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In my presentation, I will be using semiotics to deconstruct an image that came from the Me Too movement. I will also focus my attention on the evolution of the hashtag and its involvement with global activist movements. The main image I will be focusing on is one from the #MeToo movement. It is a black and white photograph of Harvey Weinstein with #MeToo stamped all over the image in bold white letters on a red background.

In terms of semiotics, I will break down the signs, the denotation (what we see): a black and white image of a middle age white man (Harvey Weinstein) with text stamped all over it. The text is close together with no spaces, the words are in caps and states "MeToo" the icon of the pound sign also appears before the text (#MeToo). All of these signs are a part of the studium which is the evidence. What we see are referred to as the signifiers. These are fixed to this specific image.

The second part in using the semiotic approach is the connotation which is a fluid, ever-changing interpretation of the signifiers. Also known as the punctum, which is the effect that the photo has on its viewer, the invoked emotion; how we feel about what we see. What we see here is the text, the colors, the photo image, symbols and composition.

The use of the symbol "#", the pound sign, in front of the text without spaces we read it as a hashtag. With spaces between the text or symbol we would read this in a completely different context. The use of hashtags on social media, specifically Twitter, was created in 2007 as a means to join like conversations together and a way to collect

tweets about a certain trending topic. The #MeToo movement came to fruition in the year 2007 by activist and sexual assault survivor Tarana Burke. This was a way to empower women through empathy and strength in numbers by visibly displaying how many women have survived sexual harassment and assault. The movement spread rapidly in 2017 after the widespread sexual-abuse allegations Harvey Weinstein faced. High profile celebrities began to join in using the hash tag #MeToo and the movement sparked coverage and discussion of sexual assault happening around the world, often in the work place as well as in Hollywood.

The fact that the hashtag “#MeToo” is stamped all over the image reminds us that there are many women having the same conversation and share similar stories. Each hashtag representing many different voices. The “stamp” simulates physical stickers placed with emotional gestures “plastering” over the image with a sense of rage. The text also begins to run off of the page leaving the viewer with a sense that this sexual assault issue continues past Weinstein's allegations. The run off text also brings a sense of continuation, allowing the viewer to fill the remaining world with many more #MeToo. Culturally showing that this issue of sexual harassment and abuse is broad and extends to many communities and cultures beyond Hollywood. The use of the color red brings feelings of fear, danger, and urgency.

The black and white image of Weinstein peaks through, his eyes are visible meeting the viewer and inviting us in. For the female viewer, we become his next target, we are faced with his toxic male gaze. For the male viewer, one becomes a spectator, an ally, to what activities Weinstein takes part of abiding by the “guy code”. His eyes acting as an invitation. The fact that this image is in black and white draws our attention

back to the text, indicating that the women behind this text are much more important and powerful than the man himself. These stickers are a reactive gesture against his image - a negation. Another thing I would like to point out is the lack of visibility of the picture; this could be any man. It could be a famous celebrity, a coworker, a neighbor, or family member. Since Harvey Weinstein's trial and sentencing of 23 years in prison for sexual misconduct, the lack of visibility sends a strong message with new meaning to sexual predators; this could also be you, your actions and words can be silenced and stopped when women use their voices and speak their truth.

This image depicts the movement “#MeToo” in today's liberal culture. A rich white man stands behind the horrors he inflicts on innocent beings, those victims find their voice, use it, and the world begins to listen and corrective action to achieve equality and justice takes place.