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**From captive to ‘grounder-pounder’: The changing gendered identities of The 100’s**

**Octavia Blake**

**ABSTRACT**

*This paper examines oppressive representations of gender within the first season of The 100 (2014-), a popular young adult television series. Particular focus will be placed on one of the lead female characters, Octavia Blake. Mimi Schippers’ work surrounding gender hegemony will be used to show how Octavia’s gendered identity is continually defined and shaped by men’s oppressive treatment of her, which on the one hand strips her of agency and on the other casts her as deviant. To show these complex correlations, I will pay specific attention to how Octavia’s gendered identity shifts between versions of hegemonic femininity and pariah femininity, and what consequences she is made to endure as a result. Conclusions will also be drawn about what these oppressive portrayals of Octavia may communicate about women’s agency to those who watch this series.*

**KEYWORDS**

Gender hegemony  
Pariah femininity  
Romantic  
relationships  
Violent paternalism  
Slut-shaming

**INTRODUCTION**

*The 100* (2014-) is a television drama series, aimed at a young adult market, set in a post-apocalyptic future ninety-seven years after Earth was ravaged by a ‘nuclear Armageddon.’<sup>1</sup> Those who were orbiting Earth in space stations at the time of the apocalypse survived and joined together to form The Ark. Now, three generations on, The Ark can no longer maintain oxygen levels; it is dying and those in power decide that returning to Earth is their best option for survival. A group of one hundred young delinquents (aged 17-18) are sent down to the ravaged Earth, to test whether it can be habitable. For this paper, I am specifically interested

in how gender plays out amongst these young characters *in season one*, with principal focus on Octavia Blake – one of the series lead female characters – and how her relationship with both her older brother Bellamy and love interests Adam and Lincoln work to define her gendered identity. I will use Mimi Schippers' theorisation of 'gender hegemony' to show how Octavia's gendered identity, within *The 100's* first season, is continually shaped by men's oppressive treatment of her, stripping her of agency in one sense *and* casting her as deviant on the other.<sup>2</sup> To show these correlations, I will pay specific attention to how her gendered identity shifts between versions of hegemonic femininity<sup>3</sup> and pariah femininity,<sup>4</sup> which consistently positions her as subordinate within season one's narrative. I will also suggest what these oppressive portrayals of Octavia may communicate about women's agency to those who watch this series.

### **THE OPPRESSIVE PEDAGOGY OF GENDER HEGEMONY**

It is widely established that popular culture plays an important pedagogical role within society.<sup>5</sup> This paper is especially interested in how popular culture disseminates messages to its audiences about *how* gender *should* be performed, with particular focus on the more oppressive features of its gender pedagogy. As will be discussed in more detail shortly, texts like *The 100* incorporate a number of hegemonic endorsements of masculinity and femininity into its storylines, which arguably influence how viewers of the series make gendered meaning of the world around them. These endorsements are concerning when one considers who *The 100's* target audience is. *The 100's* principal market are young people who are likely at a formative stage in their lives where they are trying to make sense of how to be *men* and *women* in the social world. It is therefore concerning when these types of texts support oppressive, hegemonic themes around gender.

To analyse these hegemonic endorsements, I will specifically mobilise Mimi Schippers' structural understanding of 'gender hegemony'<sup>6</sup> – a gender order that privileges hegemonic masculinity over a range of *femininities*<sup>7</sup>. Schippers' work is significant because it revises Raewyn Connell's definition of hegemonic masculinity<sup>8</sup> in ways that shift scholarship away from a fixation on normative or hegemonic masculinities by 'recovering the feminine Other'<sup>9</sup> in how we make sense of gender. To do this, Schippers directs attention to how the hegemonic scaffolding of 'gender hegemony' organises masculinities *and* *femininities* in complex and often subtle ways.<sup>10</sup> According to Schippers, hegemonic masculinity is still the ascendant, or idealised version of how men *should* perform masculinity, however it is defined

by and ascendant within the gender order because of its relationships to a *range of femininities* that both men and women can adopt.<sup>11</sup>

For Schippers, hegemonic masculinity is considered as the ‘qualities defined as manly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to femininity and that by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.’<sup>12</sup> In turn, this ‘hierarchical and complementary relationship to femininity’ is specifically constituted within performances of what Schippers terms *hegemonic femininity*.<sup>13</sup> Hegemonic femininity is a useful term denoting qualities ‘defined as womanly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to hegemonic masculinity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.’<sup>14</sup> These qualities include physical weakness, defencelessness, passivity and being unable to use violence effectively in conflict-based situations. In turn, these qualities complement and give authority to men who adopt hegemonic masculine qualities like being physically strong, assertive, and skilful in the use of violence in conflict situations.<sup>15</sup>

Not all feminine performances, however, complement hegemonic masculinity’s ascendant position within the gender order. Schippers adopts the terms pariah femininities and male femininities to denote socially defined categories that respectively, represent women’s performances of hegemonically masculine qualities and men’s performances of hegemonically feminine qualities.<sup>16</sup> These performances threaten what hegemonic masculinity stands for – a privileged status in society *for men only* that enables them to acquire and maintain control and power over women – and because of this need to be contained within the gender order.<sup>17</sup> Containment is achieved by labelling these gendered performances as deviant and contaminating.<sup>18</sup> For example, women who enact versions of pariah femininity, like being seen to be overly assertive or sexually rapacious, are called ‘bitch’ or ‘slut’. Men who enact version of male femininity, like appearing weak or sexually timid, are called a ‘pussy’ or ‘fag’. These labels are highly derisive and envelope men and women in ‘master statuses’: ‘The possession of any one of these characteristics is assumed to contaminate the individual, so by having the one characteristic an individual becomes a kind of person.’<sup>19</sup>

This paper, therefore, mobilises this concept of gender hegemony to expose strong oppressive undercurrents within *The 100*’s treatment of gender. It must be noted at this point, however, that *The 100* does present a range of counter-hegemonic portrayals of gender. For example, Clarke and Raven emerge in season one as headstrong and courageous young women and by the end of season two, all major female characters (including Octavia) play

very dominant, leadership-type roles. For this paper, though, I am more interested in the oppressive portrayals of gender in the *first season*, especially with regard to Octavia's character development. Within this season, Octavia is either portrayed as childlike and needing protection *or* as sexually deviant and non-compliant. Both of these gendered portrayals – on the one hand promoting hegemonic femininity and on the other, pariah femininity – subordinate Octavia and disseminate oppressive pedagogical messages about women's place within the system of gender hegemony.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, whilst there are certainly counter-hegemonic portrayals of gender within *The 100*, shining the spotlight on Octavia in this first season *matters* for a number of reasons. As a feminist scholar, I am committed to exposing moments in popular culture when women's gendered identities are defined in misogynistic, oppressive ways. This is imperative in uncovering the scaffolding of gender hegemony, regardless of whether counter-hegemonic narratives are present or not. This analysis is also important as arguably the oppressive portrayals of gender in the first season could potentially cancel out the more positive representations of women later in the series.

## METHOD

When I first started watching *The 100*, I had no intention of developing a feminist critique of the first season. Instead, I started watching it for pleasure on the recommendation of a friend. As I began watching however, I started to notice how Octavia, in particular, was continually oppressed by the men in her life. My previous work around gender hegemony<sup>21</sup> started to *speak to me* as I reflected on the development of Octavia's character. In this way, my initial *informal* analysis of *The 100* was inductive: I did not know before I started viewing the series that I would form such a critical feminist response to it; therefore, the data (the dialogue, storylines, and character developments) *at first* spoke for itself, which is a key feature of inductive research.<sup>22</sup>

A more formal analytical approach was required, however, in order to transform my reactions to *The 100* into a piece of research. I therefore chose to carry out a detailed qualitative content analysis. Content analysis is a robust form of qualitative research that is designed to produce 'a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings.'<sup>23</sup> In order to have content to analyse in depth, I transcribed the first season in full. Because I knew *before* I started to analyse the transcriptions that I was looking for moments of gendered oppression towards Octavia that spoke to Schippers'<sup>24</sup> notion of gender hegemony,

part of my analysis was deductive.<sup>25</sup> However, inductive<sup>26</sup> strategies also crept into my analysis: as I started to delve carefully into the transcripts, more subtle themes around Octavia's gendered development surfaced, which added depth to my overall analysis.

### **THE 100 – A SYNOPSIS**

*The 100* – based on the popular young adult books by Kass Morgan – was adapted to the screen in 2014 by Jason Rothenberg. The series is now up to its fourth season, but it is the first season that will be the focus of this paper.<sup>27</sup> *The 100* is set in a future reality where Earth has become uninhabitable due to the toxic fallout of a 'nuclear apocalypse', which has left 'the planet simmering in radiation.'<sup>28</sup> During the time of this event, twelve nations had space stations orbiting Earth. They joined as one to form The Ark: 'One station forged from the many.'<sup>29</sup>

Ninety-seven years on, The Ark is in its third generation of survivors, with a population of approximately 4,000. Life on The Ark, however, is not idyllic. Instead, it is highly regulated and regimented. 'The Council', which consists of seven leaders headed by Chancellor Theolonius Jaha, is mandated to govern and maintain law and order. Overtime, this has led to the development of and adherence to a simple yet severe punitive policy: If anyone commits a crime – no matter how minor or serious – they are imprisoned in The Skybox (The Ark's detention facility) and then 'floated' (a term that means to be executed by being expelled into space). If offenders are under the age of eighteen however, they are held in The Skybox until their eighteenth birthday when their crime and punishment is then reviewed. Some may still be 'floated'; others however may be freed.

Although being self-sufficient and sustaining for almost a century, The Ark has just three months of oxygen left to keep all inhabitants alive. Only the Council and their key advisors know of this however, and have devised a clandestine plan to send one hundred of their young prisoners to Earth to see if the planet has become survivable. The plan is actioned at the beginning of the first episode. One hundred teenagers are herded into the Dropship and descend to Earth. On their way to the ground, a video-cross from Chancellor Jaha informs them that this may be a second chance of sorts. If they manage to survive Earth, their crimes will be pardoned. However, if Earth is still toxic, they will all perish – a risk The Council is willing to take because these young delinquents are criminals and therefore are what Jaha terms 'expendable.'<sup>30</sup>

The Dropship manages to land safely and as the group disembark, they appear to tolerate Earth's surroundings. Not all is positive, though. On descent, the Dropship

experienced a 'total systems failure'<sup>31</sup> disabling all audio and visual communication with The Ark. The only communication that The Ark now has with the group is data (like blood pressure and heart rate) gathered via wrist bands that were adhered to each young person's arm before leaving. Therefore, ostensibly the group is alone, without leadership from any adults, in an environment that is completely foreign to them.

It is at this point that we meet Bellamy and Octavia Blake for the first time. Bellamy quickly takes position as an aggressive and maverick-type leader, which appeals to many in the group. Octavia, Bellamy's feisty and stunningly beautiful younger sister, is also introduced in this first episode. She is the first to walk from the Dropship onto ground, to which she screams: 'We're back bitches!' Although she appears strong-willed, it soon becomes apparent that Bellamy thinks of her as a child: vulnerable and dependent on him for safety.

### **HEGEMONIC FEMININITY, CAPTIVITY AND VIOLENT PATERNALISM**

Throughout *The 100's* first season, Octavia is regularly depicted as in-need-of protection, which in turns enables her to be subjected to various forms of *violent paternalism*, at the hands of key male characters. Men's paternalistic treatment of women is a cornerstone of gendered practices and is often disguised as acts of benevolence and kindness.<sup>32</sup> This kind of paternalism is demonstrated by Bellamy early on in the first season. Bellamy was not meant to be on the Dropship, but stowed away on board so that when on the ground, he could look after Octavia. As he explains to her: 'Someone's gotta keep an eye on you'. This statement sets up two key narratives: one, that Bellamy appears to have Octavia's best interests at heart – a benevolent big brother who is protective of his little sister; two, that Octavia may seem feisty and independent<sup>33</sup> but ultimately needs protecting. This positions her from the very first episode as hegemonically feminine – passive, unable to protect herself and dependent on a man for safety.<sup>34</sup> In turn, her vulnerability reinforces what hegemonic masculinity *should* look like.<sup>35</sup> Bellamy exhibits these various 'manly'<sup>36</sup> qualities, like being dominant, in control and physically able to protect women.

Bellamy's paternalistic practices, although seemingly innocuous at the start, morph quickly into oppressive forms of control. In the first episode, Octavia volunteers to join a small group who go in search of food and supplies. During this mission, she is attacked by a river monster while swimming. Jasper – a rather geeky male in the group – saves her life by dragging her out of the water, shortly before he is speared through the chest by an unknown attacker. The group, including Octavia, manage to escape back to camp but have to leave

Jasper behind. When Bellamy hears about the danger Octavia was in he begins to implement more malevolent ways of controlling her by assigning her a ‘minder’ – a young man called Adam. Adam’s task is to watch over Octavia while Bellamy leaves camp to rescue Jasper:

Bellamy: Adam, my sister doesn’t leave this camp, is that clear?

Octavia: I don’t need a babysitter.

Bellamy: (to Adam) If anyone touches her, they answer to me.

After Bellamy departs, Octavia begins to walk away from Adam. Following Bellamy’s orders to control Octavia, Adam quickly and forcibly restrains her from leaving by grabbing her arm, and saying: ‘You’re staying here’.

Quickly, Adam and Octavia’s relationship becomes marked by confinement. Later that day, Adam finds Octavia flirting with some of the young men in the camp. He reminds her that Bellamy will hurt anyone who ‘touches her’. Octavia scoffs at Adam and leaves to go to the Dropship with one of the young men. Adam, having followed them to the Dropship, violently removes the young man and confronts Octavia about her non-compliance. She yells at Adam: ‘Maybe one of these days you’ll realise, you can’t control me.’ Adam closes the hatch to the upper level, trapping Octavia inside. In a panicked voice, Octavia yells at Adam: ‘Hey hey hey hey!!!!!! What are you doing?!!’ To which Adam says: ‘Consider yourself controlled.’

Within these scenes, violent versions of paternalism emerge that play an integral role in how *The 100* deals with gender. Bellamy threatens that if anyone ‘touches’ Octavia they will have to ‘answer to him’. It is overtly suggested that this will be in the form of violence. Here, Bellamy displays hegemonic forms of masculinity<sup>37</sup> – making decisions for women and threatening violence on men who disobey him. Octavia, in turn, is cast hegemonically as an object of femininity,<sup>38</sup> in need of guarding and passive to her brother’s orders. Adam too takes on violent practices to control Octavia. He forcibly restrains her at the start of their encounter then holds her captive in the Dropship. Here, Octavia is *again* hegemonically positioned as an object to be control by a man, with Adam taking on hegemonically masculine acts of control and physical ability to restrain.<sup>39</sup> Her non-compliance, which signals a contaminating – or pariah – part of her feminine identity, is dealt with by force.<sup>40</sup> For example, Adam confines her in a space where she cannot escape, thus containing her resistance.

What follows, however, further complicates this oppressive gendered dynamic between Octavia and Adam. Whilst their relationship is founded on Adam being able to control Octavia's body, it develops into one marked by intimacy. In a romantic scene set in a part of the forest where the trees are covered with luminous butterflies, Adam and Octavia realise their romantic feelings for one another, and kiss. From this point on, Adam and Octavia become romantic partners. With ease, *The 100's* narrative replaces Adam's restraining of her body with intimate touching.

This intimate union between Adam and Octavia, however, breaks Bellamy's rule that ultimately is designed to control Octavia's sexuality: No-one is to 'touch' Octavia. When Bellamy learns of Adam and Octavia's relationship, he violently punishes Adam by enlisting a small group of young men to hang Adam up by his wrists from a high tree. This is clearly a form of torture designed to cause pain, discomfort and distress. Adam pleads to be let down.

Adam:           Guys, you're not just gonna leave me here?  
 Bellamy:        No Adam, I won't be disobeyed  
 Adam:           Guys! Struggling Bellamy! Guys! Bellamy!

Bellamy and the others leave Adam in this position for many hours. After Adam is released, he abruptly ends his relationship with Octavia, thus choosing to *obey* Bellamy. Bellamy's display of hegemonic masculinity<sup>41</sup> in disciplining Adam shows how violence is condoned when a dominant man asserts authority over another man. What is also evident is that Bellamy's embodiment of hegemonic masculinity<sup>42</sup> enables him to enact versions of violent paternalism in order to control women's sexuality; his actions seamlessly render Octavia powerless over her own sexuality, which is yet another way *The 100* promotes the rules of gender hegemony that subordinate women by ensuring the ascendancy of hegemonic masculinity.<sup>43</sup>

### **PARIAH FEMININITY AND BEING A 'GRUNDER-POUNDER'**

Adam and Bellamy are not the only men in Octavia's life who use captivity to control her. In Episode six, Octavia meets Lincoln – a Grunder. 'Grundlers' are humans who survived and remained on Earth during the nuclear fall-out. They live in tribe-like groups and appear uncivilised and savage to those from The Ark. Grundlers perceive those from the Ark to be a threat to their safety and territory, and because of this mount a series of violent attacks on members of the camp. Despite this animosity, Lincoln and Octavia quickly form a deep and

clandestine romantic connection. From a feminist perspective, however, their love-story is unsettling because it presents confusing narratives about how gendered intimacy should develop amongst (hetero)romantic partners.

Although they become romantic partners, Lincoln and Octavia's relationship is initially founded on abduction and forced captivity. We first meet Lincoln after Octavia falls down a ravine, injuring her leg. Octavia looks terrified as Lincoln approaches and aggressively grabs her. We next see Octavia, in pain and alone in a dark cave. Her leg is badly hurt and she is visibly frightened. Terror comes over her as Lincoln enters the scene and grabs hold of her. He pulls out a fire-hot sword and cauterizes the wound on her leg. Next, Octavia wakes in the cave and realises that her leg is feeling better. In disbelief, she says to herself, 'He fixed it?' She then begins her escape and manages to exit the cave into the forest.

Her escape from captivity though, is short-lived. She almost walks into another Grounder's trap, when Lincoln snatches her from behind, muffling her screams with his hand. This act, at first, appears to be aggressive but in fact is paternalistic. By forcibly restraining Octavia, Lincoln stops her from running into a Grounder-trap that would have killed her. At this point, Lincoln becomes defined as her rescuer, which in turn positions Octavia as needing rescue. This pattern is typical of how heroes and heroines are depicted within popular romance storylines,<sup>44</sup> and works effectively to entrench traditional gender roles within these types of texts. Lincoln's ability to rescue Octavia positions him as hegemonically masculine: in control, physically strong and protective. In turn, Octavia is positioned as hegemonically feminine: in need of protecting, vulnerable and physically weak.<sup>45</sup>

Lincoln's paternalistic treatment of Octavia signals a shift in their relationship. In the next scene, they walk, side-by-side, back to his cave: Lincoln no longer appears to be her captor. This new dynamic is further established when Lincoln, after realising that Octavia's leg is still causing her pain, gently picks her up and carries her the rest of the way. Whilst an affection is clearly growing between Lincoln and Octavia, as they re-enter Lincoln's cave, he suddenly shackles her in chains. Octavia is once again his captive. She starts crying and pleading with Lincoln to unchain her: 'What the hell are you doing! Please don't do this! Ow!! Stop it, no stop it! Please, please don't do this!' Her terror is clearly displayed within her pleas for release, which sets up a problematic narrative within *The 100*. Lincoln is able to display physical aggression and control as well as affection and paternalism towards Octavia.

Octavia has simultaneously become an object of his affection and his captive: he is both someone she is dependent on and someone she fears.

Octavia and Lincoln's relationship, from this point on, continues to play into this problematic narrative. Octavia is eventually rescued by Bellamy, Jasper and another male character called Finn. During the rescue, however, Lincoln stabs Finn. Bellamy and Jasper manage to overpower Lincoln and they all (including an injured Finn) return to camp, with Lincoln as their prisoner. He is shackled in the Dropship where Bellamy tortures him for 'intel' about the Grunders. Octavia pleads with Bellamy to let Lincoln go, stating that Lincoln was only trying to protect her. Bellamy instructs one of his crew to forcibly remove Octavia against her will from the Dropship, again marking the violent control that Bellamy is able to exert over his sister.

It soon becomes apparent that Finn has not only been stabbed, but that the knife Lincoln used to stab him was laced with a deadly poison. Finn becomes very unwell. Bellamy's crew discover that Lincoln has a set of vials in his possession and quickly deduce that one must be the antidote. Bellamy continues to torture Lincoln, but Lincoln refuses to show him which vial will save Finn's life. Octavia returns and grows increasingly distressed seeing Lincoln being tortured. She then stabs herself with the same poisoned dagger used on Finn, stating to the group that 'He won't let me die.' Bellamy is both enraged and panicked, by what he sees as Octavia defiance and irrationality. He yells at her: 'What the hell did you do!!!!' Lincoln, however, immediately signals to the vial that has the antidote displaying publicly his paternal feelings towards Octavia.

Later, Bellamy and Octavia argue about her loyalty to Lincoln. Octavia tries to again convince Bellamy that Lincoln has good intentions, to which Bellamy exclaims: 'Whatever twisted connection you think you have with that animal forget it. You don't get to see him. End of conversation.' This dialogue clearly speaks to the rules of gender hegemony: Bellamy is both defining and condemning a shift in Octavia's gendered identity. Not only has she been defiant and irrational by showing allegiance to Lincoln (and stabbing herself with the poisoned knife), but she is also displaying what he sees as improper sexual feelings. When possessed by women, these qualities (defiance, irrationality and sexual deviance/noncompliance) are deemed objectionable and therefore defined as performances of pariah femininities because of the threat they pose to the gender order.<sup>46</sup> For example, showing irrationality and non-compliance goes against the wishes of the 'rational' male (in this case, Bellamy). Similarly, showing degrees of sexual risk-taking breaks the rules of gender hegemony that require women to be sexually passive and compliant to the dominant

men in their lives; in this order, only men are entitled to take on such assertive and bold sexual practices. Bellamy therefore attempts to contain Octavia's pariah acts via control: he *forbids* her from seeing Lincoln.<sup>47</sup>

Her newly constituted pariah identity is further cemented when, unbeknownst to Bellamy, she helps Lincoln escape from the Dropship. Before Lincoln exits, he looks longingly at Octavia, then kisses her in a gentle yet intense and yearning manner. This kiss comes across as deeply romantic, leaving Octavia looking stunned and mesmerized. It not only confirms that they actually share a romantic connection, but its context – a mysterious, forbidden and clandestine union – suggests that Octavia and Lincoln's relationship is out of the ordinary – or 'exceptional.'<sup>48</sup> Later, Octavia sneaks out of camp to his cave where they have sex for the first time. This encounter is more passionate and unbridled, which adds further intensity to their intimate connection suggesting that this type of romantic relationship is valuable and desirable.

These displays of exceptional and desirable romantic intimacy, however, are problematic when they are considered within the whole context of Octavia and Lincoln's relationship. Up until this point, Lincoln and Octavia's relationship has been largely defined by his abduction and forced captivity of her (albeit with hints of benevolent paternalism). A number of scenes have shown Octavia terrified of Lincoln, pleading for her safety. Now, their corporeal interactions also include a physical intimacy that is scripted as desirous, which send a message to those watching *The 100* that gendered fear and control constitute elements of a 'good' romantic relationship.

I argue that these contradictory and problematic themes depicted within Octavia and Lincoln's relationship works to condone men's use of violence and force to control of women. Firstly, it promotes qualities of hegemonic masculinity<sup>49</sup> – like physical strength and the use of force to control women<sup>50</sup> – that normalize men's oppressive treatment of women within their romantic relationships.<sup>51</sup> Even though Lincoln had abducted Octavia and held her against her will, their intimate connection is scripted as romantic and passionate rather than incomprehensible and troubling.

Lincoln and Octavia's relationship plays into another concerning narrative that is all too common in how women try to make sense of their violent partners. There is a scene when Octavia and Lincoln – who is still chained up in the Dropship – are alone. She says to Lincoln: 'this is all my fault because I freaked out so bad when you locked me up in that cave.' In a New Zealand study carried out by Towns and Adams, women who has experienced violence from a male partner talked candidly about why they thought their

partners were violent towards them. Many exonerated the violence as somehow their fault; many talked about how they *could* have stopped the violence had they been better wives and girlfriends.<sup>52</sup> Octavia's talk about fault plays into this narrative, which works successfully to exonerate men's use of force and violence to control women.

Once Lincoln and Octavia's sexual relationship becomes known to those in the camp, Octavia's pariah status is intensified as she becomes labelled by Dell, one of her male peers, as the *grounder-pounder*. This term quickly becomes adopted by others in the camp. This pejorative label defines Octavia by her sexual contact with Lincoln and condemns her as both sexually rapacious and deviant, which are key building blocks of 'slut' narratives within society.<sup>53</sup> These labels (slut, grounder-pounder) are used by men (and women)<sup>54</sup> to contain the threat that women like Octavia pose to the gender order. Within this order, women are supposed to be sexually passive and compliant, whilst men are exalted for being sexually rapaciousness and risk-taking. When women possess these masculine qualities, it therefore threatens the ascendant order of hegemonic masculinity and is deemed deviant and inappropriate.<sup>55</sup> This label – *grounder pounder* – is so pejorative and isolating, both shunning Octavia from the group and contaminating her gendered identity.<sup>56</sup> In doing so, this part of *The 100's* narrative not only showcases the harsh effects of breaking the rules of gender hegemony but I suggest, in doing so, promotes 'slut-shaming'<sup>57</sup> as a strategy used to contain women in these circumstances.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper has provided a critical discussion about how *The 100* deals with gender within the series' first season. I argue that the rules of gender hegemony are endorsed continually via the development of Octavia's character. Octavia's gendered identity – which swings between hegemonic femininity and pariah femininity - is consistently defined by the men in her life. Her changing gendered identity promotes men's use of violent paternalism, oppression within intimate relationships and 'slut-shaming'<sup>58</sup>, which in turn endorse the rules of gender hegemony and ensure the ascendancy of hegemonic masculinity over hegemonic and pariah femininity within this gender order. I argue that this is concerning especially when we consider *The 100* as a site of pedagogy for young people – *The 100's* target audience. These themes surrounding gender strongly promote men's control of women. Therefore, the risk is that members of this young audience may in turn normalise these forms of control into *how* they make sense of the world around them.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 94

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 94

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. 94

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. 94

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 94

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 95

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. 94

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 94

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 94-97

<sup>44</sup> Anna Silver, "Twilight is Not Good for Maidens: Gender, Sexuality, and the Family in Stephanie Meyer's Twilight Series." *Studies in the Novel* 42, no. 1&2 (2010): 125.

<sup>45</sup> Schippers, "Recovering the Feminine Other" 94

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. 95

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 95-96

<sup>48</sup> Karin A. Martin and Emily Kazzyak. "Hetero-Romantic Love and Heterosexiness in Children's G-Rated Films." *Gender & Society* 23, no. 3 (2009): 315-336.

<sup>49</sup> Schippers, "Recovering the Feminine Other" 94

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 91

<sup>51</sup> Melanie McCarry, "Justifications and Contradiction: Understanding Young People's Views

of Domestic Abuse." *Men and Masculinities* 11, no. 3 (2009): 325-345.

<sup>52</sup> Alison Towns and Peter Adams. "'If I Really Loved Him enough, He Would Be Okay'." *Violence Against Women* 6, no. 6 (2000): 558-585.

<sup>53</sup> Michael Flood, "Male and Female Sluts: Shifts and Stabilities in the Regulation of Sexual Relations among Young Heterosexual Men." *Australian Feminist Studies* 28, no. 75 (2013): 100-102; Jessica Ringrose, Laura Harvey, Rosalind Gill and Sonia Livingstone, "Teen Girls, Sexual Double Standards and 'Sexting': Gendered Value in Digital Image Exchange." *Feminist Theory* 14, no. 3 (2013): 314-317; Aleza Summit, Debra Kalmuss, Jenifer DeAtley and Andrew Levack. "Unraveling the Slut Narrative: Gender Constraints on Adolescent Girls' Sexual Decision-Making." *American Journal of Sexuality Education* 11, no. 2 (2016): 118-125

<sup>54</sup> Summit, “Unraveling the Slut Narrative”, 120

<sup>55</sup> Schippers, “Recovering the Feminine Other” 95

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. 95

<sup>57</sup> Ringrose et al., “Teen Girls”, 319

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. 319

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