine and makes her feel guilty, not because she does not like to be masculine but because she wants to be a vegetarian. She feels feminine when she looks good or is content in her body and this makes her feel confident. What is interesting here is that B seems to forget halfway through the sentence about masculinity that this is what she was talking about. She talks mostly about how eating meat makes her feel, yet at the same time this is the only example she can come up with where she feels masculine. This can lead to the assumption that B probably does not feel masculine often and that she is much more familiar with feeling feminine which to her is a very broad category. So, all of these female participants have a bit more difficulty explaining when they feel masculine and feel slightly ambivalent about feeling masculine in those situations. Yet, none of them seem to have ambivalent feelings about when they feel feminine. M1 has a very different take on these blanks, that is more reminiscent of M2:

M1: Ja (*griner*) når men altså, maskulin når hm ... uff det er svært, når men jeg føler mig maskulin når jeg ordner noget handy, altså sådan, jeg har aldrig sat en lampe op men jeg samler ikea møbler og det er jeg fucking god til, men jeg ved egentlig ikke om jeg føler mig maskulin når jeg gør det, det tror jeg ikke.

I: nej?

M1: ej det ved jeg ikke, det er virkelig svært

I: det kan også være du ikke lige har nogen situationer hvor du føler dig

M1: ja, jeg tror ikke at ... *nej altså sådan, åh, det der med maskulin og feminin, det er sådan lidt, altså, jeg tror måske at jeg for fem år siden havde sagt, ej jeg føler mig mega maskulin når jeg ... bruger en hammer*

I: mh

> M1: *Men jeg tror i dag der er jeg sådan... maskulin, feminin ... der er ikke nogen maskuline ting og der er ikke nogen feminine ting på den måde*
>
> I: mh
>
> M1: *æh jeg føler mig feminin når jeg tager noget lækkert undertøj*
>
> I: mh
>
> M1: ja, i nogen gode farver og sådan noget og når jeg tager make-up på og krøller hår, duller mig op
>
> I: ja
>
> M1: og det får mig til at føle mig mega lækker og sexet og feminin
>
> (cf. Appendix p. 65, ll. 14-33)

In this quote M1 says that she feels masculine when, thinking of the baseline story, putting up a lamp, although she has never done that, so maybe rather putting together furniture, which she says she is very good at. She then adds that she does not feel masculine when doing so. She goes on to clarify that she thinks that she would have probably felt masculine while using a hammer five years ago, but that now she does not see masculine and feminine as important categories. Right after this she has no problem coming up with examples of when she feels feminine, saying that it is when she curls her hair, puts on sexy clothing or wears bright colourful clothes and this makes her feel good. This seems to be very contradictory, however it makes sense in a post-#MeToo discourse. M1 can name examples of what she knows should be masculine and feminine, but she sees it more in the category of different parts of herself than two separate categories, just like S1. M1's examples are positive, doing something she is good at, and being happy with her looks. But she does not want to divide actions in these categories. So, much like M2 she does not want to categorize and feels ambivalent about it, while at the same time being perfectly able to fill out the blanks. It is interesting to see that both M1 and M2 are participants that use the word mansplaining and seem emotional or provoked about the stories. So, they seem to be very well informed on phenomena such as mansplaining and the #MeToo movement in general.

Overall, the examples given for situations where the participants felt masculine and feminine were very similar. Most felt masculine when engaging in a physical action, for example, using tools around the house, working out, etc. or when doing something stereotypical manly as for example eating meat, drinking beer, having to be especially

decisive. They felt feminine when caring about their looks, putting on make-up, especially pretty clothes, or for the men in being more vulnerable or emotional, having deep conversations. What was especially interesting was not that the participants could name stereotypical masculine and feminine things, but their reactions to being asked to do so. Some participants decidedly mentioned that they just feel like themselves, not masculine or feminine, some had difficulties coming up with something where they felt that way. But what all of them had in common seemed to be that they were aware that they should tread carefully around this topic, and they were aware that masculine and feminine was not the same as talking about their gender.

8.2.2. PARTICIPANTS' UTTERANCES OF PREJUDGEMENTS:

Throughout the interviews some participants directly commented on their own or societal stereotypes and prejudice. This is interesting for showing that they do not take these views and beliefs for being universal facts or maybe even norms about gender.

> R: æh og ikke nok med det, så er der måske også nogen der vil understrege, hvis vi tager snakken før også, der med at, jo det er godt punkteret men han ved faktisk mere om det og han kan bedre fikse det og sådan nogle ting der
>
> I: mh
>
> R: æhm s/ ... Så ... er er der noget æh ... nu skal jeg lige huske det rigtige ord her, ... æhm. det er en gensidig relation, tror jeg go/ jeg nøjes med at sige, så ja det her med hvor er respekten for hinanden og hvor anerkender man hinanden, der er en dynamik her hvor at ... ... *den kører måske lidt på stereotype/ stereotyperne ud fra hvad man lige læser her*
>
> I: mh
>
> R: yes, sådan med *æh selvfølgelig er det mændene der ved det, selvfølgelig mænd der kan klare det*
>
> (cf. Appendix p. 31-32, ll. 25-2)

This is R with version 1 of the vignettes. R reads the first story with a man as the one mansplaining to a woman. He states that the dynamic between the two is driven by stereotypes. That there is a lack of respect and acknowledgment from the man towards the woman. He then proceeds to clarify in his words what the stereotype is that it is of

course that men know this and self-evidently men can do that. R comments on stereotypes again in the second story.

R: æh ... og det der forstærker det, det må jo så være det her med at når de er ude og skifte æh ... barnet hed Emma, ja?

I: mh

R: at, at, at Camilla lige understreger, "husk at tørre imod og ikke fra op øh for ellers så kan hun få en infektion" og sådan nogle ting der

I: mhm

R: æhm ... det noget af det kan sætte i gang, *om vi er ude og snakke i stereotyper igen*, eller om det er noget fra deres arbej/, fælles arbejdsplads hvor han måske har haft en dårlig vane med at øh ... øh køre modsat retning, eller sådan noget, ikke?

I: ja?

R: at det har været et aktuelt problem

I: mh

R: enten det eller også så er det bare, at nu er det noget andet, fordi nu er det hendes familie

(cf. Appendix p. 32-33, ll. 21-2)

In this example R begins to talk about stereotypes and says "again" because he had already mentioned it in the first story. However, this time he quickly shifts to different explanations and leaves the explanation of stereotypical behaviour. In this story the mansplaining is gender-flipped so the woman is mansplaining while the man is changing the diaper. The stereotypical behaviour that he does not explain is interpreted to be of the man, because before this he is trying to guess the ages of the couple in the story. The stereotype he implies would then be that he is both a man and young and therefore does not know how to change a dirty diaper on a girl. However, he closes his theory of prejudice quickly. Instead he suggests that there might actually have been a problem at work with him doing it the wrong way. Another suggestion is that the reason for her mansplaining actually lies with her because this situation is different from their workplace because it is her niece he is changing. Somehow R finds it more likely that either he is evidently bad at changing a diaper despite his job or she becomes more sensitive about his diaper changing because it is within a family context. What we do not know is why he is changing the course here when he does not in the first story. He does it with a man mansplaining in a domain that is normative male

dominated, but he does not do the same in a setting with a woman mansplaining in a normative female dominated domain. M1 has the non-gender-flipped version of the first incomplete story opposite to R. She notices what happens in the background of the main phenomenon of the story.

> I: ok, er der noget i historien du ellers sådan bider særlig mærke i? eller?
>
> M1: mh jeg bider mærke i sådan, nu har jeg også den anden historie i minde, så det er sådan jeg bider mærke i at det er Anders og Sofie der, jeg tror hun hedder Sofie, der går ud og skifter dækket og så Morten og Laura der står tilbage
>
> I: mh
>
> M1: mh og *det er igen lidt den der forestilling om at det er sådan noget der mænd ordner*
>
> (cf. Appendix p. 71, ll. 19-25)

In this example, when asked about what was otherwise noticeable to her she says that she actually noticed that it was not the two men who went to change the tire but a man and a woman with the woman taking the lead. She chooses to call it "this idea (forestilling)" that it normally would be the men who would go and change the tire. This shows the ambivalence because she admits to noticing the stereotypes being reversed, so she herself has that as a part of her worldview, but she does not comment by saying that it is weird or wrong, but she chooses to distance herself from those prejudices by calling them "imaginative".

Next example is S2 who has read the same version of the first story as R. In this example it is the woman and man in the background of the story changing a tire together.

> S2: Ja *han tog over sofies rolle,* hun ville jo geren skifte dækket, men der tog han over
>
> I: ja?
>
> S2: *det er sådan en mandeting ikke? I gåseøjne.*
>
> I:ja?
>
> S2: ja .. ja det, det er sådan noget mænd de gør, at det er jo det der med ego

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(cf. Appendix p. 38, ll. 6-11)

When S2 says out loud "with quotation marks", after having presented a stereotype about men followed by the statement that it is a "guy thing", she implies that she is aware that it does not account for all men. After this she continues to explain the stereotype as being about the male ego. After this she continues with sarcasm:

S2: at en kvinde skal jo ikke gøre det mændene skal gøre, fordi så kan de lige så godt kappe klunkerne af dem

(cf. Appendix p. 38, ll. 13-14)

This is interpreted to be a tool to clarify the absurdity of the behaviour in the story as well as the absurdity to the stereotypical man. Another participant using humour to address prejudice is R. The third story was designed to be particularly triggering in relation to the post-#MeToo era. Again, R is the one to directly comment on his own prejudice. After giving his interpretation and explanation of what is happening in the third story he changes course after rereading the story. His first interpretation agrees with every other participant in this age group: The man at the other table is staring because he is interested in contact with Charlotte and R discusses why it is wrong of Kasper to undermine her feelings of uncomfort. Then this happens:

I: Er der noget i historien du sådan lægger særlig mærke til?

R: ... ...

I: Nu ved jeg godt det ikke er verdens længste historie

R: øhm

I: der er ikke så meget i den

R: (griner) nej, men jeg dobbelttjekker lige her

(R læser historie)

R: Jo egentlig, altså de sidder og snakker om deres dag og det er en livlig diskussion

I: mh

R: Og efter et stykke tid med deres diskussion så begynder Charlotte at lægge mærke til at manden ved bordet ved siden af sidder og ... æh, ved siden sidder ofte og kigger over til dem

I: mh

R: Det går mig i hvert fald lidt for hurtigt her lige pludselig, det får i hvert fald en hel ny vinkel, fordi hvis det er en livlig diskussion, så kan også bare være irriteret over de har larmet måske?

I: mh

R: og måske er æh ... måske er Charlotte den der er mest højlydt

I: mh

R: er også et scenarie lige pludselig her

I: ja?

R: æh ... og så er det måske hans måde sådan at ... nogle gange når man stirrer på folk så ved de godt lige de skal pst, lige dæmpe sig lidt der, så det var faktisk også en mulighed der ja

I: ja?

R*: Ups med de fordomme der, hva?* (griner)

I: (griner)

R: hold kæft man, det er lige så meget mulighed

(cf. Appendix p. 34-35, ll. 18-15)

Here R notices that there possibly could be other explanations to why this man at the other table is staring. The friends in the story might be loud and inconsiderate in a public sphere and R proceeds to say "wups with these prejudices, huh? (laughs)". This does not change how he perceives the mansplaining and interaction between the friends, but the fact that he with his words shows uncomfort having been led by his own prejudices but he laughs at it as well. This use of humour needs to be further explored.

8.2.3. LAUGHTER AND TENSION RELEASE

There are many examples during the interviews, where laughter can be heard. As mentioned under *Mansplaining with Humour on Social Media,* laughter can occur for a variety of reasons. And humour is often due to an element of surprise, contradiction, superiority, absurdity or exaggeration. One example from the interviews is embarrassment when talking about babies' private parts and how to wipe them when changing a diaper, as in the following example:

S2: så jeg tænker jo nok at hun nok godt burde vide at han har nok,
har tørret flere røve end han har tørret sin egen

I: (griner)

S2: (griner) æhm

(cf. Appendix p. 39 ll. 24-27)

Both the participant and the interviewer here laugh, maybe in slight discomfort, as a tension release, after talking about how" the male day-care employee has probably wiped more butts than he has wiped his own". There are also examples of laughing at the absurdity of an exaggerated stereotypical or outdated gender norm, as with this example:

S2: at en kvinde skal jo ikke gøre det mændene skal gøre, fordi så kan de lige så godt kappe klunkerne af dem

I: (griner)

(cf. Appendix p. 38 ll. 13-15)

Translated it is said, "that a woman should not do what men do, because then they [women] might as well cut off their [men] balls" which is in stark contrast to post-#MeToo discourse of feminist ideals and equality. This therefore makes the sentence funny to her and makes it clear that she is being sarcastic through exaggeration. At first glance this might not seem especially relevant for examining ambivalence. However, it shows which situations and sentences the participants find uncomfortable or absurd, or where they see contradictions or feel superior. It gives an idea of what ideals and discourses are considered good or bad, by the participants. Therefore, there are several situations where the reason for the participants' laughter seems to be worth examining more in detail. In some of these examples, tone and non-verbal communication is important, to understand the humour. This is very difficult to translate into or read from the transcription. However, much of it can be heard in the voice recordings, sarcasm or irony for example, and we have only chosen examples where the humorous intent was obvious. In some situations, the participants seem to laugh because they were uncomfortable, as in the following examples by R and B:

R: lægger mere mærke til det når det er ham, i hvert fald synes jeg, på en eller anden måde æhhhm og *hvorfor gør jeg det så? (griner) det (exhales audibly)* det, det ved jeg ikke, det ved/ det er, det er vel, jeg tænker ikke som om det er verdens værste opgave at skifte det dæk, det var ret simpelt, æh så måske jeg bare går ud fra det er en selvfølge at han kan gøre det?

(cf. Appendix p. 30 ll. 12-16)

R here finds himself in a situation where he discovers that he notices more when a man says he can change a tire, than when it is the woman in the story, he asks himself why that is the case and laughs nervously. Clearly uncomfortable having discovered that he just assumes a man knows how to change a tire and hence does not have to say that he knows how to do it. This is significant as it shows that assuming that gender stereotypes or prejudgements are true, is seen as something he should not be doing, making it clear that it is incongruent with his idea of how he should think about men and women. Yet, he only discovers he has these prejudgements after hearing himself saying it out loud. This way it seems ambiguity about gender roles is expressed in R's laughter here.

B: når hun egentlig siger "det kan jeg sagtens lige finde ud af"

I: ja?

B: æh det er selvfølgelig også pænt gjort æh men jeg synes at det er interessant at det er en mand, der ligesom lige griber ind og siger "den skal jeg nok lige hjælpe med"

I: ja?

B: (griner)

(cf. Appendix p. 12 ll. 11-16)

In the example above B (a woman) mentions that after a woman says she can change a tire; a man takes over by saying "I'll help". She then laughs, as this statement makes her tense, it is clear from the beginning that she finds this weird, or uncomfortable as this statement is after being asked what seems weird in the story. This is interesting as she chooses to let the man say, "I'll *help"* help not necessarily being a negative action, yet in this context it clearly becomes uncomfortable to her, putting herself in the shoes of the female character in the story, and therefore elicits laughter. Shortly after, this

offer of help is made even more absurd, by giving the man in the story this dialogue: "By the way, if you can do this, I should probably help anyways":

B: i stedet for sådan en "*forresten, hvis du så godt kan så skal jeg nok lige hjælpe alligevel, fordi ...*"
I: ja?
B: (griner)
(cf. Appendix p. 13 ll. 1-4)

This makes the reason for the tension obvious, the problem is the contradiction between the word help, and a situation where what is being done is not helpful as it is not necessary. Similarly, in the following example, B laughs after the word nice:

I: Hvordan tror du så samtalen udvikler sig?
B: ... ... hvis han er *sød, (griner)* så tænker jeg at, så er det bare det
I: mh
B: eller så siger han "ej undskyld at jeg sådan forsøgte lidt at mansplaine hvordan man tørrer en baby"
(cf. Appendix p. 13 ll. 12-16)

It is said that "if he is nice (laughs) I think that this is it, otherwise he will say 'I'm sorry that I tried to mansplain how to wipe a baby'". The laughter here implies that he is not in fact nice because he has already mansplained. The word nice therefore becomes absurd in the context. The most obvious example of humour and laughter illustrating ambivalence surrounding appropriate discourse after #MeToo is the following:

S3: og det kommer lidt an på hendes mood
I: ja det kan godt være (griner)
S3: *Det kan være hvis hun har mens*, så kan det godt være sådan lidt
I: (griner)
S3: *Ej, det var bare det var, ej, det kommer nok an på moodet og hvordan stemningen lige er* mellem dem p.t. men den virker åbenbart meget god, på baggrund af hele historien, synes jeg
(cf. Appendix p. 98 ll. 7-13)

S3 is asked about how the woman, who is being mansplained to, is going to react to the mansplaining. And he answers that it depends on the woman's mood, and if she is menstruating, as that could make her a bit, and at this point he stops himself, probably having registered the stereotype being spoken out loud while sitting across from a woman. And then he says that he did not in fact mean this and was making a joke. While the tone is joking throughout this interaction, it is only funny as that statement is uncomfortable, both for the participant and interviewer. Yet, there would be no joke if the idea that women are unpredictably moody only while menstruating was not a popular prejudgement. The use of this to make a joke, at the expense of women, making this superiority humour, shows that this prejudgement is somehow the first explanation that came to mind when making meaning of the story. At the same time S3 is very well aware that this was not an appropriate joke and he seems to regret having said it out loud. This makes this a very clear example of ambivalence and navigating between pre-#MeToo (jokes at the expense of women are acceptable) and post-#MeToo (stereotype-based jokes about women are unacceptable). The last example included, to illustrate how humour and laughs can be used to detect ambivalence and thoughts about popular discourse is the following:

I: er der ellers noget i historien du sådan lægger mærke til eller?

M2: ... ... *sådan hvi/ hvis han skal stirre så gør det dog i det mindste diskret (griner)*

I: (griner) så ham ved bordet ved siden af er lidt en idiot?

M2: (griner) alt for dårligt

I: (griner)

M2*: han ej ok, det, det, det, det, behøver du ikke tage med.*

I: (griner) ok, ud over det var der ikke noget?

M2: nej

(cf. Appendix p. 27-28 ll. 25-1)

M2 is asked what he notices in the third story and says that he thinks about the man at the next table, more specifically "like if/ if he has to stare, he should at least do it discreetly". Both laugh at this. After being asked if the man at the next table is being an idiot he says "yes, this is not good enough" and then immediately backpedals by saying, "no, ok, you do not need to include that". So again, the absurdity of these

statements only becomes obvious after it is said out loud. M2 is clearly thinking that this was inappropriate, and he feels the need to make it clear that this does not need to be included, consequently saying that it does not reflect his opinions. It shows ambivalence in making this joke on the premise "it is completely alright to stare at a woman, as long as it is discreet" yet at the same time being aware that this is a behaviour that would make women uncomfortable and therefore should not be done. Which again shows a pre- and post-#MeToo discourse and a heightened awareness of behaviour that could potentially be seen as harassment. To sum up, these examples have shown how laughs and humour, at some points in the interviews let us know which behaviour and language the participants deem appropriate or absurd, and where beliefs are contradicting themselves, showing ambivalence in the participants' use of humour. So, laughter is at times used to release tension and deal with ambivalent feelings.

8.2.4. USING THE POST-#METOO DISCOURSE

As shown in the paragraphs above, it becomes obvious to the participants, which discourses are appropriate and inappropriate in a post-#MeToo era. We have seen examples of participants' prejudgements when making meaning of these stories, and we have seen participants discover these prejudgments and react by trying to correct themselves with humour or laughter. In the following, we see examples of participants using post-#MeToo discourse to make sense of the stories. Some even directly address these discourses during their interview. J2 describes in his interview how the characters in the third story talk about gender norms and roles in the wrong way. They "use the wrong rhetoric" when saying that "men should" and he calls this old gender norms and roles:

J2: så synes jeg gruppen sådan prøver at pålægge ham det

I: mhm

J2: altså *med den retorik som der bliver brugt, altså det der med at "mænd burde"* eller nu kan jeg ikke lige huske, men, men

I: hvordan det blev formuleret eller?

J2: ja, det der det, at der tænker jeg i hvert fald at der er noget æh, ... altså mh, noget i *nogle gamle, æh, kønsnormer og kønsroller,* at, at, det burde man, et eller andet sted

I: ja

> J2: altså koste hvad det koste vil, altså at, at, og det synes jeg er sjovt i hvert fald set fra, fra historiens præmisse, at det, det er Maria der siger det, et eller andet sted
>
> I: ja
>
> J2: men det er også hende der er den eneste sådan, der har, der kan tillade sig at sige for eksempel at *"mænd gør det"* fordi hun jo sidder som repræsentant, som kvinde, tænker jeg et eller andet sted
>
> (cf. Appendix p. 21-22 ll. 20-3)

J2 therefore implies that assuming that someone will act or feel in a specific way because of their gender is an outdated idea. A man does not have to like attention from the woman at the next table, to live up to norms, so the group should not tell him how he should behave as a man. This can be argued to be a clear example of feminist and post-#MeToo discourse, as it seeks to deconstruct gender roles and let the individual define what they "should" do. This is further elaborated in the following example:

> J2: ikke det her med gå ind i en, i en, ... en *pålæggende retorik* ved at sige "jamen ... mænd generelt gør sådan og sådan"
>
> I: ja, okay
>
> J2: så fordi så tror jeg også hurtigt at, at *personen ville føle sig forkert*
>
> (cf. Appendix p. 23 ll. 6-9)

Here we see J2 explain that the group should not generalize about men, and how a man should be, because this could possibly lead to this person feeling alienated or giving them a feeling of being wrong. Similarly, M2 describes how it hurts him inside to read the mansplaining situation. It makes him very uncomfortable and we can see quite a few nervous laughs. He then goes on to mention that this mansplaining situation is very uncomfortable from a modern viewpoint.

> M2: den ... (griner) .. den gjorde ondt inden i ...
>
> I: den er ikke sjov?
>
> M2: nej, den var, det var, det var dumt sagt
>
> I: ja?
>
> M2: ...
>
> I: hvorfor tror du han siger det?
>
> M2: fordi de skulle forstå hvad der skete

I: ja? det er ikke fordi han er akavet eller sådan? det er bare sådan en vi skal lige, jeg skal lige forklare det?

M2: Det ... det kan jo ikke læse ud fra, jeg kan jo ikke læse hans måde at snakke på, hans væremåde og alt sådan det kan jeg jo ikke læse ud fra tekst, men

I: mh

M2: ... *ud fra det at , jeg ville sige, sådan et mo/ lidt moderne synspunkt er bare lidt, ku kun læser det der kun står, så ville jeg sige et er meget sådan mansplaining øjeblik*

(cf. Appendix p. 27 ll. 7-20)

It could be argued that the modern point of view in mention is a post-#MeToo viewpoint, because he uses the word mansplaining which became popular within the same timeframe as the #MeToo movement. So, this is another very clear example of a participant reading these stories and making sense of them within a post-#MeToo frame of reference. The examples above are both from men, but there are female participants too who explain the stories in a feminist context. Both B and M1 describe how it is interesting to them in the stories that the man assumes the woman does not know something about a specific topic. They also emphasize that saying that he will help is not actually nice, as this help is unsolicited. This shows a focus on consent that could easily be seen as a result of the feminist ideals and discourses surrounding the #MeToo movement. In B's interview she mentions the following:

I: er der noget her i historien du sådan særligt bider mærke i? Eller sådan bare lige falder dig i øjnene imens du læser den?

B*: jeg tror det irriterede mig lidt at ham Anders der han var sådan der "jeg kan godt hjælpe dig"*

I: mh

B: når hun egentlig siger "det kan jeg sagtens lige finde ud af"

I: ja?

B: æh det er selvfølgelig også pænt gjort æh men jeg synes at *det er interessant at det er en mand, der ligesom lige griber ind* og siger "den skal jeg nok lige hjælpe med"

I: ja?

B: (griner)

I: hvad er det der gør det spændende?

B: ... altså jeg tænker, det der med at, det, *biler er lidt sådan et mande domæne*

I: mh

B: æh og er sådan ... *jeg tænker stereotypt, noget hvor mænd godt kan lide og fremstå ... som om de ved ... en masse*

I: ja

B: æhm .. så jeg tænkt/ altså på den måde så irriterer det mig lidt at det så igen, *når der endelig er en kvinde der kan finde ud af det, at han så lige tænker "kan du nu også det? skal jeg ikke lige hjælpe?"*

I: mh? sådan lidt denne her hjælp uden hun egentlig har bedt om det?

B: mh ja

I: ja?

B: ja, fordi jeg tænker i sådan en situation så kunne man, altså, det ved jeg ikke, hvis man ikke var helt sikker eller sådan, *så ville det være oplagt at sige "jeg tænker jeg kan, men er der nogen der lige vil gå med og hjælpe mig?"* eller et eller andet

I: mh

B: i stedet for sådan en *"forresten, hvis du så godt kan så skal jeg nok lige hjælpe alligevel, fordi ..."*

I: ja?

B: (griner)

(cf. Appendix p. 12-13 ll. 6-4)

When asked what she noticed in the tire changing story, she says that Anders offering to help is interesting because he is a man, offering to do something stereotypically associated with men, despite a woman saying that she can do this. This still includes a prejudgement that cars are something men care and know about. However, she mentions that this is stereotypical and that the problem she sees is more so in the fact that the woman, who shows capability, is offered help even though she has not asked for it. She goes on to say that this is a situation where it would be easy to say: "I think I can do this but is there anyone who can help me?" if she were not sure if she could handle changing the tire. The lack of invitation and, within the post-#MeToo era, the absurdity of offering unwanted help, makes this uncomfortable in a way that makes B laugh several times.

M1 too mentions that she finds herself provoked or uncomfortable, because the man in the story assumes that the woman does not know how a tire punctures. She has a clear prejudgement of how a man who mansplains would react. He would tell the woman not to be so sensitive and start a discussion:

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M1: mh jeg ved ikke om hun synes det er ubehageligt, men måske mere at hun bliver provokeret af at han tror at hun ikke ved det

I: mh

M1: eller sådan har behov for at forklare hende det, for at være sikker på at hun forstår hvad det er

I: mh ja

M1: mh

I: ok, hvad tror du så der sker? hvordan ville deres samtale udvikle sig, eller historien?

M1: æh ... så ville Anders nok sige, det er ham der kommer hen ikke?

I: ja

M1: Så ville han måske sige: *"Ej lad nu være med at være så nærgående" eller "nærtagende" æh og så ville det måske udvikle sig til en .... ej det ved jeg ikke ... en lille diskussion om*

I: mh?

M1*: Ej det er også fordi jeg bliver provokeret af det selv*

(begge griner)

(cf. Appendix p. 70-71 ll. 20-3)

This shows that M1 links mansplaining behaviour to a lack of understanding and this lack of understanding is very uncomfortable to her. Here too laughter is used as release. This emphasizes M1's meaning-making from a post-#MeToo discourse and feminist perspective and highlights her prejudgements on men who mansplain based on that new discourse and her personal experiences with mansplaining. It has been shown that M1 is aware of the phenomenon of mansplaining and has personal experiences with this (cf. par. 8.1.).

S2 has a more distanced way of making sense of the stories within a feminist context. She talks more about the woman in the story as a feminist and has a clear idea of how that feminist woman would act. Yet, she seems less personally provoked and uncomfortable than B and M1. She describes the female character in the story as a feminist who is "queen of [her] own body" and the male character, who mansplains in the story, ignores this and is being rude about it, and is in this way shown very negatively:

S2: og hun lyder sådan lidt feminist, hun er sådan lidt mere *"I'm queen of my own body"*

I: mhm

S2: æh ... og der æh ... det tror jeg Kasper bliver sådan lidt, han fejer hende bare væk

I: ja?

S2: sådan lidt *"fuck nu af"*

I: ja? det er det indtryk du får? det bliver han ved med?

S2: ja

I: ja?

S2: ja, og så lukker den samtale på et eller andet tidspunkt

(cf. Appendix p. 40 ll. 18-27)

There was no indication that the female character was feminist, yet somehow this is the meaning that made the most sense to S2, showing that the post-#MeToo discourse could be a base for understanding this interaction to her as well. Moreover, S2 has a clear focus on consent as well, saying that the woman in the story needs to show the male character Kasper that "men do not have the right to just stare".

S2: og det overbeviser jo så også Kasper om at

I: ja

S2: *mænd ikke bare har ret til at glo*

I: ja

S2: mh ... mh

I: ja, det er ikke ok, nej

(cf. Appendix p. 41 ll. 24-29)

In this way, S2 seems to focus on the same discourse about consent that both B and M1 pick up on as the core issue of mansplaining. To sum up, quite a few of the participants, see the stories in light of concepts like consent, respect of boundaries and generalizing gender, all topics who have been very relevant within the #MeToo movement. These points of views bring their own prejudgements as well. We see the disrespectful mansplainer and the respectful feminist. All in all, we see the participants meaning-making both from the modern post-#MeToo perspective as well as the ambivalence and the stereotypical prejudgements.

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8.2.5. Two Trajectories

There was a specific pattern throughout all the participants in the younger age group. Even though only three out of nine actually used the word mansplaining, they all agreed that the social situation was not positive. All nine participants in their 20s interpreted it as bad behaviour from the person positioned to do the mansplaining. What was even more noticeable was their meaning-making behind the mansplaining resulting in almost the same story completion. All nine participants in their 20s were able to give meaningful reasons for the mansplaining behaviour even though they did not agree with it. Two reasons, most commonly mentioned, were that the person mansplaining was either trying to help or to impress, for example R saying:

R: Så enten er vi *hjælpsom* eller også er det igen det her
konkurrencegen med at sige *"se hvad jeg også kan"*
(cf. Appendix p. 30 ll. 18-19)

It could be argued that none of these reasons are harmful in any way, however, all the younger participants agreed that this was socially uncomfortable and sometimes even viewed as wrong. This often led to the participants explaining two ways of ending the story. On the one hand, the person mansplaining was "good/sweet/nice" and was thereby able to notice their own bad behaviour (mansplaining) and the outcome would be an apology and learning from it. On the other hand, a possible outcome would be the person mansplaining starting to defend themselves by saying that they were "just trying to help".

In the first incomplete story, the story completion by the participants was often shorter and demanded less explanation. This might be because the story calls for the participant to choose to expose the "awkward/stupid/bad" mansplaining behaviour to the other friends asking about the conversation. Even though the participants were still agreeing that it was a negative form of social interaction some of them chose to not say anything to the people asking what they were talking about:

S3: det kan godt være, men tænkte, jeg tænkte mere bare so/, at han
virker som om han vil*, det er i hvert fald ikke en diskussion han gider
at tage.*

I: nej

S3: og han er måske ikke helt enige i hvad, i hvert fald hvad Laura hun påstår kan være årsagen

I: ja og det er også derfor han bare svarer?

S3: ja

I: vi snakkede bare om det her

S3: ja

I: han tager den ligesom ikke videre derfra

S3: nej

(cf. Appendix p. 93-94 ll. 27-5)

Here we have an example of a participant who would not comment on the mansplaining. What makes S3 stand out compared to the other participants is that he does not see Laura's mansplaining as basic knowledge. S3 had had a recent personal experience with tire puncturing at this point in time, which he describes in his interview. Therefore, he sees Laura's utterance as incorrect knowledge. This makes S3 think that this is a discussion not worth starting. This might be because someone sharing knowledge that is wrong or misunderstood is not as offensive as mansplaining. Some participants used humour to address the awkward situation like L in this example:

I: nej? godt, og hvad tror du så Morten siger her? Så vi har Sofie som siger, kommer tilbage og siger "så nu har vi skiftet dækket, hvad var i ved at snakke om?" hvad siger Morten så?

L: (griner) æh ... han siger æh *"Laura var ved at sige noget meget klogt" (griner begge) lidt ironisk*

I: så der er noget sarkasme her?

L: ja (griner)

I: ja, okay, og hvor/ hvorfor tænker du det bliver sarkastisk?

L: det er fordi æh... altså fordi at hun bliver sådan meget æh, meget sådan øh, klog lige pludselig eller sådan lidt gammelklog

(cf. Appendix p. 114 ll. 22-31)

As described earlier, humour can be used for tension relief, here it might be used to relieve the tension of how awkward the situation is. M1 had the non-gender-flipped version of this story and has a more direct approach:

> M1: øm, Laura hun siger at, øm *"Morten er ved at mansplaine hvordan et dæk kan punktere"*
>
> I: mh
>
> M1: mh
>
> I: hvorfor tror du det er det hun ville svare?
>
> M1: fordi at æh … hun ruller med øjnene og virker irriteret over den måde han sådan skal forklare hvad det er der sker
>
> I: ja
>
> M1: i en punkteringsproces
>
> I: mh ok, så det er ubehageligt for hende på en eller anden måde hvis hun er irriteret eller?
>
> M1: mh jeg ved ikke om hun synes det er ubehageligt, men måske mere at hun bliver provokeret af at han tror at hun ikke ved det
>
> (cf. Appendix p. 70 ll. 9-21)

M1 reacts what one might argue to be accordingly with the post-#MeToo discourse because she states that it is mansplaining. The word mansplaining has been created to detect systemic sexism in everyday life and validly address it (cf. par. 5.2.), which is exactly what M1 chooses for the antagonist to do. The difference in their response could be the difference between when a man is mansplaining, and a woman is mansplaining. However, L is 40 years old and has not grown up in the midst of the #MeToo era, so this might also influence how she would address a situation like this. Another participant who had the same version as L is J1 he talks about using sarcasm for this situation too:

> J1: *Morten "noget ekstremt åbenlyst.." (griner)* jamen så skal jeg i gang med at svare på hvordan jeg ville
>
> I: ja, altså jeg skal nok lige, det første jeg egentlig tænker er godt nok, altså nu har du godt nok lige sagt det, men hvad tror du Morten siger? hvad tror du han ville svare?
>
> J1: altså, det kommer an på, hvor gode venner er Morten med hende her? Er han der fordi Peter er der ikke også? og har han så bare lyst til at være sarkastisk over for hende?

I: mmh

J1: Eller er han faktisk en god veninde med hende? Fordi, han han vælger jo allerede til at starte med, at, når ja, han vælger jo allerede til at starte med, hvad hedder det, han vender øjne men han siger ikke noget, så det udviser sådan en eller anden form for, hvad skal man sige, lyst til ikke at såre hende, lyst til at sige, "prøv at hør her, det du er i gang med at sige det er så fucking åbenlyst, det gir ingen mening, hvad har du gang i?"

(cf. Appendix p. 17 ll. 1-14)

J1 is one of the younger participants and makes it very clear that this behaviour does not make any sense, meaning that it is inappropriate because he takes on the voice of Morten, and not that he finds the story to be unrealistic. Even though J1 and L both use humour to address this, they still do it with different attitudes. J1 describes it very well himself. He says that if the people in the story are good friends he probably would not use sarcasm like this, because he wants to be considerate of Laura's feelings. J1 just as M1 shows signs of provocation. M1 directly uses the word "provocation". Other than hearing the tone of provocation in J1's voice during the interview, it is noticeable in his use of the word "fucking" and the condescending remarks and rhetorical questions. This might show how M1 and J1 coming of age during a #MeToo era have been influenced in a different way to react to this type of behaviour opposite L who is less direct and laughs it off.

M1 describes how it could escalate by the other man in the story (not the man who mansplained) saying that she was being too sensitive and taking it personally:

M1: Så ville han måske sige: "Ej lad nu være med at være så nærgående" eller "nærtagende" æh og så ville det måske udvikle sig til en .... ej det ved jeg ikke ... en lille diskussion om

I: mh?

M1: Ej det er også fordi jeg bliver provokeret af det selv

(begge griner)

M1: *så jeg ville nok selv blive sådan "hvorfor har du behov for at fortælle mig det? tror du ikke jeg ved det?"*

I: ja

M1: *og så ville der komme en lille diskussion af det og så ville fyrene være sådan "åh det var ikke det jeg mente og det var ikke sådan ment og" ja*

I: det, det lyder lidt til at det er baseret på egen erfaring

M1: mh mh ja

I: ja?

M1: Ja, jeg har en kæreste der har en tendens til at mansplaine a lot"
(cf. Appendix p.70-71, 31-12)

M1 is the only one describing a continuation where the men in the story dismiss the woman commenting on mansplaining behaviour. However, a little later in the interview she also falls into the exact same pattern as the other participants of different explanations to how this interaction could continue depending on the person mansplaining:

M1: så ville jeg lidt diskutere med mig selv "åh er det en samtale jeg gider at have lige nu? eller skal jeg bare lade den ligge?"

I: ja

M1: ja

I: så det er også noget hvor man lige skal veje

M1: mh

I: sådan fordele og ulemper eller?

M1: ja

I: ja

M1: ja

I: hvad ville fordelene og ulemperne være?

M1: altså æh ulempen var, altså nu kender jeg jo ikke Morten men, *er han sådan en person der ville forstå det, eller sådan er han sådan en, ville det bare blive til én stor diskussion hvor han ikke fatter noget og sådan ikke ville, ikke vil forstå?*

I: mh

M1: eller er han en lyttende person, der gerne vil lære nyt fordi, de her maskulint feminint tankegange og sådan noget, der ligesom skal, som *jeg synes nogle gange skal aflæres lidt*

I: mh

M1: ... ja, så en fordel ville være at øh jeg får forklaret ham at … at det behøver han ikke gøre til en anden gang

I: mh

M1: og ulempen ville være at det kan føre til en større diskussion, som man måske ikke lige magter når man holder midt på vejen og har punkteret dæk og ja

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Here M1 elaborates on what the advantages and disadvantages would be of starting this discussion of this type of behaviour. This leads to her explaining that if Morten is a person that wants to listen and understand she might be able to explain to him why this is uncomfortable, indicating that he would learn from it and not do it again. This is in opposition to Morten being a person "who does not get it" and deliberately is trying not to understand. M1 again (cf. par. 8.2.1.) addresses the "feminine and masculine mindset" and that she thinks that this binary mindset sometimes has to be "unlearned". With these words she describes what we interpret to be the general completion strategy from the youngest participants: There is the binary mindset where things are divided into man/woman and masculine/feminine, and if a person has this mindset they are often not willing to listen, reflect, take responsibility and/or apologize. The other option is a more fluid and open mindset with focus on equality and is not driven by prejudgement and stereotypes, and if the person mansplaining is like this they would immediately own up to the fact that they mansplained. Hence, a pre- vs. post-#MeToo discourse. B also describes this clearly:

I: Hvordan tror du så samtalen udvikler sig?

B: ... ... *hvis han er sød*, (griner) så tænker jeg at, så er det bare det

I: mh

B: eller *så siger han "ej undskyld at jeg sådan forsøgte lidt at mansplaine* hvordan man tørrer en baby"

I: mh

B: æhm *hvis han ikke er sød så kunne jeg godt forestille mig at han måske på en eller anden måde gik lidt i forsvarsposition*

I: ja?

B: altså blev lidt sådan "jamen jeg forsøgte da bare at hjælpe"

Here B explains that either the person mansplaining is realizing their "bad" behaviour by mansplaining, admitting to it and apologizing or they become defensive and explain the reason for the behaviour as trying to be helpful or trying to impress the other person. What is interesting is not so much the different meanings behind the

mansplaining that each individual participant might come up with, because they can differ, as will be explained next. What is interesting is that every participant in this age group at some point during these three stories talks about how this is not a positive social interaction. The person mansplaining is the one misbehaving from social norms, and that this person can be one of two types: A person who is aware of a change after the #MeToo era, of what is acceptable social behaviour, or a person who is not aware or chooses not to follow it. This "two trajectory" completion of the stories in itself shows ambivalence, not only within the participant but in society at this moment in time.

Examples of participants who stand out during their meaning-making of the mansplaining situation are R and J2 who both mention that the person mansplaining (R reads it as a woman, J2 reads it as a man) might know from their mutual job that the person changing the diaper might have a history of not doing it well enough. This becomes one of many explanations of mansplaining. This is not something that will be analysed or discussed further for this thesis as the purpose is not to study reasons behind mansplaining. However, it shows that there are differences in the participants' meaning-making of the mansplaining situation and that it might not matter what gender the person has when doing the mansplaining or changing a diaper.

8.3. Two Generations

As mentioned before there was a change of focus from the 9th semester project where the interview method was constructed as well as the interviews being conducted (cf. par. 1.1.; par. 4.). This change of focus happened because we as researchers thought we observed an ambivalence in the participants when talking about gender. What made it even more clear to us was when an 83-year-old woman (S4) was interviewed as the last participant for the data and she had a very different approach to talking about gender. Not only did she talk about gender in a different way compared to the participants in their 20s, which might be expected given the generational gap, but she did not show the same ambivalence towards the subject of mansplaining. This was the main motive for changing the focus for this thesis.

Furthermore, L was between S4 and the remaining participants both in age and showing ambivalence. In this paragraph there will be a description of how these two

women are seemingly different in their way of interpreting the vignette stories from the participants in their 20s. As well as, how they might also be different from each other since there is also a generational gap between these two participants.

8.3.1. S4'S MEANING-MAKING

Here is one example of how S4 interprets the first story very differently from the other participants:

I: så det er som om at Morten han vil gerne, prøver at snakke om hvad der er sket?

S4: ja

I: med bilen, men kan ikke rigtig få den over på at det er nogens skyld, for det kan det jo ikke være?

S4: det kan det jo ikke være

I: så det bliver sådan en banal samtale?

S4: ja

I: mhm

S4: jeg synes altså, ja, når han siger det der "vi må være kørt over noget der er spidst" altså

I: ja

S4: at det må man jo

I: ja

S4: *det er sagens natur, hvis der skal gå hul i det*

I: ja ... så hvad får det Laura til at føle når han siger sådan noget her? Det du kalder banalt?

S4: at han er lidt naiv eller sådan

I: ja?

S4: eller det gi/ jeg, jeg, jeg ved det ikke ... ... *han er undskyldende, men han kan jo ikke gøre for det*

I: nej

S4: han kan jo ikke gøre for at nu holder vi her

I: okay så du forestiller dig sådan lidt i situationen at Morten han står sådan lidt ...

S4: åh det må i meget undskylde, hvis jeg bare havde skiftet det

I: åh må ikke have kørt over noget åh, at han er sådan lidt

S4: ja ... ... det k/ det føler jeg at han er sådan lidt ærgerlig over det skulle ske, måske lige netop fordi han har dem med

I: ja

S4: *og måske navnlig fordi han har Sofie med, der kan der godt være han gerne vil* (griner)

I: (griner)

S4: *vil være lidt mandfolket agtig*

I: mhm ... . ja ... ... så det er faktisk en lille smule, er det, er det synd for Morten?

S4: ... ...

I: også fordi du siger at Laura tænker "når han er da godt nok naiv"

S4: det kommer an på hvad forhold, hvordan deres indbyrdes forhold er synes jeg

I: ja

S4: ... . fordi æhm hvis de har et nært forhold, jamen så vil han selvfølgelig gerne fremstå som ... ... som den der ikke gøre noget forkert

I: mhm

S4: som, som ... ... klarer paragrafferne

(cf. Appendix p. 54-55. ll. 16-25)

It is a rather long extract, but it shows how many long-silenced periods S4 had while reflecting on this story. At first, she says that Morten is naive, and Laura must feel kind of bad for him because he says something that is so obvious, and she does not want to tell the others what he said. Then S4 develops the story a bit by saying that it is as if Morten wants to find someone to blame because he might be a little embarrassed that this happened as if he was kind of apologizing for the circumstances. S4 goes on to comment that it of course is not his fault, but he regrets that he did not do more to prevent this from happening. Then S4 turns it into a motive of wanting to impress Sofie by being "manly-ish" and he in general wants to be seen as someone who does nothing wrong and knows how to take care of business. What is different between S4's interpretation compared to the others is that even though she recognises his statement as being basic knowledge, banal and him being naive, yet she does not comment on it being inappropriate in any way. She actually mentions some kind of sympathy directed at Morten. She explains that he was supposed to be this man in control of the situation and this causes him to be apologetic, defend himself and try to save his image by giving an explanation and showing that it was out of his hands. This would go along with more stereotypical gender norms following a pre-#MeToo discourse. Her meaning-making of this is that he feels in this situation that he does not live up to the standards

of his own gender and that is why he is apologizing in this situation. When asked if anything in the story was noticeable to her she only continues saying this:

S4: nej jeg s/ jeg tænker lidt over om, om de også kunne, æh hvad var det de stod og snakkede om, om han eventuelt kunne have sagt "*du kører også altid i sådan nogle nedslidte dæk*" eller sådan et eller andet

(cf. Appendix p. 55, ll. 31-33)

So, she continues with the interpretation that Morten has made some kind of mistake and that it is his fault that the tire punctures because he is "always driving with worn down tires". This implies that he should have taken care of this himself and he needs to take responsibility for this situation. Here S4 says: "He probably could have said…" and it is not clear who *he* is. If it is Morten, Anders or if S4 meant to say "she" as in Laura. However, when reading in context of the rest of the transcription, we interpret it to be Anders saying it to Morten, because S4 afterwards keeps stating that Laura would not comment on what Morten said even though she might be annoyed (cf. Appendix, p. 57, ll. 2-16). This further indicates that S4 understands this situation on the basis of gender norms, specifically the man needs to be in charge of the tires. Other indicators are also

1. The fact that Anders is addressing Morten and not Laura, who was actually talking with Morten

2. All of the characters seem to be aware that it is Mortens responsibility to take care of the car

3. The fact that she assumes it is Mortens car, even though he is not the one driving and the story does not explain whose car it is

So here we see a clear example of how S4's understanding of gender norms affects her meaning-making when completing the story. In the second incomplete story when asked if anything was noticeable to her, S4 says:

I: noget der stikker ud for dig?

S4: ... ... ej jeg ved ikke om det stikker ud, at det er Thomas der bemærker at ... ... Emma trænger til en, en ren ble

I: mhm?

S4: *det, det stikker måske ikke ud så meget idag, det ville mere stikke ud i, i min tid dengang*

I: ja, ja?

S4: ... . hvor man synes at det er rigtig fint at det ogs/ at det er faderen også, eller onklen eller hvad han er, der, der lægger mærke til ... ... hvad der sk/ sk/ hvad der skal gøres

(cf. Appendix p. 62, ll. 14-23)

Here she directly addresses the difference between "her time back then" and now. She notices that Thomas is the one to discover that Emma needs to get her diaper changed. S4 immediately goes to say that it might not be something that is very noticeable today, meaning in this day and age. It would have been remarkable when she was young, she continues, and nowadays it is "really fine" that the father or the uncle is able to notice what needs to be done. This is interpreted to mean that of course S4 knows that times have changed but it was not that way when she grew up. This puts an emphasis on her distinctively different interpretations of the stories. Where other participants recognize the inappropriate behaviour immediately and address it as well as having different ways of the story to end, S4 is somehow more fixed in her interpretation and, even though she expresses doubt about the reasons for the social interactions, she does not show ambivalence about expressing gender norms or stereotypes. This obvious doubt about how to interpret stories, as well as stating multiple times that she thinks it is a difficult task, might actually indicate that these stories do not come as close to her reality as it does for the participants in their 20s.

8.3.2. DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES: L'S RESPONSE

When asking L about femininity and masculinity we received a quick and to the point answer:

L: ja, øhm .. *jeg føler mig maskulin når ...* mh ... *når jeg skruer ting op, eller sætter ting op (griner) eller samler ting*

I: ja

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L: faktisk, ja, og det får mig til at føle ... jeg tror jeg får det sådan lidt optur af det

I: ja?

L: sådan "yesss, det kunne jeg godt" æhm ... og *jeg føler mig feminin æhm ... når jeg, ja der er jo mange ting ... altså især når jeg sådan gør noget ud af mig selv*

I: mhm

L: så føler jeg mig feminin, sådan tager pænt tøj på, eller make-up, eller højhælede sko, æh og det får mig til at føle ... æh ... ja, jamen det har jeg det jo også godt med, men det er f/ ... jeg tror jeg føler mig sådan varm og sådan, ja

(cf. Appendix p. 114, ll. 4-14)

There is not any doubt about when she is on either side of the spectrum and she has almost the exact same answer as M1 (cf. par. 8.2.1.). They both mention handy-work as masculine and caring for their looks as feminine almost down to using the same words. The difference between these two answers is the ambivalence that M1 shows and says that she would undoubtedly have given this answer five years ago, but it is different for her now. L has no problem stating this and, unlike M1, she is quickly able to answer how that makes her feel as well. The way she phrases that the masculine feeling further makes her feel uplifted because "Yesss, I was able to do it" implying surprise or victory, that she for some reason expected that she might not have been able to do it. One aspect of this answer might show ambivalence which is the laughter when talking about her feeling masculine. It is as if she is laughing away the imagery of her doing these actions or the fact that she mentions something very stereotypical and starts out by saying it the wrong way "screwing things up" instead of "putting things up".

Next is an example of L talking about the second incomplete story when asked if anything else is noticeable:

I: er der ellers noget?

L: *Jeg synes det er sjovt at han går med ud og skifter måske*

I: ja?

L: nej, det er jo også hans niece ... så måske han, og han og de er lige blevet kærester, så måske han synes at det er lidt hyggeligt

I: mh?

L: mh ... ja

I: ja?

L: men, men, men ellers så, jeg tror ikke at s/, at alle mænd ville sige "jeg g/, jeg går lige med ud og skifter ble.

I: nej?

L: det tror jeg faktisk ikke

I: nej, så hvad siger det om ham?

L: jamen han vil egentlig gerne være med til det

I: ja?

L: og det er jo også lidt fint, at han viser det

(cf. Appendix p. 121, ll. 8-23)

In this example L says that it is funny that he chooses to go with Camilla when she leaves to change the baby's diaper. She reasons this with the fact that it is his niece and not Camilla's and that he might think that it would be cosy to do this with her. Even with this reasoning L continues to argue that most men would not follow to change a diaper. L says this even though she knows that he changes diapers often due to his job. L had previously in the interview commented on this:

L: så hun ved jo at ... den vej der den skal man ikke tørre

I: ja

L: det har man lært

I: ja præcis

L: ja

I: ja

L: men det kan også godt, jeg tænker, det kan også godt være hun siger "ret imponerende at du æh" *når nej han arbejder jo i en vuggestue.*

(cf. Appendix p. 118, ll. 8-15)

Here she almost continues the story by having Camilla praise Thomas for knowing how to wipe a girl correctly but stops herself when she remembers that he is working in a day-care as well. So, L shows us with these examples what she thinks is the gender norm here, that a man wanting to change a diaper and having this knowledge is remarkable unless he of course works with it professionally. However, even when she

concludes that he of course knows this via his job, and that cancels her statement about how impressive it is, she still continues afterwards to address the fact that he wants to help change the diaper with the argument that most men would not do that. None of the younger participants comment on this. All apart from one, S2, who comments that it is unnecessary for Camilla to go with him when the story is gender flipped. L has the same explanations and continuation as most of the others, that the behaviour is bad and kind of controlling and condescending which is also her final answer (cf. Appendix, p. 123, ll. 7-12). Where L differs from the others is making a point of saying that men normally would not do this and not showing any ambivalence about making this kind of statement. This kind of statement would arguably belong in a pre-#MeToo discourse.

Where L's description of gender norms becomes especially pronounced is with the third incomplete story, which is also the most triggering when it comes to gender stereotypes. L has finished reading the story and says as one of the first comments:

I: godt, så vi har Marias[1] kommentar, hvad siger Kasper?

L: æhm … … det er sådan lidt sjovt det her synes jeg (griner)

I: ja? hvorfor?

L: ja uddyb? *ja, jamen æh … altså æh, jeg tænker faktisk det samme som Maria, at i mænd kan da godt lide at sådan lige blive kigget lidt på, det er da dejligt*

I: mh

L: *men æh, men altså, så ja det er sådan lidt en atypisk mand synes jeg, sådan det tænker jeg de fleste mænd godt kan lide*

I: ja?

L: æhm ... men altså, så hvad svarer han? jamen jeg ville tænke at han s/... det er bare fordi han, han taler om det som om det er noget dårligt at hun kigger

I: ja?

L: så hans ... kommentar ... må jo også være sådan et eller andet, ved jeg ikke "bare fordi at jeg er en mand" (griner) "så øh er de/ det, det er ikke s/ sikkert alle mænd har det på samme måde"

I: nej

L: "du generaliserer"

I: ja?

---

[1] The names Charlotte and Maria were mistakenly exchanged here

L: det kunne godt være sådan noget han siger

I: ja?

L: tænker jeg

I: hvad tænker du om det her med at vennen ved siden af sidder og bekræfter, så det er faktisk ikke ku Kasper der sidder

I: ja

I: og at vennen ligesom er med på hans

L: ja

I: oplevelse

L: det .... jamen det bekræfter jo, det er ikke alle mænd der har det

I: ja?

L: *æh på den måde øhm og det det er jo også, det er jo heller ikke sikkert at alle mænd kan lide at blive kigget på*

I: mhm? nej?

L: *De er jo også bare mennesker, ikke også?*

I: ja

L: *forskellige*

(cf. Appendix p. 124-125, ll. 3-6)

Intuitively L thinks that Kasper's response is atypical for a man. She implies that she does not understand how it could be a bad thing that the woman at the other table is looking at him. L is asked to come up with a suitable answer from Kasper even though she does not really understand. She starts his response with "Just because I'm a man" and then laughs. The laughter here could be interpreted as a tension relief because she might find that sort of speech from a man unlikely, implying absurdity. During this example L becomes more and more confident in the notion that all men might not feel the same, "they are also just human (...) different/various". Last example from the interview with L is when asked if she at the end of the interview thought the stories were realistic:

I: nej? godt og så vil jeg geren høre om du synes sådan historierne var realistiske eller genkendeligt?

L: mh ja

I: ja?

L: det kunne man sagtens forholde sig til

I: ja?

L: og hverdagssituationer også

I: ja?

L: så synes de var rigtig gode

I: så det var ikke sådan at de var for, for mærkelige?

L: nej overhovedet ikke, nej og det er også noget man æh altså det satte da lige nogle tanker i gang i hvert fald omkring æh, ja sådan noget med køn og

I: mhm

L: jamen ja netop at generalisere og ja

I: ja

L: ja

I: Er der noget af det her som du sådan kan genkende fra dit eget liv?

L: æhm ... *ja, altså, ja nu er det jo sådan mig der l/, altså det er mest mig der har lyst til at gøre sådan det der handy ting herhjemme*, hvor det er S [husband] sådan lidt nervøs for hvis det er han ødelægger noget

I: ja?

L: så ... og det kan da godt *nogle gange, synes hvis jeg skal sige det til folk "jamen hjemme hos os der er det faktisk mig der gør sådan noget" at så synes jeg sådan lidt, på en måde er det lidt pinligt* altså ikke, jeg er egentlig stolt af det, jeg synes det er sjovt

I: mhm

L: også og jeg kan godt lide det, men måske var det egentlig S [husband] der burde gøre det end at sådan "åh ikke så vild med det"

(cf. Appendix p. 129-130, ll. 26-21)

In this example L says that she would say that they are realistic and depicting everyday situations as well. She also says that the stories made her think about gender and generalization. When asked if anything is recognisable from her own life she says that because she does most of the handy-work at home (what she considered to be masculine in the beginning of the interview) she admits that she sometimes finds it a little embarrassing to tell people this fact. She thinks it is fun to do handy-work and she is proud that she is doing it. However, she states that maybe it should have been her husband doing it even though he is not that crazy about doing handy-work. L is a young 40-year-old woman obviously aware of equality and discriminative and bad behaviour, but the interesting point to make is how she, unlike the participants in their 20s, is still talking about gender norms that would be considered outdated in a post-

#MeToo era following the post-#MeToo discourse. She seems to be afraid that her husband will be judged because he does not like doing handy work, and she expresses a sense of responsibility to not make him look bad. This is not something we see in any of the other interviews. Even S4 expresses that she in her life has indeed been judged for being too masculine (cf. Appendix, p. 44, ll. 20-17), but unlike L, she does not seem to fear this judgment. This might indicate that S4 has reached a stage of acceptance due to her life experience or personality. Another interpretation could be that the difference comes from the fact that it is the judgment of a man not expressing his gender correctly that L is worried about. She seems to have the feminist understanding that a woman can do handiwork without problem. But it becomes more difficult and ambivalent when the man is less masculine. This also shows itself in her understanding that "men like being looked at by women". She confidently expresses these thoughts on gender without hesitation or withdrawal. It is not until the third story where she is confronted with a gender-flipped situation that seems very strange to her that she starts to reflect on this and at the end of the interview also comments on her own reflections about the subject.

This part of the analysis is not to determine any right or wrong way of thinking about gender and interpretation of the stories. It is to show how varying the different age groups are talking about the social interactions in these stories. Even within the group of participants in their 20s we see variation in meaning-making, but all the participants in their 20s have in common that they show ambivalence and either address or avoid stereotypes. This is not the case with L and S4. Even though they show that they are aware of the stereotypes within the stories, they are not as much aware of their gender bias in their own speech. They do not express feeling provocation by mansplaining or concern for upholding traditional gender norms.

8.4. USING MEAD'S THEORY

In this paragraph a few examples of ambivalence in the interviews have been chosen for analysing the meaning-making. Using Mead, it becomes clear how the participants are trying to incorporate and navigate in a new and very sudden change in discourse. It can further be used to show how ambivalence emerges. Using the model to illustrate Mead's theory necessitates quite extensive elaboration on the participants' responses.

Therefore, the three most distinctive examples were chosen. The ambivalence and thought processes behind their meaning-making in these examples is very clear, as we hear them changing their interpretations when speaking out loud.

8.4.1. M1's Ambivalence and Mead's Theory

This first example is M1 a woman talking about when she feels masculine and when she feels feminine:

> M1: Ja (*griner*) når men altså, maskulin når hm ... uff det er svært, når men jeg føler mig maskulin når jeg ordner noget handy, altså sådan, jeg har aldrig sat en lampe op men jeg samler ikea møbler og det er jeg fucking god til, men jeg ved egentlig ikke om jeg føler mig maskulin når jeg gør det, det tror jeg ikke.
>
> I: nej?
>
> M1: ej det ved jeg ikke, det er virkelig svært
>
> I: det kan også være du ikke lige har nogen situationer hvor du føler dig
>
> M1: ja, jeg tror ikke at ... nej altså sådan, åh, det der med maskulin og feminin, det er sådan lidt, altså, jeg tror måske at jeg for fem år siden havde sagt, ej jeg føler mig mega maskulin når jeg ... bruger en hammer
>
> I: mh
>
> M1: Men jeg tror i dag der er jeg sådan... maskulin, feminin ... der er ikke nogen maskuline ting og der er ikke nogen feminine ting på den måde
>
> I: mh
>
> M1: æh jeg føler mig feminin når jeg tager noget lækkert undertøj på
>
> I: mh
>
> M1: ja, i nogen gode farver og sådan noget og når jeg tager make-up på og krøller hår, duller mig op
>
> I: ja
>
> M1: og det får mig til at føle mig mega lækker og sexet og feminin
>
> (cf. Appendix p. 65, ll. 14-33)

What we see is that she is able to intuitively give an example of something that is considered masculine. This is part of her 'Me' but as she says it out loud she denies feeling masculine doing these actions. She has immediate feedback when she hears

herself talk and asks herself "is this actually true? Is it just a masculine stereotype?" The generalized other here represents a post-#MeToo discourse that says, "actions are not gendered". This creates ambivalence. On the one hand she feels feminine and can easily identify with that but on the other hand she does not want to divide it into feminine and masculine. A part of the post-#MeToo discourse might also be that women are now allowed to do stereotypical masculine things and actions without being called masculine.
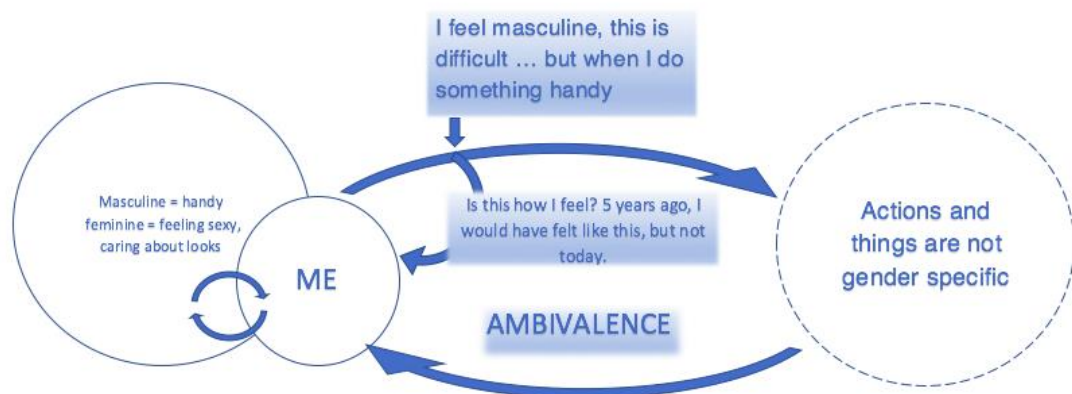

FIGURE 3 M1 MEAD MODEL 1

So, from figure 3, we see that the ambivalence arises from opposing messages or discourses. On the one hand, through the 'I' and 'Me' M1 has internalized stereotypes about gender, for example doing something handy is masculine, and caring and doing something about your looks is feminine. On the other hand, in the generalized other there is a representation of a post-#MeToo discourse, for example actions are not gendered. These statements are ambivalent, yet this is not where the ambivalence occurs. The ambivalence occurs when M1 speaks about feeling masculine when doing something handy and hears herself say this. This leads her to immediately question her own statement, as it does not fit the ideals of a feminist point of view following the post-#MeToo discourse that the generalized other represents. So, it becomes ambivalent to her, when she realizes that she has said something stereotypical, and at the same time does not agree with what she has just said. This then leads her to rephrase (figure 4):

New dialogue: I feel feminine when I'm working on my looks but there is no such thing as feminine and masculine, 5 years ago, yes, today, no.
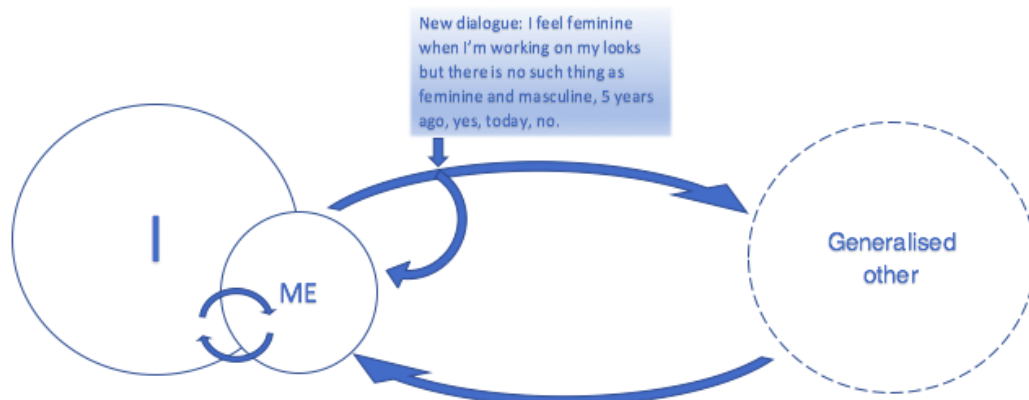
I

ME

Generalised other

FIGURE 4 M1 MEAD MODEL 2

This new sentence incorporates the ambivalence, in saying that she feels feminine, but does not feel masculine. And in addition to this her feelings about this have changed in the past five years, because how we talk about gender has changed somewhat recently and she has changed with that. As an example of a pre-#MeToo discourse, S4 is talking about how she as a woman feels masculine:

S4: jeg er nok en mandhaftig kvinde

I: (griner)

S4: kan man sige det sådan for at slippe udenom?

I: ja det kan man godt

S4: jo, jamen jeg er en til, jeg kan meget lettere finde noget herretøj, som jeg bryder mig om end noget dametøj

I: mhm ja?

S4: ja, og sådan har det altid været, jeg går for eksempel også altid i lange bukser

I: ja

S4: og jeg vælger nogle bluser som ikke er feminine

I: ja

S4: så jeg tror jeg har et eller andet

I: og du har kort hår, det er der så mange ældre kvinder der har, men

S4: ja, men det har jeg haft, som mine børn siger, de kan ikke huske mig med an/ med

andet an/ frisure end denne her korte frisure

I: mhm

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S4: jeg tror jeg er æhm ... ... jamen det lyder så fjollet at sige, man kan jo ikke være en halv mand, men altså ...

I: ja?

S4: jeg befinder mig lige så godt i mandeverdenen som i en kvindeverden

(cf. Appendix p. 42, ll. 9-28)

As S4 says she feels like a manly woman, she describes how she has always worn pants instead of skirts, and masculine blouses, and has had short hair. She therefore says she prefers men's clothing. She goes on to say that it would sound silly to say she is half man, as that is not possible, but she feels just as comfortable in a man's world as in a woman's world. Here it is clear that to her either you are a man or a woman, and if you are a woman that feels comfortable in the masculine you are a manly woman. This is the opposite of M1 who is trying to avoid these categories as well as not wanting to place a woman as masculine no matter what she does.

8.4.2. J1's Ambivalence and Mead's Theory

In this next example J1, a man, talks about a past with stereotypical representations of gender as well but slowly talks himself into a post-#MeToo discourse. He goes through childhood memories of gender roles and ends up talking about current understanding hereof:

I: ok, ja, er der ellers noget i denne her historie, som du sådan særligt lægger mærke til? eller som lige springer i øjnene på dig?

J1: ... altså nu er jeg nu er jeg født op, nu nu nu er jeg vokset op i en familie, ikke også, med to brødre og en far og en mor der er gået hjemme og har været plejemor til mig, det har været sådan meget, mændene har styr på det her og kvinderne har styr på det, så for mig overrasker det at det er en kvinde og en mand der går ud og skifter dæk, ikke? i stedet for to mænd.

I: ja?

J1: men det er bare mig, i forhold til derhjemme, der er biler, de har altid været fikset af mænd, han har altid været til mekaniker og fikset bil og husker tydeligt en gang vi var på vej hjem fra ferie, vi var lige kommet hjem fra Tenerife, og så kører vi hjem, og så da vi kom halvvejs hjem fra lufthavnen, der punkterede dækket

I: mh

> J1: så sidder mig og mor i bilen, imens han er ude og skifte dæk
>
> I: ja
>
> J1: fordi, det, ja, men han ved jo så også hvordan fanden man gør, han har pisse meget styr på det
>
> I: ja
>
> J1: og det virker som om hende der Sofie, blev der nævnt, at hun har rent faktisk styr på det, hun havde prøvet det før
>
> I: mm
>
> J1: så selvfølgelig, hvis mændene ikke har prøvet det før, jeg har aldrig skiftet dæk før, og hvis jeg sidder sammen med en kvinde der har gjort det før, så ville jeg selvfølgelig også lade hende tage styringen, eller, nu ved jeg ikke helt hvordan man skifter dæk (mumlet), men jeg ville i hvert fald være med på, sådan nej, det overrasker mig egentlig ikke når man overvejer de forskellige.... ja... dele af det
>
> (cf. Appendix p. 17-18, ll. 23-11)

J1 describes how he grew up with a dad, two brothers and a stay-at-home foster mom, so the men are good at 'this' and the women are good at 'that'. This is then leading into him implying that this is the reason that he is surprised that it is a woman changing the tire and not the two men in the story. He hears himself here and says, "But this is just me, in relation to back home" and he continues explaining that his dad always took care of everything about cars at home. So J1 tries to explain that the reason for his prejudgement makes sense because his dad was actually experienced in the car domain and he even experienced a punctured tire with his family at one point where his dad of course changed it. This creates a shift in focus from gender stereotypes to "who knows how to do this". He then concludes that it sounds like the woman in the story knows how to change to tire, despite this not being specifically mentioned in the story. He even adds that he himself, despite being a man, would not know how to change a tire. Thereby implying that gender stereotypes do not apply here. His wording here is interesting. He says that if a woman knew how to change a tire, he would *let* her change it. This implies that if none of them knew how to change it, he would by default be the one having to change it because of his gender, but if the woman knows how to do it he would *let* her. So even though he aims to follow a post-#MeToo discourse, his choice of words suggests that he is still influenced by the experiences with gender norms he has had in his upbringing. At the end he makes a last attempt to

be part of changing the tire by saying "but I would at least be willing to…", but clearly interrupts his own sentence to conclude that it is actually not surprising at all that Sofie is changing the tire. A lot of changes are happening in this example from the interview with J1 and it will be clarified in figure 5, below, to show Meads description of the process.

FIGURE 5 J1 MEAD MODEL 1

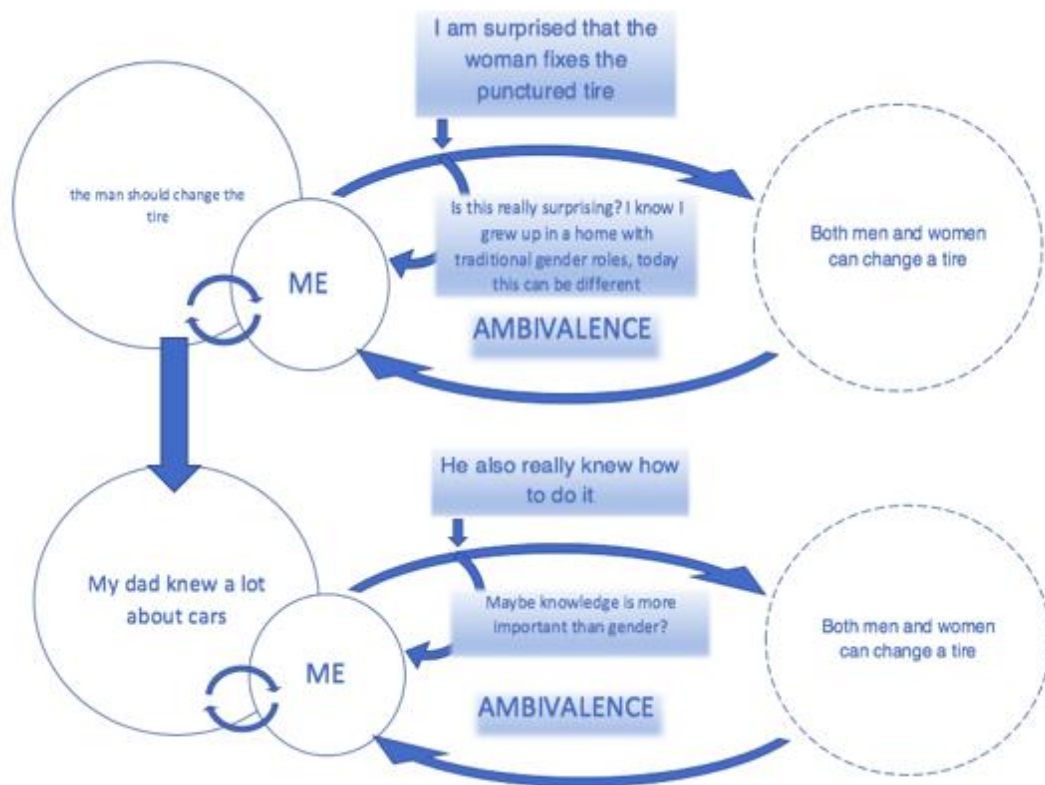What can be seen in the model above is J1's reflections as he says them out loud and tries to relieve the ambivalence that occurs between his own experience with gender roles ('Me') and the generalized other that again represents the post-#MeToo discourse. He goes from thinking that gender is important to determine who changes the tire, to emphasizing experience and knowledge. He continues (cf. figure 6):
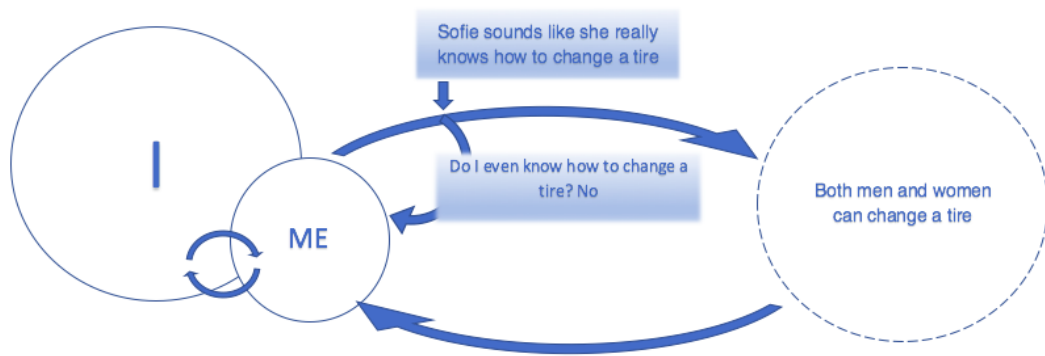
FIGURE 6 J1 MEAD MODEL 2

J1 uses this focus on experience instead of gender to create meaning in the story, Sofie changes the tire, so she has experience, she knows how to do it. He then relates it to how he would react (cf. figure 7):
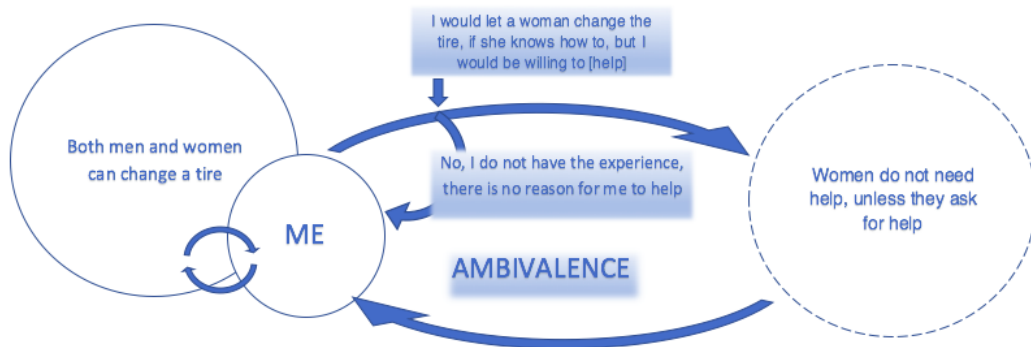
FIGURE 7 J1 MEAD MODEL 3

In this last model (figure 7) the generalized notion of both men and women can change a tire has been put in place of the I, as this is what J1 concludes after reflecting on his words. But a different ambivalence occurs as the issue of helping vs. being condescending comes up. Similar to the participants who talk about the two trajectories (cf. par. 8.2.5.), help is not seen as a positive action when it is unsolicited. The interpretation here is that J1 sees a problem with him almost insisting (implied) that a man should be involved. Therefore, he stops mid-sentence to conclude, and refers back to his surprise about the woman changing the tire in the beginning, saying that he is not surprised at all, after reflecting upon it.

8.4.3. B's Ambivalence and Mead's Theory

In the next example B directly explains her ambivalent feelings:

I: hvis du sætter dig ind i Kasper

B: mh ... er det ham der bliver kigget på?

I: det er ham der bliver kigget på ... igen, hvad, hvad tror du du ville føle ... hvis du var ham ... eller hvilke tanker ville der gå igennem hovedet på dig?

B: Der er sådan to spor, jeg tror på den ene side ville jeg synes det var grænseoverskridende, i hvert fald hvis det havde foregået over en lang, længere tid

I: mhm

B: men jeg tror også samtidig, at jeg ville ha sådan en ... internaliseret (griner) misogynistisk tilgang, hvor at "når ok" (griner)

I: (griner)

B: "kæft jeg er lækker i dag så" (griner) sådan

I: ja?

B: jeg tænker de er den, det kunne godt være to spor på en eller anden måde, på den måde

I: sådan lidt ubehageligt men også lidt et selvtillids-boost på en eller anden måde?

B: mh .. ja

(cf. Appendix p. 13-14, ll. 25-10)

When B is asked to talk about how she would feel if she was the one being looked at in a café she immediately explains that there would be two possible outcomes. One where she would feel violated and one where she would take it as a compliment to her looks. Before saying that she potentially could take it as a compliment she distances herself from this seemingly nice feeling by saying that this feeling is because of an internalized misogynistic approach and then laughs.
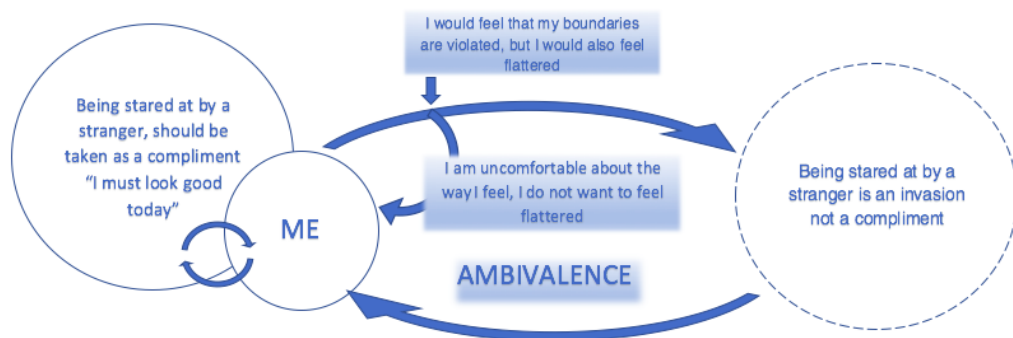
FIGURE 8 B MEAD MODEL

What is different in the interview with B from the other examples above is that she does not hear herself out loud and then changes direction in her meaning-making. She actually addresses the ambivalence herself. She is aware that she sometimes would feel flattered by looks from men, but she could just as easily feel uncomfortable. She shows us that she knows the "correct" post-#MeToo discourse by calling her flatter an internalized misogynistic approach from society in the pre-#MeToo era. B's 'I' as she describes it contains the interpretation of looks from men as being a compliment, but she might have had a dialogical moment with herself before speaking here, because she agrees with Kasper that it is uncomfortable, but needs to be honest with herself and "admit" to also seeing it as a compliment. The word choice "admit" is used here because she laughs it off showing tension around making this statement in a post-#MeToo era (cf. par. 8.2.3.). In general, throughout the whole interview, B showed reflected awareness for the post-#MeToo discourse, as an example she was one of three who called the social situation "mansplaining" as well as calling herself a feminist during the interview. In general, she follows the post-#MeToo discourse without much ambivalence occurring. In this way she stands out from the other participants.

Overall, we see a development in the participants' meaning-making, when they hear themselves talk out loud. At times, this includes stereotypes that they might not previously have been aware of that they have. In this way, prejudgements and experiences learned throughout their lives, are brought to the surface (the Me) when

they try to make sense of the stories, for example *I feel masculine when I do something practical* or *men should fix cars*, yet they discover that they feel ambivalent about this. This is only possible as they hear their learned experiences (Me) interact (I), through the action of language, in this case almost in a monologue, with the generalized other (post-#MeToo discourse). This allows them to reflect on their experiences and discuss and adjust these attitudes and reach new conclusions, for example: *Masculinity and femininity are not as important to me as they were five years ago* and *whoever has the necessary experience should change the tire.*

8.5. A Brief Summary of the Analysis

Before moving on to discussing the findings of the analysis, said findings will briefly be summarized. Firstly, only three out of eleven participants used the words mansplaining. However, all participants viewed the situations in the stories as negative. Secondly, different categories were used to look at the ambivalence. When talking about masculinity and femininity, ambivalence was mostly found when participants were perfectly able to mention situations in which they felt masculine or feminine yet did not want to think in these categories. However, the participants did not have difficulties expressing themselves both on the premise of masculinity and femininity, this was not seen as a contradiction to their gender identification. Throughout the interviews, some participants directly expressed and commented on prejudgements that either they themselves have, or that they see within the story. This seemed to lead to a sort of correcting behaviour when it was negative, such as distancing themselves from these stereotypes or laughing at the use of them. Generally, laughter often occurred in situations where the participants heard themselves say something stereotypical or something that they had not expected they would think. The use of humour and laughter indicated a heightened sensitivity to behaviour that could potentially be seen as sexual harassment or discriminatory, which seems to fit the post-#MeToo discourse. Thereby, the participants showed an awareness of what was appropriate and inappropriate to say within the post-#MeToo context. Many participants meaning-making was heavily influenced by concepts that were a focus within the #MeToo movement such as: consent, respect of boundaries, and assuming gender roles or generalize how men or women should behave. So therefore, it was visible that the participants in their 20s read and made sense of the stories within this

cultural context. The same applied to the task of completing the stories. The participants in their 20s were often divided between two trajectories depending on the mindset of the person mansplaining in the first place. Either the person mansplaining could be fluid or modern in their mindset following the post-#MeToo discourse and thereby take responsibility for their actions. Or, the person mansplaining had a more binary or normative driven mindset which would result in them explaining away the mansplaining with trying to help. This might indicate ambivalence in society in general. This analysis was not only based on responses by the younger generation but also the similarities and differences we observed between the participants in their 20s and the two participants from other generations. The women in their 40s (L) and 80s (S4) were just as aware of these situations being uncomfortable and also showed awareness of times changing in reference to gender. However, they did not avoid stereotypes and prejudgements as well as they did not show ambivalence in the same degree about this topic as the younger participants. Finally, we used the model constructed on the basis of Mead's theory to visualize the participants' ambivalence. This is done through showing their out loud thought processes and meaning-making and how hearing their own words led to new reflections and conclusions about their own beliefs and attitudes. A final note on this analysis is the fact that even though we see similarities, the process of learning a new discourse and set of values could be observed to be nuanced and fluid. This is reminiscent of the fluidity of Mead's theory on the development of self. Participants like B, M1 and M2 seemed to navigate in these topics without much difficulty, whereas participants like J1 needed some reflection time, to adjust to the post-#MeToo discourse. This shows individual differences in how the societal changes brought forth by the #MeToo movements are managed and new norms and values are internalized.

9. DISCUSSION

The findings of the analysis have been presented. In the following part of this thesis, these findings will be discussed in relation to research and theoretical framework. In addition to this potential for future research as well as practical implications will be discussed. The discussion will be divided into various topics that might overlap at points, as the theory and research are intertwined, when discussing ambivalence in the context of this project. The phenomenon should not be seen from different lenses based on which part of presented theory it is discussed in relation to, rather it should be seen as a complex phenomenon from a variety of intertwined perspectives. The division in this discussion is therefore very artificial, as reality is much more complex, and these categories should not be viewed as categories.

9.1. OUR FINDINGS AND FINDINGS IN RESEARCH

In this paragraph we will discuss differences and similarities in the research literature relevant for this thesis and the findings of our analysis. Even though there was a change of focus for the purpose of this thesis, our vignettes for the interviews were created to study the meaning-making of mansplaining scenarios. We never told our participants that this was the case, but three of the participants were able to meaningfully describe the situations as mansplaining anyway. This shows that the changes and effects of the #MeToo movement, especially with how we talk about gender topics (cf. 5.), is visible in our findings as well. Articles studying the use of mansplaining also agree that this new word is indeed helping people address the condescending and discriminating behaviour in mansplaining. Bridges (2017) concluded that mostly women use the word mansplaining with this intention, but with humour, mainly sarcasm. We found a lot of use of humour and laughter as well. Our participants used humour to relieve tension when they heard themselves express pre-#MeToo discourse or were uncomfortable with the topics presented in the vignettes (cf. par. 8.2.3.). This agreed with the research on this subject, however, research also described how men primarily evaluated the term mansplaining as hostile and as a weapon to attack the male gender. We did not in our sample find anything to point in this direction, but we did not intend to explore how the participants feel about the word mansplaining. The participants in this study

were asked to evaluate and determine an outcome of a situation, which is very different from commenting on an already existing accusation of mansplaining online. That being said, we had no male participant who saw the interaction as positive, which might indicate that they would not be the ones to be insecure about a post-#MeToo discourse on behalf of their own gender. Interesting to note here, is M1 who actually creates this defensive male in her completion of the first story (cf. par. 8.2.4.). This indicates that she knows this type of person. Maybe this goes to show that there is a difference between observing mansplaining and being accused of mansplaining. Humour however is a way of distancing oneself from characteristics connected to mansplaining or not following the post-#MeToo discourse. These characteristics are arrogance and ignorance, which are not positive properties and it makes sense for our male participants to distance themselves from these. Research also mention how it can be misused, meaning used when mansplaining per definition is not actually what is happening in a situation (cf. par. 5.2.). Because of the cultural changes in society, the word mansplaining can be used to silence someone and actually shuts the opponent down after being accused of mansplaining. This is probably effective if we know that mansplaining is associated with arrogance and ignorance and people fear being shunned for not following the post-#MeToo discourse. In the interviews, gathered for this project, we experienced many different answers to how someone should react when a mansplaining situation happens and from this it could be argued that mansplaining is dependent on the context and the person experiencing it. Are there other people watching the interaction? What is the relation between the two people talking? What is their mindset on sexism? Their thoughts on the values that have been addressed in the #MeToo movement? Those were the important questions for our participants to complete the stories and it often ended with two different possibilities depending on the mindset of the person mansplaining more than the person being mansplained to (cf. par. 8.2.5.). It must be noted that no matter what gender the mansplaining person was, it was interpreted as inappropriate. However, other elements in the stories seemed to set off the ambivalence. We observed only three people using the word mansplaining. Most participants described the situation in a way which we interpreted to be that they recognize the behaviour as inappropriate. There were however differences in how triggering the stories were and how much they provoked the participants to give a more aggressive response depending on the gender-flipping of the stories and the setting. The first story was set to be in a masculine domain, the

second in a feminine and the third a classic triggering story of discrimination. The gender-flipped stories seemed to trigger when the setting did not match. When it was a masculine setting, the gender-flipped story seemed most noticeable to the participants because a woman was changing the tire (cf. par. 8.2.2.). The second story was not as noticeable when gender-flipped. So, this gender-flipped design was more triggering for ambivalence than the actual mansplaining. The third story was emotionally triggering but not as much for ambivalence within the younger group of participants, as opinions on this story were clear. Again, the two older participants were the exception to this (cf. par. 8.2.5.). They described gender normative behaviour without ambivalence. The point to be made here, is that it seems that the younger participants know an inappropriate situation when they are exposed to it, especially when it matches many of the stories depicting sexism told by women in reference to #MeToo. This was the purpose of our third story. The research articles for this thesis analyse live TV programs where accusations of mansplaining occur or uses social media interactions and comments to study the use of mansplaining (cf. par. 5.1.; 5.2.). No matter the media, these research articles used real life mansplaining situations that are in contrast to our made-up stories of mansplaining. However, we were trying to create a realistic everyday situation in our stories inspired by social media content. The stories gave us the possibility to write situations relatable to everyday life. Stories about everyday situations, in contrast to live tv clips that might be much less relatable to everyday life, have the advantage of not confronting people in person and being familiar to the participants at the same time. With data used from social media comments there is a contrast to everyday interactions, because the mansplaining, as well as the accusations hereof, are not face to face. But virtual life as a prominent part of life today can be argued to be a part of everyday life. It could be argued that our participants would have reacted differently if they themselves were in these situations, but we get to see the attitudes they tend to have around topics of gender and discrimination and also the ambivalence it creates when they hear themselves not responding in alignment with the post-#MeToo discourse. It could be argued that the ambivalence we see in this study might be what is causing the fear among men. The ambivalence about how to respond correctly without using gender prejudgements that might be seen and addressed as sexist discrimination, might create the fear of doing it the wrong way and getting punished for it. Some men report they fear false allegations that might have huge consequences (cf. par. 5.3.). When we also remember that a study

found that a word like mansplaining can be misused to falsely accuse someone, it is no wonder we see our participants correcting their response when ambivalence occurs. Their use of humour as tension relief when prejudgements and stereotypes are mentioned and even call out their own prejudgements and the stereotypes perceived in the stories could be a sign of this. However, they could also be using humour to emphasize their position in accordance with a post-#MeToo discourse. We found in the research literature that the use of the word mansplaining is diverse; humour (sarcasm), addressing repression, defence so as to manage other people's response. Humour and using the word for addressing condescending speech was used by the three participants who actually used the word themselves. What is interesting is that these different ways of using and addressing mansplaining is also noticeable with our other participants, even though they do not use the word mansplaining. This might again further emphasize that they perceive the problematic behaviour without actually using the given name for the phenomenon. Bridges (2017) elaborates on the monitoring of one's own language and role in a new discourse. One conclusion that Bridges (2017) makes is that no matter how anyone uses a word like mansplaining, it shows that the users are aware of not only a change in discourse but a cultural change in general in society around gender norms. The fact that we can observe this awareness corresponds with the research. However, awareness does not necessarily mean compliance. Research shows that the political spectrum might also indicate how much you agree with or react to the post-#MeToo discourse (cf. par. 5.3.). If people are more conservative, they might agree more with more radical opinions and a more binary system for gender. We do not have a participant in our sample that shows disdain towards the post-#MeToo discourse, we only have the two older participants who show a lack of knowledge or reflection about the values and principles that gave birth to the post-#MeToo discourse. In this thesis we are addressing the age gap in our sample and implying that growing up during the major cultural change of the #MeToo movement has had a different effect on the younger participants than on those who did not. One-third of students from a university in Frankfurt reported that they would hesitate to share their true political opinion. In addition to this, men in particular felt dismissed and were more likely to be personally criticized for their opinions (cf. par. 5.3.). This again agrees with the study on men in the medical field and their fear of being falsely accused as well as the fact that the word mansplaining is created to make accusations of sexist behaviour but can just as easily be misused. Even though we do not detect

much difference in the response on gender-flipped stories within the group of younger participants, we had an example form participant R who addressed prejudgements of women (changing a tire) a lot more than he addressed the prejudgements of men (changing a diaper). One explanation might be that the #MeToo movement primarily addressed the discrimination towards women and particularly the need to pay more attention to systemic sexism and discrimination on the basis of stereotypical gender norms (cf. par. 1.; 5.1.). So, when R had to explain these two different situations following a post-#MeToo discourse the first story allowed for him to support the woman. R addressed the stereotypical behaviour performed by a man in the story but also the prejudgement implied in that behaviour that discriminates against the woman in the story. The prejudgement being that women do not have the basic knowledge of how a car tire punctures and how to change it afterwards. R shows his support by following a post-#MeToo discourse. When the tables are turned however, it can be a difficult position for a man to address a woman's bad behaviour even though it per definition is the exact same action in the two stories. R shows that he sees the same stereotypical behaviour but chooses to find other explanations because in a post-#MeToo era men might fear the reaction if they support a man over a woman (cf. par. 5.2.; 5.3.). The studies reviewed for this thesis say that political standpoint and thereby values have an influence, because more conservative people are fearing for their right to speak their mind. Another suggestion is fearing false allegations as well as a fear of losing power because of the assumption that women only gain power by men losing power. So, this could explain the fear of supporting the man over the woman in the story. Lastly, we see a fear of being associated with characteristics such as arrogance and ignorance. Soklaridis et al. (2020) explain how sudden changes in society result in a natural fear of how these changes will influence our life. We do not see a resistance to the post-#MeToo discourse within our sample, but we see two conflicting meaning-making processes. The participants in their 20s seem to choose the post-#MeToo discourse every time. They are however very careful about how they phrase themselves, they take pauses to consider their words, they express out loud that they think it is difficult, as well as all of the corrections in reaction to the ambivalence (cf. par. 8.). This can be seen as behaviour similar to being fearful. The careful approach in responding to the stories, could therefore be a sort of symptom to the underlying tension and fear. In this way there are many parallels between presented research and the responses and ambivalence observed with the participants in this thesis.

9.2. Our findings, #MeToo, feminism and social media

In this paragraph the findings of the analysis will be discussed in reference to theory on intersectionality, Queer Theory and feminism on social media, such as the #MeToo movement.

As presented in the theoretical framework, much of current feminism concerns itself with being aware of privilege and disadvantages, and understanding how different social identities such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class interact; intersectionality (cf. par. 5.4.). This project was mainly concerned with gender, due to the fact that the vignette stories involved gender based discriminatory actions in everyday life; mansplaining (cf. par. 1.). For this reason, gender was the main social identity that was important to the participants' understanding. What was clear from the analysis, was that the participants in their 20s were very aware that they should not assume that everyone with the same gender experiences the world similarly (cf. par. 8.2.1.). For example, J2 talks about how you should not generalize how a man should think and feel, and R becomes uncomfortable and laughs when he realizes he assumed that gender determined who would be good at changing a tire (cf. par. 8.2.4.). Moreover, the participants generally were very aware of boundaries, and the importance of respecting them. When talking about gender, masculinity and femininity, all participants seemed to be aware that they could be both masculine and feminine, as respectively a man and a woman. Yet two participants, M1 and M2 did not want to use the terms feminine and masculine at all, as they did not like these categorisations (cf. par. 8.2.1.). This is very much in line with the ideas of Queer Theory where categorisations can be seen as a problem in and of itself, as putting people in categories would always lead to discrimination of someone (cf. par. 5.4.). At the same time, these two participants were the clearest examples of ambivalence surrounding gender identities, as they both explained situations where they felt masculine and feminine while still opposing the use of those categories (cf. par. 8.2.1.). Thereby, following the discourse of deconstruction of categories can be argued to potentially lead to more ambivalence, as both the learned prejudgements about gender and femininity and masculinity, as well as the feminist discourse exist and need to be reconciled. It is not the aim of this discussion to frame one of these positions as positive

or negative, as both positions signify advantages as well as challenges. The aim is to show the differences.

If the #MeToo movement is seen as a rather sudden change in discourse, based on a broader wave of feminism (cf. par. 5.1.), it makes sense to assume that this would also lead to a necessity of a sudden change of meaning-making and self-understanding. Hitherto normalized behaviour has changed to be talked about as problematic. For example, mansplaining might be seen as trying to help in pre-#MeToo discourse. S4 understands the tire changing story in a way that was difficult even for us to understand, because she interpreted the mansplaining man to be embarrassed for not having fixed his tires, hence not living up to the standard norms of a man. Yet, in view of the increasing focus on unsolicited help and power dynamics in everyday life post-#MeToo, it becomes problematic, almost hurtful, as for example M2's description of the first story. M2 describes the story within the label of mansplaining. It can be argued that the change must be less sudden for younger generations, as they have not lived as long with pre-#MeToo discourse. These participants were between 8 and 12 when the #MeToo movement started in 2007 and might not have had as well-established categorisations as someone in S4's generation, who has lived most of their lifetime understanding social interactions from a pre-#MeToo point of view. Furthermore, this movement has largely taken place on social media, and has moved from virtual life to everyday life (cf. par. 5.1.). In the interviews we did not directly ask our participants if they spend much time on social media. However, it seems safe to assume that most of the participants in their 20s spend a lot of time on social media. We know all participants are on social media, as they responded to our posting on social media, and agreed to participate in the interview via social media (cf. par. 2.4.). So, while it is not sure, that the participants are familiar with feminist humour and feminist activism on social media it is safe to assume that they have come across discussion that were in one way or another based on topics brought up through the #MeToo movement. Especially since the #MeToo movement was seen as a global movement with hitherto unseen effects (cf. par. 5.1.). We see the participants being very aware of how they talk about gender, sexuality, and stereotypes hereabout, and potentially harassing behaviour, making it reasonable to assume that they are in one way or another familiar with the topics brought forward by the #MeToo movement. This could also be argued to influence what is humorous to these participants, as it has formed what is

appropriate and inappropriate and thereby what makes people laugh. Overall, the participants in their 20s therefore seems to follow a feminist, post-#MeToo discourse, that did not show in the same way in L and S4's interviews.

9.3. OUR FINDINGS AND ALLPORT'S THEORY

According to Allport's theory, discrimination can only exist when it is not normalised and deviates from social and cultural norms. It is further said, that prejudgements are useful, as long as they are based on evidence of some kind and do not lead to discrimination (cf. par. 6.1.) Most participants were uncomfortable when they discovered themselves using prejudgements, understanding and making meaning of the stories from stereotypes. Even though these characters are fictional, it seems that they are worried that they might offend the characters and us as researchers, which both embody the generalized other. They offend by generalizing based on their gender, hence stereotyping and inadvertently discriminating. This might be a result of the #MeToo discourse, as it has become highly consequential for the individual to be discriminatory. Discrimination against minorities has been a large focus point since the start of #MeToo in 2007, with movements such as #BlackLivesMatter, #pride and #everydaysexism. These have created awareness about how minorities are affected by discrimination, for example by sharing personal accounts of experiences of sexism, racism and homophobia. The younger participants will probably have encountered this in one way or another, as the #MeToo movement moved into popular culture, through tv debates etc (cf. 5.1.). We know the participants are aware of this through their use of the words mansplaining (M1 and M2) or feminist slogans popularised (S2 "queen of my own body") and we see it in a general awareness of the fact that the stories are seen as negative, no matter who is the mansplaining part (cf. par. 8.1.; 8.2.4.). The participants seem almost afraid to categorise even when no discrimination occurs from their statements, they are talking about fictional characters in a made-up situation (cf. par. 8.2.2.). It seems to be the consensus that generalisation is a form of discrimination as it negates and neglects the individual experience. This can for example be seen when J2 mentions that generalizing how someone should act based on gender is a wrong and an outdated rhetorical device (cf. par. 8.2.4.). Yet, the categorisation of everyday life is necessary to navigate the flood of information presented to the individual. Therefore, these prejudgements are probably useful in one way or another, as they have been

learned for a reason. As laid out in the theoretical framework, once a prejudgement is formed, individuals tend to ignore evidence that disproves these attitudes, and treat them as outliers. This would make it rather difficult to change prejudgements. Therefore, to change said prejudgements it is often necessary to change the beliefs and attitudes of a whole group (cf. par. 6.1.). Consequently, it stands to assume that a continuous effort to avoid stereotypes and prejudgements, must prerequisite a significant amount of mental resources for the individual. This would necessitate a broader cultural change when the groups in question are as broad as men and women, as the binary understanding is sought to be deconstructed. The broader cultural change can be seen to have happened through the #MeToo movement. For this reason, we observe how this affects the individual. It can be seen throughout the interviews that the participants have to be careful about how they word their understanding of the stories in order to avoid stereotyping. So, it would make sense for this to be rather difficult, as categorisations need to be avoided, and since the participants need to be aware of their prejudgements to avoid them. This also seems to be highly relevant to where the ambivalence occurs, as it is often in situations where stereotypes and post-#MeToo discourse meet. Yet, prejudgements are not always conscious, and as laid out in the theoretical framework prejudgements and categorizations are an important part of human cognition. We see clearly that the participants still categorize and have prejudgements. For example, the participants divide the mansplainer in the story into either being a good person who apologizes for mansplaining or being a person who would become defensive and justify their behaviour in saying that it was the intent to help (cf. par. 8.2.5.). This is just as much a categorisation as assuming a woman would be the one who changes a diaper, as L does (cf. par. 8.3.). S2 has prejudgements about feminists in saying that as a feminist the character being mansplained to in the third story is "queen of her own body". Thus, the character would not be able to ignore the generalization about women that the mansplaining character in the story utters (using post-#MeToo discourse). In this way the categorisations and prejudgements that the participants in their 20s so carefully try to avoid, are still present, they are just different from the prejudgements of L or S4. M1 mentions this at the end of her interview, where she says that it was interesting to look at mansplaining the other way around, where the woman is doing the explaining. She had not thought about this and found it very interesting to think about this during the interview (cf. Appendix, p. 85, ll. 11-19). So, the gender-flipped design of the interview here seemed to lead M1 to challenge her

prejudgements surrounding mansplaining. Allport's theory further describes that it is possible to be part of one group while wanting to be part and sharing the attitudes of another. For example, if you are a woman you can identify with the attitudes that you believe men as a group to have, but you do not become a man through sharing those attitudes. Similarly, it seems possible that a person could share the attitudes of their traditional family with stereotypical gender roles as they grew up. Yet, at the same time identify with feminist ideals presented through the #MeToo movement in the media. Thus, one would find it difficult to change the prejudgements learned throughout life. This would presumably lead to the kind of ambivalence we see for example as J1 talks about the tire changing stories, his traditional upbringing and trying to see it from a new perspective (cf. par. 8.4.2.). Allport describes how these prejudgements make a lot of sense in static groups and categories (cf. par. 6.1.), so how can the individual be expected to learn shared attitudes, when the group, for example intersectional feminists, is not static? This would presumably make it very difficult to identify the group. At the same time, social media makes it very easy to find people with similar beliefs and attitudes, and to feel a part of said groups. This group dynamic could presumably be part of the explanation for the differences in how aware the participants are of the new discourse, as well as how the ambivalence occurs. It could be argued that for a cultural change, women as a group need to stand together against discriminatory behaviour, hence the #MeToo movement. Therefore, finding groups with similar feminist interests on social media might be more likely for these female participants. This would increase their awareness of these feminist issues.

We will now briefly summarize the discussion so far, to be able to emphasize how the parts of the discussion are linked together as well as later in this discussion, how they are connected to Bauman's thoughts on liquidity. It has been discussed how the research literature corresponds with our findings in our analysis of the interviews. We see an ambivalence created when the participants intuitively answer to the stories with statements containing gender norms or prejudgements. This has consequences in terms of a pressure to follow a post-#MeToo discourse as well as fearing accusations of not doing so. This ambivalence is not visible with the older participants even though they show awareness of these changes in society. Some of our male participant's responses might indicate that men have to be particularly considerate with their words, while two female participants in particular show a more provoked speech when addressing

mansplaining as well as using the word themselves. The third out of three participants who used the word mansplaining is a man who does show provocation and cringes as he responds to the stories as well. He is however more fluid in his distinction between masculine and feminine. This also corresponds with the research that indicates that men have to be more careful as well as being the main targets of accusations. Even wrongfully so. Moreover, it has been discussed how feminist concepts like intersectionality and deconstruction of categories such as gender from Queer Theory can be found in the participants' understanding of gender, masculinity and femininity, as well as their responses to the stories in general. It has also been discussed how social media and the change in societal discourse about topics such as, gender, sexuality, consent and harassment, brought forward through the #MeToo movement likely has had an influence on most participants' meaning-making of the stories. Furthermore, it has been discussed how Allport's theory on prejudgements can help understand the need for categorisations and the difficulties that arise from trying to avoid stereotyping, as prejudgements help sort information in everyday life. Finally, how the prejudgements seem to have shifted in focus for the participants in their 20s and how it seems very important to them to make sure they avoid discrimination through generalisation.

9.4 NEW MEANING-MAKING AND CULTURE

In this part of the discussion we will discuss the reciprocal relationship between meaning-making and cultural change. We know that #MeToo has been a global movement and that it is seen as a sudden change in discourse (cf. par. 5.1.;5.4.). This sudden and powerful change has arisen especially because of social media and the virtual life that connects people around the globe. It could be argued that because of this widespread effect the changes are cultural as much as societal. The #MeToo movement has, unlike the feminist waves before, had a bigger focus on everyday life, and hidden systemic values and principles represented through people's actions. Earlier feminist movements led to significant societal changes, like bringing women into labour, politics and making the personal life political. While the changes after the #MeToo movement were subtler than for example the right to vote, they were significant nonetheless. The changes were primarily focused on sexual assault, but this called into question the existing power structures and systemic inequality. This then

led to discussions on where harassment begins and why it occurs. And through this it became a talk about values, principles, gender norms, and shared uncomfortable experiences that women did not have a name for. This is where talk-able phenomena like mansplaining were introduced, out of a need to voice uncomfortable and discriminating everyday situations. These seemingly minor everyday situations represent a repressive view on women in general. Then the movement became even wider to include men, ethnic minorities and LGBTQIA+ individuals, who all experienced similar discrimination at the hands of power dynamics in society. This increased attention to intersectionality. Because of the development and inclusivity of the #MeToo movement it could be argued that there is now a focus on values and principles around humanity more so than just gender. It has an influence on everyday life, as traditions and norms are called into question. This is arguably cultural change.

When looking at the participants' responses using Mead's theory, we can see that there is a change in meaning-making and what the generalized other represents. The generalized other is, in our interviews, without us mentioning it, the post-#MeToo discourse. So why is that? We had not mentioned that the focus of the project would be on gender, yet most of the participants had this focus throughout the responses. Of course, our stories contained both genders, and the interactions were always between at least one man and one woman. Furthermore, we started the interview by asking about their identification within the spectrum of femininity and masculinity. Moreover, some of the participants might have been aware of our interest in gender studies. This all could direct them to have a focus on gender. However, the fact that we told them that it was about studying their meaning-making on social interactions leads us to assume that the focus on gender came from the immense focus in society in general at this point in time. Whenever the participants were asked the open question "Is there anything noticeable to you?" they all turned to talk about gender in one way or another. For example, B says the following:

I: er der noget her i historien du sådan særligt bider mærke i? Eller sådan bare lige falder dig i øjnene imens du læser den?

B: jeg tror det irriterede mig lidt at ham Anders der han var sådan der "jeg kan godt hjælpe dig"

I: mh

B: når hun egentlig siger "det kan jeg sagtens lige finde ud af"

I: ja?

B: æh det er selvfølgelig også pænt gjort æh men jeg synes at det er interessant at det er en mand, der ligesom lige griber ind og siger "den skal jeg nok lige hjælpe med"

(cf. Appendix p. 12, ll. 6-14)

Even though she says that it annoys her that the man helps out with changing the tire, which is the opposite of what traditional gender norms would dictate, she still puts an emphasis on gender. This makes us postulate that gender in general is a big part of everyday life of these participants, especially because it is every single participant. Even S4 who does not show much ambivalence at least comments at one point that she is aware that her paying special notice to a man changing a diaper is outdated (cf. par. 8.3.). However, it could also be argued that the stories were especially written to trigger gender stereotypes through the choice of situations (changing a tire or a diaper) and through the gender-flipped design, and therefore the participants had this focus on gender roles. If so, we succeeded with that. Here it is worth mentioning that the unique method for the 9th semester project was constructed with a different focus. Furthermore, the vignettes were based on videos posted on social media platforms such as TikTok, Facebook or Instagram. This means that the stories were inspired by extensive threads online of viral videos under the hashtag of mansplaining. This shows again that the topic itself is already widely discussed, on social media, as well as part of popular culture. With the popularity and extent of these gender issues it stands to reason that it would become a part of what the participants experience to be the generalized other (cf. 8.4.; 6.3.). This makes it possible for us to observe the interaction between the self and their perceived generalized other and the process of meaning-making as well as changing this meaning when they hear themselves speak out loud.

9.5. BAUMAN, FEMINISM AND STEREOTYPES

Bauman replaces post modernity with liquid modernity with the argument that modernity has not stopped, instead it has changed from solid to liquid. With the focus in this thesis in mind, solid would be interpreted to be categorization, rules and roles for the binary gender understanding and liquid would be a deconstruction of these elements to something more fluid, i.e. understanding gender as a spectrum that does

not determine actions, looks, and so forth. Feminism today especially when condensed to the #MeToo movement represents the liquidity that Bauman describes. The values and principles behind Queer Theory and the #MeToo movement have been to deconstruct existing power structures, especially gendered power structures and oppression of minorities in general. Judith Butler describes how the categories of man and woman in themselves are a tool of oppression, as the categories will always exclude someone (cf. par. 5.1.). This means that what was perceived as normative gender roles will never fit every single individual in the respective category of man and woman, and lead to a feeling of lack of belonging. This is what Queer Theory seeks to oppose. Similarly, the #MeToo movement is concerned with giving individual agency. This lack of liberty for the outcasts in society in a solid society results in the fight for a more liquid society. The personal accounts of sexual harassment bring together these individuals who have experienced harassment due to systemic structures and thereby working together in challenging it, by raising awareness of the negative effects of traditional gender power structures (cf. par. 5.1). This puts emphasis on liquidity. Said liquidity erases the categories and thereby changes norms to stereotypes which could potentially lead to discrimination (cf. par. 6.1.) because the post-#MeToo discourse is that we cannot assume anything based on gender or other categories as such. Intersectionality has a similar focus as it is here also oppression and power dynamics that are sought to be challenged, through awareness about privilege and disadvantages and how this interacts within societal structures. Bauman describes how this liquidity means that people have to learn how to live with uncertainty and the ideal is flexibility. This makes a lot of sense when research shows that mansplaining is associated with arrogance and ignorance, we argue that these terms are the direct opposite of flexibility and aligns with the former ideal of perfection. It is not certain that a category like gender says anything for sure about an individual. This might increase anxiety in society because every individual is responsible for living their true self without guidelines as well as being flexible with respect and acceptance of others choices. In our findings for this thesis we observed the ambivalence that resembled the pressure to follow the post-#MeToo discourse. We found that the participants were correcting their speech, making light of statements with humour and addressing stereotypes and prejudgements either in the stories or made by themselves. Somehow this liberty and lack of solid categories for everyone seems to come at the expense of self-monitoring and the fear of others monitoring what is said. This is based on the

fear of unintentionally, generalising own prejudgements onto others based on solid categories such as gender and thereby unintentionally discriminating. However, as shown in the analysis, participants are able to at least temporarily resolve this ambivalence when talking aloud and hearing themselves and their own prejudgements, through their self-interacting with the generalized other (cf. par. 8.4.). If this is compared with our assertion on the generational gap, it might just mean that it is a question of time before the post-#MeToo discourse is internalized as part of the self.

9.6. CATEGORIES, LIQUIDITY AND CONSEQUENCES

Using Allport's theory one might argue that humans need categorisation and even cognitively it is per default something we do. Presumably categorisation can therefore not be avoided. However, as most of our participants do, it is possible to be aware of prejudgements, and to challenge them. This would, as mentioned in the paragraph above, come at a price of uncertainty and self-monitoring, as it uses a significant amount of resources to constantly remain critical of one's own categorisations. This is where Allport's theory and Bauman's thoughts supplement each other. According to Bauman, the increasing liquidity of society can lead to increased anxiety, due to a lack of certainty and foresight as well as the individuality and the responsibility that comes with that. It is a virtue to be able to use the liberty of society today to be your true self and live out your dreams. However, the cost of this is you also taking care of yourself and your failures. You have every choice and are not guided by norms and rules for how to live out for example your gender. This means that if you make the wrong choice it is solely your own fault and you have to live with that. This creates the said uncertainty and thereby anxiety. The changes that Bauman describes on a societal and cultural level, are what can be seen in the participants on an individual level, as they are caught between pre- and post-#MeToo discourse and have to solve the resulting ambivalence. Mead's theory helps to make this ambivalence understandable and the model can help visualize which specific discourses, thoughts and attitudes create the ambivalence. As Allport's theory describes, to change the attitudes of a group, here society as a whole, society needs to change values. This can be argued to be what has happened in light of the #MeToo movement. This has however not obliterated categories, but instead new categories have appeared. There are still categories and prejudgements in the participants as shown earlier in this discussion (cf. par. 9.3.).

Some of these categories might be more liquid, but they are still categorisations. A very obvious example is the nomenclature in the queer community, the name here fore has gone from being the lesbian and gay community, over the LGBT, to LGBTQ, to LGBTQ+ to now LGTQIA+. showing how more and more categories appear, with the definition of said categories, being liquid and often up to how the individual self-identifies. This shows how the individual's self-identification is in relation to how something is labelled in society in general. It shows the clash between wanting liberation from categorization, but the nature of human psychology not being compliant with that. In general, there is a paradox in the society becoming more liquid and freer, but there is an increasing surveillance around following a new norm for appropriate behaviour, especially in relation to the complexity and social necessity of technology. This is arguably a form of ambivalence on a societal and cultural level.

10. IMPLICATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

For further research it would be interesting to have the same vignette-based interviews but with participants growing up "after" the #MeToo movement instead of in the midst of it. It would be interesting to see if later generations show a more internalized post-#MeToo discourse and shows less if maybe even no ambivalence in an interview using this method. This could contribute to examine if this ambivalence is a self-solving problem as it only affects generations caught between pre and post-#MeToo.

Another focus for research on the basis of this knowledge would be to look at the developing culture of diagnosis in society that reflects a growing fluidity and inclusivity. One example is the system of diagnosis with the expansion of and new approach to personality disorders in the ICD-11. Also, there has been a discussion for some time about the growing rate of people getting diagnosed with anxiety, stress and depression, leaving out the growing usage of diagnosis in general. Anxiety, stress and depression is especially interesting when linked to Bauman's thinking on the effects of a liquid society discussed in this thesis. Does the need to navigate between different sets of values and the resulting ambivalence form part of this significant increase in diagnosis?

We had a focus on gender, but as mentioned in the theoretical framework under intersectionality, the topic could just as well have been about other minorities, for example black people referring to the black lives matter movement and how that has changed the discourse in much the same way as #MeToo and how the two interact.

As it has been made clear throughout the project, it has not been the aim of this project to say that one way of thinking about gender issues is right or wrong. Rather, the aim was to show the difference in meaning-making surrounding them, without evaluation hereof. However, for future research it might be interesting to examine morality in relation to these issues. And showing how public, societal and cultural morals have changed and which discourses about gender and harassment are deemed acceptable and unacceptable. As well as how ambivalence plays a role with traditions surrounding gender roles. For example, a Danish tradition is to throw cinnamon on men and women when they turn 25 years old if they are still unmarried and pepper when they turn 30 years old if still unwed. This is often criticised from a feminist point of view as forcing

traditional family values on individuals, yet it is a tradition that many participate in happily as it is seen as fun a part of growing older. How do traditions as these, stand in relation to ambivalence between traditional values and inclusivity. And does newer post-#MeToo discourse lead to changes in these traditions?

11. Practical Applications

In the final part of this thesis the practical implications will be discussed. While it has never been the aim of this thesis to generalize to other contexts from our participant's responses, it is possible to use the perspective on ambivalence towards post-#MeToo discourse derived from the interviews, to more practical situations. The main implication is understanding. Understanding the ambivalence that people can experience based on this sudden change in society about something as fundamental to self-understanding as gender, sexuality, agency and social identities in general. As we have shown in the analysis, when given the possibility to hear themselves talk about these topics, participants were often able to relieve their ambivalence through creating new meaning. This was possible through the explorative nature of the interviews. The model presented in the theoretical framework could potentially be of help on a practical level to gain an overview over a client's account of ambivalence. By outlying the opposing thoughts and thereby explore the ambivalence in cooperation with the client to help console this ambivalence. It is important for us as psychologists to understand how the liquidity of society can contribute to stress and anxiety in individuals. Not only that but also understanding a new way of identifying on a spectrum more than binary gender categories. In addition to this, it can help to be aware of one's own prejudgements when it comes to gender, gender norms and gender roles and realize that the clients might not share these categories. Moreover, to clients use of humour when talking about these issues can help identify attitudes and norms. Generally, the focus on ambivalence can be used in a variety of contexts, from clinical, over daily life, to organisational and consultative psychology. Finally, the interview method for this thesis as well as the analysis showed the importance of verbalizing one's thought processes and meaning-making to be able to reflect on one's attitudes and believes when ambivalence is present. As mentioned in delimitation ambivalence is significant in psychological problems. Therefore, these interviews can be translated to therapy where the clients in conversation with the therapist can explore and solve their ambivalence and the resulting problems, and that this ambivalence did not show itself in the same degree, if at all, in the older participants.

12. CONCLUSION

Finally, to sum up the extensive analysis and discussion in this thesis, the findings will be presented in five points:

1. We see ambivalence come forth in different ways, such as masculinity and femininity, where resistance to binary thinking was seen. Secondly, ambivalence towards own or observed prejudgements, which led to correcting behaviour, such as humour, when a post-#MeToo discourse was not followed. Humour or laughter was generally used as tension relief when something that was considered inappropriate, in light of the #MeToo era, was said. The younger participants' meaning-making had a focus on topics such as consent, agency, boundaries, potentially harassing behaviour, and liquidity of gender in general, as well as, avoiding generalizations based on gender roles. Consistent with the younger participants was that they tried to follow and changed their meaning-making to fit the post-#MeToo discourse. Generally, participants described two trajectories, solid or liquid mindset, depending on the mansplaining character, showing a general ambivalence in society. Generally, the younger participants' responses showed a lot of similarities, even though there were small individual differences.

2. The two older participants, one in her 40s and one in her 80s, did not show as much ambivalence and did not try to correct prejudgements or stereotypes along the way to fit a post-#MeToo discourse. Actually, S4, 83 years old, was sometimes difficult to understand in her meaning-making of the stories and had a visibly different interpretation of the social interactions compared to the rest of the participants.

3. Using the model and Mead's theory, it was illustrated how the participants slowly tried to solve their ambivalent feelings while hearing themselves talk. This has practical implications. Through the model their meaning-making processes have been shown, as well as when exactly the ambivalence occurs.

4. Bauman's theoretical perspectives explaining the development of society to something more liquid that matches the development of feminism today with the ideal of being more openminded, free from definitions and all equal no matter the gender, ethnicity, sexuality and so forth.

5. Allport's theory is a great addition to explain why the liberty of individualisation is filled with ambivalence, uncertainty and fear. It is by Allport's theory a necessity

for human psychology to create categories, grouping and prejudgement, so as not to live in chronic anxiety and stress.

All in all, we can see how language, is an important element in reacting to and making personal meaning of cultural changes. Through speech, the individual can observe itself in relation to these changes and adjust itself accordingly. The #MeToo movement is an example of sudden and widespread cultural changes, with feminism today supporting a more liquid society, especially through communication on social media. However, this can also have negative effects. A liquid society with the aim of freedom and attempting to avoid discrimination through categorisation paradoxically creates more ambivalence and uncertainty surrounding personal accountability.

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