

An Undergraduate Academic Journal of Gender Research and Scholarship

Through Gendered Lenses

The Gender Studies Honor Society

Gender Studies Program—University of Notre Dame 2013

Cover design by Airi Kobayashi

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Acknowledgements

This edition of *Through Gendered Lenses* marks its fourth year of highlighting gender scholarship at the University of Notre Dame, and the number of those responsible for its success grows well beyond the breadth of this page. The editors and Triota members of the last three years have paved the way and streamlined the process for this year's publication. Their audacity to brave the world of submissions and selections, advertising and printing left an easy rubric to follow and a high expectation to live up to.

Of course, significant recognition is due to Linnie Caye, program coordinator. Her sage advice and familiarity with various channels, timelines and procedures guided the production of the journal and her unwavering organization urged the honor society along despite academics and extracurriculars. Alongside Pamela Wojcik, program director, and Abigail Palko, director of undergraduate studies, the Gender Studies Program provided a vital network of resources.

Legwork can only carry the production so far, and the honors society is indebted to its many generous benefactors. The Center for Undergraduate Scholarly Engagement continues to provide substantial encouragement and support (with a special thanks to Dr. Deb Rotman) to this endeavor. We are grateful that they recognize *Through Gendered Lenses* as a worthwhile investment toward encouraging academic excellence on campus. Further thanks need to be extended to the Boehnen Fund for Excellence in Gender Studies, the Genevieve D. Willis Endowment for Excellence and those alumni and allies who sponsor Gender Studies at Notre Dame. The continued support of the program afforded these scholars the opportunities to pursue their research and this journal to spotlight their endeavors.

And, these scholars deserve special thanks as well, and all who submitted their work to *Through Gendered Lenses*. Many students are toiling in creative and advanced projects and, though these five essays represent the most innovative and thorough compositions, countless others across campus are refiguring and reexamining gender in new and noteworthy fashions. We appreciate all these efforts and hope this edition inspires next year's inquiry.

Letter from the Editor

At one point in *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler describes gender as *pastiche*, a kind of deadpan parody, an eclectic satire without a purpose. The performance sustains itself exactly because it lacks the theatricality of a performance. The five essays chosen investigate where this intersects with other levels of identity. Eighteenth-century French women learned their passive posturing through the education system while Notre Dame students come to a subconscious and ubiquitous consensus on proper gendered café etiquette. Political posing is scrutinized for women presidential candidates and the political binary of the Northern Ireland Troubles imposes its own strict masquerade on the gender binary. And, maternity and family role shift and alter when biology and affection and possession fall along new lines. These essays represent not only in-depth investigations, but also a creativity that invigorates the gender pastiche, imbuing a thriving theatricality into our straight-faced actors.

Joshua Whitaker

The Gender Studies Program

Gender Studies is an interdisciplinary academic program in the College of Arts and Letters at Notre Dame that offers undergraduate students the opportunity to pursue a supplementary major or a minor. Gender Studies analyzes the significance of gender and the related issues of sex, sexuality, race, class, and religion. The Gender Studies program approaches these issues holistically through the lenses of arts, humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. Students in the Gender Studies program develop a skill set that allows them to analyze the methods and theories applied to gender and its related issues throughout history and in contemporary society. The Gender Studies program also teaches students to apply their classroom instruction to everyday life, including personal, familial, professional and civic situations. The Gender Studies program complements the University's Catholic identity through the study of the intersection of gender and religion and the study of how this interaction shapes ethics, culture and politics. Alongside our diverse array of courses drawn from across the University, our summer internship and academic-credit internship programs emphasize the applications of a Gender Studies education. The dynamic and growing field of Gender Studies offers students the chance to analyze existing institutions and to work to improve relations in all sectors of life. Gender impacts every person in our international community, which makes it a natural and relevant supplemental field of study for students with any primary major.

If you would like more information about the Gender Studies program, please stop by our office in 325 O'Shaughnessy Hall or visit our website at genderstudies.nd.edu.

Iota Iota Iota: Undergraduate 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. The Notre Dame 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. *Through Gendered Lenses* is their main project throughout the year. Additionally, members of Triota promote the Gender Studies major and minor at various campus events and host a study break each semester during finals week for all undergraduate majors and minors.

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

Triota Members 2012-2013

Karl Abad	Class of 2013
Christina Genovese	Class of 2013
Maria McLeod	Class of 2013
Josh Whitaker	Class of 2013
Christina Dines	Class of 2014
Lindsay Dun	Class of 2014
Rachel Hughes	Class of 2015
Lex Lorenzo	Class of 2014
Molly Shank	Class of 2014

Rebecca Kibler (class of 2013) is a psychology and French major with a minor in education, schooling and society. She wrote this paper for an independent study French course led by Dr. Julia Douthwaite about the life of women in eighteenth century France. This course provided her with an opportunity to combine her interests in education and French culture to explore the education of French girls. Rebecca is grateful to Dr. Douthwaite for her invaluable help throughout the research and writing process as well as to the Nanovic Institute for European Studies and the Glynn Family Honors Program for providing funding to make possible archival research in Paris for this project.

Girls' Education in Eighteenth Century France: The Development of Feminine Passivity

Rebecca Kibler

Within the framework of modern Western society, education is often considered to be one of the most important tools needed to be able to live and think freely. Education in itself, however, is not necessarily a means towards the eventual independence of the student, as society is responsible for choosing the goal of its educational system. France during the eighteenth century held social expectations and norms in which the roles of each gender were distinct and well defined. Girls' education in this society, then, had the goal of maintaining a strong distinction between the two genders. While girls' education was not neglected in eighteenth century France, it was structured in such a way as to discourage independent thought and to encourage passivity, which in turn supported the maintenance of the status quo of distinct gender roles. This pattern is clearly seen in that the education of girls of the nobility and the upper bourgeoisie used methods and structures that resulted in the student's passivity in the intellectual, personal and social domains. These girls were censored in their reading, bombarded with ideas of feminine virtue, cloistered and isolated from the world, and obligated to develop "agreeable talents" that would

distract them from other occupations that were not considered suitable for their gender. The goal of this system was the creation of women who were passive in all aspects of their lives.

It would be neither fair nor accurate to say that there was a complete neglect of the education of girls in eighteenth century France. In fact, French society took many measures to ensure that the largest possible number of girls would have access to instruction. There were schools available, at least in theory, to girls of each rung of the social ladder. For the poorest girls, there were parish charity schools run by parish priests or by laypeople (Sonnet, 25). For people with a bit of money, the Cathedral of Notre Dame ran small paid schools, of which there were about 150 for each gender (Sonnet, 21). There were also unauthorized schools that were open to those who could afford to pay. The scholastic authorities of the cathedral closed these schools when they discovered them, but they remained a moderately important force in girls' education in Paris nonetheless (Sonnet, 20). As with authorized schools, there were as many for girls as there were for boys (Sonnet, 31). Finally, the bourgeoisie and the nobles could pay high prices to send their daughters to female religious communities to be instructed either as day students or as boarders (Sonnet, 27). It is clear, then, that the education of girls was not at all neglected during this period.

Even though the education of girls was widespread at the time, the goal of this feminine education was not to develop people who could think or act independently, but rather to ensure that girls would become calm, obedient and above all passive women. This emphasis on passivity is evident in pedagogical and moral works of writers of the era, including those by both women and men. Passivity in girls' education was also a theme in fictional novels of the eighteenth century, specifically in the rules of virtue in *Jacques le fataliste* by Denis Diderot, in the naivety of the young woman Cécile in *Les Liaisons dangereuses* by Choderlos de Laclos, in the grave punishment of an independent woman, the Marquise de Merteuil, in the same work and in the criticisms of the feminine education system in *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* by Françoise de Graffigny. Each of these novels depicts girls' schools as institutions for the production of women who are naïve and whose

thoughts and actions are dependent upon the narrowly defined gender roles accepted by their society. That said, the actual educational system in eighteenth century did not always attain the goals demanded by moralists and philosophers of education or reach the ideal depicted in these novels. It is clear in the historic work by the Goncourt brothers, *La Femme au dix-huitième siècle*, that education often left girls with more liberty than otherwise suggested by polemical or dramatic eighteenth century novels. Despite the possible existence of some female independence, the *goal* of women's education was to develop ideal feminine virtue, which discouraged women's liberty. Any power that women had at this time came in spite of the education system, not because of it. The structure and content of the education at girls' schools for the daughters of the nobility and the upper bourgeoisie in France in the eighteenth century had the goal of encouraging feminine passivity, even though the result of this education was not necessarily the complete passivity desired.

One important aspect of this feminine passivity was intellectual passivity. In today's Western society, education emphasizes academic capacities, including writing, reading and thinking, in order to ensure that young people grow up with the ability and disposition for independent reasoning. The education that French girls in the eighteenth century received, however, did not have these academic goals. A "Fille sçavante" ("a learned girl," translation mine) (La Chetardye, 20) had very negative connotations. The ideal education of a woman would be an education that would avoid the creation of such a "Fille sçavante." François Fénelon (1651-1715), archbishop and Christian philosopher who was known for his 1687 work on the education of girls, explained that "Pour les filles, dit-on, il ne faut pas qu'elles soient savantes : la curiosité les rend vaines & précieuses ; il suffit qu'elles sachent gouverner un jour leurs ménages, & obéir à leurs maris, sans raisonner. ... Il est vrai qu'il faut craindre de faire des savantes ridicules" ("For girls, it is said, it is not necessary that they are learned: curiosity makes them vain & precious; it is sufficient that they one day know how to govern their households & obey their husbands, without reasoning.

... It is true that we must fear creating ridiculous savants,” translation mine) (Fénelon, 2). Education was not aimed at teaching girls the faculties of reason or knowledge of academic subjects. Girls’ education encouraged the development of intellectual passivity instead of erudition.

One of the methods that schools and society used to prevent the development of erudite women was the censorship of girls’ reading. In his instructional book for the behavior of a young, noble girl (1684), Joachim de la Chetardye (1636-1714), priest at Saint-Sulpice and moralist writer, acknowledges that it is acceptable for girls to read books other than the Bible and devotional books from time to time, but he advises that this reading “soit plutôt pour vous occuper que pour vous instruire” (“be more to occupy your time than for your instruction,” translation mine) (20). He especially does not want girls to read philosophy or similar intellectual disciplines that could give them ideas that are improper to their gender (La Chetardye, 21). Jean du Pradel, a writer about whom little information is available today, is even stricter, demanding that girls should not read any book except for religious and moral texts (Pradel, 247). Although these two writers published their works during or even before the first part of the century, the discouragement of girls’ free reading still existed at the end of the century. Even after the Revolution of 1789-94, Albertine Clément-Hémery, a female writer who is also fairly unknown today, found it necessary to defend her gender against a philosopher who had proposed that women must not learn to read because reading could distract them from their domestic tasks. Her defense (1801) is not based on the educational advantages of female literacy, but rather on the necessity for mothers to know how to read in order to better educate their young sons (Clément-Hémery, 24).

It is not only in books specifically focused on pedagogy that it is possible to find references to the censorship of girls’ and women’s reading. Female censorship is also evident in the fictional works of the era, which demonstrates that this censorship was quite widespread and that it was not only the esoteric domain of moralists or educational philosophers. The discouragement of female reading is evident in a passage of *Jacques le fataliste* by Denis Diderot (1796), in which Madame de

La Pommeraye gives the D'Aisnon women instructions for presenting themselves as virtuous women. Mme de La Pommeraye wants these women, who work as prostitutes, to be perceived as perfect models of feminine virtue so that the D'Aisnon daughter can marry a man against whom Mme de La Pommeraye holds a grudge. After the marriage, she plans to reveal to this man the scandalous past of the D'Aisnon girl and her mother. Mme de La Pommeraye knows well that these women are not accustomed to a virtuous life, so she provides them with a long list of rules that they should follow to the letter. This list shows, in a satiric way, the absurdity of the rules of conduct that were taught to young women and expected of all women at the time. The list is a fairly comprehensive and realistic collection of cultural beliefs about the good conduct of women and girls. Exactly as in the instructional books of Chetardye and du Pradel, Mme de La Pommeraye says to the women, "Vous n'aurez chez vous que des livres de devotion" ("You will only have devotional books in your home," translation mine) and orders them "de vous déchaîner contre les philosophes" ("to rage against the philosophers," translation mine) (Diderot, 132, 134). Diderot recognizes that a woman who reads much-or who reads texts that are not religious in nature-risks losing her reputation. If the D'Aisnon women break any of these rules, they will no longer conform to the image of perfectly virtuous women, a conformity that was necessary at the time to maintain a good reputation. Although Diderot's rules are satirical, they reflect the real rules of feminine conduct and demonstrate the discouragement and the censorship of women's and girls' reading.

This censorship, which placed reading and intellectual knowledge in opposition to one another by prohibiting the reading of intellectually stimulating material in favor of material that reinforced the status quo, was one way that the education of girls in eighteenth century France encouraged passivity instead of independence. Discouraged throughout their lives and especially throughout their youth from reading, young girls' access to novel ideas was very limited. It was not desirable that women read because it was seen as negative that they be erudite or knowledgeable, that they think independently, have their own ideas or even discover the new ideas of others.

Independent thought was not suitable to their gender according to the mores of the era, so the educational system attempted to discourage it by limiting access to the knowledge and ideas that would be necessary in order to develop thought. The result was the development of intellectual passivity by means of education itself.

Girls' education was not only void of information that would be necessary to develop independent thought but it actively encouraged feminine passivity in the personal domain. One of the most important means for doing so was the instruction of feminine virtue. This virtue was a very important quality in the preservation of a woman's reputation as well as in her religious salvation. It was an important goal in the education of girls of all social ranks. For married women, virtue consisted of sexual fidelity towards their husbands, and for unmarried girls, of the preservation of virginity. It also included other personal or behavioral qualities that encouraged passivity and the maintenance of a status quo in which the woman did not have the right to think or to act independently.

The list of rules of virtue given to the d'Aisnon women in *Jacques le fataliste* shows the passivity that women must exemplify in order to be considered virtuous. Virtue, in fact, was a sort of passivity in and of itself, as a virtuous woman had to act in exact accordance with the rules of virtue without questioning them. One part of virtue was the avoidance of non-religious books and of philosophers, as mentioned above, which prevented free thought. Furthermore, according to Mme de La Pommeraye, in order to be considered exemplars of virtue, the d'Aisnon women could not receive anyone in their home, which would isolate them (Diderot, 132). Instead, they needed to spend their time embroidering, knitting and sewing, innocent occupations that would prevent them from engaging in behaviors that were improper to their gender (Diderot, 133). It was necessary, furthermore, that they stay sober at all times and that they always keep their eyes lowered (Diderot, 133). In short, Mme de La Pommeraye required that they live according to a collection of very strict rules proscribed in advance. They did not have the right to choose how to live, even in

the smallest details of their daily lives. They must submit themselves to this code of behavior—the code of feminine virtue.

The punishments for women who did not perfectly follow this code of virtue were very severe, as is evident in *Les Liaisons dangereuses* by Choderlos de Laclos (1782). This epistolary novel describes the scandalous lives of several men and women in eighteenth century France. The reader learns of the emotions, thoughts and motivations of the characters by means of their own words and the words of others about them. One of the characters, the Marquise de Merteuil, is consistently manipulative in her correspondence because she wants to simultaneously protect her reputation and her freedom. She does not attempt to live according to the code of feminine virtue, even though almost no one knows of her transgressions. Instead of passively following the code given to her by society, like the d'Aisnon women are obliged to do, she creates her own code. She writes, after having mentioned her own principles, “je dis mes principes, et je le dis à dessein : car ils ne sont pas, comme ceux des autres femmes, donnés aux hasard, reçus sans examen et suivis par habitude, ils sont le fruit de mes profondes réflexions ; je les ai créés, et je puis dire que je suis mon ouvrage” (“I say my principles, and I say this deliberately: because they are not, like those of other women, given at random, received without examination, and followed by habit, they are the fruit of my profound reflections; I created them, and I can say that I am my own creation,” translation mine) (Laclos 172). It is important to note that she contrasts herself with the other women of her society. She independently created her own rules of conduct, but this was not at all the habit of women at the time. The majority of women, women who did not have as much talent for deception as did the Marquise, did not have any choice but to receive and to passively follow the rules of virtue or to risk the scorn of society. The Marquise, with her independence of spirit, is the exception, not the rule.

Even with her significant talents, though, the Marquise’s double life is discovered by society and she is gravely punished. Despite her own advice to never put anything compromising in

writing, she sends numerous letters to her friend and former lover, the Vicomte de Valmont. After the death of the Vicomte, these letters are made public and read by all of high society. The result is the complete ostracism of the Marquise. No one speaks to this debauched woman. She is, in effect, exiled by her friends and acquaintances and has no choice but to leave France humiliated. Society penalized the Marquise for violating her prescribed gender role. Virtue was a woman's most important quality, without which she could be universally scorned. Women had to either scrupulously follow this code of conduct or to suffer grave consequences.

It is not without reason, then, that girls' schools put enormous emphasis on the education of virtue. Girls needed to know by the time that they left school what was expected of them in their roles as women. Du Pradel emphasizes virtue in education: "Il faut convenir que le premier objet de l'éducation des enfans, c'est de les former à la vertu" ("It must be acknowledged that the first object of the education of children is to form them to be virtuous," translation mine) (250). Similarly, Madame de Brulart (1746-1830), also known as Stéphanie-Félicité Du Crest Genlis and famous for her writing, her thoughts on education and her role as governess for the future king Louis Philippe and his siblings, explains in a discourse about the value of convents (1790) that the goal of education is "de donner l'instruction & les qualités morales & physiques que la Société, pour son avantage, doit désirer le plus dans les individus qui la composent" ("to give instruction & physical & moral qualities that Society, for its advantage, must desire the most in the individuals that make it up," translation mine) which for women consists, according to de Brulart, of virtue as well as of the knowledge necessary to govern a household well (57). She synthesizes the goal of girls' education at the time, saying that a woman "ne peut être estimée que par des vertus paisibles & domestiques, & une réputation sans tache : par conséquent la douceur, la modestie, la prudent sont les qualités qui doivent la caractériser ... il faut donc s'attacher à détruire en elle toute ambition personnelle ; mais il est à désirer qu'elle soit susceptible d'une noble ambition pour son mari, pour ses enfans" ("can be esteemed only for her peaceful & domestic virtues & a spotless reputation: consequently

sweetness, modesty, prudence are the qualities that must characterize her ... it is therefore necessary to commit oneself to destroying in her all personal ambition; but it is desirable that she is susceptible to a noble ambition for her husband, for her children," translation mine) (26). All of these qualities, which represent the entire construct of feminine virtue, are qualities more passive than active, qualities that require submission to rules instead of independent thought or action.

Virtue was not the only goal of a good female education. For the daughters of the nobility and the upper bourgeoisie, education of *talents agréables* (agreeable talents) was also important. *Talents agréables* consisted of competency in domains such as music, drawing, and embroidery. These skills made girls more desirable as spouses, but also distracted women from other occupations less suited to their gender. Brulart, for example, finds that embroidery is an indispensable skill that should be taught to all girls in all convents, as it is a pastime that does not distract from domestic duties, that does not engender excessive pride and that amuses and occupies the women who practice it (32). Du Pradel also considers the development of *talents agréables* to be an important pursuit, as they are "occupations dignes de la femme forte, & utiles, bien moins par rapport au profit qu'on en peut tirer ... que parce qu'ils tiennent la jeunesse dans l'action, & dans la fuite de l'oisiveté. C'est ainsi qu'on l'éloigne du Luxe, & qu'on la forme peu à peu à la vertu" ("occupations worthy of the strong woman, & useful, much less in relation to the profit that can be taken from them ... than because they keep youth in action, & in flight from idleness. It is in this way that we keep youth away from Luxury, & that we shape it little by little into virtue," translation mine) (259). In other words, the teaching of *talents agréables* was less appreciated in and of itself than for its ability to distract women from other occupations less conformant to the image of a virtuous woman. It was necessary to give girls something passive, something almost useless, to do to pass the time. The importance of these *talents* is not in the product created by the work, but rather in the time spent working peacefully. Edmond (1822-1896) and Jules (1830-1870) de Goncourt, brothers who were writers and historians, explain in their book (1882) on the eighteenth

century French woman: “Malgré tout, des heures restent à la femme qui seraient bien vides, si la femme ne leur donnait un emploi physique, presque machinal ... Elle a besoin d’un de ces travaux qui occupent tous les temps les mains et les yeux de son sexe : petits ouvrages ne demandant à la femme qu’une attention d’habitude et sans réflexion” (“Despite all, there were hours left to the woman that were quite empty, if the woman did not give them a physical, almost mechanical, task ... She needs one of these tasks that always occupies the hands and the eyes of her gender: little works ask of the woman only an attention that is habitual and without reflection,” translation mine) (127). Music, embroidery, drawing and other *talents agréables*, in addition to virtue and the censorship of reading, served to subject women to the status quo, in this case giving them something mechanical to do during their spare time to prevent independent thought or action.

It was not only the content of the education of young girls that encouraged passivity, but also the structure of the schools in which they were educated. In the case of girls of the nobility and the upper bourgeoisie, these schools were usually cloistered convents. Girls entered the convents as children, and they left them only when they were engaged and ready to be married. Usually, they lived in the convents as boarders and had to respect cloister. There were several goals of this practice, even if it was not always respected to the letter. First, boarders lived with nuns in community, nuns who had vowed to dedicate their lives to God. The coming and going of students would have brought rumors of the world and ideas of what was happening outside of the convent, which did not have a place in the life of a nun (Sonnet, 42). Even more important, though, was the fact that the sexual virtue of a cloistered girl would be beyond reproach on the day of her marriage (Brulart, 22).

After having left a cloistered convent, having been isolated throughout her childhood and adolescence and lacking the knowledge necessary to function in society, a girl had no choice but to live passively while she attempted to learn how the social world operated. Convents emphasized virtue and *talents agréables*. The society in which a young girl was thrown upon emerging from the

convent, however, was much more complicated than these well-ordered rules. In the novel *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* (1747), Françoise de Graffigny shows the paradox inherent in this cloistered education, noting that “on les enferme dans une maison religieuse, pour leur apprendre à vivre dans le monde” (“We enclose them in a religious house in order to teach them to live in the world,” translation mine) (138). If the goal of education is to prepare students for the life that they will lead after having completed their studies, it seems clear that cloister, in its effort to preserve the virtue of young girls, worked against this important end. The goal of convents, if cloister was strictly respected, was to create a world that was completely isolated from society, where, as a consequence, it was impossible to learn about the social reality of the “outside” world.

The effect of the whirlwind of society on a girl emerging from a convent for the first time is evident in the character of Cécile in *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. Lacking any knowledge of the exterior world, she can do nothing but learn from those who surround her, which leaves her vulnerable to exploitation. She obeys the Marquise de Merteuil when she tells her to pursue a relationship with the Chevalier Danceny. She obeys the Vicomte de Valmont when he tells her to go to bed with him. Without any useful knowledge or education that could help her to think and to act for herself in the social world, she is reduced to a completely passive role. At the end of the novel, she finds the society to be too unforgiving and she returns to the convent to spend the rest of her life in isolation. Danceny explains her situation, and the situation of many other girls leaving the walls of the convent for the first time, as such: “Quelle jeune personne, sortant de même du couvent, sans expérience et presque sans idées, et ne portant dans le monde, comme il arrive presque toujours alors, qu’une égale ignorance du bien et du mal ; quelle jeune personne, dis-je, aurait pu résister davantage à de si coupables artifices ?” (“What young person, leaving the convent like this, without experience and almost without ideas, and bringing nothing to the world, as almost always happens, but an almost equal ignorance of good and of evil; what young person, I say, would have been able to further resist such shameful tricks?” translation mine) (377). The cloister functions, in this

respect, rather like the censorship of reading for young girls. It imposes a lack of the knowledge that would be necessary to be able to think and to act independently, and therefore it cultivates social passivity in women and girls. The goal of this education was to create women who would adopt the role given to their gender by society without questioning it.

It is possible, of course, to question the success of actual cloisters in their mission of isolating young girls from the exterior world. The fictional cloister of *Les Liaisons dangereuses* is perhaps stereotyped according to the era's popular criticisms of cloisters in order to challenge the practices and values of the high society. According to the Goncourt brothers, however, isolation in convents was not at all complete. Education in convents was instead "flottant entre la mondanité et le renoncement, entre la retraite et les talents du siècle, une éducation qui va de Dieu à un maître d'agrément, de la méditation à une leçon de révérence ; et ne la dirait-on pas figurée par ce costume des pensionnaires montrant à moitié une religieuse, à moitié une femme ?" ("floating between worldliness and renouncement, between retreat and the talents of the century, an education that goes from God to an etiquette master, from meditation to a reverence lesson; and might we say that it is symbolized by boarders' outfit demonstrating halfway a nun, halfway a woman?" translation mine) (Goncourt, 53). The Goncourt brothers bring more subtlety and perhaps more realism to the subject of cloister in their task of writing a historical work than does Laclos in his diverting and polemical novel. Despite their emphasis on the openness of convents to the exterior world, the Goncourts do not claim, however, that a young girl would come from a convent with all of the knowledge necessary to live in the social world. They describe a young girl at her first presentation at Versailles as such: "La voilà encore ignorante, ingénue, obéissante aux timidités de son sexe et de son éducation ... réservée, modeste, indulgente, douce aux autres, laissant échapper toutes les naïvetés naturelles de son âge, de son esprit, de son cœur" ("There she is still ignorant, an ingénue, obedient to the timidity of her sex and of her education ... reserved, modest, indulgent, sweet to others, letting show all of the naiveties of her age, of her spirit, of her heart," translation mine) (67).

Even if her education was not as separated from the world as that of a fictional girl educated in an idealized convent, the Goncourts' young girl is nevertheless naïve and passive when she encounters society for the first time. It is of course difficult to disentangle the causes and effects of this situation. Was it the case that feminine education encouraged passivity because passivity was necessary for women to avoid the scorn of society? In other words, was education simply fulfilling its mission of preparing its students for the lives that they would have to live? Or, alternatively, was it the inverse? Was it the case that women had to take a passive role in society because of the education that they had received, which taught them passivity above all else? In all probability, it was both. The effects of society and of education were strongly mixed in order to create women who knew well how to play their passive role and who did not have any choice but to adopt it or to risk scorn and humiliation.

That said, it is possible that, if education had changed to teach girls a more active role, the role of women in society would have become more active as well. The character of Zilia in *Letters d'une Péruvienne* serves as a possible example of a more educated and independent person than the typical woman of the era. The author of the novel, Françoise de Graffigny, is a woman who became a writer in order to earn her living after separating from her abusive husband (Graffigny, x). The novel's narration is in the form of letters from Zilia, a young Peruvian woman who was kidnapped by Europeans and brought to France, to her Peruvian fiancé, Aza. This unique perspective allows Graffigny to criticize French society through the medium of a naïve observer, who has difficulties understanding many aspects of French culture. In particular, Zilia criticizes the role of women in the French social order. Girls' education in France is deplorable from the perspective of a woman who was well-educated at home in Peru and who places great importance on education and reading.

Zilia criticizes all aspects of girls' education in France for its inability to impart the knowledge and dispositions necessary to live with self-respect. She finds cloister to be ridiculous because it prevents girls from learning about the real world (Graffigny, 138). She criticizes the

emphasis on *talents agréables*, saying that “le temps le plus précieux pour former l’esprit est employé à acquérir des talents imparfaits, dont on fait peu d’usage dans la jeunesse, et qui deviennent des ridicules dans un âge plus avancé” (“the most precious time for forming the spirit is employed acquiring imperfect talents, of which one makes little use in youth, and which become ridiculous at a more advanced age,” translation mine) (Graffigny, 140). She finds the emphasis on virtue to be equally ridiculous, arguing that the principles of virtue “ne sont appris que superficiellement et par mémoire” (“are learned only superficially and by memory,” translation mine) (Graffigny, 138). All of this superficial education, according to Zilia, makes girls completely passive, as they do not have the knowledge necessary to be anything else. With the rare exception of women who take the initiative to educate themselves, a woman is destined by her low-quality education to be nothing but “une figure d’ornement pour amuser les curieux” (“an ornamental figure to amuse the curious,” translation mine) (Graffigny, 142). After having spent her youth acquiring a nominal education that has no practical use, the French woman is trapped as a passive wife, completely dependent on her husband.

The case of Zilia, however, shows that an alternative was indeed possible. Zilia, lacking this convent education that she would have doubtless received had she been born in France, is at liberty to instruct herself while also benefitting from the solid base of her Peruvian education. She throws herself into this task. She observes the society that surrounds her in order to learn the practices of the French instead of spending her formative years cloistered in a convent. She reads all that she can find in order to encounter new ideas about the world instead of submitting herself to censorship. She spends her time actively thinking about her own moral principles, her own feelings and her own ideas of how best to live instead of passively accepting the rules of feminine virtue. And, at the end of the novel, she rejects a marriage proposal and makes her own choice to continue to live independently and, especially, to continue her education.

Zilia, it must be noted, is an atypical example. She is a fictional woman who comes to France with ideas that are already opposed to many aspects of French culture. That said, she successfully transforms, thanks to her self-education, from a woman who is rather dependent on her fiancé into a free, independent woman who is capable of making her own choices about her own life. It seems that, if other French girls had had access to an education of the sort that Zilia gives herself, the role of women in French society would have become more active. All of the elements of girls' education were carefully arranged to inspire passivity. As Zilia explains, "les femmes naissent ici ... avec toutes les dispositions nécessaires pour égaler les hommes en mérite et en vertus. Mais comme s'ils en convenaient au fond de leur coeur, et que leur orgueil ne pût supporter cette égalité, ils contribuent en toute manière à les rendre méprisables" ("women are born here ... with the dispositions necessary to equal men in merit and in virtue. But as if the men acknowledge this at the bottom of their heart, and their pride cannot stand this equality, they contribute in all ways possible to make women contemptible," translation mine) (Graffigny, 143). French society at the time depended on women's passivity. Education attempted to maintain and develop this passivity and to pass it on to the next generation.

The education of girls in eighteenth century France was structured to encourage social, intellectual and personal passivity. An educational system that was less focused on forming passive women could perhaps have changed the role of women from passive to more active. If eighteenth century French women learned that they could think and act independently, it wasn't 18 thanks to the educational system but despite of it. The question of the role of education in the development in female passivity is still important today, as there is some evidence that the treatment of girls and boys in school is not entirely equal, with boys being more active and more probable to participate in class than girls and teachers giving more attention to boys in class (Altermatt, Jovanovic, and Perry). It is therefore possible that eighteenth century ideas of education continue to influence how modern schools construct women's passivity during adolescence.

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Blurring the Lines Among Gender, Politics, and Reality: "I Can Be President" Barbie, Sarah Palin's Alaska and the Fantasy of a Female President

Jordyn Smith

With men still dominating high-ranking occupations, such as CEO positions within Fortune 500 companies¹ and top positions of political office, women are behind their male counterparts in terms of achieving roles of leadership in the worlds of business and politics. Most discouraging to the feminist movement, is the fact that we have yet to see a woman in the White House as a presidential figure. This past year, the children's toy company Mattel launched a Barbie collection line called "I Can Be ___", which features Barbie in a series of traditionally male occupations.² In collaboration with The White House Project, an organization dedicated to encouraging more women to run for political office, this new line of Barbies features a doll called the "I Can be President of the United States" Barbie.³ Complete with a sophisticated pink business suit, wearing a skirt instead of pants and a pearl necklace to match, the intention of the Barbie is to let young girls

¹ Petrecca, Laura. "Number of Female 'Fortune' 500 CEOs at Record High." USA Today. Gannett, 26 Oct. 2011. Web. 01 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.usatoday.com/money/companies/management/story/2011-10-26/women-ceos-fortune-500-companies/50933224/1>>.

² "I Can Be President Barbie." Forbes. Forbes Magazine. Web. 07 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.forbes.com/pictures/lmj45imgd/i-can-bepresident-barbie/>>

³ *ibid*

explore and try on different wardrobe career presentations on their Barbies.⁴ Additionally, the “I Can Be” Barbie is the first Barbie that will be able to stand alone on its own two feet, a rather symbolic feature to be included. With Barbie unarguably being one of the most influential “women” for young girls in the United States, the marketing of this new doll should seem groundbreaking. However, one must remember that embracing the fantasy of an impossibly perfect woman⁵ president does not necessarily give much hope for the future or reflect the reality of the current state of women in politics.

When it comes to fulfilling roles of supreme leadership and power, women have not been able to effectively break through and discredit the stereotype that they are less qualified than men. Even with women outvoting men at the polls, men continue to dominate and hold political offices.⁶ For example, in the presidential election of 2008, “56 percent of women voted for Barack Obama, compared to 49 percent of men, despite the option of electing the nation’s first female vice president by supporting Republican John McCain and running mate Sarah Palin.”⁷ It is not only men who are hesitant to elect female political leaders, but it is also women who are not supporting female candidates. While the majority of male and female voters claim to never dismiss a female candidate simply based on gender alone, it is evident from the results of recent political elections that individual voters, other politicians, and the media scrutinize the images of female nominees to a greater extent than male contenders.

Author and staff writer for *The Washington Post*, Anne Kornblut confronts this issue of inequality that women face in politics in her book, *Notes from the Cracked Ceiling: Hillary Clinton*,

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ Slayen, Galia. "The Scary Reality of a Real-Life Barbie Doll." The Huffington Post. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 06 Aug. 2011. Web. 01 Apr. 2012. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/galia-slayen/the-scary-reality-of-a-re_b_845239.html>.

⁶ "Women Are Outvoting Men, but Men Continue to Dominate in Holding Political Offices." Lubbock Online. Web. 07 Apr. 2012. <<http://lubbockonline.com/life/2010-08-20/women-are-outvoting-men-men-continue-dominate-holding-political-offices>>.

⁷ *ibid*

Sarah Palin, and What It Will Take for a Woman to Win. She begins by addressing the presidential election of 2008, a year that many people claimed had been the “*Year of the Woman*.”⁸ While working at *The Washington Post* in the final days of the election, she describes a front-page story the paper ran entitled *The Year of the Woman*, celebrating the barrier-breaking triumphs of Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin.⁹ Kornblut argues that when the 2008 election is examined in hindsight, it becomes evident that the picture perfect successes painted by her newspaper and other media outlets of these two women was a misrepresentation of the election’s actual implications for gender equality, a fantasy that many in the feminist movement wish had actually happened. The letdown was not just that Clinton lost the Democratic nomination and Palin the vice presidency in rapid succession, but rather that they had both lost in “such resounding and devastating ways,” with gender undoubtedly playing a significant underlying role in their defeats.¹⁰ In reality, “2008 turned out to be just the opposite for women; a severe letdown, with damaging consequences. It revived old stereotypes, divided the women’s movement, drove apart mothers and daughters, and set back the cause of equality in the political sphere by decades.”¹¹ While most of the country had thought sexism was no longer a major issue, these two candidacies unleashed venomous breeds of sexism all across the country.¹²

Kornblut addresses how women in politics fail to successfully exhibit their gender and are criticized for it, and what they can do to prevail over this dilemma in order to understand why both Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin were dissected so particularly in the 2008 election. Kornblut emphasizes in her book and in interviews the importance of authenticity for female candidates in

⁸ Kornblut, Anne E. *Notes from the Cracked Ceiling: Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin, and What It Will Take for a Woman to Win*. New York: Crown, 2009. Print. P. 1.

⁹ *ibid* p. 1

¹⁰ *ibid* p. 2

¹¹ *ibid* p. 1

¹² *ibid* p.2

political elections.¹³ While Kornblut notes that men have to be authentic too, women tend to be criticized more for not meeting this condition.¹⁴ Hillary Clinton can be looked at as a prime example of this bias. The public attacked Hillary's image because of her changing delivery: in the 1990s as First Lady she often sported bright red lipstick, long blonde hair and even ponytail scrunchies, but she later emerged as a prominent figure on the political scene and attempted to execute an "ungendered" campaign style.¹⁵ This image eventually evolved, however, into a more polarized masculine woman, wearing pantsuits, minimal makeup and a shorter haircut that many call "the helmet."¹⁶ Kornblut says we do not want a polarizing candidate, which is why Hillary Clinton was unsuccessful in the 2008 Presidential election. She explains:

I think the fact that Clinton was polarizing hurt her because people saw it as making her hard to elect. But what polarizing does mean is that you get the support of your base. It can work for or against women. Like it or not, the most prominent elected women are all polarizing. It's a question of the chicken or the egg.¹⁷

Hillary's evolution in politics reveals and confirms women's struggle to find the best and most positive portrayal of gender in politics.

Nonetheless, critics affirm that Hillary Clinton, while polarizing, is presently the best female candidate on the political forefront for women. Rather than attempting to be our fantasy female candidate, trying to encompass strengths of both genders, she takes a safer approach, polarizing herself on the more masculine end of the gender spectrum. There is some risk involved, however, in taking this approach to politics. A woman running for political office must know how to execute and

¹³ Kornblut, Anne. "Are We Ready for a Female President?" *Womens Conference Organization*. Web. 01 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.womensconference.org/are-we-ready/>>.

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ Kornblut, *Notes From the Cracked Ceiling*. p.35

¹⁶ Morrison, Susan. *Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary: Reflections by Women Writers*. New York: Harper, 2008. Print. P. 5

¹⁷ Kornblut, *Are We Ready?*

demonstrate toughness, while not appearing too “bitchy.”¹⁸ In 2007, Catalyst, an organization that researches women in business, found that the same pattern is seen in business as it is in politics.¹⁹ In their study they found, “If women business leaders act consistent with gender stereotypes, they are considered too soft, however, “If they go against gender stereotypes, they are considered too tough.”²⁰

In the 2008 election, Sarah Palin took the less safe approach and was seen as the lesser-qualified candidate as a result. Palin’s method was to try to be wonder woman. She remained consistent with gender stereotypes, while trying to offset them by embracing a tough “grizzly mama” attitude. For example, Palin’s physical looks were a popular topic throughout the duration of the election. By late October 2008, McCain’s selection of Palin to be his running mate sparked rumors that he did so just because she was “hot.”²¹ Palin was immediately seen as a sexual object, a striking blow to her credibility as a political candidate: “Commentators fawned over her appearance and cable news channels aired a videotape of her strutting in a bathing suit as a beauty pageant contestant two decades earlier.”²² Palin was the antithesis of Hillary “who had been mocked for her ‘manliness,’ her raw laugh and her square-cut pantsuits,”²³ never being seen as an object of sexual desire. Palin was a political candidate who more men wanted to sleep with than vote for, a detrimental reality to the McCain campaign. In attempts to offset this image, Palin tried to identify herself with her Alaskan roots, embracing things that she saw as being more masculine, such as hunting and ice hockey. She also associated herself with a tough crowd of hockey moms when she announced her love for them in a convention speech.²⁴ She wanted to embrace the quality

¹⁸ Kornblut, *Notes from the...* p. 33

¹⁹ *ibid*, p. 34

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ Kornblut, *Notes from the...*p.3

²² *ibid* p.114

²³ *ibid*

²⁴ *ibid*, p 96

of motherhood, while deeming herself fit for leadership, saying that the only difference between a hockey mom and a pit bull was lipstick.²⁵ In the 2008 election, Sarah Palin was Alaska's "Caribou Barbie" running for presidential office, but she was not the "I Can Be President" Barbie that the country was waiting for.

The scrutiny of women's gender representation is nothing novel. Even our most qualified women are often torn apart just for having the courage, or in some instances, *the nerve* to run. It is no wonder so many women are discouraged from entering the political arena. Even after writing her book, Kornblut has been quoted in interviews about the future of a woman in the presidency jokingly saying that the ideal female candidate simply does not exist.²⁶ In her interview with The Women's' Conference Organization, when asked what the ideal female presidential candidate would be like she replied:

I've played this game with myself for a long time. She is completely impossible. She would have served in the military and stayed home and raised her children full-time. She'd be married to someone with money, and she'd have some business experience. There's just no way she could exist. There are too many demands on this candidate. But joking aside – she'd be authentic, which would need to be true of a male or female presidential candidate. She'd cross the credential threshold.²⁷

While Kornblut insists that her pessimism is all a joke, the negativity surrounding women in the political arena persists and it becomes more and more difficult to overlook the cynicism in her responses. It seems the idea of a woman in the executive office could be a product of our imaginations, a woman who could never exist realistically in American society. She embodies masculine characteristics of leadership, control and power without being seen as overbearing, and at the same time maintains critical aspects of her femininity like motherhood and compassion. She

²⁵ *ibid*

²⁶ Kornblut, *Are We Ready?*

²⁷ *ibid*

exemplifies this persona in the most effortless manner. Through these criteria she becomes a Barbie-like figure, an image of unattainable perfection.

From my observations of women in politics, I have found that many female politicians seek to fulfill this fantasy because we have come to associate it with the only path to winning. Sadly, from the reality that no woman has yet to succeed in becoming president, or even vice-president for that matter, we can see that no woman has lived up to these larger-than-life expectations. In attempts to become this fantasy character, women who enter the presidential arena are sliced and diced up by both women and men, often revealing that their guise is more a performance than innate behavior. For example, Sarah Palin has been ridiculed considerably for her struggle with authenticity. Throughout the 2008 election, many questioned the honesty behind her behaviors and actions, arguing that her lack of knowledge and experience on such obvious topics could not possibly be legitimate. She became a walking enigma to the public and especially to the media, which caused her to be picked apart even more and her political image to suffer. Out of all the female politicians to enter the limelight in the past seven years, Palin received the harshest criticism and took the biggest blows to her political ego, the cruelest ones coming from the media. Most notably, many people blame Palin for John McCain's loss of the 2008 presidential election, even though it is evident from the results of the election that a win against Barack Obama was bleak from the onset of the race. She has been mocked on *Saturday Night Live* and most recently in HBO's movie *Game Change*. While Palin's portrayal of gender alone is clearly not her only vice—a simple lack of intelligence and deficiency of knowledge on vital political issues represent primary reasons for Palin's low approval ratings—her being a woman in politics provoked more hostility towards her for these vices and placed her under a microscope that male politicians have typically been able to escape. Her approval ratings reflected this substantively, which made her, like many female politicians, feel the need to compensate for not living up to the public's expectations by creating and promoting a political persona under false pretenses.

In 2010, Sarah Palin sought to further construct her political image and blur the lines between gender, politics and reality by becoming the star of her own reality series on *TLC* called *Sarah Palin's Alaska*.²⁸ This past spring I worked as the creative marketing intern for *TLC* network, so I believe I can offer a unique inside perspective on the effect this show had on Palin's political career. By analyzing Palin's portrayal of gender on the show and behind the scenes in its production, one can see how it reinforced stereotypes of women being unable to achieve the presidency using only their natural and innate aspects of femininity. My findings from analyzing the show and its background before it aired on the network reveal that Palin, like most women in politics, desired to be the fantasy figure of a perfect woman presidential candidate, but in the process exposed herself to be an inauthentic political persona. While the show was marketed as a "reality" TV show, her purposeful manipulation of gender on the show in order to advertise herself as a certain type of candidate proves that there was more fantasy to the portrayal than there was legitimacy.

Many critics and commentators agreed that the show seemed like it was intended to be a platform which the former state governor could restart her political career or even launch a 2012 presidential bid, but the lack of legitimacy in the "reality" show did not end up having a positive effect on Palin's political career.²⁹ While the show was successful for the network, breaking a *TLC* record when it brought in five million viewers for its premiere episode in November of 2010³⁰, it did not bring in the same kinds of numbers for Palin's approval ratings.³¹ Palin's approval ratings

²⁸ *Sarah Palin's Alaska*. *TLC*. Television. 2010

²⁹ Allen, Nick. "Sarah Palin's Reality TV Show Receives Mixed Reviews." *Telegraph*. 15 Nov. 2010. Web. 1 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/sarah-palin/8135179/Sarah-Palins-reality-TV-show-receives-mixed-reviews.html>>.

³⁰ Weprin, Alex. "'Sarah Palin's Alaska' Gets Premiere Date." *TVNEWSER*. 6 Aug. 2010. Web. 07 Apr. 2012. <http://www.mediabistro.com/tvnewser/sarah-palins-alaska-gets-premiere-date_b23646>.

³¹ Mirkinson, Jack. "'Sarah Palin's Alaska' Ratings Break TLC Records." *The Huffington Post*. *TheHuffingtonPost.com*, 15 Nov. 2010. Web. 01 Apr. 2012. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/11/15/sarah-palins-alaska-ratings-tlc_n_783740.html>.

were initially low, and after the show's eight-episode stint they were even lower.³² In October of 2009, Gallup reported that Palin's approval rating was the lowest it had ever been at forty percent.³³ By 2011, the year following the show's airing, Sarah Palin was deemed the most recognizable candidate. Her approval rating, however, had fallen to a measly twenty-two percent.³⁴ Much of the negativity surrounding the show resonates from Palin's inauthentic portrayal of gender, just as it had in the 2008 election.

It is imperative to note how much creative control Palin had over her reality show on *TLC*, because we can then confirm that the way gender was portrayed on the show was done by Palin purposefully. *TLC* President Eileen O'Neill said in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, "Ultimately the network has creative control and approval over the show, but really across the production company and the Palin family it was quite a collaborative effort, which is consistent with the way we produce most of our shows."³⁵ This statement goes against my findings while interning at *TLC*. According to a conversation I had with a Supervising Producer for *TLC*, Sarah Palin, her political experts, and her family demanded more creative control than the network normally gives to their talent.³⁶ It was obvious that Palin had a particular agenda and was seeking to portray herself in a specific way to a specific group of people, no matter what the network thought.³⁷ In confidence, this same producer told me that this demand for creative control made a

³² Jones, Jeffrey M. "John Edwards, Sarah Palin Both See Favorable Ratings Slide." *Gallup.com*. 16 Oct. 2009. Web. 01 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.gallup.com/poll/123698/john-edwards-sarah-palin-favorable-ratings-slide.aspx>>.

³³ *ibid*

³⁴ Newport, Frank. "Within GOP, Huckabee Most Liked, Palin Best Known." *Gallup*. 10 Jan. 2011. Web. 07 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.gallup.com/poll/145508/Within-GOP-Huckabee-Liked-Palin-Best-Known.aspx>>.

³⁵ Madison, Lucy. "Sarah Palin's Alaska: Politics Lurk Beneath the Surface in *TLC* Show." *CBSNews*. CBS Interactive, 14 Nov. 2010. Web. 01 Apr. 2012. <http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-20022758-503544.html>.

³⁶ "Informal interview", Supervising Producer *TLC*, April 2, 2012.

³⁷ *ibid*

lot of people at TLC very unhappy, and many people had issues with working with Palin in general. Some even went as far as to threaten to leave the network if Palin took on too much control.³⁸ TLC did not want the show to become too political, because they wanted to maintain the network's nonpolitical image.³⁹

Palin's intentional use of gender to promote a specific political image is also revealed through her selection of Mark Burnett as the producer for the show and *TLC* as the network to air the show. When Sarah Palin first came up with the idea to create the show she sought out Burnett, who had produced the hugely successful reality television show *Survivor* as well as the show *Celebrity Apprentice*.⁴⁰ Working with production in marketing at TLC, I found that producers have a great impact on a show's outcome. While Palin's strategists and Discovery Communications both insisted that the purpose of the show was to tell "about the remarkable Governor Palin" and "the story of Alaska," her selection of Burnett as the leading producer, alongside herself, demonstrate that Palin sought to promote specific elements of winning and competition in the background of her show.⁴¹ Burnett's production expertise lies in two very masculine shows that both revolve around the themes of persistence and endurance in competitive atmospheres, two themes that are central to presidential candidacy. Inversely, if one looks at her selection process of choosing the network for the show, it is obvious that Palin was marketing to a female audience. Both Discovery and A&E Networks made bids on *Sarah Palin's Alaska*; Discovery bidding to put the show on *TLC* and A&E bidding to pick up the show for *Lifetime*. Both *TLC* and *Lifetime* are predominately women's networks that market to target audiences of women ages eighteen to forty-five.⁴² Palin's interest in

³⁸ *ibid*

³⁹ *ibid*

⁴⁰ Allen p. 2

⁴¹ De Moraes, Lisa. "Discovery Makes It Official: 'Sarah Palin's Alaska' to TLC." *The Washington Post*. 25 Mar. 2010. Web. 1 Apr. 2012. <<http://voices.washingtonpost.com/tvblog/2010/03/discovery-makes-official-its-s.html>>.

⁴² Weprin, p.1

these two networks is most likely because other women are female politicians' toughest critics.⁴³ If Palin were to run for president, she would have to secure the vote of women, even women outside of her own party, by convincing them that she embodied the necessary qualities of a strong female presidential candidate.

Palin's creative control is also revealed in the selection of the show's content, which is intentionally gendered in a way that promotes Sarah Palin's political image as a fantasy female presidential candidate who can blur the line between masculine and feminine aspects of leadership. For example, although the show displayed the significance of family by Palin, through highlighting her relationships with her children and husband, it also included a more masculine component through the activities that Sarah and her family perform together. Over the course of the eight-episode season, the viewer saw Palin cross-country skiing, kayaking, mushing behind sled dogs and driving off-road vehicles.⁴⁴ Professor Kathleen Hall Jamieson, a specialist in political rhetoric at the University of Pennsylvania described the intent of the show's content, stating, "What all this suggests is that she's crafting her lifestyle and her biography as typifying a person who's independent, rugged, resilient, in touch with nature, and has learned life lessons that she can bring into governance if she moves back into governance."⁴⁵ However, Sarah Palin's "crafting" of gender in her show was not so convincing to other viewers, such as, her fellow Alaskan, author Nick Jans. In *USA Today*, Jans explains that he could see straight through Palin's façade.⁴⁶ He writes, "Those of us who've actually lived off the land are less than impressed by Palin's televised exploits and, more

⁴³ Kornblut "Are We Ready?"

⁴⁴ Sarah Palin's Alaska. TLC. Television.

⁴⁵ Allen, Nick and Swaine, Jon. "Sarah Palin's reality TV show receives mixed reviews" <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/sarah-palin/8135179/Sarah-Palins-reality-TV-show-receives-mixed-reviews.html>. 15 Nov 2010.

⁴⁶ Jans, Nick. "What Palin's Show Says About Us." *USA Today*. http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/forum/2011-01-06-column06_ST_N.htm

2010. Jan 05.

important, by what they tell us about her. Tentative, physically inept, and betraying an even more awkward unfamiliarity with the land and lifestyle that's supposedly her birthright, Palin deconstructs her own myth before our eyes." Furthermore he adds, "You don't have to be a mountain man to see past the thin veil of smoke and mirrors."⁴⁷

The smoke and mirrors the Jans refers to is that Sarah Palin does not realistically embody the masculine image she tried to represent on the show. For instance, she does not know much about the Alaskan outdoors, but chose to base her show around it so that she could build up her "grizzly mama" image. In the season premiere of the show, Palin embellishes upon the construction of this image by literally including mama grizzly bears as the subject of one of her excursions with her husband, Todd, nine-year-old daughter, Piper, and niece.⁴⁸In the episode Palin makes less than subtle political references that suggests she herself is a "mama grizzly. For example, while fishing and bear watching she says, "I love watching these mama bears. They've got a nature, yeah, that humankind can learn from. She's trying to show her cubs nobody's going to do it for ya, you get out there and you do it yourself, guys."⁴⁹ Another example of Sarah exemplifying unnatural masculinity for political purposes is viewed in Episode Four, "She's A Great Shot."⁵⁰ In this episode Palin embarked on a caribou-hunting trip with her father, Chuck and her friend, Steve Becker.⁵¹ Jans, an expert hunter, describes the dishonesty surrounding Palin's actions in this episode. The episode represents Palin as an avid hunter, a male characteristic that echoes her support of the Second Amendment and could imply foreign policy skills and strengths, such as not being afraid to kill to secure survival. However, Jans notes that anyone with a hunting background can tell from her

⁴⁷ Jans, *Ibid p 1*

⁴⁸Episode 1: Series Premiere: "Mama Grizzly" *Sarah Palin's Alaska*. TLC. 2010. Nov. 14.

⁴⁹ *ibid*

⁵⁰ Episode 4: "She's A Great Shot" *Sarah Palin's Alaska*. TLC. 2010. Dec. 05.

⁵¹ *ibid*

anxiety that she has never hunted before and perhaps never held a gun.⁵² For example, she nervously asks her dad whether or not the small-caliber rifle kicks and her dad repeatedly works the bolt and loads it for her as she misses shot after shot.⁵³ Finally in the seventh round she scores a kill, after using “enough bullets for a decent hunter to take down at least five animals.”⁵⁴ Also, her great shot was a baby caribou, all skin and bones, weighing maybe a hundred pounds at most.⁵⁵

In other parts of Palin’s show where she embraces dimensions of her femininity, she delivers an entirely natural persona and in my opinion, provides the best moments of the show. In emotional scenes with her daughters, we see Palin’s maternal side shine through and she seems genuine. For example, in another scene from the premiere, we saw Palin’s sixteen-year-old daughter, Willow try to sneak a boy upstairs to her bedroom, which Palin calls the “no boys zone.”⁵⁶ In this scene Willow tries to defy her, but Palin successfully asserts her maternal authority.⁵⁷ Including only these genuine scenes of Palin as head of the family, however, would not promote the political image necessary for a strong presidential candidate. Motherhood is not directly associated with presidential leadership. Palin is forced to exaggerate unrealistic elements of her persona with the hope of convincing the public that a “grizzly mama” who goes on wildlife excursions is her true, innate self.

The public can see through women politicians’ forged election attempts to become the fantasy of a perfect female presidential candidate. In turn, Americans make a mockery of women who try to exemplify both masculinity and femininity because it seems too unnatural and overdone. Sarah Palin is a demonstration of this analysis. She feeds into stereotypes of both genders in order to portray an image that she feels is one of a strong female presidential candidate, when realistically

⁵² Jans, p.2

⁵³ *ibid*

⁵⁴ *ibid*

⁵⁵ *ibid*

⁵⁶ Episode 1: Series Premiere: “Mama Grizzly” *Sarah Palin’s Alaska*. TLC. 2010. Nov. 14.

⁵⁷ *ibid*

this candidate may not exist. In an interview, Anne Kornblut asked Rahm Emmanuel what he thought the first female president would be like. He replied, "She'll be a chief executive with a proven record to have successfully run something. You'll get a woman who's a governor or something, who has proven herself in some capacity."⁵⁸ Then he stopped himself, because he admitted he could not think of a single woman who fits the person he had described. When Rahm Emmanuel, one of the most politically connected individuals in the country, who is responsible for recruiting candidates for office within years past cannot conjure up a realistic scenario involving a perfect female candidate in the near future, it demonstrates that this woman is either pure fantasy or may be found in a far, distant, and future political horizon. It also demonstrates that our expectations for women are impractical and must be reevaluated in terms of gender equality. Both men and women alike need to reflect on the differences in how they treat both sexes in power relations. We need to develop a political climate that can respect traditionally feminine qualities as leadership characteristics so that women may become leaders on their own accord, not through fictitious personas. Moreover, in order for women to someday succeed in the presidency, we must gravitate towards a political environment in which people are evaluated *genderlessly*. For now, we only have "I Can Be President" Barbie to look to. Hopefully, one day we will bring her to life.

⁵⁸ Kornblut, p 247

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Seán is incredibly grateful for the opportunities presented by the Gender Studies Program here at Notre Dame.

**Gendering the Troubles: An Exegesis of the Psychosexual Development in Colum McCann's
*Everything in This Country Must***

Séan Cotter

Colum McCann's retrospective writings on the "conflict euphemistically known as the 'Troubles'"¹ are, in a blatant word, expected of an Irish author. The *New York Times* critic Charles Taylor lamented that the topic remains an "albatross around the collective neck of Irish writers."² In the face of a commonplace and hackneyed genre of contemporary writing, McCann introduces a new, ethnographically oriented side of the ongoing story that is the Northern conflict. In *Everything in this Country Must*, the author delineates not a narrative of masculinized guerrilla warfare, diverging religious ideologies, or a fetishized unified Ireland, but of the situation's egregious violence and its effect on the narrator's psychosexual development. The author conveyed to interviewer Joseph Lennon that "these stories [are] about glancing blows that children get from politics."³

Katie, as the reader is invited to name her, occupies a central position that is empathetically lamentable. Her gendered and sexually marginalized identity is the product of a cultural clash. The

¹ John Cusatis, *Understanding Colum McCann*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2011), 102.

² Taylor, Charles. "Cheerless in Ireland." *New York Times Book Review*, March 19, 2000.

³ Colum McCann, (Author), interview by Joseph Lennon, "'A Country of Elsewheres': An Interview with Colum McCann." colummccann.com.

narrator's sexual maturity coincides with an upheaval that crosses ethnological, political, religious, and familial boundaries.⁴ In order to explore the work as a conveyor of Katie's situation, which some may call a plight, attention is drawn to the literary devices associated with the following topics: the feminization of household chores, the masculine identity crisis of the father, the gendering and hypersexualizing of the soldiers and the promiscuity of the narrator in verbiage and action. These subsequent pages are dedicated to the aforementioned subjects with intermittent explanatory references to the Troubles and broad gender commentaries.

The significance of the reader's limited view of events in *Everything in this Country Must* cannot be overlooked; the world is filtered through the eyes and thoughts of "a Catholic teenage girl."⁵ Greater than the presentation of an unreliable narrator or brume of religion, however, is Katie's gender, a subject that must be prefaced before further exploration of McCann's work. While the "constructed" nature of gender is taken for granted among many theorists of queer personhood and performativity, one should not ignore society's compulsory gender tendencies. The Australian sociologist R.W. Connell provides a helpful gloss on the socially determined, and deforming, effects of rigidly prescribed gender binaries, when she notes: "The effort to sustain the gender categories also sustains the relations between them and ... the inequalities they produce and the harm they do."⁶ But what are the commentaries on the Northern construction of the feminine gender? The gender dichotomies of Northern Irish society are more pronounced through the setting of the late 1980s, within the context of the masculinized conflict. "The primary role of women remains that of the reproduction of the body politic,"⁷ writes Penn State professor Lorraine Dowler of the six counties' unique civil situation. The passivity of women is articulated through the channels of the

⁴ John Cusatis, *Understanding Colum McCann*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2011), 102.

⁵ Eóin Flannery, *Colum McCann and the Aesthetics of Redemption*, (Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2011), 115.

⁶ R.W. Connell, *Gender*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2002), 5.

⁷ Lorraine Dowler, "The Mother of All Warriors: Women in West Belfast, Northern Ireland," (London, UK: Zed Books, 1998), 78.

patriarchal Church that is such a part of Irish secular life.⁸ Their further domestication is embellished through the gendered political sphere's response that it is a woman's *husband and children*⁹ who are in danger of Northern violence.

With this frame, one begins to critique the overall gendered aspects that are so inextricably a part of Katie's sexual maturity. With the loss of her mother and brother at the hands of British soldiers, the protagonist becomes more a member of the "domestic economy"¹⁰ through her assumption of household chores. Indeed the femininity of household acts are in direct disagreement with her "adolescent female sexuality ... [which] has, traditionally, been diagnosed as politically, culturally, and morally subversive."¹¹ The dissident nature of the independent female sexuality is as nebulous and unknown as it is threatening to inherent androcentrism. The divergence of the repressed woman and her sexuality is exemplified in the fuss over the preparation of the tea in the following passage.

Father likes his tea without bags like Mammy used to make and so there is a special way for me to make it – put cold cold water in the kettle and only cold then boil it then put a small boiling water in the teapot and swish it around until the bottom of the teapot is warm. Then put in tea leaves not bags and then the boiling water and stir it all very slowly and put on the teacosy and let it stew for five minutes making sure the flame is not too high so the teacosy doesn't catch flame and burn. Then pour milk into the cups and then the tea followed at last by sugar all spooned around into a careful mix.¹²

In addition to the narration epitomizing the juxtaposition of youthful (the stream of consciousness style) sexuality and gendered (the task) household, it portrays Katie in a number of roles in her father's house. The critic Eóin Flannery cites this passage as evincing the assumption of

⁸ Conrad Kathryn, "Women Troubles, Queer Troubles: Gender, Sexuality, and the Politics of Selfhood in the Northern Irish State," *Reclaiming Gender*, ed. Marilyn Cohen and Nancy J. Curtin (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 54.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁰ Eóin Flannery, *Colum McCann and the Aesthetics of Redemption*, (Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2011), 118.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 116.

¹² Colum McCann, "Everything in this Country Must," *The Granta Book of the Irish Short Story*, ed. Anne Enright (London, UK: Granta, 2011), 347. All further references will appear in parentheses as *ETCM*.

the “roles of mother, wife, and daughter”¹³ by Katie, thus tying the narrator to a counterpart in James Joyce’s *Eveline*. In this historical precursor, “an oppressed female sexuality”¹⁴ is also presented in a masculine-controlled house. The titular character of Joyce’s work finds herself in “a world of clipped domestic horizons,”¹⁵ boxed by the stifling, stagnant control of her father. The important contrast between Eveline and Katie, though, comes through their respective narrative directions. The former’s desires to escape are “stillborn”¹⁶ in the confining world, while the latter focuses herself on the spectral desires of human sexuality, tying the morally “destabilizing”¹⁷ idea of a sexed girl with the Northern conflict’s entrenched masculine physicality and ridiculousness. In this sense, Katie’s sexual freedom serves as a humanizing juxtaposition with the masculinized, highly delineated rights and wrongs of the Troubles while simultaneously showing the reciprocity of psychological sexing and combat.

One cannot fully synthesize the importance of the narrator’s hypersexualization without examining the gendered reactions of the male characters of *Everything in this Country Must*. The masculine identity crisis of the father pervades the story. The antecedent death of Katie’s mother and brother at the hands of the British Army masks the father’s emotions and masculinizes his responses, while at the same time showing his loss of gendered dominance over Katie and life.

The symbolism of the trapped white draft horse around which the story builds is paramount to understanding this issue. The inability of the father to save the horse of his own power represents his insufficient masculine guidance and control over his daughter. Essentially, he fails to harbor her within the assigned gender role. Reinforcing the ironic inability to fulfill his masculinity, the rescue of the draft horse, equal parts tactile and transcultural through the physical

¹³ Eóin Flannery, *Colum McCann and the Aesthetics of Redemption*, (Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2011), 118.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 119

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 118

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 119

¹⁷ Conrad Kathryn, “Women Troubles, Queer Troubles: Gender, Sexuality, and the Politics of Selfhood in the Northern Irish State,” *Reclaiming Gender*, ed. Marilyn Cohen and Nancy J. Curtin (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 58.

effort of the British soldiers, by socially constructed masculine army characters mirrors the loss of Katie's virginity and "handled" current state.

"Leave her alone, can't you see she's just a child?" (ETCM, 346) asks the father of LongGrasses, the soldier whose attempt to cloak Katie in Stevie's discarded jacket encroaches on the familial masculinity. In the father's "jaundiced view," Flannery writes, "Katie's sexuality is to be protected and fenced off from the contaminating advances of these British soldiers."¹⁸ With the words, "Father pushed hard," (ETCM, 346) the physical manifestation of the father's address comes to fruition. The action, given in its bleak, telegraphic sentence structure, is infused with a pointedness that demonstrates the force of the push. More than any of the narration Katie observes in the passage, this single empirical event shows the frustration of loss and defeat the father is experiencing. Loss refers to the death of his wife and son, the sexual awakening of Katie, and the emasculating event with which the story is concerned.

This last point is heightened in the polarity of contrast between Stevie and the father. The juxtaposition is trifold in nature, encompassing emotional, physical, and anatomical spheres. The freeing of the horse not only liberates Katie's character from a kind of ethno-political trap manifested in her father's control, but serves to represent the freeing of her sexuality. Stevie's injury from the rescue and the blood bring "color to a home made drab by [Katie's] father's gloominess."¹⁹ John Cusatis's topic referenced in the preceding sentence refers to the odd physicality of the entire encounter. What the critic does not necessarily address in this context, however, is the conflict of impotency and vitality one sees between these two men. Stevie, with his symbolic blood and youthful flirtation, acts as the antithesis of the impotent father, whose house has become a bastion of gloom.

Seen in this impotency-versus-virility conflict, the more ethereal and fantastical issues of the father stand in contrast to the concrete gendering of the soldiers. It is true particularly of

¹⁸ Eóin Flannery, *Colum McCann and the Aesthetics of Redemption*, (Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2011), 117.

¹⁹ John Cusatis, *Understanding Colum McCann*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2011), 104.

Stevie, who, through McCann's imagery, is further rendered a virile, sexual character, one with a prurient appeal to the narrator. The following excerpt presents the author's tropes.

Hayknife was first to the edge of the river and his rifle banged against his hip when he jumped out to the rock where I was halter holding. *Okay luv you're all right now*, he said to me and his hand wet at my back. He took the halter and shouted things to the other soldiers, what to do, where to stand Icehair [Stevie] was taking off his boots and gun and shirt and he looked not like the boys from town who came to the barn for love, he looked not like Father when Father cuts hay without his shirt, no, he looked not like anybody, he was very skinny and strong with ribs like sometimes a horse has after a long day in the field. (ETCM, 345-46)

The "phallic threat"²⁰ of the rifle hitting Hayknife's hip demonstrates the masculine imagery of the passage. The wet hand at Katie's back suggests the encroaching sexual force on the narrator and acts in a microcosmic way, symbolizing the overall effect of the Troubles on disparate youths, as is the author's overall purpose. McCann's repetitive description of Stevie's disrobing is almost anaphoric through Katie's stream of consciousness narration. Indeed, from the suggestive outset of the passage through the disrobing, the reader senses both the urgency of the situation and the sexual overtones of the event. As previously mentioned, the trapped white draft horse serves as a symbol of Katie's sexuality; its release by the soldiers and ultimate destruction at the hands of the father mirrors this representation. Here, one sees the addition of a trope through which Stevie and the horse become one in Katie's verdant eyes. The simile ties the physicality of the soldier with the horse and thus renders the corporeality of Stevie with the narrator's sexual freedom. Following from this passage are "the unwittingly sexual ... finger gestures"²¹ in the subsequent lines.

He smiled at me two times when I put my head around the kitchen door and he held up one finger meaning *One sugar please* and a big O from fingers for *No milk please* I could feel my belly sink way down

²⁰ John Cusatis, *Understanding Colum McCann*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2011), 109.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 110.

until it was there like love in the barn, and he smiled at me number three. (ETCM, 347)

The unspoken communication is overtly sexual in nature. The insertive and receptive²² symbols and the anatomical motion of the hand bring the sensation of perversion and gendering to the writing.

The promiscuity of the narrator in verbiage and action is the fruition of the household's trapping, stagnant²³ feminization and the simultaneity of endangered and encroaching masculinities found within the characterization of the father and soldiers. As much as Katie's looseness culminates from these genderings, it is also independent; her sexuality presents her equally as an affected and machinated gendered individual. She is a decidedly sexed figure who rejects her surroundings through the vehicle of carnal indulgence.

At the story's outset, the reader has knowledge of Katie's fifteen-year age. Also at the opening of the story is McCann's first suggestion of a sexually-aware narrator. Katie's physical movement by which she describes her stance as "stretched wide like love" (ETCM, 343) evokes a distinctly prurient image. The narrative references to a suggestive sex pervade the work, but none is as essentially reflective of the narrator's age as the opening words. The imagery created through McCann's placement of Katie in the barn, "catching water from a hole in the...roof on her tongue" is one "both juvenile and sensuous."²⁴

The central conflict of the lodged draft horse is an inexhaustible symbol, as can be attested by the number of times it has been referenced with different significances in this paper. Its most effective use, however, is here, within the context of Katie's promiscuity and sexual maturation. Lured by the "smell of grass," the "draft horse gets caught in the river" (ETCM, 343). This action mirrors the narrator succumbing to sexual temptation. Likewise, as the horse is trapped, so is Katie astride the boundary of adulthood and childhood.

²² R.W. Connell, *Gender*, (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2002), 80.

²³ John Cusatis, *Understanding Colum McCann*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2011), 110.

²⁴ John Cusatis, *Understanding Colum McCann*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2011), 109.

Katie represents a symbolic balance between ignorant childhood and sexually explicit adulthood. The sexual effect of the Troubles on children and gender in Ireland is ultimately the focus of Colum McCann's literary foray in the short story *Everything in this Country Must*. Katie's actions and narration present more than a youthful dalliance; they explore a burdened childhood influenced by the effects of a familial and political conflict.

The importance of the titular issue of the story cannot be removed from the undercurrent of gendered discourse. *Everything in this Country Must* is "taken from a line spoken by [Katie]." ²⁵ Such a definitive verb "seems ... baldly fatalistic" ²⁶ given the context of the story. The multiple narratives of McCann's commentary on the ethno-political conflict, however, begs the reader to ask *what, exactly, must, and why?* But the word is an answer, not a means, stating that everything and everyone must be who they are; they must go through the stages of life, and take part in a role that results from the conflict of the country. There is no choice. Katie, therefore, is in something akin to a universal process of marginalization because of her gender. McCann himself, in an interview with Joseph Lennon, referenced this idea in his spoken question, "Do you need to be hurt in order to understand hurt?" ²⁷ Rhetorical as the question is, a reader finds an answer in the story; yes, because it is a kind of destined path. Katie's simply shows one aspect of a political conflict's impact. As a unit and as an individual, the North *must* experience, and through it, develop, without variance.

²⁵ Taylor, Charles. "Cheerless in Ireland." [New York Times Book Review](#), March 19, 2000.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Colum McCann, (Author), interview by Joseph Lennon, "'A Country of Elsewheres': An Interview with Colum McCann." [colummcann.com](#).

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From Café to Frappe: A Study of Starbucks and Gender at Notre Dame

Aubrey Butts

Girls and Their Starbucks Drinks: The Roots of this Project

Black or with cream and sugar? What size? Whenever a Starbucks employee poses these questions to me, I respond without hesitation: I would like a Venti black coffee please. My biggest struggle requires determining whether to stay or take my coffee away. Based on conversations with other frequent coffee drinkers however, I have realized the potential of this caffeinated beverage to cause debate and division and to inform judgments of the drinker's identity, specifically their gender and sexuality. Passing comments, such as "girls and their Starbucks drinks," led me to consider, how have certain Starbucks beverages obtained socially imposed labels of femininity and masculinity? More significantly, how does enjoying a gendered drink either affirm or produce feminine or masculine characteristics related to the consumer, at least temporarily (and if only temporarily, how do consumers avoid the equivocation of their drink with a supposedly natural, fixed, homogeneous inner gender identity)? To examine these questions, I will combine a brief history of Starbucks' transition from a niche enterprise, one focused on class, authenticity, and coffee knowledge, into a global corporation with a discussion of the company's focus on the

frappuccino in the past decade. Pairing these two histories, the transition from a single, unadorned product to a product capable of extreme individuation and excessiveness, will expose the present gendering process at play in Starbucks consumerism. Additionally, I will present a study of the Starbucks logo because of its gendered connotations and its transformations, changes seemingly corresponding with the company's trends in product development. Operating upon the belief that company decisions subsequently influence customer decisions and opinions – either intentionally or not – this paper will finish with a case study of the Notre Dame Starbucks, specifically analyzing the gendered interactions that take place within the café as well as whether product preferences differ between males and females. While associations between gender and drinks remain complicated at Notre Dame, interviews with students – casual consumers as well as workers – indicate that these associations do exist, endangering displays of masculinity more so than femininity.

In an interview with a Starbucks employee, he elaborated upon his drink of choice, a Venti doubleshot, explaining how the combination of five espresso shots, a breve dairy component, and additional pumps of syrup has often earned him the title “high maintenance.” He went on to assert, “My coffee is loaded with cream and sugar, so I’m the most sissy kind of person out there.” While he did not elaborate his definition of “sissy” nor how it followed from his drink’s creamy and sugary substance, his co-worker’s reaction and their ensuing exchange employ a similar discursive tone:

-Female Co-Worker: If a girl orders that drink, [the workers] will be like, “Oh, it’s a girl,” and they [girls] specify all these things.

-Male Worker: What’s wrong with knowing what I like?

-Female Co-Worker: It’s a good thing!

-Male Worker: I go, and I seek and destroy.

-Female Co-Worker: I think generally if a girl comes in and says, “Can I get a cappuccino with extra foam and nonfat milk,” it’s like, “Okay, I’ll mark up the cup.” If a guy says the exact same thing, they’re immediately labeled as picky.

Considering these remarks and past responses to the name Starbucks, it certainly seems as if a gendered label has become attached to particular drinks, and subsequently, this socially constructed relation transitively labels (or creates) certain consumer identities (the male worker's perception of himself as a sissy). Through social judgments, he has come to believe that consuming the Doubleshot evokes feminine qualities of sweetness and particularity (equivocations based on his female co-worker's judgment), and thus, he temporarily assumes a socially feminized identity when enjoying his beverage.¹ The detailed, specific nature of his choice complicates a gendered reading dependent on repudiation and binary categories. When describing his decision, he argues for his drink as a representation of a resolute and active persona capable of destruction, qualities often related to hegemonic masculinity.² His female co-worker, however, reads this particularity as acceptable for women customers and opposite to a dominant masculinity, a belief possibly resulting from the perceived solidarity necessary for maintaining hegemonic control.³ Although the association remains contested, this interview with two Starbucks employees reinforces the need to analyze how company decisions influence society and individual consumer decisions.

From Café to Frappe: How Starbucks Sacrificed Inclusiveness in Search of Authenticity

When the original Starbucks opened in the Pike's Place market, the company's founders focused on selling the best coffee in the Seattle area. They did not begin by selling cups of coffee, but rather, they focused on their roasted beans and marketed the store as a coffee academy, educating customers about grinding beans and making the perfect cup of coffee at home. In an interview with Bryant Simon, Jerry Baldwin – the most influential founder because he cultivated the taste of Starbucks roasted coffee – explained, “At first, we didn't really serve coffee as a revenue source. We

¹ Connell relates this concept to the body in her statement, “The body is a field on which social determinism runs riot” (50).

² The lack of perceived threat to his power correlates to this feeling of destruction (Connell 77). The transitory nature of the feminine label also supports a reading for hegemonic masculinity.

³ In *Guyland*, Kimmel cites the pressure to conform as a requisite for maintaining one's position in guyland (54-55). The mandated avoidance of individuation further explains why particularity may be read as feminine and why the male worker redefined pickiness as resoluteness.

didn't want anything to take away from the emphasis on the whole bean coffee" (Simon 29). While Starbucks immediately attracted Seattle's "urban pioneers...lawyers, architects, professors, and city workers," the knowledge and authenticity of the nascent company rather than the power of a brand logo served as the means of this attraction (30). In the early stages, people would not identify themselves with Starbucks' identity through the beverage itself but rather through their ability to deploy coffee information easily in their everyday life, a capability not possessed by the general populace.

Howard Schultz's entrance into the Starbucks world in 1987 dramatically changed the company's identity from a coffee institution catering purity, authenticity, and information to a niche market and into a mainstream, profit-driven enterprise still masquerading under the guise of authenticity. After returning from Milan, where he saw the potential of the Italian coffee bar, Schultz pushed Baldwin to expand his product. "Howard [Schultz] was really into the idea of selling drinks by the cup," Baldwin explained, and while he worried that drinks might dilute the "coffeeness of the company," he eventually acceded to Schultz (32). Schultz purchased Starbucks and began expanding the chain throughout the United States while continuing to market towards the educated, professional class throughout the early nineties. Expansion inevitably led away from authenticity, and the company solidified its place in the mainstream marketplace by the late 1990s with the introduction of milk and sugar laden drinks (48-49). Whether lattes containing less than twenty percent espresso or the frappuccino blended beverage, these savory drinks attracted non-coffee drinkers, spiked profits, and brought Starbucks to the point of no return. At this point, anyone had access to the brand and thus anyone could distinguish himself or herself through his or her consumption.

Examining the transitions in Starbucks' history reveals a discord between authenticity and expansion, coffee and the frappuccino, and the supposed tastes of male and female consumers. The original niche consumers were interested in Starbucks for its coffee and its ability to exclude the

non-informed. Now, it's an inclusive company attempting to cater to the desires of everyone.⁴ Both Connell and Kimmel discuss the importance of exclusionary practices to the project of masculinity – allowing the “other” to invade – (whether the “other” be women or non-normative men); the invasion threatens formerly uncontested dominance and complicates the construction of a masculine identity adhering to the hegemonic ideal. If operating in the same space as and engaging in the same practices as the “other,” men often actively avoid adopting qualities of the “other.”

Discussing this obsession with maintaining binaries, Butler explains, “One is one’s gender to the extent that one is not the other gender, a formulation that presupposes and enforces the restriction of gender within that binary pair” (Butler 30). Hence, Starbucks’ original focus supported its target audience and perhaps unwittingly developed the company into a relatively closed masculine space. Perceptions on the taste and strength of Starbucks’ coffee, as presented by two campus Starbucks workers, explicitly craft coffee into a masculine beverage:

-Worker One: I think it’s manly to get just straight coffee.

-Worker Two: Yeah, black coffee ... If someone comes in, orders a Venti dark roast, and I ask, “Room for Cream?” and they respond, “No thanks,” I’m like damn, hard ass.

A junior male also commented on this association, saying, “If I saw a girl walk out with a Venti black coffee, I wouldn’t think, ‘oh, what a man.’ I don’t know what I would think except I probably wouldn’t be judging her at all. It’s a deviation from the mean.” While initially stating a lack of judgment, this student nevertheless associates black coffee with the masculine domain by categorizing the female’s decision as deviant behavior. These responses also suggest a simple solution for males who enjoy Starbucks: stick to black coffee (or at least easily concealable sugary drinks) to avoid judgments about your performance of masculinity and combat the infiltration of the dangerous “other.” While a plausible solution, as I will discuss later, the location and architecture of the campus Starbucks denies this easy resolution for Notre Dame males.

⁴ The beverage prices doom this project and represent remnants of Starbucks’ classed beginning as well as the veil of authenticity thinly attached to their products.

Correlating the frappuccino with Starbucks' transformation into a more gender inclusive environment partially explains the feminine identity attributed to the drink. Consumer ability to customize the drink endlessly provides further evidence for how the beverage has achieved this social feminization. On May 4th, 2010, Starbucks launched their "However-You-Want-It" frappuccino blended beverage campaign accompanied by branding messages such as "Express your love" and "Put Yourself into it (PRSSA).⁵ While the company expressly targeted non-coffee drinkers, not their female consumers, national reactions to the campaign and student opinions lead me to assert that the blended frappuccino attracted more women and thus came to represent a socially feminized object. In an interview with a male student, he described particular reasons for this equivocation:

I think what makes them girly is that they're really sweet. If I see a strawberry frappuccino in anyone's hands, I just think why? If that's someone's standard drink, it seems frivolous and made up. I think it's partially the garnishing. You can kind of tell when it's meant for women because of the colors, the sweetness, and the name ... There are drinks at Starbucks that I respect like black coffee, black tea, café Americano, and café espresso. Those are real drinks. Then there are made up drinks, and unfortunately, all of them are marketed towards women.⁶

Therefore, by consuming a Venti caramel frappuccino resplendent with its whipped cream and caramel drizzle, the consumer may adopt these socially attributed feminine qualities of sweetness, frivolity, and falsity. When performing masculinity, few college males would willingly embrace these features.⁷ While the frappuccino maintains a feminized identity in the marketplace and

⁵ The focus on individualization and fostering an emotional attachment to your drink may further explain the connection of frappuccinos with femininity, especially for male college students. Based on Michael Kimmel's arguments in *Guyland*, the guy code demands that males conform, minimize differences, and refrain from demonstrating sissy emotions in order to avoid negative judgments and expulsion from the group (45, 54).

⁶ This student's sentiments aligned with Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz' same anxieties. When introducing the frappuccino in 2007, Schultz worried that the blended drink contradicted the company's claims to coffee authenticity, and this concern arose from the drinks' artificial, contrived, sweet, and frothy appearance (Simon 53).

⁷ Alongside Kimmel's project of conformity, I believe the feminization of frappuccinos, and hence a perceived male avoidance, loosely corresponds with the projects of silence and protection. Presented to customers in a

seemingly on the Notre Dame campus, this construction does not fully account for male condemnation of and aversion towards the drink because as a dispensable product, consumers can lose the product's label upon finishing the beverage.

On a campus of Notre Dame's size, males must remain hyper vigilant and constantly assert their masculinity. The potential for incessant surveillance explains why the frappuccino may represent a particularly threatening beverage. While only a temporary, easily disposable label, the harsh gaze of male familiars ensures that guys always feel the need to police themselves, thus avoiding practices which can disturb their fragile identity. One could relate this avoidance to a desire for gaining or maintaining a place in the hegemonic sphere, but Notre Dame's campus atmosphere – one dominated by academics and athletics – prohibits the formation of this homogeneous hegemony. In the words of one junior male, "Notre Dame males are probably better looking than the national average but more nerdy and socially awkward. I also think bromance is a bigger thing here than at a lot of other schools." When using the term "bromance," this male most likely referred to close, non-sexual relationships that develop between two (or more) men, specifically those exhibiting levels of affection and intimacy – such as hugging or other playful gestures – not found in the majority of male friendships. While the intimate features of a "bromance" may cause the relationship to toe the line between heterosexuality and homosexuality, the public sanction this heightened intimacy because those involved in the "bromance" most often clearly signal their own heterosexuality. Male students deploy multiple forms of masculinity on campus, and while endowed with varying degrees of power, most remain acceptable, so long as they do not transgress the sexual line. Therefore, guys must rely on behaviors that somehow signal deviation from heterosexuality, such as drinking a frappuccino perhaps, to signal homosexual tendencies.

clear plastic cup, consumers cannot hide the drink's colors and excessive ornamentation. While whipped cream and syrup style a caramel macchiato, its containment within an opaque white container allows the consumer to avoid harsh judgments and the drink to avoid a feminine label.

One final note supporting this argument comes from a brief analysis of frappuccino images from the Starbucks website and involves the difference between the blended and bottled frappuccino product. In 2010, Starbucks launched the “However-You-Want-It” Frappuccino Blended Beverage Campaign, giving customers greater possibilities for drink personalization. As part of the campaign, customers could also create images to advertise their custom beverage as well as advertising for the bottled beverage. Many of the images incorporating the blended beverage display similar notions as those operating at Notre Dame, specifically the pairing of females, heterosexuality, and frappuccino blended beverages. In two such images, one customer stated that they could not resist the tall, dark, and handsome frappuccino while another customer labeled their beverage “Chocolate McDreamy.” In contrast to these images, two advertisements for the bottled beverage incorporated no phrases or symbols explicitly referencing gender or sexuality; one titled the beverage “Frappuccino Monster,” which typically evokes thoughts of masculinity, but this implicit notion does not register as strongly as those displayed in the blended beverage advertisements. These images represent an important link between the assumptions operating on campus and national gender norms: created by customers, the advertisements both demonstrate individual opinions on how Starbucks drinks relate to identity as well as how company actions can transform products from neutral to sites invested with class, gender, and sexual significations.

While the majority of images for the customizable blended beverage align with the reading of the product as feminized, the images for the standardized bottled beverage do not assume such easy categorical identifications. The limited flavor options, the lack of decoration, and the muted color palette (ranging from light to dark brown) allow the bottled frappuccino to avoid the socially determined designation of a feminine beverage. While I did not observe whether males frequently purchased the frappuccino bottled product, based on the reasons previously expounded for avoiding the blended frappuccino beverage, I believe males would view this latter product as less

threatening and thus purchase the bottled frappuccino more often as well as refraining from making assumptions about the consumer's sexual identity.

Starbucks has not unwittingly transformed their company from a male safe haven into an inclusive environment by expanding its market and catering to consumer demands. Their transforming logo also reflects this shift and provides a more salient means of analysis considering company executives rather than consumers drive this change. Indeed, when explaining the logo's latest design, Howard Schultz said, "The world has changed, and Starbucks has changed. The new interpretation of the logo at its core is the exact same essence of the Starbucks experience ... We've allowed her to come out of the circle in a way that I think gives us the freedom and the flexibility to think beyond coffee" (YouTube). While Schultz does not elaborate on his understanding of the "Starbucks experience" or what it means to "think beyond coffee," the logo clearly embodies the company's mission and goals for the future. Taking a step away from the coffee then, what does the logo say about the company's social practices? Perhaps not immediately apparent, I contend the Starbucks logo plays with gender by simultaneously denying the dichotomization of male and female and affirming this distinct separation by reproducing the traditional association of the mind with masculinity and the body with femininity (Butler 17).

When Gordon Bowker, Jerry Baldwin, and Zev Siegl began searching for a company name, they wanted the name to lend the company a sense of authenticity while also evoking an image of "the beans coming from oceans away" (Simon 28). Eventually, they decided upon Starbucks, the "weighty and significant" name of Captain Ahab's first mate in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (Simon 28). A male seaman, longing to return to his wife and child in Nantucket, Starbuck expounds rationality rather than impulsiveness and reckless courage. Their product's nature did not require a gender-marked name, and thus, their choice opens an interesting doorway to analyze their original intentions, especially considering the "weighty and significant" assumptions attached to the name. At its base, giving the company a male name endows the company with a certain level of

masculinity. The verbal nature of the name as well as language's relation to the mind however deepens the analysis of Bowker, Baldwin, and Siegl's choice. In *Gender Play*, Judith Butler discusses the Sartrian economy of signification. Citing Luce Irigaray, she describes language as "pervasively masculinist, a phallogocentric language" and a system "that rests on univocal signification" (13). As a site of male dominance and control, language often perpetuates masculine influence within discourse and thus creates the possibility for female exclusion. When saying the name Starbucks therefore, company representatives and customers rely on an exclusionary means of communication, a subtle way to craft the coffeehouse potentially into a uniquely masculine space. Finally, language derives from mental processes and hence this connection subtly supports the association of the mind with the masculine; early French coffeehouses provided a space for male intelligentsia to gather and discuss Enlightenment concepts, thus Starbucks's gender marked name subtly continues this tendency to craft the coffeehouse into a comfortable male domain. While the final two points of analysis may seem untenable, traditional associations of the body with femininity and the mind with masculinity indicate the politics of brand creation, especially when both a name and a visual symbol remain crucial to the overall image. Bowker, Baldwin, and Siegl's choice of Starbucks does not necessarily represent the conscious creation of a male-oriented company. The name supports this argument however when considered alongside their original target population and the associations often crafted between coffee and masculinity.

Next followed a search for the company's visual symbol. Following the nautical route, the original logo featured a bare-breasted mermaid with long hair and spread fins, encircled by the company name (Bussing-Burks, 16). While the mermaid has transformed into a more modest image – her hair now covers her breasts and her fins only frame her face – this mythical image of classic femininity has retained its central position in the logo since 1971. While the original founders chose a male name for the verbal component of the company brand, they choose a feminine being – one pursued and objectified throughout mythology – to represent the company physically. By balancing

the masculine verbal signifier with a feminine pictorial (visual) symbol, the logo differentiates the masculine from the feminine as well as debasing the feminine. In contrast to the “abstract masculine epistemological subject” of Simone de Beauvoir’s argument, Butler states, “That subject ... disavows its socially marked embodiment, and further, projects that disavowed and disparaged embodiment on to the feminine sphere, effectively renaming the body as female” (16).

Furthermore, the choice to surround the mermaid with Starbucks subtly invokes the patriarchy through which women are defined (the phallogocentric signifying economy). Therefore, the original logo seemingly supports Starbucks’s identity as a comfortably male company because it rigidly separates the masculine from the feminine as well as subjecting the feminine to masculine control through entrapping the mermaid within the male-marked company name.

Pairing both elements into one company logo however complicates strict categories, and one could read the centrality of the mermaid as a position of empowerment rather than powerlessness. Considering both components of the Starbucks logo together demonstrates the company’s potential to create an inclusionary environment, a hospitable space equally available for men and women (and those presenting ambiguous gender may also feel secure because of the exact joining stated above). Based on the latest transformation, I contend that the verbal component originally possessed more power than the pictorial signifier because of the nature of discourse. The latest logo features a green and white mermaid freed from the encircling Starbucks. Removing the company name and investing the (presumably) iconic visual symbol with sole representative power was a bold choice. Besides Apple, most companies ensure their name appears someone in their logo, even restaurant powerhouses such as McDonald’s who possess universally recognized pictorial components. Perhaps the corporate marketing team wanted to simplify the image, and they felt confident that the mermaid’s ubiquity would allow it to signify the company in the market place effectively. This decision, however, also corresponds with the recent focus on frappuccinos and feminine consumers. Freed from her masculine counterpart, Starbucks has opened its doors

and crafted the company into a more inclusive, hospitable environment for women. While not turning their company into a specifically feminine domain and handing their products over to feminine control, by considering women as viable consumers, Starbucks has expanded beyond their original consumer focus – the men found in “worlds of wealth, higher education, and creative professional work” – and complicated notions of what Starbucks actually represents for its (particularly male) consumers (Simon 35).

From Company to Consumer: A Case Study of Starbucks at Notre Dame

This analysis began with the coffee itself because Starbucks has never wavered in their product devotion, continually refusing to expand their food selection and sell in-store merchandise unrelated to coffee or tea. Furthermore, understanding the connection between customer and product helps explain customer approaches to the physical environment of Starbucks. Based on the busyness of student life, which causes the working day to expand well beyond an 8-5 time frame, a college campus represents an ideal environment for studying coffee, its social function, and its possible role in identity construction and affirmation (as well as contradiction). For those reliant upon their caffeine for normal and continued functioning – a majority of college students – a campus café is hallowed ground. These spaces also serve more explicitly social and academic functions, such as providing an environment where you can catch up with friends, meet a professor, go on a date, or silently study. Starbucks, as a centrally located café, opens itself to all of these uses for Notre Dame students. Beyond its location however, does Starbucks craft itself into an inclusive space or does it fail in this project? After observing the Notre Dame Starbucks, I noticed variable approaches to the café, which helped me define three major Starbucks types:

- 1) “Get My Coffee and Move On”: The majority of consumers relocated with their beverages. Some in this category entered and left by themselves while others came with a number of friends. Based on rough tallies, more females patronized

Starbucks, but this overall majority does not reflect the composition of this category: males and females were equally likely to enter and exit alone or in a group.

2) "It's Social Time": These customers remained in Starbucks to talk and enjoy the company of friends. During my observations, I witnessed conversations between females and between one male and one female; I never witnessed two males use the café as a social environment.

3) "Leave Me and My Coffee Alone": This category represented the second largest group of customers and included both males and females. They remained in Starbucks and studied by themselves. Overall, more males tended to study alone, but similar to above, there was not an appreciable difference. Males were more likely than females however to study with their headphones in.

I only witnessed one male homosocial group remain in Starbucks. Their activity of choice: studying. Headphones: yes for both. How does this mix of male homo-"socialization" and silence in Starbucks relate to the categories listed above and Starbucks' role in informing the ideas about masculinity on campus? I believe the homophobia pervading the male population will emerge as a viable explanation. The prior discussion on Starbucks' recent feminine marketing focus and the café's susceptibility to observation will only enrich the conversation.

A company's history, principles, and goals affect all customers even if these same customers do not consciously sense these influences. Relating the transformations undergone by Starbucks over the past forty years to student engagement with the campus café is the core of this project. The gender relations provide an interesting gateway into this analysis because I believe the homophobia pervading male circles (homophobia is not a noticeable fear among female students) limits male engagement with Starbucks, and furthermore, the overall patterns of male and female customers manifest the recent company innovations on campus. To approach this question and

better understand how masculinity is constructed on campus, I will elaborate on the three categories of Starbucks customers listed above both through observations and student interviews.

Get My Coffee and Move On The majority of customers passed through Starbucks, ordering their drinks and then relocating to another location. There were not marked gender differences within this group: males were just as likely as females to transition through the space quickly, and both genders were equally likely to enter alone or with a group of people. This choice reflects an aversion to the space itself as well as the busyness of student schedules. Often, students grab their coffee before heading off to meetings or settling someplace for a long period of study. While perhaps raising questions about why these students do not view Starbucks as a promising study environment in comparison with the members of the third category (“Leave Me and My Coffee Alone”), student preferences most likely serve as adequate answers. Some students need ultra-quiet atmospheres while others enjoy a more social environment.

This group does not contribute much to the understanding of Starbucks’ influence on the construction of masculinity at Notre Dame. Taking count of the types of drinks students order represents the most promising component. I did not have the opportunity to create this tally, but I do not remember any marked gendered preferences. This lack of distinction contradicts the separation of drinks into male and female groups based on the amount of coffee included in the beverage and thus raises the important question. How often does the abstract fear of feminized beverages translate into realized avoidance? Discovering the reasons for this discordance would involve more study, but nevertheless, realizing that a contradiction exists displays the arbitrariness and mutability of gendered labels.

It’s Social Time Some groups remained in Starbucks and used it as a social environment. No patterns of topics emerged from the conversations between female customers, and in fact, topics ranged from romance, personal stories and classes to politics, religion and athletics. Academic topics such as departmental affairs, class projects and event coordination dominated the mixed

gendered interactions, and oftentimes these conversations assumed interview-style dialogue.

During my observations, I witnessed two other conversations between a male and a female, but I could not hear the content of one, and the other couple only remained in the store for approximately ten minutes, so I would include their interaction under the former category.

The tendency of females to approach Starbucks as a comfortable social environment agrees with the recent company transitions, but these same changes do not adequately explain why more casual, mixed gendered interactions fail to occur in the space. A comment by a junior male about the campus Starbucks' architecture provides greater support for these social tendencies:

-Student: This is meant to be more of a walk through Starbucks. The shape itself is a circulation space. It's not a destination. Often, people look in the windows and wave like we're in a zoo. I think it's really funny because often people will do stupid shit thinking no one is watching, but I'm watching, watching and judging and remembering.

While said humorously, his portrayal of the café as an easily, often observed space open to the judgments of others better explains the social patterns outlined above. In *Guyland*, Kimmel asserts that males must constantly guard and assert their masculinity while females seemingly manage to escape this stressful mandate (see chapter 3, 44-69). Therefore, females can meet casually in Starbucks without worrying about the judgment of others concerning their gender and sexuality. This same privilege does not extend to males because other men act as a "gender police, always waiting for us to screw up so they can give us a ticket for crossing the well-drawn boundaries of manhood" (Kimmel 47). In an environment where either drinking, athletics or academics mediate most male interactions, engaging in an unmediated conversation signals a transgression of the gender boundaries. Finally, the openness to observation explains why more mixed gendered interactions do not occur in Starbucks. When asked whether Starbucks provides a good atmosphere for a date, the same male student quoted above stated:

-Student: No because everyone knows each other here. I feel like your date is public domain at Starbucks. I've had the problem before where friends will see me with a girl and automatically pair us as a couple because you have to go out of the way to hang out with girls even if you are just friends.

The same fears influencing male avoidance of Starbucks limit mixed gendered interactions in the café. This category of customers casts Starbucks as an influential actor in formations of proper masculinities and heterosexual relationships on campus.

Leave Me and My Coffee Alone Customers who chose to remain in Starbucks most often fell into this category. During my observations, I did not notice a higher number of solitary male or female studiers, but the different approaches to solitary studying exhibited by males and females present a salient point of analysis. Females studying in Starbucks varied in their use of headphones, and I believe this variance relates to the greater likelihood of female students to use Starbucks as a social environment. While studying alone, they remained open to conversations with their peers passing through. All of the male solitary studiers and the one instance of paired male students wore headphones and many worked on their computers. Similar to the variance of females, this consistent practice seemingly relates to male social approaches to Starbucks. Desiring to avoid conversation at all cost, for fear of assuming a homosexual label or being paired into a heterosexual relationship, males tune out the world and engage with their technology instead.

Therefore, the openness of the campus Starbucks and the company transition towards inclusion craft the space into a dangerous environment for the formation of "proper" (heterosexual) masculinity, but so long as males can avoid conversation or prolonged interaction with other males in the café, they can avoid the condemnation of other men.

Acknowledging the Dangers of Starbucks

Male students present numerous forms of masculinity on campus, most of which students accept without harsh criticism because of the importance both academics and athletics maintain at

Notre Dame. The homosexual male student however continually represents the repudiated “other” for men. Whether threatening bromances or contradicting the presumed heterosexual dominance, most males attempt to avoid any practices that could earn them this label and consuming particular Starbucks beverages or socializing in the café manifest as two dangerous practices threatening the maintenance of masculinity. Interestingly, males seemingly avoid conversations in Starbucks so as not to be heterosexually paired, an unexpected fear considering affirming your heterosexuality represents a most promising mode of denying subversive homosexuality.⁸ As an influential global corporation, Starbucks’ expounded ethos and business practices possess the ability to construct customer identities and inform non-customers about proper ways to define customers. Whether limiting or creating possibilities for particular gendered expressions, Starbucks affects the social definitions of proper relationships, gender, and sexuality on Notre Dame’s campus, a particularly fascinating environment for analyzing gender and sexuality considering the religious doctrines and the institutionally imposed structures regulating these oftentimes controversial categorical identities. Expanding this study outwards to explore gender interactions across America’s college campuses and how these interactions relate to and inform gender and sexual conduct at the university offers a potential gateway to understanding how geography, commerce, politics and religion coalesce, informally educating students alongside the formal instruction they receive in class.

⁸ Romantic relationships do pose a threat to the bromance, so this threat of disruption could explain the desire to avoid a heterosexual pairing. The single sex dorms on campus encourage the tendency towards bromances, and the avoidance or outright denial of the responsibilities of life post-graduation further strengthens the preferences for bromances. With such a great emphasis on brotherhood informing the attitudes of your closest friends, it is not wonder that the bromance often seems more appealing than the contrasting dogma – church sanctioned, responsible, long-term monogamy. Kimmel relates the seemingly irrational practice to “dominance bonding;” while he deploys the term when discussing sports, I believe the term succinctly encapsulates a greater masculine project (134).

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The Psychology of Infertility: How Assisted Reproductive Technologies Affect the Institution of Motherhood

Maria McLeod

Because conceptions of motherhood have varied and transformed over time, there is not a single, central definition of “mothering.” Psychoanalyst Nancy Chodorow explains, “mothers are women, of course, because a mother is a female parent, and a female who is a parent must be an adult, hence must be a woman.” Chodorow, however, separates this gendered definition of mother from mothering; “being a mother, then, is not only bearing a child—it is being a person who socializes and nurtures. It is being a primary parent or caretaker.”¹ In another view, philosopher Sara Ruddick contends, “mothers are not identified by fixed biological or legal relationships to children but by work they set out to do. In my particularized conception, mothers are people who see children as ‘demanding’ protection, nurturance, and training.”² As made evident by these definitions, childbirth and mothering are not only biological events, but they are also social affairs defined through many different lenses, including time period, culture and societal norms and customs. As reproduction has become redefined, so have the convictions, beliefs, assumptions and expectations surrounding motherhood. In American society, motherhood and childbearing have largely dictated and characterized what it means to be a woman and have prescribed women’s roles

in that society. Alluding to colonial America, Judith Walzer Leavitt contends, “because women found themselves repeatedly pregnant and because this condition involved certain physical risks, women found themselves bound by what appeared to be their biology. In fact, they were bound equally by ideology, an ideology of domesticity and nurturance, which the women as well as the men in society accepted as the proper order of things.”³ This “proper order of things” has been perpetuated in American society since the seventeenth century, and women today continue to be defined by their ability to reproduce and the ways in which they mother their offspring. In her book *The Reproduction of Motherhood*, Nancy Chodorow, who draws on and develops psychoanalytic theorizations of the family, states, the “biological experiences involved in pregnancy and mothering, and unconscious as well as conscious fantasies about these, are deeply central to many women’s sense of self and one of the central meanings for women of motherhood.”⁴ Chodorow argues that the biological ability for women to reproduce remains the foremost attribute to the definition of the female self and plays an integral role in the definition of what it means to be a mother. If Chodorow and Leavitt are correct in their assertions that motherhood defines a major part of what it means to be a woman and women’s existence as females, what does that mean for women who find it difficult to get pregnant and resort to medicine, science and technology in order to fulfill what has been thought to be a woman’s sole and natural duty in life? In this essay, I will explore the rise of surrogacy and assisted reproductive technologies and the psychological implications they have on mothers, both as women and as parents.

For decades, social scientists have discussed whether or not mothering is an inherent biological process or a phenomenon women have learned. Chodorow argues, “the contemporary reproduction of mothering occurs through social structurally induced psychological processes. It is neither a product of biology nor of intentional role-training.”⁵ She contends that the institution of motherhood is propelled throughout generations because of the interplay between female psychology and the society in which women live. The author draws upon Freud’s psychoanalytic

theory, which “concentrates on unconscious mental processes, affects, and psychic structure.”⁶ Using this psychoanalytic account of female and male personality development, the author “demonstrate[s] that women’s mothering reproduces itself cyclically.”⁷ She contends that women as mothers produce daughters who have both the capacity and the desire to mother, just as they do. Conversely, women as mothers produce sons whose nurturing capacities and desires have been underdeveloped, repressed, and cast aside. In this way, Chodorow believes that mothers see their daughters as similar to themselves and their sons as different from them. Chodorow writes, “The sexual and familial division of labor in which women mother and are more involved in interpersonal, affective relationships than men produces in daughters and sons a division of psychological capacities which leads them to reproduce this sexual and familial division of labor.”⁸ This sexual and familial division of labor leads Chodorow to theorize, “women have had primary responsibility for child care in families and outside of them; that women by and large want to mother, and get gratification from their mothering; and finally, that, with all the conflicts and contradictions, women have succeeded at mothering.”⁹ Chodorow argues that a woman’s role as a mother not only solidifies her place within society, but also perpetuates the social organization of gender within contemporary society.

Historically, marriage was essentially synonymous with child-rearing, especially for women: “parenting lasted from the inception of a marriage to the death of the marriage partners. Women often died during one of the many childbirths.”¹⁰ However, mothering was not the sole preoccupation of these women’s lives, as the household was the major productive unit of society. The family, consisting of husband, wife and children, either their own or other, was a collaborative producing entity. Both the husband and the wife took part in child-rearing, as Chodorow explains, “children were integrated early into the adult world of work, and men took responsibility for the training of boys once boys reached a certain age. Women’s child-care and productive

responsibilities included extensive training of girls—daughters, servants, apprentices—for work.”¹¹ Because of this, a woman’s role within the family was both productive, as well as reproductive.

This shifted when the workplace and the home became separate entities; “the family became a quintessentially relational and personal institution, *the* personal sphere of society.”¹² It was when the workplace became a setting distinct from the home that women’s familial role became centered on child care rather than on productivity. Capitalist industrialization further privatized the home, removing grown children, grandparents and nonfamily members from the house and creating a space governed exclusively by mothers. Today, “biological mothers have come to have more exclusive responsibility for child care just as the biological components of mothering have lessened, as women have borne fewer children, and bottle-feeding has become available.”¹³ Despite the many changes that have occurred since the eighteenth-century, one of the things that has remained the same is that women continue to mother. Because of this, Chodorow argues, “women are prepared psychologically for mothering through the developmental situation in which they grow up, and in which women have mothered them.”¹⁴

If Chodorow is correct in her assertion that women learn how to mother through the ways in which women have mothered them, it is important to examine fertility and childbirth through a historical lens. This perspective illustrates the ways in which the psychology of motherhood has changed throughout time. It also highlights how this psychology is influenced largely by the society and culture in which the mother and daughter live. To colonial Americans, fertility meant survival. Elaine Tyler May, in her book *Barren in the Promised Land: Childless Americans and the Pursuit of Happiness*, comments, “without children, households would be unable to function as economically productive units, and communities would wither and die.”¹⁵ During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, women’s lives were not defined by the act of childbirth so much as they were defined by the risks associated with reproducing. May notes, “with death so prevalent, families had a matter-of-fact and unsentimental view of children. Colonial children, like children in early

modern Europe, were reared for the benefit of the community, not for the personal pleasure of their parents.”¹⁶ A woman’s destiny was understood to be to bear children, and consequently, the physical dangers associated with childbearing helped to justify the societal limitations placed on women and their confinement to the domestic sphere. Despite the anxieties associated with reproduction, fertility rates among white American women remained high, with a woman bearing an average of more than seven surviving children at the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹⁷

However, the fact that women delivered an average of seven live children does not mean that a woman endured only seven pregnancies. Many pregnancies terminated in miscarriage or stillbirths, which meant that much of a woman’s adult life was consumed by childbirth and the burdens that accompanied delivery. In her chapter, “‘*Under the Shadow of Maternity*’: Childbirth and Women’s Lives in America,” Judith Walzer Leavitt points out, “coming to terms with the deaths of numerous small children added a particular burden to women, especially during the time they were pregnant and had to anticipate the possibilities of disaster.”¹⁸ This meant that both life and death were integral parts of women’s daily lives, and both their hopes and fears surrounding childbirth consumed them.

By the turn of the eighteenth century, because adult women were largely defined by their pregnancies, they began to speak freely about their fears, expectations and experiences that accompanied childbirth with their female family members and friends. Jan Lewis and Kenneth A. Lockridge note, “the prospect of pain and the very real possibility of dying in childbirth combined to make women’s descriptions of the experience strikingly negative.”¹⁹ Women continued to enter childbirth with extreme apprehension and sought out female family members, particularly their mothers and friends, to accompany them during their delivery because they felt their husbands could not fully empathize with their fears.²⁰ Lewis and Lockridge comment, “much more than women, men tended to regard the pains and dangers of childbirth as necessary and inevitable” and continued to view pregnancy as a woman’s natural state.²¹ The authors provide further evidence

for the gendered differences surrounding the fears of pregnancy by quoting David Meade addressing a kinswoman in 1799; “newly married Daughter promises to support the credit of our race by duly answering the most important purpose of her creation – already she discovers strong indications of that disposition.”²² Rather than sympathizing with the very real fears that their wives and daughters had about pregnancy and delivery, eighteenth-century colonial men were preoccupied with the patriarchal view that pregnancy was a woman’s natural state. Men were more concerned with their wives and daughters producing children, more specifically boys, than with the fears and concerns that consumed women during that time.

However, during the late eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century, pregnancy began to be redefined. As Elaine Tyler May explains, “progeny became not only the source of progress, but the route to happiness.”²³ Due to the newly sentimentalized view of children, combined with the anxieties associated with childbirth, women began to become increasingly concerned with limiting their fertility. One of the ways in which women would attempt to space the deliveries of their children was by breastfeeding. The fact that a woman born between 1760 and 1799 could expect to give birth to an average of 8.3 children, no fewer than the number of births her predecessors had in the previous generation, however, “represents the limits of female-controlled, breast-feeding based fertility.”²⁴ Therefore, any further family limitation would require the participation of the husband. The practice of abstinence and coitus interruptus resulted in men becoming more invested in the process of reproduction. As Lewis and Lockridge note, “by the early nineteenth century, however, women *and men* both were beginning to describe pregnancy and childbirth as something un-natural, a disruption in a woman’s health.”²⁵ The pathologization of pregnancy and childbirth resulted in decreased fertility rates of women in the 1800s.

Though men were physically involved in the process of reproduction, birthing and delivery was confined to the female sphere. Leavitt comments, “the birth experience provided the context within which women could share their deepest feelings; out of this grew a sense of shared

experiences that increased the emotional bonds among women."²⁶ It was so important for women to aid their fellow females during a childbirth that many made considerable sacrifices to help their birthing relatives and friends; they traveled long distances and usually stayed for a number of months both before and after the birth to take care of the housework and the other children. A woman's female family members and friends offered her emotional comfort and psychological support both before and after her birthing experience. Psychologically, this female network that was activated every time a family member or friend was getting ready to deliver made an extremely frightening and trying experience bearable. Leavitt notes, "for the entire home-birth period [...] women, friends, neighbors, and relatives continued to offer birthing women psychological support and practical help" and "these female-centered activities dominated most American births, whether or not they were attended by male physicians."²⁷

The female network that developed because of childbirth was impenetrable by husbands for a number of reasons. Though they might have been able to provide the technical assistance necessary to aid a birth, men could not personally know their wives' experiences, and therefore, they could not fully empathize with them during their greatest hours of suffering. Because of this, women desperately sought the psychological comfort afforded to them by other women, be it from a family member or a complete stranger. Midwives, "like most women in colonial towns, were active in the local economy, and were well known among their neighbors," were invited into the home during labor to aid and assist during delivery.²⁸ Leavitt writes, "women knew how to help because they had themselves experienced the pain and anguish of delivery. They knew how to comfort because they knew what women felt and needed at their times of travail. And they knew how to intervene because they had watched others manage labor and delivery."²⁹ Also, the intimate physical details of birth embedded the birthing room in an all-female sphere. Though husbands, brothers or fathers were granted temporary entrance, "the necessity that women shield their bodies from male eyes, common to the thinking of many groups of women, led to women's

expertise in the birthing room.”³⁰ The female-centered nature of the entire home-birth period illustrates how rigidly life was divided into different spheres based on gender and the discomfort that arose when those dividing lines were crossed.

During these homebirths, trusted female companions acted as medical attendants and physicians around the birth bed. Leavitt contends, “for most of the colonial period only at the beckoning of the attending women and as a last resort would birth activity incorporate male activity.”³¹ However, physicians found themselves increasingly called upon to attend to women, alongside her friends and a midwife, during deliveries. This was due to the growing notion that circulated during the nineteenth-century that “can only be explained by understanding the women’s impression that physicians knew more than midwives about the birth process and what to do if things went wrong.”³² Women reformed millennia of an all-female tradition and invited men into their birthing rooms because they thought that a male physician would be able to provide a heightened security against the potential dangers associated with childbirth. Leavitt writes, “whereas women midwives relied on practical experience and an appeal to female traditions—factors to some extent taken for granted and unappreciated—men physicians had the extra advantage and prestige associated with formal learning.”³³ Because of the premium that began to be placed on the education granted to male physicians, they were gradually incorporated into the delivery room. Therefore, male physicians had to learn how to behave in the women’s world of the birthing room; “early in their experience with normal obstetrics, in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, many physicians tried to stay out of the confinement room except when actually needed for the delivery.”³⁴ Physicians not only felt uncomfortable breaching the female sanctity of the birthing room, but they also realized that they could not provide the same psychological support to the patient as her female family members and friends. In the words of Doctor Alexander Hamilton, “every woman in general is impressed with much apprehension at the beginning of labour, which, if

indulged, may be productive of very bad effects; it is therefore important that a cheerful friend or two should be present on such occasions, in order to inspire the patient with spirits and courage.”³⁵

This practice, however, shifted by the middle of the nineteenth century when “physicians tried to increase their own role in the birthing rooms by counseling that women about to deliver limit the numbers of women friends and relatives to one or two.”³⁶ The growing consensus among the medical professionals at that time was that friends were an impediment, which directly contradicts most women’s accounts of friends as necessary for both emotional and psychological support during delivery. For example, in his popular advice book in 1857, Doctor Edward Henry Dixon suggested that physicians, “mildly, yet firmly exclud[e] from the room all who are not absolutely necessary as attendants.”³⁷ With a woman’s friends in the birthing room, doctors felt they could not control the events in the birthing room as much as they wanted. Leavitt suggests, “physicians found it difficult to assert their authority in the presence of many friends, especially those who had considerable birth experience, and it is likely that their perception of the non-usefulness of female friends in the birthing room was influenced by their own discomfort in their presence.”³⁸ The parturients’ friends and families made medical decisions about the use of forceps, anesthesia and other interventions, which were usually thought to be in the control of the attending physician because of their medicalized nature. Though this does not mean that the woman giving birth was necessarily in better care, it does testify to the support that surrounded her during her delivery; “because of this network of women supporting one another, women found the ability to get themselves through a situation in which they felt powerless.”³⁹ A woman’s social network during childbirth provided a sense of control, even though the presence and authority of a male physician had entered the once exclusively female realm of the birthing room.

The social nature of pregnancy and delivery radically changed from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. Leavitt attributes this change to “the major alterations of place of birth, of amount and kind of interference in the birth process, and of choice of birth attendant.”⁴⁰ When the

majority of American women began giving birth in hospitals in the twentieth century, the domestic powerbase that defined childbirth for millennia was lost and the female network associated with that powerbase was weakened. Leavitt notes, “personal accounts of childbirth by women and birth attendants suggest that the birth experience was a crucial factor in creating the social dimensions of most women’s lives ... These shared experiences created a biologically based, socially determined bond among women, which in turn influenced important common aspects of their lives.”⁴¹ Women were willing to sacrifice these bonds for the promise of a less painful delivery that was provided by science.

Additionally, medicine and technology entered the reproductive sphere in the forms of birth control, education and interventions, and as industrial America expanded, many families began to limit family size and invest their resources in raising a fewer number of children. In her book *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women*, Estelle B. Freedman writes, “In the United States [...] the marital fertility rate dropped by about half over the course of the nineteenth century, from slightly over 7 children per woman in 1800 to slightly under 4 children per woman in 1900.”⁴² The fertility rate continued to drop, and “by 1950 the overall rate was under 3 births per married woman, and by 2000 it had fallen to 2.06,” where it has remained relatively stable.⁴³

Along with this sharp decline in birthrates, a dramatic increase in childlessness, which most argue to be voluntary, began in the twentieth century. Elaine Tyler May reports, “In 1990 [...] 25 percent of all women aged thirty to thirty-four were childless, compared to only 16 percent in 1976.”⁴⁴ Though voluntary childlessness significantly increased after the 1960s, it was not a new phenomenon. May writes, “for the first time, advocates for the childfree began to argue that voluntary childlessness represented not simply a legitimate alternative to parenthood, but a better lifestyle—better for individuals, better for couples, better for the planet.”⁴⁵ Part of the reason why this phenomenon emerged so strongly and when it did is because a growing number of young adults rejected the powerful postwar ideology of domesticity. May contends, “childlessness was the

married woman's answer to the *Playboy* promise to men of endless consumerism and sex."⁴⁶ The allure of freedom, spontaneity and leisure, as well as a close intimate relationship with their partner, emerged as women's reasons for voluntary childlessness. As the author poignantly states, however, "ultimately, they wanted the same things: intimacy, happiness, and fulfillment in private life. For the childfree, these goals could best be achieved by *not* having children. For the infertile, the way to achieve those goals was to have children."⁴⁷ Similar to the way in which childlessness began becoming more visible, so too has the problem of infertility. Though there is no evidence that infertility is on the rise, the number of people who are seeking treatment has risen dramatically. In her chapter, "Designer Genes: The Baby Quest and the Reproductive Fix," Elaine Tyler May reports, "The number of visits to physicians for infertility treatment rose from 600,000 in 1968 to 1.6 million in 1984."⁴⁸ Even if the chances for successful treatment have remained the same for about a half a century, new technological advances are now available; "high-tech approaches, such as in-vitro fertilization (IVF), first successfully used in the birth of Louise Brown in England in 1978, appear to offer 'miracle babies' to the childless."⁴⁹ The promise of a technological fix along with the hope and trust in the medical community has spurred many Americans to seek out these medical treatments to conquer their infertility in the latest example of women (along with their husbands) turning to medicine to help shape their reproductive experiences. However, "studies of women (and their partners) involved in making decisions about reproductive interventions—from in vitro fertilization and prenatal testing to fetal surgery and neonatal intensive care—show the internalization and transformation of women's and men's gender identities vis-à-vis their ability (or inability) to reproduce."⁵⁰ These transformations have added to American society's understanding of how reproductive practices have been redefined and altered to make room for the inclusion of infertility services. These infertility services include assisted reproductive technologies, which are used by more than "10 percent of the 62 million women of childbearing age in the US" at some time in their lives.⁵¹

Upper middle class families who have fertility problems in the United States have a number of options in order to bring children into their lives. In her book *Outsourcing the Womb: Race, Class, and Gestational Surrogacy in a Global Market*, France Winddance Twine highlights, “asexual or ‘assisted conception’ involving medical technologies such as in vitro fertilization and embryo transfers has replaced sexual reproduction (and adoption) for infertile heterosexual couples and for same sex couples who need assistance in forming families.”⁵² In vitro fertilization is “an ART [assisted reproductive technology] procedure that involves removing eggs from a woman’s ovaries and fertilizing them outside her body. The resulting embryos are then transferred into the woman’s uterus through the cervix.”⁵³ Another assisted reproductive technology (ART) is gestational surrogacy, which “involves ART with the use of third parties, referred to as surrogates, to assist individuals and/or couples who wish to conceive a child with whom they have a genetic tie.”⁵⁴ This has resulted in a “surrogate baby boom,” which has defined infertility as a medical problem that can be solved with ART instead of adoption since the 1980s.

There are two types of surrogacy: gestational and traditional. Gestational surrogacy, a practice that has both drastically changed the landscape of surrogacy in the United States and is the most common form of commercial surrogacy today, is when “a woman who gestates a fetus (allows herself to be impregnated and carries the pregnancy to term) but has no genetic tie to the child she births.”⁵⁵ She is not the “intended mother,” but rather a paid laborer who rents out her womb for nine months. In short, “a couple can hire a surrogate, provide the sperm themselves and then purchase and egg ‘donated’ by a third woman if the female partner is unable to provide a viable egg.”⁵⁶ Because of the embryo transfer that takes place, the surrogate carries a child to whom she is not the biological mother.

In traditional surrogacy, “the birth mother is both the ‘gestational’ surrogate and the biological mother (contributes the genetic material—the ovum).”⁵⁷ Unlike the gestational surrogate, this woman has a genetic tie to the child she is carrying, which makes her the legally

recognized mother until she relinquishes her rights through adoption. In these cases, the intended mother in these cases is “the woman who, either alone or with a male or female partner, commissions the pregnancy and enters into a commercial contract with another woman who agrees to be implanted with an embryo that consists of her ovum or donated ovum.”⁵⁸ The biological mother’s name, not the gestational surrogate’s, is listed on the birth certificate.

The social issue of surrogacy seized the nation in 1987 in a bizarre custody case in New Jersey that involved a baby girl who became popularly known as “Baby M.” She was “the product of a contractual arrangement between William and Elizabeth Stern and Mary Beth Whitehead.”⁵⁹ Though Baby M was genetically related to both Mary Beth Whitehead and William Stern, Whitehead was to relinquish parental rights and custody of the baby to Mr. and Mrs. Stern for a \$10,000 compensation for her services. Mrs. Whitehead, however, decided she wanted to keep the baby, and the infamous case began. Mrs. Whitehead and her family fled to Florida, where she was eventually taken into custody, and the Sterns received temporary custody of the baby. After a low-court trial, a New Jersey judge upheld the surrogacy contract, which validated the termination of Mary Beth Whitehead’s parental rights and awarded the custody of Baby M to the Sterns. Though the New Jersey Supreme Court overturned this decision and invalidated the surrogacy contract a year later, “using the legal standard of ‘the best interests of the child,’ it assigned permanent custody to the Sterns.”⁶⁰ Mary Beth Whitehead, however, retained parental rights and gained visitation privileges.

Though this case created a national uproar and brought legal discourse surrounding surrogate parenting into the public sphere, the number of surrogate children born in the United States continues to increase. Susan Markens writes, “in 1988, there were an estimated 600 surrogacy births nationwide. By the mid-1990s, roughly 6,000 babies had been born as the result of such arrangements, with approximately 250 surrogate births per year occurring in California alone. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, surrogacy births per year in the United States

number around 1,000.”⁶¹ As made evident by the growing number of individuals and couples who are choosing to use ART, bearing and raising a child seems to be an important part of American adult life. If women are psychologically primed to mother through the sexual and familial division of labor in which they developed, it is not surprising that many females experiencing infertility turn to science, medicine, and technology. Because women develop their sense of self in direct relation to their mothers, they internalize representations of their mothers and project these representations onto themselves. These projections result in women defining themselves in relation to their mothers and their ability to reproduce. Elaine Tyler May notes, “in a society that often equates adulthood with parenthood, infertility affects personal identity as well as reproductive behavior.”⁶² As in colonial America, fecundity still represents a sort of status and those who are infertile will do whatever they can to join the club.

I interviewed three women from New Jersey who have used or are using some form of science and technology in order to “cure” their infertility. My correspondence with Deanna, a 41 year-old woman who is currently going through her second round of in vitro fertilization, Jackie, a 40 year-old woman who used intrauterine insemination to become pregnant, and Kathy, a 42 year-old woman who used an egg donor in order to reproduce illustrates the psychological implications the use of ART can have on women.

Those who are infertile experience extreme frustration for many reasons; one of the most obvious problems is the low success rate of ART. According to The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s 2010 ART Success Rates, “147,260 ART cycles were performed during 2010, resulting in 47,090 live births (deliveries of one or more living infants),” putting the success rate of ART at a little over 31percent.⁶³ May alludes to the great paradox that occurs because of this; “those who become pregnant while using birth control tend to blame the technology. But infertility patients who do not conceive often blame themselves. They feel unable to control their bodies or their destinies, even with medical intervention.”⁶⁴ This is perhaps because when one decides to pursue

ART, one believes, “science could relieve our pain. Science, in the form of the good doctor, would deliver our baby to us.”⁶⁵ With this mindset, if ART is unsuccessful, there is no one to blame but oneself.

When I asked the women I interviewed if they blamed themselves when ART failed, they said they would question themselves, as well as fault the doctor, after they did not get pregnant. The women’s responses demonstrated that your life is consumed by your infertility when going through ART. For example, Jackie noted, “I did not necessarily blame myself when the intrauterine insemination did not work, but I would question choices I made while waiting to see if it worked. For example, maybe I shouldn’t have had sex with my husband, or maybe I shouldn’t have lifted up that heavy box. These things probably made no difference as to whether or not it was successful, but you do question yourself.” Though she did not blame herself, per se, she was constantly questioning her daily activities that had no impact on either the failure or success of her treatment. Deanna also revealed a range of emotions: “The first time [IVF] failed, I definitely felt blameworthy. The embryos are looking for a uterus and they didn’t attach to mine. Then you question the doctor. Could he have done something else? Did he pick the wrong embryos to implant? It is kinda like a death. You experience anger and sadness.” After investing so much time, money, and effort into getting pregnant, women who do not get pregnant after using ART look to place the blame not only on themselves, but also the medical personnel involved in the process.

Despite the low success rates of ART, couples become addicted to the process, similarly to the ways in which one becomes addicted to a drug. In her book *Waiting for Daisy*, Peggy Orenstein writes, “first you pop a little Clomid, suddenly you’re taking out a second mortgage for another round of in vitro fertilization (IVF). You’ve become hope’s bitch, willing to destroy your career, your marriage, your self-respect for another taste of its seductive high.”⁶⁶ Clomid works by making your body believe that you are not making enough estrogen during the first half of your menstruation cycle, which puts into overdrive two female hormones – follicle stimulating hormone

(FSH) and luteinizing hormone (LH) – both of which affect egg development. The boost of these two hormones creates bigger and better ovulations, which is why “nearly half of women who try it get pregnant, most within three months.”⁶⁷ Though these sound like amazing odds and makes one wonder why every infertile woman isn’t trying it, the side effects are daunting. University of Maryland Medical Center states, “some studies, but not all, have indicated that use of the fertility drug clomiphene (Clomid) may increase the risk for ovarian cancer. However, infertility itself is a risk factor for ovarian cancer, so it is not definite whether fertility drugs play an additional role in affecting risk.”⁶⁸ The fact that women are willingly putting their health on the line in order to get pregnant attests to the fact that the ability to become pregnant, carry a fetus to term, and give birth to a healthy baby remains a defining factor in women’s lives today. Orenstein, after taking her first little white Clomid pill, recalls, “it was in that moment that desire and denial merged to become obsession; it was then, right then, that doing anything to get pregnant, regardless of the consequences became possible.”⁶⁹

The hope ART provides women encourages them to pursue subsequent treatments, even after they experience disappointment of a failed attempt. During my interviews, I asked the women I spoke with to comment on what second attempts with ART are like and why they agreed to them.

MM: What is the hardest part about using ART?

Jackie: The hardest part was the disappointment of getting your period after a round.

Kathy: The hardest part is hoping that it works and if it does how many took.

Deanna: The scheduling and the waiting [is the hardest part].

MM: How many times did you use ART? If more than once, how are the subsequent attempts different?

Jackie: My doctor said we would try three rounds of intrauterine insemination⁷⁰ with injections before we considered in vitro. I got pregnant on the third attempt. When the intrauterine insemination was successful on the third try, we learned that five

embryos were implanted. We saw a specialist and selective reduction⁷¹ was strongly recommended. We decided to reduce the pregnancy from five to two. That was the hardest decision I think I've ever had to make. I wound up giving birth ten weeks early, and the twins were only two pounds and a couple of ounces each. I can't imagine that if I had kept all five, they would have been born healthy. I would not do intrauterine insemination again unless they could guarantee that only one embryo would implant. I will not ever do selective reduction again. That was so emotionally painful, and I still harbor guilt to this day.

Kathy: I tried IVF two times; the first time, the doctor used Lupron which suppressed my cycle too much that I did not get a good response to the medication. I then tried again two months later. I did not get a great response again, and the doctor suggested that I use donor eggs. I then used his program to choose a donor and use her eggs. My husband and I had to see a psychologist about the impacts of this choice. I also had been going to an acupuncturist to help with the infertility. When the time came, the doctor implanted two embryos and they both took. I had three embryos frozen.

Deanna: I am currently going through my second round of IVF after I didn't get pregnant last year while using in vitro. This time, I have a different mindset. I am more positive. I think of it as another chance.

MM: Do you or did you ever get discouraged when you were trying to get pregnant "naturally" or while you were using ART?

Jackie: Yes, all the time. I think you always hope in the back of your mind that it will happen "normally." I would get depressed for sure. Plus, people would always tell you stories about women whose doctors told them they would never get pregnant

on their own and by some miracle they do, so you always kinda think, hey, that could be me!

Kathy: It was a little discouraging when trying naturally and know that you have ovulated since now you can buy a test that tells you when it is going to happen and it still does not happen. Your hopes are even higher when the doctor says you have eggs and still nothing happens.

Deanna: You can't help but think "why me?" I just think that I can't do it naturally and I need some assistance. With IVF, I am still using all my womanly parts and contributing.

Perhaps one of the reasons why so many women who have fertility problems become obsessed with becoming pregnant and having a baby stems from their own feelings of shame and worthlessness that accompany their inability to control their reproductive functioning. Maureen Wendell, a woman who struggled with fertility, explains to May, "I began to feel defective, ashamed. I can't do a 'normal' biological function that most anyone else can do. I had to re-evaluate my life, my hopes, my dreams and my identity as a woman. I am blessed to have a very supportive husband but even with that I felt inadequate as a wife."⁷² Because of her infertility and inability to reproduce naturally, Maureen Wendell was forced to question her womanhood and her purpose as a female. The possibility that a fertility treatment, such as IVF or surrogacy, can give these women what they want most, a baby, is both a blessing and a curse. May explains, "one reason why infertility is so wrenching is that treatment holds out the possibility of a 'miracle cure,' making it difficult to give up, grieve, and find acceptance. To pursue medical intervention means to hold out hope and experience disappointment month after month, which the possibility of pregnancy still exists."⁷³ The emotional roller coaster that oftentimes accompanies infertility treatments is a ride that is not ridden alone.

In a society that is driven by a consumer and producer ethic, and is based upon working in order to obtain rewards which lead to a fulfilling life, it is no surprise that reproduction has entered that discourse. Leavitt explains, "Reproduction is linked to both the consumer and producer ethos. Children are both a reward for hard work *and* one of the few products that can still be created by the labor of one's own body. For most American, children are central to their vision of the good life; most polls show that children are still highly desired."⁷⁴ Because reproduction is "created by the labor of one's own body," infertility is more than inability to produce children; for some, it is also an affliction to their sense of manhood or womanhood.

My exchanges with Deanna and Jackie further illustrates this point:

MM: Do you assume the blame for not being able to have children "naturally?"

Deanna: Not being able to get pregnant on my own has made me question my feeling of womanhood. In the beginning, I felt embarrassed and shameful because I couldn't do it on my own.

Jackie: Yes, I assume the blame. Phil [her husband] was tested and there was nothing wrong on his end. I had polycystic ovaries, endometriosis, and insulin resistance. I was on the pill for almost 10 years before trying to get pregnant and thought that has something to do with me not being able to get pregnant.

Though only over 1% of all infants born in the United States every year are conceived using ART, reproductive technologies have flooded discourse surrounding reproduction.⁷⁵ Laura Harrison writes, "reproductive technologies have become an increasingly normalized and culturally accepted component of family formation in the twenty-first century United States."⁷⁶ Similarly, Elaine Browne quotes Burfoot (1990) saying, "increased technological intervention in reproduction, such as IVF, has become 'normalised' – ie innovative techniques are

now accepted as normal procedures.”⁷⁷ The fascination with and normalization of ART have helped women who use ART feel less stigmatized.

MM: Do you feel stigmatized by society at large because you are using or have used science and medicine in order to get pregnant?

Jackie: No, not at all. In fact, many women I talk to readily share information about having to seek help getting pregnant. There are many sets of multiples in my kids’ grade alone.

Kathy: It seems that a lot of my friends or friends of friends had used some type of science and medicine to get pregnant.

Deanna: I don’t feel stigmatized at all because of the society that we live in. There is a commonality and acceptance in our society with ART, so I don’t think people judge me or look at me any differently for using in vitro.

American women have been defined by their ability, or inability, to reproduce since the seventeenth-century. Though women have always reared children, it was not until capitalist industrialization that the domestic became exclusively feminine. This forced women to take sole responsibility for child care, which increased their emotional role within the family, as well as their psychological mothering role.⁷⁸ As Chodorow explains, “mothering is most eminently a psychologically based role. It consists in psychological and personal experience of self in relationship to child or children.”⁷⁹ Until the twentieth-century, women who were unable to bear children were marginalized from society and were forced to prove their “worthiness” through acts of piety and charity, which usually involved caring for other’s children and performing domestic duties. However, with the advent of ART in the twentieth-century, “the promise of a technological fix, combined with a faith in medical progress, led many Americans to believe that they could triumph over most physical limitations.”⁸⁰ Dissimilar to the notion held by radical feminists that

ART is “part of a male attempt to control female sexuality and fertility,” the interviews I conducted with three women who have used some form of ART prove that technological treatments for infertility are a woman’s attempt to control her own female sexuality and fertility.⁸¹ Because mothering has been embedded in the female psyche through mother-daughter relationships, most women feel like they will always become mothers. Technological and scientific advances in ART have allowed women who struggle with fertility the opportunity to achieve that dream. As Kathy said at the conclusion of our interview, “I feel they are my babies since they were implanted in me and I was able to feel them grow and gave birth to them. I am very grateful that science has come this far with using donors, if not I would probably not have my family.”

Appendix A

Assisted Reproductive Technology Cycle Profile	
Type of ART	Percentage
In Vitro Fertilization	> 99%
Gamete Intrafallopian Transfer (GIFT)	< 1%
Zygote Intrafallopian Transfer (ZIFT)	< 1%
Combination	< 1%

Procedural Factors	Percentage
With Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI)	66%
Unstimulated	< 1%
Used gestational carrier	< 1%
Use of Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD)	4%
With Elective Single-Embryo Transfer (eSET)	6%

Patient Diagnosis	Percentage
Tubal factor	7%
Ovulatory dysfunction	7%
Diminished ovarian reserve	15%
Endometriosis	4%
Uterine factor	1%
Male factor	17%
Other factor	7%
Unknown factor	12%
<i>Multiple Factors:</i>	
Female factors only	11%
Female & Male factors	18%

Pregnancy Success Rates						
Fresh Embryos (Nondonor Eggs)	< 35	35-37	38-40	41-42	43-44	> 44
Number of Cycles	41,744	21,369	21,741	10,122	4,501	1,347
Embryos transferred resulting in implantation	36.5%	26.9%	17.7%	9.6%	4.2%	1.7%
Cycles resulting in pregnancies	47.6%	38.8%	29.9%	19.9%	10.6%	3.2%
Percentage of cycles resulting in live births*	41.5%	31.9%	22.1%	12.4%	5.0%	1.0%
Percentage of retrievals resulting in live births*	44.4%	35.4%	25.3%	14.8%	6.3%	1.4%
Percentage of transfers resulting in live births*	47.6%	38.3%	28.1%	16.7%	7.4%	1.8%
Percentage of transfers resulting in singleton live births*	31.4%	27.3%	21.5%	13.7%	6.6%	1.6%
Percentage of cancellations	6.6%	9.9%	12.8%	16.4%	20.6%	25.5%
Average number of embryos transferred	2.0%	2.2%	2.6%	3.0%	3.2%	2.7%
Percentage of pregnancies with twins	32.9%	27.3%	21.6%	15.0%	8.1%	2.3%
Percentage of pregnancies with triplets or more	2.6%	3.1%	3.7%	3.0%	0.6%	2.3%
Percentage of live births having multiple infant	34.0%	28.7%	23.3%	18.0%	10.2%	14.3%

Fresh Embryos (Nondonor Eggs)	< 35	35-37	38-40	41-42	43-44	> 44
Number of transfers	12631	6195	4682	1591	710	432
Percentage of transfers Resulting in live births	38.4%	34.7%	28.4%	21.5%	16.8%	13.0%
Average number embryos transferred	2.0%	1.9%	2.1%	2.2%	2.2%	2.0%
Donor Eggs (All Ages Combined)	Fresh Embryos		Frozen Embryos			
Number of transfers	9,866		6,665			
Percentage of transfers resulting in live births	55.8%		24.9%			
Average number of embryos transferred	2.0%		2.0%			

*A multiple-infant birth is counted as one live birth

Current Clinic Services and Profile	
Total Number of Clinics:	443
Donor Egg	93%
Donor embryo	69%
Single women	95%
Gestational Carriers	84%
Cryopreservation	99%

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- ¹ Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 11.
- ² Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), xi.
- ³ Judith Walzer Leavitt, *Brought to Bed: Childbearing in America, 1750-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 35.
- ⁴ Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering*, xiii.
- ⁵ *Ibid*, 7.
- ⁶ *Ibid*, 41.
- ⁷ *Ibid*, 7.
- ⁸ *Ibid*.
- ⁹ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid*, 4
- ¹¹ *Ibid*.
- ¹² *Ibid*, 4-5.
- ¹³ *Ibid*, 5.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid*, 39.
- ¹⁵ Elaine Tyler May, *Barren in the Promised Land: Childless Americans and the Pursuit of Happiness* (First Harvard University Press, 1997), 21.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid*, 25.
- ¹⁷ Leavitt, *Brought to Bed*, 14.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid*, 18-19.
- ¹⁹ Jan Lewis and Kenneth A. Lockridge, “‘Sally Has Been Sick’: Pregnancy and Family Limitation Among Virginia gentry Women, 1780-1930” (*Journal of Social History*: 2001), 6.
- ²⁰ *Ibid*, 8.
- ²¹ *Ibid*, 7.
- ²² *Ibid*, 8.
- ²³ May, *Barren in the Promised Land*, 37.
- ²⁴ Lewis and Lockridge, “‘Sally Has Been Sick’”, 10.
- ²⁵ *Ibid*, 12.
- ²⁶ Leavitt, *Brought to Bed*, 91
- ²⁷ *Ibid*, 87.
- ²⁸ May, *Barren in the Promised Land*, 34.
- ²⁹ Leavitt, *Brought to Bed*, 108.
- ³⁰ *Ibid*, 109.
- ³¹ *Ibid*, 99.
- ³² *Ibid*, 39.
- ³³ *Ibid*.
- ³⁴ *Ibid*, 102.
- ³⁵ *Ibid*.

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- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ Ibid, 103.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Ibid, 106.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid, 107.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002), 231.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ May, *Barren in the Promised Land*, 182.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid, 188.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid, 209.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid, 217.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ Susan Markens, *Surrogate Motherhood and the Politics of Reproduction* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 5.
- ⁵¹ CDC National Report on Fertility, 2006
- ⁵² France Winddance Twine, *Outsourcing the Womb: Race, Class, and Gestational Surrogacy in a Global Market* (New York: Routledge, 2011), ix.
- ⁵³ CDC Glossary
- ⁵⁴ Twine, *Outsourcing the Womb*, ix.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁶ Laura Harrison, “Brown Bodies, White Eggs: The Politics of Cross-racial Gestational Surrogacy”, *Twenty-first-century Motherhood: Experience, Identity, Policy, Agency* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 263.
- ⁵⁷ Twine, *Outsourcing the Womb*, 11.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ Markens, *Surrogate Motherhood and the Politics of Reproduction*, 3.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid, 4.
- ⁶¹ Ibid.
- ⁶² May, *Barren in the Promised Land*, 222.
- ⁶³ CDC
- ⁶⁴ May, *Barren in the Promised Land*, 218.
- ⁶⁵ Peggy Orenstein, *Waiting for Daisy: A Tale of Two Continents, Three Religions, Five Infertility Doctors, an Oscar, an Atomic Bomb, a Romantic Night, and One Woman’s Quest to Become a Mother* (Bloomsbury USA, 2007), 64.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid, 58.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid, 59.
- ⁶⁸ University of Maryland Medical Center, “Ovarian Cancer – Risk Factors & Prevention” (http://www.umm.edu/patiented/articles/who_gets_ovarian_cancer_what_causes_it_000092_3.hth#ixzz2FEoEamJm, 2008)

⁶⁹ Orenstein, *Waiting for Daisy*, 60.

⁷⁰ According to the CDC, intrauterine insemination (IUI) is defined as, “a medical procedure that involves placing sperm into a woman’s uterus to facilitate fertilization.” Though IUI is not considered an ART procedure because it does not involve the manipulation of a woman’s eggs, science, technology, and medicine are used throughout the IUI process. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Appendix B, <http://www.cdc.gov/art/ART2009/appixb.htm#I>).

⁷¹ Selective reduction, also known as multifetal pregnancy reduction, is, “a procedure used to decrease the number of fetuses a woman carries and improve the chances that the remaining fetuses will develop into healthy infants.” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Appendix B, <http://www.cdc.gov/art/ART2009/appixb.htm#I>).

⁷² May, *Barren in the Promised Land*, 219.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 224.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 212.

⁷⁵ CDC, <http://www.cdc.gov/art/index.htm>

⁷⁶ Laura Harrison, “Brown Bodies, White Eggs,” 261.

⁷⁷ Elaine Denny, “Liberation or oppression? radical feminism and in vitro fertilisation” (*Sociology of Health & Illness*, Vol. 16 No. 1, 1994), 74.

⁷⁸ Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Motherhood*, 6.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 32.

⁸⁰ May, *Barren in the Promised Land*, 217.

⁸¹ Denny, “Liberation or oppression? radical feminism and in vitro fertilisation,” 70.

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