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Through Gendered Lenses 2018 Vol. 9

**The Gender Studies Honor Society
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About the Artist

Camille Zyniewicz is a junior from South Bend, Indiana studying Visual Communication Design at Notre Dame. Camille is currently studying abroad in Rome, Italy and plans to return next year to conduct a senior thesis. She holds a part time position with Notre Dame RecSports as a graphic designer and also serves as the graphic designer for Leprechaun Legion student apparel. After earning her undergraduate degree, Camille hopes to attend graduate school in pursuit of her MFA.

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Acknowledgements

With this edition of *Through Gendered Lenses*, we mark nine years of the journal's publication. Throughout that time, as the journal has highlighted undergraduate gender studies research and scholarship at the University of Notre Dame, its success has depended the hard and often invisible labor of many members of the Gender Studies community. It is with sincere gratitude that we honor their contributions and commitment.

Through Gendered Lenses is first and foremost a collaborative project supported by the Gender Studies Program, which educates the campus community and provides a platform for the intellectual, intersectional study of gender and sexuality. Many thanks to Pamela Wynne Butler, Associate Director and Director of Undergraduate Studies for the Program, whose guidance was essential to the production of this journal. Program Coordinator Linnie Caye deserves recognition beyond what is possible here. She provided wise advice, stern reminders, and valuable insights into the publication process.

The Honor Society is further indebted to its many generous benefactors. In particular, we would like to thank the Office of Undergraduate Studies of the College of Arts and Letters, the Boehnen Fund for Excellence in Gender Studies, the Genevieve D. Willis Endowment for Excellence, and the alumni and allies whose sponsorship of the Gender Studies Program supports undergraduate learning and research. Their continued support provided the opportunity for the scholars included here to pursue their research, and allowed for the creation of this journal to honor those endeavors.

Finally, we are grateful for the contributions of the scholars who submit their work to *Through Gendered Lenses*. Although only five submissions are featured in this volume, we received a wide variety of excellent and innovative submissions this year, and were inspired by the creativity and quality of undergraduate research on gender and sexuality here at Notre Dame.

The Gender Studies Program

Gender Studies at Notre Dame is an interdisciplinary academic program committed to excellence in teaching and research related to gender and sexuality. We develop, promote, and support research, creative work, pedagogy, service, and activism that respect human dignity, foster solidarity, and build toward the common good locally, nationally, and globally. We are a resource to the Notre Dame community regarding issues related to gender and sexuality, and we work to bridge rigorous scholarship with student development and leadership.

Our curriculum offers a diverse array of courses drawn from across the University and provides students with the tools to critically explore gender as it intersects with other social categories such as sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, age, religion, and nationality. In Gender Studies courses, students examine the historical development and cultural variations of gender in relation to the social formation of human identities, relationships, practices, technologies, and institutions. Our curriculum equips students with an intellectual framework through which the intersectional analysis of gender can be critically and creatively applied to their other coursework, as well as to their personal, professional, and community roles. Our undergraduate students benefit from internship programs that emphasize the holistic and practical applications of a Gender Studies education, and thus allow students to connect their learning with community service and positive social change.

For more information about Gender Studies at Notre Dame, visit genderstudies.nd.edu or contact gender@nd.edu.

Iota Iota Iota: The Gender Studies Honor Society

Iota Iota Iota, or Triota, is an Undergraduate Honor Society composed of sophomore, junior, and senior Gender Studies majors and minors. Notre Dame's Alpha Phi chapter of Triota was formed in 2006, and its members are the Gender Studies Program's top students as demonstrated by their overall academic performance. All members have earned at least a 3.5 GPA in Gender Studies and a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.

As the primary unit of undergraduate student service and leadership in the Gender Studies Program, Triota offers gender studies students multiple opportunities to engage their interests in gender issues beyond the classroom setting. Members of Triota contribute to an environment of academic excellence, encourage undergraduate research and scholarship in Gender Studies, foster relationships among students and faculty, promote interest and awareness of gender issues, and academically represent the Gender Studies Program

If you are a Gender Studies major or minor interested in becoming a member of Triota, please visit genderstudies.nd.edu to learn more about us or to download an application.

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Letter from the Editor

In the last year, gender has been thrust into the spotlight of cultural, political, and legislative discourse in a way that some haven't seen in decades, and that many have never experienced before in their whole lives. Just as the Baby Boomers are generationally defined by Woodstock, Civil Rights, and second-wave feminisms, Millennials and Generation Z will be defined by the events we are living through right now: Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, fourth-wave feminism, the current presidency. While discourse on current events has been recognizing gender more and more as the apex of social relations in our time, it is important to remember that the recognition of gendered factors within our society is not enough. We must push this recognition further by using it to critically interrogate and reimagine the institutions and systems that we are a part of.

The essays published in this year's edition of *Through Gendered Lenses* do just this. Within the following pages our readers will find an interdisciplinary mix of scholarship about gender, sexuality, and politics, science, art, literature, mothering, and culture. These are essays that exemplify the immeasurable value of gender-focused scholarship and the work that we all must continue to do in following years, both within and without academic circles.

The beauty of the gendered lens is its universality and accessibility. One needn't remain high in the ivory tower to study the complex gendered systems at play in our society. We can all adopt a gendered lens through which to understand our world, for we are all inherently gendered people, and it is only through this perspective that we can hope to do the most good and help the most people. This journal is just the beginning of the journey for our authors and my fellow Triota members; let it be the beginning of yours too.

Happy reading,
Emily Garrett '18

About the Editor

Hailing from the suburbs of Buffalo, NY, Emily Garrett is currently a senior at the University of Notre Dame completing a double major in Gender Studies and English. She is an ardent feminist, with a particular passion for reproductive justice, and plans to pursue a legal education and career centered on gender and women's rights. When not reading for class, Emily is usually still reading (just for fun) or organizing activist events to promote reproductive health on campus.

Women and the Colombian Peace Process

Molly Burton

Originally from St. Louis, Molly Burton is a senior, triple majoring in Gender Studies, Peace Studies, and Philosophy. She intends to work in international human rights law or policy against sexual or gender-based violence. When she's not working on her senior thesis on sex work policies and human trafficking, Molly enjoys playing traditional Irish music on the piano accordion, dancing to music from 2007, and baking way more cookies than anyone should really eat.

“To my knowledge, the peace agreement in Colombia is the peace agreement that has integrated a gender perspective the most.”¹ Hilde Salvesen, one of the members of the Norwegian facilitation team to the Colombian peace process, is not alone in this view; many others have been heralding the peace accord signed on November 24th, 2016—the *Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera* (Final Accord for the End of Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace; henceforth, the *Acuerdo Final*)—as one of the most gender-inclusive peace accords ever. Yet, was it? Though the Colombian peace process to the 2016 accord was predictably male-dominated, the text of the peace accord itself pays an unprecedented attention to women and gender. To demonstrate this, this paper will follow first why women are needed in peace processes, then trace women’s participation in Colombia’s peace processes up until the one in the fall of 2016, focusing on their general demands and desires from the peace process. Then, it analyzes the most recent accord, looking at the roles of women in its creation and in the text itself. Appendices are included to track how women are referred to throughout the accord as well as the special provisions created with women in mind. One can see that, although women were notably absent

¹ Peace Research Institute Oslo, "Gender and Inclusion in the Colombian Peace Process" (*PRIO Gender, Peace and Security Update* 4, 2016), 2.

from the creation and signing of the accord, their perspective and positionality shines through in the actual document.

The Conflict

The conflict in Colombia can be traced back to the colonial influences that led to the high levels of income inequality and lack of governmental control in the 1930s.² Colombia at this point in time was split into two main political parties: Liberal and Conservative.³ The Liberal party had released new reforms, which further increased polarization, isolated the Conservative party, and made ever clearer Colombia's governmental instability.⁴ After the 1948 assassination of a Liberal leader, what is now called "*La Violencia*," or "The Violence," began—a period in Colombia's history when over 200,000 people were killed in less than ten years, ending with the overthrow of a military leader.⁵ Since then, the two parties have been alternating power, not only causing political instability but leaving little power to enact any lasting social reform.⁶ In sum, the government was stuck in this precarious position, unable to create any real social change, leaving

² Mauricio García-Durán, *Alternatives to War: Colombia's Peace Processes* (London: Conciliation Resources, 2004), 12.

³ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ UN Women. *Gender and the Role of Women in Colombia's Peace Process* (New York, 2016), 4.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Colombian citizens without the social structures that they needed to survive.

The violence, however, continued even after the end of *La Violencia*. The first non-state military groups developed during that era, but others followed readily. The most infamous guerilla group, and the one that was involved in the 2016 peace accord, is the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), or the FARC.⁷ Other guerilla groups include the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Army), or the ELN, the M-19, and the EPL.⁸ However, these revolutionary left-wing guerilla groups were not the only violent non-state actors in the Colombian conflict. In 1980s, paramilitary forces emerged—private, armed, right-wing groups who armed themselves to provide citizen protection from the guerilla groups due to the weakness of the state.⁹ The major paramilitary party is the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia), or the AUC, and is an umbrella group for smaller paramilitary groups.¹⁰

There have been about 35 years of attempted peace agreements amongst various actors (such as guerilla groups, the government, and

⁷ García-Durán, *Colombia's Peace Processes*, 91.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

paramilitaries).¹¹ Successful agreements led to the disarmament of the M-19 and EPL guerilla groups and the paramilitary group, the AUC. None of the remaining groups—specifically the Colombian government, the FARC, and the ELN—recognize the legitimacy of the other and, for that reason, refuse to engage them politically. At this point, groups are not fighting over a specific issue; there is just mass violence.¹² A peace process and agreement are still needed.

Women and Peace Processes

Hegemonic international norms generally endorse that peace processes, and political processes in general, should be gender-neutral.¹³ However, when countries go along with this liberal peace model, which is, “supposedly ‘gender-neutral,’” they often fail to realize that the “promotion of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law does not necessarily ensure gender equality and security.”¹⁴ Gender-neutral policies in peace processes—due to their ignorance of gender—can translate into discrimination against women, especially if those making the policies do not include a female perspective. Further, gender equality is sometimes considered to be irrelevant or unsuitable

¹¹ García-Durán, *Colombia's Peace Processes*, 46.

¹² *Ibid.*, 11.

¹³ Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, "Getting to the Peace Table" in *Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why It Matters* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), 62.

¹⁴ Marisa O'Reilly, "Gender and Peacebuilding" in *Routledge Handbook of Peacebuilding*, ed. Roger MacGinty (Routledge, 2013), 62.

for peace processes, being pushed aside for more “relevant” topics like disarmament or political appointments.¹⁵ Understandably, if women are not prioritized at the peace table, a society is unlikely to reach a point of positive peace after the conflict supposedly ends.¹⁶

There are two main arguments as to why the presence of women is necessary throughout peace processes. The first is an essentialist approach claiming that the differences that separate women from men would be inherently valuable in the peace process. This most typically comes from the belief that women are inherently more peaceful than men; men are more militaristic and aggressive, while women are pacifist, nurturing, and emotional.¹⁷ Other similar forms of thought are that women’s roles as mothers or victims—two essentialist feminine roles—give them moral legitimacy to participate in the peace process.¹⁸ Further, some believe that women, due to either biology or socialization, are more capable of trust, better at communication, more equipped to emphasize with the opposition, or have better conflict resolution strategies.¹⁹ These claims are all based on the idea that women are different from men, and that these differences are why they

¹⁵ Malathi de Alwis, Julie Mertus, and Tazreena Sajjad. “Women and Peace Processes” in *Women and Wars*, ed. Carol Cohn (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013), 192.

¹⁶ Positive peace is a term originated by Johan Galtung, meaning not only the “absence of personal violence,” but the “absence of structural violence” (defined below, 22) as well.

¹⁷ De Alwis, et al, “Women and Peace Processes,” 175.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Anderlini, “Getting to the Peace Table”, 82.

are needed in the peace process, because they would be able to contribute what men cannot. These belief systems can be detrimental to women and gender equality, as they force women into essentialist roles and restrict their agency to participate in ways that are not traditionally feminine.

An alternative perspective is that women are needed throughout the peace process because gender equality itself is important.²⁰ This viewpoint allows for women to be included in the peace process without sidelining them into typically diminished feminine roles or dismissing their contributions for coming from a female perspective. It also emphasizes that peace cannot be built without the presence of a constituency that makes up more than 50% of the population, similar to how peace cannot be sufficiently built without representatives from different races, religions, economic backgrounds, etc. If equality is practiced during the peace process, it has a greater chance of being practiced in the society that follows. Peace processes are about power redistribution—to the state, to the warring parties, and to everyone else—and if women are not at the peace table, the power that women deserve (50% of the power) will be allocated elsewhere.²¹ It is important to realize the ways that “(re)building peace may

²⁰ De Alwais, et al, “Women and Peace Processes,” 175.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 171.

(re)construct gendered forms of domination, injustice and insecurity in transitional societies.”²² By not emphasizing the importance of women at the peace table and of equality at the peace table, one can miss the chance to address the underlying structural violence of gender inequity in one’s society, leaving open the path for a resurgence of conflict after the peace process.²³ This equality argument for a significant female presence in peace processes is more persuasive than the essentialist one, as it promises to construct a gender-just future.

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council ratified resolution 1325 (henceforth, UNSCR 1325). UNSCR 1325 calls on governments to increase the political participation of women throughout all phases of the peace process, in addition to recognizing the necessity of a gender perspective throughout all policy decisions.²⁴ This document is used throughout the world to lend legitimacy to the gender perspective and female involvement in politics and has been adopted by 63 UN member states (as of September 2016).²⁵ Those participating in peace talks (including the FARC) often use UNSCR 1325 demonstrate their political

²² O’Reilly, “Gender and Peacebuilding”, 57.

²³ Structural violence is a term originated by Johan Galtung, meaning an “avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs.” It is a form of violence without direct actors or subjects and tends to be presented as a form of inequality that causes harm.

²⁴ Anderlini, “Getting to the Peace Table”, 72.

²⁵ Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, *Colombia*, by Working Group for the Advocacy and Implementation of UNSCR 1325 (Security Council Resolution 1325: Civil Society Monitoring Report 2011), 295.

legitimacy by embracing international norms.²⁶ UNSCR 1325 can easily be critiqued for its liberal peacebuilding model, for focusing on political systems, top down change instead of bottom up, and overemphasizing the role of the government and the United Nations over, for example, civil society organizations.

In sum, women are needed at peace talks because of the need for gender equality, not because of their essentialist female qualities. It is important to note, as well, that some parties can use gender as a tool to garner support—whether that may be by embracing gender equality or turning away from it.

Women and the Colombian Peace Processes

Up until the most recent peace agreement attempt, women's involvement in the peace process mainly consisted of their roles in civil society organizations. Women began organizing for peace in the 1940s, but after the 1991 Constitution recognized women's rights and guaranteed women's equal roles in political participation and peacemaking, their involvement escalated.²⁷ There was a set of minor peace accords signed with the EPL, PRT, MAQL, and CRS (various guerilla groups) from 1990–1994 and, throughout all of these

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Catalina Rojas, "In the Midst of War: Women's Contributions to Peace in Colombia" ed. Sanam Naraghi Anderlini (*Women Waging Peace Policy Commission*, 2004), 6-10.

agreements, there was only one female signatory (who happened to be from the guerilla side) out of about 40 people per agreement.²⁸ This, for the aforementioned reasons, is problematic.

In 1996, the Mandate for Peace, Life, and Freedom campaign began—an example of civil society activism—of which many women were leaders. This campaign (and 10 million signatures on a petition) sparked a nonbinding ballot in favor of negotiated solutions between the government and the guerilla groups in 1997.²⁹ This movement, in addition to peace marches and public protests, started the 1999 dialogues between the government and the FARC, which had women as major participants for the first time.³⁰ The women involved were Mariana Páez (FARC), María Emma Mejía, Ana Mercedes Gómez, and Ana Teresa Bernal (Colombian government).³¹ Having women in official capacities challenged the other participants to consider gender for the first time while drafting the peace accord.

Further, during this round of negotiations, a Thematic Committee was created, which met with civil society organizations, women, and other more marginalized groups. The creation of this committee demonstrated a deeper consideration of the importance of women, gender, and civil society in this round of peace talks. A “women’s

²⁸ UN Women, *Women in Colombia*, 17.

²⁹ Anderlini, “Getting to the Peace Table”, 57.

³⁰ Rojas, “In the Midst of War”, 18.

³¹ *Ibid.*

forum” was created through the Thematic Committee and led by two of the female participants in the peace talks, Páez and Bernal.³² 600 women (some representing civil society organizations) came together for a day-long event and everyone joined together on a common agenda for peace.³³ Though this was incredibly important and groundbreaking, the government was absent from the forum and ignored the actions that the forum agreed upon.³⁴

Shortly after, attempts at a successful peace process were continued with the ELN in 2006–2007 (which involved a grand total of no women) and with paramilitary groups in 2004 (which also involved no women).³⁵ However, in 2007, a resurgence of the National Peace Council—which was originally created in 1994 and was one of the first mixed bodies of civil society organizations and government officials—allowed women’s civil society groups to have more input and to suggest delegates to the actual peace talks. At this time, the National Peace Council had only three women out of sixty men, but women were there.³⁶ Inclusion was being attempted.

³² *Ibid.*, 19.

³³ *Colombia*, Security Council Resolution 1325, 295.

³⁴ Rojas, “In the Midst of War”, 19.

³⁵ *Colombia*, Security Council Resolution 1325, 294.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 295.

Women's Goals in Previous Peace Processes

Around 2002, the *Iniciativa de Mujeres por la Paz* (Women's Peace Initiative), or IMP, brought together over 719 female delegates from over 266 women's organizations to figure out exactly what women wanted from a peace process.³⁷ They narrowed down 600 originally introduced points into twelve prioritized demands, focusing specifically on five forms of exclusion: "economic, environmental, rural, political, and socio-cultural" (the twelve demands can be found in Appendix A).³⁸ After the women decided on their priorities, their process concluded with a four-day Constitutional Assembly in Bogotá, where the agenda was introduced to the country and the twelve points were ratified by the Congress of Colombia.³⁹

In addition to that constituent process, priorities were also determined during the aforementioned women's forums conducted by the Thematic Committee. There were six different presentations emphasized at the women's forum in 2003: rural reconstruction as a pillar to rebuilding Colombia (given by *campesino*, or peasant, women); women's perspective on the economy, growth, employment, equity, and peace; the importance of sustained dialogues, women's approaches to peace, and a country filled with social justice and peace; individual

³⁷ Rojas, "In the Midst of War", 27.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

women's groups' perspectives; a cultural presentation filled with a drama and the painting of a mural; and a presentation given by Bernal and Paéz, the leaders of the forum.⁴⁰ The forum was also used an opportunity to address machismo and other misogynist actions from those in the armed groups, both state and non-state.⁴¹ In sum, the women's civil society organizations of Colombia banded together to push for peace and inclusion for women in all parts of society.

The Peace Process that Led to the *Acuerdo Final* (Final Accord)

In August of 2012, peace talks begin in Norway and women were noticeably absent.⁴² When the FARC declared a two-month ceasefire in order to begin peace talks with the Colombian government in Cuba, however, there was one woman, a Norwegian, who was there "briefly."⁴³ While the talks continued, women's civil society organizations were shaping the conversation through other means. Civil society forums, specifically the women's forums, continued in 2012 and 2013, as well as the National Summit of Women for Peace in October of 2013.⁴⁴ The National Summit was initiated by nine Colombian women's organizations and it ended with three demands: 1)

⁴⁰ Paraphrased from Rojas, "In the Midst of War", 20.

⁴¹ Rojas, "In the Midst of War", 22.

⁴² UN Women, *Women in Colombia*, 19.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 20.

that the parties stay until an agreement is reached; 2) that women be included at the peace table and at every part of the peace process; and 3) that women's needs, interests, and experiences be discussed.⁴⁵ This summit impacted the peace talks; two plenipotentiary female negotiators were appointed to the peace table.

In addition, three subcommissions and commissions were established during this round of talks that were important to women and gender equality: the Gender Subcommission, the Technical Subcommission on Ending Conflict, and the Historical Commission on the Conflict and its Victims.⁴⁶ The Gender Subcommission was established in 2014 as an "effective mechanism for including both women and a gender perspective" and consisted of primarily women (except for one FARC man).⁴⁷ The co-chair of the Gender Subcommission, María Paulina Riveros, announced eight areas where a gender perspective was essential in Colombia's peace accord: "access to rural property for women," "guarantees of the economic, social and cultural rights of women and 'persons with diverse sexual orientations and identities,'" "promotion of women's participation in representation, decision-making and conflict resolution," "prevention of risks specific to women," "access to truth and justice, and measures to counter

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ PRIO, "Gender and Inclusion", 1.

impunity,” “public recognition, dissemination and countering of stigmatization of women’s political work,” “institutional action to strengthen women’s organizations,” and “disaggregation of data by gender.”⁴⁸ These ideas can be seen implemented throughout the *Acuerdo Final*; texts were even amended after the establishment of the Gender Subcommission.⁴⁹ Further, the Technical Subcommission on Ending Conflict had a membership that was 25% female, but the Historical Commission on the Conflict and its Victims only had one female member, which could have proven problematic when portraying female victims of sexual violence in a positive light.⁵⁰ This era of the peace process was being lauded as a “model for inclusive peace processes, and in particular for the inclusion of women and a gender perspective.”⁵¹ Positive changes were being made and were still continuing to occur.

By April of 2013, women made up 20% of leadership positions at the peace table. By February of 2015, women made up 40% of the FARC delegation, accurately representing the gender proportions of its armed constituency.⁵² Meanwhile, during 2015, the president of Colombia said

⁴⁸ Roxanne Krystalli, “The Colombian peace agreement has a big emphasis on the lives of women. Here’s how.,” *Washington Post*, August 19, 2016.

⁴⁹ UN Women, *Women in Colombia*, 21.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ PRIO, “Gender and Inclusion”, 2.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 24.

the government was prepared for a bilateral ceasefire with the FARC.⁵³ Shortly thereafter, both the government of Colombia and the FARC signed a deal on paying reparations and ensuring justice for victims.⁵⁴ By 2016, both sides delayed the signing of a final agreement, citing differences, but by June they signed a definitive ceasefire and disarmament agreement.⁵⁵ In September, the Colombian government and the FARC signed a peace accord (the *Acuerdo Final*) formally ending 52 years of armed conflict.⁵⁶ Even though the voters rejected this in an October referendum, the government and the FARC signed a revised peace deal in November. At this point, peace is officially declared.

The *Acuerdo Final*, Women, and Gender

The *Acuerdo Final* is split into six sections: *Hacia un nuevo campo colombiano: Reforma Rural Integral* (Toward a New Colombian Countryside: Comprehensive Rural Reform), *Participación Política: Apertura democrática para construir la paz* (Political Participation: A Democratic Opportunity to Build Peace), *Fin del Conflicto* (End of the Conflict), *Solución al Problema de las Drogas Ilícitas* (Solution to the

⁵³ "Colombia Profile - timeline," BBC News, April 6, 2017, accessed April 09, 2017. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19390164>.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Problem of Illicit Drugs), *Acuerdo sobre las Víctimas del Conflicto: Sistema Integral de Verdad, Justicia, Reparación y No Repetición* (Agreement Regarding Victims of the Conflict: Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Repetition), and *Implementación, verificación y refrendación* (Implementation, Verification, and Ratification).⁵⁷

The first section, *Hacia un nuevo campo colombiano: Reforma Rural Integral* (Toward a New Colombian Countryside: Comprehensive Rural Reform), lays the foundation for the transformation of rural Colombia. It focuses on supporting the health and wellbeing of the rural population, recognizing that providing for the rural population is necessary to guarantee lasting peace.⁵⁸ It also ensures that women have equal access to the land (see Appendix B).⁵⁹ It states that women should be acknowledged as autonomous citizens with human rights, emphasizing that women have been set at a disadvantage. Having equal access to land is one way of doing so. This section also takes gender into account when looking at national plans to reduce poverty.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Presidencia de la república, *Summary of Colombia's Agreement to End Conflict and Build Peace* (Todos Por Un Nuevo País 2016), Table of Contents; *Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera* (24.11.2016 ed.), 10, 35, 57, 98, 124, 193.

⁵⁸ Presidencia, *Summary of Colombia's Agreement*, 5.

⁵⁹ *Acuerdo final*, 12.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

The second section, *Participación Política: Apertura democrática para construir la paz* (Political Participation: A Democratic Opportunity to Build Peace), clearly looks at political participation. This part stresses that building peace is an opportunity to strengthen pluralism and to make sure all parts of Colombia's society are represented.⁶¹ It also calls for an increase in political participation in general, as well as outlawing violence as a form of political action.⁶² There is a specific subsection (2.3.7) entitled *Promoción de la participación política y ciudadana de la mujer en el marco del presente Acuerdo* (Promotion of the political and civic participation of women within the framework of the present accord) (see Appendix C).⁶³ It recognizes the importance of women's participation in politics and emphasizes that measures should be put in place in order to ensure women's leadership and equity in politics. This section goes as far as to say that women's political participation is "vital" to democracy.⁶⁴

The *Fin del Conflicto* (End of the Conflict) is the third section of the *Acuerdo Final* and lays out the FARC and the Colombian government's bilateral ceasefire, end of violence, and laying down of arms.⁶⁵ The point of this section is fairly apparent: to make sure the hostilities

⁶¹ Presidencia, *Summary of Colombia's Agreement*, 10.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 12.

⁶³ *Acuerdo final*, 55.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Presidencia, *Summary of Colombia's Agreement*, 14.

between the two groups end, as well as to ensure the disarmament of combatants and their reintegration into Colombian society.⁶⁶ This section is what most people would consider the bulk of the peace agreement, laying out exactly what is needed to reach an end to the violence and (an albeit negative⁶⁷) peace. The predominant mention of women throughout this section is in conjunction with the mention of children, specifically to pay special mind to the violence done to women and children (see Appendix D for two quotes).⁶⁸ It also touches on the importance of emphasizing the rights of women throughout the reintegration process, bearing in mind women's roles both as disarmed combatants and as family members.⁶⁹ This section mainly focuses on the practical side of ending the violence and not any specific societal change.

The fourth section claims to have the *Solución al Problema de las Drogas Ilícitas* (Solution to the Problem of Illicit Drugs). In this section, the Colombian government and the FARC state their three-pronged commitment to finding a definitive solution to the illicit drug problems in Colombia, to intensifying the fight against drug trafficking, and to providing alternatives to farmers who rely on growing these illicit

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ As distinguished above, positive and negative peace are terms originated by Johan Galtung. Negative peace means only the "absence of personal violence."

⁶⁸ *Acuerdo final*, 57–98.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

drugs.⁷⁰ It stresses how important it is to use a gender-conscious approach when looking at this issue—especially in regards to how women are affected by illicit drugs and how illicit drugs can cause an increase in gender-based violence and domestic violence (see Appendix E). This section uses an intersectional⁷¹ lens to recognize the importance of addressing the illicit drug problem by paying special attention to not only indigenous people and women but also to indigenous women (in addition to other marginalized groups such as LGBTI individuals, those with disabilities, etc.).⁷² Additionally, although this section claims to have found the solution to the problem of illicit drugs, it recognizes that this problem will not go away immediately or easily.

Though less ambitious than the previous section, the section entitled *Acuerdo sobre las Víctimas del Conflicto: Sistema Integral de Verdad, Justicia, Reparación y No Repetición* (Agreement Regarding Victims of the Conflict: Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice,

⁷⁰ Presidencia, *Summary of Colombia's Agreement*, 24.

⁷¹ The word “intersectionality” was first used by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1991 in her article, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color.” She uses the term to “illustrate that many of the experiences Black women face are not subsumed within the traditional boundaries of race or gender discrimination as these boundaries are currently understood, and that the intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women’s lives in ways that cannot be captured wholly by looking at the women race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately” (1244). It has been adopted by gender theorists to describe the intersections of social identity that all individuals have—such as gender, race, religion, economic background, ability, etc.

⁷² *Acuerdo final*, 98–124.

Reparation, and Non-Repetition) promises a significant amount. Its goals include realizing victims' rights, ensuring accountability, guaranteeing a sound experience with the legal system, and facilitating social coexistence and reconciliation.⁷³ This section reasonably emphasizes the differential impact violence has on women and children (see Appendix F). The accord recognizes the necessity of balancing amnesty with justice and the needs of the victims with the community's need to heal.⁷⁴ Though this can be troublesome, the document does a relatively satisfying job of finding the middle ground.

The final section of the *Acuerdo Final* is *Implementación, verificación y refrendación* (Implementation, Verification, and Ratification). This section outlines the practical parts of how this accord will work, including measures that will be adopted in order to ensure proper implementation.⁷⁵ It also presents a plan to monitor compliance with the accord. This section specifies how one might implement the plans involving women (see Appendix G). It sums up what has been discussed in previous sections and demonstrates a plan for action and interpretation.

As one can see from the previous description, women and gender were discussed throughout Colombia's peace accord. Quantitatively,

⁷³ Presidencia, *Summary of Colombia's Agreement*, 28.

⁷⁴ *Acuerdo final*, 124–193.

⁷⁵ Presidencia, *Summary of Colombia's Agreement*, 32.

“*mujer*” (the Spanish word for woman) was used 222 times; for comparison, “*hombre*” (the word for man) was only used 67 times. “*Genero*” (gender) was used 55 times; “*sexo*” (sex) was used 8 times. “*Niñas*” (girls) was used 36 times, which is 2 times more than “*niños*,” (boys), which was used 34 times. “*Madre*” (mother) and “*Padre*” (father) were typically used in conjunction (4 times) except 1 time in regard to nursing mothers. “*Feminina*” (feminine) was used 4 times; “*Masculino*” was used 1 time.⁷⁶ In sum, female individuals were discussed more often than male individuals. The accord had 310 pages and used the word “*mujer*” (woman) 222 times. “*Mujer*” makes up .16% of the words in the *Acuerdo Final*; for comparison, the words “woman” and “women” make up about 2% of this paper, which is entirely about women, and .001% of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (the UN’s founding document).⁷⁷ Colombia’s peace accord addresses women an impressive amount.

However, it is important to remember that the *Acuerdo Final* that is being looked at was not the original agreement that the country of Colombia voted on in referendum; Colombian citizens voted down that original document. One of the reasons the first agreement was rejected

⁷⁶ *Acuerdo final*, 1–310.

⁷⁷ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December 1948, 217 A (III), available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3712c.html>

was because it addressed gender *too much*.⁷⁸ Yes, the peace accord that was just dissected has fewer mentions of gender than the original document. Some more conservative, traditional groups opposed the modern gender provisions in the peace accord, especially in regard to increasing the presence of women in the public sphere and issues surrounding LGBTI rights.⁷⁹ Since there was a considerable objection to the parts of the agreement discussing gender, the President of Colombia assured conservative religious groups that “we will throw out all that threatens the family, that threatens the church, and we will look for a phrase, a word, that does not create fear in the believers.”⁸⁰ Notice, however, that he does not say that any of the provisions or claims will be changed; he promises solely a word change. The new version (the one discussed here) uses words like “equality” or “equal opportunity” in place of “gender.”⁸¹ Even though this new version does not address gender as explicitly as the previous version did, the content of gender equity seems to remain the same. The writers of the accord, in some ways, snuck gender and gender equality into the accord against what might be popular citizen consensus against such provisions. Whether this was the right move is only left to tell.

⁷⁸ Roxanne Krystalli and Kimberly Theidon. “Here’s how attention to gender affected Colombia’s peace process,” *Washington Post*, October 9, 2016.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ PRIO, “Gender and Inclusion”, 3.

Towards the Future

As the date of the signing grows more distant in the past, it is important to make sure all parties follow through on their promises as the accord evolves into governance.⁸² Peace processes do not end when a peace accord is signed. The negotiations might conclude, but the process towards peace does not end until positive peace (not just negative peace)⁸³ is fully achieved.⁸⁴ In order to edge closer to positive peace, one can focus on, perhaps, making sure the women involved in the peace talks get credit for their work. For instance, 80% of the staff of the office of the High Commissioner for Peace in Colombia was female during the talks, and eight women were key advisors for the talks for the government of Colombia.⁸⁵ Though women might not have been in the majority of the prime-time leadership roles, women did dominate the majority of advisory and staff positions throughout the peace process; women were at other (albeit smaller) tables, in the background.⁸⁶

Another area of worthwhile focus is ensuring the peace accord is followed through in regards to women's political participation. "The

⁸² Anderlini, "Getting to the Peace Table", 86.

⁸³ As again distinguished above, positive and negative peace are terms originated by Johan Galtung. Negative peace means only the "absence of personal violence." Positive peace means the "absence of structural violence" (defined above, 22).

⁸⁴ de Alwis et al. "Women and Peace Processes", 178.

⁸⁵ UN Women, *Women in Colombia*, 21.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

paucity of women in leadership positions in political parties, the state, or non-state groups is perhaps the most pertinent reason for their absence from peace talks.”⁸⁷ Men, in fact, will typically point to the lack of women in political positions to give excuse to female absence in the peace processes.⁸⁸ Though Colombia is a pioneer in drafting laws and, in this case, peace accords, that demonstrate women’s rights or the fight against violence against women, it is rarely followed through.⁸⁹ This can be addressed, in one way, by ensuring that women participate in the political process. Female political participation in representative positions in Colombia has been stuck below 16% for years, and, in 2006, even at 0.6% in the Colombian House of Representatives.⁹⁰ If women can safely claim their voice in politics, perhaps Colombia would be on the path to true positive peace.

One way the Colombian government could continue to show its commitment to women and gender equality is by adopting the aforementioned UNSCR 1325. Though some groups throughout Colombia and throughout the peace process have been using the resolution to back up their arguments for women’s inclusion in the peace process, the resolution itself played did not play a political role, as the Colombian government is one of over 100 UN member states

⁸⁷ Anderlini, "Getting to the Peace Table", 58.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ UN Women, *Women in Colombia*, 12.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

that have not adopted UNSCR 1325. Further, one could argue that Colombia does not need UNSCR 1325, due to its successful and relatively gender-inclusive peace process. Ratifying the resolution, or supporting the ratification of the resolution, could be seen as supporting the liberal peace, preferring change from the top down and overemphasizing the political process. The Colombian peace process was as gender inclusive as it was because of the role of civil society organizations, not because of laws that emphasize women's inclusion that were already in place. Could dismissing UNSCR 1325 as disrespectful of the success of the civil society organizations be preferred as a model of elicitive peacebuilding? Or is it better to subscribe to the international order and promote the UN's resolution? This must be addressed as Colombia attempts to move away from a purely negative peace.

Conclusion

The peace processes in Colombia were (and still are) arguably as long and strenuous as the war itself. Women were involved throughout, mainly in the role of civil society organizations. During the most recent peace talks that resulted in the *Acuerdo Final*, the presence of women in leadership negotiating roles increased, albeit marginally. However, the accord itself was incredibly progressive, addressing a variety of gender

issues and promoting women as human beings deserving of rights and attention. The *Acuerdo Final* should be heralded as a model for gender inclusive peace accords, yet the Colombian peace process itself should be critiqued.

Appendix A

Summary: The WEC Twelve-Point Agenda for Peace

Economy

1. Formulate fiscal policy geared toward an income distribution with gender equality.
2. Create policies that will defend Colombia's strategic interests against multinational corporations.
3. Create a new development model of social and gender equality.

Justice and Security

4. Ensure that all actors involved in the armed conflict abide by the norms of international humanitarian law, respecting women of all ages, religions, sexual orientations, political ideologies, and socio-political and economic levels.
5. Investigate and place sanctions on all actors responsible for violating international humanitarian laws against women.

Politics and Public Life

6. Protect the democratic mechanisms of the 1991 constitution that allow for the full exercise of the fundamental rights of women and all Colombians.
7. Ensure the direct participation of women's organizations in the various national and local dialogue processes and political negotiations of the social and armed conflict.
8. Ensure the full participation of women's organizations in the social, political, and economic spaces with quotas that will guarantee the inclusion of peasants and all ethnic groups.

Society and Culture

9. Establish effective public policies on women's rights that promote a nonviolence culture and respect for ethnic and cultural diversity.
10. Formulate cultural policies with gender, age, and ethnic perspectives.

Land, Territory, and the Environment

11. Institute democratic agrarian reform with an ethnic and gender perspective geared toward social justice; include women's organizations in decision-making positions to formulate, implement, and monitor the process.
12. Implement the Organic Territorial Law with a gender, ethnic, cultural, regional, urban, and rural perspective with the active participation of women in decision-making positions to formulate, implement, and monitor the process.

Source: Rojas, Catalina. "In the Midst of War: Women's Contributions to Peace in Colombia." Edited by Sanam Naraghi Anderlini. *Women Waging Peace Policy Commission*, 2004.

Appendix B

En la implementación de lo acordado en el punto “Hacia un Nuevo Campo Colombiano: Reforma Rural Integral” se tendrán en cuenta los siguientes principios: . . .

In the implementation of the agreement in the point “Toward a New Colombian Countryside: Comprehensive Rural Reform” the following principles shall be taken into account: . . .

Igualdad y enfoque de género: reconocimiento de las mujeres como ciudadanas autónomas, sujetos de derechos que, independientemente de su estado civil, relación familiar o comunitaria, tienen acceso en condiciones de igualdad con respecto a los hombres a la propiedad de la tierra y proyectos productivos, opciones de financiamiento, infraestructura, servicios técnicos y formación, entre otros; atendiendo las condiciones sociales e institucionales que han impedido a las mujeres acceder a activos productivos y bienes públicos y sociales. Este reconocimiento implica la adopción de medidas específicas en la planeación, ejecución y seguimiento a los planes y programas contemplados en este acuerdo para que se implementen teniendo en cuenta las necesidades específicas y condiciones diferenciales de las mujeres, de acuerdo con su ciclo vital, afectaciones y necesidades.

Equality and Gender Perspective: The acknowledgment of women as autonomous citizens, subject to rights that, independent of their family, marital, or social status, have equal access as men to land ownership, productive projects, financial options, infrastructure, technical services and training, among other things; taking in account social conditions and institutions that have prevented women from gaining access to productive assets and public and social assets. This acknowledgment implies the adoption of certain specific measures in the planning, execution, and monitoring of the plans and programs considered in this agreement, so that they are implemented taking into account the specific needs and different conditions of women, according to their life cycle, limitations, and needs.

Source: Colombia. *Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera*. 24.11.2016 ed. Pg. 12. My translation.

Appendix C

2.3.7 Promoción de la participación política y ciudadana de la mujer en el marco del presente Acuerdo

2.3.7 Promotion of the political and civic participation of women within the framework of the present accord

El Gobierno Nacional y las FARC-EP reconocen el importante papel que desempeñan las mujeres en la prevención y solución de los conflictos y en la consolidación de la paz, y la necesidad de promover y fortalecer la participación política y ciudadana de las mujeres, aún más en el marco del fin del conflicto, donde su liderazgo y participación en pie de igualdad son necesarios y esenciales en los procesos de toma de decisiones públicas, y en la formulación, ejecución, evaluación y control de las políticas gubernamentales para alcanzar una paz estable y duradera.

The National Government and the FARC-EP recognize the important role that women play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, and the need to promote and strengthen the political and civil participation of women, even more so in the context of the end of the conflict, where their leadership and participation on equal footing are necessary and essential to the public decision-making processes, and in the formulation, implementation, evaluation, and control of government policies in order to achieve a stable and lasting peace.

El Gobierno Nacional y las FARC-EP rechazan cualquier forma de discriminación contra la mujer y reafirman que el aporte de las mujeres como sujetos políticos en la vida pública es vital para el fortalecimiento de la democracia y para el mantenimiento y el fomento de la paz. En la implementación de todo lo acordado en el punto 2 del presente Acuerdo se garantizará el enfoque de género, y se diseñarán y adoptarán las medidas afirmativas necesarias para fortalecer la participación y liderazgo de la mujer y en general para promover el cumplimiento de los anteriores propósitos.

The National Government and the FARC-EP reject any form of discrimination against women and reaffirm that the contribution of women as political subjects in public life is vital for the strengthening of democracy and for the maintenance and promotion of peace. In the implementation of all that is agreed in point 2 of this agreement, a gender focus will be guaranteed, and the necessary affirmative measures necessary to strengthen participation and leadership of women and in general to promote

the fulfillment of the previous purposes will be designed and adopted.

El fortalecimiento de la participación política y ciudadana de las mujeres en pie de igualdad incluye adoptar medidas que contribuyen a garantizar una representación equilibrada de hombres y mujeres en la conformación de todas las instancias a que se refiere este acuerdo. Así mismo, se requiere propender por la participación equilibrada y el protagonismo de las mujeres al interior de organizaciones y movimientos sociales y partidos políticos. Con el fin de crear conciencia de derechos y promover nuevos liderazgos de las mujeres, se pondrán en marcha programas de formación sobre sus derechos políticos y formas de participación política y ciudadana.

The strengthening of the political and civil participation of women to equal footing includes adopting measures that contribute to guaranteeing a balanced representation of men and women in the shaping of all the instances referred to in this agreement. Likewise, it is required to promote the balanced participation and the protagonism of women within social movements and organizations and political parties. With the end of creating consciousness of rights and promoting new leadership of women, training programs about their political rights and forms of political and civil participation will be implemented.

Lo anterior sin perjuicio del deber de fortalecer el cumplimiento de los compromisos y normas internacionales y las normas nacionales sobre el particular.

The previous, without prejudice, should strengthen compliance with international commitments and norms and national norms in this regard.

Source: Colombia. *Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera*. 24.11.2016 ed. Pg. 55. My translation.

Appendix D

3.2. Reincorporación de las FARC-EP a la vida civil - en lo económico, lo social y lo político - de acuerdo con sus intereses: . . .

3.2 Reincorporation of the FARC-EP to civilian life—in the economic, the social, and the political—according to their interests: . . .

. . . El proceso de reincorporación tendrá en todos sus componentes un enfoque diferencial, con énfasis en los derechos de las mujeres. (pg. 69)

. . . The process of reincorporation will have all the components of different approaches, with an emphasis on the rights of women.

3.4.1. Principios orientadores

El Gobierno y las FARC- EP acuerdan los siguientes principios orientadores: . . .

Guiding Principles

The Government and the FARC-EP agreed on the following guiding principles: . . .

Enfoque de género: se pondrá especial énfasis en la protección de mujeres, niñas, niños y adolescentes, quienes han sido afectados por las organizaciones criminales objeto de este acuerdo. Este enfoque tendrá en cuenta los riesgos específicos que enfrentan las mujeres contra su vida, libertad, integridad y seguridad y serán adecuadas a dichos riesgos. (pg. 79)

Gender Approach: special emphasis will be placed on the protection of women, children, and adolescents, who have been affected by the criminal organizations in this agreement. This approach will have the into account the specific risks that have been faced by women against their lives, liberty, integrity, and security and will be appropriate to those risks.

Source: Colombia. *Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera*. 24.11.2016 ed. My translation.

Appendix E

4.2.1.1. Principios: La política nacional frente al consumo de drogas ilícitas se guiará por los siguientes principios: . . .

4.2.1.1. Principles: The national policy on illicit drug use will be guided by the following principles: . . .

Enfoque diferencial y de género: en el marco del respeto a los derechos humanos, para que las acciones que se implementen en materia de consumo respondan a las realidades de los consumidores y las consumidoras y sean efectivas y sostenibles, es necesario identificar factores de vulnerabilidad asociados a edad, sexo, condición de discapacidad, condición socioeconómica y ubicación geográfica o pertenencia a la población LGBTI, entre otros. Dichas acciones deberán prestar especial atención a las necesidades de los y las adolescentes en zonas rurales y urbanas.

Approach of difference and gender: in the context of respect for human rights, in order to ensure that actions implemented in the subject of consumption respond to the realities of the consumers and are effective and sustainable, it is necessary to identify factors of vulnerability associated with age, sex, disability status, socio-economic status and geographical location, or belonging to the LGBTI population, among others. These actions should pay special attention to the needs of adolescents in rural and urban areas.

Este enfoque deberá tener en cuenta la relación entre el consumo de las drogas ilícitas y la violencia contra la mujer, especialmente con la violencia intrafamiliar y la violencia sexual. Se preverán medidas para mujeres, niñas, jóvenes y adolescentes.

This approach should take into account the relationship between the illicit drug consumer and violence against women, especially with domestic and sexual violence. Measures will be planned for women, children, youths, and adolescents.

Source: Colombia. *Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera*. 24.11.2016 ed. Pg. 117. My translation.

Appendix F

Principios básicos del componente de justicia del sistema integral de verdad, justicia, reparación y no repetición (SIVJRNR). . .

Basic principles of the justice component of the integral system of truth, justice, reparation, and non-repetition . . .

El funcionamiento del componente de justicia dará énfasis a las necesidades de las víctimas mujeres, niñas y niños, quienes sufren de una manera desproporcionada y diferenciada los efectos de las graves infracciones y violaciones cometidas con ocasión del conflicto. Las reparaciones deben responder al llamado de las Naciones Unidas que todo acuerdo de paz debe adoptar un enfoque de género, reconociendo las medidas de reparación y restauración, el sufrimiento especial de las mujeres, y la importancia de su participación activa y equitativa en el componente de justicia del SIVJRNR.

The functioning of the justice component will emphasize the needs of women and children victims, who suffer in a disproportionate and different manner the effects of the serious infractions and violations committed during the conflict. The reparations should respond to the call of the United Nation that all peace accords must adopt a gender focus, identifying the measures of reparations and restoration, the distinctive suffering of women, and the importance of the active and equitable participation in the justice component of SIVJRNR.

Source: Colombia. *Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera*. 24.11.2016 ed. Pg. 144. My translation.

Appendix G

Principios generales para la implementación

General Principles for Implementation

Sin perjuicio de los principios específicos contemplados para la implementación de los diferentes acuerdos, el Gobierno Nacional y las FARC- EP hemos acordado los siguientes principios orientadores para la Implementación del Acuerdo Final: . . .

Without prejudice to the specific principles contemplated for the implementation of the different agreements, the National Government and the FARC-EP have agreed to the following guiding principles for the implementation of the Final Agreement: . . .

Enfoque de género: En el presente Acuerdo el enfoque de género significa el reconocimiento de la igualdad de derechos entre hombres y mujeres y de las circunstancias especiales de cada uno, especialmente de las mujeres independientemente de su estado civil, ciclo vital y relación familiar y comunitaria, como sujeto de derechos y de especial protección constitucional. Implica en particular la necesidad de garantizar medidas afirmativas para promover esa igualdad, la participación activa de las mujeres y sus organizaciones en la construcción de la paz y el reconocimiento de la victimización de la mujer por causa del conflicto.

Gender Approach: In the present Agreement, a gender approach means the recognition of equal rights between men and women and the special circumstances of each individual, especially women, independent of their civil status, their place in life, and relationship to family and their community, as subject to rights and a special constitutional protection. It implies, in particular, the need to guarantee affirmative actions to promote equality, the active participation of women and women's organizations in peacebuilding, and the recognition of the victimization of women because of the conflict.

Para garantizar una igualdad efectiva se requiere adelantar medidas afirmativas que respondan a los impactos desproporcionados que ha tenido el conflicto armado en las mujeres, en particular la violencia sexual. Respecto de los derechos de las víctimas su protección comprende el tratamiento diferenciado que reconozca las causas y los efectos desproporcionados que ha tenido el conflicto armado especialmente sobre las mujeres. Además, se deberán adoptar acciones diferenciadas

para que las mujeres puedan acceder en igualdad de condiciones a los planes y programas contenidos en este Acuerdo. Se garantizará la participación de las mujeres y sus organizaciones y su representación equitativa en los diferentes espacios de participación. El enfoque de género deberá ser entendido y aplicado de manera transversal en la implementación de la totalidad del Acuerdo.

In order to guarantee equality effectively, it requires affirmative actions to respond to the disproportionate impact that the armed conflict has had on women, in particular sexual violence. With regards to victims' rights, their protection includes different treatment that recognizes the disproportionate causes and effects that armed conflict has especially had on women. In addition, different actions must be adopted so women can have equal access to the plans and programs mentioned in this Agreement. It guarantees the participation of women and women's organizations and the equal representation of women in different spaces of participation. The gender approach should be understood and applied transversally in the implementation of all of the Agreement.

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**Truth-to-Nature: Enlightenment Anatomy's Essentializing
and Idealizing Tendencies**

Pete Freeman

Pete Freeman is a senior at the University of Notre Dame, where he studies Sociology, Gender Studies, and International Peace Studies. His research interests include social and gendered determinants of adolescent sexual health in Ghana, access to entrepreneurial spaces in Switzerland, and charitable giving behavior among US college students. In his free time, he enjoys meditating, playing the guitar, and trying new vegan recipes with friends. Pete hopes to continue working with adolescents to learn about holistic approaches that enhance social and emotional health and wellness.

I. The Sixteenth Century Forefathers of Anatomical Illustration

The history Enlightenment anatomical modeling can be traced back to Belgian physician Andreas Vesalius's^[1] 1543 book *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*^[2] (Irons, 2009; Ebenstein, 2016; Rifkin, Ackerman, & Falkenberg, 2011; Barnett, 2014; O'Malley, 1964). The publication marked a major turning point in human anatomy, largely because it contained remarkable illustrations from his unorthodox lectures at Padua during which he dissected a human corpse in front of students to illustrate the theoretical content of his lectures (O'Malley, 1964). In addition to his unique pedagogical approach to teaching human anatomy, Renaissance advances in printing and woodcut engravings allowed Vesalius to create striking anatomical illustrations that far surpassed any previously published works of similar anatomical aims (Barnett, 2014; Rifkin et al., 2011). What resulted were the most accurate portrayals of the human body yet created, both in the mid-sixteenth century and for several decades thereafter (Rifkin et al., 2011).

As result of the landmark illustrations in *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, many anatomists, artists, scientists, and academics began to emulate and build upon Vesalius's style of anatomical illustration to create scientific works of the pathology of death (Ebenstein, 2016). Though these scientific works depicted dead bodies in incredibly vivid,

and often evocative detail, their content was art insofar as it concerned the form, the emotion, and the force of life. Though science in subject and purpose, these post-Vesalius anatomical illustrations were art in their emotive forms, their treatment of the bare body, and their essentializing and idealizing tendencies. The human subjects of these anatomical illustrations are presented, in part, as mournful of their own death. They grieve the deaths of their compatriots, their sufferings palpable, at times leaping off the page to touch the observer (Rifkin et al., 2011). As such, these illustrations seemed to many to be as much science as they seemed spectacle (Ebenstein, 2016; Barnett, 2014, Rifkin et al., 2011).

De Fabrica's illustrations were in part inspired by an often overlooked source: sixteenth-century doctor and anatomist Charles Estienne's *De dissectione partium corporis humani* (*Dissection of the Human Body*). Though written in the early 1530's, Estienne's book was not published until 1545, two years after Vesalius's, and was thus lost in its shadow (Rifkin et al., 2011). Despite being overlooked by those concerned with Vesalius' magnum opus, Estienne's work contained good science and even better folio woodcuts. These woodcuts introduced new methods of illustration to anatomical science that Vesalius and contemporaries very likely drew inspiration from and built upon. But most importantly, both Vesalius and Estienne shared an

ardent preoccupation with anatomical dissection at a time when their contemporaries, by and large, preferred texts and images. Moreover, the two men believed that students and citizens alike would be more drawn to anatomy if the subject of the field - the human body - could be made palpable, able to be interacted with and explored in a hands-on, three-dimensional practice. It was precisely the 'hands-on' approach preferred by these two early anatomical luminaries that would soon lead the way to life-sized, wax anatomical models (Ebenstein, 2016; Rifkin et al., 2011; Messbarger, 2010).

But as Park (2000) deftly notes, Vesalius' influence carried not only breakthrough anatomical illustrative techniques and ways of seeing and portraying the human body, but also gendered ideas of male superiority and women's sexual inferiority rooted in philosophical texts that pre-date Vesalius by hundreds of years. As much as any other image in his master work, Vesalius' self-portrait on the frontispiece of *De Fabrica* sends a clear, gendered signal to its readers: "by choosing a female cadaver for his frontispiece; by placing that single female body in the middle of an unusually large and rowdy male crowd; and by placing it, and himself, in a position calculated . . . to magnify the sexual element,' Vesalius, and his many early modern devotees, ascribed to the male superior formative virtues for the generation of offspring, while proffering 'a corresponding denigration of the woman's part'"

(Messbarger, 2010, p. 146; Park, 2000, p. 38-39). Vesalius writes in *De Fabrica* that the “Maker of Things so constructed humans in the beginning that one [man] would put forth the supreme reason for the beginning of the fetus while the other [woman] would receive it and nurture and foster the fetus” (Vesalius, 1543). Thus the mark of male superiority was imprinted both explicitly and implicitly in Vesalius’ anatomical works. This androcentric approach to the precursors of Enlightenment anatomical modeling would manifest itself in gendered, and at times sexist, idealizations of men and women in the forms of life size wax models (Ebenstein, 2013; Ebenstein, 2016; Showalter, 1990; Newman, 1996; Jordanova, 1989).

II. The Inception of the Anatomical Wax Model

Nearly fifty years after *De Fabrica*’s publication, production of wax anatomical models began. The first anatomical teaching model, designed for medical students and scholars, was created when French surgeon Guillaume Desnoues commissioned Sicilian abbot Gaetano Giulio Zumbo to build a model of a decomposing human body (Bensaude-Vincent & Blondel, 2008). Zumbo’s early seventeenth century creation was the first of its kind and, in conjunction with other anatomical wax models, popularized the use of modeling as a teaching tool in anatomy (Ebenstein, 2013). Though, as will later be shown,

these models did as much for instruction in the classroom as they did to evoke seduction, intrigue, and the ecstatic in other spaces.

In the mid-1700's, scientist Felice Fontana collaborated with artist Clemente Susini to create the Anatomical Venus, the crown jewel of Enlightenment wax anatomical models (Ebenstein 2016; Ebenstein 2013; Von Düring, Poggesi, & Didi-Huberman, 1999; Rifkin et al., 2011; Jordanova, 1989). Susini's "Anatomical Venus" - also known as the "Medici Venus" and the "Demountable Venus" - is widely regarded as the most iconic anatomical wax model (Ebenstein, 2016). The dissectible, life-sized wax model was made in the workshop of Clemente Susini and is displayed at La Specola, The Museum of Zoology and Natural History, in Florence, Italy. Created between 1780 and 1782, the Anatomical Venus not only allowed for accessible anatomical exploration that broke contemporary taboo, but also created a cultural statement about the gender politics of women and science through medical mannequins (Ebenstein, 2016).

Indeed, as Kemp and Wallace (2000) discuss, anatomical imaging maintained a multifaceted purpose from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century. The purpose of anatomical images during this period, they argue, "had as much to do with what we would call aesthetic and theological understanding as with the narrower interests of medical illustrators as now understood. . . . They were not simply

instructional diagrams for the doctor technician, but statements about the nature of human beings as made by God in the context of the created world as a whole . . . they are about the nature of life and death” (Kemp & Wallace, 2000; Ebenstein, 2016, p. 14). Depending upon the observer, the Enlightenment anatomical Venus took on different and diverse meanings. To some, these anatomical representations were artistic statements on life and death, a *memento mori* that allowed the observer to dissect and disembody the anatomical building blocks of life (Barnett, 2014). Still to others, some models’ body language and downcast gaze evoked thoughts of Eve, of fallen grace, and of the original sin (Ebenstein, 2016).

The Anatomical Venus challenges belief. The model is at once a teaching tool of science and an aesthetic masterwork of art. Originally, this dissectable Anatomical Venus was created as a substitute for the constant, messy dissection of the human corpse, an act fraught with ethical tension and dependent on few available cadavers (Guerrini, 2015; Ebenstein, 2016). However, the Venus has since come to challenge conventional relationships between body and nature, humanity and the divine, art and science, life and death, and education and entertainment. It - or, she - can be seen in the original Venetian glass that she has laid in for over two hundred years. Her glass eyes, human hair, and ecstatic gaze beckon observers, drawing them to look,

gaze, and contemplate her body and not-so-human being. But her physical makeup - the very pieces that comprise the Venus - call for an even closer look. The Venus is dissectible, able to be disassembled into seven different, anatomically correct layers, each hand-crafted with an eye toward anatomical accuracy. Only once completely dissected does the Venus reveal, folded deep inside her final layer, a fetus curled within a wax womb. If the Venus appears complex on the outside, her interior is surely even moreso.

Instruction, seduction, and intrigue: these are three of the functions of the late-eighteenth century Florentine wax anatomical models, often referred to as 'wax women,' 'slashed beauties,' or 'dissected graces' (Ebenstein, 2013; Ebenstein, 2016). The Venus is at once a fetishized object and fine art, at once an educational instrument and a divinely ecstatic *memento mori*, reminding its viewer that they, too, must die eventually. Inspiring morbid fantasy with its transgressive aesthetics, these feminine models were used to communicate anatomical knowledge while evoking thoughts and feelings of female sexuality, death, the divine and the ecstatic.

III. Methodology & Scope

The scope of this paper is limited to anatomical models produced in the Enlightenment era (1685-1815). The theoretical, epistemological

framework of truth-to-nature will be applied to Enlightenment era models with the purpose of analyzing their trespass of the art-science dichotomy and their gendered implications for feminist scholarship.

This paper builds upon Daston and Galison's (1951) conception of truth-to-nature, an Enlightenment epistemic virtue that emerged in reaction to pre-fifteenth century naturalists' preoccupation with nature's variability. The paper will explore the benefits and pitfalls of a truth-to-nature approach to modeling anatomy, posing questions of gender, imaging, understanding, and educational pedagogy. Outcomes of this Enlightenment epistemic reaction will be presented and questioned - what are some historical examples of naturalists working with artisans who sought generalization, idealization, and characterization? In what ways did science's collaboration with art permanently intertwine the two in Enlightenment anatomy? What cultural messages did observers of these models read on and in their wax bodies during the Enlightenment era, and how do these readings complement or contradict more modern, scholarly approaches to understanding these models and their multifaceted meanings? Answers to these questions will be attempted and grounded in an approach that acknowledges the futile binary categorization of these models as either art or science, either entertainment or education, either nature or humankind. Instead, the author acknowledges that these opulently

bizarre models challenge convention, and require a nuanced, interdisciplinary analysis.

IV. Truth-to-Nature

Though controversial and complex, nearly all Enlightenment anatomical models were crafted under the same shared reaction to earlier naturalist work: an aversion to the obsession with the singular, the deviant, the particular (Gaston & Dalison, 2010). Many pre-fifteenth century naturalists fixated on the singular, the individual, the markedly different specimen, and truth-to-nature anatomists, beginning around Vesalius' time, rejected this fixation wholesale. As a result, many Enlightenment models were adorned - moving past educational and scientific purposes - with accessories that made them appear to represent a typical young woman, or a characteristic old man (Von Düring et al., 1999; Carreiro, 2009; Dery, 2012). Some were erotic in nature, featuring low cut dresses or chests that simulated the rise and fall of breath (Irons, 2009).

But how to understand an object that represents idealized feminine beauty, yet functioned as a teaching tool that, in part, demonstrated the deepest of human anatomy? For what purposes did the gendering of these models serve, and how have these purposes been interpreted - or misinterpreted - by modern scholars? And how can science and art

become so tangled that these two seemingly oppositional realms collude to produce the bizarre, the opulent, the anatomical model? The purpose of this section is to introduce Daston and Galison's (2010) conception of truth-to-nature, briefly discuss its origins, and provide a framework with which to analyze the art-science dichotomy and the gendered implications of Enlightenment wax anatomical models.

Daston & Galison (2010) define truth-to-nature as a guiding epistemic virtue that sought to reveal an 'ur-form' in the object that it represented (p. 363). The two note that "Early [scientists] did not all interpret the notion of 'truth-to-nature' the same way. The words *typical, ideal, characteristic, and average* are not synonymous, even though they all fulfilled the same standardizing purpose. These alternative ways of being true to nature suffice to show that concern for accuracy does not necessarily imply concern for objectivity. On the contrary: extracting nature's essences almost always required scientific atlas makers to mold their images in ways that their successors would reject as dangerously 'subjective'" (Daston & Galison, 2010, p. 69). Truth-to-nature is, thus, an attempt to 'typify' through the portrayal of a single representation. It is an attempt to represent a general archetype that at once speaks for all who belong to the type and at the same time admits that no one particular body or animal can be used as *the* reference point for all bodies or all animals of that type. In other words,

the singular, by its very nature, cannot strictly speak to or for the whole; and yet, the singular could typify, idealize, characterize, or present an average of the whole of its species. And yet, truth-to-nature scientists worked under an epistemology that sought universal truth from the particular, sought the type from the individual.

This type of vision, prevalent in Enlightenment anatomy, involves both the selection of a particular and a sort of aesthetic transforming of the particular to represent all that the particular 'typifies' or 'characterizes.' This type of epistemic virtue involves a sort of "double sight" in which a scientist - naturalist, anatomist, physiologist - collaborates with an artist - a printer, engraver, draughtsman - to create an artistic-yet-scientific rendering that served both artistic and scientific purposes, to different extents (Daston & Galison, 2010, p. 82). The double sight, or 'four-eyed sight' as coined by Daston and Galison, is that of the artisan representing through material what the naturalist has analyzed in nature.

Indeed, the quest to represent a 'canonical body' was taken up by Vesalius in the mid-sixteenth century, by German anatomist Samuel Thomas von Sömmerring in the nineteenth century, and by many anatomists and scientists in between. These anatomists took great pride in their depiction of the canonical, a phrase coined by Greek sculptor Polykleitos in the fifth century BCE, and popularized in

anatomical literature by perhaps the forefather of ancient anatomy, Galen of Pergamon, in the third century AD (Daston & Galison, 2010, Rifkin et al., 2011).

Thus, truth-to-nature results in a sort of synthetic image. On one hand, the artisan works with a form of the natural, correcting one singular instance of nature so as to make a representation of a more perfect, 'invariable general form,' according to the artist Sir Joshua Reynolds (Daston & Galison, 2010, p. 81). On the other hand, the naturalist seeks the ideal, individual specimen for the artisan to represent, as well as the means to communicate exactly how to portray such a generalized specimen. Both seek the same invariable form, the archetypal or paradigmatic blade of grass to represent them all, for example, knowing all the while that no two blades of grass are exactly the same. In this way, the naturalist's job was to observe many blades of grass to know the 'ur-form' of them all, even though that ur-form likely would not be found in any one blade of grass. Careful, prolonged observation of individual specimens was the naturalist's task, first and foremost because selection of the first blade of grass the naturalist saw might, for example, contain an abnormality or unique characteristic that would bring into question its representativeness of its species as a whole. In this way, truth-to-nature was a collaboration between artisan and scientist to produce what would be considered as the most

'beautiful,' meaning the most generalizable, form of single thing that would stand to represent its species or type. In other words, truth-to-nature is the repeated observation of many individual specimens, the careful comparison of these specimens, in order to perceive the overarching archetype or characteristic version to represent the species.

What, then, might truth-to-nature as an epistemic virtue tell us about Enlightenment wax anatomical models? To begin with, these models were almost never representative of one human body.^[3] Instead, these models often represented a typical or 'ideal' human body, a perfectly healthy specimen that substituted for the individual cadavers that were so scarce, messy, and ethically compromising during the Enlightenment era (Ebenstein, 2016; Guerrini, 2015). Indeed, these models were made by truth-to-nature 'savants,' those whose careful observation and critical attention could extract the overarching truth from myriad observations and multiple impressions: one beautiful, generalizable body to represent all uniquely different bodies. Of course, there were advantages to creating representations of a 'perfect' or 'beautiful' body, namely that one single, actual human body could not reveal 'truth' for all bodies. How could it? Human bodies, though generally similar, are too variable in minute detail.

Individual bodies were, are, and will always be qualified by special circumstances (Daston & Galison, 2010, p. 234).

An excellent example of how truth-to-nature guided Enlightenment anatomists and artists can be found in the work of eighteenth century Dutch anatomist Bernhard Albinus. Albinus went to great lengths to ensure his artisan collaborator would adhere to his strict standards of truth-to-nature science when overseeing his artisan's illustrations of his original anatomical skeleton. Daston and Galison (2010) recount Albinus' struggle inherent in truth-to-nature anatomy, as well as the normative selection process behind crafting the essential, the ideal body:

“Having thus taken every ordinary and several extraordinary measures to ensure the integrity of object and subject, Albinus’s pronouncements about just what the finished pictures are pictures of comes as a distinct shock to the modern reader. They were pictures of an ideal skeleton, which may or may not be realized in nature and of which this particular skeleton is at best an approximation. Albinus was all too aware of the atlas maker’s plight: nature is full of diversity, but science cannot be. He must choose his images, and Albinus’s principle of choice was frankly normative. Accordingly, Albinus selected a skeleton “of the male sex, of a middle stature, and very well proportioned; of the most perfect kind, without any blemish or deformity.” (For Albinus it went without saying that a perfect skeleton was perforce male; in 1797, the German anatomist Samuel von Soemmerring constructed an ‘ideal’ - and ideology-laden - female skeleton)” (p. 73-74).

Additional implications of Enlightenment truth-to-nature modeling include the already touched upon duality of art and science and the emphasis on idealized gendering of wax models. Each of these

implications will be further discussed and analyzed in the following sections, each through the lense of truth-to-nature. In each of the following analyses, conclusions will be brought back to the truth-to-nature virtue, and new questions may be posed.

V. Art & Science

Traditionally, art and science are often defined in opposition to each other. And yet, recent scholarship suggests that empirical values that had long been the property of European artisans came to be adopted by scientists in the making of the 'new science.' Long (2011) confronts this issue in the history of science when asking whether artisan/practitioners shaped, through values and direct influence, the development of the scientific revolution?^[4]

The scientific revolution can be defined as the gradual emergence of modern scientific disciplines and methodologies in Europe stretching from the early modern period - near the end of the Renaissance - to the late eighteenth century - shaping Enlightenment era social and scientific values (Long, 2011; Grant, 1996). During this time, societal views of the natural world underwent a shift corresponding with the development of numerous academic and scientific disciplines - math, physics, astronomy, chemistry, and human anatomy. And while the methodologies and theories unique to each of the aforementioned

disciplines seemed at first glance to stand in stark contrast to anything that resembled 'art,' a closer look reveals quite the opposite.

Not only did artisanal empirical values begin to emerge in Enlightenment Europe culture in the fifteenth century (Long, 2011), but also, little by little, artisanal values became embedded in the 'new science,' influencing, among other disciplines, the emergence and methodology of Enlightenment era human anatomy. The historical context for the rise of the visual and material in European Enlightenment science is long and complex, but can be briefly described as occurring during a rising tide of cultural, political, and economic changes that took place in late medieval Europe (Long, 2011; Smith, 2004). Cities were on the rise, capitalism and long-distance trade were rapidly growing, large-scale industries that would become 'trading zones' for artisans and scientists were emerging, lands outside of Europe were being discovered, new plants and animals in these lands were seen as exotic and intriguing, political courts were gaining social importance, and the invention of the printing press, books, and pamphlets are only a few of the many historical events that greatly influenced "the increased importance of visual culture and the rising status of the visual arts aided by the invention of artist's perspective" (Long, 2011, p. 3). All of these influences converged to increase societal

value of objects, the material, and those who created and designed such things.

Enlightenment anatomical models, then, reflected this confluence of science and art in its attention to material, to bodily pose and form, and to the general appearance of the model. This concern for the appearance and material used in science can be traced back to the myriad empirical approaches derived from hands-on experience and manipulation of objects, experimentation, measurement and quantification, and the insertion of individual experience and perspective - as in truth-to-nature - in science's quest for truth. These aforementioned Enlightenment scientific values mirror those practiced by artisans: potters, farmers, sculptors, painters, and architects (Smith, 2004; Bennett, 1986). Thus, Renaissance scientific enquirers increasingly began to use artisanal empirical approaches when producing knowledge about the world, so that by the time of the Enlightenment, the formerly distinct line between science and art was considerably blurred (Long, 2011).

An excellent illustration of the collaboration between artist and scientist in creating the Enlightenment wax anatomical model can be found in the wax molding process. Deftly and thoroughly, Ebenstein (2016) describes the essentializing, idealizing, truth-to-nature wax modeling process:

“Firstly, the modeler, usually taking advice from an anatomist or natural philosopher, would select an illustration, or illustrations, from trusted anatomical atlases by Vesalius, Albinus, Haller, Mascagni, or another. Real human body parts would then be procured to work from, in order to ensure that all the individual parts were as accurate as possible. An Anatomical Venus was expensive and time-consuming to produce. Over two hundred cadavers were sometimes required to craft a single dissectible figure, owing to the speed with which bodies decayed, especially in the hot weather of the summer months. The modeler would either take a cast of the prepared specimen or copy it by hand. . . . Once a model of inexpensive wax or clay had been approved, a plaster cast would be taken to serve as a mould, which would then be used repeatedly; many such moulds are still owned by La Specola today. Next, the plaster moulds would be coated with soap or oil to ease release of the wax. The most commonly used waxes were beeswax; white ‘Virgin wax’ from Smyrna or Venice; or that of the Chinese scale insects Ceroplastes ceriferus and Ericerus pela, which produce a particularly fine, hard, white wax with a high melting point, well suited to modeling skin, though prohibitively expensive. The wax would be mixed with turpentine and other oils or fats to produce the required texture, as well as a mastic, or plant resin, to fortify and increase its stability, which was important for sustaining structure and creating vivid colors. It would then be carefully heated and colored with finely ground pigments often highly precious or toxic, which had been sifted through cloth and dissolved in oil or turpentine. Thin layers of wax would then be painted into, cooled and released from the mould. As most of the pieces were hollow, they were stuffed with rags or wood chips for support, although some, including Susini’s Medici Venus, have metal frames. Hair was attached with varnish; eye-lashes were individually implanted. Fine blood vessels and nerves were made of silk or linen fibres dipped in wax. The parts would be assembled, while attending to any flaws or damage. Finally, the model would be glazed in order to keep its surfaces free of dust and effect a realistic shine: another anatomical masterwork ready for display” (p. 48-49)

“Wax can look uncannily like flesh; it has a similarly moist appearance, depth of color (due to the even suspension of added pigments), and transparent opacity. It has also been intimately related to death rituals, where it represents the stillness of a corpse that appears only to need its spirit to be immediately reanimate. Wax is, by nature, contradictory: solid and molten, stable and ephemeral, ‘flesh’ and yet simulacrum, seemingly alive, yet merely material” (p. 70)

Indeed, insofar as scientific empiricism can be defined as “sense-based experience,” and to the extent that early modern and Enlightenment European art invoked the senses - chiefly sight and touch - to experience a piece of art, the binary categories of artisan/scholar, experimental/scientific, practice/theory, and finally art/nature need disaggregating. These dichotomies are deeply challenged by the Enlightenment anatomical model. As noted previously, these representations blur the lines between many conventional dichotomies, perhaps none more so than art/science. Of course, as Rifkin et al. (2011) note, that scientists and artists came to assume similar values and employ methodologies and practices that resembled each other’s should come as no surprise: “With kindred presumptions of benefice, the doctor studies the body to improve its fate; the artist to improve its spirit. Above all, [art students and medical students] start with the same genre of book: the illustrated anatomy. Here the body is laid bare inside and out in pictures that work in several realms. They are science in subject, illustration in usefulness, but art in their potential emotional impact. Spawned in the ancient union of art and medicine and fears of mortality, these [works] transform the pathology of death into art concerning the force of life” (p. 7). Research on these models that assumes binary categorizations or

dichotomous descriptions could benefit from disaggregation of classification.

On one hand, Enlightenment anatomy straddled artistic categories through the mediums of paintings, drawings, prints, sculpture, and photography. The artistic aspect of these otherwise scientific models was enhanced by various accessories featured on some of the models - jewelry, clothing, hairstyles, and cosmetics - which Prown (1982) labels as “adornments.” On the other hand, these models may also fall under Prown’s classification of “devices” - machines, scientific instruments, and life-size teaching tools. But as Prown argues, “Sorting by physical materials does not work because of the multiplicity of substances used, even at times in a single artifact. The same is true of methods of fabrication. The most promising mode of classification is by function. . . . Many objects straddle categories, but taxonomic shortcomings do not cause analytical problems” (1982, p. 3).

Of course, Enlightenment anatomist-professors came to realize the usefulness of the ‘emotional appeal’ of an idealized human body, made of wax, to teach dissection. After all, anatomy as the study of parts can be made more interesting, argued some Enlightenment professors, when presented in relation to a quasi-living, quasi-breathing, beautified whole. As Ebenstein (2016) notes, “The Anatomical Venus can be seen as part of an Enlightenment project to impose a sense of order and

control on that which will always defy our understanding. To anatomize is, after all, to single out, to separate from its system to analyse each thing separately. Yet this approach can obscure knowledge of equal importance: an understanding of the system as a whole, connection, and the relationship between things” (p. 209). Indeed, the Medici Venus is an ideal site to investigate the artistic idealization inherent in truth-to-nature Enlightenment science.

While the modern viewer may react with perplexed anxiety or confusion at the juxtaposition of beauty and organs, of eroticism and teaching tool, Enlightenment observers of the Medici Venus took less issue with the seemingly superfluous and extravagant inclusion of her pose, expression, accessories, and gendering. After all, the modern viewer might ask, how can her flowing hair, her necklace of pearls, her silk bed, or her strikingly human eyes compliment or enhance the Venus’ pedagogical purpose? Surely these artistic, beautifying aspects of the Venus detract from the educational integrity, the scientific standard for which she was made? But the Venus is an excellent example of ‘artnatomy,’ and brings the viewer back to a time when such sexual expressions and seductive body language were symptomatic of the divinely ecstatic, and not the basely sexual (Ebenstein, 2016). Indeed, how could the Medici Venus be seen as sexually indecent when she was put on display for the general public - for men *and* women *and*

children - and quickly became one of the most popular exhibits, were it not for an Enlightenment understanding of the ecstatic that elevated the status of the sexual to the status of divine? The popularity of the Medici Venus, and of similar, apparently sexualized models, was not rooted in controversy, criticism, or outcry during the Enlightenment era (Ebenstein, 2016). Rather, the fascination with the Medici Venus and her unifying the artistic and the scientific can be explained, in part, by her evoking the ecstatic in her observers.

In the Enlightenment era, the ecstatic was defined “not merely as a profane, sensual experience, but as an expression of the sacred: a mystical experience” (Ebenstein, 2016, p. 180). While at first glance mysticism and science may seem as opposite as art and science, one must be reminded of Enlightenment science’s aims: to use empirical methods to understand the mysterious, the incomprehensible, or even the divine. Enlightenment anatomy pursued these aims by investigating, uncovering, and ‘anatomizing’ the human body - God’s greatest creation. As such, the Venus’ ecstatic outward expression coupled with its scientific inward purpose is at once a social statement on the aims of Enlightenment science, its religious and cultural milieu, and an example of artisanal empirical values being taken up by Enlightenment anatomists. To the Enlightenment observer, the Venus made a kind of scientific and cultural ‘sense,’ reflecting Enlightenment

values that, to the modern viewer, seem more oppositional than complementary. Obviously, scientific and cultural attitudes have shifted since the Venus' inception to make her seem strange, sexual, and over-the-top. As Ebenstein (2013; 2016) notes, a cultural understanding of the ecstatic that differs greatly from the modern understanding likely shaped how the Venus and her sisters were received by Enlightenment era observers.

Thus, at the heart of the confusion between the art/science dichotomy is in part a fundamental misunderstanding of sexuality, religiosity, and Enlightenment virtues. Perhaps ironically, while the binary categories that seem to be split wide open by the Venus - artisan/scholar, experimental/scientific, practice/theory, and art/nature - need disaggregating, our modern understanding of the ecstatic in relation to the sexual needs *the opposite*. The ecstatic, though understood today as either sexual or religious, either base or divine, was once understood to be both. Indeed, French philosopher Georges Bataille (1986) posits that, generally, sexuality was an integral part of religious practice and expression before Christian doctrine separated the two. And so an anachronistic reading of these models, one that concludes with negative value judgments of science tainted by art, for instance, is a reading that has not fully understood the epistemic virtue

of truth-to-nature under which these Enlightenment models were crafted, nor the cultural context in which they were observed.

Much of the 'artistic' element of the Venus and her sisters involves their being gendered. In other words, that many Enlightenment anatomical models were representations of the female body gendered in an idealized way is the root of much modern confusion. Indeed, as eighteenth century anatomical illustrator Arnaud-Eloi Gautier d'Agoty questioned, "For men to be instructed, they must be seduced by aesthetics. But how can anyone render the image of death agreeable?" (Ebenstein, 2016, p. 45). So, why would a teaching tool need to be overtly sexualized, even if to more thoroughly engage male students? Why would some anatomical models need to be made so clearly feminine, or so clearly masculine? Part of the answer to these broad questions lies, again, in the guiding epistemic virtue of truth-to-nature. The 'perfect,' 'characteristic,' or 'idealized' human body would differ based on sex and gender. The ideal female, to many Enlightenment anatomists, looked quite different than the ideal male. And because no human body is completely a body without traces of a sex, many Enlightenment anatomists gendered models so as to make them, figuratively, more essentially human on the outside, while their sexed wax bodies made them, literally, more essentially human on the inside.

VI. Feminist Critique

Academic feminists have gone so far as to critique the literal objectification and the stereotypically gendered portrayal of these wax women (Jordanova, 1989; Showalter, 1990; Newman, 1996). Indeed, one reading of the Venus and her sisters suggests that the Enlightenment wax model is concrete - or *wax* - proof of the male anatomist's ambition to master the body, often the female body, and to dissect, understand, and behold all of its individual components. On one hand, the silky hair, suggestive body language, and jewelry adorning many wax anatomical models seems to recreate the image of the female created from the male. The downcast gazes and Eve-like appearances of many models only confirm what many feminists have sensed as inherent statements of female inferiority and sinfulness. Add the seductive, ecstatic element to the pedagogical function which required male medical students to reach deep inside the Venus to disembody and understand her inner workings, and a strong case emerges for inherent sexist and patriarchal themes embedded in these male-made wax women.

Of course, students and spectators alike *did* penetrate these models, both with their hands in a sort of faux-dissection and with their minds in a sort of theoretical contemplation. As Messbarger (2010) notes, "Spectators were invited to behold the successive removal of

layer on corporeal layer in the mode of an anatomic undressing: off came the breast-plate, the superficial muscles, the deep muscles, and the lower abdominal organs. The climax arrived at the disclosure of the naked core, the gravid uterus with its tiny fetus in view. . . . Each separate anatomical component could be physically extracted and possessed” (p. 140). Not only were anatomists and artisans collaborating to ‘play God’ by at times creating representations of essentialized, idealized, and beautified female bodies, but they were also inviting observers to penetrate the representations, reaching deep within to take apart, to understand, all while the feminine model lay motionless, unspeaking, sometimes posed in a defenseless, seductive posture.

Feminist scholars follow the models’ poses, natural hues, and wax curves back to the scientific male gaze and the Enlightenment scientist’s male audience. According to Jordanova (1989), the males in the audience found themselves responding to the wax body as they would to a female body, taking pleasure in her naked form and their own sexual thoughts. Moreover, Showalter (1990) explains the male approach to these feminine models by describing men’s mastery of anatomy and, at the same time, their intense gynophobia: “[Men] open up a woman as a substitute for self-knowledge, both maintaining the illusion of their own invulnerability and destroying the terrifying

female reminder of their impotence and uncertainty. . . . there were few overt cultural fantasies about the insides of men's bodies, and opening up the man was not a popular image" (p. 127).

Of course, from its inception, wax anatomical modeling was a male sport. This meant that, while masculine models were usually made to appear strong, heroically posed, and well dressed, feminine models were typically seductive, coy, and sometimes exhibited naked on silk. While feminine arms were often positioned to cover feminine eyes while an onlooker gazed at and into her sexually posed body, the arms of masculine models rarely covered the eyes or pubis. For example, Messbarger (2010) notes that Italian artist Ercole Lelli's anatomical wax figures "mingled a neoclassical heroism. . . . pathos-laden anatomical figures epitomized the hybrid drama of sin and science" (p. 21). As such, Lelli's wax figures are excellent examples of the guiding truth-to-nature virtue in Enlightenment anatomy. "[Lelli's] figures," notes Messbarger, were actually a composite of the perfect bony parts of scores of male and female cadavers that he had dissected, painstakingly reassembled, and covered in wax" (2010, p. 40).

Furthermore, Lelli's Adam and Eve wax models speak volumes about the gendered differences inherent in truth-to-nature Enlightenment anatomical modeling. These two nudes - one male and female - stand in striking contrast, embodying the archetypal posture,

pose, and expression of the idealized man and woman in Enlightenment science. Messbarger (2010) notes that, "While Lelli's fallen couple expresses subtle movements indicative of their internal turmoil, he poses them in ways to manifest a range of both muscular tension and emotion. With head bent and eyes downcast over her right shoulder in an attitude of shame and remorse, Eve twists her torso to the right while her right arm extends across her trunk to the left. Her waist-length, flaxen hair falls over her shoulders and breasts, paradoxically accentuating her nakedness by the insufficiency of the veil it provides. The display of pubic hair further embellishes her nudity. By contrast, the curly black-haired Adam, as so many Saint Sebastians, exhibits his nakedness in an unabashed full-frontal posture, his muscular left arm raised in beseeching supplication. Adam and Eve provide a striking contrast, physical as well as metaphysical, to each other" (p. 42). As epitomized by Lelli's fallen couple, truth-to-nature modeling required idealizing and essentializing - in this case on the basis of gender - even some of the most sacred biblical figures. Lelli idealized the body. In doing so, he subtly placed the truth-value of anatomical representation on aesthetic and moral effects, not on objectively recreating nature.

Generally, enlightenment masculine models were upright in posture, older, and well-dressed. One masculine model was made to hold a document so as to appear knowledgeable (Carreiro, 2009). On

the other hand, feminine models were generally coy, pale, young, and vulnerable. Many of Florentine artist Clemente Susini's feminine models were created with the intent to display and convey pathological sickness and dermatological symptoms. Susini's masculine models, however, often represented fit men portrayed as if they had died heroically. Because of this, the models seemed to many to toe the line between instruments of scientific education and objects of sexual spectacle. Importantly, these gendered differences represent the cultural ideals about women held by men in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Conversely, the anatomical models made by the few women anatomists - such as eighteenth century anatomical wax modeler Anna Morandi Manzolini - were nearly all highly technical, and displayed no erotic signs and little gendered messaging.

Scholars have gone so far as to flesh out the pornographic implications of these mannequins (Dery, 2012). Evidenced in part by female models' arms being positioned so as to cover the pubis when lowered or cover the face when raised, feminine wax models may evoke thoughts of sexual playfulness, naked eroticism, and the deepest, most intimate form of penetration. Considering the Venus' naked skin, pearl necklace, and apparently sexualized facial expression, its likeness to a corpse seems ridiculous (Henderson, 2010). A more sensible modern appraisal, it may seem to some, would be to liken the Venus to a sexual

plaything who has all but revealed her deepest sexual and anatomical offerings. In this reading, the model may be interpreted as showing her observers less about herself and more about her male creator and his literal objectification of the female body. Henderson (2010) suggests that the men who created these models revealed, perhaps unknowingly, much more about their own gaze than they did about anatomy.

However, there remains important and missing scholarship on these wax representations. Certainly, the feminist appraisals presented above contain truth and insight into the Enlightenment era academic patriarchy, social sexism, and cultural androcentrism. However, as Messbarger (2010) deftly counters, “Each of the studies discussed above posits an unqualified dichotomy of the fully realized male subject (anatomist, spectator, and indeed fetus), his presumed agency and desire, and a conversely submissive and ontologically deficient female corporeal object” (p. 141-142). Once again, these models are involved in a false dichotomy. This time, a limiting binary of male viewer and female viewee is assumed by feminist scholars and critics. Enlightenment women were not mere subjects of men’s gaze. Women, too, took part in looking at these Venuses.

What did Enlightenment era women see when they gazed at the Medici Venus? Did they see the same sexist, patriarchal symbols and

cultural representations that many modern feminist scholars have interpreted in these wax models? US art historian Mary Sheriff (1996), herself a specialist in eighteenth century European art and gender studies, critiques the critiques issued by feminist scholars concerned with the apparently submissive, deficient feminine Enlightenment model. Sheriff notes that feminist analyses only concerned with men looking at the female body are lacking, both historically and theoretically. Discussing how women and Enlightenment feminine models are often narrowly portrayed by modern feminist scholars, Sheriff (1996) posits, “women appear . . . only insofar as they are objects for the male gaze and are never considered looking themselves” (p. 31). Messbarger (2010) builds upon Sheriff’s critique when adding that in leading feminist critiques of Enlightenment anatomical models, critical questions are consistently left unanswered. Who made these waxes? Why were they made? For whom were they crafted? Who viewed them? Documents and sources that hold the answers to these questions, argues Messbarger, are left unengaged and unexamined by the canonical feminist critiques of Enlightenment era wax models. Perhaps most crucially, what is to be made of the position and power of a *female* anatomist? What subversive authority might the female anatomist - such as Anna Morandi Manzolini - possess that would add

nuance, substance, and a very different perspective to the feminist literature concerned with these models?

The European Enlightenment marked a shift away from the superior male/inferior female dichotomy toward a more equitable cultural model. The Enlightenment was the first time in modern history that the female came to no longer be seen as a derivative of the male, deficient and submissive in relation, but as distinct in occupying its own space in a two-sex model (Messbarger, 2010). Feminist scholars, however, often argue the opposite, claiming that the European scientific revolution did little or nothing to erode the precept of male superiority, nor did it advance the study of sexual difference (Laqueur, 1990). Yet, the mid-seventeenth centuries marked the rephrasing of 'female testicles' to 'ovaries,' Antoni van Leeuwenhoek's discovery of spermatozoa, and the general rejection of Aristotelian sexuality in favor of sexual difference. Each occurred before the Enlightenment. These events caused a shift toward the early acknowledgement and investigation of female reproductive function. Perhaps most importantly, the renaming and discovery of the function of ovaries prompted early modern anatomical and medical authors to write of the equal necessity of both sexes in human reproduction, and their perfection relative to their respective sexual functions. This admission,

by academics and medical practitioners, marks a major turning point in the move away from Aristotelian sex and gender theory.

This current of sexual difference in academia and medicine collided with the centuries-old “dogma of male superiority” to manifest itself in quasi-progressive works of anatomy (Messbarger, 2010, p. 143). While on one hand the Enlightenment and the decades preceding it marked a major advance in the conceptualization of human sexuality, scientific misogyny remained prevalent throughout the Enlightenment, on the other. Moreover, the female body continued to be considered a representation of ‘Nature herself.’ Thus the female body remained a site of male desire and study, a space in which male agency was demonstrated (Jordanova, 1989). So while recognition of the distinctness and function of ovaries caused, in part, an Enlightenment cultural recognition of sexual difference, women in the Enlightenment period came to be defined chiefly by their reproductive capacities (Park, 2000).

Still, major advancements were made in cultural and academic realms with regard to sexual difference during and directly preceding the Enlightenment era. These advancements made it possible for women to hold subversive power in academia. These seventeenth and eighteenth century women include but are not limited to figures such as anatomist Anna Morandi Manzolini, physicist Laura Bassi,

mathematician and philosopher Maria Gaetana Agnesi, and poet-turned-mathematician Diamante Medaglia Faini (Messbarger, 2010; Findlen, 2003; Nochlin, 1971).

In short, leading feminist critiques of Enlightenment era anatomy and the Anatomical Venus and her sisters speak more to modern attitudes and values than to the attitudes prevalent during the era of the Venus's inception. In fact, predominant feminist critiques concerned with Enlightenment anatomical models take up a new stance, historically, that "makes strictly private—and often deviant or even demonic—the way in which mankind has formerly found ecstatic union with the divine: sexuality, intoxication, and rituals encouraging loss of ego awareness" (Ebenstein, 2016, p. 188). In the example of the Venus, ecstatic postures and intriguing expressions beckon scientists, students, and spectators to behold the human body and attempt to fathom its anatomical complexities. In doing so, observers of the Venus play the role of holy creator, of God. By analyzing human anatomy, the observer becomes awakened to its operational and structural composition. At the same time, however, this process means beholding, contemplating, and scrutinizing God through the medium of God's pinnacle creation (Simoni, 2015). Precisely these deeper dimensions of theoretical contemplation are the elements missing from feminists' consideration. Ironically, as feminists seek to remove and exclude the

spiritual, the ecstatic, and the presence of divinity from Enlightenment anatomical models, they inadvertently empower these realms of thought and being. After all, if the experience of communion with what is greater than the material is excluded, this very communion may come to be associated with the transgressive, or the basely sexual, which would only serve to veil or banish the true, original intent. Inadvertently, it seems, feminist scholars have done exactly this when critiquing Enlightenment anatomical wax models.

VII. Directions for Future Research

As shown in this paper, placing Enlightenment wax anatomical models and their creators in neat, dichotomous categories such as art/science, artisan/scholar, experimental/scientific, and practice/theory is misleading and insufficient. Enlightenment wax anatomical models defy categorization and stretch the imagination. These binaries need disaggregating, and future research should focus on nuanced analyses of the complexities of the cultural milieu in which these models were created, as well as the cultural context that shaped women's views of the Venus and her sisters.

Moreover, future scholarship should focus on engaging historical concepts of male supremacy, female deficiency, and sexualization in an attempt to show not just *how*, but more importantly *why*, Enlightenment era anatomy marked a significant turning point in the

recognition of the female sex, the two-sex model, and the distinction of ovaries as such, and not as female testicles. In addition, further research must fill gaps in predominant feminist critique by identifying and analyzing documents and essential information about the creators of the models, and the purpose and audience for whom they were created. For example, questions about who viewed these models, why, and how are still largely unanswered, though Ebenstein (2016; 2013) and others have taken remarkable first steps in producing answers. Even scarcer is the academic literature on the female spectator, the female artist, the female scientist, and, in particular, the female anatomist during the Enlightenment era who held subversive power and knowledge about the sexed body, though Messbarger (2010) has taken great strides in investigating the latter.

Lastly, future research may take up concepts of the uncanny and abhuman in attempting to classify these seemingly unclassifiable representations of human anatomy. In particular, little academic work has focused on Japanese roboticist Masahiro Mori's conceptualization of the "uncanny valley," a term which describes the point at which human-like objects appear nearly like actual human beings and so evoke revulsion, disgust, and discomfort among viewers. Dolls, robots, and computer animations have received thorough analyses through Mori's uncanny lense. But human-like wax anatomical models have not

been sufficiently taken up as objects that may fall in Mori's valley, or represent some yet unexamined aspect of the uncanny. What's more, these wax models have not been analyzed with Edwardian fiction writer W.H. Hodgson's concept of the abhuman, defined by English professor Kelly Hurley (2004) as "a not-quite-human subject, characterized by its morphic variability, continually in danger of becoming not-itself, becoming other" (p. 3). While a few scholars concerned with Enlightenment wax models have touched on the abhuman and uncanny, a large gap remains in the scholarship regarding the exploration of these two concepts in relation to the wax model.

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[1] Though Vesalius' text heavily influenced the epistemic virtue of truth-to-nature that governed Enlightenment anatomical modeling, Messbarger (2010) notes that, "the oldest known recipe for wax in modeling and bronze casting appeared in Pomponius Gauricus's *De Sculptura* of 1504" (p. 59).

[2] *On The Fabric of the Human Body*, as translated from Latin to English, is a set of seven books that comprehensively detail the complete structure of the human body. The books are based primarily on Vesalius's lectures at the School of Medicine in Padua, at which he held professorship from 1537 to around 1544 (O'Malley, 1964).

[3] Not all Enlightenment era anatomical models represent healthy human anatomy. See Barnett's (2014) *The Sick Rose: Disease and the Art of Medical Illustration* for examples of the "variability and monstrosity of nature" represented in wax. One may also visit the University of Bologna's Museo delle Cere Anatomiche "Luigi Cattaneo" for several examples of morbid anatomy. Yet, even a number of models in "Luigi Cattaneo" were not modeled after one singular patient or body, but rather based on texts or a number of patients exhibiting similar symptoms.

[4] The individuals who contributed to what is now commonly referred to as the "scientific revolution" did not use the term as such. Instead, those involved in the revolution spoke and wrote of their own work as "new science." The classic example, and the text which, though debated, may have marked the beginning of the revolution, is Nicholas Copernicus' (1473-1543) *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (*On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*). Likewise, the end of the revolution may be marked by Sir Isaac Newton's (1643-1727) *Principia Mathematica* (1687).

Dear Cincinnatus C.:
The Intimately Oppressive Effect of Patriarchy in
Invitation to a Beheading
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The surrealist world constructed within Vladimir Nabokov's novel *Invitation to a Beheading* has inspired a multitude of abstract interpretations. Metaphysical theories of Gnosticism explore the implications of existential knowledge, while metaliterary theory investigates the gap between art and reality. The most concrete interpretative approach is that of dystopia as it questions society's oppressive violence. Such varied perspectives, however, commonly rely on one particular theme: entrapment. Gnosticism involves the entrapment of ignorance, metaliterary theory considers one's entrapment within either the realm of art or reality, and dystopian theory imagines an individual's entrapment within a hostile culture. Cincinnatus C.'s physical imprisonment most explicitly portrays this idea as a type of subjugation resultant by individual transgression but fails to acknowledge the oppression of the other non-transgressive beings who are captive within this society. The surrealist style of the novel relies on a farcical mimicry of true reality in order to explore the complete entrapment of all individuals, and thus, employs patriarchal society as its grand oppressor. Patriarchal ideals manifest in the novel through the various representation of the female characters as well as through the feminization of Cincinnatus; thus, the forced intimacy between the characters adopts gendered undertones of power with the

result of creating an even more sinister and personally oppressive society.

Patriarchy is best understood as a structural form of social power in which “the main axis of power in the contemporary European/American gender order is the overall subordination of women and dominance of men,” according to masculinity theorist R. W. Connell (36). The society within *Invitation* irrevocably matches this definition, since men hold nearly every position of power while the women are relegated to more stereotypical mothering or sexual roles. Robert Jensen explores the correlation between rape and the power of patriarchal systems in his feminist essay “Patriarchal Sex.” He emphasizes the interactive nature of patriarchy and rape, asserting that, “When sex is about power and control, and men are socially, and typically physically, more powerful than women and children, then sexual violence is the inevitable outcome” (Jensen 98). This connection between patriarchal control and sexual violence against women can be expanded in order to include subordinate men as additional victims of patriarchal violence. The terms “patriarchy” and “rape” should be understood in their broadest sense so that they can be successfully applied in interpreting Cincinnatus’s entrapment and gendered oppression. This seemingly political interpretation of Nabokov’s novel is not a mere enumeration of a social problem within this fictional

society but an analysis of how this gendered lens can allow for a stronger perspective when investigating the “artistic dilemma . . . behind the motley costuming of his extravagant fictions,” (826) as put by critic Dale E. Peterson in his article “Nabokov’s Invitation: Literature as Execution.” Peterson also praises the setting of *Invitation* as “Nabokov’s most autonomous, self-enclosed fictional world—the unnamed, unlocated, undated punitive mechanism that labors to execute the trapped, yet elusive, Cincinnatus C.” (825). With this extreme autonomy of place in mind, one must then question what benefit the inclusion of patriarchy within this otherwise ambiguous setting contributes to an artistic understanding of the novel. As such, patriarchy’s purpose within the text is to construct a totalitarian entrapment of Cincinnatus.

An initial analysis of women’s position in the novel’s society is essential to understanding the gendered oppression leveled against Cincinnatus. Marthe, Cecilia C., and the super-intendant of schools best illuminate women’s role in this farcical, hyper-patriarchal city. Patriarchal ideals often interpret female sexuality on a limited scale with the most popular being the Madonna/Whore binary. This classification of female sexuality dichotomizes the ideal mother from sexual promiscuity and can be exemplified between the characters of Marthe and Cecilia C. Marthe represents the hyper-sexual female role in

the novel. Her promiscuity is the apex of her character. Nearly every scene which involves Marthe references her repeated adultery, and because her character is so reliant on her sexual role, she even incriminates herself by confessing her actions:

Generally when Cincinnatus came home she would have a certain sated half-smile on her face as she pressed her plum chin against her neck, as if reproaching herself, and, gazing up with her honest hazel eyes, would say in a soft cooing voice, 'Little Marthe did it again today.' (Nabokov 31)

In this scene, she can be interpreted as embracing her promiscuity while simultaneously infantilizing herself through her impersonal declaration about "Little Marthe." This infantilization paints her sexual exploits as immature rather than agential. Instead of wielding her sexuality as a type of social power within the patriarchal structure, she passively concedes it for the pleasure of men. Granted, she does use sex as a sort of currency in her efforts to visit Cincinnatus in jail prior to his execution. The novel heavily alludes to her bargaining as she momentarily exits the cell, having been called out by Rodion, and then returns snapping "her garter, and, angrily readjusting the pleats below her waist" (Nabokov 199). This seemingly manipulative sexual act fails to redefine Marthe as an agential character because of her elaborative use of the third person when referring to herself in the following conversation with Cincinnatus, as well as her inability to understand the cruelty and unjustness of Cincinnatus's situation. Marthe's

justification of her sexual escapades depends on her passivity rather than agency: "You know what a kind creature I am: it's such a small thing, and it's such a relief to a man" (Nabokov 31). This explanation positions her as a compliant participant in the man's life and solidifies her subservience in accordance with patriarchal ideals. Similarly, her role as mother is deemphasized by the incompatible description of her and her children: "it was odd to see nimble, sleek, rosy Marthe leading home this cripple and this stocky tot" (Nabokov 31). The children prove a stark contrast to the alluring descriptions of Marthe's beauty, suggesting that motherhood is not a compatible role for her. When placed into the broader societal context, Marthe represents the hypersexual role applied to women within a patriarchy.

Cecilia C. is presented as the antithesis to Marthe's hypersexuality. Her introduction as Cincinnatus's mother prevents her from being sexualized like Marthe, while simultaneously aligning her with the role of the Madonna. In addition, Cecilia's occupation is midwifery; a profession that further emphasizes motherhood over promiscuous sexuality. Through her role as midwife, Cecilia is constantly involved in the process of birth; in a novel that questions consciousness and reality, this is an interesting position for her to assume. If Cincinnatus's execution at the end of the novel can be interpreted as a sort of awakening, then birth, too, should be interpreted as an awakening into

reality. With birth and death standing as gateways to different realities, Cecilia can be interpreted to play the role of gatekeeper. Motherhood and midwifery correlate with M'sieur Pierre's role as executioner in the sense that they facilitate the creation of new consciousness (or the awakening of preexisting ones) into this reality. Cecilia brings new conscious life into her reality while M'sieur Pierre removes that conscious life; however, both patrol the borders of the novel's conscious world. The lack of sexual objectification placed upon her character allows Cecilia to act in this role because it affords her a comparable sense of autonomy that is granted to M'Sieur Pierre in the novel.

It is also possible to deduce that, because of her proximity to birth and her own intimate experience with motherhood, Cecilia would find Cincinnatus's clarity more easily accessible than if she had been the victim of sexual objectification like Marthe. For this reason, she is granted individuality in the absence of objectification. Indeed, when Cecilia describes herself to her son, she weighs her sexual life with no more importance than her love for lemonade: "I work all day at our ward, I take everything in my stride, I have lovers, I adore ice-cold lemonade, although I've dropped smoking, because of heart trouble—and here I am sitting with you." (Nabokov 134). Of all the female characters in the novel, Cecilia possesses the greatest independent

personality. She, in a sense, exists nearly entirely outside of the patriarchy because her occupation so densely surrounds her with expectant mothers. Perhaps it was this disconnect with society, this distance from the patriarchy, that allowed her the moment of clarity:

... but it was as if something real, unquestionable (in this world, where everything was subject to question), had passed through, as if a corner of this horrible life had curled up, and there was a glimpse of the lining. In his mother's gaze, Cincinnatus suddenly saw that ultimate, secure, all-explaining and from-all-protecting spark that he knew how to discern in himself also. (Nabokov 136)

Cincinnatus and Cecilia's close familial relationship can be no coincidence when debating the origin of this clarity, especially in light of Cecilia's claim that Cincinnatus's father was also "like" him. Just as Cecilia works in a space sheltered from patriarchal expectations, Cincinnatus's conception also occurred outside the reach of the patriarchy in a dark park. Later, Cincinnatus (having been mysteriously born to two non-traditional parents) was raised in an orphanage and thus did not witness the traditional gender roles of heterosexual marriage. It can be argued that, by existing outside of patriarchal society, this family developed the ability to transcend the bounds of this farcical reality and passed on their mutation of consciousness to their son. The physical and psychological oppression of patriarchal society within this novel entraps the citizen's consciousness as well, forcing them to lead a blind existence. Further evidence to support this

correlation between birth and consciousness within the character of Cecilia is the last gesture she makes before she leaves: “Cecilia C. got up, making an incredible little gesture, namely, holding her hands apart with index fingers extended, as if indicating size—the length say, of a babe. . . . Then she immediately began fussing, picking up from the floor her plump black bag, adjusting the lining of her pocket” (Nabokov 136). The extreme ambiguity of her gesture discourages a definitive conclusion from being drawn, but it at least implies a correlation between her experience with birth and her aptitude for clarity by its comparison to a “babe.” Cecilia herself does not appear to be truly aware of the significance between these two things, as evident in her absent-minded fussing following her gesture, and seems to be the result of a subconscious awareness that persists after her moment of actual clarity has passed.

While one could argue that Cecilia remains fettered by patriarchal society by the fact that her role as midwife is a notoriously feminine occupation, it is important to interpret her embrace of that role as powerful but subversive display of hegemonic femininity. She herself, though mother to Cincinnatus, played no active role in his upbringing, and in that way rejected domestic societal norms. Her declaration that she has lovers—plural—connotes that she remains independent of any one man. Cecilia’s life is a protest of gendered expectations in

conjunction with a semblance of personal identity, whereas Marthe's acceptance of motherhood, her participation in marriage, and her sexual promiscuity all adhere to the novel's societal norms while simultaneously denying her a non-sexualized identity. This all implies that total conformation with the patriarchal norms of their reality is destructive to the self and further suggests a natural hostility of their society.

The district super-intendant of schools cannot be as easily classified on the Madonna-Whore binary as Cecilia or Marthe; instead, she inhabits the limbo in between due to her representation as a masculinized woman. Her opening description only hesitantly classifies her as a lady: "There were no ladies present, unless one counted the district super-intendant of schools, a very stout, elderly woman, in a gray frock coat cut like a man's, with large flat cheeks and a smooth hairdo as shiny as steel" (Nabokov 182). Her age seems to immediately discount her as a possible subject of sexual objectification along with her masculine style of clothes. Just as Cecilia's freedom from sexual objectification granted her privileges of identity and clarity, this woman's exemption from sexuality can be interpreted as beneficial for her powerful career within this society. Similarly, her assimilative style of clothes narrows the perceived gender gap between her and the other men at the dinner, thus affording her an elevated status; she isn't as

subjugated by patriarchal society because of her 'un-feminine' representation, and because of this, possesses a position of power. Her unfeminine appearance and position of power however, do not exempt her from male harassment:

The respectable woman, who supervised the schools, flushing blotchily, was silently and tensely leaning away as she defended herself from the supply director, who was playfully aiming at her with his finger, which resembled a carrot, as though her were about to transfix her or tickle her, all the while repeating, 'tee-tee-tee!' (Nabokov 185)

The woman is still liable to fall victim to the forced intimacy and physical harassment that is so characteristic of this society. When her experience is compared with the other women, the scenario becomes notable since the super-intendant is the only female character who actively rejects a man's intimate advancement. Marthe's tactic of navigating sexual harassment is to consent to this forced intimacy, with the result of becoming the embodiment of female sexuality and engaging in sexual activity with the men, while Cecilia was never portrayed as being harassed. The super-intendant even goes so far as to verbalize her discomfort when she exclaims, "Stop it, leave me alone" (Nabokov 188). This interaction solidifies the standard that women within this novel are the objects of intimate or sexual harassment, whereas men are granted the natural right by the patriarchy of

harassing women. Not even the super-intendant's power status could spare her from societal gender oppression.

The system of gender oppression exposed through the interactions of these women with their society introduces patriarchal violence into the novel, which can then be projected onto Cincinnatus C. Violent patriarchal society not only victimizes women and children, as previously stated in the definition, but also oppresses other men in an effort to maintain strict power hierarchies and to further perpetuate patriarchal ideals. The oppression faced by the women in the novel creates the template of sexual violence which the elite men use to subordinate other men, especially men like Cincinnatus who are already guilty of transgressions against cultural norms. In order to emphasize their complete dominance over him, the characters in power—namely Rodion, Rodrig, and M'sieur Pierre—feminize Cincinnatus. In this hyper-patriarchal society, the feminization of a male character would allow for a more totalitarian and intimate oppression. Following the notion that within patriarchal society men have the right to possess or control women, his feminization would grant the jailors autonomy over Cincinnatus's whole being. Their method of feminizing Cincinnatus can be broken down into three main tactics: first, their reference to Cincinnatus as a woman and projection of feminine roles onto him; second, their invasion of his personal space,

forcing upon him the intimacy characteristic of this farcical reality; third, M'sieur Pierre's use of hegemonic displays of masculinity to contrast his virility with Cincinnatus's constructed helplessness.

The early feminization of Cincinnatus begins with only a few passing remarks. In order to demean and also to impose a sense of familiarity, Rodrig and M'sieur Pierre mock Cincinnatus through feminine pet names. They refer to him repeatedly as a "regular little woman" (Nabokov 57), "my fair damsel" (Nabokov 78), and even simply as "my dear" (Nabokov 187) in order to belittle Cincinnatus. By rhetorically inserting the "my" before some of the nicknames, the men display a desire to appropriate Cincinnatus as their own. In gendering him female, they allow for the possibility to more intimately claim Cincinnatus as their possession. M'sieur Pierre advances the feminization by later forcing Cincinnatus into the position of bride while he himself adopts the role of groom: "To me you are transparent as—excuse the sophisticated simile—a blushing bride is transparent to the gaze of an experienced bride groom" (Nabokov 162). This analogy not only places Cincinnatus in a female, and thus subordinate role, but also makes him the explicit object of the male gaze. M'sieur Pierre declares himself to have the singular power of seeing right through his "bride," but Cincinnatus is given no choice in the matter. This bridal analogy is later expanded in chapter seventeen with the dinner party

that M'sieur Pierre and Cincinnatus attend together. The style of the dinner party closely resembles a Russian wedding reception, with a previous best man even giving a traditional toast: "Bitter, bitter, sweeten it with a kiss," said a recent best man" (Nabokov 185). M'sieur Pierre adopts the role of husband while relegating Cincinnatus to the role of wife. Through the traditional understand of marriage as the changing ownership of a woman from her father to her husband, M'sieur Pierre positions himself as the new and complete possessor of Cincinnatus. He ominously declares his new right of ownership when Cincinnatus refuses to participate in relinquishing his personal autonomy: "I have the right, finally, to demand," M'sieur Pierre whispered convulsively, and suddenly, with a gasp of forced laugh, he poured a drop of wine on top of Cincinnatus's head, and then sprinkled himself also" (Nabokov 185). This scene finalizes M'sieur Pierre's totalitarian right to Cincinnatus by entrapping him as the inferior object of the historically patriarchal custom of marriage.

M'sieur Pierre invokes other hierarchical power factors in addition to gender that further subordinate Cincinnatus. Following the scene in which Cincinnatus escapes with Emmie's help, M'sieur Pierre insists that the director should, "Let them be. . . . After all, they are both children" (Nabokov 166). In aligning Cincinnatus's status with that of a little girl, M'sieur Pierre not only effectively feminizes him but also

infantilizes him. The hierarchical structure of patriarchy holds the oldest, most experienced male as the natural possessor of power while, in contrast, little girls are seen as the least agential beings in this type of society. Thus, this comparison between Cincinnatus and Emmie has the effect of robbing Cincinnatus of any authority that might have been based on his adulthood while simultaneously degrading him to the lowest rung of the power hierarchy. This infantilization is similar to that which was previously seen with Marthe. The repetition of this type of demoralization mirrors the frequent conflation of women with children with the effect of belittling an adult women's maturity to the level of a child.

The second facet of Cincinnatus's feminization is the repeated invasion of his personal space. In a society that is characterized by its citizens' transparency to one another, Cincinnatus's opaqueness comes into direct conflict with this notion of habitual intimacy. M'sieur Pierre pushes against Cincinnatus's mental isolation by physically invading his personal space and imposing this cultural intimacy. He begins casually by drawing out a handshake for just "a second longer than is customary" (Nabokov 81), but becomes more forceful as time goes on. M'sieur Pierre goes out of his way to force himself within Cincinnatus's personal space, especially during the scene in which he "rapidly" examines Cincinnatus's neck (Nabokov 109). In light of the impending

execution, this fixation on Cincinnatus's neck carries a sinister connotation, symbolically allowing M'sieur Pierre—the executioner—preeminent access to his victim. By the time the two men attend the dinner party in chapter seventeen, M'sieur Pierre is so bold as to be “incessantly touching him either with his back, or with his side” (Nabokov 186). This practice of invading another's personal space and imposing intimacy is a privilege only granted to those in power over Cincinnatus, but is denied to Cincinnatus himself. It works as a double standard; the forced intimacy that Cincinnatus endures works to close the special gap between him and his executioners, while Cincinnatus's inability to reciprocate connotes the position of powerlessness that he is in. This trend keeps to the theme of their hyper-patriarchal society since it enforces the privilege of male authorial figures to manipulate the bodies of those inferior to them. The objectification does not work the other way in this novel; so, just as Marthe concedes her body for the pleasure of men, Cincinnatus too is placed in an objectified position.

Finally, in order to emphasize the contrast between M'sieur Pierre's authority and Cincinnatus's subordination, M'sieur Pierre demonstrates hegemonic masculinity. The social construct of the hegemonic male relies heavily on his virility, strength, intelligence, and power—especially over women. Sten Eirik describes the scenario of man's effort to maintain his authority and achieve hegemonic

masculinity as a tedious position within the hierarchy in his article, "Battered Men: Inferiority in Males." The description emphasizes the necessity of protecting one's masculinity in a patriarchy as a means of self-preservation as well as oppression:

Picture, if you will, a male of the species perched halfway up the patriarchal totem pole, clinging for dear life. Measuring the distance he has to climb, he peers up toward the patriarchal icon looming at the top. His glance drops down towards the bottom of the totem pole, knowing that if he loosens his grip, his hold will be precarious and he will have a long way to fall. (79)

M'sieur Pierre periodically takes it upon himself to reassert his masculinity over the degraded masculinity of Cincinnatus as a means of strengthening his autonomous authority over their relationship, and thus, maintains his own rung on the totem pole while simultaneously knocking Cincinnatus down. Having been offended by Cincinnatus's question of his athletic ability, M'sieur Pierre insists on drafting a dramatic note to affirm his physical strength: "Let me assure you, thus ended the note, 'that I am physically very, very strong [twice underlined with a ruler], and if you are still not convinced of this, I shall be honored some time to show you certain further interesting [underlined] demonstrations of agility and astounding muscular development'" (Nabokov 118). The extreme validation of his strength voiced in this note reflects the need to defend his own masculinity from any slight offense. His need to defend his masculinity over Cincinnatus is even more pronounced because of the authorial relationship M'sieur

Pierre has with him; thus, it becomes more of defense for his authority than his actual strength.

M'sieur Pierre also makes a point of emphasizing his sexuality to Cincinnatus as further validation of his authority. While the two men play chess, M'sieur Pierre begins his monologue on sex by first objectifying Marthe as a "juicy little piece" (Nabokov 144). This comment shows a level of disregard for Cincinnatus's patriarchal authority as Marthe's husband and appropriates her as the object of M'sieur Pierre's own desire. When he continues the conversation with a reminiscence of his own sexual escapades, it has the effect of contrasting M'sieur Pierre's sexual agency with Cincinnatus's chaste imprisonment. Because patriarchal masculinity is heavily founded on heterosexual exploitation, this contrast between the men's sexual lives further stratifies their personal power with M'sieur Pierre reigning superior. M'sieur Pierre's self-affirmation of his sexuality turns threatening, however, immediately after he displays his axe to Cincinnatus: "We are both young—you must not remain here any longer. Tomorrow they will explain to you, but now please go. I too am excited, I too am not in complete control of myself, you must understand this" (Nabokov 163). By declaring a lack of control, M'sieur Pierre implies that he is experiencing an excess of masculine sexuality similar to men in situations of rape who just 'couldn't control themselves' in the presence

of the object of their desire. With Cincinnatus standing as the object of M'sieur Pierre's desire, the impending execution can be interpreted as a rape of Cincinnatus's body—the non-consensual manipulation of his physical being. Indeed, within this interpretation of the execution as an act of rape, Cincinnatus's entire imprisonment mirrors a type of sexual harassment, especially as it consists of repeated unwanted physical contact, sexist remarks used to gaslight his emotion and belittle his agency, and the gendered implications of the marital metaphors used throughout the novel.

The construction of a hyper-patriarchal environment as the setting for Cincinnatus's imprisonment allows gendered implications of oppression to intimately entrap Cincinnatus. The absurdity of the patriarchy contributes to the farcical nature of this reality while also facilitating a total domination of Cincinnatus's being through sexual oppression. The harassment endured by the main women of the novel mirrors the harassment projected at Cincinnatus, only made possible through his captor's meticulous feminization of his character. Thus, by including sexual oppression as a facet of Cincinnatus's imprisonment, his entrapment within this society becomes absolute with the result of calling into question one's personal agency in a restrictive reality.

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**Evolving Trans Narratives: Jennifer Finney Boylan Paves the
Way for Janet Mock**

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Introduction: The Power of Narration

The power of narration extends past simply the sharing of stories. Indeed, by properly illustrating an experience or journey, one has the ability to shift political opinion, draw attention to certain issues or struggles, normalize a group of marginalized individuals, and even push a foundational narrative forward, creating dynamic change in the evolution of society's thoughts and actions. In fact, scholars have supported that contact with unfamiliar communities reduces prejudices as the majority group learns more about and identifies with the minority group (Allport 38-39, Macedo 19-20).¹ Undoubtedly, an approachable, sharable, and articulate narration has the power to truly affect societies, global communities, and even individuals' ways of life.

Marginalized communities, including the transgender community, have used the power of narration to illustrate their experiences. The transgender community, a community in which individuals move away from the gender they were assigned at birth and "cross over (trans-) the boundaries constructed by their culture to define and contain that gender," has faced and continues to face discrimination (Stryker 1). According to Susan Stryker, a trans historian, "the gender-changing

¹ In *The Nature of Prejudice*, Gordon W. Allport was the first to explore this connection regarding discrimination in 1954. Stephen Macedo, author of *Just Married: Same-Sex Couples, Monogamy, and the Future of Marriage*, applied the theory that meeting, talking to, and understanding same-sex couples led to greater acceptance of same-sex marriage throughout the late 1900s and early 2000s.

person can evoke in others a primordial fear of monstrosity, or loss of humanness. That gut-level fear can manifest itself as hatred, outrage, panic, or disgust . . . against the person who is perceived as not-quite-human” (Stryker 6). To combat this negativity, some trans individuals created art or wrote different forms of literature from pamphlets to articles to books for the purpose of influencing others. Allies of the trans communities—including doctors, scholars, and lawmakers—joined the sharing of information as well. These different forms of narration built off each other, continuously pushing ideas of transness² forward. This progression occurred throughout history, even more so in recent decades. Recently, within a span of ten years, two biographies have captivated American audiences. Jennifer Finney Boylan’s *She’s Not There: A Life in Two Genders* (2003) began the process of normalizing transness, allowing Janet Mock to build upon the foundation in *Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love & So Much More* (2014), through which she began politicizing transness and approaching the subject with an intersectional perspective.

Types of Trans Narration: A Brief History

Trans people have existed in some form or another dating back to at least ancient Asia (Stone 154). However, in establishing the context

² The term “transness” will be utilized when discussing what it means to be trans, aspects of life a trans individual faces, and the trans experience as an all-inclusive term.

from which Finney and Mock's biographies arose, it is prudent to begin the study of trans narration with Dr. Harry Benjamin's book, *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, written in 1966. Trans narration does not always have to be from the perspective of a trans individual, although listening to trans individuals' own articulation of their experiences in their own words allows for a more genuine understanding of transness. Nevertheless, starting the historical overview of trans narration from a medical perspective allows for a better understanding of the outsiders' point of view of what it meant to be trans and the perceived struggles trans individuals faced. Additionally, this narration in particular sparked great change within the trans community due to its involvement with the establishment of gender reassignment surgery.

As a physician, Dr. Benjamin researched transgender patients for seventeen years before writing a collection of articles and a book on what it meant to be "transsexual"³ (Stryker 73). He argued, "a person's gender could not be changed, and that the doctor's responsibility was thus to help transgender people live fuller and happier lives in the gender they identified as their own" (Stryker 73). As a respected doctor, Dr. Benjamin used his influence to encourage not only the

³ Different narrations regarding the transgender community and specific trans individuals use their own terminology. For the sake of accuracy to the context with which these narrations were recorded, the terms used most commonly throughout the narration will be used in the discussion of each narration. If an abundance of terms are used, the uniform and more modern term, "trans," will be employed.

medical but also the legal community to shift the way transsexuals were viewed. From his point of view, trans individuals needed sympathy from the medical and legal community to live their best lives.

As a doctor, Benjamin approached what it means to be a transsexual from a medical perspective (i.e. an illness that doctors have the ability to ameliorate); nevertheless, he addressed societal and legal issues associated with being trans as well. Additionally, he articulated the difference between a transsexual and a transvestite: the transsexual seeks the physical characteristics of the opposite gender, unlike the transvestite who is satisfied by cross-dressing (Benjamin 429). Dr. Benjamin summed up his argument by stating, “The homosexual has a sex problem, the transsexual has a gender problem, and the transvestite has a social problem” (Benjamin 430). By including this part in his medical narration of transness, Benjamin elucidates notable and key distinctions between various marginalized identities. By doing so, Benjamin clears up, within the medical community at least, common misconceptions about the transsexual community.

Because of his narration of the immutability of being trans, the first “sex change” procedure in the United States was established within a year of *The Transsexual Phenomenon*'s publication (Stryker 73). Additionally, his book was used as a reference for establishing suitable candidates for the “sex change” surgeries. As time passed, doctors and

researchers began to realize that the book was being passed down through the trans community as research material on the best way to articulate one's transness to the medical community in order to be accepted for the surgeries. Indeed, in order to pass the evaluation stage in the process of acquiring surgery, the individuals parroted Dr. Benjamin's narration of being in the "wrong body" (Stone 40). Once again, powerful narration sparked opportunity, an opportunity for trans individuals to continue their journeys with more support from the medical community.

While understanding the implication of Dr. Benjamin's patient's narration of their transness is important—especially as it relates to gender reassignment surgery—there is no clearer, more truthful way of understanding the thoughts and minds of a trans individual than through their diary. Lou Sullivan, an American author and activist in the 1980s, identified as a gay, FTM (female-to-male) transsexual. Without a doubt, his path to articulating this identity was long, challenging, and complex. By looking into Sullivan's diaries—which he started as a ten year old girl growing up in the Milwaukee suburbs—one gains insight into how a child, young adult, and adult understands and articulates what it means to be trans as well as gay throughout the late 1900s. Scholar's appreciate Sullivan's journals as "one of the most complete

and one of the most compelling accounts of a transgender life ever to set page” (Stryker 116).

Here is just a sample of some of his most noteworthy passages:⁴ “When we got home, we played boys.” January 1963, age eleven. At this point in his life, Sullivan was still presenting as a young girl; the only time he could tune into his desire to be a boy was to play pretend. This experience is particularly common in the transgender community, (both Boylan and Mock engaged in similar activities, as mentioned in their biographies) as an individual uses time in their adolescence to dress up as and pretend to be their desired gender identity. Under the guise of playtime, trans children can explore their identities and reconcile their feelings and beliefs before—potentially—sharing their identity with others. This part of Sullivan’s narration establishes that many trans individuals suspect a disconnect between their assigned sex and gender identity at a young age.

“No one looks deeper than the flesh.” December 1965, age fourteen. Sullivan articulates the hardship shared by many individuals both within and outside of the trans community. During this passage of his diary, Sullivan recognizes that his internal struggle with his gender identity and sexual orientation affects the way he interacts with society as well as the way society interacts with him. Sullivan faces the issue of

⁴ These passages are taken from Susan Stryker’s *Transgender History* pages 116-117.

wanting to be seen for who he is, but because he is unique with both his trans and gay identities, society has a hard time accepting him.

Sullivan continues to express this realization at age fifteen in 1966: “I want to look like what I am but don’t know what someone like me looks like. I mean, when people look at me I want them to think, there’s one of those people . . . that has their own interpretation of happiness. That’s what I am.” As a young adult, Sullivan desires a reconciliation of his identity with society’s perception of him. He is unique; the only people he felt a kinship with were drag queens, and that lifestyle and identity did not quite fit either. At age twenty-two, Sullivan looks forward to surgery and his desire to physically transition: “I know now that I can get exactly what I want—to fantasize is no longer enough. Before it was beyond my dreams. It was the worst perversion that I wished I had a penis. . . . But now it’s only a matter of time.” At this stage in his narration, Sullivan has an attainable goal: gender reassignment surgery. For him, this is a vital part of his transition, one that his narration focuses a great deal on as he pictures—and then lives—the life he wishes to lead as a gay man.⁵

In conclusion, Lou Sullivan’s diaries share insight into the deeper thoughts and articulations of what it means to be trans. Diaries—unlike

⁵ Unfortunately, as Sullivan shares, “[They] said I couldn’t live as a gay man, but it looks like I’m going to die like one” in his narration when he was diagnosed with AIDS.

medical books, biographies, and other forms of narrations—allow for unedited discernment into the journeys and issues trans individuals encounter. In Sullivan’s case, his diaries continue to be referenced as people try to understand transness as well as homosexuality from a youth’s perspective.

While diaries like Sullivan’s provide this unique, personal perspective, narration may also take a more academic form. Unlike from a medically intellectual perspective, scholars, such as Sandy Stone, began to study transness from a newfound “gender studies” angle in the 1990s. In her acclaimed article, “The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto,” she steered the conversation away from discussing transness as an illness within the scholarly community (Stryker 124). Stone articulated a more modern, concise definition of a “transsexual” by stating, “A transsexual is a person who identifies his or her gender identity with that of the ‘opposite’ gender” (Stone 41). She also clarified that “Sex and gender are quite separate issues, but transsexuals commonly blur the distinction by confusing the performative character of gender with the physical ‘fact’ of sex, referring to their perceptions of their situation as being in the ‘wrong body’” (Stone 41). Indeed, by Stone’s inclusion the distinction between gender and sexuality, a distinction that often needs to be elucidated to

this day, she propelled trans narration forward with greater clarity of subject matter.

Stone's main agenda in her academic narration of transness was to convey her desire that trans individuals take back their voices, tell their stories, and take control of their own narrative (Stone 41). Stone claimed that others hijacked the narrative for too long, and trans individuals need to dispel the claims that they are "an army designed and constructed to infiltrate, pervert and destroy 'true' women" (Stone 42). Who better to narrate what it means to be trans than trans individuals? Lastly, she narrated a common goal among many trans individuals that will be explored further with the discussion of the two modern biographies: passing. Indeed, Stone claimed:

The most critical thing a transsexual can do, the thing that *constitutes* success, is to "pass." Passing means to live successfully in the gender of choice, to be accepted as a "natural" member of that gender. Passing means the denial of mixture. One and the same with passing is effacement of the prior gender role, or the construction of a plausible history (44-45).

As time progressed, narrations took a more modern turn and began to include blogs, podcasts, and reality television shows—including the famed *I Am Jazz* and *I Am Cait*. But perhaps the most popular and far-reaching form of narration is the biography. Through auto-biographies, specifically, trans individuals have the opportunity to narrate their own story, in their own words, and share it through a common, easily

distributed medium. In the span of ten years, two biographies shifted the way Americans thought about and discussed what it means to be trans. In 2003, Jennifer Finnley Boylan's *She's Not There* laid a foundation with a more palatable narration of transness; in doing so, she paved the way for Janet Mock to push the conversation further with *Redefining Realness* in 2014.

Homonormativity and Transnormativity

Lisa Duggan coined the term “homonormativity” in the early 2000s. Homonormativity stands for the principle that queer life does not “contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions” (Duggan 50). In other words, in an attempt to become normalized, homosexuality became marketed as aligning with heteronormativity—the typical heterosexual lifestyle—and the LGBTQ community began assimilating heteronormative ideas into their culture.⁶ Furthermore, this term is relevant to the discussion of trans culture and narration; indeed, the extension of “homonormativity” to “transnormativity” is readily established as there is continued “pressure on trans people to conform to traditional, oppositional sexist understandings of gender” (Lewis 222).

⁶ For example, the fight for same-sex marriage was marketed as a fight to uphold a cherished heteronormative institution, marriage, not as a means to destroy it. Homonormativity suggests a desire to be assimilated into heteronormativity, not as a play to disable the current system (Duggan 50).

When studying Boylan's biography, one sees a woman who does not quite embrace transnormativity per se, but who appears more comfortable utilizing its persuasive powers than Mock. In fact, Boylan does not shake up the status quo with her discussion of trans individuals, but instead seems to have the goal of garnering support and acceptance of the trans community. With this goal in mind, she creates a normative trans identity, one that would assimilate well in heteronormative society. Indeed, even though she remains with her wife—whom she married before she transitioned and is therefore technically in a same-sex relationship—Boylan creates the image of a typical white, upper middle class woman. As a college professor with her children and beautiful homes, she represents a lauded American citizen. Indeed, Boylan establishes that she is just like everyone else in most regards and is trying to live her life like a normal woman (whatever that may actually be). Incidentally, she uses humor when demonstrating that trans people are not so different from the rest of society:

... a discussion of transgendered people frequently resembles nothing so much as a conversation about *aliens*. Do you think there really *are* transgendered people? Has the government known about them for years and kept the whole business secret? Where do they come from, and what do they want? Have they been secretly living among us for years? (Boylan 21)

By employing this kind of humor, Boylan laughs off the idea that trans people are alien like—and rightfully so! The trans narrative, in

the early 2000s, could not afford to isolate themselves from society, and Boylan took it upon herself to normalize the trans community with her journey, confirming that trans people are already incorporated into society and have always existed. In her biography, Boylan was able to introduce herself, her journey, and her struggles in a way that makes readers not only sympathize with her, but also feel a connection to her story as well. By taking baby steps forward in trans narration, Boylan gained supporters.

In addition, Boylan described her experience using similar terms, such as transsexual, and descriptions, such as “living the wrong life . . . in the wrong body,” as previous narrators (Boylan 102). By doing so, Boylan skillfully presented trans topics to a wider audience through her narration. Furthermore, her book became the first book by an openly transgender American to become a bestseller and gained notoriety through its promotion by Oprah Winfrey (“Professor Jennifer Finney Boylan . . .” 1). Because she had a captivated audience, Boylan was able to normalize trans individuals, as evident in her terminology, discussion of transness, and approach to politicizing transness (or lack thereof), setting the stage for Mock to shatter this normativity and initiate a more inclusive discussion.

This step, as noted in the brief historical study of trans narration, is an important one. In an evolving narrative, especially one that is foreign

to the general public, it is important to share personal details—such as in Sullivan’s diaries—but to also have a solid foundation so as not to confuse or isolate the intended audience—such as how Dr. Benjamin paved the way for the understanding of what a trans individual is and the desire for a safe gender reassignment surgery. Without Boylan setting the stage and introducing a normalized trans narration, Mock’s more modern, groundbreaking, and inclusive narration may have fallen on deaf ears. Indeed, while Boylan’s more common use of terminology, familiar approach to passing and gender, and lack of discussion regarding intersectionality may seem limiting in hindsight, her biography laid the necessary groundwork to Mock to step in and continue trans narration in a more modern, politicized fashion.

Terminology

Throughout the study of trans narratives, one notices a shift in terminology. Even from 2003 to 2014, the terms the two women use to describe their transness differ. Boylan, for example, notes how growing up as a child in the late 1960s, she did not even know the word “transsexual,” and the word “transgender” even existed. While she was familiar with “transvestite,” Boylan didn’t identify with it; “it sounded creepy, like a kind of centipede or grub” (Boylan 21). Later, when she

came out to her co-workers at Colby College, she is able to describe the distinctions between these terms:

Transsexuality can be treated, and most of those who embark upon the journey of “transition” do go on to live fulfilling and joyful lives. . . . *Transgendered* is the preferred term for the whole range of people with gender issues. *Transsexuals*—persons who feel that their body and spirit do not match—are a particular kind of transgendered person. . . . A transsexual is not a cross-dresser, for whom the issue is clothes. (“Transvestite” is now considered a pejorative term for “cross-dressers.”) (Boylan 173).

Throughout the course of her biography, Boylan identifies as both a “transsexual” and “transgendered” individual, using the former term more frequently at the beginning of her book when discussing her youth and the latter more so towards the end as a mature woman. This may be, perhaps, to demonstrate the changing of the times and which terms were deemed more socially acceptable or politically correct, or simply that Boylan personally felt comfortable using both and the timeline is irrelevant. Nevertheless, Boylan taking the time to distinguish these terms allows readers to learn more about various gender identities and become introduced to their nuances. One also sees how Boylan still describes transsexuality as an illness, something that can be—and maybe should be—fixed, reflecting the ideology and conception of transness at the time. Boylan’s biography acts as an introduction of the average person to the trans community, and her use of varied, yet clearly defined terms allows her to best narrate her life

with words and concepts with which the typical audience has familiarity and can understand.

Whatever reasons Boylan may have had for using the terms she did, it is significant to note how, just a few years later, Mock strays away from any and all of the terminology Boylan employed. In fact, Mock even goes as far as to say, “I prefer to use *trans* over *transgender* or *transsexual* when identifying myself.” (Mock xi). By using the more inclusive and less stigmatized word, “trans,” Mock opens the conversation regarding trans individuals and attempts to remove herself from the branded words previously used to narrate transness. While she recognizes that the words like “transgender” and “transsexual” are often used—and she herself is not offended by them—Mock takes control of her own identity and uses the term she is most comfortable with embracing.

Indeed, as time progressed, more trans people reject the terminology assigned to them by outside narrators; instead, individuals within the trans community embrace whichever or whatever identities, terms, labels, et cetera that *they* deem appropriate. Like Stone advocated, trans people are reclaiming their stories and the words they choose to describe themselves.

Passing and Gender: Two Trans Topics, Two Approaches

As previously discussed, Boylan uses humor to narrate her transness, possibly as a means to be more approachable to a general audience when normalizing the transgender community. Notably, this humor comes into play when she discusses “passing” and the goal of passing. At one point in her hormone therapy (during 2000-2001), Boylan occupied what her child described as a “*boygirl*” phase, where she did not quite present as either male or female and was being addressed as both genders in public. During this period, Boylan addresses her unique appearance:

What are the three phases of male-to-female transition? Step one: *Hey, that guy looks a little weird*. Step two: *Hey, that person looks really weird*. Step three: *Whoa, that chick is ugly!* (Boylan 152)

Boylan demonstrates, through her humor, the thoughts and emotions associated with transitioning and the difficulty of passing. By including this in her narrative, one sees how she straddles both genders at one point, but how she ultimately looks forward to a time when she will be seen as woman—even if she jests that she might be an ugly one. As she transitioned, Boylan felt “raw and vulnerable, exposed to the world” and shares that “a transsexual’s womanhood is examined, considered, and criticized much more relentlessly than that of other women” (Boylan 140, 246). Ultimately, she narrates her journey to “passing” by establishing that “the line between male and female turns

out to be rather fine. Although we image our genders as firm and fixed, in fact they are as malleable as a sand castle” (Boylan 137). While she never explicitly states that her goal was to pass, by the way she narrates the phenomenon, one recognizes how it is a subject of importance to her.

Boylan’s narration of her transition from male to female reflects a general, perhaps even simplistic, viewpoint of transitioning: moving from one side of the gender binary to the other. This is the easiest way of describing what it means to be transgender to those who are unfamiliar with the concept; thus, it makes sense for the fundamental biography to take this approach. By addressing “passing” in this approachable manner, Boylan opens the door for Mock to enter and question the very idea of passing and what it means to be a real woman:

“Passing” This pervasive thinking frames trans people as illegitimate an unnatural. If a trans woman who knows herself and operates in the world as a woman is seen, perceived, treated, and viewed as a woman, isn’t she just being herself? She isn’t *passing*, she is merely *being* (Mock 155).

Mock approaches passing from a different perspective than Boylan as she readjusts the lens through which the concept is studied. Instead of Boylan’s approach—marking the ending of a transition, the final destination of crossing the genders—Mock disagrees that the “journey of transsexual people [is] passing through the sexes . . . from male to

female.” She believes that formulation simplifies a complicated journey of self-discovery that goes way beyond gender and genitalia” (Mock 227). Thus, “passing” should not mark the finality of transitioning, nor should it be required aim of trans individuals. Trans women, as Mocks narrates, should not be compelled to “pass”; indeed, she discusses how even though she has transitioned (with gender reassignment surgery, a process that will be discussed at greater length) and “passes,” this does not make her experience as a trans woman—and more importantly, just as a *woman*—any more valid than individuals who do not share her experience (Mock 188).

Mock narrates a more fluid definition of gender than Boylan; thus, it is no surprise that she views transitioning and identity with similar elasticity. In fact, she shares that she too struggled with landing on an identity that was right for her. Growing up, she came out as a gay boy before realizing that she was a heterosexual woman. Even though she came to terms with who she is—and recognizes that, as identities go, her identity is relatively straightforward—she clarifies that “it’s ok if your personal definition is in a constant state of flux as you navigate the world” (Mock 172). As a trans, heterosexual woman, Mock acknowledges gender and sexual fluidity and ensures that her narration of her journey includes this message of inclusivity regarding passing and gender identity.

An important aspect of gender identification that is commonly noted in trans narration is gender reassignment surgery. Trans narration, over time, has defined this process differently: sex change, sex reassignment, gender reassignment surgery (GRS), to name a few. Boylan addresses the topic of her surgery in her biography, describing where she went (Wisconsin), her process of asking for a loan to pay for it—where the woman at the bank posed an awkward question regarding collateral, as she notes that Boylan was not using the money to buy a car which could be repossessed—and her mental state leading up to the procedure (Boylan 201). Indeed, Boylan expresses an excitement over her “dream” finally coming to fruition (Boylan 79). She shares her emotions and actions leading up to her surgery, noting how right before she left for the procedure, she “for the last time, peed against a tree” (Boylan 230). From her perspective, this final act marks her leaving her life as a man and the beginning of her life as a woman. She leaves her “boygirl” stage behind and can finally be, in her mind, a woman.

Back in the early 2000s, this mentality—although still foreign to many, to say the least—was at least, in some regards, understandable. Boylan normalizes her transition by putting it in the context of moving from one gender to the other, with her gender reassignment surgery has the indicator of the completeness of her transition. Using the

framework Boylan established and benefiting from the fact that audiences are now somewhat familiar with the process, Mock alters the narration. Building off her discussion regarding passing, Mock once again questions what it means to be a real woman. Although she personally sought gender reassignment surgery, she elucidates that even though her own journey included this step, “genitals [do] not dictate . . . womanhood. [My] path and internal sense of womanhood included a vagina, and that does not negate anyone else’s experiences” (Mock 188). Mock, through narrating her own experience, creates space for other trans individuals to elaborate on their own unique experiences and identities within the trans community—just as how Boylan opened the door for Mock to share her life after introducing more modern and personal trans concepts.

Intersectionality and Politicization of Transness

As previously established, Boylan seeks to normalize transness; Boylan, in turn, is able to isolate and ignore other variables and identities, such as race and socioeconomic class, which may have clouded her narration. Indeed, her narration was meant to set a baseline of understanding of what it means to be trans—which in and of itself carries specific issues in society—and while she does recognize and acknowledge her privilege as a white upper middle class, she

cannot genuinely explore or discuss transness from an intersectional perspective. Additionally, Boylan's objective in the scheme of trans narration is to gently open the door to what it's like being trans—without the additional factors such as race or socioeconomic class. Because these elements are left out of her narrative, her biography takes more of a story-telling tone as she creates her normalized, idealized trans woman; whereas Mock's goal is to establish that there is no normal trans or even female identity. In contrast to Boylan, Mock's biography addresses transness from a political, intersectional perspective, leading to her creation of an almost manifesto type of biographical narration.

Mock sets the stage for combating a normalized trans identity from the very beginning of her biography. Unlike Boylan, she will be addressing intersectional issues head on. In her introduction she proclaims:

I have been held up as the “right” kind of trans woman (educated, able-bodied, attractive, articulate, heteronormative). It promotes the delusion that because I “made it,” that level of success is easily accessible to all trans women. Let's be clear: It is not. . . . We must also deconstruct these stories and contextualize them and shed a light on the many barriers that face trans women, specifically those of color and those from low-income communities, who aim to reach the not-so-extraordinary things I have grasped: living freely and without threat or notice as I am, making a safe, healthy living, and finding love. These things should not be out of reach (Mock xvii).

Despite the fact that Mock appears to be the “right” kind of trans woman (other than her mixed race, Mock currently reflects a similar image to Boylan’s normalized trans individual), Mock’s journey was full of the barriers she mentions in her introduction that often affect trans individuals from marginalized communities. As a woman of color from a low-income family, young Mock certainly did not embody the normative identity Boylan portrayed. Growing up, Mock recognizes that while she and her fellow trans friends did not have many resources and financial support, she was blessed to have a “deep legacy of trans womanhood passed on to us by older women who had been exactly where [they] were” (Mock 136). For example, Mock’s supportive mentors taught her who to go to for hormones when she was uninsured and the women even shared their hormones when they could afford them.

Additionally, when Mock realized that she would bear the cost of her transition on her own, her community of trans women taught her the ropes as she began to prostitute herself:

Without money of my own, I had no independence, no control over my life and my body. No one *person* forced me or my friends into the sex trade; we were groomed by an entire system that failed us and a society that refused to see us. . . . So we used the resources we had—our bodies (Mock 213-214).

Mock shares how her socioeconomic situation impacted her as a trans woman. Unlike upper middle class women, like Boylan, Mock

could not afford to start her transition without engaging in prostitution. She narrates this part of her story in a matter-of-fact manner: it was simply what she needed to do. As Mocks clarifies, she did not have any other options. Because of a lack of education or work experience as a high school student in addition to lacking updated identification showing her appropriate gender (another politicized point in her biography includes updated identification for trans individuals), it was difficult for Mocks to find any other kind of employment to finance her transition (Mock 213). Her time as a prostitute led to additional struggles, including the looming fear of being rape, arrested, or robbed. Although Mock was never arrested herself, she politicizes her narration when she proclaims:

When a trans woman is arrested, she is charged with an act of prostitution, a non-violent offense committed by consensual adults, and placed in a cell with men, because prisons are segregated by genitals. . . . Yes, this is cruel and unusual punishment (Mock 206).

Mock clearly believes that society must shift its views on what it means to be trans and the social, economic, and political implications of being part of a marginalized community. Starting with a description of her own sexual assault as a child, Mock expresses her anguish over how trans individuals' vulnerability and the lack of respect for the trans community manifests itself in dangerous ways, especially for people of color.

Her financial situation came to a head when it came time to finance her gender reassignment surgery. With insight from her fellow prostitutes, Mock learns that she can acquire the procedure in Thailand for approximately \$7,000, as opposed to in the United States where it would cost upwards of \$30,000. Ultimately, Mock relied on her clients' contacts and engaged in pornographic acts to fund her trip and surgery. Aware that this is not the desired narrative, Mock explains:

Trans youth, especially those of color, represent a large portion of young people engaging in survival sex, yet they are often erased from narratives... The greatest push factor for trans girls engaged in the sex trade is poverty, stemming from homelessness . . . or growing up in already struggling low-income communities where resources are scarce (Mock 213).

Mock educates her readers throughout her narration, demonstrating how lower income, trans women of color face compounded, complex issues. Recognizing the need for these stories, including her own, to be told, Mock sheds light on the side of trans issues that Boylan's journey did not possess. Indeed, she shatters the illusion that:

all trans people come of age in supportive middle- and upper-middle-class homes, where parents have resources and access to knowledgeable and affordable health care that can cover expensive hormone-blocking medications and necessary surgeries. These best-case scenarios are not the reality for most trans people, regardless of age (Mock 119).

Mock calls upon her own experiences to illustrate the reality of many trans individuals' experiences, hardships, and personal struggles that extend far past those Boylan encountered. As Boylan demonstrates, trans individuals face unique challenges just on that front alone. When one, such as Mock, adds the complexity of being a person of color from a lower socioeconomic status, these challenges intensify and add a whole other dimension to what it means to be trans. These battles, logically, become political; thus, the narration of transness has become taken a definitively political turn. By using her own story to narrate this call to action, Mock successfully connects with the reader. Because readers are already familiar with basic trans concepts, thanks to less issue-driven narratives like Boylan's, Mock is able to push the narrative forward and politicize not just the normalized viewpoint of transness, but also intersectional transness.

Conclusion: Where Will Trans Narration Go Next?

When Jennifer Finney Boylan articulated her experience as a transgender woman in *She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders* in 2003, she worked to normalize transness; in doing so, she prepared society for Mock's groundbreaking biography, *Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love & So Much More* (2014), allowing for continued discussion and politicization of transness. Boylan's narration

was a necessary step in this evolution. She created a relatable image of a trans woman who was looking to be understood, respected, and accepted. Along the way, she introduced common obstacles trans people battle, including the struggle of “passing,” and she employed more familiar terminology and ideologies to ensure clarity with her readers.

While Boylan’s biography certainly had an impact on readers in the early 2000s, it did not grossly expand trans narration; indeed, it only made it more accessible to the general public. Nevertheless, this is a vital move in garnering support for the more challenging issues associate with transness. Without this groundwork by trans individuals with more approachable backgrounds, trans narration may not have entered the public sphere; on the contrary, the stories may have stayed in a more scholarly realm. Because the idea of being transgender was at least familiar to the public because of these works, such as Boylan’s *She’s Not There*, people like Janet Mock have the space to share more insight into the densities of the trans community and apply an intersectional layer onto the basic foundation.

Like trans individuals themselves, trans narration has always existed; however, through time, the way trans individuals, allies, and opponents have articulated transness has undoubtedly evolved. From medical textbooks to scholarly texts to diaries and autobiographies,

narration has taken many forms. With each narration, the question of what it means to be trans is addressed, and each answer raises even more questions and opportunities for further exploration. Indeed, the narrators layer their stories and experiences onto of those narrations that came before them, creating a complex picture of transness.

Now, the digital age allows for the sharing and distribution of trans stories via social media, blogs, movies, television programs, and even podcasts. In this day and age, it has become easier than ever for people of all backgrounds to share their journeys and experiences. Even though Boylan's biography seemed earth-shattering in 2003, it quickly became antiquated within ten years, leading to Mock's narration—another seemingly earth-shattering portrayal of what it means to be trans. Now, three years after Mock's narration took the world by storm, it too is beginning to seem outdated. For example, the term "trans" is being replaced by "trans*" to be even more inclusive to other trans identities. Additionally, Mock politicized and brought to light a fair share of trans issues, including identification issues, healthcare resources, and physical safety threats. However, more challenges are being discussed regarding the trans community, including bathroom bills, changing areas, and military involvement.

This begs the question: whose narration will be the next to lead America to better understand these important issues? Laverne Cox and

Caitlyn Jenner have become household names; Jazz Jennings has publicized her life as a trans teen. Are these individuals allowing Americans to become even more familiar with transness along the lines of Boylan's biography, building up to a watershed moment? As trans narration evolves, one must be open to the new stories just waiting to be told. These stories can have the power to change society, as long as we are willing to listen.

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**The Tensions of Mothering and Othering:
Breastfeeding in the Dominican Republic**

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Originally from Toronto, Canada, Nicole is a junior Political Science major with a minor in International Development Studies. Interested in a range of issues centered on the intersections of economic development, public policy, and human rights, Nicole has spent the past two summers exploring these interests in Laos and the Dominican Republic through grants with the Kellogg Institute. Currently studying abroad in Puebla, Mexico, she enjoys trying new foods and learning new languages. She intends to return to the Dominican Republic in the upcoming summer to continue to research issues connected with migration in the Dominican Republic.

Suboptimal breastfeeding practices contribute to 11.6 percent mortality for children under the age of five, a statistic that translated into the deaths of 804,000 children in 2011 (Chaparro & Lutter, 2011). Despite these striking statistics, only 4.7 percent of infants in the Dominican Republic (DR) are breastfed (UNICEF, 2015). This figure is remarkably low, particularly when compared with DR neighbor Haiti, where 39.3 percent of infants are breastfed, or with the global average of approximately 40 percent (UNICEF, 2015). Breastfeeding practices dramatically improve global health, yet globally, and particularly in the DR, the great majority of infants are not breastfed according to the World Health Organization recommendations. Previous attempts to elucidate the reasons why the breastfeeding rate remains so low in the DR have concluded that a lack of information about the importance of breastfeeding is not the whole, or even a major part, of the reason why some mothers do not breastfeed (McLennan, 2001). Motherhood, and by extension breastfeeding, are inherently social experiences and consequently are greatly influenced by societal norms, particularly those concerning a woman's body and sexuality. An understanding of these norms is further complicated when they are examined alongside racial norms and stereotypes, as is the case in the DR for Haitian migrants and women of Haitian descent. This article aims to account for

these complexities in the attempt to understand a woman's decision and ability to breastfeed.

Understanding the intersection of these gender and racial norms regarding breastfeeding allows for a greater understanding of the ways in which mothers navigate cultural and moral terrain in their decisions about breastfeeding. With this understanding, health advocates are able to better account for the tensions and social constructs that women face as they breastfeed. Considering the complex social norms and discourses surrounding breastfeeding also allows for a greater recognition of the complexities that each individual woman faces throughout her experience breastfeeding or not breastfeeding. Such a nuanced understanding creates the opportunity for improved support infrastructure for breastfeeding women and a more effective response to the low breastfeeding rates discussed above.

Through this study, conducted in summer 2017, I worked with various mothers from a region of the DR near the Haitian border to hear their perspectives on breastfeeding in the region. This region is home to a large variety of ethnic Dominicans, Dominicans of Haitian descent, and Haitian migrants. A border region such as the one where I conducted this study, with its complex dynamics of migration, allows for an exploration of the ways that racial norms, identity, and stereotypes influence the social norms surrounding breastfeeding. My

results and discussion are not necessarily generalizable to the rest of the Haitian-Dominican border, the DR, or to the Caribbean and Latin America. However, with my analysis of my observational study of this unique region, I hope to contribute to the broader discussion of the contradictions that mothers face in their decision whether or not to breastfeed and how the ways in which society racializes and moralizes certain groups of women influences these contradictions.

Breastfeeding in the DR and Haiti

Exclusive breastfeeding is the practice of feeding an infant solely breast milk for the first six months of their life, and is recommended by the WHO (World Health Organization) as the best infant feeding practice for the first six months (WHO, 2014). The DR has one of the lowest exclusive breastfeeding rates in Latin America, with a mere 4.7 percent of infants fed exclusively breast milk in the first six months of life (WHO, 2014). This rate has declined by 14.3 percent since 1996, raising concerns about the state of breastfeeding in the country. Various studies have examined perceptions of breastfeeding among Dominican women and reasons for terminating breastfeeding before the infant is six months old (Babington, 2006; McLennan, 2001, 2016; O'Neill, 2015; Kristensen-Cabrera et al., 2016). Results from those studies suggest that although physical factors, such as low infant birth

weights and Cesarean births, have been noted to impact a mother's likelihood to initiate breastfeeding, socio-economic status also have significant negative effects on initiation and duration of breastfeeding (Lutter et al., 2011). These results confirm the importance of considering social factors when attempting to understand a woman's decision to breastfeed.

Some ethnographic work demonstrates that breastfeeding is perceived to be the most common infant feeding method in the DR; however, in practice, partial breastfeeding for the recommended period of two years and exclusive breastfeeding for the recommended six months are not widespread (Babington, 2006). As demonstrated by the low exclusive breastfeeding rate, many women terminate exclusive breastfeeding, whether by choice or by necessity, before infants are six months old (WHO, 2014). In interviews with Dominican mothers, two studies found a lack of sufficient milk and a lack of desire for milk by the child to be some of the most commonly cited reasons when mothers were asked why they stopped exclusively breastfeeding (McLennan, 2001; O'Neill, 2015). Equally important in this discussion, however, and as of yet underexplored in the literature, are the reasons that mothers propose as to why their *peers* choose not to breastfeed. Such an analysis allows for the elucidation of perceptions of breastfeeding and eliminates the possibility for mothers to underreport reasons for

choosing not to breastfeed in order to conform to the broader social norms governing a women's choice to breastfeed (McLennan, 2001). The few studies that have examined Dominican communities' perceptions of the decision to breastfeed report that mothers believe that concern over the "loss of their figure" is a factor in other mothers' decisions not to breastfeed. (Babington, 2006; McLennan, 2001). Such social factors and dynamics, including those deeply embedded in social constructs such as race, matter in a woman's individual decision to breastfeed, but often are unreported in individual interviews (McLennan, 2001).

Haiti maintains a significantly higher rate of exclusive breastfeeding than the DR, with a rate of 39.3 percent, which is on par with both the Latin American average and the global average (UNICEF, 2015; Heidkamp et al., 2013). Heidkamp et al. (2013) found that exclusive breastfeeding rates were higher than the national average at 49.5 percent in the north of Haiti, the region that borders Dajabón in which this study was conducted. Multiple ethnographic studies have noted that, generally, Haitian mothers believe breastfeeding to be the best source of nutrition for a baby and cite reasons such as the perception of breastfeeding as a "natural" process and the belief that it would develop a healthier baby (Dempsey & Geese, 1983; Thomas & DeSantis, 1995; Roman, 2007). Similar to results from the DR,

Dornemann and Kelly (2012) found that breastfeeding was widely perceived to be the norm among Haitian women that they interviewed. Multiple women in their study described breastfeeding as duty and obligation for a mother. Such cultural norms and perceptions are essential to take into account when considering breastfeeding rates and the decision to breastfeed among both Haitian women and Dominicans of Haitian descent.

Maternal decisions are made within the highly complex sphere of feminine sexuality, in which women are expected to navigate the standards of being both an ideal mother, which is increasingly perceived as a breastfeeding mother, and a sexual being whose breasts are celebrated for the way in which they reinforce feminine sexuality (Carathers, 2017). The ways in which mothers negotiate this balance are complex and often emerge from more deeply held social and cultural beliefs. Considering the effect of wider societal norms on decisions related to this tension requires an understanding of how social norms are influenced by the political, racial, and historical contexts that shape perceptions. In the Dominican context, these beliefs are likely highly influenced by the racializing and othering of Haitian migrants. This paper defines othering as the process through which a group of people are treated as intrinsically different from another group, for reasons of socioeconomic status, beliefs, or cultural values.

This concept is central for apprehending the way in which differing decisions regarding breastfeeding are understood. An analysis of the social perceptions of breastfeeding in the DR would be incomplete without considering the ways in which racializing and othering processes shape discourse surrounding breastfeeding in the DR. Given the highly socialized sphere of motherhood that breastfeeding inhabits, these social factors warrant further examination.

Othering Processes in the DR

The DR has a complicated history of racializing processes. The country borders Haiti, the first independent black republic, and relations with its neighbor have been complex since Haiti occupied the former Spanish colony in the mid 1800s. Throughout the rule of dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo (1930–1961) and with significant support and influence from the United States, the state made a concerted effort to distance itself from its African identity, and by extension, its Haitian neighbor (García-Peña, 2016; Wigginton, 2010). Trujillo was extremely influential in constructing the Dominican identity as distinctly Hispanic and emphatically not African. Blackness and *Dominicanidad* were portrayed by the state and in common practice as mutually exclusive (García-Peña, 2016; Wigginton, 2010). The development of a non-African identity has simultaneously

developed into an anti-Haitian bias in many aspects of Dominican society (Howard, 2007; Wigginton, 2010). Haitians and those of Haitian descent have been and continue to be stigmatized primarily based on darker skin color, perceived low incomes, clothing quality, and maintenance of cultural norms (Howard, 2007). Together, these qualities are perceived by those responsible for the stigmatizing as not being adequately 'European' for the Dominican Hispanic identity and, when present, are used to construct an ethnic Haitian as the other in Dominican society (Howard, 2007).

The historical racialization of ethnically Haitian women has included an intense racialization of physical appearance, particularly of physical qualities such as hairstyle. Those with straightened hair were perceived to be Dominican, while those with natural hair or braids were seen as Haitian or of Haitian descent (Simmons, 2005). This distinction has received pushback from younger generations of Afro-Dominicans, and there has been an increased movement to embrace the Afro-Dominican identities. Nevertheless, women's appearance beyond skin color directly contributes to the racializing of ethnic Haitians in the DR (Howard, 2007; Simmons, 2005). This process and its consequences represent a stereotyping and othering of women.

Othering and Breastfeeding

Much research into the effects of race/ethnicity and stereotyping on breastfeeding experience has been conducted in the United States, Canada, the UK, and other highly industrialized countries (Hurley et al., 2008). Work in these settings has noted an impact of race/ethnicity on the way that health workers perceive a certain group's likelihood to breastfeed and their reasons for doing so (Hurley et al., 2008; McFadden, 2015). In Western Canada, interviews with health professionals correlated breastfeeding likelihood with racial identity and level of assimilation into Canada. These factors affected the level of support provided by nurses (McFadden, 2015), a systematic mechanism of othering. These groups of women, defined by demographic characteristics such as race or socioeconomic status, are viewed by 'outsiders' as intrinsically different in the way that they will elect to feed their infants, solely due to the fact that they are a member of said group. Other work on the impact of group identities, such as culture or race, has noted that breastfeeding practices are guided by perceptions of what is culturally acceptable and appropriate. These perceptions can shape how factors such as difficulty breastfeeding or the need for financial income may affect a mother's decision whether or not to return to work (Hurley et al., 2008).

Group identities have appeared to be very important to the decision to breastfeed and to the perception of a group's decision whether or not to breastfeed. However, to my knowledge, no previous studies have examined the specific impacts of race and ethnicity on perceptions of breastfeeding in the DR. In addition, a majority of the previous work conducted on race/ethnicity and breastfeeding has been conducted in countries with better breastfeeding support infrastructure. Thus, what holds in previous studies may not necessarily be the case in the DR

Study Site

I conducted this study throughout a two-month period in the summer of 2017 in the northeastern Dominican province of Dajabón. Located directly on the border with Haiti, Dajabón is a major crossing point for thousands of Haitian migrants annually. Dajabón is situated in the larger region of Cibaonoreste, which in 2012 reported the one of the highest proportions of immigrants in the country, with 12.1% of its population born in Haiti ("Encuesta Nacional de Inmigrantes en la República Dominicana," 2012). The highly concentrated immigrant population and proximity to the border provide a unique environment in which to understand the interactions between social norms, race, and decisions to breastfeed.

Methods

I conducted interviews in the general public hospital in one of the major municipalities in the province of Dajabón. The population within the municipality is approximately 8,000, but the hospital serves patients from within the municipality, the surrounding rural areas, and many patients who cross the border from Haiti to seek medical care. I conducted interviews in the waiting room outside the gynecologist's office while women waited for walk-in prenatal consultations that were offered twice weekly. I received Institutional Review Board approval from the University of Notre Dame to conduct focus groups and interviews.

I conducted 28 interviews with female patients in the waiting room using a non-probabilistic sampling method. Seven of those interviews were with women born in Haiti who currently live in Haiti, three were with women born in Haiti who currently live in the DR, and the remaining 18 were with women born in the DR who currently live in the DR. I extended an offer to participate to all women in the waiting room who were over 18 years old when the translator was present. When the translator was not present, I only conducted interviews with women who were able to converse in Spanish, given my lack of proficiency in Creole. Naturally, this obstacle impeded my ability to collect a more diverse sample of Haitian migrants and Dominicans of

Haitian descent who were more comfortable speaking in Creole. In these interviews, I asked about the women's intentions to breastfeed, their previous experiences with breastfeeding, their perceptions of breastfeeding, and their perceptions of the availability of breastfeeding support resources. I also conducted a brief true or false assessment to elucidate general levels of breastfeeding knowledge. Interview questions were adapted, in part, from Kristensen-Cabrera et al. (2016). A baby blanket was given as compensation for completing the interview. I obtained informed consent from all interview participants.

Information from the interviews was supplemented by a focus group conducted after the completion of the interviews. Women who had previously participated in breastfeeding support groups in the community were approached and invited to participate in the focus group. Snowball sampling techniques were used to invite more women to the group. A total of eight women participated in the group. Six of these women were born in the DR and currently living in the DR. Two of the women were born in Haiti but had spent at least 10 years in the DR and were proficient in Spanish. The facilitator asked various probing questions regarding perceptions of breastfeeding, perceived reasons why some women in the community did not breastfeed, and perceived reasons for why the breastfeeding rate was significantly

higher in Haiti than in the DR. Focus group participants were compensated with infant clothing.

All interviews were conducted in Spanish or Creole, and the focus group was conducted in Spanish. Interviews were primarily conducted with the assistance of a translator, a Dominican nurse who was a native Spanish speaker and fluent in Creole. Some participants, although more comfortable in Creole, had conversational abilities in Spanish and chose to complete the interview in Spanish. The focus group was facilitated by a native Spanish speaker, allowing for a more natural dialogue among participants than would have otherwise been possible.

The focus group was recorded in audio and written forms. In order to obtain a more accurate response for time spent exclusively breastfeeding, I asked mothers when they began giving their youngest child water and other staples. Using these responses I subsequently calculated their time spent exclusively breastfeeding based on when they first introduced other liquids and foods. Interview data was coded by giving a score of one to each affirmative answer and zero to all negative answers for questions regarding the perceived and reported presence of breastfeeding support, such as the perceived ability to access medical or family help with breastfeeding. I then summed the total number of positive responses to questions about the availability of breastfeeding support to develop a social support score for each

woman. In order to obtain a measure of general breastfeeding knowledge of each participant, I also graded the results of brief true or false questionnaires of each participant. Throughout the data analysis, I divided the participants into three categories: those born in the Dominican and currently residing in the Dominican, those born in Haiti and currently residing in the Dominican, and those born in Haiti and currently residing in Haiti.

Results and Discussion

Knowledge of Breastfeeding

Women in both the focus group and the interviews almost unanimously considered breastfeeding to be the best infant feeding method. These results are consistent with previous work in the DR on perceptions of breastfeeding (McLennan, 2001). All but 2 women of the 28 interviewed stated that they planned to breastfeed when their baby was born. Of those women interviewed who had other children, only 1 out of 21 stated that they did not breastfeed their previous child at all. When asked why they chose to breastfeed, women responded with statements such as, "It is the best milk for the baby when they are born," or "When you breastfeed, the baby gets sick less often." Consistent with trends in previous work, the most commonly cited reasons to breastfeed were that it was considered to be the best and

that it was the healthiest option for the baby (Marshall, Godfrey, & Renfrew, 2007). Three women mentioned that that they breastfed because “there are no resources for anything else,” or similarly, “because I can only breastfeed. Formula is too expensive.” All three of these women were born and reside in Haiti.

There were notable differences among social support scores between women born in the DR and those born in Haiti. The average social support score for women born in the DR was 4.06 (out of a possible 6) while the score for women born in Haiti and living in Haiti was 2.5. The average score for women born in Haiti but living in the DR was 2.33, also quite low. However, only three women fit this category, so this low result could be due to a small sample size. This disparity would suggest more robust breastfeeding support infrastructure in the DR, for most but not all. The Foundation (FIMRC) that supported this research was engaged in breastfeeding promotion activities, and the scores of the women who were living in the DR and within reach of FIMRC could have possibly reflected the support they received from this organization. There were also notable differences in reported exclusive breastfeeding between women born in the DR and women born in Haiti. Contrary to what would be expected based on the social support scores, women born and living in Haiti reported an average of 5.6 months exclusive breastfeeding. Women born in Haiti and living in

the DR reported a similar five months exclusive breastfeeding. Women born and living in the DR, however, reported an average of only 2.75 months exclusive breastfeeding. The disparity in these trends is consistent with countrywide averages (WHO, 2014).

A majority of the women interviewed knew that breastfeeding was recommended for at least six months. However, few understood *exclusive breastfeeding*, the recommendation to not give babies anything else but breast milk. While 67% of mothers responded correctly to the true or false statement “Doctors recommend to breastfeed for two years,” only 35% correctly answered false to the statement, “During the first six months babies need water and tea.” Moreover, only 18% correctly answered both questions about exclusive breastfeeding.

When asked whether a doctor had spoken to them about breastfeeding, 72% of women responded affirmatively. Many of these women indicated that a doctor had told them it was very important to breastfeed for the first six months, saying that doctors had given instructions like “It is very important to breastfeed because when you breastfeed you will not become pregnant again soon after,” or “You should breastfeed for the first six months, that is the best milk for the baby.” Only one mother, however, mentioned that a doctor had explained the concept of exclusive breastfeeding, saying, “They said it is

the best to breastfeed babies, no food during the first six months.”

Although there is a clear understanding of the importance of breastfeeding, the results above indicate a need for increased education about exclusive breastfeeding, particularly given its possibly counterintuitive nature.

The tension of ‘Moralized Motherhood’

Given the intensely social nature of breastfeeding, trying to understand low breastfeeding rates in the DR simply by looking at knowledge of breastfeeding’s importance would have little relevance. Research in the American context lends evidence to the theory that a lack of information is not the sole driver of low breastfeeding rates, and my results would indicate that this theory holds in the Dominican context (Smyth, 2012). As Marshall et al. (2007) neatly highlight in their work on the tensions of modern motherhood, “Being a mother, and indeed breastfeeding, do not occur within a social or historical vacuum” (Marshall et al., 2007).

Responses from the focus group and interviews indicate the array of the factors that women must consider when deciding to breastfeed, as well as the judgment that women receive when they make their decision whether or not to breastfeed, and for how long to do so. These factors particularly come to light when drawing

comparisons between responses about why women themselves would not breastfeed and responses about why other women in the community might not breastfeed. Previous research found that a lack of sufficient milk and a lack of desire for milk from the baby were the most commonly cited reasons to discontinue breastfeeding (McLennan, 2001). However, when asked about why the breastfeeding rate in the DR was low, the women presented those who decided not to as somewhat selfish or morally irresponsible, saying, “There are many mothers that [don’t breastfeed] to go out . . . to go out drinking. They say, “Ah no, I’m not going to breastfeed, nor do anything that requires me to stay with the baby.” Following a similar trend, one woman responded saying, “They have to go out, to dance, or anything.” Smyth (2012) describes the way that breastfeeding has been established as a part of “moralized motherhood,” a standard against which new mothers may be judged. In her work, she found that many mothers who were not planning to breastfeed felt that less esteem was accorded to them as a result of their decision not to breastfeed (Smyth, 2012). This perception appears to hold in the Dominican context where I conducted my work, given the implicitly negative way that mothers who do not breastfeed were discussed. Those who did not breastfeed were othered, represented as holding themselves to different standards than the participants, based on their breastfeeding practices.

More broadly, the ways in which breastfeeding was discussed also reflects the way in which decisions are made in the context of broader social norms, which, particularly for women, include norms about their body. As previous work found, the impact of breastfeeding on a woman's figure and the misperception that breastfeeding will result in falling breasts was mentioned as a factor in the decision making process (Lou et al., 2014). Through the focus group we explored the tension between being a 'good mother' and maintaining one's figure:

Facilitator: Does the impact on the mother's body influence these decisions? You all stated: She thinks first of herself, she puts herself as the priority and doesn't think of the sickness that the babies could catch.

Participant: And the baby is forgotten.

Participant: Yes, the 'I' first.

The trend demonstrates the choice that women are forced to make: breastfeed and be a 'good mother,' or engage in activities that prioritize herself, not breastfeed, and be a 'bad mother.' When portraying other Dominican women, the Dominican focus group participants present the decision not to breastfeed as a kind of personal failure—choosing to drink, choosing to go out, and choosing to put other things over the baby. Such a 'good' and 'bad' mother binary constrains mothers to one group or the other based on their breastfeeding practices. This binary moralism again highlights the tendency to "other" within discussions of

breastfeeding decisions. The tone of discussion within the focus group of mothers who did not breastfeed was one of distance, of 'them' and not 'us.' Those who chose not to breastfeed or were unable to breastfeed were viewed as intrinsically different from the norm in terms of morals or values. This difference was explained with priorities and in part, as I will discuss later in this paper, by further othering through the implication of intrinsic differences between Dominicans and Haitians.

This trend of differentiating between 'good' and 'bad' mothers has enormous effects on the pressure that mothers feel and the approach that policies take in supporting mothers in the face of various social factors. The moralization of breastfeeding can cause a mother to feel pressured to breastfeed given the social pushback she will receive if she does not, all while she simultaneously faces cultural pressures to go out and engage in social activities. This contradiction is particularly prevalent for young mothers, who often experience the lowest breastfeeding rates of any demographic (Bell et al., 2015). Embedded in this contradiction, as well as in the focus group quotes I discussed above, there are clear indications of the way that certain mothers are grouped into distinctive categories based on a personal decision and the assumptions of society that accompany said decision.

The Othering of Haitian Women

In contrast to the moralization of breastfeeding in the discussion of Dominican breastfeeding practices, a Haitian woman's decision to breastfeed was portrayed by focus group participants as a necessity, made with little other option. Again, however, little nuance was afforded to a Haitian woman's decision to breastfeed. The othering processes which were employed to moralize Dominican women served to group all Haitian women as poor and acting out of necessity.

In contrast to their discussion of Dominican women, when asked about Haitian women, focus group participants primarily presented Haitian women's decision to breastfeed as one that was made because they did not have the money to purchase anything else. One woman stated, "They have to use their resources, their own resources that they have to be able to provide for their children." When explaining why they would not choose to use formula, another woman stated, "There is no money. There is no money for that. They are not going to lose their thirty pesos." While some of these responses are based in an objective understanding of Haiti's lower socioeconomic status, the statements and the direction of the discussion also highlight a challenging contradiction that women face in their decisions to breastfeed.

The decision of Haitian women to breastfeed was perceived as settling for something due to a lack of resources, while the decision of

Dominican women not to breastfeed, as discussed in the previous section, was perceived as a personal failure. Neither decision was portrayed as entirely positive. Portrayals involved grouping individuals based on their othered ethnicity or moral status. Once an individual was placed in a certain group, whether that be Haitian or a non-breastfeeding mother, assumptions were made about them regarding characteristics far beyond whether or not they breastfed. They were othered, placed into a group with defined characteristics that were intrinsically different from those of the group that was categorizing them.

This study was limited in that I did ask women to describe broader trends, thus possibly explaining the broader characteristics that were attributed to certain groups. However, the starkly different way that these groups were presented, based solely on whether or not they breastfed, indicates that women are grouped based on their breastfeeding practices. This claim extrapolates the findings of Brown and Kennelley (1999) and Kennelley (1999), who demonstrate how women in general are grouped by society as mothers, and black women are grouped by society as single mothers.

Marshall et al. (2007) discuss contradictions in the way that breastfeeding is portrayed in society, as women receive messages stressing the decision to breastfeed as essential to their baby's health

while simultaneously receiving messages from a society that portrays the breast as sexual. I argue that this balance is further complicated by the ways in which women are othered depending on how they navigate this contradiction. As witnessed in this study's results, both the decision to breastfeed and the decision not to breastfeed are deeply judged by other breastfeeding mothers.

Body image also plays a significant role in the decision whether or not to breastfeed. Lou et al. (2014) found that women cited a fear of their breasts falling as a reason not to breastfeed. While this conception has been proven false (Thompson, 2007), I found a similar trend in the Dominican community where I worked. In the focus group, one woman stated, "As soon as you turn 18, down they fall [speaking about breast shape]." Conversations with a nurse in the community also pointed to breast appearance, as well as a distinct racialization of that appearance. The nurse described to me the stereotype that Dominican women highly value their appearance while Haitian women do not. When asked why the breastfeeding rate in Haiti was higher, one woman commented: "They are not embarrassed. Their figure is not important to them." In this way, the distinction othered the Haitian woman as an attempt to rationalize her decision to breastfeed. That the Haitian woman breastfeeds because she does not care about her figure suggests that the Dominican woman *does not* breastfeed because she

does care about her figure. The Haitian woman in this instance was othered, placed in a category distinct from a Dominican woman, regarding the value she was perceived to place on her appearance. Again, in this instance, othering was invoked in explaining the decision or ability to breastfeed. In this way, the othering of the Haitian woman simultaneously brings to light the role of societal pressures to maintain a specific type of feminine bodily ideal in a woman's decision to breastfeed.

This analysis highlights the intersectionality of gender, race, and sexuality in the ways in which some breastfeeding mothers discuss other mothers. These intersectionalities shape and are shaped by the factors that qualify one as a 'good' or 'bad' mother. 'Bad mothers' are othered and given moral characteristics based on their grouping as the other. Hamilton (2016) discusses the importance of understanding the ways in which both gender and race contribute to how a policy supports mothers, and how general motherhood is discussed—particularly with regard to policies that disproportionately affected marginalized populations. As previously mentioned, the work by Brown and Kennelley (1999) and Kennelley (1999) suggests that the ways these groups are discussed is not neutral, and assumptions are made based on both gender and race, and often based on the intertwining of the two. Understanding these factors intersectionally is

essential for improving policies to support mothers, particularly for those who face discrimination due to their social class and socioeconomic status (Hamilton, 2016).

Conclusion

Ultimately, breastfeeding is experienced by each individual woman in response to the unique context of her life. An understanding of why a woman may choose to breastfeed and how to best support her in her decision requires an understanding of the complex, intertwining aspects of societal norms, knowledge, resource availability, and the region-specific discourse surrounding breastfeeding. In the DR, the importance of breastfeeding was well understood, indicating that focusing solely on breastfeeding education would ignore the nuances of the decision to breastfeed and thus likely be ineffective. There does, however, appear to be a need for improved education regarding the concept of exclusive breastfeeding, given the low levels of knowledge regarding the details of the practice. Given that exclusive breastfeeding is the statistic most often captured when examining the levels of breastfeeding in an area, a particular focus on education about exclusive breastfeeding would likely reap large dividends in terms of the perception of exclusive breastfeeding levels in the country.

The discussions of the Dominican women who breastfeed and those who do not, as well as Haitian women who choose to breastfeed, demonstrate a tendency to group women based on their mothering choices in a way that is consistent with the literature. Although my study was limited both by its small sample size and its localized context, it nonetheless represents the tendency for some breastfeeding mothers to discuss certain groups of women and the decisions they make in terms of generalized group characteristics. Beyond the possibility of obscuring the particularities and complexities of each individual mother's decision, such a tendency has the potential to be dangerous given the way that it can shape discourse and policy regarding women's health. By understanding the behavior of individuals through attributes and characteristics as a group, many breastfeeding mothers will inevitably miss the opportunity to support individual women in their individual circumstances.

This article highlights ways in which motherhood is portrayed and experienced intersectionally and personally. This research contributes to a larger body of literature by highlighting the way that these discussions are carried out in the Dominican Republic, where few studies on the racializing and gendering of mothers have taken place.

The overgeneralization of mothers and mothering practices shapes discourse, and discourse ultimately shapes policy. Given the

results of this research and similar research in other contexts, it is clear that there is an imperative to develop policies for women's health and maternal care that are not only cognizant of the various social factors that shape practices, but that also inclusively support mothers who are marginalized through racialized othering. In addition, it is essential to promote policies that account for marginalization of certain groups of mothers while pushing for an awareness of the inclusivity of practices such as breastfeeding. Only with the development of such policies will women's health, breastfeeding, and other highly social maternal practices be given the competent and nuanced attention they require.

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