

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

*Witch at Court* (Korean: 마녀의 법정 – Ma Nyeo Oi Beob Sa) is a South Korean crime and law miniseries focusing on several types of sexual assault cases. The title use the word Witch (마녀 – Ma Nyeo) because of the play word between Yi Deum Ma’s last name (Korean: Ma 마) plus her job as prosecutor (검사- Geom Sa). Therefore, the word play is Ma Geom Sa – Prosecutor Ma (Korean : 마검사) that has a similar sound with the word Witch - Ma Beob Sa (마법사). The word Witch emphasizes Yi Deum Ma as the main character in the miniseries who always has her own “magic” in the courtroom.

In episodes two and three, the Crime Against Girl Unit is investigating an unusual attempted rape of a female professor, Professor Hae Young Sun. Her male teaching assistant, Woo Sung Nam, becomes the alleged suspect. During the investigation, the investigators, Yi Deum Ma and Jin Wook Yeo, then reveal the fact that the real perpetrator of the rape is the female professor, Hae Young Sun, not her homosexual male teaching assistant, Woo Sung Nam.

The discussion about males being sexually assaulted by females is intriguing. Males being sexually assaulted by females is one of the rarest cases appearing in media, movies, or literary works. Many researchers for the past years have been working more on sexual assault against women. The rising of feminism in the present years gives way to the increasing number of studies about female rape victims. In contrast to female rape, male rape is not much studied for some reasons. One of them is the prevalent false beliefs about male rape related to gender stereotypes and social norms regarding masculinity and male sexuality (Turchik & Edwards, 2012). In hegemonic masculinity, males are stereotyped to be masculine. They are believed to

have more power than women, be dominant, and be physically and mentally strong. Therefore, in a sexual assault case, male beings are mostly associated as perpetrators and not victims. Moreover, the public does not even recognize that men can be a victim of rape or other forms of sexual harassment because they believe that only women can be victims of sexual assault or other than men cannot be a perpetrator of sexual assault.

However, research reveals that males can be the victims of rape or attempted rape as well, just like females. Male rape is the same as female rape. Both include a non-consensual act of sex or forced intercourse by other people. Rape, according to Stanko (1990 as cited in Javaid, 2016) is used as a means to exert power and control, and utilised to humiliate, degrade, destroy and hurt victims. Abdullah-Khan (2008, as cited in Javaid, 2016) argues that male rape research demonstrates that the main motivation for male rape is the perpetrators' want to seek power, control, and domination; the concepts first recognised by feminism to explain rape against women. Similar to rape against women, power relations are the key point of sexual assault.

Based on the discussion above, the writer wants to study male rape represented in a Korean miniseries, the *Witch at Court*. The writer's reason for choosing this object of study is that sexual assault against men by a female perpetrator is inadequately discussed. It is difficult to find sources of information about male rape victims by the female perpetrator in academic literature. Therefore, this study is expected to discuss male rape victims in a Korean miniseries. The writer wants to argue that the false belief in rape is a product of socially constructed norms or gender roles, and false beliefs would become an obstacle for male rape victims. The writer wants to argue that hegemonic masculinity becomes a disadvantage for a male rape victim by a female perpetrator. This study also focuses on the intersectional discrimination against the male rape victim character represented in the Korean miniseries *Witch at Court*, Woo Sung Nam.

## **1.2 Field of the Study**

This study is related to Gender Studies and focuses on the field of sexual violence against males by female perpetrators.

## **1.3 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on intersectional discrimination against female-on-male rape victims caused by hegemonic masculinity in *Witch at Court*.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What are the intersectional discriminations experienced by a male rape victim, Woo Sung Nam?
2. What are the false beliefs about male rape victims by a female perpetrator appearing on *Witch at Court*?

## **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

With regard to the problems mentioned, this research is conducted to achieve the following objectives:

1. To find out the intersectional discrimination experienced by a male rape victim, Woo Sung Nam
2. To show the debunked false beliefs about male rape victims by a female perpetrator on *Witch at Court*

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Upon conducting the study, the writer expects to find out how harmful male rape is, especially when the perpetrator is a female. The involvement of hegemonic masculinity should be

considered in the discrimination experienced by the male victims. This study hoped to provide a description of female-on-male rape portrayed in a Korean miniseries.



## **1.7 Definition of Term**

### **1.7.1. Intersectional discrimination**

Intersectional discrimination happens when two or multiple characteristics operate simultaneously and interact inseparably, producing distinct and specific forms of discrimination. Intersectional discrimination as a tool of analysis is all characteristics of discrimination may interact with each other and produce specific experiences of discrimination (Makkonen, 2002).

### **1.7.2 Hegemonic Masculinity**

Hegemonic masculinity refers to social ideals of heterosexuality and masculinity that dictate that men are the penetrator, not the penetrated, and pursuers of sex, rather than pursued. Therefore, a man who reveals to the police that he did not want sex with a woman but was forced to do sex is challenging the norms of masculinity (Weis, 2010 as cited in Javaid, 2016).

### **1.7.3 Male Rape**

Male Rape is defined as an act of psychological, physical, and emotional violation in the form of a sexual act, which is inflicted on a male without his consent by either a man or a woman (Javaid, 2018).

### **1.7.4. LGBTQ+**

LGBTQ+ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and other sexual orientation.