Rethinking Labor Histories and Production Cultures in #MeToo and #TimesUp Hollywood

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The #MeToo and #TimesUp movements have shed light on voices not heard and challenged the foundation on which previously unquestioned patriarchal discourses have relied. This is an effort to which film and media studies scholars can contribute in salient ways. For instance, recent scholarship on female, LGBTQ and non-Caucasian film and television writers, directors, producers, and below-the-line personnel has made significant inroads in illustrating the degree to which industry and auteur studies historically have focused almost exclusively on straight white males. One cannot underestimate the importance of this work and we should strive to make it so common that it becomes unremarkable. However, as feminist academics we also need to ask ourselves if we have overlooked other means through which we can highlight the inequities in the media industries. There are other non-traditional steps we can take to change commonly held beliefs and assumptions.

First, we can engage in different types of writing. Academic institutions require us to publish peer-reviewed work in order to achieve tenure and promotion, which makes it challenging to carve out time to publish in other venues. However, academic scholarship only reaches a small, self-selecting audience and therefore has minimal impact outside the Ivory Tower. Where we as scholars and teachers can help intervene in the cultural conversation about Hollywood's problematic institutional structures is to engage in visible public scholarship that not only discusses issues within the industry but also promotes the work of marginalized practitioners. Producing podcasts or publishing op-eds or think-pieces in *Medium*, *The Huffington Post* or *The New York Times* can help us communicate to a non-academic audience.

Second, we can teach our students to challenge common narratives about the media industries. There are many ways to do this in the classroom and through course assignments. One possible route is to contribute to the National Women's Studies Association Wikipedia initiative, which revises the Wikipedia entries of important women in history. I recently worked with Wikipedia Education (as a part of the NWSA program) on a semester-long project in my Women Filmmakers class that required students to add to and/or revise the Wikipedia entries of global women filmmakers. I chose this project because as much as we may hate to admit it, Wikipedia is one of the first places that people go to get a snapshot of information about public figures and topics. When you look at most women filmmakers' entries, the information is scant at best.

Watching students go through this process was illuminating. Most knew that women filmmakers received far less attention than their male counterparts but didn't realize the extent to which this was true until they started comparing and contrasting the entries of a director like Nora Ephron (whose entry was heavily focused on her connection to the

Watergate scandal through her ex-husband, with little information about her films) to that of a filmmaker like Christopher Nolan (who has an extensive entry with detailed information about his films). Students went through a step-by-step process of gathering well-sourced information about their chosen filmmakers and the context in which they work(ed). Many of them found themselves having to address the recurring issue of women filmmakers' entries being far more likely to emphasize their personal lives than their male counterparts.

This was an effective pedagogical tool because it not only taught students about the ways in which institutional structures operate to suppress women's voices but how they can try in small ways to help counteract this tendency. What also became clear from this process was the scarcity of sources on women filmmakers for my students to cite in their Wikipedia entries. This is a sort of chicken and egg dilemma that reflects back on my first observations about the importance of scholarly work in the overall picture. The more peer-reviewed work we do on these practitioners, the more reliable mainstream sites will become.

By engaging in these actions that have a chance to reach "everyday" media consumers, we can prompt broader groups of people to recognize disparities and inequities. And in this small way, we can attempt to turn our teaching and scholarship into a type of activism.