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editor's note

As an illustration of the soul of the Women’s Studies Center at Florida International University, Making Waves not only creates opportunity for students to express themselves and their views of the world, it reflects the diversity and creativity that Women’s Studies envisions. With this edition of Making Waves, various themes run through the pages. While it recognizes and accounts for the impoverished nature of the history of women’s lives, the journal also transcends these historical challenges and sociocultural restrictions by being itself a product of social progression, diversity, dissent and freedom as women and gendered bodies.

Most of the essays and artwork found in this edition of Making Waves are from the 8th Annual Women’s Studies Student Conference, “Seas of Change: Women and Gendered Bodies Riding the Waves,” sponsored by Women’s Studies Graduate Student Association (WSGSA), where over two hundred people attended. The conference topics that are covered in this journal are: Health and Gendered Bodies, Challenging Masculine Domains in Culture and the Arts, and Women and Work. The various fields of study found in this edition are literature, history, public health, politics, sociology, anthropology, art, philosophy, and music. As a result, Making Waves Vol. 8 is an enriched anthology that offers to its readers a uniquely broad source of Women’s Studies topics that serves as an open platform for discussion and debate.

Not only would I like to congratulate the students who have been published in this issue of Making Waves, I want to extend my sincerest gratitude to them as well for their hard work and dedication throughout the editing process. And, I want to thank the anonymous reviewers who exceptionally served their expertise and knowledge to contribute to the quality of this journal. To the staff and faculty of Women’s Studies at FIU, thank you for being so supportive in allowing me the responsibility, creativity, and autonomy to edit this edition with freedom of expression. Lastly, I want to thank the readers of Making Waves. Our readers are the progression of something superlative: knowledge.

Best,
Susan Rainsberger
Design & Content Editor, Making Waves Vol. 8

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Women’s Studies Center
Women’s Studies Graduate Student Association
Reflecting Renaissance English society, Shakespeare’s plays exhibit a tendency to restrict women’s roles according to gender specific ideals of behavior. The plays reproduce Renaissance society’s shaping of women into its chaste ideal of womanhood through the character development of their heroines. “While Renaissance men aspire to the ideal of the whole man, women are typically divided into opposite extremes, perfection and evil. Thus [in Shakespeare’s The Winter’s Tale] Polixenes calls Hermione ‘sacred’ at the same time that he implies that women are ‘devils’” (Erickson 820). Like the other heroines in Shakespeare and particularly in the romances, Hermione, from The Winter’s Tale, is characterized as one of the chaste and potentially “sacred” sort of women. According to Peter B. Erickson we find that in Shakespeare there is no “whole [wo]man” (820), who is neither sacred nor evil, but only female characters who embody the chaste and good versus seductive and evil dichotomy. Other “good” heroines like Hermione are: Cordelia, from the tragedy of King Lear, whose plot development resembles that of a romance, Thaisa and Marina from the romance Pericles, and Paulina and Perdita from the romance The Winter’s Tale. In the tragedy of King Lear, Lear banishes his “good” but defiant daughter Cordelia from his kingdom and as a result of this error above all brings about his own as
well as his kingdom’s downfall. In the romance *Pericles*, Pericles must constantly flee evil King Antiochus assassins and as a result looses his wife and daughter during one of his escapes. His daughter, Marina, eventually suffers at the hands of evil men and is protected only by her commitment to her chastity. Finally, in *The Winter’s Tale* king Leontes’ excessive jealousy of his allegedly adulterous wife Hermione tears his kingdom apart and leaves him without a male heir. All of these female heroines exhibit the qualities of a chaste and sacred feminine; that is, qualities exhibited by the goddess Diana from Greco-Roman mythology as well as by the female saints celebrated by the Roman Catholic tradition. One of the principal qualities displayed by these sacred women is chastity, a quality which patriarchy ties to all other form of goodness in women. Therefore, in being held up against ideal womanhood, these heroines are being held up against the ideal of perfect chastity.

In all of the above mentioned plays, including the tragedy of *King Lear*, the heroines suffer and do penance in a Christian-like fashion. This suffering and penance appear to purify them of their inherent impurity as women according to the patriarchal system, which then raises them to a kind of sainthood. When “good” female characters try to reach out for self actualization and seek to become more like “whole women,” as Cordelia does through her defiance of her father’s excessive expectations, they crash violently against the invisible walls of gender-role boundaries. In the tragedies these “good” female heroines fulfill their divine script as most female saints do, through mortal death. In the romances however, they instead fulfill their divine script through the arrested development or death of their budding “whole woman” self as it struggles against tyrannical patriarchal society. It is after this partial death that our heroines are forced to assume more “sacred” countenances in order to survive in a supposedly redeemed, more benign patriarchal order. This metaphorical partial death occurs most obviously, as Ruth Vanita puts it, through “marriage [which] entails a kind of death for many women in the comedies . . . [for] As Petruchio suggests, marriage ‘is a way to kill a wife with kindness’” (328).

*King Lear*’s Cordelia is perhaps the most complex heroine in that she does not fully submit to this analysis. She seems to be able to sustain her claim to “whole” womanhood longer before she exhibits clear saintly qualities. She submits to a more redeemed patriarchal authority only at the very end through her forgiveness and return to her repentant father. Her marriage is part of her defiance to the tyrannical patriarchal authority represented by her father, and entails no apparent submission to her husband. Unlike in the traditional marriage transaction, Cordelia is not exchanged between her father and her husband-to-be. Instead she is disowned by her father and therefore is left
ambareneses

without a dowry. France takes her as his wife anyway and she claims to “choose” him as her husband because his love is true. Therefore she has a most unusual wedding in that it marks her defiance rather than her submission to patriarchy, in this way also marking her claim to “whole” womanhood. After act 1, however, France is absent from the action of the play and hardly figures in it. In act 5 Cordelia hardly seems like a married woman, leading her husband’s troops herself. By the end of the play her marriage has become irrelevant to her reconciliation with her father and a reminder of it might even be an obstacle, hence France’s absence. It is in her return to her father like a prodigal daughter and her desire to reconcile with his humbled patriarchy that she displays divine qualities. We know of Cordelia’s claim to sainthood from a soldier’s description of her happy sorrow over news of her father. His account of Cordelia crying resembles the common fables of Madonna statues that miraculously cry (Starbird, 94), for Cordelia’s tears were miraculous in that they seemed “as pearls from diamonds dropped” (4.3.23).

Pericles’ Thaisa and Marina do not bring about their own suffering, as perhaps Cordelia does, since she defied her father. Thaisa and Marina not only do not defy patriarchy, but conform to its ideal womanhood in the strictest sense even when circumstance would have excused them otherwise. It could be said that Thaisa and Marina’s suffering, like Cordelia’s, results from men’s follies. Though Pericles commits no crime Thaisa and Marina are lost and suffer due to his constant need to escape from Antiochus. So however indirectly, Pericles causes their exile and suffering. Thaisa, true to a good Shakespearean heroine’s part, does not remarry after years separated from her husband. From the moment she lands at Ephesus she commits herself as a priestess at the temple of Diana and thus begins a saintly life. She renounces the conventional idea of earthly womanhood, that is, the possibility of marriage and more children. However, she does not do this in defiance of patriarchy but conforming to its ideal of what widows should do, “But since King Pericles,/ My wedded lord, I ne’er shall see again,/ A vestal liv’ry will I take me to,/ and never more have joy”(14.7-10). It was often expected of Medieval and Renaissance noble widows in Europe that they should seclude themselves in convents after their husbands’ deaths (MacLean, 4, 6, 7; Stafford 17, 19); many did, while others founded or gave money to these nunneries, or, after the reformation, to some form of secluded religious community (Radford Ruether, 16). What Thaisa does is not essentially different. Thaisa chooses to be patriarchy’s ideal woman under her circumstances, living faithfully to the memory of her husband, in chaste religious worship.
Since in Shakespeare’s plays women may only be good or evil, and since women’s goodness is equivalent to their chastity, Marina is the heroine who is put to the most difficult test. Unlike her mother she does not fall into the hands of good people, but into the hands of murderers and pimps, such as Dionyza, Leonine, Boul, Pander, and Bawd. Marina is put in the difficult position of almost having to choose between her life and her goodness or chastity. A woman like her, brought up to embody the patriarchal design of ideal womanhood, could not live the life of the extreme alternative, a prostitute. She knows that it would be the death of her in the literal sense, due to venereal disease, but she also knows it would be the death of her womanhood as she could not be a prostitute and be good. Such a paradox is simply inconceivable. She behaves like Diana and like the female saints in that she resists promiscuous sexuality at a time and place where it would seem she has no choice but to give in or to die. The female saints escaped their homes, joined convents and endured martyrdoms in order to preserve their chastity (Young, 447). Though Marina is luckily neither tortured nor raped, she is kept prisoner at a brothel where she is constantly threatened with both, enduring psychological martyrdom, yet she does it with saintly patience and dignity. Furthermore she shows herself wise and resourceful, flourishing in goodness in the unlikeliest of environments.

Paradoxically Marina both conforms to and defies patriarchy, for she resists the play’s patriarchal design for slave women in order to salvage her patriarchal womanhood. She chooses an option that her environment does not really allow her, and in so doing she achieves patriarchy’s definition of the sacred feminine. Marina’s resistance of predatory sexual advances is the same as that exhibited by the virgin female martyr saints (Young, 447). Women like Marina, while admired by the patriarchal system, are also resented by it for finding power through their chastity, for turning what should be their shackles into their weapons. However it is not that Marina has any desire to defy patriarchy, but that she would conform only to its definition of the ideal woman, and that can only be done through marriage or a chaste, preferably religious life. The ideal patriarchal design of womanhood would have every “good” woman married rather than in chaste, religious seclusion, since women are prized for their reproductive function. That Marina would rather conform to patriarchy if it means a better rather than worse status for herself is obvious in her agreement to marry the first and not so ideal candidate, Lysimachus.

The conflict between women and patriarchy is greater in The Winter’s Tale than in Pericles or in King Lear, for in The Winter’s Tale Hermione pretends her own death to punish or at least to avoid her tyrannical husband. Erickson describes Hermione as a woman frustrated in her marriage, as a woman who
conforms to it, but being at least minimally frustrated in it, enjoys playful verbal sparring in mild defiance of her husband. Her defiance lies in playfully mocking his authority when she says, “Our praises are our wages” (1.2.90-94). As Erickson explains, Hermione’s words reveal that Hermione can mock and make fun of her role, but she can neither transgress nor change it. The sarcastic undertone of her wit suggests a sense of frustration, of being trapped. She provokes Leontes into naming what constrains her, the conventional utterance by which she made herself her husband’s possession: ‘I am yours for ever.’ When she loses Leontes’ ‘favor,’ ‘the crown and comfort of [her] life,’ she submits her case to an earlier patriarchal authority: ‘The Emperor of Russia was my father.’ (Erickson 825)

Leontes, a representative of tyrannical patriarchy, cannot stand her mild mockery, as tyranny is quick to take offence at even the mildest protest. Leontes then abuses his power in trying to reassert it as absolute, but fails. In the gentlemen’s protests in favor of the queen, and especially in Camilo’s protest that progeny, the kingdom and the future are more important than absolute power, there seems to lie a critique against a tyrannical patriarchal rule over women. To be an apt women’s advocate though, Hermione is compelled to assume a saintly patience, endurance and countenance. She can no longer afford to be playful in her speech; she must assume the resolute voice of righteousness, of a divine advocate. She places herself in this position by calling attention to the unjust imprisonment and abuse she suffers (2.1.80-126), which is akin to the suffering of female martyr saints (Young 447). She expresses a certainty that divine powers witness our actions and know of her innocence (3.2.26-30), and that her suffering will bring her grace (2.1.123-124), as it did to the martyr saints. Hermione declares, “if powers divine/ Behold our human actions, as they do,/ I doubt not then but innocence shall make/ False accusation blush, and tyranny/ Tremble at patience” (3.2.26-30).

Hermione’s greatest act of defiance of patriarchy lies not in her bold speech, but in her choice of a secluded religious life in lieu of a married one. As mentioned before there are only two ways to be a “good” woman under patriarchy, and those are to get married or to live a chaste and preferably religious secluded life. The ideal of these two ways is the first, to be married. It is in Hermione’s rejection of her own marriage that her defiance truly lies. Critics of The Winter’s Tale have complained over the unlikelihood of Hermione’s choice and attributed it more to a supposed indecision on Shakespeare’s part to have
Hermione die or live. However, “the details attending Hermione’s death are too important for one to suppose that they could pass unnoticed in a revision” (Siemon 13).

There is another instance of a dishonored female pretending her death in Shakespeare. And that is Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing*. The difference is that when Hero’s honor is restored she immediately comes back to life, while Hermione does not. Hero pretended her death in order to escape the dire fate patriarchy ordains for dishonored maids. By going into hiding Hero does what patriarchy expects of her. By contrast, given Hermione’s brave stance against her husband’s tyranny, her pretended death seems like the ultimate defiance of Leontes and the tyrannical power he represents. Through it she reveals that he really does not have absolute power over her, that she can leave him is she chooses, if not permanently.

When Hermione wishes to return to see her daughter she and Paulina stage her return in a way that would accentuate that divine grace she laid claim to at the beginning of the play. After such a spectacle, who dares ask for explanations? Leontes’ excessive protestations of authority have finally ceased and Hermione is able to return to hopefully an at least peaceful pretense of a marriage. However compelled, this return implies reconciliation between her and Leontes and therefore between women and patriarchy, the latter now chastened, but still strictly limiting women’s options.

Perdita’s defiance of patriarchy may perhaps lie only in her illicit romance with Florizel. She is defying social boundaries and the authority of Florizel’s father, the King of Bohemia. Because she presumes her defiance a secret, her act of defiance does not seem as powerful as Cordelia’s or Hermione’s even when she escapes with Florizel. Her defiance is not as powerful because it seems fully self-serving, rather than being associated with a higher purpose. On the other hand, Cordelia’s and Hermione’s acts of defiance are associated with doing what is right and revealing life truths. Perdita escapes with Florizel because she loves him and he is the only one that may protect her, but she never joins their love to the upholding of an ideal higher than itself. In fact she wishes it were not a forbidden love because she has no desire to defy patriarchy. She is the least saintly of our heroines. While still being chaste she is the least chaste of them. Upon her birth she is described as a “lusty” babe (2.2.30), she understands Autolycus’ lewd lyrics and by her expression “quick and in mine arms” (4.4. 132) she expresses a greater awareness and acceptance of sexuality than any of the other previous heroines. Though motherless, she is the one of our heroines to suffer the least. She seems like a happy girl in Bohemia and does not really feel the consequences of being an orphaned young woman in Shakespeare’s society.
the way Cordelia, Marina and Hermione do. She undergoes nothing like an extended period of suffering the way in which these three previous heroines do. Her separation from her parents does not mean suffering when she is ignorant of it.

In short, though idealized in beauty and grace, Perdita is the only one of these heroines who is allowed at least mild human “faults” without having to suffer so much for them. Though in this way she is the most earthly of our heroines it would not be fair to call her a “whole woman” because of it. While the other women are clearly denied the expression of whole womanhood especially after their suffering, through which they are purified into more sacred versions of themselves, at least they have gained awareness of whole womanhood through it. Perdita seems unlikely to ever discover “whole womanhood” through her own experience. How can she gain a full awareness of what it means to be a woman in a tyrannical patriarchal society when she is neither subjected nor is witness to the possible losses and indignities many women must suffer under it? Perdita and Florizel are a harmonious pair who seem to be “alternatives to Leontes and Hermione, a new generation representing anew the possibilities inherent in love and in a healthy community” (Siemon 15). The source of their squabbles is not a desire to have more than the one can claim of the other, or to rule absolutely over the other, or deep distrust of one another, but a difference of degree in the common worry that is Florizel’s father. In contrast the other heroines analyzed have to suffer unjustly due to the excessive and tyrannical authority of men, excepting only Thaisa, who suffers indirectly due to Pericles’ troubles. Marina is not equally excepted because besides suffering indirectly through Pericles’ troubles she also suffers under men’s authority during her time as a slave. “The logic of [The Winter’s Tale]” and the romances “is to excise this antifeminist tendency [of women as devils] by eliminating the negative view of woman and magnifying the positive one” (Erickson 820). In a world where women are devils by default, to win against men’s tyranny, Cordelia, Marina and Hermione must become like living saints, giving up any earthliness forever.

References
The hymen discourse

Virgins, Modest Maidens, and Modern Women: 
The Hymen Discourse

Kerstin Espinoza

Kerstin Espinoza graduated in April 2009 from Florida International University with her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology/Anthropology with a minor in History and a certification in Women’s Studies. Espinoza is of Nicaraguan descent. Like many families in the 1980s, her family fled to the United States to escape the civil strife that had overtaken the country. She has recently applied to various teaching abroad programs mainly in Japan. Espinoza is looking forward to broadening her horizons through travel and perhaps enrolling in a Master’s program abroad.

The hymen is a crucial determinant for a woman’s virginity; in certain cultures, it determines whether a woman is honorable and respectable. This paper takes on a historical perspective in the discourse of the hymen beginning in 16th century France. Further, it examines how women in certain Middle Eastern states suffer deadly consequences at the hands of their families in so-called “crimes of honor”. Also considered are the extremities some women undergo to reconstruct this missing piece of flesh.

The hymen, the fold of flesh that covers the opening of the vagina, is what determines a woman’s value, honor, and virtue among many western and non-western cultures. The hymen has different names ranging from maidenhead, the cherry, or even more symbolically, the temple. This fold of flesh came to be a crucial determinant for a woman’s virginity, if she did not have it intact she was not a virgin and therefore defiled in some way. I argue however that these notions change throughout history as long there is a need to control women’s bodies, mainly for reproduction and to bear legitimate children. For instance in Japanese history, particularly during the Heian Period (794-1185 AD), virginal court ladies were considered to have been odd and questionable; furthermore sexual promiscuity was allowed so long as it was discrete. Soon this would
change as the need to have legitimate sons was necessary for men, and thereby the need to control women’s sexuality. Even in contemporary times we hear of Middle Eastern states that murder their daughters if they are no longer virgins before marriage in so called “honor killings.” Here again is the notion that women’s sexuality must be controlled so long as they are a commodity to their male kin. Although I drew a few examples of two very distinct cultures and time periods, this does not take away from the fact that the center of all of this is the hymen.

I argue that within Western and Middle Eastern cultures this type of thinking regarding virginity is no different. This paper will discuss the emergence of the hymen discourse as it started with the publications of 16th century French midwives recordings of women’s genitalia. Following this, we will examine the Victorian Era’s (1837-1901) ideology of sexuality in which, according to Michel Foucault, the repression of sexual behavior began. Furthermore I seek to compare Victorian notions of virginity towards modern women of today and question whether we truly have abandoned these repressive ideals; here I will discuss the reality of women in certain Islamic states, particularly from Jordan, and their predicament. The hymen discourse is then a historical account on the emergence of the continuous need to repress women’s sexuality and keep their virginities intact.

The Hymen Discourse Begins: French 16th Century Publications and the Repressive Hypothesis
It all started with 16th century French midwives’ terminology on the female genitalia that made its way into publications which employed the use of metaphoric imagery to describe different parts of the vagina. In one instance, the hymen was described as the “lady of the middle in retreat,” a metaphor of a solider retreating from battle (Klairmont-Lingo, 1999, p.341). Some of these descriptions, especially the ones that were bawdy on virginity, became so popular that prominent anatomists tried to say they were false when in fact they were fairly accurate. However, because of the graphic descriptions these terms were scandalous material for pornographic stories that began to circulate around 16th century France. What caused even more chaos was when an anonymous author took Laurent Joubert’s chapter on virginity (which Joubert published in 1578), and basically wrote that there was a recipe for women to reconstruct their hymen. This in turn opened up more avenues for further publications in pornography and interestingly enough, this recipe made its way into judicial courts in which women were suspected of using “trickery in order to dissolve marriages or save their honor” (Klairmont-Lingo, 1999, p.348). The hymen made
its way from midwives accounts, to medical publications, and into the hands of
the population.

As we have seen, 16th century publications about the hymen circulated all
over France into the hands of the common people, of course to the dismay of
those in power who sought to control what people believed about sexuality.
Though this was in the 16th century it does not take away from the fact that
people are always seeking knowledge about sex and the more it is controlled the
more people want to know. Michel Foucault’s book *The History of Sexuality: An
Introduction* (1978) provides some insight into why this could be using his theory
of the repressive hypothesis. The main premise of Foucault’s book is that
repression links power, knowledge, and sexuality - the more people know about
it, the more the hierarchy wants to control it. Furthermore, Foucault argues that
it was not until the 19th century that individuals had been repressing their sexual
drives. He argues that it was during this time that sex became taboo and only
natural in the parent’s bedroom, and even then, heterosexual sex was the only
type of sex that was acceptable. Women were prudish in this sense because they
were only to have sex with their husbands for the sole purpose of procreation –
thereby, women’s sexuality is repressed and controlled, as she must remain a
virgin until her wedding night. This repressive behavior was so prominent
during the 19th century it seeped into paintings, giving rise to a particular artistic
movement.

Virginity made its way into an independent art form of the nineteenth
century in what Hope B. Werness calls the “Modest Maiden” (1985, p.5). These
lavish paintings portray women clothed, passive, and in touch with nature.
There is a sense of femininity associated with everything that is natural, as if to
accentuate the purity of women’s maidenhood with nature. It is almost as if the
hymen is embodied as the cloth that keeps her perfect body from being naked to
the rest of world. As Werness explains, “the ideal female was submissive,
dependent, innocent, pure, gentle, and self sacrificing, and lacked ambition,
anger, hostility and competitiveness. This ideal was implicitly spiritual and
asexual” (1985, p.5). In these paintings women’s stillness represents a moment in
time when she was pure and prudish, but more importantly sexually repressed.
Sex was so repressed in this era that “even piano legs had to be covered”
(Staples, 1973, p.12). Again, Foucault’s repressive hypothesis tells us that
sexuality was meant to be concealed behind closed doors, inside the parent’s
bedroom entailing that sex was only legitimate within a married couple.
Furthermore, we discover in depth that “the other Victorians” are those who
tolerate sexual “deviancy” from the norm in places such as the brothel and
mental hospitals. The prostitute serves an important role because she will offer her body to men of society in order to preserve the virginity of the proper lady. Thus, the hymen is safe from the perils of penetration (at least outside of the bedroom) and in some cases not at all.

**Into the Middle East: Virginity, a Matter of Life and Death**

Virgin women in most cultures, either Western or Middle Eastern, are regarded as pure, innocent, and expected be cautious with regards to their hymen. In certain Middle Eastern states, such as in Jordan, virginity is a dichotomous situation between life and death. Shelley Saywell’s documentary *Crimes of Honor* (2000) and Jan Goodwin’s book *The Price of Honor* (1994) are two perfect examples of how women in the Middle East are suffering at the hands of their families because their virginities are no longer intact. The documentary presents a distressful reality that the women of Jordan are facing: honor killings. We hear the story of an unfortunate young woman named Rania Arifat, who ran away from home because she had fallen in love with a man from her university – however, her parents had already promised her to her cousin. When her story circulated among journalists and activists, Arifat went on national radio expressing her fear that her family would murder her because she had run away, even though she was still a virgin. While on the air, her family promised not to harm her, but begged her to return safely. Arifat, believing their words, did so only to be sentenced to death by her father and brothers. Stories, like Arifat’s, are not at all rare throughout Jordan and other Middle Eastern states.

Like Saywell’s *Crimes of Honor* (2000), Jan Goodwin’s book *The Price of Honor* (1994) stresses honor in their titles because it is an essential part of women’s role in Islamist societies: honor, sexuality, and virginity, are synonymous in most of these Middle Eastern states. Goodwin writes that although the complete veiling restrictions placed on women has no basis in the Koran or any of the teachings of the Prophet, they are nonetheless essential because of women’s place in the Muslim world. Additionally, Goodwin states that “the honor of the Muslim family is believed to reside in women’s chastity and modesty; hence the stress on her being a virgin until her marriage and the very real threat of death if she is not” (1994, p.8). Goodwin’s book is pivotal and informative in that it covers the stories of many women from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, Israeli, and Egypt. Women talk about their horrible encounters in which they were raped, forced to marry their rapist, experience being put in jail for being raped, and worst of all, facing death. In most instances, the victims are never given the justice they deserve because
their assailants are only charged and rarely tried. Women and their sexualities are never safe from scrutiny of others.

Conclusion: Women and Modernity – The Hymen under Construction
In today’s modern societies there is a continuous struggle for women to take back their bodies, especially campaigns throughout the Western and Muslim worlds. Although things have changed since the Victorian era, there is still this notion that women’s sexuality must be controlled. David Berger makes the point that women’s bodies are controlled by men and serves as “the sexual and ego-gratification of males” (1973, p.667); thusly, the hymen still serves as a tool for men to control and degrade women, but also to harm other males. Goodwin makes the point that “rape is a weapon used for revenge” (1994, p.52) because in certain circumstances, these violent acts against women were meant to debase and offend their male kin.

Although the situation for women throughout the Middle East seems dire, there is activism aimed at stopping these atrocious acts against women. This is not to say that all women living in the Muslim world are being raped or stoned to death, but there is yet a high percentage rate. Still, there are cases where women have sex of their own accord because they love a man. Women admitting that they had sexual intercourse before marriage (no matter if they were raped or if it was consensual) is not an option; therefore women undergo a procedure to repair the missing flesh. Numerous Middle Eastern states have special gynecologists that surgically “reattach” the hymen for as low as $300. According to Goodwin’s encounter in Jordan, hymen restorations take only minutes and do not require any anesthesia since the needle used is relatively small. Further, the gynecologist that Goodwin interviewed said that the procedure should be done several days before the woman’s wedding night because it does not last very long (1994, p.279). Another way in which women are able to get away with not having their missing hymen is if their gynecologists sign a certification of “intact hymen” proving to her male kin that she is a virgin. Usually a gynecologist noticing how distressed a woman is about the whole procedure and knowing the real consequences of death a woman faces, will sign the certificate.

We all like to think that for the most part we are done with repressing our sexualities but clearly there are large pockets in the world that have no qualms with it. The reason for this I think is that societal traditions and cultural norms die hard, no matter what part of the world you live in. For instance, many activist women in the Muslim World argue that it is not Islam that hates its women; rather it is the men who interpret the Koran in such a way that benefit
males. Most of the restrictions placed on women are not written in the Koran, rather they are the traditions that individuals had adhered from time and time again. Again, Michel Foucault argued that repression links power, knowledge, and sexuality, the more people know about it the more the hierarchy wants to control it. Moreover, religion is misused as a tool to oppress individuals. Nolifar Ahmad, an activist for the liberation of women through Islamic rights, argues that Muslim women must study the Koran themselves and not accept others’ interpretations, by doing so women will be able to fight for their rights (Goodwin, 1994, p.75). Throughout history, Western and Middle Eastern cultures change constantly with regards to their ideas on sexuality; however, we must realize that we are the makers of our culture and only once we question those norms and traditions will there be change.

References
Women's Socio-political Fertility in America (1900-1940): Eugenics and Female Reproductive Control

Susan Rainsberger

Susan Rainsberger is a graduate of FIU with her Bachelor of Arts in Women’s Studies and two minors in English and Psychology. Upon graduation, Rainsberger took a position in the nonprofit sector, with the Non-Violence Project USA, working with Miami-Dade County Public School students to prevent youth violence. Outside of the work world, she is expanding her research on new age philosophy and spirituality and the impact that sociocultural constructions have on the ego. In her future, Rainsberger plans to continue to work in the nonprofit sector, advocating against violence and for equal rights, and plans to return to school for graduate work.

When economic instability, rapid growth in population, the Scientific Revolution, genetic engineering, economic instability, patriarchal ideology, racism, and bureaucracy came together in the turn of the 20th century, Eugenics was born worldwide. What came of the American Eugenics movement was the socio-political control of the human reproductive system, which took reign over women’s fertility in order to ensure ‘human betterment.’

While the bourgeoisie had been building its foundation since the end of the Middle Ages when feudal society was going to be abandoned, at the turn of the 19th century the Victorian era was in its early stages of development. The rise of the bourgeoisie and the entrance into the Victorian era paved the way for the growth of capitalism and a new social class rooted in the inextricable link between ambition, power, money and status. As society moved towards capitalism it became necessary to question and formulate a structured model on how to maintain the security of this socio-political powerhouse. As Michel Foucault points out in The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, at the heart of the sustainability of a strong economic and political country was sex:

“It was necessary to analyze the birthrate, the age of marriage, the legitimate and illegitimate births, the precocity and frequency of sexual relations, the
ways of making them fertile or sterile, the effects of unmarried life or of the prohibitions, the impact of contraceptive practices—of those notorious ‘deadly secrets’ which demographers on the eve of the Revolution knew were already familiar to the inhabitants of the countryside.” (p. 26)

As a consequence of economic regulation through sex, in conjunction with the upcoming Scientific Revolution and the combination of the booming medical interest in genetics, Eugenics was born. And, those most at stake to being subjected to the strictest, most inhumane regulations are those who threaten the normative social order that is historically known to be the white, heterosexual, abled, Christian man. To clarify, this is due to “economic factors that [threaten] the power of the white middle class and, in particular, white manhood, [as well as] internal symptoms of increasing fragility and weakness [that manifest] themselves in the male body” (Kline, 9). From this assumption, the rest is history. However, understanding the history of Eugenics, following its progression, and specifically relating this to the issues of the socio-political fertility of women is a crucial discourse in understanding Eugenics and its effect on women’s lives and American history.

Beginning with the shift from the ancient Greek Aristotelian one-sex model to the two-sex model beginning during the Renaissance era, one can understand the historical construction of gender. Under the one sex model, there was one sex, male. Women were merely a defective form of men incapable of contributing form to reproduction, but their function was to produce the matter (nourishment) to the fetus. However, in the two-sex model, men and women are anatomically distinguished. Consequently, in distinguishing the two sexes, gender construction and normative gender roles evolved. Although the two-sex model is definitively scientific, the gender construction that evolved from it is social construction that creates an institution of normative gendered social order. Essentially what it means to be a woman lies within what it means to be a socially acceptable woman, and to be a socially acceptable woman meant to be heterosexual, chaste, and passive or submissive. On the other hand, to be a socially acceptable man meant to be heterosexual and active.

The social construction of gender did not stop here. Soon after the establishment of the two-sex model, but still pre-Victorian era, Malthus released his popular discourse, Essay on the Principles of Population, in 1798.

“At the political heart of Malthus’s Essay lies a polemic against Britain’s Poor Laws. Malthus’s Essay responds to this widely perceived crisis not by calling for greater or even more efficient charity but by attacking the very theory upon which the Poor Laws were based: that alms relieved the misery of the poor.” (Burgett)
Primarily, Malthus’s essay outlines how population and resources do not multiply at the same rate and a country’s economic and political survival stand in jeopardy unless population is controlled. Specifically he presents three postulates:

I. “Food is necessary to the existence of man.

II. “The passion between the sexes is necessary and will remain in nearly its present state.

III. “The power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man.” (Pingle)

“In general, his modified population theory points to some form of birth control as being essential to social progress.” (Pingle) Although there is some evidence that William Godwin first proposed this idea that “mankind could progress toward perfection under appropriate social institutions,” (Pingle) Malthus is credited with fleshing out the theory and beginning the race for the ‘survival of the fittest.’

Once society moved into the Victorian era, beginning around the 1830’s, sexuality becomes rigidly regulated and confined between a man and a woman who are married with the sole intention to start a family. Michel Foucault demonstrates in his Repressive Hypothesis the silencing of the nature of sexuality within the Victorian era and the formation of sexual taboos. The very word, “sex,” was silenced in language all together. The flawed logic behind this sexual repression was: women were to remain virgins, and men were to continue reproducing more men. Women become exploited and subjected to extreme sexual control. As there is a common belief at this time that anyone inferior to the white male possesses an uncontrollable sexuality, women are clearly regulated to the point of absurd reproductive logic. One questions how a woman can remain a virgin while birthing children for the men who created them.

In 1865, Gregor Mendel reported his results of plant hybridizing experiments and formulated the basic laws of inheritance. This work was ground breaking and eventually has noted him to be the Father of modern genetics. However, initially his work was ignored and not rediscovered until the turn of the century. It wasn’t until James Watson and Francis Crick rediscovered Mendel’s work and associated the theory of plant inheritance to human inheritance and formulated the beginnings of what we understand today as DNA and chromosomes. Almost simultaneously Biology became an officially established biopower, being accepted by society as a single, dependable field. The Scientific Revolution had been born, and genetic engineering was its vision.

The implications of this medical advancement meant a new outlook on regulating population. Yes, it was still imperative to control sex and to create a discourse on sex and reproduction, as Foucault had mentioned. However, new possibilities were well within reach. Eugenics was established. To control
population didn’t just mean propaganda and prohibitive laws. Eugenics meant extensive scientific research to scientifically indicate that a master race biologically existed, consequently identifying an inferior race.

It is essential to examine the fears men had about women at this time, as this elucidates the absolute reproductive control of women by men and upheld by society. “Threatening the authority of white middle-class manhood in the late nineteenth century was the ‘woman question’” (Kline, 10). There was a new set of middle-class women rising and the

“‘new woman’ challenged the existing social order by demanding ‘rights and privileges customarily accorded only to white middle-class men.’ Between 1890 and 1910, the number of women attending college tripled, and by 1920 women accounted for nearly 50 percent of the university population. Choosing college and careers over marriage and motherhood, these women violated the nineteenth-century ‘cult of true womanhood,’ which placed middle-class women in the home.” (Kline, 10)

In essence, a woman’s fertility became a socio-political symposium where men moderated the dialogue. During WWI Roosevelt laid complete social responsibility on women when he stated that the white race would face extinction if women did not “heed Gillman’s call to ‘social responsibility...as makers of men” (Kline, 11). In examining Roosevelt’s statement, America’s patriarchal order is clearly identifiable in recognizing that women are the primary reproducer, in the sense that they are able to contribute both form and nourishment, yet the ideal product of reproduction, the ideal human being, is nonetheless male and women are burdened with the blame of the fate of humanity.

In 1915, at the San Francisco Panama Pacific Exposition the National Conference on Race Betterment promoted Eugenics. Visual evidence (photographs) were provided, particularly from the feats of the Swedish Eugenics movement. In addition, models were created alongside charts and graphs of the race betterment plan. The exhibition documented dramatic visual evidence of the extinction of the white race if Eugenics did not intervene. This tapped deeply into white middle class fears. With the war, the strongest, healthiest men were being lost, while the weakest were at home. Soon, there was perceived to be an

“alarming increase of the insane and mental defectives’ [that] suggested that the ‘feebleminded’ were ‘spreading like cancerous growths...infecting the blood of whole communities...Yet it was not until the early twentieth century, when Eugenics linked feeblemindedness to ‘race suicide’ and the ‘girl problem,’ that social commentators expressed anxiety about the ‘menace of the feebleminded.’” (Kline, 15)
Beginning in 1910 there was a widespread cultural debate over the meaning of womanhood in modern America by linking female sexuality and mental deficiency. Female sexuality became a key component to race betterment according to pioneers of the Eugenics movement.

During the Great Depression, the economy stood in great jeopardy and there was a slight shift from the focus on feeblemindedness to a focus on poverty amongst the socially irresponsible. The American Conference on Birth Control published surveys demonstrating that as economic stability decreased, reproduction increased (Caron, 81). They promoted temporary sterilization (birth control methods) and enforced birth limitation as a component of social work. Government involvement with contraception increased in the 1930's, particularly within low-income areas (Caron, 94). At the same time, feminists were fighting for their reproductive rights. This is particularly due to the fact that the feminist movement of the 1920's and 1930's was predominantly middle-class, educated white women seeking independence within a patriarchal imperialist society. Yet, there was little support to allow these women to temporarily sterilize themselves. Although, when the Rhode Island Birth Control League (RIBCL) opened in 1931, many of these feminist advocates did gain reproductive control. The RIBCL was a free clinic that was endorsed by prominent physicians (eugenicists) and served women who were either self admitted or admitted by their husbands or the state. The agenda of the eugenicists to target the feebleminded women backlashed. Most women were self admitted and were the educated white middle-class women (Caron, 103). And, a lot of the methods of contraception that RIBCL forced onto its non-self admitted patients were inconvenient to the husband so he pulled them out of the program (Caron, 99).

Also during the Great Depression was an expansion in abortion services (Caron, 106). However, abortions were by a woman’s choice and were very costly, demonstrating that only financially stable, independent thinking women were having abortions, which again was not the agenda of the eugenicists. However, most physicians set their ideal agenda aside due to the economic state of the country.

All the aforementioned material is what is coined the term Positive Eugenics. Women were targeted for race suicide since they were allegedly not meeting social expectations. Politics and media used influential evidence to convince white women to come over to the right side of the debate, but essentially it was the simple fact that without white women, men could not fulfill the eugenic dream of racial purity and white supremacy.

As the Great Depression worsened, America moved from segregation to sterilization. The economic situation of the country and the “emphasis on
population control led to a push for sterilization of the ‘unfit’ in public institutions” (Caron, 109). The perceived threat of the extinction of the white race grew stronger. Eugenics propaganda was essentially ineffective. The American economy had crashed and population kept growing. Fears and anxieties heightened and greater regulation and legislation was sought to be the answer. So, the best way to effectively reform this moral deficiency that women were allegedly infected with, and ruining the “New Race” (Franks, 21-43) because of, was to mandate that women meet sexual and reproductive standards. “For this reason, they perceived sterilization to be the most effective strategy for curbing the reproduction of the unfit” (Kline, 33).

In implementing sterilization, Eugenics becomes not just a convincing argument for white middle-class women by burdening them with the fate of humanity; it becomes mandated to “search and destroy” (Franks, 91) genetic deficiencies in women. Herbert Spencer Jennings marks the significant impact of this kind of Eugenics, Negative Eugenics, that began to permeate in the United States when he states,

“A defective gene – such a thing as produces diabetes, cretinism, feeblemindedness – is a frightful thing; it is the embodiment, the material realization of a demon of evil; a living self-perpetuating creature, invisible, impalpable, that blasts the human being in bud or leaf. Such a thing must be stopped wherever it is recognized.” (Franks, 67)

The rise in sterilization during the Great Depression is key to how social structure, hetero-normativity, and racial purity are all inextricably linked to capitalism. Bureaucrats saw sterilization as a “cost-effective means to deal with undesirable reproduction” (Caron, 110). The Human Betterment Foundation released the following statement:

“Sterilization removes no organs or tissues from the body, interferes with no blood or nerve supply, produces no physical changes. It does not in any degree unsex the individual, except in making parenthood impossible.” (Caron, 110)

But, to take away parenthood from an individual is to take away their ability to fully mature into the social identification of their gender, which is socially and politically definitive of what being a woman or man is. Also, when sterilization was being discussed as an implementation to the Eugenics methods of moralizing, the argument stood that sterilization, compared to segregation, was more cost effective, reached more people, and effectively fixed female promiscuity, whereas segregation worked counterproductively and often inefficiently (Kline, 49).

“By 1936 twenty-seven states had either compulsory or voluntary sterilization laws...Between 1907 and 1936 23,118 people were sterilized under state law; most of
them were mentally deficient, idiots, insane, epileptics, or imbeciles” (Caron, 110-111). It is worthy to note that at this time, epilepsy was associated with sexuality due to the misperception of orgasms as seizures. Furthermore, belonging to any of the abovementioned classifications was a matter of subjective opinion and rested in the hands of bigots.

The culmination of the sterilization of the feebleminded was seen through the history of the Sonoma State Home for the Feebleminded. Originally established for mentally challenged children to be reformed and reintegrated into society, with the rise of Eugenics, it became a place for women to be sterilized. “According to one expert in 1942, more eugenic sterilizations were performed on ‘mental defectives’ than in any other institution in the world” (Kline, 33). Between 1910 and 1920 the population of inmates increased by fifty percent. The largest “type” of person that was targeted was referred to as the female “high-grade moron” (Kline, 33). Sterilization was officially institutionalized as a practice by the 1920’s. As Kline summarizes:

“The story of the Sonoma House – its patients, practitioners, methods, and policies – dramatizes the sweeping transformation of mental deficiency from a treatable disease to a sexually loaded, gender-specific, permanent condition requiring either lifelong institutionalization or sexual sterilization.” (p. 33)

Sterilization laws had been enacted as early as 1907. They were not commonly practiced until 1918, in part due to an amended California sterilization law in 1917 that stated sterilization was to be used on not only those who were insane, chronically manic and who had dementia, but to “all those suffering from perversion or marked departure from normal mentality” (Kline, 50). With the rise of sterilization, Eugenics itself became segregated. Physicians were divided between segregation Eugenics and sterilization Eugenics, or positive and negative Eugenics. Those who promoted segregation, regardless of sterilization laws, believed that by taking away the risk of pregnancy from a woman that the nation would truly decay and promiscuity would run rampant. It was the only substantial burden, economically and politically, that women faced, by course of nature, which acted as a deterrent from sexual behavior.

Within Sonoma we see this segregation also. Dawson, a segregation advocate, refused to follow sterilization procedures. In 1918, when he died, Butler, a sterilization advocate, transformed the system. In twenty-six years he himself had performed 1,000 sterilizations and had supervised more than 5,400 sterilizations (Kline, 52). Although Sonoma’s sterilizations on women were only a slight majority to the sterilizations of men, the reasoning behind the sterilizations were to protect society by sterilizing women, while men were sterilized for “therapeutic reasons” (Kline, 53).
The widespread criticism of sterilization in the United States in conjunction with new information of the Nazi ideology of Germany’s Eugenics program and its perverted programs, Eugenics took a turn in the 1930’s. Because of the news that had been seeping into America’s media about concentration camps, selections, and Racial Hygiene, the American people called for reform in population policy. It became evident that the American “selection” process, in theory, was no different than overseas. Media began to criticize sterilization and many organizations were backing down in promoting their policies (Caron, 2008). Ultimately, “Nazi population policy contributed to the decline of hard-line Eugenics in the United States” primarily as America entered the 1940’s (Caron, 115). In addition, there were new scientific advancements in genetics and medical treatments return to a soft Eugenics population policy.

Although hard line Eugenics fell out of favor starting in the 1940’s, Eugenics still exists today. Welfare programs have shifted from controlling individuals to advocating for counseling for the individual family to choose what is right for them. In one sense, it liberates individuals with the freedom to choose. However, on the other hand, it only takes the scrutiny off of the American government, while it remains a social injustice to humanity, and is masked and justified as a personal family decision. It is not unmerited to say that women have received the most injustice since the beginning of the Eugenics movement. Eugenics puts a grave burden on women because “with genetic selection, the mother becomes the quality control gatekeeper of the gene pool...The burden of eugenic responsibility falls squarely on the shoulders of women” who become the target of both propaganda and tyranny (Franks, 93).

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This paper will seek to explore some of the debates surrounding feminism and the issue of women who choose to engage in work that specifically entails removal of clothing or the performance of sexually-provocative acts for financial gain. My aim is to investigate the arguments offered by feminists as regards both the potential for empowerment and freedom as well as the denigration and exploitation which erotic dancing, or similar forms of legal ‘sex-work’, may be found to entail (sex-work here will be a term used loosely to describe any paid employment wherein the primary object is sexual in nature). Does stripping demean women and promote an ideology within society that encourages their objectification? Or, is a conscious decision to engage in such a career evidence of female empowerment and the right to personal expression? Finding a common ground for the issue requires analyzing the basic tenets of each opposing side.

The Naked Issue
Everyday in the United States, several hundred thousand women remove all or a majority of their clothing in an establishment which can generate anywhere from $500,000 to 5 million annually as part of a 57 billion dollar industry (Hanna, 1998, p.41). Alternately called strippers, exotic dancers, nude dancers, burlesque performers, striptease artists, or peelers, these women operate within one of the only occupations in America wherein the concept of labor is euphemistically
labeled or very loosely interpreted: that of the “sex worker.” Theirs is an ambiguous position within society existing somewhere between socially-acceptable representations of sexuality, as portrayed in many forms of modern media, and the predominantly socially-unacceptable work engaged in by other sex workers, such as prostitutes and, to a lesser extent, pornographic actors. Thus, they create a space within the dialogue of sexuality and feminism that questions the object-subject dynamic of performance, the politics of free will, and the nature of individual versus public rights; with implications regarding societal ramifications for the continuation of an industry that is potentially demeaning, potentially empowering, and beset by issues concerning both labor conditions and morality. This essay seeks to provide clarification of the opposing arguments concerning exotic dancing, to question the construction of those arguments, and hopefully to point out areas of research which would benefit from future exploration.

**The Opposing Sides: Empowerment vs. Exploitation**

Exchanging visual, and occasionally physical, stimulation for monetary gain transcends the traditional boundaries of a free-market system in that it subjects the performer to the potentiality of being perceived as an object or good which may be readily purchased, rather than a person with individual sense of will and agency. Yet, as such a performer is offering a service that utilizes property of which they are the sole proprietor (i.e. their own body) in a manner that is available only to desiring consumers above a legally-sanctioned age limit, it could be argued that prohibition of stripping, or of institutions which offer a setting for nude dancing, violates personal rights and further subjugates women by stigmatizing overt displays of feminine sexuality while simultaneously denying them access to a financially profitable occupation. The debate then is one of both philosophical and practical concern. Two opposing camps of feminist thinkers, radical feminists and sex-radical feminists (or sex libertarians), are cited as the primary proponents of each side of the argument.

The radical feminist perspective is that, “structurally, dancing is exploitative and destructive to women both as individuals and as a group” (Barton, 2002, p.600). Female dancers are paid to perform in what is generally referred to as the sex-object role. The nature of their work leads to objectification and unequal distribution of power within the system reinforces patriarchal views of female subservience and sexual availability. “In the dramatic, sartorial design of the show, the male spectators are protected by their dressed state, while the nudity of the female performers suggests the cultural and physical vulnerability and accessibility of women to men” (Katherine Liepe-Levinson, 1998, p.14).
performers have limited control over their environment, routinely coping with poor working conditions that lead to both physical and emotional consequences. In her interviews with dancers in a typical middle-class strip club in San Francisco, Bernette Barton (2005) noted that,

Several of the participants reported discrimination in obtaining housing, employment, and medical care. Many dancers hide the fact that they dance from family and friends... Some, when finances are tight and other dancers are making more money, agree to participate in abusive, invasive, or dangerous sexual behaviors that they previously felt violated their boundaries. (p. 599)

Furthermore, the dancer who blurs her personal rules and names her price has then monetarily valued an aspect of herself—her pride, her sexuality, her character—that we culturally learn is priceless... the more a dancer values her self-esteem at a certain figure, the more important it becomes to make that much money—no matter what it takes. (Barton, 2007, p.585)

This societal stigma combined with non-standard personal interactions and situations within the sex industry can, and at least occasionally does, result in an altered perception of self and others for the dancer. Many note an inability to maintain stable relationships with men and gauge themselves according to a perceived level of attractiveness that is based upon conventional, and unrealistic, standards of beauty. Finally, not only does the harmful aspects of her job weigh considerably upon the performer, but, “being ‘the object of the lustful male gaze,’ or economically exploited, rebounds to all women. Thus patriarchy and its capitalism, [radical feminists] assert, keep all women in bondage” (Hanna, 1998, p.63).

In opposition to these claims are the proponents of sex-radical feminism, whom hold that women have the right to engage in any lawful employment they choose. Stripping mimics patriarchal based sexual positions, with the women being desired and the man being the active desirer, yet “the body as object of intervention, in Foucault’s terms, also becomes construed as a subject in exotic dance... adult women who choose are often conflated with women and girls who are coerced against their wills and surrender volition” (Hanna, 1998, p.63). The mere act of deciding to be objectified precludes the performer from being completely denied subjectivity in relation to her patron whom, in any event, she may refuse to offer her services to at any given time. Not only would abolishing strip clubs be in violation of 1st amendment rights but a perceived necessity for

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1 Thus far two cases, *City of Erie v. Pap’s A.M.* (2000) and *Barnes v. Glen Theatre, Inc.* (1991), have come before the supreme court. In both instances, the court ruled that nude dancing/stripping was covered under the 1st amendment but only ‘marginally within the perimeter of acceptable expression’, thus validating particular laws governing the manner in which it is presented or performed. (Adler, 2007)
prohibition implies that men lack full self control when confronted with displays of female sexuality. “Feminist discourses which present stripping as harmful to women construct the woman as a ‘fearful, protected feminine object’, reducing ‘women’s sense of agency’ and victimizing them” (Pilcher 2009, Lewis 2000). Accusations surrounding the background of the performers, or their conduct as regards drugs and alcohol, indicate a need for stricter regulations (or enforcement of existing regulations) within the club setting but data has not been found to support claims that the environment in which stripping takes place inherently leads to substance abuse or that nude dancing has an adverse effect on viewers. Barton (2006) states that, “for many of the women I interviewed, it was only a short step across — an admittedly large taboo — from mainstream expectations about their sexual desirability to stripping for money,” (p.28) indicating that stripping may serve as a reflection of women’s subjugation in society, rather than actively perpetuating it. Gender differences arise in the arena of the strip club as well, with male dancers purporting a maintained sense of power despite their personal objectification (Tewksbery, 1993). Thus, it appears logical to assume that the dynamics of stripping would alter given a modification within the greater culture concerning women’s status in relation to men. Finally, anecdotal evidence shows that a percentage of the performers feel empowered by nude dancing. The role of ‘stripper’ is one that is willingly assumed by the dancer. Furthermore, her ability to engage in overt displays of sexual power confound traditional belief systems which have undermined feminine sexuality in the past, leading to progressive views of self and sexual expression.

Reconciliation
The next question in examining the arguments set forth by both sides in this debate is then, can there be a reconciliation of ideologies that will satisfy the majority of feminists (and women as a whole)? In a word: no. One cannot legally support specific rules of safe game play in an illegal sport. Still, Chancer argues that “partisans of the sex wars have potentially reconcilable goals: for women to enjoy sexual freedom (the emphasis of sex radicals) and to experience freedom from sexism (the emphasis of radical feminists)” (Barton, 2002, p.32). The focus then becomes improving the labor conditions for the performers and reducing societal stigma.

As a burlesque dancer herself, Jo Weldon of the Sex Worker's International Media Watch believes it is the denigration of female performers which leads to an inability to adequately research, understand, or aid women in need within the sex-industry. "When sex workers are in the news, they are often portrayed as being a blight upon communities when they are in fact members of those
communities” (Weldon, 2005). “Given [her] time investment, she is identified, more so than male dancers, by this occupation. This means the negative connotations associated with exotic dancing are more likely to be applied to her” (Bernard et al., 2003, p.7). The question of whether or not there is something inherently demeaning in the work, or if our culture has simply chosen to demean individuals who engage in this work for moral, religious, or other philosophical reasons, overlooks the inherent ‘value’ in reducing the negative consequences of stripping in the present; a task which begins with changing outdated cultural perspectives.

As noted in the introduction to this paper, ‘sex work’ is a label that is used very broadly to describe multiple venues for garnering income, including some that are currently illegal (e.g. prostitution and the use of under-aged performers). Concern over the moral validity of sex-work in general allows the public to disregard the amount of active and emotional labor involved. Melissa Ditmore prepared a discussion on the sex-industry for the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Geneva in June of 1999. She points out that, addressing the sex industry as labor is a prerequisite for including sex work in discussions of women's and worker's rights. Otherwise, we risk losing sight of the violations of labor norms in the sex industry in the name of moralizing.

Both radical and sex-radical feminists have made the mistake of creating a binary discourse on a topic that has multiple interconnected aspects; not the least of which is the politics of ‘free will.’ If women are 'choosing' to engage in exotic dancing, further ostracizing them from main-stream society, attempting to abolish the practice, or supporting them without investigation into the dangers such an occupation can entail does little to affect the circumstances of individual women (and recall that there are over 500,000 individual women in question). It also does little to enhance the sense of agency women need in order to overcome their subordinate role in society. Research in all areas of the sex-industry is needful as there is little comparative analysis between subsets of the field or between sex work and other forms of employment. Until this information is gathered, however, women throughout the United States can benefit by taking heed of the debate surrounding exotic dancers as it illustrates the anxiety, fear, and oppression of female sexuality experienced by Americans both within and outside of the sex-industry.

The work these women perform places them in an ambiguous position that challenges cultural norms but which may also support a trend toward the degradation and objectification of all women. Regardless of which side of the debate one feels personally vested in, no true feminist can claim to be working for the rights of women while female performers in this industry suffer unduly
under unnecessary physical and emotional stresses caused by their profession. In the end, the overall goal of feminists may differ depending on whether one believes in the abolishment or acceptance of sex work, but the means to achieve that end are remarkably similar: empowering women, including their points of view in feminist discourse, working to improve their living (and working) conditions, and educating individuals as to their personal rights and responsibilities, to themselves as well as each other.

References


Interrogating the Birthing Experience:  
A Feminist Perspective of Women’s Choice in Childbirth

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The redefinition of childbirth as clinical crisis validated the expansion of medicine’s jurisdiction over pregnancy and labor. The rise of obstetrical care has caused a steady erosion of maternal choice, control, and satisfaction, a trend which continues to be justified in the name of safety (Cahill, 2000). An overwhelming majority of births are still highly medicalized, which often result in adverse perinatal outcomes for both mother and infant.

Many women in the United States are dissatisfied with the birthing experience, especially due to discrepancies between what they expect and hope for and what they actually encounter (Thachuk, 2007). Women’s perception of their childbirthing experience is important for immediate perinatal outcomes, breastfeeding and parenting skills, and for her self-esteem (Ballen & Fulcher, 2006). Western society’s patriarchal and over-interventionist systems have lost faith in women’s natural birthing abilities (Scotland, 2007) and have limited women’s capability to exercise genuine choice (Cahill, 2000). Women often make choices based on inadequate or biased sources and their obligation to make significant sacrifices on behalf of their partners (good wife) and children (good mother), while some women do not have choices available to them due to lack of education or resources.

Gender discrimination, the increasing medicalization of women’s bodies (Reissman, 1998), and the valorization of scientific knowledge have all been
strong areas of feminist discourse in the women’s health movement (Thachuk, 2007). Childbirth is a biological and personal event for women, and has also become political and cultural, entrenched in and consequential for gender relations (Beckett, 2005). Feminist scholars and activists across all three waves of feminism have taken active interest in childbirth and reproductive justice, but there is much conflict in regards to these issues within feminist discourse itself, causing another yet rift in feminist scholarship.

In what follows, the debate over maternal choice in Western practices is used to explore critical issues in the internal feminist discourse in childbirth and gives birth to three areas of inquiry. The first section probes the transformation of the childbirth experience which excludes and devalues women and their choices. The second section interrogates the current internal feminist debate with regard to maternal choice and analyzes the weaknesses within that discourse. The third section examines future considerations regarding women’s choice in maternal health care reform and feminist discourse.

Redefining Childbirth in the United States: From the Hands of Women to the Control of Men

Until the 17th century, most women in the United States delivered at home, typically with a midwife in attendance. During the 18th century, physicians armed with increasing scientific knowledge and technology began to dispute the intuitive knowledge of midwifery practice (Cahill, 2000). By the 19th century, excluding women from childbirth extended to the effective barring of entry into formal medical institutions. But birthing women were not easily convinced that science and technology necessitated a change in traditional practices. Women still relied on midwife or family member attendance and support during labor. In response to this, Jean Donnison and fellow scholars argued that medical men conspired “to frighten women into believing that male attendance was necessary by exaggerating the dangers of childbirth” (as cited in Cahill, 2000, p. 338). Physicians used their authority to redefine childbirth as a dangerous, pathological, high-risk event (Beckett, 2005). Lesley Doyal upholds this as a “covert mechanism of social control under the guise of benevolent help” (as cited in Cahill, 2000, p. 338).

After the 20th century, the location of birth changed. By 1939, 50% of births took place in a hospital. Since the 1970s, hospital births became the norm across all demographic groups, with hospitalization rates as high as 97% (Cahill, 2000) with 90% attendance by physicians (Beckett, 2005). Popular perception was shaped to associate and depend on hospitals and physicians for the safe outcome of pregnancy. Donnison and Doyal’s arguments still hold true in maternity care
today. Potential risks are presented in a way to elicit fear and assure patient compliance (Thachuk, 2007), and Western society still devalues the caring work of women—nurses, midwives, teachers, homemakers—and gives physicians and specialists prestige for their medical and technological expertise.

**Transformation and Critique**

There is convincing evidence that involvement of medicine (and men) in childbirth brought new hazards to mothers and infants instead of greater safety. In the 19th century, there were increased in infections and injuries, especially with the careless use of new technologies such as forceps (Cahill, 2000). Routine procedures were adopted to provide comfort for physicians, while limiting women’s comfort and movement. Today, women deal with the erosion and illusion of choice, impersonal institutionalized care, over-interventionist practices, and often the preference of fetal rights over maternal rights.

While women always had some plan for their birth, written birth plans were not introduced until the 1980s. Creating one encouraged women to think about what they valued in their experience, clarify expectations, communicate with their care provider, and to make informed decisions (Lothian, 2006). Hospitals became providers of childbirth education and used classes as a way to market their obstetric programs and control what women were taught. The idea of the birth plan also became institutionalized, and templates were distributed that reflected available options, usually in the form of a checklist of medical interventions (Lothian, 2006).

The ideology of technology connotes order, objectivity, rationality, and predictability. It also treats women’s bodies as potentially malfunctioning machines (Beckett, 2005). Many technological interventions have been counter-productive to health outcomes. Diagnostic tests often overstate possible risks. Fetal monitors, for example, overestimate fetal distress and have contributed to increased obstetric interventions, especially Cesarean section rates. In the United States, 70% of women chose epidurals, 20% of births are induced, 25% are surgical in nature, and four of the eight most common surgical procedures are obstetric (Beckett, 2005). These rates exceed acceptable standards for care established by the World Health Organization (WHO). Studies have not proven that technology has made childbirth safer, and most interventions are frequently unnecessary.

In the past 20 years, there has been a return to the midwife movement in response to critique of routine hospital care. Management of increasing technology, such as fetal monitors and epidurals, play a part in distancing nurses from the birthing mother (Ballen & Fulcher, 2006), and there is a potential threat
of medicalization and fragmented care of midwifery services. This is already the case in the United Kingdom (Thachuk, 2007), and is a current threat to North America. In response to the desire for one-on-one support and satisfying childbirth experience, more women are beginning to choose doulas over midwives and physicians to attend their childbirth. Studies have shown that the effects of labor support are greater when continuous labor support was provided by a caregiver who is not an employee of the hospital (Pascali-Bonaro & Kroeger, 2004).

Current Feminist Discourse in Childbirth

In the early 20th century, first wave feminists fought for a woman’s right to pain relief in the birthing process. Feminist scholars and activists were furious with the medical resistance to pain medications for women, and the struggle became a campaign for responsive and respectful medicine, as well as choices in childbirth and control over one’s body. While feminists won the battle for pain drugs, they also lost when they found that scopolamine, one of the pain drugs, was found to be harmful to infant health (Beckett, 2005).

In the 1960s and 1970s, second wave feminists critiqued institutionalized birthing practices and advocated natural birth methods (e.g., home births, midwife attendance) for women. Institutionalized medicine opposed what was termed the “alternative birth” movement. This movement emphasized childbirth as an important life experience, and women had the right to choose their birth environment and be free from impersonal and the counter-productive hospitals and technology.

Third wave feminists have a strong antagonism to the radical and cultural feminists’ alternative birth movement. Some post-structuralist feminists have even joined medical opposition to these efforts to return birth to its natural phenomenon. They argue that the alternative birth movement valorizes natural birth and, by celebrating gender differences, cultural feminists re-invoke binaries that result in the failure to deconstruct dualisms that underpin patriarchal society (Beckett, 2005). Romanticizing natural birth leads others to perceive that other forms are therefore unnatural and this can lead to essentialist and elitist thought (e.g., “I’m a better mother than you because I had a natural birth”). Post-structuralist feminists maintain that medical technology and interventions—including Cesarean sections—can be an empowering choice for women by serving their needs and desires, and the natural birth movement’s rigid stance on medicalization limits this choice to women.

Reconstruction of Feminist Discourse on Childbirth
There are several flaws in the internal feminist discourse regarding childbirth. The underlying bases of these shortcomings is the limited analysis to rhetoric of “natural” and “medical,” disregard of specific practices that have important perinatal outcomes (both positive and negative), and the illusion of choice. This section critiques these issues and adds an evidence base for the reconstruction of feminist discourse on childbirth.

**Natural vs. Medical Binaries**

Third wave feminists critique cultural feminism’s value of gender difference, yet at the same time they are accepting the very dualisms they criticize. Instead of limiting themselves to a binary, they should accept difference and expand categories to be more inclusive of ever diversifying groups (e.g. the binary man/woman does not include transgender and intersex individuals). Post-structuralist feminists also criticize cultural feminists use the word “natural.” This is a weak argument since “natural birth” is inherently organic, and was historically, until a few centuries ago, the traditional standard of care. The existing binary since the medicalization of childbirth has been that medical birth is “standard” care and natural birth is an “alternative.” (There is a problem with this language, but I will not argue semantics here.)

Medically and technologically assisted births do not have to necessitate a negative connotation if they were indeed as safe an option and didn’t preclude consideration of broader areas of justice and equality (e.g., lack of perinatal health education, access, and resources). Natural (vaginal) births have better perinatal outcomes than medicalized births (Romano & Goer, 2007), and the emergence of the natural birth movement has given women something to compare obstetric models of care to. With this empirical evidence, we are able to find the faults in “medical” births and repair them. In a safer, more healthful society, we can respect medical births as a “different” choice, rather than the negative part of a binary.

**Cesarean Sections: From Problem to Choice and Back Again**

Technological interventions can indeed be a tool to empower women to plan and control her childbirth experience, provided that the methods are safe and do no harm to mother or infant. The rates of Cesarean sections in the United States have increased radically in the last few decades. In the 1980s, the rate was less than 20% and by 2007, the estimated rate was over 30%. In the private sector of Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, however, Cesarean rates are excessively high, between 70% and 99% (Crossley, 2007). Recent studies have shown a correlation between babies born by means of Cesareans and neonatal (less than one month old) death. Infants were 2.9 times more likely to die than those born vaginally (Romano & Goer, 2007).
Like many cosmetic surgeries, Cesareans are often elective treatments that are unnecessary. Obstetricians blame maternal requests as the most important factor for rising rates, however the reality of this perceived demand is a falsehood. After a national audit, the United Kingdom reported that maternal requests only represented 7% of elective Cesareans (McCourt, Bick, & Weaver, 2004). In another study examining maternal requests for elective Cesareans, participants requested the procedure for what they considered a necessary medical or psychological reason. Fear for herself or her infant was a major factor behind women’s requests along with the belief that Cesarean sections were safer.

Physicians interviewed in the above study did identify fear as an important factor of women’s requests, but admitted they didn’t have the time in their schedule to addressing their patient’s fears (Weaver, Statham, & Richards, 2007). The claim that C-sections are safer and the risks of vaginal births are underestimated deceives women and doesn’t allow them to make a fully informed decision regarding her childbirth experience.

Pain & Fear Relief: What Women Are Not Told

Some cultural feminists believe that pain must be part of the full natural birthing experience. When women are told that childbirth is excruciating, it leaves them fearful and with few options. They are told they can mitigate the pain with tools or choose to feel nothing with the help of drugs. Due to the fear associated with pain, and ironically, the pain resulting from fear, many women choose analgesics or anesthetics. What women are not told is that one medical intervention makes another more likely. Epidural use is associated with an increase risk of instrumental vaginal birth, intrapartum fever, fetal malposition, and anal sphincter laceration (Romano & Goer, 2007, p.38). What women are not told is that non-pharmacological pain relief methods have potential to avoid these harms while enhancing women’s perception of her birth experience. Evidence suggests that women receiving acupuncture or using self-hypnosis techniques are less likely to require pain medications when compared with routine care (Romano & Goer, 2007).

What women are not told is that comfortable birth is a real possibility for women (Wildner, 2004). HypnoBirthing, a self-hypnosis program for childbirth, teaches that severe pain does not need to accompany normal labor. Studies indicate that these techniques reduce labor duration, post-partum depression, complications, and the need for pain drugs and medical interventions (Mantle, 2003; Scotland, 2007). Some studies show that 60% to 70% of HypnoBirthing mothers need no pain medication (Cyna, Andrew, & McAuliffe, 2006; Donegan, 2006). Self-hypnosis also improves maternal satisfaction and may result in higher rates of vaginal birth (Romano & Goer, 2007).
The Illusion of Choice
Choice is an important part of feminist moral discourse, especially with regards to reproductive issues, but the discourse lacks the analysis of the reasons for which women are making choices. Are Cesareans an empowerment for women’s choice, or a means for wives to sexually please their husband’s with their toned vaginas? Like the Cesarean section and epidural studies above, many women make choices on biased information about risks and benefits and can become victims of medical manipulation. Physicians and hospitals have own their agenda and interests (e.g., convenience, profitability, liability reduction) that shape the way information is given to women. For instance, if a Cesarean procedure is more comfortable and profitable for an obstetrician, he won’t necessarily deter his patient from choosing one. This is alike to plastic surgeon telling a prospective patient, “You’re beautiful as you are, you don’t need surgery.”

Choice can be coerced, choice can be misinformed, and sometimes choice may not even be available. The concept of choice depends on access to reliable information as well as presence of genuine alternatives. Informed consent and decision making in the current model of health and maternity care does not respect women’s choice and autonomy to its full extent (Thachuk, 2007).

The Future of Feminist-Approved, Women-Centered Childbirth
Future Considerations for Maternal Health Care Reform
Maternal health care needs to give women proper and safe methods for childbirth including, but not limited to technology, pharmacology, and provider support. Evidence-based practices should be standard in any birth setting. Proponents of midwifery and doula care should be utilized by medical professionals since they far exceed obstetrician safety and satisfaction records, and at lower costs.

Women also need to be given the tools and empowerment to make well-informed choices (e.g., lose fear, feel safe, be educated). The $800 million that can be saved by reducing Cesarean rate by just 5% can be used for sexual health and prenatal education and could have dramatic effects on infant and child care (Beckett, 2005). Since timing of childbirth and nutrition education is a problem in the United States, especially with low-income women, information should to be disseminated in appropriate sexual health education programs in schools. Antenatal classes should include evidence-based reports, as well as the policies and procedures of local hospitals (Lothian, 2006). The birth plan should include flow charts for alternative decisions in case there are complications with their desired plan, and care providers need to support and respect women’s birth
plans and choices. Women need to learn how trust their bodies and physicians need learn to trust the decisions of their well-informed patients. Women should have the right to choose their best childbirth option, but must also have access to quality care and resources to carry out that choice.

Reconstruction of Feminist Discourse on Childbirth

The three waves of feminists agree that women should have a right to choose. But so far, the agreement ends there. The continued deconstructions and lack of construction in childbirth discourse could leave feminists with a “negative” feminism. Feminists can join in their efforts from the framework of “right to choice” alone. They can strive to improve women’s ability to make meaningful choices and work to have those choices supported. Feminist must be ready to support those women who choose natural birth, medical interventions, or make the choice not too choose and instead to trust the experts to take control of the birthing process (Stockill, 2007). Are we ready for a fourth wave of feminism which can include the re-construction of feminist politics around childbirth and reproductive justice?

Conclusion

Childbirth in Western society is problematic and women have an illusion of choice in their childbirthing experiences. Feminist scholars and activists, while very passionate about women’s choice in the areas of reproductive justice, are involved in an internal discourse that limits their analysis to the rhetoric of the natural and medical model binaries of childbirth, and disregard the perinatal outcomes of specific practices as well as women’s illusion of choice. There is a need to reconstruct feminist politics around childbirth and implore each other to find a common ground so we can fight collectively for the reproductive rights of women.

References


Wendy X. Ordóñez was born in Cali, Colombia. She is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Art Education at Florida International University, under the direction of prominent artist and Professor David Y. Chang. Ordóñez’s paintings are meant to highlight the beauty of the world which many times goes unnoticed. Being aware of the global situation, her paintings do not depict suffering or tragedy, rather she deliberately wants to have something beautiful as input to the world every time she paints. If you are interested in more of her work please visit: http://wxstudio.blogspot.com

“Femininity”
This painting conveys the delicateness of the female figure. Soft and sensual, yet never frail.

[Pastel on paper: 18inx24in.]
Nathan Delinois is a South Florida artist. He has been creating art throughout his lifetime, and has taken up painting seriously for the past 5 years. Most of his work is in watercolor, acrylic, and oil paint. His art is figurative and incorporates text sourced from various forms of media such as literature, television, movies, songs, etc. The imagery is directly related to the text and quotes found within a majority of my work.”
“Essentially the Kind of Sense”

“This painting is titled: “Essentially the Kind of Sense” (48inx36in) and is created in watercolor. This piece relates to composition and the considerations an artist makes in the creation of art in general. The female figure represents the use of the female form in the art world from as long as art has been around. In my work I try to portray the woman not as simply an object but as a multi-dimensional human being.”
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“Deconstruction”

This piece, called dEcOnStRuCtIoN, was inspired by today’s social reality where people judge each other and spread gossip. I believe that in order to grow as human beings we have to unlearn many things that we have been taught, break stereotypes and be tolerant to differences among us.
Memorias de una Viajera Enamorada
•Memories of a Traveler in Love•

“The artwork shown is part of the collection called Memorias de una Viajera Enamorada (Memories of a Traveler in Love). This collection has to do with the emotions I have felt throughout my life’s journey up until now. These paintings are filled with symbolisms and are focused on Love’s surrealism, where reality and fantasy become bittersweet memories.”

“Flames 2 Dust”

This piece, called Flames 2 Dust, was inspired by a brief romantic relationship that, although brief, provoked very intense emotions. This relationship was like a fairy tale, and as such it had an “The End.”
In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, societal factors determined that many African American women work in paid domestic service. Similarly, black women were responsible for unpaid domestic tasks in their homes. Sources indicate that women experienced physical and psychological impairment from their unpleasant paid and unpaid domestic responsibilities. This paper examines the strategies African American women employed to resist the physical and psychological consequences rooted in the domestic labor they performed between 1886 and 1928. The paper reveals that resistance strategies fell into four distinct categories including: workplace resistance, self-care behaviors, support groups, and domestic feminism.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, African American women inhabited the lower rungs of the gender, racial, socio-economic and occupational ladder (Hooks, 2000). Society had determined the division of labor among the Black working classes, and Black women would be cemented in the domestic services (Jones, 1985). Furthermore, Black women were restricted from higher paying occupations such as manufacturing jobs. Black women were also largely responsible for domestic tasks in their homes. As a result, domestic labor was prominent in Black women’s public and private lives. Research suggests that the domestic labor Black women performed at work and at home was oppressive in nature. Paid domestic workers complained of undesirable working conditions, unfair compensation, an unstructured labor market, and employer antagonisms. Black women who
performed domestic chores in their own homes expressed that unpaid domestic work was burdensome and confining. Furthermore, women complained of both physical and psychological impairment from their paid and unpaid domestic responsibilities. For example, they experienced physical side effects, such as fatigue and obstetric complications as well as psychological ramifications, such as feelings of belittlement, demoralization, and confinement (“A Negro Woman Speaks,” 1902; Dunbar-Nelson, 2004; “Experiences of a Hired Girl,” 1912; Gray White, 1999; Hunter, 1997; Katzman, 1978; McDougald, 1925; Mossell, 1908; Negro Nurse, 1912). These grievances are documented in essays, articles, narratives, diaries, and literature between 1886 and 1926.

African American women resisted workplace injustice and adverse side effects of domestic labor in four distinct ways. First, they demonstrated opposition through workplace resistance. They also employed self-care strategies to counter the debilitating physical and psychological effects they experienced from performing domestic tasks. In addition, Black women promoted support groups as a way to offset the burden of domestic work responsibilities. Finally, African American middle class women employed domestic feminism that extolled the domestic labor women performed in the home—this revised the idea that domestic work was burdensome and simultaneously imbued women with a sense of dignity.

Sources reveal that African American women often complained of workplace injustices. (Clarke-Lewis, 1994; “Experiences of a Hired Girl,” 1912; Hunter, 1997; McDougald, 1925; Negro Nurse, 1912). For example, in terms of undesirable working conditions, women often compared their work as domestics to slavery (Phillips, 2001). An anonymous African American domestic worker revealed in The Independent that:

I will say, also, that the condition of this vast host of poor colored people just as bad as, if not worse than, it was during the days of slavery. Tho [sic] today we are enjoying nominal freedom, we are literally slaves (Negro Nurse, 1912, p.196).

Similarly, Mary Johnson Sprows’ 1916 diary entry explained:

I am a poor maid that has toiled many years for a living and has [sic] really become tired of it...work would not be such a task if it was not for the ingratitude we get from our employers...it is true that you work to make a living for yourself, [but] I feels [sic] it will be little different than a slave. (Clarke-Lewis, 1993, p. 55)

As illustrated by these narratives, the working conditions of domestic workers “recapitulated” the mistress-slave relationship (Jones, 1985, p. 127).
Domestic workers also complained of unfair compensation. They had “the lowest wage scale of any wage earners” (Brown, 1920, p. 4). An anonymous writer declared in The Afro-American (1903) that black domestics earned “$2.50 to $3.00 per week” and “at this rate little is left for the support of families and parents” (“Not Willing,” 1903, p. 1). The writer also explained the wages the women received were insufficient for a comfortable living.

Employers exploited domestic workers by underpaying them due to the unstructured labor market. The unstructured labor market included unregulated wages, hours, and responsibilities for domestics within the workplace. As independent workers, domestics usually made verbal employment agreements with their employers. The lack of legitimate employment contracts often created opportunities for exploitation and errors in pay. In 1912, a domestic worker revealed:

Ladies are sometimes not honest in money matters concerning the girls they employ. I have known many nice girls to work for little money...and one week out of every five or six the lady would forget, or pretend to forget, to pay for [sic]. If the girl has given no written receipt for her wages, she sometimes has no proof of what is due her. A girl should give a written receipt for the time and amount every time the lady pays her, and the payments should be made regularly on a fixed date, just as they are in shops, factories, and offices (“Experiences of a Hired Girl,” 1912, p. 780)

This domestic’s testimony illuminates the ways employers exploited their workers by underpaying them. Employers would also accuse them of stealing and deducting supposed stolen items from their wages, or, giving them household items and clothing in lieu of monetary payment (Jones, 1985). Moreover, domestic workers had little recourse when mistresses withheld or unjustly reduced their wages.

Many of the domestic servants’ complaints stemmed directly from their unsavory experiences with their employers. The employer/employee relationship was antagonistic because mistresses were often racist and exploitative (Tucker, 1987). Antagonisms were a direct result of “intense cultural, religious, and class conflict because most often mistress and servant were drawn from different worlds” (Katzman, 1978, p. 146). Mistresses were described as “masters” and “tyrants” (Whipple, 1886, p. 32-33). Scholar Jacqueline Jones (1985) noted that “These angry feelings festered in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion and hostility between employer and employee. White women perceived their relationship with their servants to be one of never-ending antagonism” (p. 130). Furthermore, the subordinate position of domestic workers marked the “power and privilege” of the
men and women they were serving and created antagonistic relationships (Hunter, 1997, p. 54).

In order to fully discuss the unpleasant nature of domestic work, it is necessary to understand the adverse physical effects. The labor involved in domestic work was physically taxing because domestic workers spent hours performing back-breaking work including: washing, scrubbing, cooking, cleaning, and delivering child care services. For example, laundresses carried heavy loads on their heads, lifted gallons of water, and prepared their own soap in addition to the washing, boiling, ironing, starching and rinsing clothes (Hunter, 1997). In 1925, the Opportunity reported that,

Mortality among Negro mothers at childbirth is increasing...These deaths are found common among mothers who are forced to work and where proper medical care cannot be secured...The figures may be further illuminated by positing them beside another set, those which tell the outlandish number of Negro women forced to labor (“Morality of Negro Mothers,” 1925, p. 99).

As described by these reports, women suffered serious and debilitating physical consequences due to the demanding nature of domestic work.

The nature of domestic work is also depicted in literature. Zora Neale Hurston’s 1926 short story “Sweat” reveals the life of Delia, a laundress. The reader understands that there is an inextricable connection between Delia’s labor and her health because work negatively affects various parts of her body. Hurston explains that, “Delia never looked up from her work, and her thin, stooped shoulders sagged further...She was on her feet; her poor little body, her bare knuckly hands” (p. 1021). As indicated, Hurston highlights the damage inflicted on Delia’s body parts such as her shoulders, feet, and hands, while also commenting on her fatigued deportment and the overall condition of her “poor little body.”

In addition to the physical consequences, paid domestics expressed the psychological ramifications of performing domestic labor. For example, domestics experienced belittlement in the workplace. Employees did not address their workers by their proper names. A domestic confessed that:

It’s a small indignity...no white person, not even the little children just learning to talk, no white person at the South ever thinks of addressing any negro man or woman as Mr., Mrs., or Miss. The women are called, ‘Cook,’ or ‘Nurse,’ or ‘Mammy,’ or ‘Mary Jane,’ or ‘Lou,’ or ‘Dilcey,’...In many cases our white employers refer to us, and in our presence too, as their niggers (Negro Nurse, 1912, p. 198).

This testimony illustrates the ways employers disrespected their domestics.
In addition to verbal epithets from employers, the social stigma and working environment of domestic work had adverse psychological effects. Women expressed embarrassment due to their working conditions and environments. For example, women preferred to work outside of their communities to escape possible humiliation from their respective communities. Domestics were generally “unwilling to work in their own neighborhoods, for various reasons. They do not wish to work where there is a possibility of acquaintances coming into contact with them while they serve” (McDougald, 1925, p. 691). According to this report, the lowered status of domestics adversely affected their self-perceptions.

Domestics internalized the social stigma associated with performing undesirable work. They were often described as dependent, docile, and childlike by their employers and society at large (Katzman, 1978). David Katzman’s extensive study of domestic workers concluded that “within society, paid household labor carried a stigma that separated household workers from other laborers. Internally, it left a mark of inferiority and servility” (1978, p. 269). As a result of these conditions, W.E.B. Du Bois stated that domestic workers were “discontented” and “bitter” (1899, p. 137-138). Furthermore, the working conditions of domestics lead them to feel demoralized.

Within literature and non-fiction texts, many Black women expressed feeling burdened, and circumscribed by unpaid domestic work performed in the home. Their feelings of confinement stemmed from dominant beliefs that a woman’s place was in the home. African American club women—social reformists and community activists who spoke from a middle class consciousness—projected these values upon African American women. They expected Black women to build respectable homes by performing unpaid domestic work. Lucy Craft Laney claimed in 1899 that Black women had the “burden” of providing “clean homes, [and] pure homes...” (p. 55-57). Similarly, Mary Church Terrell indicated that Black women were responsible for creating “homes, more homes, better homes, purer homes...” (1898, p. 10-11). Between the 1890’s and 1910, “tracts produced near the turn of the century tended to glorify marital bliss in euphemistic, codified fashion by offering fairly chase versions of patriarchal order and maternal duty within race households” (Mitchell, 2004, p. 115). Within the African American community, Black women were confined by the “maternal duty” of building respectable homes through domestic work.

In addition, Black women were burdened by their unpaid domestic tasks. Moreover, women resented working their day jobs and also performing a second shift of domestic work at home. Scholar Sharon Haley explains that, “As also the case during slavery, Black women were responsible for household work and child care in addition to their outside labors” (Harley, Wilson, & Logan, 2002, p. 5).
Similarly, scholar Deborah Gray White explained that for club women, performing community service work and domestic work in the home was considered “double duty” and caused women such as Alice Dunbar Nelson and Ida B. Wells to feel “unappreciated and devalued” (1999, p. 90). Likewise, Mary Church Terrell resented performing housework, and thought that it “burns her talent and time” (Gray White, 1999, p. 90). As indicated, these women felt burdened by their domestic responsibilities.

As revealed by essays, newspaper articles, and literature, it is evident that African American women endured unpleasant consequences as a result of the paid and unpaid domestic labor they performed. Conversely, documents also highlight forms of opposition women demonstrated, including workplace resistance, self-care, support groups, and domestic feminism.

Domestics avoided unfavorable working conditions by exhibiting workplace resistance. One form of this resistance was quitting. Resigning from work was a clear expression of dissatisfaction with their employers and/or working conditions. Additionally, Jacqueline Jones mentions that Black domestic workers would “arrive to work late, left early in the afternoon, or stayed away for days at a time to partake in special events and holidays. Communal celebrations in their neighborhoods took precedence over the needs of their employers” (1985, p.131). Domestic workers also resorted to taking unplanned breaks, feigning illness and sneaking away to complete personal errands (Hunter, 1997). Absenteeism demonstrates the spatial and psychological boundaries women set between their personal lives and their work. Through a myriad of resistance strategies in the workplace, paid domestic workers were successful at retaining their self worth, conserving their health and energy, and resisted succumbing to workplace injustice.

Secondly, women employed self-care to recover from adverse physical ramifications. Self-care is defined as preventative and restorative measures taken to ensure health for an individual (health encompasses physical, emotional, and psychological well-being). Self-care was one way that Black women demonstrated resistance because it allowed them to take control of their health in opposition to domestic work-related stress and illness. For example, in her diary, Alice Dunbar-Nelson (1984) discussed the fatigue and illness she experienced from performing work outside the home as well as domestic chores. She described the ways she would self-treat her illnesses, such as the common cold, with home remedies in order to recover quickly. She writes that “My cold developed into a horrible hoarseness and general smash up. I doctored myself Wednesday night and Thursday night. Yesterday, went to Dr. Stevens” (p. 120). In seeking medical solutions to her illnesses, Dunbar-Nelson reclaims her body in the self-care she
performs and heals from the damage imposed on her from illness, work, and stress.

In addition, Tera Hunter’s work (1997) focuses on the ways women sought reprieve from work through dance. She states:

Domestic laborers ...escaped from their workday worries through dance in jook joints and settings also referred to as dives...black dance itself embodied a resistance to the confinement of the body solely to wage work. The transformation of physical gestures from black dance from slavery to freedom demonstrates the rejection of wage work as the only outlet for physical exertion (p. 181).

Although Hunter does not describe dance as a form of self-care for domestic workers, the effects of dance functioned similarly to that of self-care behaviors. That is, dance had physical benefits that enabled women to unwind and decompress from the stress associated with domestic work. In addition, workers danced in socially robust milieus that were diametrically opposed to their workplaces, which had psychological advantages.

The third form of resistance is defined in terms of support groups. Authors discussed the ways in which African American women’s characters provided domestic services and information to each other. In Trial and Triumph, Frances Harper (1994) recounts the “labor of love” performed by a local teacher, Mrs. Lasette. Mrs. Lasette would visit women in the community and instruct them on how to build better homes and manage the demands of work, motherhood, and household duties. Additionally, the labor of love, described by Harper, contained dominant ideologies of Christian stewardship and racial uplift that was performed by actual women, such as Rebecca Cole, a physician who would visit African American neighborhoods to give instructions on hygiene, child care, and sanitation (Sterling, 1997).

Furthermore, African American social groups and clubs provided help to working class women in the areas of domestic duties, such as child care. For example, the National Organization for Colored Women convention reported that women from the Washington League created a day nursery to “provide a place where poor mothers who work may leave their little ones during the day, knowing they will be kindly cared for” (Hilyer, 1901, p. 155). These various support groups helped relieve the burden of domestic work performed in the home. This lessened the work load of domestic chores for women and provided information concerning domestic matters.

In the early 20th century, authors and community service members employed domestic feminism in order to counter the perception of household work as a burden and bolster racial and gender uplift in African American communities.
Primarily directed towards women who performed unpaid domestic chores, domestic feminism ideologies counteracted the idea that the home was “intellectually limiting and physically confining” and framed domestic work performed in homes and communities as the “extended skills and concerns so well developed by women” (Carter, 2002, p. 24). In addition, domestic feminism sought to lift the psychological burden of performing unpaid domestic work. For example, author Amelia Johnson’s most notable objective in The Hazeley Family (1894) is the revision of the stereotype of the docile homemaker. Although Johnson recognizes that domestic work is “women’s work,” she constructs the protagonist, Flora, as a character who is not subdued by the work she performs but who is strengthened by it. Furthermore, Flora seeks to enrich her home and secure the health and wellbeing of her family members through the domestic labor she performs.

Alice Dunbar-Nelson thought that constructing strong Black homes through domestic work was akin to racial uplift. Moreover, through domestic feminism principles, African American women satisfied their intellectual and familial needs while projecting an image marked by virtue and activism (Gray White, 1999). This is evident in the fiction of Pauline Hopkins’ Contending Forces, Frances Harpers’ Trial and Triumph, and The Hazeley Family. Additionally, Anna Julia Cooper argued that the social and economic value of the unpaid domestic work Black women performed in their homes was equivalent to the paid work they performed outside the home (Cooper, 1899; Wilson Logan, 2002). Moreover, African American women endeavored to reconstruct domestic work that was considered degrading as edifying and uplifting (Gray White, 1999; Knupfer, 1996).

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, paid and unpaid domestic work had harmful consequences for Black women. However, they forged various resistance strategies. With workplace resistance, women challenged injustice in the workplace and fought for equality as a demonstration of their autonomy and self-respect. Through self-care, women prioritized their health to counterbalance the adverse side effects of performing domestic work. As illustrated with support groups and domestic feminism, women worked together to lessen the burden of domestic labor and extracted honor from their domestic responsibilities. These strategies highlight the agency and self-advocacy of Black women. In addition, this research revises stereotypes of working class African American women as docile and victimized beings by categorizing opposition to labor oppression in unique ways.
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The Influence of Parents’ Work History On Female Leaders’ Work-related Attitudes

Veronica Averhart is a doctoral student in the Industrial/Organizational Psychology program at Florida International University. She received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Texas at Austin where she majored in Psychology and minored in Business Administration. Averhart’s research interests focus on diversity in the workplace. Her previous research has examined the effects of organizational justice on fairness perceptions of employees with disabilities and the impact of stereotypes on women’s leadership aspirations. She currently works in the Center for Leadership assisting in their research on female top-level executives.

Using data form female top-level executives, this study sought to examine the influence of parents’ work history on female leaders’ own career motivations and perceived contributors to their success. Results indicate that fathers’ and mothers’ employment is differentially related to career-related motivation and success factors. Mothers’ employment has a strong influence on female leaders’ career motivations, and fathers’ employment has a strong influence on female leaders’ perceived contributors to success.

There is no doubt that female managers and executives play an integral role in organizational success. Not only do women bring a unique perspective to their organization, but they also possess many characteristics that are indicative of a good leader. Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen (2003) found that compared to male leaders, female leaders are more likely to display qualities that create a sense of pride and respect from simply associating with them, effectively convey the importance of organizational values and mission, and show optimism about the organization’s goals and future. Additionally, female leaders are more likely to find innovative ways to address problems and complete tasks, focus on the personal growth of followers and be attentive to their individual needs, and reward followers’ behavior that matches the organization’s standards. Although many female leaders possess these attributes, from whom do they learn that these characteristics are necessary to be a successful leader? The purpose of this study is to use social learning theory to examine how parents’ work history influences female leaders’ career motivations and perceived contributors to their success.
General learning theory posits that an individual’s behavior is based on the principles of association, repetition, and reinforcement (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). As an offshoot of general learning theory, social learning theory emphasizes the acquisition of new behaviors by means of observational learning. In its most basic form, the process of social learning involves an individual attending to a set of behaviors, retaining that behavioral set in their memory, and being capable of reproducing it at a later time (Taylor, 1998). Although behaviors are the focus of this theory, attitudes and values may also be learned through observation.

A crucial component of social learning is the model, or person, from which an individual learns new behaviors. Not every model is given the same amount of attention. An individual is more likely to imitate someone whom they respect, consider powerful or attractive, and whose behavior leads to positive outcomes (Weiten, 2007). Due to their status as highly valued individuals in a person’s life, one of the earliest and perhaps strongest models of behaviors and attitudes is one’s parents (Andrews, Hops, & Duncan, 1997). Previous research on social learning theory supports the role of parents in the development of behaviors and attitudes.

Given the important role of parents in the development of children’s behaviors and attitudes, it is not surprising that previous research has examined parents’ influence on attitudes related to work. Although this research did not specifically use a social learning theory framework, it provides insight into the effect that parents have on children. For example, ter Bogt, Raaijmakers, and van Wel (2005) examined the influence of parent’s cultural-political conservativism on adolescents’ work ethic development. They found that work ethic is transmitted from parent to child as a part of the wider scope of cultural-political conservativism, and this transfer is an ongoing process throughout adolescence. Furthermore, findings from a study by Barling, Dupre, and Hepburn (1998) indicate that there is a positive relationship between parents’ job insecurity and children’s work beliefs and attitudes, such that children with a greater perception of their fathers’ job insecurity are more motivated to work hard in a job that provides them some type of personal fulfillment.

This study attempts to expand on previous research by focusing on female leaders’ career motivations and perceived contributors to success. Much like other social learning theory research, this study proposes that leaders learn important work-related behaviors and attitudes from their parents. In the current study, parents, through their employment status, act as models of work-related behaviors and attitudes, and this in turn influences their children’s career-related motivations and perceived contributors to success. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, specific hypotheses are not proposed, but potential differences in the influence of fathers and mothers will be examined.
Methods

Participants & Procedure. A sample of 150 female executives from organizations throughout a region of the southeast United States participated in this study. Participants ranged in age from 26 to 74 years old with a mean age of 49.82 (SD = 9.66). Eighty-four percent of participants identified themselves as being of Caucasian background. Participants’ years of management experience ranged from 0 to 47 with a mean of 18.03 years (SD = 9.08). Participants’ number of years in their current leadership position ranged from 1 to 47 with a mean of 10.86 years (SD = 8.78). The majority of participants (77.9%) reported being the first woman in their organization to occupy their current position.

A total of 1582 women in executive positions were invited to participate in this study. Participants were able to complete the survey in paper format or online. After a data collection period of approximately 3 months, a total of 161 female executives completed the survey (a response rate of 10.18%). Eleven participants did not provide a sufficient amount of data to be included in this particular study, therefore analyses for the current study are based on a sample size of 150.

Measures

Parental work history. Parental work history was measured using 2 items. Participants were asked to indicate their agreement with statements pertaining to their parents’ work history by marking either Yes or No. These items read “My father worked for pay or salary (either part- or full-time) while I was growing up.” and “My mother worked for pay or salary (either part- or full-time) while I was growing up.”

Career motivations. Career motivations were measured using a 17 item questionnaire, which assessed individuals on statements regarding what drives their pursuit of a career. Participants rated the importance of each contributor using a Likert scale from 1 (Not Important) to 5 (Extremely Important). A sample item from this questionnaire is “To fulfill a personal vision.”

Perceived contributors to success. Perceived contributors to success were measured using a 20 item questionnaire, which assessed individuals on statements regarding the behaviors and attitudes important to success. Participants rated the importance of each contributor using a Likert scale from 1 (Not Important) to 5 (Extremely Important). A sample item from this questionnaire is “Focusing on the big picture.”

Demographics. A 20 item questionnaire was used to assess individual characteristics, such as age, race, ethnicity, educational attainment, marital status, and number of children.

Results
A one-way analysis of variance was used to compare the mean importance ratings of each perceived career motivation for participants with employed fathers and participants with unemployed fathers. The motivation “To fulfill a personal vision” was found to be statistically significant at an alpha level of .05, $F(1, 145) = 5.74$, $p < .05$. The strength of the relationship, as indexed by $\eta^2$, was .04. The mean importance rating for this motivation was significantly lower for participants with employed fathers ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.04$) than for those with unemployed fathers ($M = 4.67$, $SD = .66$).

A one-way analysis of variance was used to compare the mean importance ratings of each perceived career motivation for participants with employed mothers and participants with unemployed mothers. The test for the motivation “To challenge myself” was found to be statistically significant at an alpha level of .05, $F(1, 145) = 5.81$, $p < .05$. The strength of the relationship, as indexed by $\eta^2$, was .04. The mean importance rating for this motivator was significantly lower for participants with employed mothers ($M = 4.39$, $SD = .870$) than for those with unemployed mothers ($M = 4.70$, $SD = .57$). The test for the motivation “To undertake exciting work for which I have a passion” was found to be statistically significant at an alpha level of .05, $F (1, 145) = 7.29$, $p < .01$. The strength of the relationship as indexed by $\eta^2$, was .05. The mean importance rating for this motivation was significantly lower for participants with employed mothers ($M = 4.19$, $SD = .94$) than for those with unemployed mothers ($M = 4.58$, $SD = .71$). The test for the motivation “To achieve something and get recognition for it” was found to be statistically significant at an alpha level of .05, $F(1, 145) = 4.06$, $p < .05$. The strength of the relationship as indexed by $\eta^2$, was .03. The mean importance rating for this motivation was significantly lower for participants with employed mothers ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.29$) than for those with unemployed mothers ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.31$).

A one-way analysis of variance was used to compare the mean importance ratings of each perceived contributor to success for participants with employed fathers and participants with unemployed fathers. The test for the contributor “Understanding the company rules, including the unwritten ones, and playing by them” was found to be statistically significant at an alpha level of .05, $F(1, 145) = 4.78$, $p < .05$. The strength of the relationship, as indexed by $\eta^2$, was .03. The mean importance rating for this contributor was significantly higher for participants with employed fathers ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.21$) than for those with unemployed fathers ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.64$). The test for the contributor “Knowing myself and what I wanted” was found to be significant at an alpha level of .05, $F(1, 145) = 6.70$, $p < .01$. The strength of the relationship, as indexed by $\eta^2$, was .05. The mean importance rating for this contributor was significantly lower for
participants with employed fathers ($M = 4.06$, $SD = .86$) than for those with unemployed fathers ($M = 4.57$, $SD = .75$). The test for the contributor “Emulating successful role models” was found to be statistically significant at an alpha level of .05, $F(1, 145) = 11.43$, $p < .01$. The strength of the relationship, as indexed by $\eta^2$, was .08. The mean importance rating for this contributor was significantly higher for participants with employed fathers ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.11$) than for those with unemployed fathers ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.18$). The test for the contributor “Finding a mentor who will pave the way for my career” was found to be statistically significant at an alpha level of .05, $F(1, 145) = 8.62$, $p < .01$. The strength of the relationship, as indexed by $\eta^2$, was .06. The mean importance rating for this contributor was significantly higher for participants with employed fathers ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.31$) than for those with unemployed fathers ($M = 2.05$, $SD = 1.20$). The test for the contributor “Willing to make the necessary sacrifices” was found to be statistically significant at an alpha level of .05, $F(1, 145) = 5.54$, $p < .05$. The strength of the relationship, as indexed by $\eta^2$, was .04. The mean importance rating for this contributor was significantly lower for participants with employed fathers ($M = 4.35$, $SD = .88$) than for those with unemployed fathers ($M = 4.81$, $SD = .40$). The test for the contributor “Willingness to take risks” was found to be statistically significant at an alpha level of .05, $F(1, 145) = 3.95$, $p < .01$. The strength of the relationship, as indexed by $\eta^2$, was .05. The mean importance rating for this contributor was significantly lower for participants with employed fathers ($M = 4.29$, $SD = .76$) than participants with unemployed fathers ($M = 4.76$, $SD = .44$).

A one-way analysis of variance was used to compare the mean importance ratings of each perceived contributor to success for participants with employed mothers and participants with unemployed mothers. The test for the contributor “Perfectionism” was found to be statistically significant at an alpha level of .05, $F(1, 145) = 6.13$, $p < .01$. The strength of the relationship, as indexed by $\eta^2$, was .04. The mean importance rating for this contributor was significantly lower for participants with employed mothers ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.03$) than for those with unemployed mothers ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.16$).

Discussion

In this study, social learning theory was used as a framework to examine how parents’ work history influences female leaders’ career motivations and perceived contributors to success. Previous research has found that parents have a strong impact on their children’s subsequent work attitudes and behaviors. Results from this study support this literature. More importantly, this study demonstrates that fathers’ work history has more of an influence on what female leaders believe are important contributors to their success and mothers’ work history has more of an influence on what female leaders believe are important career motivations.
Results from this study indicate that there is a marked difference in the types of attitudes that female leaders learn from each parent. Female leaders learn the types of behaviors that will help them get ahead at work from their fathers and what drives them to succeed from their mothers. This difference in learning may be a result of the autobiographical narratives that parents share with their children. Autobiographical narratives are accounts of events from one individual's perspective. The details of an event that a narrator includes highlight their importance and meaningfulness (Gergen & Gergen, 1988). By sharing these narratives, parents aid children in the development of their comprehension of emotions and self (Fivush, 2007). Additionally, this sharing supports the process of social learning. Children attend to a set of shared memories from which they extract attitudes and behaviors. They retain those extracted attitudes and behaviors in their memory, and then are capable of reproducing them at a later time (Taylor, 1998).

Previous research has indicated that there are parental differences in reminiscing styles. Mothers talk more overall, talk more about emotional experiences, and use more emotion words than fathers (Fivush, Brotman, Buckner, & Goodman, 2000). Results from the current study seem to be reflective of these gender differences. Mothers’ tendencies to share more emotionally-based information may increase their daughters’ acquisition of more work-related attitudes from them, whereas fathers’ comparatively lesser tendencies to share emotionally-based information may increase their daughters’ acquisition of more work-related behaviors from them.

The results of this study also seem to suggest that parents’ work history affects the extent to which their daughters understand what is required both behavior-wise and attitude-wise in order to have a successful career. Parents’ work history provides their children with a “realistic career preview.” A realistic career preview gives an individual a more accurate idea of what is involved with having a career. Both positive and negative information about careers are included in order to achieve this goal (Buckley, Mobbs, Mendoza, Novicevic, Carraher, Beu, 2002).

Participants whose fathers or mothers were unemployed viewed their careers as ways to fulfill a personal vision, challenge themselves, undertake exciting work that they are passionate about, and achieve something and get recognition for it. Based on these results, it seems that female leaders learn at an early age that it is important to have a multifaceted sense of self, and through working for pay, an individual is able to develop a self-identity that is not necessarily formed by only working inside the home. This is especially important for a female leader because it allows them to benefit from occupying both a family role and a work role.
Similar results pertaining to the impact of parents’ employment status can be found for contributors to success. Female leaders with employed fathers learned which behaviors relate positively to career success, while female leaders with unemployed fathers and mothers learned which behaviors relate negatively to career success. Participants’ whose fathers worked for pay felt that it was especially important to understand both written and unwritten company rules, emulate successful role models, and connect with a mentor. Participants whose fathers or mothers did not work for pay felt that it was particularly imperative to know who they were and what they wanted, be willing to take risks and make sacrifices, and show some level of perfectionism. Based on these results, it appears that female leaders learn at an early age that it is not just about what you know. Who you know and the quality of your relationship with them is also extremely important. Additionally, female leaders learn that it is important to have some sort of direction in their life and be willing to make sacrifices and take risks in order to succeed.

Although this study provides interesting insight into the formation of female leaders’ work-related values, there are a couple of limitations that should be taken into consideration. First, due to the use of an all female sample, we cannot determine if these findings are gender specific or can be generalized across populations. Perhaps using a more diverse sample would result in different conclusions. Second, while several findings were statistically significant, it should be noted that the $\text{eta}^2$ for these results ranged from .03-.08. This indicates that only 3%-8% of the variance in career motivations and perceived contributors to success is due to parents’ work history, suggesting that this study only taps into one piece of the work-related values and behaviors puzzle. Other variables such as personality, educational background, and previous work experience may provide greater insight into the development of work-related values and behaviors.

Future research on the development of leaders’ work-related attitudes and behaviors should attempt to connect these characteristics to more concrete individual and organizational outcomes. One potential topic area is the relationship between a leader’s work-related attitudes and behaviors and their subsequent job performance as measured by subordinate ratings. Another area of future research is the role or influence that a leader’s attitudes and behaviors have on different measures of organizational success.

In conclusion, findings from this study contribute to the current literature on the development of work-related attitudes and behaviors. Overall, findings from this study indicate that parents’ work history influences children’s career motivations and perceived contributors to success. Findings from this study should also encourage researchers to further investigate contributions to the work-related attitudes and behaviors of top-level executives.
References


Table 1

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<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>To fulfill a personal vision</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>4.67</td>
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<td>5.74**</td>
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<td>To lead and motivate others</td>
<td>4.24</td>
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<td>.007</td>
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<td>To be respected by my friends</td>
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<td>1.34</td>
<td>2.90</td>
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<td>To give myself, my spouse, and children financial security</td>
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<td>.93</td>
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<td>To continue to grow and learn as a person</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>4.48</td>
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<td>To follow the example of a person I admire</td>
<td>2.92</td>
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<td>To achieve something and get recognition for it</td>
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<td>1.17</td>
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<td>To build great wealth or a very high income</td>
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<td>To have the power to greatly influence an organization</td>
<td>3.59</td>
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<td>To make a</td>
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<td>4.05</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>.035</td>
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</table>
Table 2

Analysis of Variance for Contributors to Success

| To make a contribution to society | 4.10 | 1.05 | 4.05 | 1.20 | .035 | 3.98 | 1.11 | 4.26 | .99 | 2.50 |
| To have considerable freedom to adapt my own approach to | 4.25 | .98 | 4.52 | .98 | 1.45 | 4.24 | 1.02 | 4.35 | .92 | .410 |

Analysis of Variance for Career Motivations

* = p < .05; ** = p < .01

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<th>Mothers</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<td>Understanding the company rules, including the unwritten ones, and playing by them</td>
<td>3.75</td>
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<td>Finding ways around any potential obstacles</td>
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<td>Knowing myself and what I wanted</td>
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<td>.75</td>
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<td>Emulating successful role models</td>
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<td>Perfectionism</td>
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<td>Focusing on the big picture</td>
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<td>.80</td>
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<td>Achieving goals, time after time</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>.88</td>
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<td>Developing substantive relationships, both within and outside the company</td>
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<td>Pursuing win-win solutions</td>
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<td>Finding the right balance between family, work, and self</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>4.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building a strong team</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintaining visibility</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>.87</td>
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Analysis of Variance for Contributors to Success

* = p < .05; ** = p < .01
Women in music technology have made many advances both in representation and in becoming innovators in a male-dominated field. In contrast, women dominate music therapy, and yet there is very little integration or documentation of the use of music technology in this field. This paper examines some of the issues facing women in music therapy when they utilize music technology and how this intersects and resonates with historical issues of gender and technology.
examining some of the issues facing women in music therapy when they utilize music technology and how these issues intersect and resonate with the historical issues of gender and technology. This paper also examines how recent innovative projects for the special needs population, such as Pauline Oliveros’ *Adaptive Use Instruments* and Adele Drake’s *Drake Music Project*, challenge and question contemporary practices in music therapy.

The study of women in technology has been researched since the beginning of the feminist revolution. Though women have made progress, they still lack in numbers in technological careers and degree programs. This underrepresentation persists in part because as children, girls are less likely to be interested in gaming and are not as encouraged by parents and teachers to go into technological careers. Girls are often less interested in developing computer skills because it is considered a more masculine territory and girls have limited access to technologies in comparison to boys (Pegley, 2006). Women also have less affirmative experiences within the technology field. The lack of female role models and the male-dominated learning environment reinforce gender inequity. As a result of gender stereotypes, some women are scared of technology or believe that it is difficult to understand or use. In contrast, music therapy has predominately female practitioners, occupying over eighty percent of the practitioners with very little integration of technology in clinical practice. Before examining technology in music therapy, it is necessary to first examine basic tenets of music therapy.

According to *The Handbook of Music Therapy* (2002), music therapy “utilizes sound and music within an evolving relationship between client/patient and therapist to support and develop physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being” (Bunt, p. 10-11). Training in music therapy is designed for someone interested in music education but also in the health care field to put his or her talents to good use. Music therapy has existed since the early 1900s with the first journal of music therapy. During World War II, groups of musicians performed in war hospitals for injured soldiers (Standley, 2002, p. 462). Through these interactions, the healing potential of music was realized. Since then, music therapy has evolved with the development of specialized undergraduate programs throughout the world for music therapy. There are fewer graduate-level programs and only a handful of post-graduate programs. Music therapy research has steadily improved the quality of life for patients with widely different issues.

Exact implementations of utilizing sound in music therapy are generally unspecified, as are the relationships between sound and conventional ideas about music. Technology can enable new, creative intersections between
therapy, music, and sound. Technology can redefine the nature of sound creation, allowing one who is unable to physically access acoustic instruments to produce sound and perform musically. Using music technology, one is able to create his or her own sounds and also use recorded sounds in a piece to express thoughts or feelings through unique gestures and ways of controlling and producing sound.

Regardless of the rapid growth of music therapy, the use of technology in music therapy remains underdeveloped. Music therapists base their therapy sessions on conventional interaction through acoustic instruments and singing that dates from its post-war origin. The music therapy certification focuses on the use of acoustic instruments such as voice, guitar, piano and percussion in groups or individual settings. In a typical session, the therapist usually plays the guitar or piano while the patient beats on a drum or other percussion instrument to keep the beat. Patients that are unable to hold the percussion instrument often have them strapped to their arms or hands. If the patient is unable to move, the therapist or an assistant helps them play the instrument with hand-over-hand gestures. This use of instruments has worked well for music therapists, but one does not know how someone who is unable to convey their feelings receives this physical use of instruments. The use of technology can take away the need to strap instruments to patients and the need for closed musical structures that may not be understood by patients.

The potential for integrating electronic instruments, for example, in music therapy remains underdeveloped in part because of the emphasis on acoustic instruments within music therapy. However, the lack of exploration of the potential of electronic instruments may also be accounted for as the result of how instruments and technology are genderized. A New Foundland study (2006) of gendering in music technology states, “Encouragement for women to play acoustic rather than electric instruments perpetuated the tendency to downplay women’s technical prowess by associating them with older ‘traditional’ instruments” (Diamond). Thus, as a result of this genderizing of technology, women are less likely to explore the potential of electronic instruments. Having more technology training in music therapy education and certification would help overcome this barrier between electronic instruments and women practitioners.

The use of technology starts with education. Bhatnagerm, Brake and Bellamy (2007) state, “The educational system has a significant influence on technology perception of young people as well as their decision to choose or reject technology careers” (Bhatnagar). There is very little training for a music therapist in technology in and out of college. There are limited workshops in the
United States that deal with technology in music therapy. A survey conducted by Magee in London in 2006 discovered that 69% of the music therapists that responded stated they never used technology” (p. 143). Elaine Streeter (2007) discusses how music therapists usually argue that they must be free to interact with patients and their wariness of safety issues concerning electrical cords in therapy spaces. These are some of the challenges the music therapy community has when using technology. These fears can be alleviated when provided with appropriate technologies and training. For example, wireless technologies can be employed as a means of addressing concerns related to having electrical cords in a given space.

Examining the different music therapy programs offered in the United States on the American Music Therapy Website, one frequently finds only one music technology course dealing with MIDI (Music Instrument Digital Interface) offered in the curriculum. Indiana University Music Therapy Program has an uncommonly large amount of technology within their curriculum (Purdue, 2008). The relatively large amount of technology courses specifically for students becoming certified music therapists at Indiana University reveals that it is possible to successfully integrate technology into the music therapy certification curriculum. This makes the lack of technology in other music therapy curriculums particularly puzzling. During personal correspondence with researchers for the American Music Therapy Association, I was told that if one was to use technology it was developed through personal interest and not college coursework. Thus, it seems that a music therapy program that seeks to incorporate music technology into its curriculum must have someone who will personally advocate for its integration.

Another issue related to the consistent lack of technology in music therapy is the dearth of documentation on its use in different academic programs and the field at large. Very little documentation on the technology taught in the coursework of a music therapist exists. A search for textbooks on music therapy and technology or MIDI has proven unfruitful. It seems hard to build upon the technology already in use if it is not documented. In other music or medical fields, new uses for technology are emphasized and documented even if the technology in question is in development. Music therapy, on the other hand, rarely documents the use of the technology being used. This deters conversation

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1 Author accessed: http://www.musictherapy.org/handbook/schools.html then looked into each individual school’s curriculum.
between music therapy practitioners using technology and prevents those who want to learn about it from finding relevant information.

Considering there are more women practitioners of music therapy than men and that women are less likely to create new technologies, this barrier between the fields of music therapy and technology persists. There are more men specializing in the technologically related aspects of the medical and musical fields. Men make up fewer than twenty percent of music therapy practitioners. With fewer women than men in music technology, conventional barriers related to music, gender, and technology seem uncomfortably reinforced, resulting in fewer people to create these technologies for music therapy. In Kip Pegley’s study, “Like Horses to Water” (2006), girls preferred working with acoustic instruments and also preferred to be involved with the more creative, hands-on aspect of these instruments. However, technology does not have to be abstract. One can be creative and also hands-on while using technology. Technology assists to make the interaction more meaningful for a person who might not otherwise be able to interact completely. As Magee (2006) states “It is a clinical intervention which works towards enabling individuals to express themselves and interact on a non-verbal level with others, regardless of physical, sensory, communication or behavioral difficulties.” (p. 140)

There is a demonstrated need for music therapy, but its place within therapy, music, academic, and research institutions is uncertain and perpetually changing. There is still research being done as to what group or groups of people respond to music. Music can be a motivational tool and if the technology employed in music therapy can be flexible, then it could easily be adaptable to individual needs and modes of expression. In this sense, music therapy would need to become more interdisciplinary. Music therapy and technology can intertwine in such a way that a combined approach can be used to motivate patients to do the work they need to fulfill IEP (Individualized Education Program) goals from moving their own wheelchair to pushing buttons and packing objects. Music technology could also be used to motivate patients within their physical and occupational therapy. Incorporating technology with music therapy will give the patients an opportunity to create and express themselves and help with the psychological process as well as motivation to help them acquire skills necessary for a more independent living situation or quality of life.

Unfortunately, an additional barrier to working with music technology is cost. Magee’s survey (2006) states that seventy nine percent of music therapists surveyed expressed that they do not have access to music technology and forty percent agree that music technology is expensive. (p. 143) This is a significant
reason music therapy has not been incorporated as much technology. The latest innovations can be costly but modifying and adapting a more widely available consumer-oriented interface can cut costs. One may also use open source software and customize it to fit the individual needs of each patient. The use of technology in music therapy does not necessarily require working with the newest gadgets. Using what the patient might already use within their daily activities, for instance switches and talking devices can be frugal and intuitive for the patient. The more innovative music therapy is in technology, the more likely people will take an active part in the development of new innovative practices. This is also true if music therapy was to be more interdisciplinary. The technology used in music therapy can also be used in other therapies, which has the potential to make the technology cost effective. A music therapist could use the technology not only for the needs of their session but also within other therapies (e.g. occupational or physical therapy).

Nevertheless, groups have emerged that have been innovators in helping people with disabilities become musicians. For example, the Drake Music Project has been helping people with disabilities live their dreams as musicians and composers with the use of technology.

Drake Music is based in the UK and has additional facilities in Ireland and Scotland. The Drake Music Project offers support for people with disabilities in creating music and also for professionals who work with the disabled community. The Drake Music Project uses sensors, electronic instruments and acoustic instruments. The Drake Music Project also develops technologies such as the MIDIPad or E-Scape. With these technologies, one can create their own music and play in an ensemble setting with non-disabled musicians. One does not need to have much mobility to use these musical devices and interfaces.

Pauline Oliveros’ work with the Adaptive Use Instruments provides another innovative way to help people with disabilities become musicians. This program uses Max/MSP and Jitter to track the movements of the individual to control different instrumental sounds. One can control drum sounds by moving their head. The position of his or her nose is tracked from one box to another on the screen to control what type of percussion instrument is played. This same technology of motion tracking is also used for keyboard sounds. One can move their head from side to side and go up and down the scale of the keyboard with different selected scales. One valuable aspect of this program is its adaptability. For example, it can be changed per participant to fit his or her range of movement. Oliveros states that,
It is quite easy to see how affected they [people using the software] are with their musical results. There are holistic and therapeutic side effects as well. We want to increase their possibilities for choice with improvisation as an empowerment for them. (Pask, 2007)

It is significant to note that the Drake Music Project and the Pauline Oliveros Adaptive Use Instruments were created outside the realms of music therapy. However, there could be a use of this technology within music therapy practice. Based on personal correspondence with music therapists, one can surmise that there is some knowledge of both Drake Music and Adaptive Use Instruments within the discipline, and these programs know about music therapy, but there seems to be a wall between the two. By combining these two resources there would be the possibility of forming a middle ground between acoustic music therapy and using music technology as a creative means for people with disabilities. Music therapy has proven to be a wonderful resource, and yet has the potential of being so much more with recent technological advances allowing the patient to be a part of the music process in new capacities.

One way to increase the use of new, creative technologies in music therapy is to provide more education and training in technology. Magee’s survey (2006) found that only fourteen percent of music therapists surveyed believed that technology was inappropriate for their patients. Only four percent thought that technology was not pertinent in music therapy. (p. 143) A majority of music therapists agree that technology could be useful, but do not have the access or education to use technology in their clinical practice regularly. This has long term detrimental effects for incorporating technology within the discipline, which is corroborated by a study (Reese, 2003) completed focusing on music educators, whose field is closely related to music therapy, which studied the effects of a one-week extensive workshop on technology and if this workshop would increase the use of technology for instruction. The research showed that the teachers were more confident with technology but in the long term the use of technology diminished. The researchers sent out a follow up survey ten months after the workshop and only thirty one percent sent back the survey. The group who did not complete the follow up survey was predominantly women. The conclusion was that there needed to be more support and resources for long-term use (Reese, 2003). Workshops and classes held annually to keep the therapist up to date on the latest technology or to help use the existing technology are necessary. Extensive workshops on a particular technology used in music therapy, a certificate offered by AMTA (American Music Therapy Association) to those that have been through technological training could be offered as a way of
encouraging the incorporation of music technology. More classes in technology need to be offered in the undergraduate through the post-graduate level. This would likely produce a greater documentation and discourse of the technologies being developed for music therapists and patients.

This paper is not suggesting that music therapy should only use technology but a combination of technology and acoustic music that works best for each individual patient. Music therapists can be further empowered to address the specific needs of each patient when they have all the information and advantages to help them. Understanding the basics of music technology and how to use it in a therapy session can facilitate new, powerful interactions between the patient and the therapist. Technology is useful for those patients who may not be able to move or hold acoustic instruments. Technology is a way for those who want to express themselves but are not trained musicians to do so. Technology gives someone with a disability the chance to be an equal to his or her non-disabled counterpart. Technology should not be seen as something that gets in the way or that is difficult over prohibitively expensive, but instead be looked to for its potential in achieving musical, and social, equality.

References


I’m In the Band:
A Study of the American Rock Feminine

Elisa Meléndez

Elisa Meléndez was born and raised in Puerto Rico and moved to Miami ten years ago. It was this move that inspired her to begin writing music with heartfelt, autobiographical lyrics. At Florida International University, she found the perfect academic pursuit to combine with her love of music: Women’s Studies. Meléndez graduated with a B.A. in Women’s Studies in December of 2006. Then, she moved on to specialize in the study of women in American rock at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She graduated with her M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies in May of 2009 and hopes to enter a Ph.D. program in the next few years. Her Master’s thesis consists of the development of an undergraduate course in the history of women in rock. In this course, Meléndez explored women’s contributions in the rock genre, as well as the sociological reasoning behind rock being such a male-dominated field.

A Brief History of Women in Rock Music

Rock music was born of the Blues, a predominantly African-American genre of music developed in the Deep South at the turn of the century (Starr & Waterman, 91). As the music traveled to the North, it eventually became amplified and electrified with the creation of the electric guitar. This popular music, with sexual references and a raucous attitude, was attractive to the baby boomer youth of the 1950’s. Afraid that the messages behind the music would somehow corrupt the youth, record labels would enlist white artists to re-record popular blues songs for mainstream audiences in an attempt to capitalize on their success. Sometimes, these versions even sported tamer lyrics. Thus, rock and roll, the first music genre marketed to America’s youth, was born (Starr & Waterman, 156).

As rock music grew, so did its subgenres. Today, there are almost as many styles of rock as there are bands to fit them. However, what all of these subgenres have in common (with the exception of riot grrrl) is that the typical
guitar hero tends to be a man. As of the 2008 ceremony, approximately 18 out of 159 performing bands and artists inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame feature women considered to be in the rock genre. Where are the guitar – or bass, drum, vocal – heroines?

Contrary to what current rock radio will have you believe, women not only can rock, but have been rocking for more than fifty years. The following is but a small sample of prominent women in rock history.

**The 60s**
The tumultuous 60s saw the movements toward peace and civil rights hit a fever pitch. Along with electrified rock music, folk and protest music provided the soundtrack to the 60s. Artists such as Joan Baez and Joni Mitchell used their acoustic guitars to sing songs of protest and freedom from oppression, foreshadowing the second wave of feminism to come.

The hippie movement, which promoted peace, love, and social consciousness, was especially influential to the popular music industry. Artists, in an expression of rebellion against the established American norms, experimented with alternate spiritualities as well as drugs. This experimentation was reflected in a musical style known as psychedelic rock.

Bands in the psychedelic rock movement included The Grateful Dead and The Doors. On the female side of the equation, strong voices began to emerge to lead rock bands, such as Grace Slick of Jefferson Airplane and Janis Joplin from Big Brother and the Holding Company. Joplin went on to have great solo success with her Blues-influenced, raspy voice and unique look. Her voice and style directly challenged notions of how a woman’s voice could sound.

**The 70s**
In rock’s adolescence, the genre began to divide and subdivide into a wide variety of subgenres. Hard rock became distinguishable by its use of heavy, distorted guitars and the reliance on the riff, which is a repeated pattern that usually provides the main theme for a rock song (Starr & Waterman, 136). Examples from this generic form include such bands as Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin. Heart, led by sisters Ann and Nancy Wilson, was a prolific band showcasing Ann’s powerful vocals and Nancy’s prowess on the acoustic guitar.

Hard rock’s most rebellious subgenre is punk, defined by fast tempos and anti-establishment lyrical content. While the Sex Pistols and The Ramones enjoyed success in the genre, it was hardly a men’s only club. Siouxie Sioux and the Banshees, Patti Smith, and The Runaways also commanded the youth to rebel under the punk banner. The Runaways, an all-female band, is most notable for the later, separate success of its members. Guitarists Joan Jett and Lita Ford
went on to successful solo careers, while early bass player Micki Steele eventually joined The Bangles.

The 80s
With the 80s came the birth of a new music promotion medium, the music video. The music video allowed fans to catch a glimpse of the artist’s performance style, personality, and possible interpretations of the featured song. Because of the new visual medium, musicians became more image-conscious than ever before. Madonna, though a Pop artist, was instrumental in moving mainstream popular music forward in this decade for her use of the music video to push the envelope with references to sexuality and gender roles.

In spite of the new music video medium (or perhaps because of it), there is a significant representation of women in the rock world. Pat Benatar and Lita Ford enjoyed noteworthy hits as solo artist, while Joan Jett’s biggest hit “I Love Rock & Roll” recorded with her band The Blackhearts, catapulted her to stardom. All-female bands also enjoyed the limelight that music videos provided. Bands such as The Bangles, The Go-Gos, and Vixen (from the hair metal subgenre) each managed to show that they were more than just a novelty.

The 90s
Alternative music had its hey-day in the 90s and was the anti-thesis of 80s excess. Nirvana’s 1992 album, *Nevermind*, was the final nail in the coffin for the glamorous image of hard rock, and it created the genre of grunge: a music and image that is dirty, heavy, and apathetic to the opinions of others. Bands such as Pearl Jam, Nirvana, and Soundgarden epitomized the grunge mentality.

This grunge attitude also spurred the creation of the riot grrrl movement circa 1991, featuring female bands whose politics were just as important as the music (Schilt, 6). The riot grrrls concerned themselves with challenging traditional notions of femininity, as well as reclaiming and redefining words such as *girl*, *bitch*, and *slut*. The movement gave its fans a place to express themselves through the creation of *zines*, magazines in which opinions could be submitted regarding gender, eating disorders, abortion, rape, self-esteem, etc. (Whiteley, 208-209).

The mid 90s also saw an explosion of female artists, most of them brought to prominence by the creation of Lilith Fair, an all-female music festival created by musician Sarah McLachlan. This festival was a successful attempt to prove that women could sell tickets en masse, despite protests from the music industry that two women could not sell tickets on the same bill, or could not get radio airplay back-to-back (Westmoreland, 217). In its three years, Lilith grossed an average of about $17.5 million each year and enjoyed seven sold-out shows in its final run
Artists such as Ani DiFranco, Alanis Morisette, Meredith Brooks, and No Doubt benefitted from the exposure the festival received.

**00s and Beyond**

One would think that the success of Lilith Fair would lead to a boom of female rock artists in the subsequent century, and that female-created rock music would be commonplace. However, that is not the case. Music critic Elysa Gardner notes that there was a palpable backlash post-Lilith of male-centered rock and rap, followed by teenage-affiliated bubblegum pop (Gardner, pp. 15). In her 2006 article, she reviews the charts and reveals that the successful female acts of the time relied more on production and image to garner success than the originality of their music.

Three years later, however, it seems that the tide could be shifting to make female rockers relevant again. Popular female-fronted bands include Evanescence, Flyleaf, and Paramore; with Paramore joining 90’s powerhouse No Doubt for a summer 2009 tour. While Paramore and No Doubt’s tour benefits from the effects of their Lilith Fair foremothers, their success is highlighted by the fact that rock radio still appears hesitant to include female rockers in their rotations.

**Where Did They Go?**

Rock music remains a male-dominated field after more than a half-century of existence. It is difficult to understand why it is that jazz, country, and rhythm & blues can make such liberal use of female vocalists, but rock music only has a few surge periods. Even with the lack of prominent female vocalists, there are even fewer famous female instrumentalists. There are a few specific reasons identified as contributing to this lack, including the use of electric guitar, gender norms, and a lack of role models.

The electric guitar is the signature instrument of the rock genre and is partly to blame for the lack of prominent female involvement. The instrument can be uncomfortable to play for those who have ample-enough breasts. Guitar technique typically dictates that one play the instrument higher up on the torso. A woman is either forced to sacrifice technique and play nearer to their hips than their chest, or they risk an uncomfortable squashing of the breasts.

Also, in order to properly press down the strings on the neck of the guitar, the nails on the fretting hand must be shortened. Otherwise, a buzzing sound occurs, and it is not possible to attain the correct pitch. The tips of the fingers on the fretting hand then become callused from the electric guitar’s sometimes sharp steel strings. The development of calluses is necessary in order to continue to
play the guitar with comfort. Calluses and shortened fingernails are anathema to traditional conceptions of femininity.

Along with the physical ramifications of the instrument is the power of the symbolism attached to it. Rock music is associated with predominantly masculine attitudes, including sexual aggression. This sexual attitude is taken further when one sees a male guitar player making movements that suggest the guitar as an extension of the phallus. These attitudes are not in keeping with gender norms: Women are generally not encouraged to adopt anger, rebellion, and sexuality as part of their socialization. Instead, they are traditionally encouraged to be peaceful, quiet, and passively sexual.

Mavis Bayton explored the mythos surrounding women’s involvement with the electric guitar, and she noted that the image of the electric guitar as masculine extends past images in guitar magazines or guitar stores. In her study, she reviewed guitar magazines for women’s inclusion and interviewed female musicians. A common theme seemed to be the denigration of women by their musical peers, audience, and exploitative record labels. Rock music is no different than any other male-dominated field in which the men turn to harassment at the infiltration of women. From demands from fans to take their clothes off to the sneers received from men attempting to demean their skill, it appears that women are still not entirely safe in picking up the electric guitar as their instrument of choice (Bayton, 46-47). Despite these challenges, there have been quite a few women who have picked up the electric guitar and garnered respect throughout rock history.

There are some female guitarists featured in guitar magazines, although they are few and far between. The electric guitar has multiple magazines dedicated to it, Guitar Player being one of them. Taking a cue from Bayton’s work, the author looked at recent editions of the popular guitar magazine to see if things have changed since her mid-90’s exploration. In their December 2008 issue, they featured the winners of a guitar superstar competition that year. This was the first time that a woman took home the grand prize. In the brief write-up, she was mentioned as being a force within a male-dominated industry. Other than that, no mention was made of her gender, not even in the quotes from the judges. All that was spoken of was how she surpassed the other finalists in technique and stage presence.

This is an exciting moment for guitar-playing women, but it is bittersweet. The same magazine features the most visually and technically stunning guitar equipment rigs for famous guitar players, all of them men. On the opposite side of the magazine from the picture of a triumphant female winner is the section devoted to advertising space. One of the ads features a woman in provocative
clothing lying on an amplifier. Another ad is a picture taken within a studio, with a male guitar player playing the advertised amplifier in the foreground and underwear-clad women in the vocal booth. Only one of the advertisements features a woman playing a guitar next to a man. Every other advertisement features a man with the featured product. It is clear that the guitar magazine is still a source of inequality – an inequality that extends to an instrument’s performance.

Maintaining rock as a men’s only club allows for performers to regain some semblance of the power they felt they may have lost at the onset of the second wave of feminism and its redefinition of femininity (Lee, Shaw, 121). The performance of a rock guitar, the consummate phallic symbol, reaffirms the connection between male genitalia and concepts of aggression, violence, and the penetrative nature of dominance and oppression. To have women picking up a guitar would mean that they, too, had a “phallus” with which to display these commonly male traits.

Women, however, did not stop there. While picking up a guitar and displaying masculinity in lyrics and music style was one form of subversion, it would be only one step in the fight to claim rock music for both sexes. Women donned these male sensibilities; some even embraced androgyny in their musical performance. This helped to reinforce the stereotype that those benefitting from the feminist movement just wanted to be men or resemble them in some way (Lee & Shaw, 12). In a way, it could still be a source of comfort for men who felt threatened by women’s presence in rock, since the only way to be successful would be to become a man. Men, with the actual genital equipment to back it up, would still be at an advantage.

The real source of discomfort for men came in the form of those who both embraced their sex and displayed prowess on the instrument. There would be no denying, then, with sexualized feminine trappings such as dresses, make-up, and high-heeled boots, that these were women playing a male instrument. These women came of age in the music video era, however, and their performance often was misconstrued. Whereas some women could see an ownership of feminine power attached to the instrument, others merely saw that as self-objectification: a woman turning herself into a sex object for the eyes of men in response to an image-driven promotion method.

Riot grrrl’s politically-charged music actively sought to cause gender distortions. Instead of juxtaposing the masculine instrument with sexualized dress, they mixed gender roles within their own costumes. Along with angry lyrics and aggressive musical styles, the gender mélange exhibited exposes gender as a social construct, not a biological inevitability.
Participant Observation: FemmeFest

As part of a participant observation project, I visited a local all-female music festival in order to observe the bands and possibly interview a couple of the participants. FemmeFest was a concert put together by two local promoters, Oski and the “Queen of the Scene,” in order to showcase female artists in Miami. The concert was held at Tobacco Road, a downtown Miami bar. At 96 years old, Tobacco Road boasts nightly live music, and it is the home to many a local band. I was able to observe a few bands perform, including the rock bands Pheonix/Nebulin and Ex-Norwegian.

Pheonix/Nebulin is an industrial rock band. The industrial label is born out of the synthesized, electronic sounds that accompany the distorted guitars, reminiscent of machinery, engines, and factory work. The lead singer carries on the stage persona of “Pheonix,” while her husband’s pseudonym is “Nebulin.” Other band members include a female bass player and male lead guitarist. “Pheonix” was the subject of study for this particular observation.

She was clad in a corseted top, heavy eye make-up, and a black skirt. Her vocals ranged from high melodies to deep growls and screams. A notable moment during Pheonix/Nebulin’s set occurred when I overheard a co-worker of the female lead singer talking about her. The co-worker said, “You should see her when she is at work. Black nail polish. That’s it. Normal. A totally different person.” This comment struck me. Women cannot perform a variety of roles and still remain the same person. Will this person view them completely differently in the office now that they have seen this other side? Can a woman be an aggressive performer and administrator and have both roles be considered “normal?” Ideas like this do a disservice to women who want to pursue a music career on top of their vocation.

Ex-Norwegian represented a different style of music, called indie rock. This is music that is considered left of the mainstream, with indie being an abbreviation for independent. The independent refers to both the music style and the record labels that signed such bands at its inception, as they were not affiliated with larger corporate entities. The Ex-Norwegian female component was a bass player. She did not dress in a way that exhibited her sexuality: Her t-shirt and jeans, with slippers and wool hat, were more casual than the distinctively rock costumes from Pheonix/Nebulin. While her dress may have been tame, she did express that she had experienced sexist behavior at the hand of promoters and bar owners: she’s had to remind several people that she is in the band and not one of her band mate’s girlfriends.

Femmefest is another example of the contradictions that rock provides. On a positive note, we can see how far these women have come in being able to
completely fill a festival full of artists. On the other hand, it is a detriment that there is a need for such a festival in the first place.

Conclusion

Music scholarship has taken a long journey since the ancient Greeks began discussing its effects on the human spirit. It is only in the late 20th century, however, that music scholarship has included women as scholars and as subjects worthy of study, with popular music as no exception. A “Women in Rock” course would thus be beneficial.

Musicians need to have a more complete history of popular music available to them that includes these female artists. Gender studies scholars would benefit from having one more lens with which to view gender issues, to match already established courses in other disciplines such as literature, visual arts, and law. I look forward to presenting this history in the classroom, and I dedicate the course to anyone who has been told that they were “pretty good…for a girl.”

References


RAINSBERGER: We would like to know a little about your background and your field of study. What brought you to this/these field(s)?

STRYCHARSKI: My main research focus is English Renaissance literature, rhetoric, and formal education. I concomitantly study the history of writing technologies, old and new. I’ve always been drawn to conceptions of the self and selfhood. What really hooked me about studying Renaissance literature was the kind of historicist/social analysis that became prominent in Renaissance studies when I was an undergraduate. I learned how notions of selfhood are socially and historically contingent, and also came to recognize the power of narrative and the arts in making different conceptions of selfhood affectively convincing.

Graduate study helped me to re-conceptualize these issues through the lens of rhetoric. In one broad sense, “rhetoric” names the idea that literature does not just sit around being beautiful, but that it does things—has both personal and social effects—including affecting perceptions of who and what we are as human beings. That’s a broad understanding of “rhetoric,” but I also came to appreciate the more narrow meanings: the art of persuasion (an art that was codified and taught in schools from antiquity through the Renaissance) and, overlapping with this meaning; the study and teaching of composition. I became interested in rhetoric and education, both as it is done now and as it was done in the Renaissance. This was partly a result of getting to teach writing as a graduate assistant. Something about that hooked me, and I taught composition full time at the University of Miami for several years before coming to FIU, where I also teach writing. Those experiences have revealed to me that different ways of teaching writing influence and are influenced by broader social forces, and can have a shaping effect on the self. The ways we use writing, the ways we teach it, the ways we value it, all these are wrapped up with notions of what a “self” is and how we interact with others, which leads us into ethics.

RAINSBERGER: What role does gender play in your studies?

STRYCHARSKI: Gender plays a fundamental role in my studies. My dissertation focused on masculinity in English Renaissance education. I explored how English humanists developed a way to teach writing that contested a predominant model of masculinity they inherited from the middle ages, and also how that new model of masculinity was contested in turn. That dissertation was part of a movement that’s happened in gender studies of turning the tools of critical analysis that had conventionally been applied to women and to cultural conceptions of femininity to a concomitant analysis of
masculinity. I'm very encouraged by the ways third wave feminism has often walked through doors that second wave feminism opened, and the spirit of openness to all kinds of gender-and sexuality-based analysis it represents. I try to bring that spirit into the classroom, and in teaching Renaissance literature to help students to see the history of various conceptions of gendered being and sex.

In terms of my interest in notions of selfhood, obviously one of the primary ways we experience who we are is as gendered beings, as men, or women, or something that always exists in relation to these two kinds of being. And one of the questions I always want to ask is, why? I could go on, but instead I'll encourage interested readers to sign up for my course in Renaissance Gender and Sexuality.

Rainsberger: What brought you to FIU and what has your experience with students at FIU brought to you?

Strycharski: FIU was willing to hire me in a job that allows me to work in my two areas of interest: rhetoric and composition and Renaissance literature. That combination is actually rare in research university jobs these days. I went to a school similar to FIU—Temple University—for my undergraduate degree, so it feels like a homecoming to get to work with students at a state urban research university with a lot of diversity in terms of ethnicity, age, job responsibilities, family academic history, and so forth. I have often heard newer faculty express surprise and delight at just how good their students are, and I share that admiration. So I am not just mouthing a cliché when I say that FIU students have challenged me and keep me on my toes. I've been able to bring my research into the classroom, and it's a delight to see students develop new understandings of gender history or the impact of writing technologies. And there's a lot of good humor here, so students keep me laughing as we work through complicated ideas together, which I appreciate.

Rainsberger: What current projects are you working on, and what future projects do you have in mind?

Strycharski: I am currently working on a book on the English poet/courtier Philip Sidney and his literacy education. It's an extension of work I did for my dissertation. I focus on what I call the “literacy affect,” which is a set of emotional responses to writing conditioned by the way (many) early modern males were taught to write. I am also working on a collection of essays, co-edited with Jeffrey Shoulson at the University of Miami, on John Milton, the liberal tradition and religious violence. There are connections between this collection and other work I have done on ethics and the seventeenth century English drama, including some work on gender and sexuality in Milton's Comus. If that's not enough, my research also feeds an interest in the history of writing technologies, including nascent ones. I teach a course in Writing and New Media, have done some conference presentations with this work, and am very interested in continuing to find alternative publication forms/venues for it in the future.
Madre Tierra is a drawing made shortly after the creation of the Madre Tierra radio show in 2007. The original drawing was done with pastel oils, color pencils and crayons and it was then taken to Photoshop for a brighter look. I was looking for a representation of Mother Earth and had the idea of creating a woman on top of the world with a radio on her shoulders. Madre Tierra is a self-inspired drawing of a woman of color wearing indigenous jewelry and tattoos who also happens to be blind and pregnant. The image is about fantasy and about exploring my own vision of Mother Earth, focusing on inner and outer identity and beauty and the connection of music to the body and world. Madre Tierra was made from the heart with the hope of encouraging people to transform and expand their idea of Mother Earth.

Lis-Marie Alvarado

I am a Nicaraguan immigrant who loves and sees the importance of art to life. I am a self-taught artist that created Madre Tierra radio show for people to respect and appreciate indigenous and contemporary world music, as well as to promote campus and community activism. I am an undergraduate student in the department of Global & Sociocultural Studies and a certificate earner in Womens Studies. I am also a Youth & Schools Organizer with WeCount! In Homestead, FL and am a member and leader of school and community organizations.
Making Waves, Florida International University’s Women’s Studies journal, features a diverse yet integrated selection of historical and current women’s issues that is creatively delivered by distinguished university students. Making Waves is dedicated to the unique, creative and academic voices of its writers, poets and artists.

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FIU’s Women’s Studies Department would like to especially thank those who have contributed to the development of the voices of Making Waves. Our educators and the dedicated staff and interns are a valuable element in the production of Making Waves.