



intersections

women's and gender studies
in review across disciplines

“Gender Politics”

The University of Texas at Austin
Issue 6, Fall 2008

Intersections: Women's and Gender Studies in Review across Disciplines is a graduate student publication committed to promoting the interdisciplinary research of women and gender. Published by graduate students at The University of Texas at Austin, *Intersections* seeks to create a feminist-centered space in which members of all academic disciplines can explore the depth and breadth of the study of women and gender. *Intersections* is building a community of voices across disciplines by: (1) Creating a space in which graduate students can participate in the process of academic publication; (2) Encouraging an environment in which academics and advocates can explore the intersections of their work, drawing connections between and among the multiple communities associated with women's and gender studies; (3) Facilitating a conversation of powerful voices joined in dialogue about women's and gender studies.

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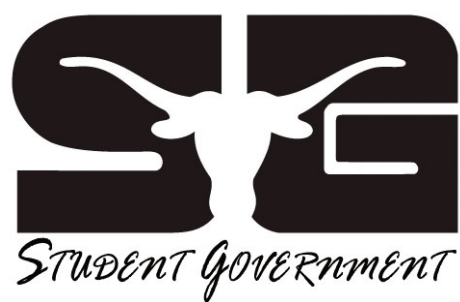
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Advisory Editors' Note

Greetings from the Advisory Editors of Intersections!

We, Jennifer Zalgison and Corinne Reczek, are please to bring you Issue 6 of *Intersections: Women's and Gender Studies in Review Across Disciplines*. Both of us were a part of Issue 5's creation, Jennifer as the Managing Editorial Director and Corinne as Editor. We were pleased to be asked to lead *Intersections* for its sixth issue, and, thanks to our hard working staff, are thrilled to have helped produce such a fine piece of gender studies scholarship.

During this past year, the staff at *Intersections* has worked hard to create a multi-disciplinary journal and establish the presence of the journal in the University of Texas at Austin's (UT) feminist and academic communities. We are proud of these endeavors, and would say they were quite effective. We received more submissions from authors representing a greater variety of departments and disciplines than ever before, with 32 abstract submitted, representing eleven departments at UT and ten submissions from graduate programs across the United States. We even had one international submission from a university in Germany. Submissions rolled in from high quality schools like New York University, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, and the University of Wisconsin. At UT, we received submissions from a wide breath of departments such as Anthropology, Advertising, Communication, and Sociology.

In addition to open up our submissions across the country and globe, we were able to secure more substantial support from a more diverse collection of university and private funding, and plan to continue to grow financially in the coming year. We thank our contributors, the Center for Women's and Gender Studies at UT, The University Co-Op, the Student Government, and the Gender and Sexualities Center at UT. The interest in and support of our interdisciplinary feminist academic project has never been stronger, and we, the advisory editors, are excited for the future directions of this project.

We have already picked our incredible staff for the next journal addition, Issue 7, and have great hopes for our future staff members. We know they will continue to grow funding and institutional support for *Intersections* in the coming year. Additionally, we have picked our theme for Issue 7 to coincide with the Center for Women's and Gender Studies theme of *Performing Gender*. Please see our call for papers included in this issue, and consider submitting to Issue 7. We look forward to continuing our graduate student run feminist project, and hope you enjoy Issue 6, *Gender Politics*.

Corinne Reczek
Jennifer Zalgison
The University of Texas at Austin

Editors' Note

Hello from the Editors of *Intersections*!

The theme for this sixth issue of *Intersections: Women's and Gender Studies in Review Across Disciplines*, could not be more timely. In the 2008 Presidential race, we saw a woman's Presidential candidacy that was only delegates away from a party nomination. We also saw the first woman on a Republican Presidential ticket. Given these important landmarks in women's participation in national politics, the staff of *Intersections* presents an issue that addresses the concept of "gender politics," broadly defined.

We invited submissions from graduate students whose research addressed some aspect of the political nature of gender and the gendered nature of politics. The contributions appearing in the following pages serve to remind us that the study of gender politics is not merely an analysis of women's status in formal politics. Rather, they illuminate the pervasiveness and power of gender politics in shaping our identities, our institutions, and even our social movement strategies. The contributions in this issue also remind us that gender is itself shaped by the interaction of many forms of inequality, including racism, classism, and imperialism.

A number of the contributions in this issue shed light on the ways in which our political, cultural, and social context shapes our social movement strategies for gender justice. In her examination of the Kuwaiti women's movement, Dana Al-Ebrahim explains why many women were willing to acquiesce to the patriarchal practices of the Kuwaiti government in exchange for maintenance of their social and economic privileges. Along these same lines, in her discussion of lesbian and transgender public sex spaces, Heather Wollin examines the ways in which participants' decisions regarding their presentation of gender are politicized within the context of sex clubs and sex parties in New York. Jessica Johnson examines the strategy of "outing" of closeted conservative gays and how this strategy is shaped by a neo-liberal framework that justified the practice of surveillance. Similarly, Jane Meek illuminates the ways in which the Human Rights Campaign has framed its political strategy within a liberal framework of civil rights. Meek argues that gays and lesbians will not emerge from the margins of society without a more radical framework that includes a deconstruction of gender.

Several articles appearing in this issue serve to remind Western feminists to be diligently reflective as we place value judgments upon and interfere in the politics of other nations as well as marginalized groups within the US. These authors remind us to place ideas and people within their social, cultural, and even literary contexts. Karin Friederic presents findings from her ethnographic study of domestic violence in the El Páramo region of Ecuador. She challenges the effectiveness of propagating a human rights discourse within a political and cultural context that denies women access to resources to make personal decisions on the basis of this ideology. Katherine Cumings Mansfield presents a policy analysis of the French ban on young girls' wearing of the hijab in public schools. Mansfield urges us to critically examine both the intended and unintended consequences of the adoption of the hijab ban for Muslim immigrants in France. Likewise, in his critique of the film, "*Conversations Across the Bosphorus*," Hikmet Kocamaner illuminates the ways in which Western feminists serve to silence the true experiences of Muslim women by failing to recognize and legitimize Muslim women's agency in their decision to wear headscarves.

In a somewhat different but related vein, Devon Wallace analyzes Charlotte Perkins Gilman's texts and argues that in order to understand *Herland*, the racially problematic sequel *With Her in Ourland* must be considered along with it.

The staff of *Intersections* would be remiss to publish an issue on gender politics without an analysis of the 2008 Presidential election. Beth Latshaw presents findings from her content analysis of media coverage of the 2008 Presidential primaries. She illuminates the ways in which media coverage of the campaign was distinctly gendered.

Three book reviews relating to the topic of gender politics appear in this issue of *Intersections*. Elyshia Aseltine discusses *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory and the Sacred*, a collection of essays by M. Jacqui Alexander that examine transnational discourses of power that serve to reify various forms of social inequality around the globe. Emily Neff-Sharum discusses *Rethinking Madam President: Are We Ready for a Woman in the White House?* By Lori Cox Han and Caroline Heldman, a collection of essays that examines the challenges a woman faces in making a successful run for the office of President. Finally, Kimberly Campanello reviews *Look Both Ways: Bisexual Politics* by Jennifer Baumgardner. Campanello explores Baumgardner's claim that bisexuality offers valuable insight for women seeking egalitarian feminist relationships and that bisexual women are uniquely positioned to reap the benefits of both straight and gay expectations.

This issue's faculty contributor, Pascale Bos, discusses her personal journey to answer this question: do those of us in academia have a role to play in creating social change? "Asked what I did this summer while working on my 'depressing' subjects, I can thus answer in surprisingly positive fashion: I reaffirmed my belief that gender politics belongs in academia, and that academic work can prove itself relevant to politics." Her answer should inspire us all to continue our work on gender politics. We would like to thank every contributor to this issue, our reviewers, copy editors, and everyone who helped make this issue a success. We keep Dr. Bos' message in mind as we enjoy the articles in this issue and begin work on a new and exciting issue of *Intersections*. At the end of this issue is a call for papers for Issue 7 on the topic of *Performing Gender*, and we encourage all of you whose academic work and commitment to feminism are in dialogue with each other to consider submitting.

Intersections Editorial Board

Perna Arora

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Political Rights: A Brief Look at the Kuwaiti Women's Movement

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Abstract

From the beginning of Kuwaiti parliamentary life and the inauguration of the National Assembly in 1962, Kuwaiti women have been demanding political rights granted them in the Kuwaiti Constitution. Despite the many prominent roles that women take in Kuwait in both public and private sectors, Kuwaiti women have been deprived of their right to vote and run for Parliament for approximately 45 years. Prior to women's enfranchisement in 2005, women protested their exclusion from political life in various ways. This paper will introduce the reader to the various women's associations in Kuwait and show how these groups were often willing to acquiesce to patriarchal dominance to maintain their beneficial social and economic status. I hope to show that the women's associations that have adhered to Kuwait's inclusion-exclusion paradigm are the ones that have lasted and remain active in the women's rights movement today. Since their inception, women's associations have in different ways called for women's inclusion into Kuwaiti society. As time progressed, the organizations adopted the platform for women's suffrage; until recently, however, they were not able to form a strong, unified faction to challenge the existing traditional patriarchal system.

Introduction

This paper will introduce the reader to a brief history of the women's movement and the various women's associations in Kuwait. I hope to document that while Kuwaiti women created various avenues through which they could battle their exclusion from society, they were often willing to acquiesce to patriarchal dominance to maintain their beneficial social and economic status. By adhering to the overarching patriarchal system, merchant-class women aligned themselves with men to ensure their superior societal position, in lieu of achieving greater gender equality.

Using sources by Haya Al-Mughni, Mary Ann Tétreault, Anh Nga Longva, and Margot Badran, I will show that the women's associations that have adhered to Kuwait's inclusion-exclusion paradigm are the ones that have lasted and remain active in the women's rights movement today. By studying the main women's organizations, their transformation from the 1960s to the present, and their impact on society vis-à-vis the state, I hope to elucidate how women hindered their own enfranchisement in the Kuwaiti political arena.

From the beginning of Kuwaiti parliamentary life and the inauguration of the National Assembly in 1962, Kuwaiti women have been demanding political rights

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granted them in the Kuwaiti Constitution. Despite the many prominent roles that women take in Kuwait in both public and private sectors, Kuwaiti women have been deprived of their right to vote and run for Parliament for approximately 45 years. This changed on May 16, 2005, when in a vote passed by 35 to 23 with one abstention, Kuwaiti women were given the right to vote and to stand for public office ("Kuwaiti Women Celebrate," 2005).

In Kuwait, equality has been absent from state policies, which consider women, as second-class members of society, to be dependent on men (Rizzo, 2005). While articles 29 and 30 of the Kuwaiti Constitution grant Kuwaiti women their rights by stating that personal liberty is guaranteed and that "all people are equal in human dignity, in public rights and duties before the law, without distinction to race, origin, language or religion" (National Assembly, 2002), and they were granted their political rights in a 1999 decree by Amir Jabir Al-Sabah (r. 1977-2006), it was not until 2005 that Parliament voted in favor of giving elite women their constitutional right to vote and run for Parliament.

Class System

The class system in Kuwait is a very formal structure, and only a fraction of the Kuwaiti population enjoys full political rights. Of Kuwait's one million citizens, 340,000 have the right to vote, of which 195,000 are women ("28 Among 253," 2006). To participate in the parliamentary system, a person must be classified as originally Kuwaiti or *asil*. The Nationality Law of 1959—still in effect today—defines *asil* as members of the ruling family, those permanently residing in Kuwait since 1920, and children of Kuwaiti fathers. The biggest difference between first (*asil*) and second-class citizens can be felt at the national level of political participation, as only *asils* can vote for or hold parliamentary office. The defining marker of citizenship is not religious affiliation, as both Sunni and Shi'a citizens can be either first- or second-class citizens; rather, it is the date of migration. Those who settled in Kuwait prior to 1920 and participated in the 1920 Battle of Jahra are *asil*, while those who immigrated between 1920 and 1948 are second-class citizens (Meyer, Rizzo, & Ali, 1998). The 1920 date is not arbitrary; rather, it is the date that all of Kuwait's population participated in saving the city and the nearby town of Jahra, which was a major source of water for families. The town was being threatened by the Sa'uds of Riyadh and their *ikhwan* forces, and in response, Amir Salim Al-Sabah (r. 1917-1921) ordered the building of a wall around Jahra, which was accomplished in two short months. The sense of urgency in building the wall required, as historian Abu-Hakima stated, "the unfailing support and personal involvement of each and every individual Kuwaiti, man or woman" (Abu-Hakima, 1983, p. 133). The customs and norms of Kuwait were overridden during this time of need. The necessity of building the security wall called for the inclusion of women, and while women participated in the rapid building of the wall, they were not rewarded. This lack of benefits resulting from women's involvement during a time of crisis would be seen again during the 1990 Gulf War. The Battle of Jahra remains, to this day, an important historical date, and the bonds built between the large families and tribes that participated continue to exist (Abu-Hakima, 1983). It is this battle that marks the separation between first- and second-class citizens.

Associations in Kuwait

All voluntary associations in Kuwait, including women's groups, are controlled and

funded by the State. Organizations must have an elected board, a written constitution, and paid membership. By decree of law 24 of 1962 (amended in 1965 and still in force), the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor has full control over all voluntary associations and may refuse to license any association or dissolve its board and terminate the association if it is determined that the association is not beneficial to society as a whole, or it is not abiding by its constitution (Al-Mughni, 1996). Researcher and Kuwaiti sociologist Haya Al-Mughni (1996) asserted that women's organizations, as the only legitimate forum for Kuwaiti women to engage in public activity, have inhibited the development of the feminist movement, providing elite women with the power to control other women's access to the public sphere. As a way of maintaining their hold on their limited power, women formed associations based on class allegiances and kinship, seeking a legitimate forum to discuss their needs and display their exclusivity. Currently, there are five women's associations licensed in Kuwait: The Women's Cultural and Social Society, licensed in 1963; the Girls' Club, licensed in 1975; Bayadar Al-Salaam, licensed in 1981; the Islamic Care Society (ICS), licensed in 1982; and the Volunteer Women's Association for Community Service, licensed in 1991. Membership in these associations is overlapping, and the majority of the members are middle-aged, upper-class women.

The Early Associations

The creation of the women's associations was brought about due to the development of the oil economy and the creation of the modern state. The necessity of integrating Kuwaiti women into the national economy (Al-Mughni, 1996) was the impetus in forming the first two women's associations in 1963. The Women's Cultural and Social Society (WCSS) was formed by Lulwa Al-Qatami, a woman of the first class, whereas the Arab Women's Development Society (AWDS), no longer in existence, was formed by television producer Nuriya Al-Saddani, who was a member of the middle class. Although Al-Saddani reached out to the WCSS to create an umbrella organization under which they could work to benefit Kuwaiti women, she was rejected by the elite women of the WCSS. For more than a decade, these two organizations were the only associations which spoke and acted on behalf of Kuwaiti women.

In a time of rapid modernization and state-building, women's associations gave Kuwaiti women access to the public sphere and to the world of male politics, from which they had previously been excluded. In 1963, the WCSS provided a social gathering place for educated merchant-class women to volunteer. Elite, first-class women were the first to work outside the home and to remove the veil (De Onis, 1974),¹ while their inclusion into the workplace served the interests of their male counterparts. The elite class was willing to change its social mores and traditions, enabling women to work outside the home, to ensure that the emerging middle class would not take over prestigious positions. To the male elite, educated upper-class women posed less of a threat than the upwardly mobile men from modest backgrounds (Tétreault & Al-Mughni, 1995). The elite women of the WCSS played an important role in class politics and their public activities served both their class and gender interests.

The women of the AWDS focused on issues that the WCSS refused to address, namely gender equality and women's citizenship rights. The AWDS challenged official policies on women's status, demanding the extension of political rights, equality in employment, the restriction of polygamy, the appointment of women as

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special attorneys to draft family law, and the provision of child allowances to married women (Al-Mughni, 1996). The AWDS succeeded in 1973 in forcing the all-male National Assembly to discuss an equal rights bill (Al-Mughni, 1996). The women were blocked by opponents of the bill, who demanded the "preservation of the patriarchal integrity of the society, claiming that Islam gave men and women different responsibilities and made men superior to women" (Al-Mughni, 1996, p. 33). Supporters of the bill were nationalists who advocated for individual rights and democracy. The equal rights bill angered the male community and threatened the patriarchal political system that existed, and with the support of the government, the assembly avoided voting on the bill (Al-Mughni, 1996). The AWDS's desire to expand the feminist struggle, demand political rights, and place restrictions on the patriarchal authority that underpinned Kuwaiti society met with resistance from both Kuwaiti men and the government. The government's ability to hinder the AWDS's activities was assisted by the disunity and rivalry that existed between the elite members of the WCSS and the middle-class members of the AWDS (Tétreault & Al-Mughni, 1995).

This hindrance came in the form of increased state intervention to protect family roles and to reduce the influence of secular and feminist movements (Al-Mughni, 1996). In 1978, Amir Jabir Al-Sabah addressed the public and "stressed his government's dedication to the Islamization of society" (Al-Mughni, 1996, p. 34). That same year, the Personal Status Law was enacted, legitimizing the control of men over women.

During the same time, the AWDS started the Girls' Club in the hopes of having a political ally to help strengthen their political activities. Instead, the members of the new organization, which comprised both upper- and middle-class women, formed an all-inclusive sports club, whose members were not interested in pursuing political activities, but rather sporting activities. Thus, the attempt by the AWDS to ally themselves with another women's association never came to fruition.

The activities of the WCSS in the 1960s and 1970s revolved around strengthening kinship ties within their class and with "Arab sisters" from neighboring countries (Al-Mughni, 2001). While not all members of the WCSS were related, the private parties and social events hosted by the WCSS provided the women with an opportunity to solidify their positions in society and to form a cohesive bond with other women from the same social strata (Al-Mughni, 2001).

The WCSS was the first organization to introduce the concept of the charity bazaar, selling luxury items at prices left to the discretion of the buyer, which enabled them to build their headquarters. And while the women of the WCSS provided charity by distributing clothing to low-income families and visiting hospitals, they did little to improve the lives of the lower middle class.

It was not until the mid-1970s that the women of the WCSS became truly interested in advancing women. The involvement was forced upon them by the government, which was accusing the women's organization of not contributing to society, and in 1975, the WCSS "undertook a survey of the factors preventing illiterate women from attending adult literacy class" (Al-Mughni, 2001, p. 76). They also established a nursery, which by 1980 had ten classrooms, and by 1987, was run by 18 teachers and had over 175 students (Al-Mughni, 2001).

The AWDS on the other hand aimed at modernizing women, believing that education was the most important factor in their liberation. As the AWDS came into contact with other Arab feminist organizations, the leaders realized that if the position of women was to change, "society had to alter its attitude and enforce legislation which would promote and guarantee gender equality" (Al-Mughni, 2001, p. 77). Unlike the women of the WCSS, the AWDS held conferences to bring women together and raise awareness of gender discrimination. The members of the AWDS took interest in the lives of the underprivileged and believed that education would "liberate women from the state of 'ignorance' to which they had long been condemned" (Al-Mughni, 2001, p. 78).

In 1971, inspired by Huda Al-Shaarawi's campaign for women's enfranchisement in Egypt and the AWDS's affiliation with Al-Shaarawi's Arab Feminist Union, Al-Saddani organized a Kuwaiti Women's Conference. The turnout at the conference included over 100 women, both professionals and housewives, elite and middle-class women (Al-Mughni, 2001). The women of the educated, elite class were feeling alienated by the solely philanthropic nature of the WCSS and were looking at the AWDS for a more radical feminist challenge. The conference was held for and by women, and provided Kuwaiti women with a forum to express their feelings of dissatisfaction with discriminatory government policies in employment and education. They drafted petitions to approach the National Assembly within the framework of the Kuwaiti constitution. The women argued that the small size of Kuwait required the use of all of Kuwait's citizens to build the nation (Al-Mughni, 2001).

In 1980, sparked by a financial argument amongst AWDS members, the government charged Al-Saddani with financial fraud and closed the AWDS. Under the charge, Al-Saddani went into exile in the United Arab Emirates. She later returned to Kuwait in an attempt to start a new women's organization, which the government refused to license.

The first half of the 1980s saw the dissolution of AWDS, and Kuwaiti women were left with the WCSS and the Girls' Club to promote the suffrage cause. When a bill to grant women political rights was put to the vote in the National Assembly in 1982, neither group had campaigned effectively to gain the deputies' affirmative vote. After the closure of the AWDS, the government, eager to shift the "character of women's public discourse from demands for autonomy to the advocacy of values whose practical effect is to reinforce female subjugation" (Tétreault & Al-Mughni, 1995, p. 410), licensed two Islamic organizations. Amidst the rivalry of the women's organizations throughout the 1970s, the country had seen an increase in state intervention to protect family roles and to reduce the influence of secular and feminist movements (Al-Mughni, 1996). As a result of the state's intervention and the Amir's public support of the Islamization of the country, the Personal Status Law of 1978, which legitimized the control of men over women, was formalized. This law disallowed women from contracting their own marriages regardless of their age, and once married a woman's mobility could be restricted by her husband (Human Rights Watch, 2000). Earlier clauses of the penal code relating to women's honor and reputation were amended to bring tougher sentences to female offenders. An example of this was the increased period of incarceration for women having sexual relations outside of marriage, which was doubled from five to ten years (Human Rights Watch, 2000).

Religious Organizations

The revival of the Islamic movement in the 1970s and 80s in the Middle East occurred in response to both the governments' inability to solve regional problems and the influence of westernization (Al-Mughni, 2001). As part of the Kuwaiti government's plan to reduce external, western influences, two religious women's organizations were licensed, Bayadar Al-Salaam and the Islamic Care Society. Additionally, there was a proliferation of literature on "women's rights and duties in Islam" (Al-Mughni, 2001, p. 34). The Islamic veil, *hijab*, made a reappearance,² and there was a new model for womanhood. Although there was not a consensus on what space women should occupy, the religious groups and organizations called for women to return to more traditional female virtues. Women were defined as having moral duties to raise good children, strengthen family ties and ties to the State, and defend customs of society (Al-Mughni, 2001). These new organizations, made up of elite women, including the Crown Prince's wife, aligned themselves with the government and its ideology. They rejected the feminist platform of the AWDS, which had demanded reform in family law and called for gender equality and women's autonomy, and instead used "religion to defend the patriarchal family and women's subordinate role within it" (Tétreault & Al-Mughni, 1995, p. 411).

Bayadar Al-Salaam was officially licensed in 1983, and adhered to three principles: discipline, companionship, and uniform. Their headquarters acted as a place of worship and both members and visitors had to adopt certain behavioral patterns in recognition of, and respect for, its sanctity. Most of the organization's members were newly graduated college students and secondary education teachers. The women were drawn to the organization because of "the emphasis placed upon companionship, the serenity of its leaders and their smiling faces" (Al-Mughni, 2001, p. 100). The organization emphasized the self rather than politics, and spiritual realization rather than material success, and drew many women who felt alienated and disheartened by the prevailing western values of modernization.

Although the group was attacked and labeled un-Islamic by both the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi (traditional/ancestral) groups for their Sufi practices, they maintained their small but dedicated membership. The basis of their organization was to educate women on Islam through readings from the Qur'an, courses on the Prophet's life, and the teachings of mystical songs, and by the late 1980s, Bayadar Al-Salaam was looking for ways "to reach illiterate and deprived women" (Al-Mughni, 2001, p. 104).

Another Islamic organization, the Islamic Care Society (ICS), was established by Sheikha Latifa Al-Sabah in 1982. The ICS held that the ideal woman worked for the interest of the family and society. The society grew out of lectures and religious seminars held at a neighboring mosque in the late 1970s for elite women. As attendance grew, so did the support of the government, which feared that the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood and Bayadar Al-Salaam would threaten the foundation of a secular national identity. For this reason, the government saw its task not simply as supporting the Islamization programs but, more importantly, as reinforcing the spirit of patriotism within an Islamic framework (Al-Mughni, 2001). The objectives of the ICS were to "'purify' Islam from distorted interpretations, to 'propagate' the true Islam and to 'build a Muslim life' in which the individual is a 'member of a family and of a society'" (Al-Mughni, 2001, p. 104).

Each of the women's organizations adhered to its own agenda, pushing for the advancement of women while advancing its members' own politics. The WCSS and the Islamic Care Society were established by elite women, both at the government's behest, to promote women's involvement, only inasmuch as it maintained the power of the elite class. The WCSS was established to give educated, elite women an arena to focus their energies and as a way of modernizing the country. These women were not relegated to the house, but served their fellow citizens. While the WCSS was a secular, elite organization, the ICS was a religious, elite organization, with many members from the ruling family. The ICS was created as a way of controlling the rising Islamic movement in Kuwait that threatened the power of both the ruling family and the elite class.

The secular organizations, the WCSS and the Girls' Club, supported the return to modesty and chastity, and "perpetuated the myth that Kuwaiti women's achievements in education and paid employment were synonymous with female emancipation" (Al-Mughni, 1996, p. 34). Throughout the 1980s, the women's associations worked closely with the government to teach women how to be better housewives and how to raise children within the confines of Kuwaiti culture (Al-Mughni, 1996).

The Gulf War and the Women's Resistance Movement

The Gulf War of 1990-91 introduced a new era in the women's movement, which enabled women to demonstrate their ability to mobilize a resistance movement that was structured and systematic. Their ability to move around Kuwait undetected while aiding in the liberation should have extended to their being granted voting rights (Badran, 1998). The women's readiness to protect Kuwait in the face of rape and violence and their adamant loyalty to the nation made women's demands for full political rights more compelling (Badran, 1998). During the defense of Kuwait, women of all socio-economic classes united to create a defense.

Women were at the center of the seven-month resistance to the Iraqi occupation. After three decades, women who still did not have their formal political rights were to play nationalist political roles, forging the gender solidarity that had until then eluded them (Badran, 1998). Women from all backgrounds came together along with resistance groups created abroad, such as the Women's Joint Resistance Committee in Cairo. The Kuwaiti government, in exile in Saudi Arabia, and external resistance committees assisted and coordinated with the resistance movement inside Kuwait. The women resisters inside Kuwait were referred to as the *samidat*, meaning the steadfast (Badran, 1998). They demonstrated publicly by marching in front of the 'Adailiyah Mosque, cloaked in the Kuwaiti 'abaya, a billowy, black garment worn over clothing in public to hide a woman's figure. The 'abaya, which had previously been rejected in lieu of modernization and the call for inclusion into politics and the public sphere, represented Kuwaiti women's rejection of the Iraqi occupation. Women became the protectors and men the protected, and during the war, gender roles and use of space were reversed. Kuwaiti women who burned their 'abayas in the 1960s in refusal to hide themselves and in demand for the ability to participate more fully in society and to enjoy political rights, returned to their 'abayas. Margot Badran (1998) noted that the 'abaya "had no cultural or religious significance, but became a weapon in the defense of women and the nation" (p. 194).

The women mobilized for resistance in a number of ways. They published a resist-

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ance paper, called *Al-Kuwaitiya* (The Kuwaiti Woman) which affirmed allegiance to the Kuwaiti government, kept alive the idea of a Kuwaiti nation, and advocated national sovereignty (Badran, 1998). The women addressed community needs, distributed food and medicine, and cared for widows, the infirm, and orphans. Their homes were turned into shelters for orphans, the disabled, stranded foreigners, and resistance fighters, and clinics were set up where women who had participated in first-aid courses could administer medicines and basic medical needs.

At the end of the Gulf War, Kuwaiti women hoped to maintain the solidarity that they had gained during the occupation and resistance. They wanted to direct their enhanced gender consciousness toward building a re-envisioned post-liberation Kuwait, and in this arena of solidarity and euphoria at having defended their nation and the recent liberation, women brought the issue of female suffrage back to political center stage, while also campaigning for the rights of second-class citizens and biduns (Longva, 1997).³ After the war, women demanded women's rights under the auspices of the constitution, and their roles in the resistance movement added urgency and legitimacy to their case (Badran, 1998). One of Kuwait's leading women, Rasha Al-Sabah, vice-rector of the University of Kuwait at the time of the invasion and founder of the Joint Women's Resistance Committee in Cairo, stated that "the prevention of Kuwaiti women from political participation and representation must be considered a form of discrimination against them as humans and citizens" (Badran, 1998, p. 199). But it was not long before the cohesion that the women had achieved under the occupation was divided along class, kin, ethnic, and sectarian lines.

The women's organizations faced two problems after the liberation of Kuwait. First, the organizations formed in the 1960s and 1970s were anachronistic by the 1990s. They did not have the means or the ability to mount the post-liberation task of campaigning for women's rights. These organizations were vehicles for reproducing class and kin divisions. Most of the younger women were more able to disregard the class and kin differences than their elders, creating a generational divide, but were unable to organize on their own. The stress of rebuilding the home and workplace was also high, as were increased divisions "between 'secularists' and 'Islamists' [which] added to women's difficulties in forging a broad gender alliance" (Badran, 1998, p. 201). Second, women faced a lack of serious support from men, both in political groups and at the head of the government. In his speech from Saudi Arabia in 1991, and again during his Ramadan speech in March 1992, the Amir applauded women's roles during the occupation. He also affirmed the need to grant women their political rights and promised to study the possibility of extending rights to women (Ferraro, 1991). In the new democratization campaign after liberation, the progressives and the liberals of the "Democratic Forum placed women's political rights on their agenda and were vociferous in calling for these rights in front of the media, especially the international media" (Badran, 1998, p. 201).

As the elections of 1992 drew nearer, the male candidates who had strongly voiced their demands for women's inclusion began to waver in the face of conservative social norms. Male progressive candidates undercut female suffrage by accepting the societal norm that women and men could not intermingle and by extension could not sit together in Parliament (Badran, 1998).

The debate between men and women intensified during the time of post-libera-

tion. Men were concerned with setting up their own power structures and getting their own people, mostly friends and family members, into positions of power to help keep them in power. For men and the government, women's political rights were subordinate to their own political interests and power needs, whereas for women, the ability to vote and be elected was an "ideological statement about their citizenship and a matter of exercise of their legitimate rights" (Badran, 1998, p. 202).

The internal politics that existed in women's organizations prevented women from gaining access to their constitutional rights. The gender cohesion that was achieved during the Gulf War no longer existed as class and kinship roles created barriers between women once more. Additionally, these barriers were reinforced and preserved by the elite male political culture and the state's concern for its longevity, which was best secured by preserving the gender status quo that maintained the political and economic power of the ruling class. Moreover, Saudi Arabia, which played a large role in the liberation of Kuwait, opposed the enfranchisement of women, and exerted political power on Kuwait (Badran, 1998).

In 1992, Kuwait held parliamentary elections for the first time since 1986.⁴ At the time, there were only 81,400 eligible voters out of Kuwait's 600,000 citizens ("Kuwaiti Women Demand," 1992), and none of the campaigners overtly discussed women's issues (MacFarquhar, 1992). During the 1996 elections, women protested their political exclusion at polling centers by carrying banners and placards, and by wearing blue ribbons, the symbol of the women's movement ("Women Demand Right," 1996). In 1996 there were 107,000 first-class men who were allowed to vote, 15 percent of the 700,000 citizens.

While it might seem that many liberal, educated, secularist, urban men might be proponents of the extension of women's rights, ironically they are the ones who push for maintaining the status quo. Past research by sociologists Helen Rizzo, Yousef Ali, and Katherine Meyer (2002) suggests that these men fear the inclusion of women in the electoral system because "Islamists and tribalists from nonurban areas have more wives and more influence over their wives" (p. 645). The elite class fears that it will lose its position of power within Parliament if women with conservative tendencies and those who follow Islamist beliefs enter the political arena (Rizzo, Ali, & Meyer, 2002).

Conclusion

When Kuwait began to export oil in the 1950s, modernization of the nation began with the influx of financial wealth. With this modernization of the state and its citizens, men of the elite class feared that their women would become bored and "might indulge in unlawful relationships with unrelated men" (Al-Mughni, 2001, p. 185). Consequently, the men encouraged the establishment of women's organizations. It was the strength behind Al-Saddani's AWDS and her demand for women's political rights and the restriction of polygamy that "forced men to notice that women could act as an autonomous group and make claims on men by exercising political pressure" (Al-Mughni, 2001, p. 185). In response to the women's activities, the Islamist movement was revived and the government presented itself as more Islamic.

The disunity between the women's organizations stems from the patriarchal class system that exists and the elites' interest in maintaining class hegemony, which over-

rides their desire for gender solidarity. In the 1980s, the women's organizations sought to maintain the status quo and endorsed the government's views on women's issues. After the dismantling of the AWDS, which fought for women's equality and autonomy, the other organizations, although pressing for women's suffrage, believed in the "asymmetrical relationship between men and women [that] must be sustained...The primary duty of every woman was to be both a loyal citizen and a 'perfect' mother" (Al-Mughni, 2001, p. 187).

Throughout the political instability, the elite women of the organizations were willing to accept gender inequality and the oppression of women in return for maintaining social hegemony over middle- and lower-class women. The gender disunity had greater implications for lower-class women, who suffered the most from discriminatory welfare policies.

It was not until May 16, 2005, that Kuwaiti women were given the right to vote and to run for Parliament. While not a single woman won a seat in Parliament in the 2006 elections, Ma'ssouma Al-Mubarak was appointed to the cabinet ("Kuwait's Woman Minister," 2005). Her tenure was marked by continued attacks by Sunni Islamist MPs who were threatened by her liberal tendencies, and she resigned from her position in August 2007 ("Kuwait's First Minister," 2007).

The second woman appointed to the cabinet, Nouriya Al-Sbeih, is the current Minister of Education, and has been subjected to continued criticism stemming from her refusal to wear the *hijab* at her swearing-in in 2007 ("Veil Protest," 2007). Her refusal to wear a veil sparked a large debate among the Islamist MPs, who claimed that although Article 1 of the 2005 Election law gives women their political rights, these rights are "contingent upon their commitment to the principles of Islamic law" (Rappaport, 2007), which have yet to be defined.

The upheaval faced by these two women politicians is a single example of the challenges that face Kuwaiti women. The political turmoil that marked their tenure currently marks all of Kuwaiti politics. On March 18, 2008, Amir Sabah Al-Sabah dissolved the National Assembly after continued clashes between the cabinet and the ministers. And while elections have been called for May 17, 2008 ("Kuwait Emir," 2008), it is unknown who will run and whether Kuwaiti women will be able to unify long enough to win entry into Parliament.⁵

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Footnotes

¹ Women removed the veil in Kuwait in 1956, and since then have been accepted into civil service.

² Wearing the hijab was not mandatory in Kuwait, and in 1956, many women chose to remove the veil, enabling them to enter the workforce as part of the State's modernization agenda.

³ *Biduns*, also known as *bidun jinsiyya*, do not carry Kuwaiti citizenship, and are described by Longva as those who fall "neither under the category of Kuwaitis nor under that of non-Kuwaitis in the sense of expatriate (i.e., nationals of other countries with temporary residence in Kuwait)," (Longva, 1997, p. 50).

⁴ The Amir disbanded the National Assembly twice before 1986, in 1967 and in 1976. In 1986 Parliament was disbanded because of its harsh criticism of the government.

⁵ None of the 27 women who ran for a seat in the 50-member Parliament on Saturday, May 17, 2008, were elected ("Islamists Dominate," 2008).

Mapping Inclusion: Social Groups and Subcultures within New York City's Queer Commercial Sex Landscape

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Abstract

Public sex in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities has historically been crucial for the development of both a group and a sexual identity. It has also been intensely stigmatized and, in recent years, erased from the urban landscape due to gentrification. Current academic discussions of public and commercial sex (sex clubs and sex parties) focus exclusively on men, excluding their female and transgender counterparts. When researchers study these spaces, they do so from a policy or public health perspective, overshadowing the voices and histories of those who frequent them. Looking at sex spaces analytically brings information on how they constitute unique social spaces in the urban landscape. This paper emerged from an ethnographic study conducted at a sex club in New York City that catered exclusively to women and transgender people. In this article, I focus on how gender presentation was a political choice within the space. People would dress according to how they wanted to be seen sexually and whom they wanted to attract as potential partners. Those who were the most visually expressive of their gender were those who tended to participate the most and who made the most social connections within the space. The systematic expression of these identities and their political purchase created a queer subculture that was based upon resisting heteronormativity. Gender presentation in this setting established the notion of a sex-positive community outside of a hetero-centric model of gender, sexual, and political identity.

Introduction

When one thinks about public sex in New York City, a montage of images may spring to mind. Flash to the men soliciting each other on the Ramble in Central Park; flash to the covert encounters in public bathrooms in subway stations; flash to the pornographic movie theaters in Times Square that stayed open until former mayor Giuliani issued a zoning ordinance that would turn the area into a playground for children and not for adults; flash, one final time, to the piers off Christopher Street that became a stomping ground for gay youth of color and were eventually rezoned into an upscale city park. The history of public sex thus far has been largely piecemeal. While public sex has a strong tradition in urban environments, amongst both gay and straight individuals, it has been looked at from a limited academic scope. While the little that has been written focuses on the historical context of public sex, current discussions do not provide a holistic understanding of public sex, both in terms of the tangible experiences of participants and its broader political implications. Additionally, much of the literature focuses on public sex between men.

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The research on public sex between women and transgender people is scant, and these groups have remained largely excluded from the history and discourse on public sex.

This paper focuses on gender politics at a commercial sex party called "Give In," situated in New York City.¹ The party catered exclusively to transgender people and women. In this paper, I explore how these spaces create queer subcultures and communities for those who frequented them. I argue that gender presentation was a political choice in that it reflected how people conceived of themselves in the space and whether or not they chose to participate sexually. A person's gender presentation was integral to structuring his or her social networks. Gender presentation played a large role in how a person wanted to be seen sexually, who his or her friends were, and also who a person wanted to attract as potential partners. Those who were the most visually expressive of their gender identities were those who held the most social capital and political power within the walls of Give In parties.² Gender expression helped to create and reinforce an identity for some people and made others feel alienated. However, most of my participants articulated that the space constituted a strong community, despite any social hierarchies that existed.

Defining My Terms

When I refer to "public commercial sex" in this paper, I do not refer to sex that literally takes place in public, for example, outside in the park or in a public bathroom. In this context, "public" refers to sex that occurs while others are watching, often times with anonymous partners, which takes place in an enclosed space. By "commercial," I am referencing spaces wherein capital is exchanged for sexual activity in an enclosed space that caters to a specific clientele. I use the term "commercial" because patrons pay an entrance fee at the door of the club, even though there is no traditional sex work or prostitution. Public commercial sex has a long history in queer communities because the public expression of desire was integral to the establishment of a sexual and personal identity. Public commercial sex was seen amongst queer people as an issue of visibility and a rejection of heteronormative social structures.

Before I begin my analysis, it is important to define the key terms I use in my research. I rely heavily on the language my participants used to describe themselves during their interviews. "Playing" refers to participating in sexual opportunities at the Give In parties. The word "scene" refers to the physical and contextual set-up of the sex act, and is used to describe any type of sexual interaction ranging from kissing to flogging. These terms are borrowed from the Bondage Domination and Sado-Masochism (BDSM) community—a group to which many of my participants belonged. It is also important for me to reflect the ways in which my participants spoke of their gender identities. The terms "trans man" and "tranny boy" refer to some of my participants' self-identification as female to male transgender individuals. I use "genderqueer" to speak to gender identities that are fluid and do not fit into the categories of "male," "female," or "transgender." "High-femme" signifies a gender identity that is hyper-feminized. Lastly, when I use the term "queer," I use it in two ways. Firstly, I use it as an umbrella term to encompass transgender people, women, and men of all non-heterosexual sexual preferences, and secondly, to imply a rejection of heterosexual norms of community, desire, identity, and activity. There are sections in this paper in which I use "gay" or "lesbian" interchangeably with "queer," as

in the background literature.³

I would like to address the problem of lumping women's and transgender communities together in the same space. The axis of power and exclusion lies along lines of gender, and the experiences of biological women and transgender individuals are very different. I do not mean to obscure these differences and to conflate identities, but the space is exclusive to women and transgender people, and in many queer spaces, these two categories are related. I did not notice a privileging of biological women in the space, but the organizers decided to advertise specifically in lesbian magazines, and not in places that were necessarily accessible to the transgender or genderqueer communities.⁴ However, some of my transgender and genderqueer participants once identified as lesbians, and they maintained many of the same social networks after their transition.

Historical Context and Relevant Literature

As stated earlier, the literature on public commercial sex for women and transgender people is scant. Judith Halberstam, in *In A Queer Time and Place*, argues that, "the literature on sexuality and space is growing rapidly, but it tends to focus on gay men, and it is often comparative only to the extent that it takes white gay male sexual communities as a highly evolved model that other sexual cultures try to imitate and reproduce" (Halberstam, 2005, p.13). The literature makes the claim that it is important to look at the establishment of commercial sex spaces for men because they paved the way for the creation of women's and transgender spaces (Delany, 1999; Nestle, 1997; Thomas, 1996).

The gay and lesbian liberation movement of the 1970s, marked by the Stonewall riots of 1969,⁵ paved the way for queer commercial spaces in urban environments. With increased social recognition, there was a proliferation of bars, clubs, restaurants, and sex shops that catered to and were frequented by gay people during the post-Stonewall period. Urvashi Vaid, in *Virtual Equality* states, "creation of a gay and lesbian counterculture was an essential part of establishing lesbian and gay identity" (Vaid, 1995, p. 57). Although the gay liberation movement did not invent the concept of public commercial sex, it did re-envision it. For the first time, people in the gay community could express their desires in a solidified and visible manner without the fear of legal sanctions (Adams, 1987; Feinberg, 1994). However, only those with enough income had the luxury of frequenting these businesses. They catered predominantly to white upper and middle class gay men and women, making the process of exclusion class-based and racialized (Berlant and Warner, 1998; Thomas, 1996).

According to Patrick Califia, a transgender activist and writer, the discussion about public commercial sex outside of the gay male community did not begin until the 1970s when leather (BDSM) clubs and bars for women were established alongside the men's leather community. As a queer identity began to emerge, the spaces where it was appropriate to engage in public commercial sex changed, as well as the clientele. Califia articulates the way in which space was used within the queer community:

Other sexual minorities—lesbians, transvestites and transsexuals, sadomasochists, etc.—tend to make parallel use of any gay male

social space when their presence is tolerated. Historically, these sexual minorities have “followed” gay men out of the red light districts and into the gay ghettos. (Califia, 1997, p. 182)

Califia's comments show how women and transgender people began to create their own social and sexual spaces that paralleled those of gay men. Lesbian public commercial sex became more established during the late 1980s, when the New York City Department of Health was closing gay male public sex spaces on the grounds that they constituted public health hazards (Elovitz and Edwards, 1996). The definition of what constitutes sex for women and transgender people is complicated, multi-faceted, and less subject to regulation; thus, spaces that catered to these populations were not viewed as threatening. Julie Tolentino, founder of the Clit Club, a lesbian sex club in New York City (now closed) said:

I've spent months agonizing over how to get girls to fuck in a more anonymous way, but I don't know if [the club] is going to be able to be sustained beyond past the first surge of “Gee, isn't this exciting? We're actually having public sex just like everybody else” (On Our Backs Magazine, 2003).

During the 1980s, the culture of lesbian public commercial sex emerged where it had previously been invisible. The BDSM community was also a large part of this new lesbian visibility because for the first time, other sexual minorities were starting to experiment and express their desires publicly.

This paper demonstrates the ways in which women and transgender people have created their own unique public sexual culture independently of their gay male predecessors. While it is important to look at gay male spaces, as the literature suggests, it is crucial to study spaces that are exclusive to women and transgender people, as they are distinct sites of social and political activity. This paper, in contrast to the existing literature, explores the qualitative experiences of the people who frequented the parties and gives voice to the meaning that they make from their participation in these spaces. I look at gender identity as a political category that shapes participants' experiences of the party. My larger project is to speak to my participants' understanding of gender politics, community, and desire within the commercial sex setting. Lastly, I posit that these spaces create queer subcultures, communities, and sites of resistance for those who attend. While the existing literature articulates the meaning of queer subcultures (Halberstam, 2005), the sex club constitutes a unique space with its own social practices—especially when the participants are women, transgender people, and members of the BDSM community.

Methodology

I conducted my research at Give In during 2004 and 2005. It was a party that occurred every month on New York City's Lower East Side on a Friday evening. At the time of my research, the party attracted between sixty and eighty biological women, both male-to-female (MTF) and female-to-male (FTM) transgender people, and genderqueer people every month. It was co-run by Graciela and Dexter, both of whom had been instrumental in starting sex and BDSM parties for women and transgender people in New York City since the mid-1990s. I collected detailed field observations from parties that occurred on six different occasions, and I interviewed

fifteen participants about their experiences at the parties. I did not take any recording devices with me to the party and wrote down my notes after the event had occurred. In order to recruit participants, I placed fliers with the project information at a table at the party and spoke to those attending about the project. I have attached an appendix with specific demographic information about each participant.⁶

The space was open to the public, and as a queer woman, I was not excluded on the basis of my gender identity or my sexuality. I was surprised how easy the party was to access; those who wanted to be interviewed were very enthusiastic and those who didn't politely refused my offers. Dexter and Graciela were accommodating in allowing me to place fliers with my contact information in an accessible space.

"Transgender? FTM/Intersex? If yes, you are welcome at [Give In]"

Give In would be unrecognizable to a passerby on the street if he or she had not been previously informed about the party. In order to be admitted to the party, people needed inside knowledge of the location and the "gender rules," which were outlined on the party's website in the following manner: "Born Female? Transgendered? FTM/ Intersexed? Live your life 24/7 as a woman? If yes, you are welcome at [Give In]. If you were born male and sometimes wear women's clothing or makeup, [Give In] is not your party. We will ask that you leave." In addition to these rules, attendees underwent three screening processes at the door. The first involved getting past a bouncer; the second was signing a consent form with various rules such as not drinking alcohol or using drugs as well as paying the fifteen dollar entrance fee; and the third was agreeing to become a "member" of the party, in which attendees obtained a membership card that signifies their belonging. The rules were firm: one could not enter if one did not know about the party, which was advertised only in some lesbian magazines around the city and by fliers put out at various venues frequented by people who might attend the party. The bulk of my participants found out about the party through friends or by word of mouth.

As soon as one passed the screening process and entered the club, there was a smaller room where the party organizers set up food and drinks. Pornographic videos were always playing on a television, and there were chairs and benches in this area to facilitate socializing. There was no sex occurring in this room. There was an array of safer sex supplies set up on a table. These supplies included condoms, lube, gloves, dental dams, mouthwash, and paper towels for cleaning up. One of my participants, Brent, who helped organize the parties, told me, "engaging in safer sex is one of the rules at Give In. We try to monitor people and to walk around making sure people are using safer sex materials." Despite the organizers' encouragement of safer sex, this practice was not enforced. I had never seen Dexter or Graciela stop someone because he or she was not using protection, or encourage someone to engage in safer sex. Much of the sex going on did tend to be protected, especially when it involved anonymity, but my participants indicated that they thought more could be done to encourage safer sex without policing.

The front room provided a social atmosphere that did not involve sex. First timers at Give In and those who were generally shy thought the room was an important gateway to the party. Cara talked about her first experience at the party:

I was very uncomfortable at first. I grabbed my friend's arm and I said, "Don't leave me!" There is that first room, and you can slowly wade your way in. What was scary about it was that I would walk into the other room and see people having sex. Sex is usually a private act. We're not used to the concept of it in public.

Despite the fact that she was not immediately confronted with sex, she felt wary of seeing such private behavior in a public setting. However, Cara's statement elucidates how the physical setup of the space helped to alleviate some of her concerns about attending the party.

Gender Politics and Participation

Everyone who attended the party participated in some sense, whether or not they chose to participate sexually. If they were not playing, they were usually watching, which was in and of itself a form of participation. The majority of participants who congregated in the front room eventually meandered into the sex space to watch, regardless of how long they stayed at the party. Participants' physical expression of gender and sexuality was crucial to how they were participating in the space. Those who disseminated their gender identities most explicitly were those who participated the most and who held the most social capital. In this sense, gender presentation was a political choice because it inscribed people's social groups and dictated how much people "fit in" to the scene. Brent, Dexter's partner, described his role at the party:

Going to [Give In] has allowed me to make a lot of good connections within the leather community. I would like to be a prominent figure within the scene some day, so it is good that I am making a name for myself. I think I've done a lot of stuff at [Give In], sometimes stuff that is really edgy for other people. But I think it's good for them to see me enjoying myself, because it takes the stigma away from what I'm doing and opens their minds.

Because of Brent's physical presentation of his gender and his sexual desire, he gained notoriety at the party. He often wore leather shorts and a leather harness, signifying his role as a submissive partner in his relationship with Dexter. Fresh scars from having his breasts recently removed were also visible, signifying his gender identity.

Offentimes the expression of gender within the space approximated a gender binary of masculinity and femininity. While some people were very comfortable with this dynamic, others felt differently. Those who expressed their gender in more ambiguous terms often felt as though they struggled to find a niche within the space. Alissa said, "There is a fair amount of gender play that makes me uncomfortable sometimes. I don't feel like I fit into a particular gender presentation, and I don't know who to approach. Usually I don't end up playing at all." Those who were attending for the first time, like Cara, were struck by the ways in which people were disseminating their gender on their body. She told me:

Most people were a lot more sex radical in their appearance than I'm usually around... It means they are more gender queer in their

presentation. Not as in literally gender-queer, but that they wear their gender on their sleeve. I saw a lot of butch-femme stuff and a lot of piercings and tattoos. I guess it means people are sensitive about how they are perceived, but I felt it was alienating on a personal level.

Cara also cited the people whom she felt as the most "radical" in their gender presentation as those who tended to play the most. Cara and Alissa both expressed discontent with sexual participation across a strict gender binary. When I asked her what she liked least about the party, Alissa told me, "I don't like the politics of the scene. It feels like high school. Everyone knows each other and there is a main clique of people." Alissa's reference to the "main clique" of people shows how gender presentation was integral to participation and social status in the space.

Presentation and Performance

Participants would present outwardly in such a way that their physical appearance dictated whether or not they had come to play and with whom. Suzan, when asked what she wears to parties said:

I wear stuff I feel sexy in. Usually high-femme, classic, retro gear. It relates to who I'm looking to play with, usually more experienced butch tops. If I dress up, I tend to get more play. If I dress down, I get less play.

It was often obvious whether someone was intending to play based upon what he or she was wearing. For example, Alissa told me that the first time she went to the party, she did not dress up because she had no intention of participating. The Give In website itself addressed the issue of dress and presentation, with a section that read: "Although there's no dress code, that's no reason to save your sexiest threads or fetish-wear for private occasions: come in your sexy skivvies or your jeans—whatever you prefer!"

Amongst many of my participants, there was a strong sentiment at the party that participating in some form was the purpose of attending. The Give In website stated:

We assure you, and if you bring one, you and your partner will feel very comfortable: there is never any pressure to participate. We offer a one of a kind safe, sexy space where women and trans-folks can explore their sexuality.

Both Graciela and Dexter tried to set people up with each other because they felt that, "women are so shy about approaching each other, which is just ridiculous. Part of our role as organizers is to match people with others they think are hot." While the encouragement to participate did not come in the form of pressure, participation was widely encouraged, helping people to explore their desires.

Trans-gressing Gender

When asked if they thought having spaces that were open to women and transgender people were important, most participants said that they felt safer and more

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comfortable playing in spaces that excluded biological men, because they were more supportive and created or reinforced a separate community. Brent said:

It's vital to the women and trans communities to have a space free from bio-men. Women and trans folks need to have that intimacy, security, and comfort... I definitely don't feel comfortable with bio men seeing my genitals or my breasts, so I generally don't get naked at parties with them. I feel much more insecure about my gender-identity and how men perceive me... Women and trans-folks are much more respectful of personal space, of bodies and identities, and of the needs of others.

Like Brent, people articulated discomfort around playing in spaces with biological men, but at the same time, other transgender participants felt that Give-In invalidated their masculinity. Ryder, a twenty-two year old transgender man, said:

I think the party organizers could do more to include transmen. I understand the fear of women and trans people who are just on the scene about whether or not they're going to be abused. But to be honest that will happen in a women only space, and it's more important to have good floor monitors than it is to have no penises allowed. At a certain level it's a disservice to the trans men who come, because it's saying that they're not really men... I identify with being trans over being a man, but I don't like being lumped in with women.

The dilemma over how to create a space that is safe for everyone and simultaneously allows people to feel as though their identities are being honored calls for future research. It is crucial to address the concerns of transgender and genderqueer people, as they constituted a vital part of the space.

Subculture as Collectivity

Judith Halberstam defines subcultures as sites of "collectivity rather than membership" (Halberstam, 2005, p. 156). While stratification based on the presentation and physical expression of gender existed within the space, the space itself created a community for those who attend regardless of how they presented their gender. The space created a subculture for party attendees, and they congregated over the concepts of being "deviant" and "kinky." Kit, when asked if he felt that the party helped to create and define his identity said:

Everyone knows that everyone else in the world has sex—but you're not supposed to have "strange" desires. It's more acceptable to have all these strange desires here. When I tell people that I come because they're like, "Oh my god, you did that? That is so intense. I've seen pictures of that in the media and they must be full of crazy perverts." But once you go there, you're like it's just a room...people are laughing and hugging and kissing. It's weird, but it's not the standard perversion people make it out to be.

Brent expounded on this point:

There's definitely a community created—I mean some of these people are seeing you at your most vulnerable and most intimate moments. That intimacy grows between the regulars. I think it is because we are sharing ourselves with each other not necessarily playing with each other, but I mean, if I watch your scene, and then you watch mine, there's a bond created there.

The culture at Give In fostered a supportive atmosphere. It created the social and physical location for people who were interested in BDSM and sex in a public space to explore those interests and to act on them. The sense of community for attendees was cohesive: people were infinitely grateful for the opportunity to attend and to hang out. Alissa told me, "I'm just really glad that I get to spend time with other kinky people. It makes me feel as though I'm not so alone," which broadened her sense of community. Regardless of sexual orientation or motivation to attend, people could find something with which to identify with in the space, even Cara, who said, "it's a queer space, so it's congruous with who I perceive myself to be."

Implications for Future Research

Public commercial sex settings create a sense of community and collaboration because they facilitate interaction between people of different experiences, genders, classes, and ethnicities. They meld social barriers in order to create fluid identities. As public and commercial spaces for sex are going underground, it is important to study them before they disappear altogether. Future research might call for a discussion of the subculture of public sex within the larger queer community and the relationship between these subcultures as they pertain to issues of health, policing, and legality. The culture of public sex as an historical and cultural stronghold within the queer community has been derided, especially in the aftermath of the AIDS epidemic.

Public commercial sex settings for women and transgender people are indubitably political. They challenge norms of monogamy, desire, and activity. They provide important insight into gender politics, from the perspective of the exclusionary space itself and the politics inherent within the space. The placement of commercial sex spaces within the urban landscape is paramount because it allows alternative desires to flourish within supportive communities. Further research might also focus on how these spaces create nuclei of political and social action, as historically, commercial sex spaces have been places where social and political information was distributed. They create forums for collectivity, which establishes the commercial sex space as an evolving locale with unique social practices: a site of queer resistance.

Demographic Information about Participants:

Pseudonym	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Self-Defined Gender	Education	Occupation
Alissa	24	White/Native American	Female	College	Sex Educator
Brent	20	White	Tranny Boy	Some College	Student
Cara	22	White	Female	College	Administrative Assistant
Dexter	45	White	Butch	Associates Degree	Party Organizer/Cell-phone Technician
Graciela	35	Unknown	High-Femme	Unknown	Party Organizer/Sign Language Interpreter
Kit	20	White	FTM	Some College	Student
Ryder	22	White	Tranny Boy	College	Unemployed
Suzan	25	White	High-Femme	College	Public Health

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Footnotes

1. This paper is an excerpt from my B.A. thesis in Urban Studies at Columbia University, written during the 2004-2005 academic year. For the purposes of confidentiality, pseudonyms are used throughout the paper. For the full version of this paper, please contact the author at heather.wollin@mail.utexas.edu.
2. For a discussion of social capital, please see Bordieu, Pierre, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 1972 and Coleman, James, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital." *American Jour-*

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nal of Sociology, Vol. 94. Supplement: Organizations and Institutions: Sociological and Economic Approaches to the Analysis of Social Structure, pp. S95-S120 (1988).

3. There are a range of gender identities my participants used to describe themselves. The identities discussed in this paper are not exhaustive and do not describe the identities of everyone at the party.

4. The term "biological woman" refers to the biological sex of the participant. In this context, biological is not seen as a natural category, but rather a constructed one, just as all other gender identities are constructed.

5. The Stonewall riots refer to riots that occurred in June of 1969 at the Stonewall Inn, a New York City bar. Police raided the bar, one of many raids that summer, and the community decided to resist. The Stonewall riots are widely acknowledged as the spark for the gay and lesbian liberation movement in that public attention around the riots was considerable, leading to widespread recognition of the LGBT community.

6. As my table shows, most of my participants were white. I would have liked to have been able to interview people from other ethnicities in order to obtain different perspectives on gender, race, and hierarchy, but the majority of people who attended the party consisted of an ethnically homogenous group.

Queer Liberalism, Women's Equality, and the Patrolling of "Domestic" Boundaries in the United States

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Abstract

Based on two years of ethnographic research in Seattle, Washington on same-sex marriage politics, this paper examines responses to the Ted Haggard sex scandal that nearly escalated to a protest outside one of my field sites, a church called Mars Hill. In this article, I ask how recent articulations of "queer liberalism" within the "gay community" and "women's equality" at "emerging" churches, produce U.S. citizen-subjects as "effects and instruments" of a neoliberal political economy. By placing into dialogue reactions to Haggard's "fall" from a gay liberal sex columnist and conservative evangelical pastor, I suggest that their political values are concomitantly formed by practices of surveillance and techniques of governmentality. This analysis explores how such "technologies of citizenship" serve to patrol community and national boundaries such that "intimate" threats and "domestic" insecurities are propagated and intensified during a "war on terror" in the United States. In an effort to propose a genealogy of "culture war" polarizations, this critical ethnography tracks how practices of identity politics deployed by queer liberals are shaping and shaped by neoliberal techniques of governance mutually constituting the worship practices, gender theology, and entrepreneurialism of "emerging" churches like Mars Hill.

Introduction

Based on two years of ethnographic research in Seattle, Washington on same-sex marriage politics, this paper examines responses to the Ted Haggard sex scandal that nearly escalated to a protest outside one of my field sites, a church called Mars Hill. In this article, I ask how recent articulations of "queer liberalism" within the "gay community" and "women's equality" at "emerging" churches, produce U.S. citizen-subjects as "effects and instruments" of a neoliberal political economy (Cruikshank, 1999). By placing into dialogue reactions to Haggard's "fall" from a gay liberal sex columnist and conservative evangelical pastor, I suggest that their political values are mutually constituted by practices of surveillance and techniques of governmentality. I approach these political values as "technologies of citizenship" that "rely not on institutions, organized violence, or state power but on securing the voluntary compliance of citizens" (Cruikshank, 1999, p. 4). This analysis explores how such technologies serve to patrol community and national boundaries such that "intimate" threats and "domestic" insecurities are propagated and intensified during a "war on terror" in the United States. All of the evidence used in this article was gathered at public church events recorded and distributed by Mars Hill on their website, as well as internet blogs and news forums.

Haggard the Gay Hypocrite

In November 2006, Ted Haggard, Pastor of New Life Church in Colorado Springs and President of the National Association of Evangelicals, vocal opponent of gay marriage and consultant to the Bush administration, was reported to have had a three-year sexual relationship with a male escort named Mike Jones. It was said in the *New York Times* that Jones leaked information about his monthly appointments with Haggard to "expose a hypocrite" (Banerjee & Goodstein, 2006). When Jones discovered that Haggard was an ardent supporter of Amendment 43, an initiative on the Colorado ballot to "protect" matrimony from the same-sex marriage "threat," Jones retaliated: "He's preaching against homosexuals and yet he's having gay sex behind people's backs" (Banerjee & Goodstein, 2006).

In this statement, Jones links Haggard's illicit sexual conduct to a closeted gay identity. The *New York Times* also did its part to link behavior to identity as it inquired of "experts on evangelicals" how the scandal would affect midterm elections. These unnamed "experts" replied: "Accusations that such a politically involved pastor was a closet homosexual could further alienate evangelicals from political involvement...or further motivate them" (Banerjee & Goodstein, 2006). No authoritative answer is provided on the "evangelical voter"; instead, this discourse stabilizes and normalizes Haggard's sex practices as sexual identity, making legible "private" conduct that contradicts his "public" image. Like the legal cases *Bowers v. Hardwick* (1986) and *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003), this "outing" of Haggard delimits certain sexual acts as expressions of gay identity in spaces relegated to the "private" and relations deemed "intimate."

In 1986, *Bowers* was framed as a case concerning the "fundamental right of homosexuals to engage in sodomy" by a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that stated such a right was not "deeply rooted in this Nation's history and tradition" or "implicit in the concept of ordered liberty" located in "family relationships, marriage, or procreation" (White, 1986). Subsequently, the Court declared the Georgia statute banning sodomy permissible by producing *homosexuals* as criminal sodomites, despite state laws that (at least on paper) prohibited anyone (gay, straight, or otherwise) from practicing sodomy. While the Court claimed to rely on a "longstanding history" of proscriptions against sodomy to uphold the criminality of such sex acts, the ruling affectively mandated a moral code against a particular species of sodomite: the "homosexual."

The 1986 *Bowers* decision was overturned in 2003 by another case that challenged sodomy laws called *Lawrence v. Texas*. In their opinion the *Lawrence* Court states: "To say that the issue in *Bowers* was simply the right to engage in certain sexual conduct demeans the claims the individual put forward, just as it would demean a married couple were it to be said marriage is simply about the right to have sexual intercourse" (Kennedy, 2003). Thus, in its reassessment of the *Bowers* decision, the *Lawrence* ruling curiously argues that calling attention to the "certain sexual conduct" in question "demeans" the claims of those protesting their arrest for said "certain sexual conduct." A counterfactual is performed that reinvents as it reinvests the plaintiffs Paul Lawrence and Tyrone Garner (a white man and black man who may have met only moments before their criminal encounter) as a couple worthy of the Court's consideration. In *Lawrence*, what is at stake is not the "right to engage in sodomy" but rather the right for "adults to choose to enter upon this relationship in

the confines of their homes and their own private lives and still retain their dignity as free persons. When sexuality finds overt expression in intimate conduct with another person, the conduct can be but one element in a personal bond that is more enduring" (Kennedy, 2003). Thus, the Court articulates its version of liberty in the *Lawrence* decision as a choice that seeks to "regulate" rather than "eliminate violence" by introducing a "different structure of ambition and fear" (Asad, 2004, p. 8): to express "intimate conduct" in "private" or to relinquish "dignity as free persons." In effect, sodomy is decriminalized once transposed into a "sexual intimacy" secured by "a personal bond that is more enduring" and relegated to "the home" (Kennedy, 2003). In the case of Haggard, his sex with Jones is immediately classified as "homosexual" as well as "hypocritical" given his conservative religious beliefs and political platform.

Thus, Haggard's "fall" is easily characterized as the morality tale of a gay man who denied his "true identity" at a price; blame is placed on him for lying to himself, his family, and his congregation. The "threat" to marriage that conservative religious and political leaders relentlessly repeated in their calls to "defend" it from the inclusion of same-sex couples was affectively reproduced in reports identifying Haggard as a gay hypocrite and his family as victims. In this sense, Haggard's fall was of greater help to the conservative cause than marriage equality supporters and gloating members of the press were willing to admit. National coverage of Haggard's affair duly supplied the narrative of a man who had been repressing "homosexual" desires due to his religious and political values. No one asked, at what cost is Haggard's identity unremittingly articulated as that of a gay hypocrite? The multiple answers to this question index shifts in visibility politics and surveillance practices during the U.S. "war on terror" that affectively stabilize the "public" and "private" spheres as they blur distinctions between who is watching/being watched.

Visibility Politics, Technologies of Governance, and Gay Patriotism

Despite Haggard's "outing," Amendment 43 passed in Colorado, stalling marriage equality efforts in the state. Regardless of these election results, Mike Jones was hailed a hero by many for exposing Haggard's hypocrisy. One writer for the alternative Seattle weekly *The Stranger*, edited by nationally publicized sex columnist and outspoken gay marriage advocate Dan Savage, called Jones an "American hero" (Barnett, 2007). The sentiment conveyed in this title, reminiscent of similar pronouncements such as the "I am a Gay American" resignation speech of former New Jersey Senator James McGreevey in 2004, simultaneously articulates exclusion from, desire for, and claims to national belonging. When *The Stranger* embraced Mike Jones as a gay patriot, the publication provided a new spin to a politics of visibility that had previously been used against gays and lesbians but flourished as a counter-strategy of queer resistance in the 1980s and 1990s.

The outing of closeted gays was one tactic used by queer activist groups like Act Up in the 1980s and 1990s to call attention to their numbers and interrupt notions of norms and, in some cases, make their own claims to normalcy. This counter-discourse affectively troubled prior stigmas associated with "gay visibility" that cost people their jobs, but it also helped to reconstitute the "culture war" rhetoric of religious right groups such as Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority by perpetuating an us/them binary of inclusion and exclusion. Outing required tactics of surveillance and representation that fostered an identity politics heavily reliant on regulating boundaries of

public/private, hetero/homo, and "community." Such techniques proved to sustain and further stabilize rather than disrupt "culture war" stalemates. As the number of "polarizing" single issues multiply rather than recede, and political values are continually reconstituted in terms of "for" or "against" stances, it is necessary to analyze how both "sides" in an ideological "culture war" are mutually constituted by technologies of governance and political economy.

Framed as a strategy of cultural politics, "outing" is rarely examined in relation to the neoliberal political economy in which it was shaped and deployed. In using the term "neoliberal," I index transformations in political economy "retrospectively applied to the 'conservative' policies of the Reagan and Thatcher regimes in the United States and Great Britain," that conjure "the form of pro-corporate, 'free-market,' anti-'big government' rhetoric shaping Western national policy and dominating international financial institutions since the early 1980s" (Duggan, 2003, p.10). My argument understands neoliberalism as "a cultural politics that organizes material and political life" in terms of class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, nationality and religion, sorting these and other categories of liberalism in such a way as to "actively obscure their connections" (Duggan, 2003, p.3). Visibility politics instrumentalized during this neoliberal economic transformation are culpable in managing classifications of identity and the private/public spheres foundational to liberalism, as well as advocating for a "free-market" economy by endorsing consumerism as patriotic.

To be understood as a neoliberal technique of "governmentality" or "mode of governance encompassing but not limited to the state...that produces subjects, forms of citizenship and behavior, and a new organization of the social" (Brown, 2005), "outing" also needs to be read in conversation with U.S. policies that sanction "responsible" citizenship and the "privatization" of state agencies. Welfare "reform" like the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (1996) signed into law by President Bill Clinton is one example of a neoliberal economic policy that instrumentalizes the political strategy of visibility as it allocates blame for the "failure" of the "American family" on unwed teenage mothers often identified as black and/or low-income. Advocacy for this bill was "largely framed around the need for sexual responsibility," and the law offered "states millions of dollars in federal matching grants for sex education in public schools, but only on the condition that they make abstinence the exclusive aim of their sex education efforts" (Jakobsen and Pelligrini, 2004, p. 6). As President Clinton proclaimed that "'no social problem stands in our way of achieving our goals for America more than teenage pregnancy,'" he set the stage for guidelines that coerced public schools into targeting sexually "irresponsible" girls with classes that taught "'sexual activity outside the context of marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects'" (Jakobsen and Pelligrini, 2004, p. 6). Such neoliberal policies articulate "morality" as a political value that reproduces and reinforces discrete categories of identity in binary, hierarchical, and analogous terms. Additionally, these laws operate in correlation with a visibility politics that reconstitutes distinctions of public and private as it simultaneously contests them.

In terms of recent gay rights activism, marriage equality extends neoliberal logics of self-governance based upon principles of responsibility and practices of surveillance. On the one hand, by positing marriage as the proper object of "equality," gay rights activists reify the "domestic" as a space of freedom from surveillance and the "intimate" couple as a configuration worthy of financial benefits and legal privileges. On the other, critics of marriage equality posit gays and lesbians as a "threat"

to the "sanctity" of the institution and its "domestic" sphere. Furthermore, such political projects ignore their exclusion of "community" members who cannot take refuge in "privacy" and "intimacy" because they are forced to rely on forms of dependency other than a "home" or "partner" to survive. As one black teenager said in a rare *New York Times* article published on homeless queer youth during (LGBT) Pride Week in Manhattan: "Being homeless is not exactly conducive to dating. These days, I'm not very prideful" (Jacobs, 2004). Technologies of citizenship that promote the ideal queer as a "proud American" proliferate as "community" surveillance intensifies in the wake of "culture war" discourses that produce "domestic" moral threats.

Intimacy Bought and Sold

When Mike Jones's book, *I Had to Say Something: The Art of Haggard's Fall*, was published in 2007, he went on a promotional tour that included an interview with Dan Savage, the Editorial Director of *The Stranger*, an evening the Seattle alt-weekly dubbed "Come of a Preacher Man" (Frizzelle, 2007). In Savage's article written post-event, there are indications that the domains of "privacy" and "intimacy" are further conflated and patrolled in recent iterations of visibility politics. First, Savage states that Jones and his co-author Sam Gallegos do a good job of portraying the "less sensational aspects of sex work," informing his readers that "closeted gay men don't just get sex from escorts, they also get intimacy and a chance to be completely honest with someone about who they really are" (Savage, 2007). By this account, male escorts like Jones are remunerated not just for sex but to bear witness to their clients' "real" selves. Intimacy is supplied to customers by high-paid escorts in lieu of families and friends. Thus, the sex worker provides the (closeted) gay citizen-consumer "more" than sexual satisfaction or pleasure by offering emotional reassurance, privacy, and security—an "intimate bond more enduring" like that described in *Lawrence*. In the case of Haggard, it appears that intimacy and privacy cannot be bought at any price because of the threat he poses to "true" versions of self, community, and nation.

When an audience member suggests that Jones's motives were not "heroic" but selfishly driven by the prospect of a book deal, Savage rises to Jones's defense: "It was the *scale* of Haggard's hypocrisy combined with the *magnitude* of the damage he was doing to *his fellow gays* that made him a justifiable target for an outing" (italics the author's, Savage, 2007). Savage cannot hazard the possibility of selfish motive or economic profit in Jones' actions. Instead, he protects Jones as a gay patriot whose surveillance tactics are as all-American as the USA PATRIOT Act, eerily echoing a discourse that defends governmentality techniques used against (potential) enemies of "American freedom" here "at home." The "scale" of Haggard's hypocrisy and "magnitude" of damage done to "his fellow gays" justifies his outing and subsequent humiliation though intense scrutiny and frequent public mocking. Savage concludes his account of Jones's visit with the description of an overwhelmingly supportive crowd rising to their feet to provide the American hero a standing ovation; once their applause diminishes, Savage reminds them that the purchase of Jones's book would better demonstrate their thanks.

Both Jones and Savage are portrayed as doing a civic duty by patrolling the boundaries of queer nationalism to keep out dissident perverts like Haggard who sully their status as "true" homos. A "queer liberalism" is forged through privileges of

privacy and bonds of intimacy bought by those who can afford to traffic within and through domestic spheres due to their race, nationality, and class (Puar, 2007). Additionally, this queer liberalism demands allegiance to a secularity strictly delineated from religious norms, proscribing a "queer agential subject [that] can only ever be fathomed outside the norming constrictions of religion, conflating agency and resistance" (Puar, 2007, p. 13). Such "liberal underpinnings serve to constantly recenter the normative gay or lesbian subject as exclusively liberatory," a tendency that insists upon an "exclusively transgressive...regulatory queer ideal" (Puar, 2007, p. 22).

Despite explicitly paying for it, Haggard is not afforded the right to privacy/intimacy because he is ultimately a traitor to queer liberalist principles. His religious and sexual identities are too contradictory to reconcile in an intelligible manner; his "queerness" calls into question binaries foundational to liberalism like hetero/homo, religious/secular, and public/private. Ultimately, Haggard's public flogging by queer liberals is proof of their patriotism and his perverse dissent from the normative ideal of the queer transgressive. His "outing" signals a shift in technologies of surveillance that discipline individuals into being "good" neoliberal citizen-subjects while propagating moral "regularities" of population (Puar, 2007). To further explore how the "private" and "intimate" are deployed to reconfigure notions of citizenship and security in the wake of "domestic" threats to community and nation, I investigate responses to Haggard's fall in relation to conflicts over gender politics that incited a near-protest outside Mars Hill Church in Seattle. In this discussion, I examine how neoliberal technologies of governance deployed by "emerging" churches inscribe political values of self-governance and responsibility in and through their members.

"Emerging" Churches and Mars Hill

When the allegations concerning Haggard broke, a number of evangelical figures responded with support for him and his family. One of these leaders was Mars Hill Church's founder and worship pastor Mark Driscoll, who posted a cautionary message on his blog that appeared to blame pastors' wives for their husbands' infidelities. Just one month before, Mars Hill had celebrated their 10 year anniversary and recently been named one of the 50 most influential churches in the country by *The Church Report* (Editors, 2006). In an odd affirmation of just how much buzz Mars Hill was generating, angry reactions triggered by Driscoll's controversial blog nearly eclipsed coverage of Haggard's three-year affair. For weeks after his November 4 post, Pastor Mark was the subject of websites either accusing him of misogyny or defending him as a brash pastor with good intentions. Additionally, a grassroots group called People Against Fundamentalism (PAF) formed in Seattle to stand up to "Mark the misogynist," against whom they organized a protest for early December 2006.

Mars Hill is one of a growing network of evangelical "emerging" churches that began in the mid-1990s. Emerging churches distinguish themselves from "purpose-driven" churches like Rick Warren's Saddleback, or "prosperity gospel" messages like Joel Osteen's, by targeting a predominantly young demographic of urban 20-somethings wary of the self-help trends and mega-sized proportions of what they consider "institutionalized" Christianity. In a recent volume entitled *Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches*, editor Robert Webber describes emerging churches as responding to a "new crisis in American culture fueled by the emergence of a postmodern, post-Christian, neo-pagan culture and the global war on terrorism" (Webber, 2007, p.15). In keeping with emerging churches' hesitation to proclaim

themselves part of a movement with an ideological center like James Dobson's Focus on the Family or political muscle like Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, the book is comprised of five chapters written by prominent young pastors representing a variety of views on questions pertaining to ministry. Mark Driscoll's reflections comprise the first chapter, in which he cites the Bible 174 times over the course of 14 pages of text, suggesting that there's nothing new about *his* message despite its technologically savvy packaging.

Mars Hill's Calvinist emphasis on sinful nature and Reformed sense of grace and salvation are bridged to a ministry well-suited to fulfilling one primary aim identified by Pastor Mark: to reach the least-churched demographic in one of the least-churched cities in the United States—young “entrepreneurial” men in their 20s and 30s in Seattle. Mars Hill's objective is to train these men to become responsible Christian husbands and fathers, and good stewards of church, family, and nation. The church accomplishes this goal through a variety of media technologies and community events that emphasize the need for male congregants to “man-up”—i.e., stop having sex outside of marriage, get a job, marry a Christian woman, have kids, and provide for his family. This focus on the accountability of men in the home and workplace, for church and country, both reinforces a neoliberal ideology of responsibility and a clear division between the private and public spheres. Additionally, this discourse of “masculine Christianity” figures men as leaders who must protect family and nation from threats spiritual and cultural, global and domestic.

To extend the scope of his aims for Mars Hill as a “man-factory” Pastor Mark leads a church-planting organization called Acts29, which screens and trains potential pastors and their wives for leadership in churches congruent with Mars Hill's theological aims and mission. So far, Acts29 has sponsored over 100 churches nationwide, and several more in countries such as Africa, India, and Thailand. Mars Hill's own multi-sited structure serves the greater Seattle area through six church “campuses.” In eleven years, the congregation has grown to over 6,000 members; 150 community groups across the city meet weekly to discuss sermons over dinner. Worship services and teaching events incorporate alternative music styles, Hollywood films, and a host of blogging forums and public events to get “plugged in” to the church community via the web. Pastor Mark's sermons also reach a transnational audience through free downloads available on iTunes, and an ever-changing church website of extensive teaching-content provides access to audio and video recordings of sermons and seminars.

My first visit to the Mars Hill Ballard campus revealed a renovated warehouse painted all black outside, with a softly contoured cream-colored lobby that showcased paintings by church members and huge canisters of free coffee. The dimly lit sanctuary was the size of a lecture hall and boasted a sound-system fit for a DJ. Three large video screens augmented a stage with a podium flanked by musical instruments and behind which a large cross welded out of steel loomed. Part art gallery/coffee shop, part late-night club, I immediately saw why this space felt comfortable for the undergrads in university sweatshirts or the hip club kids who had seemingly been dancing just a few hours before. Pastor Mark describes Mars Hill as “conservative theologically but liberal culturally.” His sermons reflect this worldview with up-to-the-minute cultural references to everything from *The Simpsons* to *Talladega Nights*, peppered with jokes at the expense of local neighborhood stereotypes and national celebrities, his patter and timing that of a stand-up comedian.

Although many Christian and secular progressives undermine the success Mars Hill has enjoyed in “blue” Seattle, examination of the “equal yet different” beliefs espoused at the church reveal moments of intersection between “conservative” and “liberal” principles.

Neoliberal Deployments of “Women’s Equality”

At a church seminar entitled “Biblical Gender Roles and Sexuality,” I was introduced to “complementarity,” a theological position that deems males and females equal, but distinct; a stance claiming a middle ground between the extremes of hierarchical and egalitarian worldviews. Mars Hill describes these differences as such: in conservatively hierarchical churches women cannot serve communion, act in any leadership role, or speak in services; in liberal egalitarian churches any office is open to qualified women; at Mars Hill, women can be deacons, serve communion, and teach classes, but they cannot minister as pastors. Both sexes are equal insofar as they are image-bearers of God, but they are created for distinct purposes: men for work, competition, and the pioneering of new frontiers; women to help their husbands and care for their children. Thus, Mars Hill claims to offer a “third way” to practice gender in marriage and family: wives “choose” to be submissive to devoted husbands as they embody their God-ordained role as helper to him in their “natural” domain—the home.

To further my understanding of this gender theology, in December 2006 I attended Mars Hill’s annual Women’s Training Day: “Christian Womanhood in a Feminist Culture.” In preparation, I was asked to read a complementarian primer entitled *Men and Women Equal yet Different: A Brief Study of the Biblical Passages on Gender*. Within the opening pages of this book, a quote from the 1993 United Nation’s Human Development Report was side-barred: “No country treats its women as well as it treats its men” (Strauch, 1999). The passages that followed constructed a narrative of injustices against women that drew distinctions between so-called “modern, developed societies” and less “developed” countries. The list of crimes against women specific to the Philippines, Thailand, India, Africa, Afghanistan, and China included minors forced into prostitution, wife burning, female circumcision, refusal of health care and education, and female infanticide. In contrast, the book mentions only one crime done to women of the Western world: harmful divorces that leave them without financial support for their children. A discourse of “equality” that renders women of “less developed” societies victims of “uncivilized” cultures, “pre-modern” states, or “patriarchal” religions, deflects attention from the effects of disparate socio-economic conditions wrought by uneven distributions of global capital. Furthermore, economic inequities women suffer in supposed “modern, developed societies” are ignored as focus is placed on individual harms and responsibility for social ills perpetuated by divorces.

Additionally, reified notions of “public” and “private” are reinstated in neoliberal discourses that focus on the plight of women globally without acknowledging how this binary demarcation willfully discounts “domestically” racialized bodies. For example, rethinking universalized notions of “women’s equality” in light of the experiences of black women in the United States, who have traditionally worked outside the home in numbers far exceeding the labor participation rate of white women, complicates abstractions of public and private, workplace and domesticity, and a universally naturalized heterosexual family structure (Crenshaw, 1989). The supposed

"failure" of black women to live up to a national ideal of motherhood proffered by an imaginary white female standard has created the threatening figure of the pathological black matriarch subsisting on welfare hand-outs (Crenshaw, 1989; Ferguson, 2004). Analyses offered in studies concerning "failures" of the African American family such as the Moynihan Report (1965) and the Bill Moyers documentary *The Vanishing Black Family* (1986), attribute socio-economic inequities to an irresponsible sexuality encouraged by a welfare state that renders the black male's familial role obsolete and emasculates him (Crenshaw, 1989; Ferguson, 2004).

Thus, "black culture" and "big government" are attributed with perpetuating gender disorder and sexually irresponsible behaviors that weaken African American families and, subsequently, their ability to capitalize on "free market" opportunities. In complementarian and liberal frameworks, "equality" and "agency" are tethered in a relationship constrained by notions of "choice" and "resistance" relegated to autonomous subjects negotiating the public and private spheres (Asad, 2003). Additionally, women are figured as individual complements to men in complementarianism and liberalism, establishing their proper place in the heterosexual family and a naturalized sexual/social division of labor (Brown, 2006). Thus, universal claims to "women's equality" manage differences like race, class, and nationality that challenge clear distinctions between public and private. Although complementarian and liberal discourses appear to be in opposition, framed as "conservative" theology and "progressive" secularism, they converge in reiterations of "public" and "private" critical to the proliferation of economic "reforms" and regulations of "difference." In turn, neoliberal policies reassert socio-economic ideologies of privatization and responsibility that shape identity politics and nationalist projects which link "equality" to distributions of tolerance.

Taking One for the Team

To conclude, my examination of Mark Driscoll's controversial response to Ted Haggard's fall explores how deployments of "women's equality" are necessary for articulations of tolerance to have productive value beyond merely "managing" or "incorporating" difference, particularly with regards to sexuality. The following statements were made on the Resurgence website, an "outgrowth of the teaching ministry of Mars Hill Church" whose intent "is to provide a large repository of free missional theology resources" to encourage "multiple generations to live for Jesus so that they can effectively reach their cities with the gospel by staying culturally accessible and Biblically faithful" (Resurgence, 2006). After providing a sketch of the media frenzy over Haggard's (then alleged) affair, Pastor Mark asks people to pray for Haggard's wife and children. He then launches into a discussion that, in typical fashion, weaves Biblical themes and personal anecdotes:

As every pastor knows, we are always at risk from the sin in us and the sinful temptations around us. Pastoring in one of America's least churchified cities to a large number of single, young people has been an eye-opening experience for me. I started the church ten years ago when I was twenty-five years of age. Thankfully, I was married to a beautiful woman. I met my lovely wife Grace when we were seventeen, married her at twenty-one, and by God's grace have been faithful to her in every way since the day we met. I have, however, seen some very overt opportunities for sin. On one

occasion I actually had a young woman put a note into my shirt pocket while I was serving communion with my wife, asking me to have dinner, a massage, and sex with her. On another occasion a young woman emailed me a photo of herself topless and wanted to know if I liked her body. Thankfully, that email was intercepted by an assistant and never got to me (Driscoll, 2006).

Driscoll's marriage to his "beautiful" wife Grace is described as a blessing that shields him from "overt opportunities for sin" with young women who make aggressive sexual advances. In the cases mentioned in this particular paragraph, either his wife or an assistant protects Pastor Mark from brazen attempts to lure him into sexual temptation.

In the next paragraph Driscoll laments, "my suspicion is that as our culture becomes more sexually rebellious, things will only get worse. Therefore, as a means of encouragement, I would like to share some practical suggestions for fellow Christian leaders, especially young men" (Driscoll, 2006). The following "words of encouragement" were the source of much negative attention:

Most pastors I know do not have satisfying, free, sexual conversations and liberties with their wives. At the risk of being even more widely despised than I currently am, I will lean over the plate and take one for the team on this. It is not uncommon to meet pastors' wives who really let themselves go; they sometimes feel that because their husband is a pastor, he is therefore trapped into fidelity, which gives them cause for laziness. A wife who lets herself go and is not sexually available to her husband in the ways that the Song of Songs is so frank about is not responsible for her husband's sin, but she may not be helping him either (Driscoll, 2006).

People outraged by Driscoll's "practical suggestions" for male Christian leaders were angered by his insinuation that pastor's wives are responsible for their husband's infidelities due to not being as sexually available, or attractive, as desired. While Driscoll's critics and supporters debated over the misogynistic character of his comments, the frequent appearance of women in this post is more telling. Driscoll describes female temptations in detail throughout this blog: the aforementioned woman who offered sex as she accepted communion, the woman who emailed a photo of herself topless, and "hurting single moms wanting a strong man to speak into their life, [who] would show up [at the church] to hang out and catch time with me" (Driscoll, 2006). He warns pastors to protect their homes against flirtatious women who arrive for Bible study and to beware of overly intimate relationships with emotionally dependent female assistants, adding: "I have been blessed with a trustworthy heterosexual male assistant who can travel with me, meet with me, etc., without the fear of any temptations or even false allegations since we have beautiful wives and eight children between us" (Driscoll, 2006).

In Driscoll's post, the single, hypersexualized female, emotionally vulnerable and overly available, eclipses Haggard's sin; his practical suggestions have nothing to do with men who are attracted to other men and everything to do with women who do not know their place. Completely ignoring the evidence that Haggard was having sex with a male escort, Driscoll refuses to address any questions pertaining to

Haggard's sexual identity. Instead, he focuses on women's sexual sin to shape how tolerance manages the difference of Haggard's sexuality. In this case, tolerance is not deployed to incorporate or accommodate difference; rather, it is used to displace and sublimate difference by redirecting our focus from Haggard's sexual attraction to a man onto female bodies solicitous of male attention. In this way, Driscoll transfers our gaze from the fallen President of the National Association of Evangelicals to the importance of marriage and family in monitoring and protecting men from their sinful sexual natures.

Driscoll's blog achieved a number of objectives (intentional or not) within and beyond the walls of Mars Hill. At the church, there has been a rapid increase of interest in "reforming female sexuality"; in workshops, blogging forums, and "redemption groups," women's sexual sin is confessed to, recorded, and selectively disseminated as aural and written testimonies on the church website. These surveillance techniques function at Mars Hill as productive networks of control that simultaneously redeem, reform, and proselytize. Pastor Mark's post also generated an enormous amount of press coverage that shifted the discourse in Christian communities from indictments concerning Haggard's "homosexuality," to polarizing discussions about whether Driscoll deserved to be called a misogynist. Later, once the group People Against Fundamentalism (PAF) announced its intention to hold a protest outside Mars Hill Church, the conversation shifted once again to debates over whether it was in the interest of Christians (as many in PAF identified themselves) to be protesting fellow Christians.

In the end, PAF called off their protest; the day before the event Driscoll met with his critics and apologized for his offensive comments. In return, he received an apology for being called a misogynist. Since the demonstration was cancelled just one day before it was scheduled, members of PAF went to Mars Hill at the appointed time and held a banner across the street that said "Thank You for Apologizing, Mark." Despite their initial outrage, progressive Christians and secularists were appeased with an apology and a promise that Pastor Mark would monitor his comments concerning women in the future. By contrast, Haggard's apology was insufficient; he was required to undergo "restorative" therapy to "cure" his homosexuality.

While opinions concerning whether or not Haggard is to be despised or defended continue to circulate, this paper asks how Haggard is figured as a "domestic threat" to our "national security" in a way that Driscoll cannot be. As churches like Mars Hill continue to propagate discourses of "family" and "home" that locate "intimacy" in spaces and bonds both "enduring" and "private," their rhetoric echoes gay rights cases such as *Bowers* and *Lawrence* that reify "family relationships, marriage, and procreation" as critical to "this Nation's history and tradition." Meanwhile, sex scandals starring fallen conservative figures of political stature such as Ted Haggard perpetually index threats to (and of) the "domestic" as the U.S. wages a "war on terror." While conservative evangelicals across the country were shocked and otherwise affected by the news of Haggard's fall, gloating members of the "gay community" such as Dan Savage were far more vitriolic in their repudiation of his "hypocrisy." In many ways, responses like Savage's are understandable given the extent and degree to which Haggard preached against homosexuality as a sin. However, I suggest that such "wounded attachments" (Brown, 1995) also signal a moral panic within a "gay community" whose boundaries are articulated, secured, and contested not only through litigious and state means, but technologies of citizenship dis-

seminated by logics of responsabilization and confluences of privacy and intimacy. In an effort to propose a genealogy of "culture war" polarizations, this critical ethnography tracks how the values and practices of identity politics deployed in queer liberalism are shaping and shaped by neoliberal techniques of governance mutually constituting the worship practices, gender theology, and entrepreneurialism of "emerging" churches like Mars Hill.

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Lose the Radicals, Wear a Suit, and Meet Me in the Rose Garden

A Critique of the Human Rights Campaign's Gay Agenda

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Abstract

Are civil rights the key to freedom for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) people in the United States? Should the emerging queer theories and intersectional movements of the postmodern era conform to the traditional shape of a civil rights movement aiming for legal equality? The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) would answer affirmatively. In staking their claim as the leading LGBT organization in the United States, the HRC has made significant strides in convincing the LGBT community that it is capable of achieving the hopes and dreams of the LGBT movement—as long as these hopes and dreams do not entail a deconstruction or queering of gender in terms of its roles, norms, identities, expressions, or in terms of the way that systems of gender interlock with and uphold other systems of power. Throughout this essay I will analyze how the HRC's focus on lobbying politicians for civil rights limits its work to a liberal, modernist agenda within the hegemonic and heterosexist democratic system, which has ultimately forced them to play assimilationist, political games. I will argue that in making the HRC the major organization representing LGBTQI communities, the needs for educational, cultural, sex-positive, feminist, anti-racist, and radical advancements have been virtually ignored. Eradicating homophobia, transphobia, and sexism thus becomes the work of another kind of organization.

Introduction

As a former card-carrying member of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), I approach my critique of the organization with an insider's perspective on the so-called "gay agenda" that the HRC has enshrined, namely, that civil rights and legal equality are the key to freedom for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people in the U.S. Displaying a rigid commitment to its equal rights ideology, the organization proudly claims the title of the "largest national gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) civil rights organization" in its definition of "Who We Are" as posted on its website (Human Rights Campaign [HRC], 2007a, par. 1). In staking its claim as the leading LGBT organization that "represents a grassroots force of more than 700,000 members and supporters nationwide" (HRC, 2007a, para. 1), the HRC has made significant strides in convincing a certain portion of the LGBT community that it is capable of achieving their hopes and dreams—, as long as those hopes and dreams do not entail a deconstruction of gender in terms of its roles, norms, identities, expressions, or in terms of the way that systems of gender interlock with and uphold

other systems of power.¹

For many individuals and organizations, however, a critical analysis of gender is at the very center of their "queer" identities and activism. Distinguishing between a queer community and what the HRC calls the LGBT community is often difficult, but for the purposes of this analysis, I will use queer to represent an inclusive and intersectional notion of minority and non-normative identities and considerations that places great emphasis on the deconstruction of gender and on systems of race and class. Queer activism thus stands in stark contrast to the assimilationist tactics of the HRC, and I will argue that it is precisely a more queer perspective that the HRC must adopt if it truly wants to serve the various lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and allied (LGBTQIA) communities. The HRC strategically does not employ this more comprehensive list of identities and especially avoids the term queer, as its history is associated with radical direct action. Throughout this essay I will examine such strategic use of discourse and political strategies by the HRC and give a brief history of its rise to power in order to argue that there are major drawbacks to focusing a movement's efforts on lobbying politicians for civil rights.

By selecting legal rights as its main target and employing an equal rights discourse, the HRC is following in the liberal tradition of the U.S. democratic process, which is supposedly available to any citizen at present, but in reality is more effective for those citizens with enough capital to organize a strong political lobby. Working within this system of politics demands that a movement embrace certain kinds of discursive and political methods, and the HRC has fallen in line and chosen strategies fostered by the liberal tradition of social justice through civil rights for minority identities. These strategies, however, inevitably produce discourse and legislation that only reify the existing boundaries of identities sanctioned by the dominant culture and do little to deconstruct the systems that enforce these boundaries. Furthermore, the privileges of civil rights most often benefit those of the minority group who are upper- or middle-class and whose investments in the economic system will increase with their new access to certain rights. Eradicating homophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, sexism, racism, and classism becomes the work of another kind of organization.

The HRC thus tailors (and tames) its discourse and political strategies to take advantage of notions of liberal citizenship and individual "human rights." What gets left out of such a strategy is a dedication to cultural, educational, economic, and social critique or forms of dissent that might seem too radical to the politicians whose opinions determine the success of the HRC's lobby. But how has this "tamed," liberal strategy come to form the agenda of a movement that in the past has been characterized as radical in its various forms of dissent? How did this social movement evolve from the Stonewall Rebellion and the Lesbian Avengers to the suit-wearing Human Rights Campaign, lobbying on Capitol Hill? Answering this question involves an analysis of how the movement's history has been represented by mainstream media and activists and an attempt to more accurately portray the activism and concerns of transgender people, an endeavor that historian Susan Stryker (2007ab) takes up in her recent writings. Instead of the liberal grand narrative of "progress," Stryker (2007a) more accurately reframes the construction of the gay rights movement as hinging, at least in part, on a process of "othering" transgender individuals in order to establish a more normative gay and lesbian core identity (p. 7-8).

Stryker (2007a) identifies 1973 as the year that "sentiment against transgender people

participating in gay and feminist work reached a fever pitch," in part because it was the year that homosexuality was removed from the list of mental disorders in the psychiatric Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (p. 8). Hence, "gender-normative gay and lesbian people could say that they were healthy and transgender people were sick" (Stryker, 2007a, p. 8). A more normative gay identity could also benefit the movement's bid for civil rights, and Stryker (2007a) explains, "With the war in Viet Nam winding down . . . the androgynous hippy style of the 'Freakin' Fag Revolution' was replaced with the new macho of the 'clone look'" (p. 8). Adopting a "clone look," especially for gay men, may have been an attempt to forge a new masculine gay identity, but it also coincided with the emerging assimilationist bent of the movement that attempted to downplay any visible difference between gays and straights. This notion of gay assimilation was recently referenced by U.S. Representative Barney Frank, whose first full year as a (then-closeted) Representative was, coincidentally, 1973. In a speech to the House of Representatives, Rep. Frank (2007) explained why American society is ready to protect the rights of gays and lesbians but not of transgender people:

We are at a differential stage in public understanding of these issues. We've been dealing explicitly and increasingly openly with prejudice based on sexual orientation for almost 40 years, since the Stonewall Riots of 1969 and since then. The millions of people that talk openly and take on the prejudice against people who who are transgendered is newer. It is also the case that prejudice begins with people reacting against those who are different from them in some way. People are rarely prejudiced against their clones. So we have this situation where there is more prejudice in this society today against people who are transgendered than against people who are gay and lesbian, partly because we have been working longer at dealing with the sex orientation prejudice; partly because the greater the difference, the greater the prejudice is to start, the more people fail to identify, the more they are put off by differences (para. 6-7).

Not only does this statement reinforce Stryker's argument that gay rights leaders have othered transgender individuals in order to lessen the difference between gays and straights, but it also proves that homocentric and homonormative gay leaders tend to (as I call it) "gay-wash" the history of the queer movement by denying the central role of transgender activists.

Frank's assertion that the gay rights movement started with the Stonewall Rebellion but did not include transgender individuals or issues is an oft-used tactic of gay-washing discourse, but one that is historically inaccurate. Laws that prohibited cross-dressing in New York made transgender patrons and drag queens at the Stonewall Inn the prime targets of the 1969 police raid that initiated the Rebellion, and by many accounts it was an unidentified butch lesbian and a trans woman, Sylvia Rivera, who were the two central individuals inciting the crowds to riot (Stryker, 2007a, p. 8). Though some gay men tried to "deny transgender participation in the street fighting" and though Silvia Rivera was "prevented from speaking at the Stonewall commemoration" in 1973, these riots occurred as a joint effort—though not the first—by transgender and gay people (Stryker, 2007a, p. 7-8). Other joint protests that precluded the Stonewall Rebellion included the April 1965 sit-in at

Dewey's Lunch Counter in Philadelphia and the August 1966 protest in San Francisco at Compton's Cafeteria (Stryker, 2007a, p. 6). As Rep. Frank cites, many gay leaders have proclaimed the Stonewall victory as the beginning of the Gay Pride/Liberation Movement and of an identity politics for a homocentric and homonormative gay citizen. But the details of what actually inspired the riot also contain the beginnings of a different wave of movement and politics—one where gays and lesbians would unite with bisexual, transgender, genderqueer, and intersex people to fight homo-, bi-, and transphobia and where they would join forces with feminists and anti-racists to critique the systems of gender, race, and class that oppressed them all.

This second, and more explicitly queer, movement has indeed persisted, though only at the margins of the mainstream, hegemonic Gay Liberation/Rights Movement. Just as Second Wave feminists were coming to terms with the "white-washing" of their movement in the early 1980's, the then-named Human Rights Campaign Fund was establishing a hegemonic hold on the LGBT community. But within the feminist movement, such hegemony would not go unchallenged. U.S. third-world feminist Chela Sandoval (1991) describes the rift within the feminist movement, citing feminist literary critic Gayatri Spivak who first applied the term hegemonic to "the dominant feminist theory emerging in the 1970's" that designated white, middle-class theorists as the leaders of the movement, often to the detriment of the theory and activism of more marginalized women of color, third-world feminists, working class women, and gender non-conforming women (p. 75). Addressing these inequities of race, class, and gender identity or expression within the U.S. movement resulted in a revision (though not a complete transformation) of the feminist perspective, which Sandoval (1991) characterized as, "an uneasy alliance between what appears on the surface to be two different understandings of domination, subordination, and the nature of effective resistance—a shot-gun arrangement at best between 'hegemonic feminist theory' and 'US third-world feminism.'" (p. 75).

Even as women of color and lesbian feminists were reconfiguring the focus of the feminist movement, strikingly similar inequities plagued the LGBT Rights movement and allowed for a hegemonic identity and discourse to arise. Queer activist and writer Sue Hyde (2007) added to Stryker's critique of the exclusionary practices of the mainstream LGBT Rights movement when she wrote:

The LGBT movement has been primarily driven by middle-class and white LGBTpeople. Not only has this demographic reality caused a narrowing of our political vision, the dominance of white middle-class people has obscured the presence and leadership of LGBT people of color, leaving them relatively powerless to affect the development of our overall political agenda (p. 92).

Though there remains this legacy of a racial and class majority controlling the mainstream gay agenda, the numerous needs of the queer community have inspired the formation of various local and state organizations and direct action groups, some of whom fiercely oppose the assimilationist and classist values of the HRC. ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), the Lesbian Avengers, Queer Nation, and other groups strongly active in the 1980's and 90's described themselves as radical, anti-establishment, trans-inclusive, anti-racist, and queer, working for issues ranging from AIDS prevention to childcare issues. As Lisa Duggan (1991) explains, radical groups

like ACT UP and Queer Nation “reject the liberal value of privacy and the appeal to tolerance which dominate the agendas of more mainstream gay organizations” (p. 219). The divide between radical and assimilationist organizations within the LGBT movement is deep, as Duggan (1991) points out: “They emphasize publicity and self-assertion; confrontation and direct action top their list of tactical options; the rhetoric of difference replaces the more assimilationist liberal emphasis on similarity to other groups” (p. 219). Thus, when the HRC would raise and donate “\$140,000 to 118 congressional candidates” (HRC, 2007a, para. 2), an organization like ACT UP would bring 4,500 protestors to St. Patrick’s Cathedral during Mass to stage a “Die-in” that Judith Butler called “a shocking symbolization” of the AIDS crisis (as cited in Osborne and Segal, 1993, para. 27).

Such dissident, radical groups still face resistance, according to feminist theorist Holloway Sparks (1997), because they fly in the face of “respectability and traditionality” and “threaten traditional gender norms, sexuality norms, and class norms” (p. 469). Sparks asserts that certain brands of dissident citizenship can be powerful. However, as membership in ACT UP has drastically dwindled (with many members dying of AIDS) and as Queer Nation is all but defunct, these radical groups have lost ground to organizations like the HRC. The HRC’s hegemonic discourse has gained power through its claim that lesbians and gays are a minority group deserving of the “liberal rights of privacy and formal equality” and “full economic, political, and cultural participation in U.S. life” (Duggan, 1991, p. 217). In 2004 it added the transgender community to its minority group and supposedly welcomed this “new” group to the identity politics table (HRC, 2007a, para. 3). However, Duggan (1991) argues that claiming a minority identity in order to lobby for civil rights is merely a “rhetorical overture to the logic of liberal tolerance [that] has generally met with very limited success” (p. 217). One of the greatest reasons why the HRC’s embrace of identity politics has failed to make significant gains is their reliance on political lobbying. I would argue that when the majority of the HRC’s efforts are aimed at Beltway lobbying in Washington D.C., the organization is empowering politicians as the *de facto* leaders of its movement. Sadly, when these leaders actually come through with legislation favoring LGBT citizens, the integrity and strength of the bill is often compromised in order to attract bi-partisan support.

The most recent result of such lobbying efforts was the passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) in the U.S. House of Representatives in November of 2007. Originally drafted to include workplace protections based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, Rep. Frank and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi—both noted gay allies—redrafted the bill to exclude gender identity and expression after their informal poll of representatives showed there were not enough supporters to pass the fully inclusive version. In response, over 360 national, state, and local LGBTQI organizations “representing tens of thousands of members and constituents” went on record in support of the gender-inclusive version of the bill, all signing a letter urging Congress to “oppose legislation that leaves part of our community without protections and basic security that the rest of us are provided” (United ENDA, 2007, para. 1). These organizations strongly criticized the HRC for refusing to stand with them and sign the letter. Eventually, the HRC publicly declared its full support for the non-inclusive version of ENDA and celebrated its passage in the House as a “major advance” in their “determined march towards progress,” as President Joe Solmonese wrote in an email to HRC members (personal communication, November 7, 2007).

The price of this supposed victory was quite substantial. Transgender individuals, who Solmonese acknowledged as “especially vulnerable to workplace discrimination,” would remain unprotected by the bill. But they would not be the only ones. According to Lambda Legal, the nation’s largest legal organization dedicated to LGBTQI issues, gender non-conforming individuals would also continue to be at risk due to what Executive Director Kevin Cathcart characterized as a bill “riddled with loopholes” (as cited by Hardaway, 2007, para. 2). Lambda Legal’s analysis of ENDA revealed this troubling fact:

This new bill also leaves out a key element to protect any employee, including lesbians, gay men and bisexuals who may not conform to their employer’s idea of how a man or woman should look and act. This is a huge loophole through which employers sued for sexual orientation discrimination can claim that their conduct was actually based on gender expression, a type of discrimination that the new bill does not prohibit (Hardaway, 2007, para. 5).

Such a loophole is the logical result of the HRC’s discursive strategies that do not take into account issues of gender-variance but instead rely on a homocentric and homonormative vision of middle-class, gay citizens who are able to assimilate by fitting the clone mold.

A lack of attention to systems of oppression (gender, race, class, etc.) seems to be the ultimate flaw in the HRC’s gay agenda. Its assumption that homophobia and discrimination are provoked by someone’s sexual orientation but not by her/his gender expression is not only ignorant, but is itself homophobic and sexist in that it legitimizes only those gays and lesbians whose gender identities and expressions conform to the traditional binaries of masculine/feminine. Thus, when the HRC supports legislation like the non-inclusive ENDA, it is reinscribing gender binaries and promoting essentialist ideas of gender that are at the very root of homophobic and sexist oppression.

This is the intersection where the feminist and queer movements converge and where queer leaders must turn their focus if they want to avoid the problematics of an equal rights ideology. The queer community and its leaders must recommit their efforts to engage in an intersectional analysis of themselves and their politics, and they can start by studying contemporary feminist and queer theory and the ways that women of color have revolutionized the U.S. feminist movement. In tracing the various forms of political and social resistance in the United States, Sandoval (1991) has found that “hegemonic feminist forms of resistance represent only other versions of the forms of oppositional consciousness expressed within all liberation movements active in the United States during the later half of the twentieth century” (p. 77). Such direct parallels between social movements should encourage queer activists to study the discursive and political strategies of the feminist movement in particular, as well as build alliances with feminists. Such alliances would inevitably teach queer activists to be wary of enshrining and blindly following any one ideology of opposition.

Indeed, queer activists could learn a great deal from the work of feminist theorists and activists such as Audre Lorde, Barbara Smith, and Cherríe Moraga (all lesbian-feminists and women of color) who exposed the dangers of a movement becom-

ing rigid in one ideology, whether it be equal rights ideology, a separatist, supremacist, or revolutionary ideology, as Sandoval (1991) classifies them. These U.S. third-world feminists were able to refocus the mainstream, hegemonic feminist movement on ideas of intersectional identities and radical critiques of gender as part of an interlocking system of oppression, as described by the Combahee River Collective (1977, p. 29). Addressing the various forms of difference within a single movement (even within one member of a movement) and treating them as the movement's greatest strengths is fundamental to its success, and the abundant diversity of the queer community demands this understanding and practice. This has been the central internal challenge to the queer movement since Stonewall, when the first organization to emerge after the Rebellion—the radical and anti-assimilationist Gay Liberation Front—survived only three short years before internal divisions over how to negotiate differences and intersectional identities caused its dissolution (Stryker, 2007a, p. 9).

Though queer organizations in the 1980's and 90's promoted an intersectional and trans-inclusive ideology, they were not as successful in transforming the mainstream ideology of the larger Gay Rights movement as their U.S. third-world feminist counterparts. These queer organizations were hindered in part by the rise of a powerful voice against gays—the Republican Right. However, beginning in the early 1980's, it was the HRC that was able to unite the gay and lesbian community by being the public voice that countered the well-publicized, anti-gay tactics of extremist right-wing groups, such as the Moral Majority and the National Conservative Political Action Committee. By 1992 the HRC had gained enough capital and visibility to receive an invitation to meet with newly-elected President Bill Clinton—"the first meeting between GLBT leaders and a sitting president," as the HRC's website boasts (2007a, para. 4). I would cite this moment in history as the point of no return for the HRC and for the movement that it was spearheading—the moment when its oppositional consciousness solidified into a hegemonic ideology shaped by the hope for legal equality. This ideology has thrown queer and feminist theory to the wind and groomed the organization for its true purpose: to build a strong political image in Washington, D.C. As HRC President Joe Solmonese (2007) admitted in a written response to criticism of his organization, "Yes, we are the nation's largest GLBT lobby [*italics added*] organization" (para. 5).

Though the current HRC president may have finally acknowledged the limited focus of the organization, his statement is not in keeping with the public image that the HRC promotes. Still aware of the cultural and educational work to be done before legal equality is possible, the HRC skillfully maintains the image that it is accomplishing such comprehensive work. On its website, the organization pays lip service to its diversity initiatives that "unite [...] diverse communities into a powerful whole striving for equality" and to its "research and educational programs [that] engage GLBT and straight-supportive Americans in an ongoing dialogue about equality" (HRC, 2007b, para. 5). One can only imagine what percentage of its donations the HRC dedicates to these initiatives, but they clearly center the programs on the ideology of equality: "The Human Rights Campaign Foundation develops educational programming and research in support of basic equality" (HRC, 2007b, para. 7). The fact that they have developed these programs in recent years shows that the organization is striving to counter those who have criticized its "narrow" vision for a "gay agenda" (Hyde, 2007, p. 95). For instance, Hyde describes how the HRC refused to join other national LGBT organizations in taking a public stand on the death

penalty and the war against Iraq in 1999 and again in 2003. The HRC explained, "We don't see [them] as particularly gay issues" and said that these issues "[fell] outside [their] specific mission, which is to ensure that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people achieve equality in today's society" (as cited in Hyde, 2007, p. 94-5). Even as other national organizations design programs that account for the intersectional identities of queer individuals' various health-care, cultural, educational, child-care, religious, and family backgrounds and needs, HRC's President continues to reveal the true purpose of his organization: "It's a long process to educate [Congressmen], get the bills drafted, and compile sponsors and cosponsors. That's what we spend a lot of time doing. And Capitol Hill is ultimately where we need to see the results" (Solmonese, 2007, para. 3). Many in the queer community would disagree, and their voices are beginning to be heard.

The scandal over ENDA has shaken the HRC's hegemonic hold somewhat and has reminded the LGBT community that a movement focused solely on civil rights easily divides the community as much as unites it. As politicians like Rep. Frank break promises and reveal their own prejudices, it is becoming more evident that the goals of the HRC do not benefit the entire community equally and do not fundamentally alter oppressive social conditions. Until queer, intersectional organizations rise up and break from the ideology of equal rights and adopt perspectives gained from queer theory and U.S. third-world feminists, including Sandoval's concept of differential consciousness³, the HRC will continue its hegemonic reign from atop Capitol Hill, and the compromised legislation that they (rarely) hand down will continue to be a hollow victory for most LGBTQI people.

As queer activists and scholars, we must continue to challenge the grand narrative of LGBT history put forward by organizations like the HRC, and we must expose assimilationist political discourses and strategies for their classist, racist, and sexist underpinnings. I am not calling for the total elimination of the HRC, but for a major overhaul of its political commitments and its hegemonic hold on the purse strings and aims of the LGBT community. I believe the HRC has its place in a queer movement for social justice, but that place should not be leading the movement nor controlling the majority of its discourse, activism, and political strategies. The HRC must continue to own up to its limitations as a political lobby, and as a lobby it must decide exactly who it is willing to represent. If the HRC added transgender issues to its banner in 2004 out of sincere dedication, then it must lobby for legislation that is truly inclusive.

The queer community has the power to force the HRC to surrender its hegemonic control. We can refocus our donations, time, and energy and break the myopic spell of equal rights ideology. We must engage in dialogue and action with other social justice activists to uncover and challenge the interlocking systems of oppression that are common to our experiences. We must reinvest ourselves in movements for sexual and gender liberation, as well as sex and body positivism. We must value what queer identity has taught us about the importance of inclusiveness and intersectionality, and based on this we must be willing to reform traditional identity politics so that a queer agenda might represent a struggle against any type of discrimination and ignorance, an agenda for human dignity. When queer activists mobilize to take action against racist or sexist situations, we will do so as "out" LGBT and genderqueer individuals, but we will focus our energies on the issues at hand and foreground the identities that we share in common with our allies. In reconfiguring the way identity politics is organized, we can begin the work of enacting the feminist and queer the-

ories that have explained how social and political oppression cuts across all identities and build coalitions across lines of difference. If queer activism is to be successful, its concerns must be truly inclusive of all identities.

There exist many LGBTQI organizations already doing such intersectional and coalition-building work, and we must strengthen our support of these grassroots organizations which are revolutionizing the way our society understands LGBT issues with programs like the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network's No Name-Calling Week (2007) that begins educating children on bullying and the power of language as early as grade school; Gender Public Advocacy Coalition's (2007) touring panel that brings together youth activists and community leaders to discuss mainstream hip-hop's role in promoting homophobia, sexism, and hyper-masculinity among youth; and Queers for Economic Justice (2007) whose multi-racial and multi-cultural politics dictate their work to "challenge and change the systems that create poverty and economic injustice in our communities"—with added emphasis on the plurality of communities (para. 2). We must also focus on the importance of our local communities and strengthen our support for and presence in local organizations that work on broad social justice issues. The example set by the HRC of delimiting only certain justice issues as "particularly gay issues" must be eradicated, and queer individuals must continue to resist normative and exclusionary hegemonies and live "out" as we build strong coalitions with other social justice movements.

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Footnotes

1. The interlocking systems of oppression as cited by Combahee River Collective (1977) include but are not limited to "racial, sexual, and class oppression . . . The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives" (p. 29).
2. I use the term "white-washing" to refer to the white, middle-class, and heterosexual focus of the feminist movement that paid little attention to the intersectional identities of many women.
3. Differential consciousness as defined by Sandoval (1991) "depends upon the ability to read the current situation of power and of self-consciously choosing and adopting the ideological form best suited to push against its configurations" (p. 90).

Violent Frontiers: Women's Rights, Intimate Partner Violence, and the State in Ecuador

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Abstract

Family violence is shockingly widespread in a rural region of northwestern Ecuador, in part because of its legitimacy in the eyes of both men and women. El Páramo region, comprised by colonists from the province of Manabí, is considered a lawless frontier, as it lacks access to basic infrastructure as well as legal, judicial, and institutional resources. To combat family violence in El Páramo, NGOs have instituted workshops to educate men and women about women's rights. However, these empowerment initiatives have approached gender inequality solely as a cultural and ideological issue, and have had variable, contradictory effects on social relations and rates of violence. Utilizing ethnographic data from seven years of research and activist involvement in this region, I explore the complex ways that increasing awareness of women's rights affects experiences of and responses to intimate partner violence. Through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and oral histories, I demonstrate the contradictions that arise among both women and men during processes of politicizing gender and argue for the importance of multi-faceted interventions. I close with personal reflections about the challenges of combining "neutral" data collection with engaged methodologies that contribute to the local politicizing of gender.

Introduction

"If you have a problem with the decisions of the health committee of which I am President, go ahead and hit me right now, as all the men do to their women here. We have been victimized for much too long. You may not respect women here, but the state of Ecuador does. So, go ahead and hit me. I will finally have recourse this time."

In this statement, Diana, one of the women I interviewed, captures the sentiments of many women who are gaining awareness of their rights in a rural region of coastal Ecuador called El Páramo.¹ While assessing health service coverage in this region in 2005, I witnessed Diana's forceful response to a health-committee member who complained about women's involvement in health center management. Due to rising participation in state and non-governmental (NGO) programs, El Páramo's inhabitants are growing increasingly aware of their rights as Ecuadorian citizens. Women in particular are asserting their gender-based rights and organizing themselves in new ways.

Family violence is shockingly widespread in the recently settled region of El Páramo, in part because of its legitimacy in the eyes of both men and women. This region of northwest Esmeraldas, comprised of colonists from the neighboring province of Manabí, is often considered a lawless frontier by community members and outsiders alike. El Páramo lacks access to basic infrastructure as well as legal, judicial, and institutional resources. In addition, Manabita men are characterized by their aggressive masculinity by other Ecuadorians (DeWalt, 2004). To combat El Páramo's so-called culture of violence, NGO programs have instituted workshops to educate men and women about women's rights. However, these women's empowerment initiatives have approached gender inequality as a cultural and ideological issue, and they have had variable and contradictory effects on social relations and rates of violence. Having worked in this region for seven years, I have explored the ways that many women have experienced increased rates of violence within the home.² They struggle deeply with the ideological claims to "rights" when they do not have the resources to act upon these rights (Merry, 2003). Diana, for example, struggles daily with this contradiction. In public, she uses the language of rights and invokes the protection of the state. At home, however, she continues to be battered by her husband. In fact, she also continues to believe that she deserves it.

In this paper, I provide a brief overview of the dimensions of family violence and related gender norms in El Páramo region. Through a case study of a particular women's empowerment initiative, I highlight the complex contradictions experienced by Diana and other El Páramo women in a context of increasing women's rights awareness in this "frontier" zone. Though the women are currently exposed to multiple discourses of human rights, they lack access to institutional and political-economic resources that would allow these women to act as rights-bearers. I also argue for the importance of utilizing the lens of historical anthropology to investigate the political, economic, and social processes that underpin gender norms and produce a normalized "culture of gendered violence." In this case, a historically specific examination of the lived realities and political-economic context from which El Páramo colonists originated is crucial to making sense of the Manabita gender norms and their role in the normalization of gendered violence (Adelman, 2004).³

Family Violence in Ecuador

Intimate partner violence in Ecuador is prevalent, and often considered legitimate (CEDAW, 2002; Machuca, Briceño, & Granda, 2003; McKee, 1999; Moscoso, 1996; Stølen, 1987). For example, sixty percent of low-income women in a Quito neighborhood reported physical abuse by a male partner between 1986 and 1992 (Barragán Alvarado, Ayala Marin, & Camacho Zambrano, 1992). According to the World Bank (2000), thirty-seven percent of women in Ecuador experienced abuse two to three times per month, demonstrating that rates of violence in Ecuador may be higher than in many other Latin American countries.⁴ Most scholarship on violence-against-women in Ecuador has focused on gender relations and violence in urban settings (Barragán Alvarado, Ayala Marin, & Camacho Zambrano, 1992) and indigenous communities (Hamilton, 1998; Muratorio, 2002; Prieto, Cuminao, Flores, Maldonado, & Pequeño, 2005), while only a select few studies have addressed gender and violence on the Ecuadorian coast (DeWalt, 2004; Phillips, 1985, 1987). In all, the studies identify several factors that contribute to family violence, including poverty, alcohol, patriarchal gender norms, "aggressive masculinity," and lack of educational, legal and judicial resources (The World Bank, 2000). However, they do not

capture women's subjective experiences of violence, nor do they reveal the broader societal mechanisms through which poverty, for example, leads to violence. They also fail to demonstrate how family violence is changing in response to legal, political, and structural reforms.

During the 1990s, women's organizations and Ecuador's government collaborated to establish institutional norms for women's equality (Herrera, 2001; Lind, 2005). In 1995, Ecuador adopted the Law against Violence towards Women and the Family (*Ley 103*), which led to the creation of provincial police stations for women and the family where violence against women can be reported (CONAMU, 2001). Overall, Ecuador's movement against family violence is considered progressive, yet its effects on the daily lives of rural women are not well understood (Heise, 1994; Lind, 2005).

Women's Empowerment and Family Violence: The Literature

Women's empowerment initiatives worldwide have varied and uneven effects on violence against women. Evidence suggests higher rates of violence against women in contexts where gender norms are in flux, but no direct relationship between female status and wife battering has been found (Mitra & Singh, 2007). Activists have long advocated multisectoral approaches to combat family violence by combining awareness raising, legal advocacy, family planning, and economic initiatives, but rarely are these approaches implemented with success due to lack of resources and adept programming. In light of these limitations, investigators of family violence should turn their attention to examining the consequences of these approaches (often partially-implemented) on women's daily experiences with violence.

Much of the literature on human rights assumes that people throughout the world have a universal "rights consciousness," but many people do not have a sense of self aligned with the identity presupposed by international law – that of an autonomous rights-conscious self (Merry, 2003, 2006). Rather, people who have had little interaction with formal legal systems may tend to define themselves through their relationships with family and community. Studies on human rights and family violence rarely demonstrate how women worldwide must also experience a powerful shift in identity and have particular resources at their disposal in order to act upon understandings of themselves as rights-bearers (Merry, 1990, 1997). As Sally Engle Merry (1997) reminds us, human rights implies a particular form of subjectivity – and though powerful, this subjectivity may not always be compatible with the realities of the rural poor. In fact, discourses of female empowerment can result in blaming poor women and "their culture" because they fail to exit cycles of abuse, while ignoring the necessary political and economic restructuring. Much of this literature frames violence as "cultural" without further interrogating how "culture" is produced through the body, family, community, and nation-state (Adelman, 2004). Although it manifests in individualized suffering, family violence constitutes a form of structural violence, embedded in a larger social, political, and economic matrix which must become part of the analysis (Farmer, 2003). Therefore, I argue that both research and programming that address human rights and gender-based violence must embed family violence in a political-economic context, for it is these processes that shape not only how women understand and experience their right to live a life free of violence, but also how they access and act on this right.

The Research Setting

In the remote cloudforest region in northwestern Ecuador called El Páramo, 6000 people have settled into twenty-six communities linked by muddy trails to a central commercial town. These mestizo settlers arrived from a neighboring province an average of fifteen years ago in search of productive land to practice subsistence agriculture. El Páramo's inhabitants live in a precarious state of poverty. Not only do they survive on minimal income, but also they suffer from their unstable legal relationship to the land that sustains them. The majority of inhabitants are *poseionarios* (possessioners), who claimed possession of their land but hold no legal title. Aside from limited aid with road improvements during the dry summer months, the municipal government has yet to provide electric, water, or sanitation services to this region. Residents praise their independence from the government and high degree of self-reliance, yet they criticize the failure of the Ecuadorian state to provide basic infrastructure. However, this is beginning to change. In 2001, an international NGO implemented basic health services in the region in collaboration with local communities. With the Ministry of Public Health, this NGO has facilitated a number of health and development projects, including the provision of workshops on family violence, family relations, and the rights of men, women, and children. In 2006, municipal officials installed electricity posts and improved road conditions for the central community. This year, the government promises to "bring law and justice"⁵ into the region by building a police post.

Overall, life in El Páramo is in a state of flux. Domestic violence is generally considered a private affair, but newly circulating discourses of citizenship are prompting some inhabitants to hold the state responsible for protecting women and children. Meanwhile, men are suffering from their inability to provide enough economic support for their families due to their limited participation in the market economy and rising prices of consumer goods. Tensions are increasing from the strict gendered division of labor during a time when women are increasingly pressured to assist in providing for their families. Each of these factors is critical to understanding family violence in the region.

Family Violence in El Páramo

Incidence of wife battering is extremely high in this region, and violence is the commonly accepted manner of resolving conflict both in and outside the home. Due to its remote location, El Páramo inhabitants are in many ways exempt from or ignored by the Ecuadorian legal system. Presently, the closest *Comisaría de la Mujer y la Familia* (Women and Family Commissariat), where women can report cases of family violence (and specifically, violations of "Ley 103") is located in the capital city of the province (which is approximately four hours from El Páramo's central community and as much as thirteen hours from others). Due to their recent migration and extreme isolation, women lack access to legal recourse and family and community networks that can offer support and hinder violence.

For the most part, impunity reigns. However, El Páramo inhabitants often take the law into their own hands, and justice is enforced by recourse to *la ley del machete* (the law of the machete). Life in El Páramo can be characterized by most of the predictive factors of family violence that have been outlined worldwide, including: economic inequality between men and women; stringent division of labor between

men and women (usually 'private' versus 'public'); violence as an societal pattern in resolving conflict; male authority and control of decision-making; and restrictions on women's ability to leave the family setting (Brasiliero, 1997; Counts, 1999; Levinson, 1989; Sanday, 1981).

Almost all of the women who I have interviewed over the last five years have reported at least one incident of physical abuse at the hands of an intimate partner in their lifetime.⁶ Intimate partner abuse in El Páramo manifests as physical, sexual, economic, and psychological abuse and these forms of abuse are often interrelated. Sexual violence among intimate partners is especially common. When I asked the regional midwife to tell me about the sexual and reproductive health issues that women faced in El Páramo, she quickly responded,

Well, for one, women are sexual slaves for their husbands. Sexual violence is a big problem, because husbands force sex onto their wives without their willingness. This is rape. If women refuse sex to their husbands, their husbands beat them.

Most women in El Páramo live with violence – and the threat of violence – on a daily basis. The exact toll of wife battering and threats of violence on the physical and mental health of El Páramo women is currently unknown, but the effects of spousal abuse on the physical and mental health of families worldwide are multiple and severe.⁷

The Legitimacy of Wife Abuse

Due to their recent attendance of workshops and events that promote women's rights, the majority of battered women in central communities of El Páramo increasingly recognize their right to live free from violence – or, at least, from violence that is unjustified. However, domestic violence remains invisible in the more distant communities, due to its perceived legitimacy and relegation to the "private" realm, the lack of awareness of women's rights and "Ley 103," and the lack of legal and economic options. For example, when discussing intimate partner violence with a Maria, a 45-year-old woman from the central community, she claimed,

Women's punishment by men is usually deserved. I have never deserved it though. I have been treated like a pigeon locked in a cage. I don't want liberty or independence, or anything like that. I just want to be able to leave the house sometimes. But other women, well – they should be stopped, because many of them really know how to get around.

Many women consider physical violence as a normative form of discipline, as has been found in multiple settings worldwide (Ofei-Aboagye, 1994). Three years after making this statement, however, Maria eventually filed a *denuncia* (or a police report) against her husband for hitting her for so-called unjustified reasons. Now, they are living together peacefully, and his behavior has changed radically (though he attributes his non-violent behavior to having matured naturally, not to the sanction made against him). Maria, however, has proven to all the men and women in the community that a *denuncia* can make a difference in a household, and her case is now cited regularly as an example of the positive power of *Ley 103*. Other women,

such as Diana, have also learned to condemn family violence in "public", while they continue to accept it and legitimize it in "private" discourse and commentary, exposing intriguing contradictions and discrepancies between what women say and what they do.

No Exit: Options and Strategies

Unfortunately, even when women recognize that family violence is wrong and unjustified, they often do not have the resources at hand to be able to change their predicament. Ana, for example, speaks of her investment in her family and her unwillingness to squander it:

I don't want to leave this home that I have built up. I have been working for this family, my kids, my house, this relationship...for more than 20 years. I cannot give up now and leave him with it all. I cannot go to my [extended] family. I have not seen them in so long and I can't bother them now. There is talk of refuges in some places, but why would I go somewhere where I don't know anyone? I just hope that my husband stops bothering me one day, so we can just get on with our lives somewhat peacefully.

If we understand the few options that women actually have, we see that the dilemma for women is an intensely contradictory one. As Merry (1997) points out in her discussion of battered women in Hawaii, "protection requires ending a relationship that may involve some caring and financial support as well as violence" (p. 65). Women generally have little contact with extended family, they have no source of independent income, and they desire to stay with their children for obvious reasons.⁸ Retaining the sanctity of the family is of extreme importance to El Páramo women, as it is integral to their identities as women. Also, the strict relegation of women to the domestic sphere severely impedes solidarity building among women, as many women only rarely leave their homes. Though women have adopted micro-strategies of resistance to negotiate their positioning within the household and to temporarily escape violence, they are often unable to truly challenge their treatment and position. Often, their short-term collusion is a form of ensuring their ability to enact resistance in the long-term. Although women's "empowerment" and solidarity-building is effecting change, the emergence of new discourses of empowerment ring hollow in an environment underpinned by structural violence due to lack of governmental engagement, limited economic opportunity, and institutional ideologies that legitimize and reinforce the oppressive treatment of women.⁹ By achieving only particular dimensions of empowerment, women find themselves in a contradictory predicament characterized by an organized and powerful sense of willingness and strength, yet an inability to truly access enabling resources and overcome structural barriers.

Women's Community Bank and Women-Against-Violence

In 1998, the Women's Community Bank (*La Asociación*), a women-run micro-credit organization was established with the help of an Ecuadorian NGO to provide small loans for income-generating activities for women of El Páramo. *La Asociación* is currently the sole female-only organization with 31 members from six communities. As defined by the women themselves, the primary objective of *La Asociación* is to "em-

power rural women to overcome their marginalized positions" by encouraging solidarity.¹⁰ The secondary aim of the bank is to "lend credit to the women for the establishment and strengthening of small business."¹¹ *La Asociación* has provided women with a space to share their ideas and establish bonds that would have been impossible without having a "legitimate" reason to gather.

La Asociación initiatives have emphasized women's economic empowerment, with the assumption that social and political empowerment would ensue. In many ways, it has. Within households, many women report more equitable relations with their husbands and a greater role in household-decision making. While gender norms have shifted dramatically within the bank's member households, they are changing much more slowly in the greater community. For this reason, the women of *La Asociación* often encounter resistance in the form of criticism and pejorative gossip from non-participant families. In turn, the husbands of *La Asociación* members are particularly challenged by this harsh and public criticism. In defense of their masculinity and the integrity of their households, they often enact their frustration against their wives. As we will see, domestic strife therefore increases in a number of households. Overall, women confirm the success of *La Asociación* in increasing household incomes, establishing solidarity among women, and encouraging more equitable relations. In reality, however, they have only achieved particular dimensions of empowerment.

In 2003, an NGO focused on health and community development held a series of workshops aimed at raising awareness of women's rights – especially with respect to family violence. To fulfill a requirement for gender programming, the NGO funded and organized a training initiative for five women from *La Asociación* (whom I will refer to as the Women-Against-Violence), to attend a five-day workshop on family violence at one of Ecuador's only battered woman's shelters located in Quito. At this workshop, the women were educated about the cycle of violence, improving communication between couples, existing Ecuadorian laws concerning domestic violence, and strategies for holding their own community-based workshops to promote equitable family relations. After returning to their region, these women held a series of workshops to educate families about women's rights and the dangers of family violence, but they met with a lot of resistance. Rather than being respected for their training, they were treated as non-experts and as "loose women" who had abandoned their families during a recreational trip to Quito. Using the following example, I demonstrate how the Women-Against-Violence attempted to reconcile discourses of psychological empowerment and women's rights, learned during the workshops, with their daily experiences in their families and communities.

Sofía, one of the Women-Against-Violence, was chosen by her fellow community members to attend the workshops because she was a strong, outspoken woman who had her husband's support in this initiative. Sofía had a very powerful experience at the women's shelter. As she explained,

The workshop made me change, I realize now that I am not a bad person and I have no reason to believe that I am. I also realize that if something is wrong in my relationship, well I just have to change it, find the way to do it. It's not worth being resentful and frustrated any longer. I saw that things just did not have to go on the way they were.

Upon her return from the workshops, Sofia and her husband Julio began to fight. He would tell me that she was being disrespectful and making decisions without consulting him. She would claim that she deserved more from her relationship. One month later, Julio was no longer living at home. For the first time in over five years, he hit her during one of their fights. The following day, she prepared a small bag of his belongings, which she left on the front step of their home. With this, she asked him to leave. Sofia demonstrated impressive strength during this period, as she had to endure community gossip because her adoption of "male" responsibilities was critical to her family's survival. Six months later, Julio returned home and again, they tried to live together, struggling but surviving. Now, two years later, he has left home yet again – and Sofia leaves her children with friends, while she works restaurant jobs for months at a time in the nearest city. As a woman determined to establish respect and understanding in her home, she struggles deeply with the disconnect between the ideals she aspires to, and the realities of daily survival. As Sofia herself has experienced, the promise of equal rights rings hollow when no options are available to battered women.

Battered El Páramo women often suffer not only from their inability to reconcile this contradiction, but also from increased rates of violence within the home. In some contexts, it may appear that informing women about their rights can do no harm. "Rights-based educational workshops" constitute a convenient and common strategy to combating gender inequality and intimate partner violence, especially if we acknowledge the severe economic constraints faced by many NGOs and state agencies in developing countries. But, before designing family violence prevention and treatment programs, we –investigators and activists – must fully consider how women who are exposed to discourses of women's rights often struggle deeply with the ideological claims to 'rights,' when they do not have the resources to act upon them. In fact, much "more than a choice-making self," women really need "the means to make choices" (Merry, 1997, p. 66).

The Women-Against-Violence initiative in El Páramo was planned with the dangerous assumption that wife battering resulted from a so-called culture of male dominance. In fact, the NGO staff member responsible for holding the training sessions reported being told only that it was "a typical machista society." Madeline Adelman (2004) warns that "starting out with gender as the theoretical or explanatory foundation of domestic violence precludes an accounting of how domestic violence is produced" through structural and institutional arrangements (p. 35-36). Likewise, using "culture" to explain the high incidence of violence impedes an analysis of the ways that domestic violence interacts with and perhaps emerges from other forms of violence (such as structural violence). Therefore, we must be wary of women's empowerment programs – such as those targeting domestic violence – that approach this problem solely as an ideological one (i.e. focused on male dominance) without paying attention to its political, economic, and structural underpinnings. Rather, I argue that gender inequality, especially as it manifests itself in wife battering, is produced both materially and ideologically in ways that vary by context. As demonstrated by this case, if "culture" is to blame, then educational workshops are the answer. Clearly, this is not enough. In truth, rights-discourses, which are implemented without the proper support, can lead to increases in violence.

Reflections

In closing, I would like to reflect upon the role that researchers of family violence have on the politicizing of gender; in particular, I acknowledge the ways that my involvement has affected gender politics in El Páramo. From the beginning, I have always exercised extreme sensitivity to the predicament of battered women by recognizing the limited access that women had to alternatives or resources to help alter their predicament. However, I failed to recognize the ways that the lack of options shaped their *sense of self*, especially as they came to understand themselves differently through rights-based discourses of self and gendered empowerment. Through workshops, group discussions, interviews, and daily conversation, I have helped politicize "gender" by encouraging reflection and solidarity among women. When I first began working in the region as a twenty-one year-old woman recently graduated from college, I jumped into "preaching" women's rights to the men, women, and children in the region, believing passionately that there was "no wrong" in educating the world about human rights. Education, in my mind, was the key to social change. Of course, it was easier for me – as it is for many others – to hold participatory, educational workshops than to jump into policy implementation or to develop a multi-pronged program against family violence. While I still believe in the power of education – especially of the "participatory" variety – I admit my own naïveté, which had led me to profess women's rights as if it were a religion until the shortcomings of my this approach became increasingly apparent. I witnessed multiple couples separate from one another, with the ex-wife in each case ending up in a situation that was utterly unsustainable for her and her children (i.e., working fourteen hours for five dollars per day in a city without any family or friends). I could never say that I would have hoped that these women had stayed in their battering relationships and, despite their difficulties, these women now say they are happy that they left when they did. However, I believe that – as activists and researchers working towards family violence prevention – we must (1) recognize and appreciate *time* as an essential element of change in both our analyses and interventions, (2) continue to exercise increased sensitivity towards the specific predicaments of women and families, and (3) broaden our notions of violence to ensure that we are not propelling women to leave one violent situation only to enter into another. Often, this requires that we make decisions that hold greater benefit for the long-term, even if they make us uncomfortable in the short-term. I have had to learn to let go and practice neutrality (with its limits) in cases where I have felt instinctively compelled to intervene, because I would have jeopardized relationships and broken particular ties that prove critical to processes of community-generated social change in the long-term.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have sketched the complex and shifting configurations of power both embedded in and arising from the lives of women and men in El Páramo. In this case, power does not inhere in El Páramo men, but rather, it loosely configures the terms of engagement between men and women. I close with three interrelated suggestions for future research and intervention. First, we should move beyond utilizing "gender" or "culture" as end-points of our inquiries into family violence. We must recognize that gender ideologies have developed historically *vis-à-vis* particular material conditions, both of which were deeply influenced by agendas of local and global institutions, such as the Church, the State, the family, and development agen-

cies. Second, historical perspectives help us untangle the complex mechanisms and connections between state processes, global capitalism, and 'everyday violence' in El Páramo.¹² To flush out and build upon this analysis of the structural basis of family violence, we must more fully demonstrate the ways in which various institutions are implicated in creating the conditions for this form of gendered violence and oppression. In this way, we will be able to address the "gendered structures of violence" and "naturalizing [of] power" in a broader context, which "is not to suggest that women are always the victims, but instead to call attention to the differential effects of coercive processes on women and men, girls and boys" (Anglin, 1998, p. 147; Yanagisako & Delaney, 1995). Third, historical insight is crucial in helping us denaturalize and "deculturalize" explanations of violence by accounting for the various mechanisms and institutions through which particular gendered selves are established and reproduced. Using a longitudinal perspective of the contradictions and discrepancies that emerge during processes of social and cultural change among families in El Páramo, I point to the importance of examining how "human rights" discourse both derives from and produces particular ideas of self that are often in conflict with women's current sense of self, as it has historically developed. Empowerment of women, in this context, occurs in *time*, through men and women's actions and interactions with newly defined institutions and relationships. The role of investigators and activists in family violence prevention is to facilitate action and reflection in ways that engage men and women to redefine and recreate their sense of self according to their own individual, community, and family-defined needs.

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Footnotes

1 In order to protect the privacy of my informants, in this paper I have used pseudonyms for all El Páramo inhabitants.

2 This paper is based on ethnographic research and activist involvement in a rural region of

northwestern Ecuador where I have spent a total of twenty months over the past seven years. In coordination with a locally based health project, I have investigated various themes in the region, such as health and illness, community development, gender relations, and family violence. Currently, I am in the midst of conducting my dissertation research which will extend beyond community-based research (as reported here) to include both institutional and historical research. My dissertation provides a historical and anthropological examination of intimate partner violence and women's rights awareness among Manabita colonists living in Esmeraldas, Ecuador. This doctoral research was made possible through funding provided by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, the National Science Foundation, the Department of Anthropology at the University of Arizona, and the Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Institute at the University of Arizona. I also thank FLACSO Ecuador (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales) and Fundación MeHiPro, Ecuador for their institutional support of my dissertation.

3 In my long-term research, I draw upon recent anthropological scholarship on violence that has demonstrated the importance of incorporating historical perspectives to denaturalize violence (Binford 2001, Bourgois 2001, Farmer 2004, Green 1999, Green 2002, Hernández Castillo 2006, Muratorio 2002). However, I also agree with critiques that suggest more sophisticated use of history, as anthropologists sometimes tend to invoke "history" without demonstrating the particular mediating mechanisms through which violence, for example, is produced over time (Binford 2001, Green 2002, Wacquant 2004). In this respect, I heed lessons from William Roseberry (1993) who urges anthropologists to exercise sensitivity to historical particularity to ensure that our conceptualizations are not "historically and sociologically empty." Therefore, my research will not only contribute to the minimal anthropological scholarship on family violence, but also help us theorize relationships between culture, power, gender and human rights in our understandings of violence.

4 Prevalence rates of domestic violence are extremely difficult to assess and to compare due to severe underreporting and the diversity of data collection procedures (The World Bank, 2000).

5 These are words spoken by a municipal official during a community meeting held in July 2005.

6 Most interviews with battered women were conducted in 2003, 2007 and 2008.

7 Though death and physical injury are the most evident symptoms of gender-based violence, women abused by intimate partners also have higher risks of: depression, suicide attempts, chronic pain syndromes, psychosomatic disorders, physical injury, gastrointestinal disorders, irritable bowel syndrome, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, increased poverty and various reproductive health consequences (Bergen, 1996, 1999; Campbell, 2002; Ellsberg, Jansen, Heise, Watts, & García-Moreno, 2008; Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002)

8 For example, María, a 37 year-old woman who suffered severe forms of intimate partner violence in the early years of marriage, reported the following,

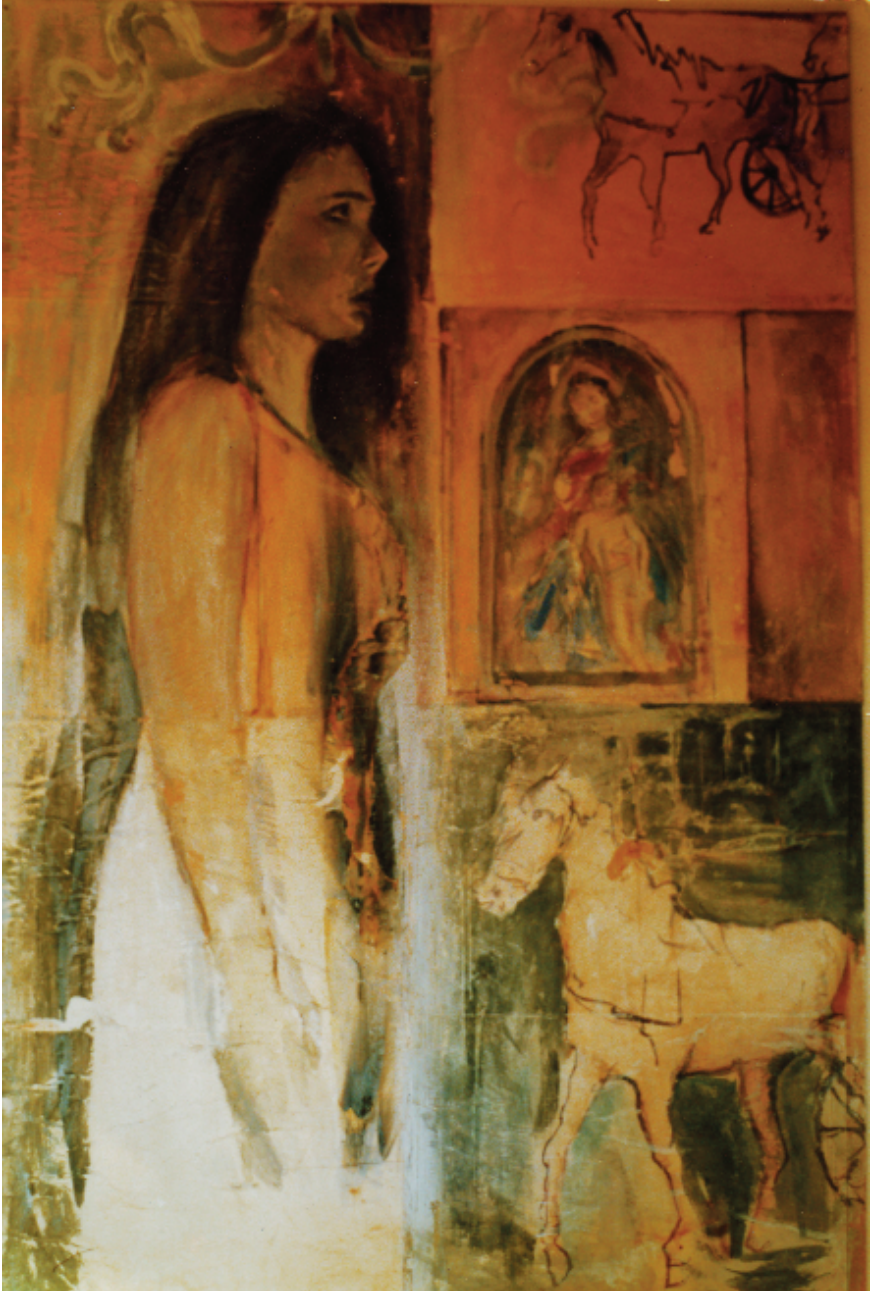
When they are abused, what a woman does is take the hit and cry. And that is all. When we have good friends, or we are close [physically] to our parents, sometimes we will go to them and tell them we demand that our husband no longer hits us for a specific reason. But when we live at home, there is nothing we can do but cry.

9 In this regard, further discussion is warranted about the role of the Ecuadorian Church and State in promoting particular notions of gendered identities.

10 "capacitar a las mujeres campesinas para que no vivamos marginadas" (La Asociación de Mujeres and Fundación Natura 1998)

11 "dar crédito a las mujeres para pequeños negocios" (La Asociación de Mujeres and Fundación Natura, 1998)

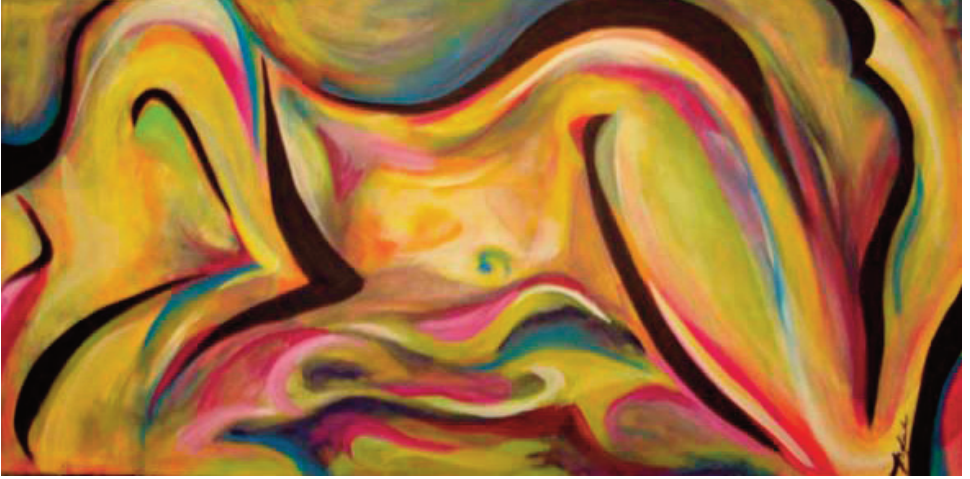
12 Through my dissertation research (in progress), I aim to uncover these mechanisms, utilizing the lens of historical anthropology (Roseberry, 1993).



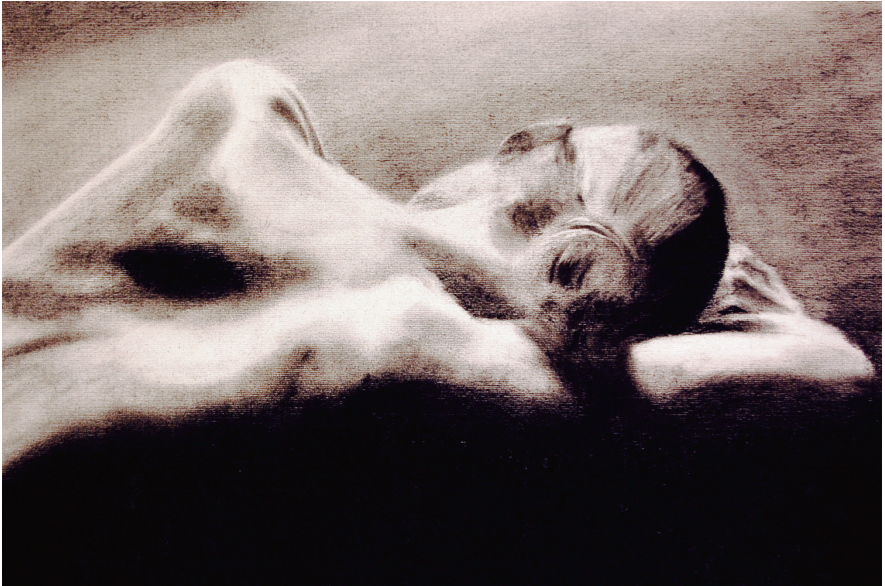
La Hija del Dictador, 2001
Acrylic on Wood
Nicky Arscott
Department of English, The University of Texas at Austin



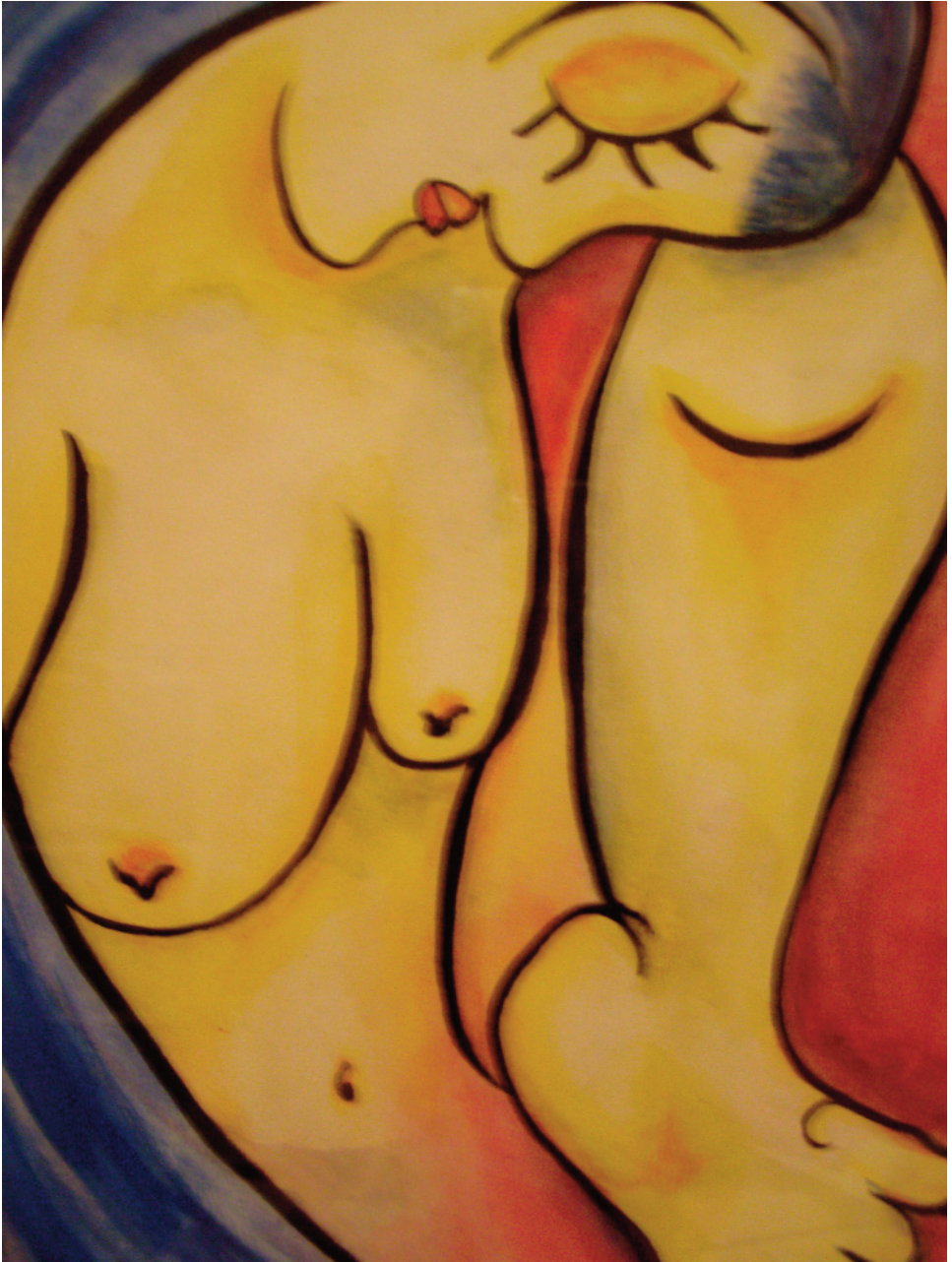
Red Lined Nude, 2000
Acrylic on Canvas
Tiffany Mylinh Duong
School of Law, St. Mary's University



Lying Figure, 2003
Acrylic on Canvas
Tiffany Mylinh Duong
School of Law, St. Mary's University



Insomnia, 2007
Charcoal on Pastel Paper
Arthur Christian Abello
School of Medicine, University of Texas Medical Branch



Resting Woman, 2000
Watercolor
Tiffany Mylinh Duong
School of Law, St. Mary's University

Examining the Politics of Education: A Critical Policy Analysis of the French Ban of the Hijab in Public Schools

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Abstract

This policy analysis of the 2004 French ban on the hijab in public schools highlights the politics of education relative to the intersection of gender, race, and religion. Post-colonial scholarship frames the work then data is uniquely presented utilizing the analytical tool of montage. The author contends understanding educational policy in light of historical context is essential to designing school policies and practices that best serve students in the current global context. The study attempts to answer important questions such as: *How might the origins and intentions of the policy have been influenced by prior history? Does a feminist perspective help or hurt women in this particular case?* Recommendations are offered for deliberation by educational policy actors with the ultimate consideration being: *What is best for students?* A future research agenda is proposed that can further inform this important controversy that is sure to be a topic of discussion internationally in our post-9/11 world.

Introduction

It is important educators recognize the politics of education relative to the intersections of gender, race, and religion to better serve students. Understanding educational policy in light of historical context and political environments is essential to fostering dialogue and designing effective, democratic, and humane school policies and practices. This seems particularly relevant concerning Muslim students in "post-9/11" democratic societies.

Often the preconceptions of society in general, and policy actors in particular, result in "out-group" members not receiving comparable consideration as those with whom the majority easily identifies (Rochefort & Cobb, 1994). This article explores the politics involved in developing educational policy as it relates to the 2004 French ban on the hijab in public schools and seeks to answer the following questions: Why would policy elites in a democratic society press for and construct a zero-tolerance policy against female Muslims wearing the hijab? What is the immediate effect of this policy on members of the hijabat?¹ How might the relational history between the policy actors have influenced the origin and intentions of the policy? In turn, how might the policy influence the continuing relationships between in-groups and out-groups?

Prior to addressing these questions, a brief overview of the research process is given with particular attention to the theoretical framework and analytical tools employed.

Thereafter, an explanation of the case is given including conflicting perspectives. After analysis and interpretation, recommendations and directions for future research are presented followed by tentative conclusions.

Theoretical Framework

For the purposes of this paper, three dynamics of post-colonialism are highlighted as presented by Memmi, in his book, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1961): Specifically, when he states that those in power stress elements that separate them from the subaltern rather than emphasizing that which might show agreement and contribute to compatibility. Secondly, Memmi contends the colonizer always finds justification for rejecting the colonized. While the colonizer stresses natives' lack of progress and backward living, he tends to eulogize the self and emphasize "cultural and technical superiority" to assuage a collective guilt. Finally, Memmi adds that the colonizer is so preoccupied with changing the colonized that he has no desire to understand him, ultimately using his power to deny a person's greatest privilege: Liberty (Memmi, 1961).²

Methodological Tools

For this policy analysis, document and archival analysis, as well as historical methods, are used. The specific analytic strategy is the application of montage: a useful method of editing and communication in the visual arts that can also be utilized in literary works to emphasize the complexity of an issue. "In montage, several different images are juxtaposed to or superimposed on one another to create a picture...blending together, overlapping, forming a composite" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 4). The complexity of the issue is communicated by introducing various historical scenes for consideration by the reader. It is assumed that readers interpret the scenes of a montage simultaneously, rather than sequentially. Obviously, the reader can only take in one sequence at a time, but the goal is to leave each image on the tableau for further examination and juxtaposition with each subsequent theme. "The viewer puts the sequences together into a meaningful whole, as if at a glance, all at once" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5).

Overview of the Policy

In 1989, the French government intervened in several disputes over wearing the hijab in the public schools, ultimately declaring that head coverings would continue to be allowed; that the hijab was not an enemy of secularism (Marlowe, 1999). The government included a provision allowing final decisions about the appropriateness of the hijab to the discretion of school administration (Murphy, 2003). Unfortunately, many schools continued to expel students or refuse them entrance. The reason cited most often was that the school did not want to risk *contaminating* other Muslim students.³

The controversy continued until 1996, when the French government further decreed that the Muslim veil was not an "ostentatious" sign of religious belief and did not constitute grounds for expulsion (Judge, 2004; Marlowe, 1999). Schools were forced to allow the hijab's return, and in response, teachers in some schools went on strike because the scarf offended their personal convictions.⁴ In response, The Ministry of Education at employed a full-time mediator, Hanifa Cherifi, to address

the disagreements (Judge, 2004; Marlowe, 1999).

Disputes persisted until the National Assembly finally prohibited any "ostentatious" religious symbol, including the hijab, in public schools in 2004 (Judge, 2004). President Chirac's Cabinet noted the decision "respects our history, our customs and our values...to do nothing would be irresponsible" (Knox, 2004). Ironically, the goal of government and school personnel was to commence expulsions before the upcoming ten-day school holiday commemorating Catholicism's "All Saints Day." When questioned, French officials dismissed the hypocrisy, stating that it is "normal" to celebrate Catholic holy days and to retain Catholic priests as chaplains in French public schools (Sciolino, 2004).

Policy Discourse

One major argument to ban the hijab is France's historic battle to maintain its cultural uniqueness. The French commitment to preserve the French language and culture and an unambiguously French educational system are vital elements of French character that most feel must be preserved despite heavy financial and human resource commitments (Judge, 2004). Rather than embracing a "patchwork" identity based on multiculturalism as in other democratic societies, French identity is seen as an amalgamated monolith "forged over many centuries, repeatedly contested and modified, often imposed from Paris on recalcitrant dissidents," whose equilibrium depends "on the exclusion of religion from the public school, for religion had proved to be inherently and inevitably divisive" (Judge, 2004, p. 17). In such an environment, anything that threatens the goal of "equilibrium" is expelled. Likewise, individual rights and identity do not eclipse the government's commitment to group conformity to an exclusively French identity.

Another claim is that secularism is the closest France has to an official religion (Astier, 2004). "Separation of church and state" was first enacted during the French Revolution and demands strict "official neutrality" in religious affairs. Likewise, the French State is not allowed to proselytize in public buildings. For centuries, France has fiercely defended its commitment to religious neutrality (Astier, 2004; Judge, 2004; Knox, 2004). Some see the veil as a form of proselytization; that religious symbols will lure students to convert to otherwise unfamiliar religions. In fact, President Chirac proposed zero tolerance for the headscarf because he viewed it as an instrument of religious propaganda (Astier, 2004).

Others object to the headscarf because they reject what they perceive as the intolerant nature of Islam and fear allowing the scarves will lead to inappropriate accommodations such as separate public beaches and train cars. Feminists contend that veils do not belong in a democratic society because they are a symbol of women's oppression forced on some females by fathers and husbands (Judge, 2004; Murphy, 2003) and state that allowing the scarf in the name of religious tolerance undermines decades of fighting for equality of the sexes (Murphy, 2003).

Additional Considerations

Sarroub (2005) notes in her description of being a Muslim school girl in the US that students are better positioned for success when their identities are respected and they feel supported in the process of acculturation. She also emphasizes the strong

role curriculum and teachers play in impacting student achievement and attaining future goals. Moreover, Sarroub (2005) notes the tendency in Muslim ethos toward group effort to protect individuals from temptation and ensure integrity, whereas other cultures incline toward individual responsibility. The traditional Muslim garb is considered by many an essential form of modesty; helping girls safeguard their purity, reputation, and family honor (Sarroub, 2005).

Ann Norton (2004), in her discussion of the sense of sight as the most recognized mode of domination, ponders whether the veil removes women from the public sphere or permits them to enter it. Does the hijab construct women as wholly sexual beings or remove them from sexual discourse altogether? Either way, she contends that the reader must recognize the controversy over veiling as "politics on the plane of sight" (p. 75).

From the Muslim schoolgirl's perspective, the veil may be considered that which enables the youngster to go to school. Therefore, stripping Muslim females of the right to wear the veil may be interpreted as an aggressive form of rejection. Since race, gender, and religious garb are symbols of meaning inscribed on the body, the hijab ban places the identity in *sous rature* (under erasure)⁵ (Norton, 2004).

It is important to at least briefly note the difference between acculturation and assimilation. Indeed, according to Memmi (1961), in order to assimilate, one must experience total self-rejection and replace self-esteem with love and admiration of the colonizer. He adds that as soon as the colonized adopts the values of the colonizer, he or she brings condemnation upon his or her own culture and true identity. Eventually, the colonized realizes he or she has become ashamed of his or her people and tires of the "exorbitant price" of assimilation. The colonized finally questions if liberation must occur through this self-annihilation. Ironically, the quest for assimilation is in vain because the colonizer will never accept the colonized despite the changes made. To really allow the colonized to be "assimilated" means the colonizer must put away his or her privileged position because it hinges on the lowliness of the colonized. In other words, there is a never-ending cycle to the colonial relationship (Memmi, 1961).

Analysis of the Case

The former French colony of Algeria is the focus of the analysis for a number of reasons. First, Algeria was the last French outpost in North Africa. Secondly, the largest minority population in France consists of Algerian descendents. Most civil rights abuses reported by human rights organizations are concerning French citizens of North African, specifically, Algerian descent (See references published by *Amnesty International* 1998-2006). Lastly, world attention, including that of "Amnesty International," tends to focus on the colonial and post-colonial relationship between France and Algeria. The next step is to juxtapose the scenes of the montage below to analyze the case.

Scene #1: French Colonialism

Algeria was a French colony from 1830 to 1962. The Algerians were treated as an inferior underclass by a brutal, racist regime (France/Algérie, 1999; French colonisation, 2002; House, 2006). Native Algerians suffered economic exploitation and social

control, most significantly through the loss of land promised to French colonialists, which served as impetus to live in the new French territory as well as a means to control the colonized. The Algerians were considered backward, ignorant, and lazy, yet they were tightly controlled by imperialist soldiers and police (Memmi, 1961). The French did not allow Algerians to hold public meetings or bear arms, nor could they travel beyond their villages without government permission. Meanwhile, Algerians were encouraged to immigrate to France, as this provided a source of cheap labor to continue French economic growth (French colonisation, 2002; Memmi, 1961).

In the 1950s, fighting between the colonist and colonizer began in both France and Algeria. In Algeria, the French government began a policy of torture and mass executions against civilians suspected of aiding rebels in their fight for independence. When suspects were permitted to live, they were sequestered in concentration camps under deplorable conditions (France/Algérie, 1999; French colonisation, 2002; House, 2006).

Meanwhile, in France, the government continued racist policies, such as housing segregation, low wages, and curfews. In one instance, police killed dozens of French Algerians during a peaceful protest challenging the new curfew and other racist policies. Eventually, in 1962, France recognized Algeria's independence and fled Algeria (Amnesty International, 2001; France/Algérie, 2000; House, 2006).

Scene #2: Post-colonial Problems

Though Algeria became an independent nation in 1962, conditions did not improve for *les pieds noir* (black feet)⁶ Even in the late 1970s, they were living in "*les bidonvilles*" (the American equivalent of shantytowns) and since then, have been segregated to temporary accommodations in prefabs known as "*les cités de transit*" (House, 2006). *Les cités* serve an important purpose for the post-colonial situation. According to Memmi (1961), the very sight of the colonized induces guilt in the colonizer and brings critical accusations from visiting tourists.⁷

In addition, France adopted an "established discourse" from 1975-1985 whereby state officials and the press characterized French Algerians and other immigrants as criminals refusing to integrate (House, 2006). According to House (2006), this decade was also characterized by widespread discrimination in French society, especially by the hands of the criminal justice system.

This discussion echoes Memmi's (1961) contention that colonialism denies rights to people it has subdued by violence and keeps them in their state of misery by force. In order to maintain privilege, the colonizer must work diligently to degrade the colonized and devalue them at every opportunity, using the "darkest colors to depict them."

Scene #3: Late Twentieth Century Developments

In the mid-eighties, an anti-racist movement was started in France by citizens of Algerian, Moroccan, and Tunisian descent. Their main point of contention was that though they are French, they are not treated as such. During this time, the movement produced a hapless political collective named *Les Beurs*⁸ (House, 2006). *Les Beurs'* attempts to secure policy changes and guaranteed civil rights proved ineffectual.

The 1990s were marked by an exceedingly strained relationship with Muslims from former North African colonies who felt marginalized and discriminated against. Despite negativities, Paris continued to encourage migration. There was widespread concern that the low birthrate and aging population among the Franco majority would cause government services to collapse. Immigration was identified as essential to continued economic prosperity and salvation for the disintegrating retirement system (Daley, 2001). Memmi (1961) confirms this exploitive practice of the colonizer using the colonized to reduce the cost of labor and support an easy life.

Between 1998 and 2000, Amnesty International filed several reports outlining specific cases of individual French Muslims killed while in police custody. (France: Death in custody, 2000). In January 2001, during the Franco-African Summit in Yaoundé, *Amnesty International* challenged heads of state in countries such as Kenya, Cameroun, and France to jointly and publicly commit to end the use of torture and other police abuses and secure the right to a fair trial (Afrique, 2001).

Scene #4: Post 9/11 Tensions

According to Daley (2001), the terrorist attacks against the United States fueled fear of Muslim immigrants in France. The month following the attacks, mayors in France stopped issuing "Certificates of Welcome" needed to secure visas to Muslim immigrants. "I am not saying immigration equals terrorism...But people come here and we don't know much about them..." (Daley, 2001).

Justification for *Amnesty International's* identification of France as a "threatening regime" is not limited to French atrocities during the Algerian War of Independence. According to dozens of reports, the continued violence perpetrated by the modern police force in France, as well as the degrading conditions in prisons, which hold an inordinate number of French Muslims, are also sources of contention (Déli de justice, 2005; Pour une véritable justice, 2005). Memmi (1961) records in numerous places the need of the colonist to "approve the discrimination and the codification of injustice," going so far as to claim the colonists' "delight at police tortures and, if the necessity arises, will become convinced of the necessity of massacres" (Memmi, pages 55-56).

Scene #5: The Riots of 2005

The highly-publicized 2005 riots in Paris⁹ were started by mostly French Muslims of African/Arab descent living in *les banlieus*.¹⁰ Reporters speculate as to the cause of the bedlam, but three themes stand out. Amiel (2005) reports the riots were provoked by the majority culture's indifference to high unemployment and assimilation difficulties of the Muslim population. In addition, shortly before the riots began, newspapers reported that Nicolas Sarkozy, then French Interior Minister¹¹, publicly referred to the youth in the area as "criminals" and "scum" (Henley, 2006). Meanwhile, two teens were electrocuted while fleeing police. These events culminated in an explosion of rock-throwing and burning cars and buildings.

According to Kay Velvet (2005) the origin of these riots is colonialism. She argues that the history of the white, imperial French violently oppressing African colonists, while preaching democratic values, has spawned the recent violence. Indeed, the French government has relegated Muslims into poor, desperate, ethnic ghettos

where unemployment is almost 20% overall and more than 30% for males between the ages of 21 and 29 (Ford, 2005). Henley (2005) adds that racism and abuses by the police force have fueled the need for the riots to be used as a way of being heard.

Memmi (1961) would agree. Sooner or later, the colonized realizes the only way out of misery is through revolt: "...his condition is absolute and cries for an absolute solution..." (Memmi, p. 127). He has become a man without a country, language, culture or religion. He has torn pages from his past and has no hope to author a future. The revolt begins by the "recovery of self" and of "autonomous dignity" and the complete rejection of all things associated with the dominant culture (Memmi, 1991). Eventually, he must give in to the "intoxication of fury and violence" as this is the natural, final stage of colonization (Memmi, p. 139). "In order to witness the colonized's complete cure, his alienation must completely cease. We must await the complete disappearance of colonization – including the period of revolt" (Memmi, p. 141).

Discussion

By examining the scenes above, the reader can appreciate the complexity of the case and consequent difficulty interpreting the data. Rather than taking the zero-tolerance ban of the hijab at face value, one is urged to consider a number of difficult questions: Are policy actors truly trying to protect women's rights? Do religious symbols really possess proselytizing power? Is preserving an *imagined community of sameness*¹² achievable or acceptable? While ultimate Truth remains elusive, an interpretive discussion is possible and desirable; although, admittedly, such discourse may likely generate additional questions rather than definitive answers.

Position #1: Preserving French Culture

It seems political elites are having difficulty choosing between saving their social security system and preserving an unchanging French identity, as accomplishing both seems impossible. After all, encouraging the migration of former colonized people, permitting them to become French citizens, denying these particular citizens the civil rights afforded to others, while requiring them to give up their cultural distinctiveness because it is not "French" seems an ineffective, if not contradictory, means of conducting economic policy and ensuring political stability.

Moreover, the argument to adopt this policy in order to maintain cultural "equilibrium" actually suggests petitioning for the status quo. Might it be time for political elites to consider changing their definitions of what is French? How willing are French citizens to invest enormous amounts of time, money, and human suffering to maintain the status quo (especially in light of enormous changes in France's demographics and the attempts of other democratic nations to establish multicultural identities)? The argument that this policy is essential to preserve a culture, curiously perceived by some as predetermined and everlasting, pales in comparison to providing a free, public education to all students, regardless of whether they wear "ostentatious" religious symbols.

Position #2: Secularism and Religious Neutrality

Preserving religious neutrality is a palatable argument. The French Revolution is

nothing to snub. Purging the government of religious monarchs dictating from the throne came at a very high cost indeed. Ensuring that government does not proselytize in public buildings is a key law in many democratic nations. Likewise, assuring official neutrality in religious affairs is essential to secular democracies.

But does adopting this policy meet the test of religious neutrality? Do religious symbols truly have the power to proselytize? What evidence do we have that allowing students to wear religious garb amounts to the government preaching support for representative religions or that students will be enticed to adhere? While the separation of church-state argument is important to the welfare of the citizenry as a whole, so is the concept of religious tolerance and the individual rights of students to express their religious identity and garner an education.

Position #3: Feminist Principles and Religious Identity

It is appropriate that feminists in France are concerned about women's rights and symbols of women's oppression. It is also understandable that in our post-9/11 environment, people are wary of Islamic Extremists. However, there is no evidence indicating the hijabat are dangerous radicals. Moreover, the prevailing notion that women are forced to wear the veil discounts the agency of many women who choose to wear the hijab for a variety of personal reasons. In this particular case, it may be that strict adherence to feminist politics actually hurts, rather than helps, female students, as doing so denies them a basic education in the name of freedom from patriarchal oppression. "While an ethic of justice proceeds from the premise of equality – that everyone should be treated the same – an ethic of care rests on the premise of nonviolence – that no one should be hurt" (Gilligan, 1993, p. 174). Moreover, a basic feminist precept is that social and personal growth is paramount to feminist consciousness-raising (Faludi, 2006). Denying an entire cultural group a basic education because one disagrees with their religious practices is a form of hostility that ironically threatens, rather than strengthens, the foundations of the feminist project.

Recommendations for Consideration

The book, *All American Yemeni Girls*, by Loukia K. Sarroub, provides a helpful case study for consideration¹³; as Sarroub (2005) so aptly states, "...public education serves as a constant democratizing agent of hope and liberation during uncertain political and economic times" (Sarroub, page 122). Her 2005 analysis is a critical ethnography highlighting a specific Muslim community intersecting with American public schools in southeastern Michigan. Sarroub shadows high school girls from the hijabat and details specific policies resulting from forward-looking administrators anticipating conflict between the needs of the Arab and non-Arab students, teachers, and community.

Incredibly, the administration tracked in Dr. Sarroub's field work respected the girls' "corporeal space" and allowed wearing the hijab immediately. The high school and school district personnel worked diligently to ensure a "sound learning environment for all students" (Sarroub, 2005). Despite the U.S. commitment to "separation of church and state," accommodations were provided including excusing absences from school on Friday afternoons for religious instruction, providing Muslim dietary choices on the cafeteria menu, and adapting the physical education program to

offer more modest clothing choices as well as separate classes by sex (Sarroub, 2005).

According to Sarroub (2005), campus personnel consulted with districts with similar situations and provided human resources training for faculty and staff. In addition, the school started a new "Diversity Club," displayed dual language signs throughout the school, and implemented curricular materials that taught Muslim culture. The district also officially recognized Muslim holidays and hired a community liaison that regularly consulted with mosque and community center leaders.

Sarroub (2005) affirms that not everyone was happy about these accommodations. There were complaints and tensions. She stresses that the changes were hardest on teachers, those "caught in the middle, as enforcers of unenforceable measures and as inadvertent agents of American culture" (p. 91). Simply put, the students came first. Ensuring an education for Muslim youth took precedence over teacher discomforts.

Future Research

It would be incredibly helpful to conduct additional research in the field, not only in France, but also in other democratic, pluralistic nations struggling with this issue. Comparing the policies across countries utilizing document and discourse analysis would be enlightening. In addition, it is vital to extend the research agenda to include the lived experiences of those most affected by educational policies banning "ostentatious" religious symbols: the students and their families. Critical ethnography utilizing participant observation, interviews, and other tools may enlighten policy-makers to the intended and unintended consequences of their policy actions and further enable proper follow-up responses. As a teacher who has experienced straddling the world between policy maker and policy enforcer, I believe examining the lived experiences of teachers can further inform the messy work of educational policy formation and evaluation.

Conclusion

This critical analysis of the 2004 French ban on the hijab in public schools provides a means to examine the politics of education intersecting race, religion, and gender. By utilizing a post-colonial framework and analyzing the case as a montage featuring the riots in Paris, against a backdrop of colonialism and post-colonial problems, a richer reading of the controversy is offered.

When one examines the montage in light of the theoretical framework and questions posed during discussion, it seems reasonable to imagine that policy elites were acting within a past, present, and possibly future that includes racism and aggression rather than strict devotion to democracy and preserving religious neutrality and gains made by feminists. The immediate effect of the French zero-tolerance policy is that possibly thousands of French citizens (all female) are being denied a free, public education. This is unacceptable. Consequently, an uneasy relationship between in-groups and out-groups remains. This must be addressed.

Offering conclusions about such a complex policy issue is difficult. But examining educational policy from the macro perspective of historical relationships magnifies

the importance of educational policymakers considering context in defining problems, and designing and implementing educational policies appropriate to populations outside majority identification. One can offer recommendations for consideration, but rather than provide definitive answers, substantive questions are provoked, the most crucial being, "What is best for students?" Accommodations may vary from community to community but, regardless of specifics, the future lives of youth should be the key consideration. Indeed: "It is better to accept her and give her a chance of having a normal education, to allow her to open herself to the world" (Marlowe, 1991, p. 1). It is imperative that educational and political policy actors struggling with this issue develop democratic and humane policies that ensure the basic human right to a free, public education.

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Footnotes

- 1 Those who wear the hijab are sometimes referred to as members of the hijabat.
- 2 The limitations of the post-colonialist lens include a lack of attention, most likely desired by liberal feminists, to dissecting problems inherent in patriarchal society. Examining this "women's issue" through a feminists' lens certainly is an option. However, I fear doing so may bring unhelpful criticism to Muslim families rather than questioning the policy actors responsible for developing, implementing, and enforcing this particular policy.
- 3 An exact definition of contamination was elusive. Is it that policy elites view the hijabat as "extremists" who must be quarantined from "normal" Muslims lest they, too, become "extremists" who may choose violent political action?
- 4 News accounts did not elaborate on exactly how the hijab offended teachers. Overall impressions suggest teachers were uncomfortable with the veil because they regard it as a symbol of female oppression.
- 5 A term coined by Jacques Derrida, meaning when a word (identity) has been rejected by an author (or the one erasing the identity); the original word (identity) remains visible underneath the spot of scribbling or erasure. It is impossible to hide or eliminate the original identity and the attempt at erasure is an aggressive form of rejection.
- 6 A controversial term that denotes French citizens of Algerian descent.
- 7 A 2007 article in *USA Today* reported that "the depressed projects that ring Paris are a world apart from the tourist attractions of the capital. Police speak of no-go zones where they and firefighters fear to patrol" (Rioting continues for third night in France, 2007).
- 8 A neologism identifying one as French but of North African heritage living in socioeconomic crisis, high unemployment, and widespread discrimination. Interestingly, "neologisms

we create are intimately connected to our actions, our perceptions, and our participation in daily life...social practices, such as labeling or categorizing, are concretized through the positioning of the individual. . ." (Sarroub, 2005, pp. 130-131).

9 Riots recurred in November, 2007 when two teens were killed in a collision with a patrol car. Local residents claim the officers responsible left the scene without rendering aid. An investigation is pending. Police report that "guerillas" have escalated the violence minimizing the riots of 2005 by comparison. Mayors of the affected towns condemn the violence but maintain they understand the anger and despair of the poor (King, 2007; Rioting continues for third night in France, 2007).

10 The closest American equivalent is segregated housing projects.

11 In 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy was elected President of France. During his campaign, he promised to revitalize the work ethic and fight intolerance by integrating skilled migrants into French society. More recently, his support of state assistance to Muslims for building mosques met controversy. (Basravi, 2007; Profile: Nicolas Sarkozy, 2007).

12 I first heard this phrase at a paper symposium at American Educational Research Association in New York City, April, 2008. I regretfully cannot give proper credit to whoever first coined it, but it was used by several researchers during the group discussion.

13 Despite the fact that Yemen was colonized by British and Turkish rulers, not France, and earned independence in 1925, almost 40 years earlier than Algeria (Yemen, 2002), concepts presented in Sarroub's book may provide insights to educational policymakers in France and elsewhere.

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Conversations Across the Bosphorus: The Poetics and Politics of Depicting Other Women

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Abstract

Conversations Across the Bosphorus is a documentary that aims to shed light on the headscarf issue, which has been the main focus of the discussion around Islam's presence in public and political life in Turkey. It was shot during the time period when groups of Turkish women started (re)veiling themselves and the Islamic headscarf started to be perceived as the most visible and controversial symbol of a non-secular lifestyle that had previously been excluded from the public sphere. Although the documentary was shot more than a decade ago, it is still very significant given that the Islamic headscarf is being debated even today in the Turkish public sphere as the symbol of the increasing ascendancy of Islamists in the secularized public and political life. This paper first provides the historical context of the so-called headscarf issue. Next, this paper presents an analysis of how these women are depicted in the documentary as representing secularist and fundamentalist discourses and how the connotative meanings of certain visual signifiers point to the secular-liberal feminist standpoint represented by this documentary. This paper also argues that this perspective is problematic because it has approached (re)veiling as an issue of gender inequality and patriarchal oppression rather than seeking a viable explanation for veiling as an embodied ritual practice and its relation to political agency.

Introduction

I remember how disconcerted I felt after seeing a documentary film about Turkish women, titled *Conversations Across the Bosphorus* (1995), directed by Jeanne C. Finley, an award-winning American video artist. I was looking for an English language film to show to my Middle Eastern Humanities class, so I picked up this film, mainly due to its attractive title, from the library of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Arizona. The reason for my discomfort was the documentary's topic: the so-called headscarf issue—an enduring, delicate subject that has been worrying many secular Turks due to its association with political Islam and its increasing presence in the Turkish public sphere.¹ As a progressive, secular Turk, I was appalled by the thought that American people get to know Turkey and Turkish women as oppressed and backwards. Why was I so bothered by the representation of women in this film, which was shot more than a decade ago? This questioning has led me to ponder the film's relevance to the present and my own preconceived notions about the Islamic headscarf.

In this paper, I will argue that the issues raised in *Conversations Across the Bosphorus* are still relevant given that the Islamic headscarf is being debated even today

in the Turkish public sphere as the symbol of the increasing ascendancy of Islamists in the secularized public and political life. I will also argue that while the documentary seems to take an objective stance by giving both the secularist and the Islamist women a chance to speak, a close analysis of its structure, narrative, and visual codes displays the film's ideological position that has close affinities to secular-liberal feminism. Finally, I will argue that this perspective is problematic because it has approached veiling as an issue of gender inequality and patriarchal oppression rather than seeking a viable explanation for veiling as an embodied ritual practice and its relation to political agency.

The Headscarf Debate in Turkey

In Turkey, ninety-eight percent of the population is Muslim, mostly Sunni. Unlike in other Muslim-majority nations, there has existed a strong tradition of separation between religion and state in Turkey since its constitution, which is based on secularism, was adopted in 1924. The notion of secularism as appropriated in Turkey relegates religion only into the private realm and restricts its presence in the public sphere. For example, people working in government jobs are not allowed to wear any symbols that would reveal their religious affiliation.

While the constitutional reforms gave women the right to vote (before many Western European countries) and equal opportunity in the workplace, it also introduced strict limitations on the public participation of women who wore the headscarf as a requirement of their religion. Although women's headscarves were never removed forcefully, unveiling was encouraged as an imperative of the modernization process (Saktanber, 2006, p. 25). In doing so, the modernizers implicitly represented the "veiled" female body as "corrupt and impaired, thereby framing it as in need of liberation and transformation" (Cinar, 2005, p. 54). Those who emancipated themselves through unveiling have dominated the public spaces (schools, offices, government buildings, etc.), while those who resisted this transformation were *de facto* confined to the private space of their homes.

The wearing of the headscarf in universities was prohibited in 1982 for the alleged reason that public display of religious symbols was a threat to the secular state. Since then, Islamists have protested against what they see as the extreme secularization of the Turkish state, arguing that the suppression of religious freedoms and discrimination against women who choose to wear the headscarf is inherently undemocratic (Narli, 2003). Therefore, in the Turkish context, it is the covered and uncovered heads of women where the definitions of modernity and secularism are contested.

The secularist state tradition was challenged significantly in 1995, the year when this documentary was shot. The Islamist Welfare (Refah) Party won the national elections in 1995 and formed a coalition government. This event signified a big change in the power relations between secularist and Islamist political forces because Islam stamped its dominance into the political arena for the first time within the history of the Turkish Republic. The Welfare Party's election victory was considered a great threat to the secularist state structure. The secular anxieties about Islam's regained dominance have been amplified by Islamist women's responding to the prohibition of the headscarf by re-veiling and fighting to gain access to the public, educational, and economic opportunities of which they have been deprived due to their headscarves.

Execution of the headscarf ban has intensified since 1998 when the Turkish Constitutional Court disbanded the Welfare Party as a "center of activities contrary to the principle of secularism" and forbid six of its leaders from political activities for five years (as cited in Moe, 2003). In the following years, the other members of the party formed a couple of new parties. One of these parties, Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma or "AK" Party), has distanced itself from the previous fundamentalist formations and chose to situate itself as a conservative democratic party instead of defining its ideology as based on Islam. The AK Party swept to victory in Turkey's parliamentary elections on November 3, 2002 and was able to form a non-coalition government alone. In the 2007 general elections, AK managed to retain its dominance in the parliament and again formed a government single-handedly.

On April 24, 2007, Turkey's ruling AK Party chose a presidential candidate with a background in the country's Islamist movement—Abdullah Gül. This has been considered "a move that will extend the reach of the party—and the emerging class of devout Muslims it represents—into the heart of Turkey's secular establishment for the first time" (Tavernise, 2007, p. A1). The election of Gül as the president has aggravated the secular Turks who fear that women wearing headscarves would dominate the state buildings and other public spaces from which they were previously excluded. The fears and debates around the headscarf have intensified because the first-lady who resides in the presidential palace, which has historically been considered as the "castle of secularism," wears the Islamic headscarf. The headscarf debate has recently become even more aggravated within the first months of 2008, since Prime Minister R. Tayyip Erdoğan proposed a change in the constitution that would lift the ban on female students wearing head scarves in universities. On February 7, 2008, the parliament passed the head scarf bill; however, the implementation of this new regulation has remained ambiguous, maintaining the status of the headscarf as a problem yet to be solved.

Conversations Across the Bosphorus aims to shed light on the headscarf issue by having a number of Muslim Turkish women from different social, economic, and cultural backgrounds talk about their values, beliefs, and opinions on the Islamic headscarf. It was shot in 1995, when groups of Turkish women started (re)veiling themselves and the Islamic headscarf started to be perceived as the most visible and controversial symbol of a non-secular lifestyle that had previously been excluded from the public sphere. Although the documentary was released more than a decade ago, it is still significant in reflecting the prevailing perspectives on the headscarf issue, which has continued its dominance in the political agenda of Turkey up to the present day.

Islamist Women vs. Secularist Women: A Binary Representation

Conversations Across the Bosphorus intertwines the stories of two women from Istanbul. One of these women is Mine Yasar Ternar, the voice-over narrator, whose story is revealed through her letters. Ternar, an emigrant to the U.S., voices her perspective on the place of religion in her life and the Turkish public life at large. The other major character is Gökçen Havva Art, who talks about her years of oppression by her radical Islamist family and her struggles for liberation from religious and patriarchal oppression. Other subjects of the film are placed within the narrative structure as representing views and attitudes that either support or oppose the ne-

cessity of wearing the headscarf in public places.

This documentary is significant in reflecting the perceived rift that has been thought to divide Turkish women into two groups: secularists and Islamists. Although there is no obvious clustering of these different women in the documentary, a brief description of the opinions of each woman represented in the film indicates that the director gives only those women who fit the dichotomy of secular vs. Islamist a chance to speak. On the one hand, Art is an agnostic who took off her headscarf in protest to her oppression by her fundamentalist parents; Ternar was brought up to see Islam as part of a mystical tradition that is exclusively spiritual but not communal; Demet Turna is a secular university student who believes that she does not have to practice Islam to maintain a Muslim identity; and Fatmagul Berkday is a sociologist who believes that Islamists are trying to prevent women's presence in the public sphere. On the other hand, Emine Senlikoglu is an Islamist writer who believes that Westernization has stripped the society of its moral values and veiling represents a return to these values; Esra Kenar is the president of the Women's Association for the Islamic Welfare Party who believes that women's bodies are exploited by the mass media and they should cover up in order to avoid this; and Gulsen Kozakoglu is a university student who has decided to cover her hair since she believes her brain should be given more value than her body.

Although this may not be the intention of the director, this binary way of thinking leads to a reductionist representation of the subjects. However, as Turkish sociologist Nilufer Gole also argues, the clash between secularist and Islamist forces in Turkey is more complicated than it has been depicted in popular discourses (1996, pp.1-27). Contrary to the dualistic representation that dominates *Conversations Across the Bosphorus*, not only Islamists and secularists participate in the debate around the headscarf issue in Turkey. The headscarf issue has been discussed in the public sphere by different groups of women including Secularist Feminists, who associate the headscarf with backwardness and oppression (Arat, 1997, p.103); New Feminists, who have challenged the secularist understanding of women's emancipation (p.103); Islamist Feminists, who are against both the secularist state and the traditional patriarchal Muslim view for denying them presence in the public sphere (Cinar, 2005, p.76); and several other feminist groups appropriating different configurations of these mind-sets that defy essentialist categorizations and totalizing attitudes (p. 76). For example, contrary to their depictions in secularist narratives, some of the university students that have been protesting against the ban on headscarf in university campuses have not resorted "to Koranic references or to requirements of a pious Muslim lifestyle ... but rather evoked liberal democratic values, namely freedom of conscience and individual rights" (p.82). While their exploitation of liberal discourse has not necessarily translated itself into a genuine dedication to it (pp.82-3), it has indicated the fluidity of Islamist female subjectivities within the context of modernity.

Gole suggests that the essentialist tendency of representing these female identities in terms of fixed, homogeneous categories can be transcended if these identities are historicized and contextualized (1996, p.10). Nevertheless, the historical context for this socio-political issue is not presented adequately in *Conversations Across the Bosphorus*. At the beginning of the documentary, Ternar, the voice-over narrator addresses the issue briefly:

From your letters I understand the streets are different now. Is it true that ... many women who walk Istiklal Street cover themselves with

veils and long coats? ... in 1920s a revolution had created a militant secularism, and although some continued the Islamic traditions, veils were illegal in universities and government buildings. But now I hear that veils are worn freely on the streets, and the most brightly colored ones are the most radically devout.

The narrator seems to have inadequate information about the socio-political backdrop of the headscarf question. From her narration, it might be deduced that no women wore the Islamic veil until then or women who wore it never went out of their homes and walked around the city. However, as mentioned above, within the history of the Turkish Republic, the wearing of the headscarf in the street has never been banned, and it was banned in universities only after 1982. The narrator also does not provide any information as to the significance of Istiklal Street. Istiklal Street is one of the most Western districts of Istanbul with its buildings constructed in the style of French-influenced Baroque and neo-classicism, its chic boutiques, Euro-style cafes, restaurants, and its frenetic night-life. The narrator's astonishment, therefore, is more about the increasing visibility of the veiled women in such settings than their wearing their veils freely on the streets for the first time. In this sense, by relying solely on the authority of her interlocutor, the director seems to overlook the necessary context for having a better understanding of the complexity of the actors involved in the headscarf debate.

The political context of the documentary is mentioned merely in the form of a single-sentence, anonymous quotation at the beginning of the film: "The party, the group we had considered as 'the other' has come to power and now controls us in the big cities." The party in question is the Welfare Party, whose controversial stance on the headscarf issue had led to a lot of public debate of the tolerability of non-secular identities in politics and society. However, no background information is given in the documentary about this party and their politics. Visually, this quotation is superimposed over a sunflower in a busy street. With its bright yellow pedals, the sunflower connotes the desirability of the unveiled, liberated women in public spaces.

This quotation is also indicative of the type of audience to which the director is appealing. By using the pronoun "us" as referring to an anonymous identity, the director interpellates the audience by implying that the person speaking is one of "us," sharing a common secular identity as "we" do. The director implies that the situation is important to "us", i.e. Turkish or Western secular, liberal humanists.

Secular-Liberal Position of the Director and Her Intended Audience

The director's career, the film's sponsor, and the venues where this film was shown give significant clues as to the secular-liberal character of the director and her intended audience. Finley is an American media artist who works in experimental and documentary forms ("Finley Bio," n.d.). Her work has been exhibited in prestigious national and international institutions, including the Guggenheim Museum, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Whitney Museum, and the George Pompidou Center ("Finley Bio," n.d.). She released *Conversations Across the Bosphorus* after her stay as an artist-in-residence in Istanbul through a grant from the Lila Wallace Readers' Digest Foundation (*Video Databank*, n.d.). According to the mission statement in the foundation's website, the Wallace Foundation is dedicated to improving people's lives by giving service and support,

especially in the arts and education. As Bill Nichols (2001), a well-known theoretician of documentary film, argues, documentaries stand for or represent not only the interests of the group depicted or the filmmaker herself but also the interests of the institution or agency that supports her filmmaking activity (p. 3). Finley's film seems to be in agreement with her sponsor's commitment to improving other people's lives: she implies the undesirability of the situation of the veiled women throughout her documentary.

The venues where the film was distributed also hint at the secular-liberal character of the director and her intended audience. In 1996, it won the Charlotte Film & Video Festival Juror's Award for best documentary, given to independent films that provoke thought and discussion and bring attention to important issues (Charlotte Film Festival, 2007). The same year it was exhibited at the New York Museum of Modern Art and shown at public broadcasting networks in Los Angeles (KCET) and San Mateo, California (KCSM) ("Finley Resume," n.d.). Although it would be a hasty conclusion to claim that Finley has a secular-liberal agenda that she imposes on her audience through her film, the sponsorship and the awards the film received and the venues where it was distributed strongly imply a liberal, humanist perspective.

I argue that this perspective is problematic because it looks at veiling as an issue of patriarchal oppression and backwardness rather than considering veiling as part of an embodied ritual practice and its possibilities for political agency. As Saba Mahmood (2005), a cultural anthropologist, argues, the secular-liberal position maintains that Islamist women essentially submit to the dominant patriarchal norms and expectations by re-veiling (pp. 1-2). Even those feminists who are cynical of the "false-consciousness thesis" cannot figure out "why such a large number of women across the Muslim world [would] actively support a movement that seems inimical to their 'own interests and agendas,' especially at a historical moment when these women appear to have more emancipatory possibilities available to them" (p. 2). Nevertheless, the secular-liberal notions of freedom, agency, and subjectivity should be re-examined to better understand what motivates Islamist women in their participation in such social and political movements, since these concepts, as they are perceived and used in today's academia, have not been able to explain these questions satisfactorily. While the progressivist outlook might consider these women's passivity and compliance appalling, the voluntary veiling of these women may in fact be a form of agency, which "can be understood only from within the discourses and structures of subordination that create the conditions of its enactment" (p. 15).

Jakobsen and Pellegrini (2000), professors of feminist and queer studies, are also skeptical of the secular-liberal discourse according to which secularism constitutes the core of the entwined discourses of modernization, rationalization, and progress, all of which propagate the supremacy of reason over religion (p. 4). They claim that although equality and liberty proposed by the secularization narrative is universal, this discourse simultaneously leads to inequality since it emphasizes the superior moral position of modernity and secularism and their adherents in comparison to those who regulate their views and lifestyles according to the dictates of a certain religion (p. 9). Therefore, instead of evaluating veiled women from a Western liberal perspective, researchers and artists, like Finley, should look into the actual living conditions of the veiled women and the discourses that shape their practices in order to better understand how an ostensible sign of oppression might in fact open up possibilities for political agency. In order to show how this liberal-secular perspective is

implicitly inscribed into this documentary, the rest of this paper will present an analysis of how certain visual signifiers are manipulated in the depictions of women coming from secular and religious backgrounds.

At first glance, *Conversations Across the Bosphorus* seems to represent both secular and Islamist women on equal terms by giving all agents of the discussion a chance to have their voices heard. Although the film does not explicitly stand for a certain ideology and aims to build a dialogue between the agents of this perceived clash, as implied in its title, certain discursive strategies are used within the narrative, visual, and structural framework of the documentary to hint at the director's preference for women's emancipation through modernization's unveiling, as opposed to their acquiescence to fundamentalist patriarchy by re-veiling themselves.

Most problematically, the women who represent this binary clash do not get equal talking time on the screen. The narrative interweaves the stories of two women from Istanbul with varying attitudes to religion. Art comes from an orthodox Islamic family and decides to take off her veil after years of struggle. Ternar, on the other hand, is from a secular family, and she examines her faith for the first time while living as an immigrant in San Francisco. Both women demonstrate how their relationship to their faith has shaped and determined their personal lives. Although her attitude toward Islam is milder than Art's, who displays complete animosity, Ternar is raised in a staunchly secular family that adheres to the ideals of secularist republicanism. Therefore, the protagonists of the film stand for a secular ideology, and the rest of its subjects are either antagonists that argue against the view represented in these narratives or minor characters that support it. The secularist women dominate the screen whereas the Islamist ones are given the chance to talk no more than one minute in each scene they appear.

The choices that the director makes in terms of how she will narrate the story also gives significant clues about her ideological position. Instead of narrating the story from an impersonal perspective, she uses Ternar as the voiceover and her story as the main narrative framework. The narration is in epistolary form, yet it is not clear who wrote the letters and to whom they are addressed. The audience is not aware of the narrator's identity either and might think that it is the director herself speaking. It is revealed only during the closing credits that the director is Finley and the letters are written by Ternar. This narrative ploy might imply that the director has adopted a guise through a surrogate. The surrogate narrator does not have any physical presence; we just hear her speaking in a voiceover. This strategy gives the narrator an immanent presence and authority, which is reinforced through her poetic tone that leads to the "construction of a deferential, somewhat romanticized mood" (Nichols, 2001, p. 14). Therefore, the audience is made more inclined to accept her perspective than the other characters'.

The message that the voice-over gives through most of her narration is the practice of a milder, folk interpretation of Islam that concentrates more on the philosophical and spiritual aspects than an Islam that is based on ritual, social, and political practice:

Ours was a spiritual upbringing with my grandmother reading from Rumi as well as Siddhartha. I was never taught how to pray. She never covered up except for a loosely draped thin white scarf with

exquisite needlework around the edges.

In this description, it becomes clear that Ternar had a somewhat secular upbringing since the religious education she got from her grandmother consists of references to texts and figures from Buddhism and Sufism rather than mainstream Islam. Her grandmother seems to be the only representative of religion in Ternar's life since she does not mention other members of her family as being religious. Ternar's description of her grandmother's headscarf is significant since it acts a symbol of Ternar's view of Islam as an exotic and romanticized faith. It also indicates Ternar's desire to differentiate her grandmother's spiritual identity from the Islamist female identity, which is characterized by these women's uniform adoption of a style of headscarf which tightly covers the head and the neck. In other words, her grandmother's loosely draped headscarf is acceptable and even desirable, unlike the Islamic headscarf. In this sense, Ternar's attitude represents the common secular position in Turkey which considers the headscarf as a headgear from the past that only grandmothers wear. However, this symbol of nostalgia has turned into a stigmatized symbol since young women in Turkey started adopting the headscarf voluntarily and appropriating it deliberately as an everyday item worn in public spaces (Gole, 2003, p.817).

The linguistic styles of the women represented in the documentary also hint at who is/should be more dominant in this perceived clash between the two conflicting discourses of secularism and Islamism. The language of the documentary is English – the national language of the two world powers, i.e. Britain and the U.S. In developing countries like Turkey, articulate English is a symbol of prestige. Both of the main characters, each representing a liberal secular identity, are eloquent in their use of English. In contrast, most of the Islamist women are shown not to speak any English. By having the secular characters speak in English, the director aligns these characters with the intended audience, i.e. Western liberal intellectuals and feminists. The Islamist women are othered through their use of their native tongue whereas secularists are depicted as closer to "us," if not one of "us." Further, the Islamists are shown to be ineloquent at speaking even their own language, since the subtitles and the voiceover translations communicate only main ideas, rather than the intricacy of the linguistic style of the speakers.

The ideological positioning of the director can be excavated further by analyzing her use of narrative and *mis-en-scene* to explore how the film's ideological message is encoded with the use of certain audio-visual and verbal signs (Hall, 2006, pp. 164-165). According to Barthes, visual forms of representation like films can be analyzed connotatively as each of the audio-visual elements represented are open to different interpretations due to the arbitrary nature of the link between the signifier and what it signifies (Hebdige, 2006, p. 147).

The title of the documentary, *Conversations Across the Bosphorus*, is a significant verbal sign that can be read to demystify the ideological message of the movie. The Bosphorus Strait divides Istanbul into two, leaving one side of the city in Asia, the East, and the other side in Europe, the West. By this title, the filmmaker is claiming that her film enables a dialogue between the East and the West, between the secularists and the Islamists. However, the women that belong to this binary opposition never interact with each other in the documentary. Their talks constitute monologues rather than a dialogue. Moreover, the title also refers to the ambiguous, in-between position of Turkey, which has been exploited by the Orientalists throughout history.²

Although the Turkish Republic has been "oriented toward the West" since its very inception, Orientalist scholars and writers have always perceived it "as located in the East, as the 'other', at best viewed as negotiating a location between the East and the West" (Shafak, 2004, p. 51).

Some artifacts in the documentary receive more visual prominence than the others as they act as signs used to situate the subject into one of the competing discourses of secularism and fundamentalism. The most significant of these visual signs is, of course, the headscarf. Although the headscarf in an Islamic context signifies modesty, piety, and dignity (Mernissi, 1991; Zuhur, 1992), it is shown as a signifier of patriarchal oppression in this documentary. All through the documentary, Art, who took off her veil in protest, tells how she was oppressed by her father and brothers and unequivocally states how other women who wear the headscarf are in the same situation as she was. Since she is one of the protagonists and her story is presented as a first-hand experience, her interpretation of veiling, which stands for oppression, backwardness, and inferiority, is presented as more prominent and credible.

The message that these covered women are oppressed is also implied through a visual strategy that the director employs. When these women are in the scene, their faces are placed in a black frame, which might signify their subjugation and captivity. On the contrary, Art's face is placed well into the frame and situated so close to the camera that one gets the feeling that she might jump out of the frame and come into the viewer's living room.

In contrast to the headscarf, secularist women display more implicit signs that might signify their position as liberated, secular women. One of these signs is the earrings that Demet Turna, the secularist university student, is wearing. She has earrings in the shape of the Eiffel Tower hanging down her ears. The Eiffel Tower is the symbol of France, the country from whose secularism Turkey was inspired. Thus, it acts as a perfect sign that stands for her ideological position. Another sign is smoking. Art, who ran away from her parents' home after taking off the headscarf, smokes in a significant number of scenes. The way she smokes provides her with an aura of confidence and strength. By showing her smoke, the film seems to be in agreement with the popular association of women's smoking with their liberation from and rebellion against women's traditional roles.

Finally, the *mis-en-scene* also contributes to conveying the ideological position of the film. One of the elements of the *mis-en-scene* is lighting. The scenes, especially those that show the neighborhoods where fundamentalists live, are usually very dark and dull. This is contrasted with the brightly lit house on the European side of the Bosphorus that belongs to Ternar's family. In other words, the East or Islam is presented as dark and oppressive whereas the West and secularism is shown to be bright and enlightened. The visual aesthetics is another factor that might have to do with the filmmaker's message. Although it is based on personal taste, a viewer who has been in Istanbul would find most of the city scenes represented in the film not very attractive because it depicts very dark, dirty, gloomy, and dreadful Istanbul scenes. On the contrary, in the scenes where Ternar's family mansion on the Bosphorus is shown, a particular attention to details, like camera angles and lighting, is notable. This contrast in the visual aesthetics of the representation of these two different Istanbul might be interpreted to mean that the fundamentalists make the city uninhabitable and unsightly.

Conclusion

Conversations Across the Bosphorus is a significant documentary that represents the dominant attitudes surrounding the so-called headscarf debate in Turkey. Through my analysis, I have argued that this documentary, as an example of Western discourses of representation, is inclined toward a reductionist depiction of these "other" women. Rather than contextualizing the headscarf debate and its main actors, and reflecting their diversity, the film portrays two somewhat homogeneous groups: secularists and Islamists. While secularist women are represented as liberated and enlightened, the Islamists are portrayed as oppressed and backward. I have explained this tendency as an extension of the director's and her intended audience's identity as secular-liberals. I have also argued that this perspective is problematic because it looks at veiling as a matter of repression rather than seeing it as an embodied ritual practice with a potential for political agency. In the final analysis, possibilities for new conversations and reconfigurations should be considered to establish a more inclusive perspective and evaluate the situation of these women from the vantage point of the discourses that shape their practices and everyday realities.

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Footnotes

1 The term "headscarf" is used in the Turkish context to refer to the Islamic principle of *hijab*, i.e., the religious requirement for women to cover their hair and their bodies (not including the hands and the face) to preserve their virtue and modesty. Although *hijab* is a more general dress code, the headscarf is the term used in the debates about Islam's presence in the public sphere since it is a visible and distinguishable garment that acts as the symbol of the Islamic female identity.

2 The term "Orientalism" refers to the depiction of Eastern cultures by Western writers, travelers, artists and academicians, and the term "Orientalist" refers to any professor of Oriental studies or anyone occupied with these activities. However, since the publication of Said's groundbreaking work *Orientalism*, these terms have started to be used with negative connotations. A central idea in Said's work is that all Western systems of representations (including arts, cinema, mass media, and the academia) have produced a false depiction of the Middle East. Orientalists have represented the East as isolated from progress in the sciences, arts, and commerce and associate these cultures with sensuality, despotism, aberrant mentality, and backward-

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ness. Through the works of the Orientalists, large groups of people with different histories have become oversimplified into one monolithic, subordinate, and ahistorical category.

The Canonization of Gilman's "Lost Utopias"

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Abstract

Herland, originally published in 1915 in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's privately published magazine, *The Forerunner*, had never been widely read until 1979 when it was rescued from obscurity and republished by editor Ann Lane. However, Gilman's sequel and conclusion to *Herland*, *With Her in Ourland*, was not republished for another twenty years and to this day remains a much lesser known text. *With Her in Ourland*, a problematic, unsavory text, exposes a darker side of Gilman's Utopian philosophy, primarily her racism, eugenics, and anti-Semitism. In this paper I trace the publishing history of these two utopias, contextualizing the moment of their "discovery" amid the feminist recovery movement of that period, question the canonicity of these books and finally argue that in order to fully understand Gilman's utopian project in *Herland*, it is essential to study her approach to race in her problematic but compelling sequel, *With Her in Ourland*.

Introduction

Within the context of utopian studies, the prolific economist and sociologist Charlotte Perkins Gilman is best known for her 1915 novel *Herland* and its idealistic society inhabited by empowered, self-reliant women living in universal sisterhood. This novel, which was not widely read in Gilman's lifetime, received critical attention for the first time during a booming age of feminist utopian literature when editor Ann Lane rescued it from Gilman's obscure self-published magazine, the *Forerunner*, and republished it in 1979. Upon this "discovery" and republication, *Herland* was greeted with great critical acclaim, instantly hailed as the "foremother" of the feminist utopian genre and entered into the feminist canon. Leading new wave feminists found that Gilman not only presented a beautiful utopian vision, but also exposed cultural issues that were still relevant 65 years after its original publication.

In order to make *Herland* a relevant, publishable work with canonical potential, Anne Lane made the editorial choice to remove *Herland* from its literary context and did not publish it along side the second half of Gilman's utopian novel, the more complicated *With Her in Ourland*. Gilman's sequel and conclusion to the plot of *Herland*, *With Her in Ourland*, was not republished for another twenty years and still remains a lesser-known text. When reading *Herland* as it was originally serialized in the *Forerunner*, it becomes evident that Gilman was a remarkably forward-thinking woman in the 1910s as she channeled her frustrations vis-à-vis her political culture into a hopeful image of a utopian feminist community. However, the articles about race and religion that Gilman published alongside chapters of *Herland* and *With Her in Ourland* in the *Forerunner* expose significant and disturbing aspects of Gilman's

ideology that are central to her utopian project. The most obvious and upsetting of these ideas are her racism and her support of eugenics, which date her utopian vision and are in no way pertinent to the late twentieth-century feminist movement. It is necessary, then, to consider the general project of the *Forerunner* with special attention to *With Her in Ourland* in order to fully understand Gilman's utopian project.

The Utopian Project of the *Forerunner*

In 1909, as Gilman was approaching her fiftieth birthday, she found herself in the most creative and prolific period of her career. The American political climate was swiftly moving towards a rupture point as the women's rights movement, which had been growing in supporters and power for decades, gained momentum and forcefully questioned the very definition of womanhood. Though her controversial book *Women and Economics*, published in 1898, had already established her as a figurehead of the feminist movement and won her worldwide attention, she was struggling to find publications that would accept her work (Lane, 1990, 362). She could not publish as quickly as she could write. Her friend, author and editor Theodore Dreiser, recommended that she tone down her radical writing in order to appeal to the mass media. Gilman refused and, in her autobiography, recalls:

As time passed there was less and less market for what I had to say, more and more of my stuff was declined. Think I must and write I must, the manuscripts accumulated far faster than I could sell them, some of the best, almost all- and finally I announced: "If the editors and publishers will not bring out my work, I will!" And I did. (303)

She and her husband, Houghton, opened a small press on 67 Wall Street in New York City that she named the Charlton Company. Then in November of 1909 she published the first issue of the *Forerunner* and continued to produce an issue every month for the next seven years.

The *Forerunner* was written, owned, published, advertised and funded solely by Gilman. On the last page of every issue from November 1909 to October 1910, Gilman included an advertisement for her own magazine which demonstrates exactly how ambitious this project was:

"If you take this magazine, in one year you will have: One complete novel by CP Gilman, One new Book, Twelve short stories- Twelve and more short articles. Twelve and more new poems, Twelve Short Sermons Besides the comment and review, "Personal Problems," and many other things....Don't you think it is worth a dollar?"

Gilman delivered all of this promised material every year. She estimated that the *Forerunner* required twenty-one thousand words per issue and that her work equaled about four books of thirty-six thousand words per year. Gilman recalls, "It was an immense task to get the work done, to write more than I could ever have done without some such definite compulsion" (*The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, 305).

The *Forerunner* was never widely read, or financially successful; Gilman lost money every year it was in print. Priced at ten cents a copy or one dollar for a year, Gilman

would have only needed a circulation of 3,000 to keep the magazine afloat, but, despite her international reputation, she was never able to attain more than half of this required readership. The *Forerunner* never had a newsstand edition and was primarily distributed by the organizations to which Gilman belonged: the Rand School of Social Science, the Women's Political Union, the Nationalist Woman Suffrage Association and the Socialist Literature Company (Stern, 1968, xx). Gilman covered the additional costs of publication out of pocket and took on additional writing assignments to pay for her magazine. She turned away advertising money, refusing to endorse products she did not personally care for and eventually fired her "advertising man" when he suggested that her work was less valuable to American women than the popular fashion magazines.

Gilman understood that the *Forerunner* was far too radical to ever be popular. In her autobiography, she wrote,

This is also why my little *Forerunner* has so few subscribers, at least one reason why. There were some who were with me on one point and some on two, but when it came to five or more distinct heresies, to a magazine which even ridiculed fashion and held blazing before its readers a heaven on earth which they did not in the least want- it narrowed the subscription list. (310)

She refused to diminish her project of projecting a "heaven on earth" by including anything in the *Forerunner* for the mere purpose of appealing to a wider audience. Rather than treating her magazine as a business, Gilman proudly claimed in her first edition of the *Forerunner* that she saw her magazine as a personal mission. On the first page of her first edition of the *Forerunner* she defined that mission and revealed her utopian belief in the achievability of a better society: "The *Forerunner* is to stimulate thought; to arouse hope, courage and impatience; to offer practical suggestions and solutions, to voice the strong assurance of better living, here, now in our own hands to make."

First Publication of *Herland* and *With Her In Ourland*

Given the utopian project of the *Forerunner*, it is not surprising that in the final twenty-four issues of the magazine, published between 1915 and 1916, Gilman serialized a two-part utopian novel, *Herland* and *With Her In Ourland*. These books describe the adventures of three male explorers who discover a hidden nation inhabited solely by women who had lived for thousands of years in peaceful sisterhood and were bonded by communal productivity, worship of motherhood and the ability to magically and parthenogenetically reproduce. In the first twelve chapters of *Herland*, the men explore Herland and are educated by the Herlanders about the utopian society. They each fall in love and eventually marry. The last installment of *Herland* ends with a dramatic cliffhanger. The narrator, Van, his misogynistic friend, Terry, and Van's wife, the "Herlander" Ellador, jump into a hover plane and leave Herland with the intention of introducing Ellador to the "rest of the world." The next twelve serialized chapters, titled *With Her in Ourland*, complete the plot. Ellador first visits a bloodied Europe in the midst of the first World War. She and Van continue to tour the world and eventually settle in Van's homeland, the United States. Horrified by the state of the "real world," Ellador diagnoses its ills and after a great deal of study she concludes that the world can be cured through a careful

practice of eugenetics. The couple eventually return to Herland, where they finally consummate their love and Ellador gives birth to a son.

Among the articles in the last issue of the *Forerunner*, Gilman published the final installment of *With Her in Ourland*, and a letter to her readers which began with a promise to "publish the separate books included in this set, as well as volumes of short stories, essays, verse and allegory" (Gilman, December 1916). She was never able to fulfill this promise. Toward the end of her life in the 1930s, her popularity waned. Women were voting and the First World War marked an influx of women in the workplace; the feminist movement had gained momentum. Though her work remained politically relevant and impudently forward thinking, it was no longer widely circulated. Her autobiography, the last book she ever published, sold only 808 copies, marking the beginning of her slide into obscurity (Lane, 1990, 360).

The Recovery of *Herland*

Herland is what Frances Bartkowski describes as a "sleeping-beauty history that is linked to the selective memory of the marketplace" (Bartkowski, 1989, 23). For more than sixty years it waited, fading into historical anonymity, until the late 1970s when literary critics and feminist historians became increasingly concerned with expanding the literary canon to include more great works by women writers and began to look back at previously unknown texts to find the foremothers of the feminist literary movement. When, in 1979, women's studies historian, Anne J. Lane, discovered *Herland* serialized in Gilman's obscure *Forerunner*, she significantly edited the work and published it in book form for the first time. Lane's subtitle, "A Lost Feminist Utopian Novel," presents the book as an artifact, dug out from the deep sands of oppressed feminist literature, and calls attention to its previous obscurity while celebrating the historic appeal of its rediscovery, which is emphasized by the publisher as a selling point.

***Herland* as "Foremother"**

By the time *Herland* reappeared on the literary scene, the feminist utopia was already an established genre. The 1960s marked a change in utopian fiction that led to a sudden peak in the popularity of the genre in the late 70s (Kessler, 1995, 249). In her introduction to *Herland*, Lane discusses the trend of "the utopian form going through a rebirth as a uniquely feminist expression" (Lane, 1979, xx). She mentions a list of feminist utopias published in the mid 70s, drawing attention to Marge Piercy's, *Women on the Edge of Time*, Joanne Russ's *The Female Man*, Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, Dorthay Bryant's *The Kin of Ata Are Waiting for You* and Mary Stant's *From the Legend of Biel*.

Upon the suddenly discovery of *Herland*, the novel was the subject of critical attention, widely circulated, and it entered into the feminist and utopian literary canons partially because it was considered to be the first of its kind. Before Gilman published *Herland* in 1916, previous utopias had questioned women's traditional role in society and called for a change. In her introduction to the first book edition of *Herland*, Lane mentions that "several utopias have espoused the rights or exposed the plights of women... but few are written by women" (Lane, 1979, xvii). *Herland* is not the first utopian novel written by a woman. Carol Farley Kessler has discovered utopian themes in Annie Denton Cridge's *Man's Rights* published in 1874, and Rosa

Graul's *Hilda's Home* published in 1897. In her introduction, Lane also mentions several late nineteenth-century novels written by women about utopian societies, such as *San Salvador* by Mary Agnes Tinker and Zebina Forbush's *The Co-opiltan: A Story of the Cooperative Commonwealth of Idaho*. Lane emphasizes, however, that there is "nothing particularly feminist about these worlds" (Lane, 1979, xviii). While *Herland* is not the first utopia written by a woman, it is the first conscious and distinctively feminist separatist utopia.

Critical Reception

Herland immediately received significant critical attention because its initial reviewers were surprised to find that, for a novel originally published in 1915, the content of *Herland* still offered a relevant cultural critique of gender politics. The back cover of the first edition featured best-selling feminist author and essayist Alix Kates Shulman's promotional quote:

Cheers to Anne Lane for rescuing this delightful fantasy from obscurity. Gilman not only presents a charming rational vision, but she exposes the absurdities of sexism in a way that still stings after half a century. If the utopias a society produce are any index of its ills, then *Herland* nails our own.

For Shulman, *Herland* revealed the sexism in a "society" that was not Gilman's, but rather her own. The quote instructs readers to study Gilman's ideologies, not in order to historicize Gilman but, rather, to better understand current gender politics. The next promotional quote, by feminist science fiction writer Joanna Russ again presents *Herland* as a contemporary text:

It is a lovely, funny book. There is a wonderful flavor of Golden Age science fiction, which adds to the fun and doesn't in the least spoil the argument, which is still fresh and very much of today.

Shulman and Russ suggest that the utopian vision projected by *Herland* can be used to satirize the sexist society of the late twentieth century as well as shed light upon the pre-nineteenth amendment society that inspired Gilman to write. *Herland* is surprising and politically applicable because the feminist separatist community that Gilman created is in no way antiquated. Posthumously introduced to the feminist literary movement, Gilman is presented as a contemporary political philosopher.

Eugenics in *With Her in Ourland*

This reading of Gilman as a modern, politically applicable utopian visionary was only possible because Lane isolated *Herland* from *With Her in Ourland*. Throughout *Herland*, the women reacted to what they learned about the real world from the three men, but could not offer specific advice about how to change it. In *With Her in Ourland*, Ellador, the spokeswoman of *Herland*, enters the real world, finds that it is sick and assigns herself the role of doctor. She diagnoses the ills of the world and then suggests a specific treatment plan: eugenics. Ellador's lengthy proselytizing about "breeding" exposes racism, eugenics, and anti-Semitism which have no place in the utopian project of the late twentieth-century feminist literary community.

According to Ellador, it is not the world, culture or society that needs to change. Instead, it is the genetic "stock" of humanity that must evolve. Ellador declares that a new, more perfect race will take exactly three generations to develop: "You could improve this stock, say, 5 percent in one, 15 in two and 80 percent in three. Perhaps faster" (Gilman, December 1916). This passage is central to the "diagnosis" Ellador offers in *With Her in Ourland*. Ellador, who has used cool, unimpassioned language throughout the entire book, finally breaks down and emotionally pleads for the perfection of humanity with an outburst of optimism:

People are not bad now; they are only weighed down with all this falsehood and foolishness in their heads. There is always the big lifting force of life to push you on as fast as you will let it. There is the wide surrounding help of conditions, such conditions as you even now know how to arrange. And there is the power of education—which you have hardly tried. With all these together and with proper care in breeding you could fill the world with glorious people—soon. Oh, I wish you'd do it! I wish you'd do it! (Gilman, December, 1916)

Ellador clearly suggests that the building blocks for utopia are already in place. She argues that the human race needs to be purified and she has already made it abundantly clear exactly what needs to be purged from it. This moment in the text is disturbing specifically because it is Ellador at her most hopeful and optimistic. This passage sheds light on the eugenics practiced within the society described in *Herland* that might have gone unnoticed without *With Her in Ourland*. Now that Ellador has established breeding as the most essential tool to the production of a utopian society, the race of the Herlanders can not be overlooked as an incidental detail. Since all of the Herlanders are descendents of the first Aryan women who asexually conceived, they are all part of the same bloodline. They have carefully bred a master race and the maintenance of their racial uniformity is more essential to their social practices than their singularity of gender.

Gender in *With Her in Ourland*

Isolating *Herland* from *With Her in Ourland* also gives a false impression of Gilman's utopian project. The first twelve chapters of *Herland* suggest that Gilman's utopia is a feminist separatist community. At the close of the first portion of the story all men leave Herland, except for Jeff, the most feminine and acculturated of the three intruders. This ending suggests that Herland is utopian because it is feminine and allows readers to conclude that women are fundamentally different and superior to men. *With Her in Ourland* concludes very differently. In the last chapter of *With Her in Ourland*, Van and Ellador return to Herland as a unified and loving couple. There, they consummate their love and Ellador gives birth to a male child. The magical asexual reproduction that accounted for all prior births in *Herland* is not responsible for this new utopian child. Now that men have entered into this utopian society, Herland will forever be both a masculine and feminine world. The unique factor of this community is no more and Herland can no longer be utopian simply because it is populated only by women. Now the utopia must face the challenges of maintaining its perfect social structure with the added complications of a bi-gendered race. At the end of *With Her in Ourland*, Gilman presents a utopian society that is more concerned with the "genetic stock" of its inhabitants than with gender.

Racism in the *Forerunner*

Throughout the *Forerunner*, in her nonfiction, political essays, sermons and letters to readers, Gilman frequently makes a case for eugenics and expresses racist and Anti-Semitic sentiments. In an essay she published in the May 1915 edition of the *Forerunner* titled "Faith in Evolution," she calls for attention to breeding:

Here are People,— tall, strong, healthy, clever, beautiful, well man-
nered, and highly moraled, —creditible specimen of humanity.
And here are other People, as inferior to these as stubbed little
birch, which the Norwegian mountaineers call "Dog's Ear," is to the
tall birch tree of the fjords.

She goes on to claim that "the savages in Africa have reproduced themselves for ages with no appreciable progress." Her essay titled "Race Pride," appearing in her April 1913 edition, opens with an argument for racial equality:

For any separate nationality to look down on another shows provin-
cialism. And for us of the United States of America to look down on
the nations from which we are constructed is palpably worse; not
only wrong, but ridiculous.

In the very next paragraph, Gilman's anti-Semitism raises its head.

Perhaps the most pronounced instance of this absurdity is in the his-
toric pride of the Hebrews, firmly believing themselves to be the only
people God cared about, and despising all the other races of the
earth for thousands upon thousands of years, while all those other
races unanimously return the compliment. (Gilman, April 1913)

Gilman's anger at the "Hebrew race" is prevalent throughout the *Forerunner*. One particularly distressing anti-Semitic moment appears alongside the final installment of *With Her in Ourland*, in the last published issue of the *Forerunner*. Gilman writes a conclusion to her magazine and mission in the form of a letter entitled "To My Real Readers." Here, she attempts to bid farewell to the periodical and her loyal subscribers with a summary of her personal philosophy. The first point that she raises is a declaration of her faith, which again waxes anti-Semitic.

Don't worry about God. God is there working all the time, not angry
or jealous or any of those things the limited intelligence of those an-
cient Hebrews discredited Him with... Do you not see the pathetic
egoism of those early Hebrews in imagining their special God, of
whom they were the special children? (Gilman, December 1916)

Approaches to Gilman's Racism

Gilman scholars have debated about how to discuss Gilman's anti-Semitism and racism without undermining her legacy as a great feminist and utopian thinker. In her anthology *The Charlotte Perkins Gilman Reader*, Lane makes editorial decisions to exclude sections of Gilman's writing in order to emphasize her ideas that best fit in with the thriving feminist movement of the late 1970s. She is conscious about her par-

tial selection of Gilman's work and justifies her decision in the first chapter: "Despite her genuine commitment to humanism and socialism, Gilman voiced opinions that are racist, chauvinistic, and anti-Semitic. The decision to exclude sections from *Ourland* that would illustrate these ideas flowed not from the desire to hide that side of her thought but from the belief that her valuable ideas better deserve remembering and repeating" (Lane, 1999, xxxvi). Instead of dealing with the theme of eugenics that permeates the novel, Lane intentionally selects excerpts that avoid the subject as she highlights an aspect of the book that will not diminish its overall contemporary relevance: Van and Ellador's changing relationship.

Like Lane, in her book, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Her Progress Toward Utopia*, Carol Farley Kessler attempts to place Gilman's racism in its historical context and avoids condemning her for her beliefs. Note how Kessler concludes the passage about Gilman's eugenics:

By the end of the 1920s, uneasy about the influx of immigrants who she felt were somehow lesser peoples, Gilman hit upon a new topic in "Progress Through Birth Control" (1927) and "Sex and Race Progress" (1929): careful selection of partners and limitation of births would lead to peace and progressive race evolutions. (Although this stance is xenophobic, during the 1890s, Gilman had been one of the few feminists who had not sanctioned a literacy test to stem the tide of largely Jewish, Eastern European immigrants.) (Kessler, 1995, 39)

Here, Kessler describes one of Gilman's racist articles, then immediately draws attention away from it by praising Gilman for her non-racist stance on an unrelated issue. Later in this same book, Kessler addresses an article Gilman published in *The American Journal of Sociology* in 1908, "A Suggestion on the Negro Problem." Kessler dedicates one paragraph to explaining Gilman's outrageous belief that all black Americans, men, women and children, should be forced to enlist in the army since Gilman believed that they were suited for manual labor. Notably, Kessler frames this disturbing passage by praising Gilman's forward-thinking feminism. Kessler opens this paragraph with the sentence, "However acute Gilman's thinking was on women's issues, her views on race contrast strikingly and reveal ethnocentrism," and begins the following paragraph with the following caveat: "Regarding women's issues, however, Gilman did stand ahead of her time and is still ahead of ours" (Kessler, 1995, 48). When Kessler addresses what she calls Gilman's "negative traits," she consistently de-emphasizes her criticism with praise.

Similarly, Mary A. Hill, who edited a collection of Gilman's love letters to her second husband Houghton, passionately praises Gilman, claiming that she is "the hero who returns as a messenger, as a healer... or as a woman—empowering woman" (Hill, 2000, 50). Like Lane and Kessler, Hill does not excuse or dismiss Gilman's disturbing racial views, but does separate them out from her feminism and utopian philosophy.

That is not to say that I admire *everything* about Gilman. Like some other Gilman scholars, I recognize that Gilman, like most people, had her darker side, her racism, her ethnocentricity, her homophobia— all of which deserve attention. But she, nonetheless, was an impressive mentor, a delightful humorist, a spiritual leader, a radical

critic of patriarchal structure, and a proud, forceful woman who urged us to find the goddess in ourselves. (Hill, 2000, 51)

She mentions that this "darker side" does "deserve attention"; however, she very consciously chooses not to actually pay it any. Rather than studying how Gilman's disturbing "racism, ethnocentricity and homophobia" act within her successful work as a "mentor, humorist, spiritual leader and critic," Hill segregates the unenlightened aspects of Gilman's ideology as her "darker side" and poses them in direct contradiction to her overall success as a women's activist.

Gary Scharnhorst, one of Gilman's biographers, expresses frustration with scholars' tendency to isolate Gilman's racial theories: "Gilman's defenders, while certainly acknowledging her racism, seem to regard it as a discordant note or a minor strain in her thought that can somehow be isolated like a virus and set aside" (Scharnhorst, 2000, 67). Rather than polarizing her "dark" and "bright" sides, scholars might integrate Gilman's controversial and disturbing beliefs with her radical feminism and utopian project to complicate readings of Gilman's *Herland* in interesting ways.

Moving Beyond Gilman's Cohesive Utopian Project

Due to the combination of the difficult writing style, the antiquated nature of its content and Gilman's problematic racial views, *With Her in Ourland* has not received the same level of critical attention as *Herland* and is rarely brought into the classroom. It is a "difficult book to teach; as well as being didactic, it is dense" and "is certain to offend most readers today" (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2003, 112). The book remained "lost" for another two decades until 1997, when sociologist Mary Jo Deegan edited and republished it in book form with the purpose of claiming Gilman for the sociological rather than the literary canon. Two years later, the book *Gilman's Utopian Novels* was published. For the first time since 1917, the *Herland* books were bound together, offering a more disturbing and complete reading experience.

In order to incorporate *Herland* into a literary canon that would have been incomplete without the "foremother of the feminist utopia," Lane had to remove *Herland* from the context of the *Forerunner* and isolate Gilman's contemporarily applicable ideas about gender from her archaic understanding of race. However, now that Gilman has been restored, there is no longer a need to sanctify or defend her. Gilman's atrocious racial discrimination does not eliminate her feminist agenda. She still deserves to be widely read and studied within her historical context. However, her racism does discredit her as a contemporary utopian writer. Because the utopianism of *Herland* relies so heavily on eugenics, it can not be praised as a "charming, rational vision" or read as currently applicable satire. A literary utopia ought to reflect the best in humanity and its purpose is to offer a perfect alternative to reality in order to show society how it ought to be organized. It should be an artistic representation of an ideal world while encouraging social reform. Knowing that *Herland* requires religious and racial homogeneity attained through "careful breeding" prohibits it from being relevant to modern idealism. As feminist and utopian writers work to create new fictional utopias, rather than refer back to the influential but deeply flawed "foremother" of feminist utopian fiction, they must move beyond *Herland* and question how a perfect society might allow every person to be respected and celebrated for his or her humanity without regard to gender, race, heritage, class or creed.

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Shattering the Final Glass Ceiling: Gender, Politics and the Campaign for Presidency

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Abstract

While the intimate yet complicated relationship between gender and politics has deep historical roots, what makes the years 2007-2008 unique was the unprecedented campaign of the first viable female contender for the United States' highest political office – president. Using a dataset of 79 news articles written between January 2007 and January 2008, this paper critically assesses mainstream media's coverage of Senator Hillary Clinton's campaign through a gendered lens. With Marilyn Frye's concept of the "double-bind" as a theoretical guide, I organize evidence around three major themes in the coverage of Senator Clinton's campaign: "Cleavagegate" and subsequent discussions of Senator Clinton's appearance, experience as First Lady, and emotional sincerity and character. I find that over half of the articles either reference or actually place Senator Clinton in a double-bind, which I define as a situation in which any option given to or choice made by a female leader results in a disproportional amount of judgment, criticism, and sometimes punishment, suggesting differential standards in media coverage of female politicians.

Introduction

In the year 1588, Queen Elizabeth I addressed English troops preparing for their impending battle with Spain by stating, "I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king" (Kantrowitz, 2007, p. 1). Over 400 years later, Senator Clinton¹ stood in New Hampshire and assured her supporters that she was "cool under fire," "tough," and could "make decisions," (Garrett, 2008, p. 1) despite the reality that, as her husband apologetically told the press days earlier, she could not be "younger, taller," or "change her gender" (Huffington, 2008, p. 1). Certainly, in comparing these quotes alone, it becomes apparent that the intimate, complicated relationship between gender and politics is nothing new. What does makes the years 2007-2008 unique, however, is the fact that feminist scholars and the American public at large witnessed the unfolding of the unprecedented campaign of the first serious female contender for the country's highest office — president. Using data drawn from television, magazine, radio, and newspaper coverage of Senator Clinton's presidential pursuit, this paper seeks to take advantage of the opportunity to watch the worlds of gender and politics intersect before a national audience, assessing the modern-day significance of sexism and double-binds confronted by women who lead in 21st-century America.

The Significance of Gender in American Politics Today

In the course I teach on "Sex and Gender in Society" at the University of North Carolina, students are initially hesitant to believe gender inequality still exists in this country, having grown up reaping the benefits of the women's liberation movement (while sometimes giving it little thought) and entering a collegiate environment where female undergraduates often outnumber their male counterparts. While I push them to confront subjects like oppression, power, and privilege in the classroom, it often takes a glance at C-SPAN in their dorm rooms to have such topics hit home. Indeed, according to the "Center for American Women in Politics" (2008), in this country's 220 years of presidential elections, there have been 43 male presidents and 46 male vice-presidents, but no women have filled either office. While last year, feminists cheered as Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi made history by becoming the first female Speaker of the House, women still make up just 16.1% of both the Senate and the House of Representatives and currently lead only 8 of our 50 states as Governor. In addition, only 23 women have served on a presidential cabinet in the history of this nation to date. Given these facts, if Senator Clinton has been receiving a disproportionate amount of media attention (both positive and negative) lately, it is not difficult to theorize why. Of the sixteen initial contenders for the 2008 presidency, she is the only woman running, the only former first-lady to do so, and the first viable female contender in reach of America's foremost political office. During a November 2007 speech at her alma mater, Wellesley College, Senator Clinton expressed her desire to finally "shatter that highest glass ceiling," (Bumiller, 2007, p. 1), referencing her intention to break through the barriers keeping women from obtaining such leadership positions in historically male dominated political and economic arenas.

Methodology & Theoretical Framework

To assess media coverage of Senator Clinton's campaign, I collected a dataset of 79 articles, including newspaper and magazine pieces (online and in-print). I also observed a number of political television shows and listened to several radio broadcasts, all focusing on the 2008 campaign for presidency and many on the Democratic or Senator Clinton's campaign alone. My search for potential articles was limited to those written on the candidate during the time period of January 2007 (when the Senator declared her intention to run for president) to January 2008 (when this article was written). Throughout this time period, Clinton, a Senator from New York, is competing against former North Carolina Senator John Edwards and current Illinois Senator Barack Obama for the Democratic Party's nomination for U.S. president.

I aimed to critically assess the media's coverage of Senator Clinton's actions, words, external appearance, internal motivations, and record by examining information from a wide variety of sources (ranging from political blogs to the Opinion Section of the *New York Times* to discussions on Conservative Rush Limbaugh's radio show). My evidence came primarily from mainstream media sources, which I define as powerful media outlets designed to reach and distribute information to the widest audience of readers. The complete list of sources I examined is: mainstream newspapers (*The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The NY Daily News*, *The Washington Post*, and *Times Online*), magazines (*Newsweek* and *Time*), and major network's Internet coverage (*Fox News*, *CNN*, *MSNBC*, *ABC News*, and *CBS News*), as well as several less

mainstream sources such as non-profit, progressive media websites (*The Huffington Post*, *Media Matters*, and *In These Times*) and a political blog (*Buck Naked Politics*).²

When analyzing the data, I paid particular attention to the terminology used to describe Senator Clinton (adjectives, variations of her name), the types of criticism she received (the subject and the source of critiques), and the contrasts in both the interpretation and evidence used by political or media figures who admonished or praised her. I ultimately organized the evidence around three major themes in Senator Clinton's campaign coverage: (1) "Cleavagegate" and subsequent media discussions of Senator Clinton's appearance, (2) Senator Clinton's power and experience as First Lady, and (3) Senator Clinton's emotional sincerity and character, especially following the New Hampshire Primary. It is important to note that the findings and scope of this paper are limited by my use of a relatively small, convenience sample of articles from mostly mainstream media outlets during a short time period.³ Future research could utilize a larger sample of articles drawn from a wider range of sources over a longer period of time with hopes of increasing the generalizability of the arguments. Still, the sheer number of articles published that delved into issues of gender, image, character, power, and politics made the short but historically unprecedented timeframe I chose to examine especially ripe and pertinent for a glimpse at how the media framed a female politician running for president in 2008.

I interpret my sources through the theoretical lens of Marilyn Frye's (1983) "double-bind," a concept introduced in her groundbreaking essay "Oppression." In this piece, Frye (1983) says double-binds are "one of the most characteristic and ubiquitous features of the world as experienced by oppressed people," describing them as "situations in which options are reduced to a very few and all of them expose one to penalty, censure or deprivation" (p. 7). While Frye wrote of oppressed groups in society generally (e.g., the poor, racial and ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians), her concept is often applied to women as a stigmatized status group, and even more specifically, to women who pursue leadership roles in male dominated fields like business, law, and politics.

Frye compares the experiences of an oppressed person to that of a bird trapped in a cage, claiming that each wire in the structure surrounding them represents a barrier or obstacle that must be overcome. While each individual wire, when viewed alone, appears easily surmountable, it is systematically situated and intertwined with other wires in such a way that it "catch[es] one between and among them and restrict[s] or penalize[s] motion in any direction" (p. 8). Applying this metaphor to a female leader, Frye might offer the example of a businesswoman attempting to balance work and family. Because of inflexible workplace policies and discriminatory practices or attitudes, if she chooses to stay home for one year after having a child, she could face criticism from coworkers for putting her family before work or burdening the company by taking maternity leave. If the same woman chose not to stay home, she could be perceived by coworkers as being a bad mother who is jeopardizing the well-being of her offspring or as being less committed because she will likely need more flexible hours. In this example, either choice the woman makes is accompanied by criticism and penalty, as if the ideologies and practices built into the very structure of the workplace interlock and restrict her ability to move past each obstacle. After revisiting Frye's piece, I wondered if, how frequently, and to what degree a female contender for president could be experiencing forms of gen-

der-based oppression and whether the media was either overtly or, more dangerously, covertly constructing wires of a birdcage around her via their interpretation of the words, actions, and decisions she made on the campaign trail.

This assertion that women in power face double-binds and are subject to a different set of standards and expectations than their male counterparts is hardly novel. Feminist scholars, Frye included, have explored this topic in-depth for decades, particularly in response to the influx of women into the labor force in the later half of the 20th-century (e.g., Jamieson, 1995; Norris, 1997). Still, applying Frye's concept to Senator Clinton's campaign is not without complications. While Senator Clinton may arguably be oppressed on the basis of gender, she is jointly privileged by virtue of her Caucasian race and membership in a high socioeconomic bracket. As Patricia Hill Collins (2000) points out in her discussions of intersectionality, because one's race, class, and gender intersect, simultaneously affect his or her experience of the social world, and are enmeshed in the very structure of social institutions, it is nearly impossible to isolate the oppressive influence of a woman's gender without considering whether she is jointly oppressed or privileged by virtue of other group memberships. In addition, Frye's analogy of oppression as akin to being a bird trapped in a cage evokes images of being immobilized and rendered powerless by a series of systematically woven barriers, while Senator Clinton has achieved a tremendous amount of power, status, prestige and autonomy throughout her lifetime. Because of this, some might argue in favor of using a more agentic framework to assess women in politics today, a framework characterized by an examination of female leaders' abilities to overcome and persevere against restrictive institutional barriers, discrimination, and the discrediting of their record or competence on the basis of gender.

Certainly, feminist scholars in the U.S. would unite around the hope that in 2008, media coverage of the first serious female contender for President would be virtually free of sexist jabs and biased reporting of the campaign. As Gloria Steinem (2008) lamented in a recent op-ed column of *The New York Times*, even today, when hope and progress seem perched on the horizon, "Gender is probably the most restricting force in American life, whether the question is who must be in the kitchen or who could be in the White House" (p. 1). In my limited collection of articles alone, I found evidence of double-binds related to Senator Clinton's clothing choice (including the color, style, and cut of her suits), hairstyles, laugh, experience as first lady, likeability, and loyalty to her gender. Similar to Frye, I define a "double-bind" here as a situation in which any option given to or choice made by a female politician (whether it involves wearing pink versus black, crying versus appearing stern, or downplaying versus claiming to have experience) results in intense, often unrelenting judgment and criticism. It is an inability to make any decision without being penalized for it in one's personal and public life — a constant battle to avoid lose-lose circumstances that are inherently unavoidable because of one's gender.

Not all of the articles I examined portrayed Senator Clinton in a negative or critical light, with about 36% making no reference to her appearance, laughter, sincerity or experience in a ways that overtly signaled gender-specific scrutiny in the coverage. Of those remaining, 23% of the articles in my sample made explicit or repeatedly negative gender-specific references to Senator Clinton on the aforementioned topics, 13% featured defenses of Senator Clinton against such criticism, and the final 28% represented a more balanced glimpse of what both critics and de-

fenders of the candidate were arguing on one or more of those topics. In all, slightly less than two-thirds of the articles I gathered made reference to topics I classify as the "double-binds" female candidates disproportionally face in media coverage, on topics ranging from their clothing choices, laugh, hairstyles, and aging appearance to their emotional sincerity and vulnerability to their past work experience and ability to handle the demands of presidential power.

It is also important to note how difficult it is to prove that this scrutiny is unique to female leaders, especially when male candidates have, at times, also been criticized for their attire, gestures, and likeability (e.g., the controversy over Senator Obama's decision not to wear an American flag pin, references to his "elitist" attitude, and the "fist bump" he shared with his wife after a primary victory) (Newton-Small, 2008; Keck, 2008; Sklar, 2008). By virtue of being a top contender for the country's highest political office, regardless of one's gender, one is certainly subject to scrutiny that is uniquely unrelenting and severe. Because of this, I focus my analysis on media criticisms that are overtly gender related (i.e., discussions of Senator Clinton's necklines and years as First Lady) and pay close attention to not only the subject matters but also the intensity and frequency of criticisms when compared to those given to male politicians on the same or similar topics.

"Cleavagegate" - Attacks on Appearance

Even before the primary battles began, Senator Clinton's wardrobe made national news when she graced the senate floor in the Summer of 2007 wearing what Washington Post writer Robin Givhan (2007) described as a "neckline [that] sat low on her chest and had a subtle V-shape" (p. C01). Givhan went on, saying, "There wasn't an unseemly amount of cleavage showing, but there it was. Undeniable" (p. C01). In fact, Senator Clinton's blouse choice on this particular day generated such a media frenzy that it was discussed on-air for twenty-three minutes on MSNBC news (Media Matters, 2007) and eventually coined "Cleavagegate" on the web (Damozel, 2007). While women like fashion editor Lisa Armstrong quickly came to Senator Clinton's defense, thanking her for "finally acknowledging that she is, you know, a woman and for daring to presume that the public is sufficiently adult to listen to her making a speech on the cost of higher education ... without being inflamed by lustful feelings" (Howse, 2007, p. 2) and Senator Clinton's campaign called Givhan's article "grossly inappropriate" (Kurtz and Kornblut, 2007, p. 1), the symbolic significance of the event lingered on. To make matters worse, a week later, at a Democratic Presidential debate, when asked to explain something he disliked about Senator Clinton, then presidential contender and former North Carolina Senator John Edwards joked, "I'm not sure about that coat," in reference to her pink suit jacket. Current Illinois Senator and presidential contender, Senator Barack Obama also jumped in, saying, "I actually like Hillary's jacket. I don't know what's wrong with it" (Bradley, 2007, p. 1).

While former Senator Edwards and Senator Obama were likely attempting to bring some lighthearted humor to an otherwise serious event, their comments point to a larger trend of female politicians' outward appearances being critiqued with more time, commentary, and criticism than is typical of their male counterparts. It would be hard to imagine MSNBC spending nearly half an hour of prime news time discussing the fit of a male contender's pants. Admittedly, former Senator John Edwards was scolded for using campaign finances to fund his four hundred dollar

haircuts, but it was mainly the cost and not his hair itself that was under fire (Lowy, 2007). In contrast, Senator Clinton faces intersecting double-binds, evident by the scrutiny given to everything from the articles she wears to the colors she chooses to her hairstyle, trivializing her role as a serious politician and overshadowing seemingly more important concerns, like her political record and stance on key issues.

These examples can be labeled as double-binds because on one hand, if Senator Clinton reveals too much skin; opts for skirts or dresses; chooses pastel, bright, or "feminine" colors; lengthens and dyes her hair; or wears noticeable amounts of makeup, she could be subject to criticism for being too traditionally feminine, soft, womanly, or weak, or even accused of purposely tweaking her image to appear more motherly to attract voters. Simultaneously, if Senator Clinton covers her body from head to toe, chooses dark colors, opts for pantsuits, lets her hair turn gray, or refuses to wear makeup, she might be described as cold, rough, manly, or even suspected of appealing to patriarchy by adhering to masculine rules of what power "should" look like. For example, in an article entitled "Why Women Hate Hillary," feminist scholar Susan Douglas (2007) strongly scrutinizes Senator Clinton for not acting feminine enough. Douglas states, "Hillary seems to want to be more like a man in her demeanor and politics," going on to claim that Senator Clinton "reinforces the Genghis Khan principle of American politics that our leaders must be ruthless and macho" and even referring to her as "patriarchy in sheep's clothing" (p. 1).

Senator Clinton's appearance was perhaps condemned most harshly in the days following Conservative Rush Limbaugh's discussion of aging women on his radio talk show in December of 2007. Limbaugh asked, "Will Americans want to watch a woman get older before their eyes on a daily basis?" referencing a widely-circulated, close-up photograph of Senator Clinton that exposed wrinkles on her sixty-year-old face (Nelson, 2007, p. 1). Limbaugh himself admitted that a double standard exists when it comes to gender and age in America, arguing that as male politicians age, they become "more authoritative, accomplished and distinguished" (Nelson, 2007, p. 1), while female politicians become unattractive or—even worse—old. While it is not clear what an aged appearance has to do with one's ability to lead a country, Limbaugh brings up a valid point—it is hard to imagine headlines describing an aging male politician's face as unappealing, ugly, and wrinkly. Certainly, being a high-ranking politician places one in the public eye on a daily basis, so appearance is an important part of politics regardless of one's gender. However, while Republican presidential candidate Senator John McCain's age is a frequent subject of discussion in the media, concern is primarily focused on whether he will be physically healthy enough to lead the country, and not on whether he will still look attractive while doing it.

First Lady Experience and Implications of "Soft Power"

Criticism of Senator Clinton's appearance is certainly not the only double-bind she faces in the media. When the campaigners' stances on issues, political experience, and voting record are considered, a slightly less visible but lethal gender dynamic comes into play. In several articles and at least one Democratic debate, the issue has been raised of whether Senator Clinton's time as First Lady should be included in what she calls "35 years" of experience. In two pieces by *The New York Times* writer Patrick Healy (2007), Senator Clinton's time in the White House is assessed, stating, "Mrs. Clinton did not hold a security clearance. She did not attend National Secu-

rity Council meetings. She was not given a copy of the President's daily intelligence briefing" and during one "major test on terrorism, whether to bomb Afghanistan and Sudan in 1998, Mrs. Clinton was barely speaking to her husband, let alone advising him" (p. 1). In another article, Healy (2007) goes on, claiming Senator Clinton "was more of a sounding board than a policy maker, who learned through osmosis rather than decision-making," saying her role focused mainly on "'soft power' ... converting cold war foes into friends, supporting nonprofit work and good-will endeavors, and pressing her agenda on women's rights" (p. 2).

While it is fair and necessary to question a candidate's claims of experience and one should not automatically assume her influence was significant, Healy's interpretation of Senator Clinton's days in the White House take on a new connotation when viewed through a gendered lens. Compare, for example, Healy's interpretation of her role to that of Mickey Kantor, Secretary of Commerce under former president Bill Clinton's administration, who said she was "an adviser, analyst, devil's advocate, problem-solver and gut check for her husband," and the "last court of appeal for him when he was making a decision" (Healy, 2007, p. 2). Kantor went on, saying he'd "be surprised if there was any major decision he made that she didn't weigh in on" (p. 2). In a subtle way, Healy trivializes Senator Clinton's importance as First Lady without having direct access to any proof that she did not influence her husband's policy or aid in decision-making. Moreover, the term "soft power" that Healy raises immediately evokes a sense of unimportance, lessened legitimacy, and frankly, femininity. In reality, the term "soft power" (Nye, 2004) describes a compelling and successful strategy nations employ to accomplish political gain through cultural and ideological means when traditional hard power strategies (i.e., military and economic) fail.

Christopher Edgley, a supporter of Senator Obama and former member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, recently spoke out against the media's tendency to undermine Senator Clinton's experience in the White House, saying "I've cringed at the dismissive tone people have taken towards Hillary's service as First Lady. Dismissing the substantial informal role that she played [often] reflects, or feeds, stereotypes about the role of women" (Meacham, 2008, p. 1). In the same way that women's housework and childcare are often viewed by society as illegitimate or not being "real" work (England and Folbre, 1999), it is not surprising that a First Lady's role would be downplayed and her power called "soft." This again represents a double-bind, as Senator Clinton risks being viewed as playing a trivial, insignificant, or a traditionally feminine role during her years as First Lady if she downplays her responsibilities and power, or alternatively, is subject to critiques of overexaggerating her influence or power-hungrily abusing the First Lady role if she emphasizes the experience she gained throughout those two terms.

This issue of Senator Clinton's experience being disparaged corresponds with another trend in the media coverage—the frequency at which author's referred to Senator Clinton on a first-name basis by calling her "Hillary" (e.g., Huffington, 2008) or in reference to her husband by referring to her as "Mrs. Clinton" or "Bill's wife" (e.g., Zeleny and Steinhauer, 2008). Senator Clinton's campaign is partially if not primarily responsible, having created a logo that says "Hillary" in large letters, perhaps in efforts to appear more familiar and less formal to working class or female voters. In addition, this does not appear to be a generalizable trend, as evidenced by the fact that female Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is not usually referenced as

"Nancy" and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is often referred to simply as "Arnold" in the press. Still, it subtly hints at the media's level of assumed familiarity with a female contender that is rarely paralleled with her male opponents. Imagine an article referring to former North Carolina Senator John Edwards or former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee as only "John" and "Mike" instead of by their last names and the contrast becomes clear. Again, as if between a rock and a hard place, Senator Clinton might attract voters by appearing more accessible and familiar if she identifies herself on a first name basis, while simultaneously undermining a sense of authority and formality, perhaps negatively differentiating herself from male opponents by not demanding the respect that being addressed by her last name would allot.

Emotional or Compassionate? - The New Hampshire Primary

Another of Marilyn Frye's examples of double-binds seems particularly salient when examining the media's interpretation of Senator Clinton's character and likeability by questioning the sincerity of her laugh, her words, and even her tears. According to Frye (1983), oppressed groups frequently confront the danger of appearing either too happy or too angry. Speaking on behalf of oppressed groups, Frye elaborates, if we "smile and be cheerful ... we comply we signal our docility and our acquiescence in our situation [and] participate in our own erasure" (p. 7). On the other hand, says Frye, "anything but the sunniest countenance exposes us to be perceived as mean, bitter, angry, or dangerous" (p. 7). Senator Clinton faced this double-bind early on in the presidential race when, according to the media, in response to her fearing she "comes across as too controlling" and "too cold" (Thomas, 2008, p. 1), she began to laugh more. Immediately, the media shifted from criticizing her so-called icy, defensive persona to assessing whether what some writers called a "merry, infectious laugh" (Thomas, 2008, p. 1) and others called a "cackle" (Vennochi, 2007, p. 1) was too loud, too forced, or simply too fake.

This interrogation of Senator Clinton's emotions reached an all-time high after her surprising loss to Senator Obama in the 2008 Iowa Caucus. As Senator Clinton shifted her focus to the next primary in New Hampshire and media pundits analyzed what many rushed to call the demise of her presidential run, the relationship between gender and politics garnered national media attention in an unexpected way. While for weeks, Senator Clinton received criticism for being too aggressive and rigid at debates, a media firestorm began after cameras captured Senator Clinton getting choked up at an intimate campaign stop in New Hampshire after a woman in the audience asked her how she made it through each day. The headlines that followed painted an interesting portrait about the emotional leverage allotted to women in power. For example, Evan Thomas (2008) of *Newsweek* claimed Senator Clinton was purposely "using emotion for effect" (p. 1), Maureen Dowd (2008) titled her Opinion Column, "Can Hillary Cry Her Way Back to the White House?" (p. 1), and Emily Friedman (2008) of *ABC News* asked the nation if Senator Clinton's "emotions got the best of her" (p. 1). Ironically enough, when Republican contender Mitt Romney shed tears at a campaign event months earlier, it barely made the press, while Senator Clinton's tears and debates over what they revealed about her ability to rule our country made the front-page of all major U.S. news outlets.

When asked about Senator Clinton's moment, fellow Democrat and former Senator John Edwards responded, "I think what we need in a commander in chief is

strength and resolve, and presidential campaigns are a tough business, but being President of the United States is also a very tough business" (The Situation Room, 2008, p. 1). Others jumped on the "Is Hillary tough enough?" bandwagon, dramatically shifting from criticizing Senator Clinton as appearing cold and unemotional to hysterical and irrational. Several articles dramatized and exaggerated the intensity of Senator Clinton's reaction (e.g., Dowd, 2008; Friedman, 2008), with one saying, "her voice cracked and quavered, her eyes turned watery" (Miller, 2008, p. 1). Nearly all articles published in the days following the meeting at least referenced her "shedding a tear" or getting "choked up" (e.g., Breslau, 2008; Montanaro, 2008; Noah, 2008), prompting many female leaders and scholars to cry foul over the double standards they observed in media coverage. Diana Owen, Chair of American Studies at Georgetown University is quoted as saying, "It's very hard to find the balance between appearing strong and tough and caring and engaged and then crossing the line to where you'll be labeled shrill and bitchy. As far as being a female candidate, she's open to different descriptive adjectives—things like melting down or being too emotional—that you would not hear as much in terms of male candidates" (Friedman, 2008, p. 2).

Indeed, one can only imagine how the articles' tone might change if the word "emotional" was changed to "compassionate" or "sincere," words frequently used to describe instances when male politicians show emotion. While exaggerated emotion of any kind is often discouraged for male and female politicians alike, as evidenced by the media's overtly negative reaction to current Chairman of the Democratic National Committee Howard Dean's loud "yell" during his campaign speech in 2004, many opposed the media's intense reaction to Senator Clinton's comparatively minor public display of vulnerability. In *The Huffington Post*, Erica Jong (2008) defended Senator Clinton, stating, "Do we allow women the same emotional latitude as men? I doubt it" (p. 2). Even the authenticity of her emotion was challenged, with one reporter joking, "That crying really seemed genuine. I'll bet she spent hours thinking about it beforehand" (Dowd, 2008, p. 1) and another quoted as saying, "my guess is that it was 'real enough,' [or], in any case, it worked" (Thomas, 2008, p. 1).

The implication of this last sentiment raises issues of sexism in a slightly different way, as pundits scrambled to connect the backlash over the media's coverage of Senator Clinton's "teary day" to her win in New Hampshire. I found a number of articles claiming that the droves of female voters who came out and helped Senator Clinton win the state did so in response to the media's gender-biased coverage (e.g., Erick, 2008; Kennedy, 2008). In generating this theory, I sensed a more covert media-driven form of sexism. While some women probably did vote for Clinton for this very reason, is it not equally plausible they voted because they thought she was the best candidate, had carefully researched the issues and her stances on them, or wanted to exercise their civic duty? To claim that women who supported Senator Clinton did so out of the desire to have revenge on the media seems as sexist as claiming Senator Clinton was emotionally overreacting in the first place. Clearly, neither the female candidate nor female voters are free from the media's heightened judgment and scrutiny. If women vote for Senator Clinton, they are perceived as biased and voting on emotion. If they do not, they are traitors to their gender or unsympathetic to Senator Clinton's plight.

Conclusion

In closing, Senator Clinton, like many female leaders, has confronted double-binds in nearly every aspect of her campaign, and this should come as little surprise to feminist scholars. When she chooses to emphasize her gender, discusses the significance of being the first serious female contender running for the office or brings attention to the double standards she confronts on the campaign trail, she is said to "play the gender card" or "play victim" (Martin, 2007, p. 1). If she opts to ignore that she is a woman, downplay her gender, or act as though sexism, discrimination, and the "Old Boy's Club" mentality of politics haven't impeded or challenged her journey, she is in danger of being called a traitor to women and feminists, distancing herself from a female support base, or worse, is forced to stomach and ignore the sexist and discriminatory practices that still exist and hamper women's lives in our country today. Ideally, as Gloria Steinem (2008) pointed out in her recent op-ed piece, "This country can no longer afford to choose our leaders from a talent pool limited by sex, race, money, powerful fathers and paper degrees... We have to be able to say: 'I'm supporting her because she'll be a great President and because she's a woman'" (pp. 2-3). If not in the year 2008, then perhaps in the near future, Steinem's vision will be realized and a female politician will shatter the final glass ceiling, making national headlines primarily because of her policies and not her pantsuits, her ability to lead and not the volume of her laugh, and her aptitude instead of her aging skin.

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Footnotes

1 Throughout this paper, I will refer to New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton as "Senator Clinton." Choosing a title to use when referring to Senator Clinton was difficult given the historical bias associated with calling a female politician by her first name (i.e., Hillary), her married title (Mrs. Clinton), or in this case, simply her last name (Clinton), since her husband of the same last name, Bill Clinton, is a former president who is still active in the political arena.

2 This list of sources does not represent the totality of available sources, but rather a collection representing some of the most widely read, watched and distributed newspapers, channels and news magazines in the United States. This collection is a convenience sample, due to time and monetary constraints, but I attempted to achieve some balance in the number of sources that are politically liberal/progressive versus conservative (e.g., I included three progressive political blogs in attempts to balance the more conservative tones used in programming from Fox News and Rush Limbaugh's radio show). I included mostly national news sources but also picked several smaller, regional news outlets and one international source to achieve some diversity in the targeted readership and coverage of the campaign. Again, it is important to note that this is not a random sample of sources, so I cannot generalize my findings beyond the scope of this small set of articles written on specific topics examined in a short time period.

While the sources in the sample do not exclusively reflect my own personal readership, my decision to include some sources instead of other plausible sources does introduce a level of bias to the results that limits my ability to extend the findings beyond the scope of this paper.

3 Convenience sampling is a sampling technique in which a researcher collects a sample that is easily accessed, affordable, and conveniently located for analysis. This sampling method uses nonprobability method and is useful when either cost or time demands prevent a researcher from collecting a random sample. As stated in the footnote above, a convenience sample is not a random sample, so the results of this study cannot be generalized beyond the scope of this paper.

M. Jacqui Alexander

Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory and the Sacred

Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.

410 pages

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\$23.95 (paper)

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Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory and the Sacred is a collection of essays that spans a decade of M. Jacqui Alexander's theoretical engagement with transnational feminisms. Her critiques incorporate feminist, queer, and critical race theory to dismantle discourses of power that are critical to the maintenance of exclusion and marginalization in our modern world. In reading *Pedagogies*, the reader follows Alexander's intellectual journey as she considers issues ranging from the intersections of empire, hegemonic heterosexuality, and citizenship, to the marginalization of the spiritual as a legitimate way of knowing and of knowledge-production.

In the first of three sections, entitled "Transnational Erotics," Alexander focuses her attention on "heteropatriarchy" in the Bahamas and on the re-colonization of third world countries as "sexual utopias" for gay male tourists from the first world. In her consideration of the Bahamas, Alexander traces the logic of the Bahamian parliament as they worked to pass the 1991 Sexual Offenses and Domestic Violence Act. Alexander dissects the components of this act and the discourse surrounding it to reveal several startling logics upon which it was built.

First, though the Act is framed by government officials as comprehensive legislation aimed at the protection of women from sexual and domestic violence, the Act also simultaneously works to criminalize some women—including women who fail to report sexual victimization and lesbians—in particularly disturbing ways. Women who fail to report their victimization risk their own criminal prosecution, often with consequences as severe as those that their violators would face if successfully prosecuted.

In criminalizing same-sex relationships, the Act also serves to pit the protection of the heterosexual woman against the criminalization of lesbian and gay Bahamians. In the discourse surrounding this legislation, homosexuality is imagined as the "pinnacle of perverted heterosexual violence" (p. 40), and same-sex relations are posited on the outermost edge of sexual criminality.

Finally, in parliamentary discussions, homosexuality is cast as a remnant of a polluting Western influence that must be purged so that a more "authentic and traditional" Bahamian identity could be re-realized. Alexander's critique wonderfully illustrates how state practices work to link hegemonic heterosexuality and patriarchy (i.e., heteropatriarchy) with the enjoyment of citizenship rights. In linking these two, Alexander also illustrates how new laws create an entire class of deviant, disloyal non-citizens.

In the second chapter, "Transnational Erotics," Alexander describes the neocolonial relationships forged by the growth of first world tourism in third world countries. While Alexander is careful to note the potential dangers of turning a critical eye towards marginalized communities (i.e., that such critiques could be appropriated and distorted by conservative anti-gay movements), she focuses her attention in this chapter on white, gay, corporate tourism. The tourism industry is called out for both the reproduction of colonial geography (e.g., former British colonies are still described as belonging or pertaining to England) and for the constructions of the "tourist" as white and Westernized and the "native" as Black and exotic. She draws parallels between old colonial scripts that worked to sexualize, fetishize, and silence "natives" and the types of discourses that are perpetuated by the modern-day gay tourism industry. Much more than a critique of gay tourism, however, this chapter is a critique of the polluting forces of the capitalist market: "No matter how tainted gay dollars appear, no potential market can escape capital's logic to transform them into an arena of competition or a site for potential profits" (p. 73).

In the second section of *Pedagogies*, "Maps of Empire, Old and New," Alexander turns her attention to the historical and modern incorporation of the academy into empire-building and maintenance. She explores the reciprocal relationship between academic institutions, the economy, and empire. Academia provides the "ideological fodder" for corporate capital and is complicit in both the practice and normalization of state terror within national borders and beyond. Modern projects of U.S. state terror include increasing militarization (i.e., the imagination of an "enemy" and the implementation of strategies to eliminate such imagined enemies) and privatization (i.e., the systematic dismantling of social welfare that disproportionately impacts immigrant women and women of color.)

The chapter "Anatomy of a Mobilization" offers Alexander's personal account of one university's struggle with "managing diversity," a struggle that undoubtedly mirrors struggles occurring in universities across the United States. Infused in her account of her experiences at The New School in New York, is a critique of multiculturalism, liberal pluralism, and instrumental diversity. Academia conditions students to meritocratic views of upward mobility and thereby assists in masking the structural sources of inequality. In inculcating students with a meritocratic perspective, academic institutions diminish their potential as sites of antiracism practices and as catalysts for social justice.

The chapter "Whose New World Order? Teaching for Justice" may be of particular interest to those who desire to use teaching in ways that promote social justice. Alexander offers an insightful and energizing discussion of education as an explicitly political endeavor. Teaching for justice entails providing opportunities for the development of a "self-conscious positionality." Achieving this positionality (and inspiring its development in students) requires new ways of being and of knowing that do not

perpetuate the development of an "'other" and mandates more critical considerations of state practices in the perpetuation of victimization. Teaching for justice also requires the recognition that the boundaries drawn between the academy and the community are not only fictitious but also that the maintenance of such boundaries serves as a constraint to achieving social justice.

In the third and final section, "Dangerous Memory" of *Pedagogies*, Alexander broaches the denigrated role of spirituality in academia, in postmodernist thought, and in feminist movements. Alexander introduces her discussion with the statement, "No self respecting postmodernist would want to align herself with a category such as spiritual" (p. 15), yet she quickly works to break down the artificial distinctions between personal, political, and spiritual. Alexander modifies the feminist expression, "the personal is political," to suggest that not only is the personal political but the personal and the political are each also spiritual. Alexander encourages readers both to embrace their personal need for spiritual meaning and sustenance, and also to value the role of spiritual labor in working for political and social change.

In this section's two chapters, Alexander reflects on the role of spirituality in the seminal feminist text, *This Bridge Called My Back* (1983), and the dangers of regressing to ethnonationalisms when working for decolonization. Crafting a political space that recognizes and values the spiritual counteracts this regression. It forces us to recognize our interdependence and our interconnectedness.

It is in this final section that Alexander reveals the meaning of the title of her book and the central principal around which she organizes her text: the marginal spaces created and sustained by nation-states, academic institutions, and ethnonationalist movements, generate powerful, albeit subordinated, knowledges. These knowledges hold the potential for destabilizing discourses and practices that perpetuate on exclusion. The marginal spaces are spaces of "crossing," serving as bridges across boundaries manufactured to separate fictive groups of human beings.

Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory and the Sacred is a complex analysis of the intersections of race, sexuality, and spirituality within the context of empire-building and the fortification of modern nation-states. Alexander offers a nuanced and multifaceted account of how states and academic institutions are particularly implicated in the construction and preservation of exclusion based on these identities. Readers accustomed to straightforward, linear lines of argument or to texts organized around a uniform, concrete theme may struggle with this text, as Alexander pays little heed to topical, temporal or geographic boundaries. For those willing to take the theoretical and spiritual journey, *Pedagogies* offers a startling and compelling account of the various ways exclusion and marginalization are maintained in our modern world. While *Pedagogies* is a useful text for scholars interested in race, feminism, and queer studies, it would also hold tremendous value for those who seek to advance their own sense of self-conscious positionality or those who desire to use teaching as a means to advance social justice aims.

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Lori Cox Han and Caroline Heldman Eds.
Rethinking Madam President: Are We Ready for a Woman in the White House?

Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2007

229 pages

Hardcover \$55, paperback \$22

Reviewed by:

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The most ardent believer in the ability of Senator Clinton to be elected to the presidency would have started to doubt her chances early after reading Lori Han's and Caroline Heldman's edited volume *Rethinking Madam President: Are We Ready for a Woman in the White House?* The fundamental and recurrent question this collection of essays explores is the readiness of the American electorate to vote for a woman president. In making this assessment, the contributors base their analyses upon the large body of scholarship on women in politics. Despite notably missing dimensions of presidential campaign politics from the analysis, overall the book offers a strong tool for guiding critical thinking about a woman's chances to run a competitive presidential campaign. This collection is a well-organized volume in which most chapters reference the same core explanation for why the American public is not likely to elect a woman running in 2008.

One deciding to read (or assign this book for a course on women in politics) should be aware that the book was dated the day it arrived on the book shelves. Perhaps this is the inevitable result of any endeavor to publish a meaningful assessment of a current event using the culmination of knowledge gathered through decades of research. For instance, the book was written before Clinton officially announced her run for the presidency and even speculates that Condoleezza Rice would be running in the 2008 election. While some statements may sound strange in light of new developments, overall the book offers an invaluable tool for evaluating the events of the current campaign.

The skepticism throughout the book rests mainly on two types of barriers: attitudinal barriers and structural barriers. Each of the ten chapters discusses at least one variety of either of these barriers. Attitudinal barriers encompass the various gender stereotypes that will make electibility for a woman difficult. Two take center stage in this book: traditional notions of women's role in society and the concentrated masculinity imbued in the office of the presidency. Anyone engaging scholarship in women's studies, even those unfamiliar with American politics, should be familiar with these barriers. Attitudinal barriers dealing with the masculine presidency center on one of two narratives. Some of the chapters consider the notion of the president as being a "great man" and the gendering this narration encompasses. Others emphasize the high salience of security issues of a post 9-11 and Iraq War climate. Gender stereotyping of political issues has led to national security being considered the

purview of men. As several contributors argue, such stereotyping makes a woman's campaign for presidency difficult (if not impossible) in the current election cycle. The latter claims rest mainly on the work of political scientist Jennifer Lawless (who is noticeably missing from this volume). Almost every chapter in the collection cites Lawless' work on the effect of the post 9-11 environment on women in politics. These two variations of attitudinal barriers are synthesized as a double bind for a woman seeking election as the president. This version of "damned if you do, damned if you don't" goes like this: to embody the feminine counts against a woman because she does not embody the traits of the political institution (the presidency), and to be "too masculine" counts against her since she is not upholding notions of what it is to be a woman. Evaluations predicting the inability of a woman to be elected to the presidency are sourced mainly on these attitudinal barriers.

Structural barriers refer to the difficulty in obtaining the necessary components to making a successful bid for the presidency, such as money for running a competitive campaign, party support, previous experience, etc. Structural barriers have been a barrier to the office for a multitude of men. Much of the analysis on structural barriers intersects with attitudinal barriers, demonstrating how elite preferences (or stereotypes) doubly prevent women from gaining access to these necessities of running a solid campaign.

While the basic framework of analysis is compelling, the edited collection suffers from a few limitations. First, much of the analysis is based on observations from legislative campaigning. Most of the chapters include an analysis of how presidential campaigns are different and attempt to include this difference in their analysis (some of the better examples include the chapters by Thomas and Schroedel, Duerst-Lahti, and Farrar-Myers). Most disappointing was that only two chapters (Thomas and Schroedel, Bose) explore the unique structure of the U.S. presidential general election—the Electoral College. Additionally, the collection fails to discuss the specifics of the presidential candidate nomination process for each party or the changes found in the 2008 primary race, which became crucial factors in the failure of Hillary Clinton to secure the nomination. The most notable change is the condensed nature of the primary season this year. This omission may be an intentional cue the contributors send the readers to predicting the unlikelihood of success of a female candidate to win the primary race.

To those well versed in the field of women and legislative politics in the U.S. context, this book will not offer much new information. However, it does remind the reader of many of the additional challenges any woman candidate for the presidency faces, many of which the first women legislators faced (and one could argue many women legislators seeking office continue to face). For women and politics courses, the book offers an excellent store of analytical tools for students to assess the current race and articulate what strategies may have helped or harmed Senator Clinton's campaign. Despite what many students will take as a cynical view of possible success, the closing words of the collection, given by Ann Gordon, are "Never say never." Perhaps a better ending today would be, "Better luck next time."

Jennifer Baumgardner

Look Both Ways: Bisexual Politics

New York, NY: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2007

256 pages

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\$24.00 (paper)

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Revered as a third-wave feminist activist, Jennifer Baumgardner is co-author (with Amy Richards) of two widely read books, *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* (2000) and *Grassroots: A Field Guide for Feminist Activism* (2004). Prominent second- and third-wave feminists, including Naomi Wolf, Rebecca Walker, Andrea Dworkin, Gloria Steinem, and Alix Kates Shulman, praise Baumgardner's most recent book, *Look Both Ways: Bisexual Politics* (2007). In *Look Both Ways*, Baumgardner argues that bisexuality offers valuable insight to women seeking egalitarian feminist relationships and that bisexual women are uniquely positioned to reap the dual benefits of "gay [and] straight expectations." In support of her argument, Baumgardner uses interviews with second-wave lesbian/bisexual feminists for evidence of the empowering potential of same-sex relationships between women. Next, she recounts her own sexual experiences and relationships with men and women. Baumgardner begins this section with a discussion of her internship at Ms., where she had her first relationship with a woman and ends it by discussing her recent split with her male partner, with whom she co-parents a son. Baumgardner describes how her relationships with women enabled her to become more confident and consistent in her expectation of sexual gratification, respect, and egalitarianism. She imports these lesbian and feminist "gay expectations" into later relationships with men (with varying degrees of success).

Ultimately, Baumgardner argues throughout this book that feminism can benefit from the liberatory potential of bisexuality. Since women in same-sex relationships are ostensibly not competing with each other for men, Baumgardner suggests that same-sex relationships empower women to confront internalized sexism. She also proposes that bisexual women can bring "straight expectations" to their same-sex relationships and can demand respect for these relationships from a homophobic and heterosexist world. She supports her secondary thesis through conversations with young women, as well as interviews with bisexual icon Ani DiFranco.

Though I appreciate Baumgardner's affirmation of bisexuality, her argument for its utility is reliant on essentialism, or the belief that certain groups possess inherent characteristics or qualities. For example, she assumes that women need to be empowered sexually, that men are more slovenly than women, and that same-sex relationships are inherently more egalitarian than straight relationships (though she also posits that straight relationships might work better because they are less intense).

Thus, Baumgardner's book reiterates essentialist theorizing and stereotypes of lesbianism and bisexuality. She utilizes "self-help" feminism in combination with bisexuality, which is understood as a choice between two gendered objects of desire.

The permissiveness with which some prominent feminists approach Baumgardner's work seems to indicate a belief that third-wave writers do not need to be theoretically responsible as long as they convince young women to involve themselves in feminism. In fact, one of Baumgardner's main goals seems to be to recruit young women to feminism, persuading them through a personal narrative that she bases on essentialized binary formulations. Scholars of feminism and queer theory criticize such pervasive dualistic thinking and link this thinking to the structural privilege of men, masculinity, and heterosexuality. However, Baumgardner does not seriously consider the ramifications of her use of binaries and essentialism. Though she encourages readers to transgress these binaries for individual erotic or material gain, she never questions or analyzes the difficulties and implications of these transgressions.

For Baumgardner, the personal is political for personal gain. Bringing "gay expectations" to one's relationships is individually beneficial and therefore (somehow) feminist. Thus, the goals of Baumgardner's bisexual politics are individualistic rather than intersubjective and systemic. Her politics seek to empower the individual while reifying existing gender and sexual categories. Instead of attributing the prevalence and political potential of bisexuality to increased gender variance and a rejection of gendered norms (feminist goals that are intersubjective and systemic), Baumgardner claims bisexuality as a core identity based on essentialist notions of masculinity and femininity that may only be transgressed within certain limits. She misses the opportunity to delve into bisexuality from a perspective informed by queer theory and politics, which could have had a great impact due to her large readership.

Overall, the book panders to an individualist self-help notion of sexuality, relationships, and feminism rather than developing a politics of bisexuality as her title claims. Baumgardner takes great pains to remind the reader that her own sexual practices and gender expression are not marginal, as though she fears her audience will reject her arguments if she is too queer. Baumgardner does not acknowledge the fluidity of gender or sex aside from quoting Ani DiFranco, who describes her queer sexual practices in her heterosexual marriage, and queer college students, who explain their unwillingness to use the label "bisexual" since it echoes a binary gender system. She merely considers the idea that sexuality is fluid in terms of partner choice and seems to prefer a formulation of bisexuality that works within an unexamined binary gender system for individual advantage. This emphasis on individual gain precludes the broader goal of much feminist and queer politics to undermine systemic, oppressive gender and sexual conditions (particularly as these conditions intersect with the non-exclusive conditions of race, class, nation, and ability). In contrast to Baumgardner's normative individualist prescriptions, this political goal requires a non-essentialist analysis of gender.

Baumgardner admits: "I never *really* felt as if I had to hide my sexuality" (p. 211). She does not make this admission in the context of examining her own privilege, nor does she consider the experiences of those who undergo extreme consequences due to their sexuality or gender expressions. Instead, she states that LGBTQI activism's emphasis on homophobic violence is an overused trope: "But it's the tragic part of

being gay (or thereabouts) that I don't want any part of, honestly. It's not so much that I'm afraid of it. It's more that tragedy is not the whole story and, like focusing on back-alley butchers to justify abortion rights, it's overtold" (p. 213). On the other hand, I argue that the LGBTQI persons, who have had "tragic" experiences, do not want to be part of the "overtold" story either. However, this option is not available to them. Thus, her secondary thesis that LGBTQI people should bring "straight expectations" and a sense of entitlement to their daily lives in a heterosexist and homophobic world fails. Unfortunately, Baumgardner does not acknowledge the potential negative consequences of living as an LGBTQI person, nor does she discuss the structural origins of these consequences. Perhaps her failure to recognize these factors is due to her lack of experience with them.

Baumgardner's failure to account for her privileged position—in terms of her race, class, normative gender expression, and connections (as exemplified by her work at *Ms. magazine*, her numerous interviews with Ani DiFranco, her romantic relationship with Amy Ray of the Indigo Girls, and her conversations with prominent feminists)—is a major problem that undermines her arguments in *Look Both Ways: Bisexual Politics*. Baumgardner states: "But if there's one thing I've come to believe about privilege, it's this: the worst thing you can do with privilege—whether it's money, education, beauty, or connections is deny it. The best you can do is use your privilege in service of changing the world" (p. 201). Here, Baumgardner infers that she is privileged and that her book is "changing the world," but she does not investigate her privilege and its origins or the kind of changes she expects. Though this book is useful in its ability to expose readers to aspects of second- and third-wave feminism and is important in its affirmation of bisexual identification and experience, Baumgardner's reliance on reiterations of binary gender essentialism, individualism, and unexamined privilege remains problematic.

Gender Politics and Academia

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July 20th, 2008. I have just returned from attending a workshop on "The Pervasiveness of Sexual Violence in Wartime" at the *Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung*. I traveled there from Austin through my original hometown Amsterdam, which I had the luxury to visit due to this invitation. Despite the depressing subject matter, I return from Hamburg with renewed energy. My friends and family question me and demand an explanation: how can I continue to work with enthusiasm on these kinds of horrible topics?

The answer lies in a kind of transformation I have gone through in the past few years. Although I have worked in a variety of different sub-fields and disciplines over the years (German and Dutch Studies, Holocaust and Trauma studies, Women's and Gender Studies, Jewish Studies, European Studies, and employ methodology from my training in Comparative Literature and Philosophy, but also borrow from history and psychology), I find that the common denominator in my research has been the attempt to address critical issues of identity, displacement, inequality, and oppression that cross boundaries of gender, class, race/ethnicity, nationality, sexuality. I want to better understand how such situations emerge, what they look like, what kinds of discursive practices are at work in bringing about, perpetuating, or alternately, challenging such conditions.

Most of the time, the cases I have addressed in this fashion are in some sense historical, or at least not ongoing. It becomes a scenario, then, of analyzing the past in order to draw some kind of deeper understanding from it, hopefully to be applied in the present. Such is the case when I teach on aspects of the Holocaust, for instance. Yet, in recent years I have found myself drawn more and more to what I for a lack of a better term call current (or ongoing) affairs. And at times during this work, I have wondered whether I have in some way chosen the wrong field or even profession to address these issues, as a career in politics or law or international relations would perhaps have been more appropriate. Now I wonder at times whether the academic work I do will make any difference in the world.

It is with these doubts in mind, but also ready to test these assumptions that I came to Hamburg. Indeed, I was excited to have been invited, as it is on the basis of an article in which I analyze different –and what I argue to be, problematic– feminist interpretations of wartime mass rape (in particular the Soviet rapes of German women in the Spring of 1945, and the Serbian rapes of Muslim women in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early 1990s).¹ It is a subject to which I am eager to return to because it unfortunately remains so acutely current (sexual violence during armed conflict continues unabated), and there is a great need to analyze and understand it more effectively, to explore it in more national and ethnic contexts, and to develop strategies to combat it (which can range from adjustments in military training, UN intervention on be-

half of the victims of sexual violence to new strategies to prosecute it in both international and national courts of law, for instance). I thus hoped that this conference would be able to strengthen my sense that a critical gender politics -stemming from a humanities background- can inform very concrete activism and political and legal action at the grassroots level and shake me up from my fears that my academic work will prove impotent and irrelevant.

The set-up of the workshop organizers was unusual but promising. A few months in advance they sent three guests and myself a challenging set of questions having to do with several theoretical aspects of the subject. We were to send back a detailed written response several weeks before the workshop took place (after which it would be placed on line for all participants to read), yet were deliberately limited by the organizers to a short page limit which made it essential to be succinct and to distill one's arguments with precision.

They also created a reader with the most relevant article of all attendees of the workshop which allowed us to familiarize ourselves before hand with each other's work. This facilitated open discussion and collaboration rather than a hierarchy between the so-called "keynote speakers" and the audience. The reader also proved useful as many of us stemmed from different disciplines and were not familiar with all the relevant periodicals in each other's respective fields.

The questions to which I was to respond allowed me to think more in depth through a number of aspects of the subject, some of which I had not yet tackled before. They dealt with *the military as an organization* (f.i.: do different forms of warfare promote specific forms of sexual violence? How are orders communicated between commanders and subordinate soldiers? Does closer examination of sexual violence against men changes our general analysis of wartime sexual violence?), *the individual (military) actor* (about whose motivation for and responses to sexual violence we still know too little), *conceptual questions* of whether or not sexual violence in wartime and peacetime constitute different phenomena, and with a *reflection on the divergent approaches* employed in work on this subject, and what theoretical and political concerns seem to inform this work.

In my response, I stressed the need to gather more empirical data (we have unreliable data from the armies that are perpetrating this violence, and as violence of a sexual nature tends to induce shame in its victims and/or in the victims' families and communities, we also have a high degree of underreporting of this kind of crime on the part of the victims). Next, I stressed a point which has been central in my work on this subject, namely the need to distinguish those cases of wartime rape and mass rape that have a component to them that is informed by the perpetrators' notions of supposed racial/ethnic/national inferiority of the (either female or male) victim from those cases in which this does not seem to play a central role. I thus argue that we should not consider wartime rape to be merely an extension of "everyday rape" – in which case we assume that all men feel that they have as it were a "natural" or "justifiable" access to female bodies. An explanation for wartime rape that accounts only for male against female violence and which is a-historical and non specific ignores that wars are not primarily conflicts of gender but instead are fought between two or more parties with both male and female members who oppose each other on grounds other than gender. These "other" rationales are of course not gender blind (and it is clear that sexual violence is more commonly employed by males than

females and against female rather than male members of the enemy group), but at the same time it is crucial to understand that women's (and men's) bodies during war time are never marked as *just* female, but always as female bodies that belong to a *particular race or ethnicity or nationality*. This is of significance, because we need to better understand how racial/ethnic/nationalist hatred aids in the dehumanizing of both the enemy's army and its civilian population. Second, reifying racial/ethnic stereotypes in order to get rapes convicted (lawyers argue that rape constitutes "genocide" because victims are impregnated with an "enemy" gene and now have their wombs "occupied by the enemy") may be effective, but is morally problematic as this kind of rhetoric seems to affirm that there are essential, immutable, "genetic" differences between racial or ethnic groups which should not be mixed. (Rather than emphasizing that this kind of racial and /or nationalistic ideology and its accompanying rhetoric is employed by the enemy army to induce greater hatred and should be condemned).

To make a long story short, not only was the work that I was made to do before the workshop productive, the gathering itself was also unusually dynamic, in great part due to the set up of the organizers. The discussions, structured as they were by one specific question per session were focused, constructive, and of high caliber, and the exchanges between the different colleagues were greatly collaborative. No vying for territory, no Prima Donna's. No fear of giving away one's brilliant idea to another colleague, only the genuine desire to better understand this horrible phenomenon and work on possible solutions. Furthermore, around the table I had colleagues whose home disciplines ranged from political science, to law, philosophy, history, sociology, and international relations, and despite being the only one with a more "literary" background, none of this mattered. Disciplinary and methodological differences seemed less pronounced as our goals were so similar in our work on this subject. This was intellectual and political work rolled into one, with frankly no distinction to be made. In the end, the suggestion was made for a joint publication to wrap up the findings of the group, an unusual initiative.

Asked what I did this summer while working on my "depressing" subjects, I can thus answer in surprisingly positive fashion: I reaffirmed my belief that gender politics belongs in academia, and that academic work can prove itself relevant to politics.

Footnotes

¹ Bos, Pascale R.(2006). *Feminists Interpreting the Politics of Wartime Rape: Berlin, 1945; Yugoslavia, 1992-1993. Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. Vol 32:4. 996-1025.

Contributor Biographies

Artie Christian Abello is a freelance artist currently studying medicine at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Austin. His work is predominantly oil paint, graphite, or charcoal and the subject matter varies greatly, but is often times anatomical in nature. He emphasizes elicitation of emotion and thought from the viewer through subtle juxtapositions and the interplay between pattern and spontaneity. With that said, he also rejects the limitations of style and artistic phases and constantly challenges the definition of dynamic. His work can be found at acabello.net.

Dana Al-Ebrahim serves as the Middle East North Africa (MENA) Program Associate at Vital Voices Global Partnership, a DC-based, non-governmental organization, where she develops programs on combating domestic violence and raising awareness on breast cancer in Jordan, Dubai and Bahrain. She recently completed her M.A. in Near Eastern Studies from the University of Arizona focusing on the rights and political participation of Kuwaiti women. While completing her degree, Dana spent a year in Egypt studying Arabic at the Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA) at the American University in Cairo. She has also served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Jordan, teaching English to high school girls.

Nicky Arscott grew up in Herefordshire, U.K., and moved to Austin in 2006. Most of her artwork is portrait-based. She has had illustrations published in the magazine 'Make-out Creek'.

Elyshia Aseltine is currently working towards a PhD in Sociology from the University of Texas at Austin. Her specializations include race/ethnicity, crime and education. Her dissertation research is on school discipline; she is examining increased criminal justice system (i.e., police and criminal courts) involvement in the regulation and punishment of student misconduct.

Dr. Pascale Bos is Associate Professor in the Germanic Studies Department at the University of Texas at Austin. She received her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Minnesota. Dr. Bos' research interests are: Post 45 German and German-Jewish literature and culture, modern Dutch literature and culture, modern Jewish literature, history, and culture in Western Europe and U.S., Holocaust in literature, film, and history, ethnic minorities in Western Europe, theoretical perspectives on autobiography, cultural memory, trauma, race and gender.

Kimberly Campanello is an M.A. candidate in Women's Studies at the University of Cincinnati. She has a B.A. in English and French from Butler University ('02) and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Alabama ('05). Her Creative Writing is forthcoming in *The Cream City Review* and has appeared in other literary journals. An article she wrote on queer representations in *The L Word* was recently published in *GRAAT*, a French journal of Anglophone Studies. She recently presented at *Queertopia!:* An Academic Festival in Chicago and at the National Women's Studies Association Conference in Cincinnati.

Tiffany Mylinh Duong received her J.D. from St. Mary's University School of Law in May 2008, and received her B.A. in Psychology (minor in Business) from UT in 2004. Her main areas of interests are contract, bankruptcy and tax law. Her favorite artists are

Salvador Dali and Vincent Van Gogh.

Karin Friederic, a Ph.D. student in the Medical & Cultural Anthropology program at the University of Arizona, is currently conducting her doctoral dissertation research in rural northwestern Ecuador. Funded by a National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant and a Wenner Gren Dissertation Fieldwork Grant, her dissertation is based on over twenty months of ethnographic research and activist involvement in this region over the past seven years. Her work provides an historical and ethnographic examination of intimate partner violence and women's rights awareness among Manabita colonists living in Esmeraldas, Ecuador.

Jessica Johnson is a doctoral candidate in Sociocultural Anthropology at the University of Washington. Her dissertation project proposes a genealogy of U.S. 'culture war' polarizations based on three years of ethnographic research on same-sex marriage politics in Seattle, Washington. From 2004-2007, she collected national and Seattle-based news articles on topics related to marriage, family, and 'moral values,' analyzed legal testimonies and court decisions relevant to marriage equality and gay rights activism, interviewed lawyers and activists on both sides of the 2005 Washington State Supreme Court case challenging the state's Defense of Marriage Act, and gathered textual, audio, and visual material during visits to Mars Hill Church in Seattle. Currently, she is writing her dissertation while teaching courses in the Anthropology Department at the University of Washington.

Hikmet Kocamaner came to the University of Arizona in 2005 as a Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant to teach Turkish. After an MA in English literature and four years of teaching English at the college level in Turkey. He decided to stay in Arizona and pursue a PhD degree in Near Eastern Studies. This is his second year in the NES PhD program, and he was recently admitted into the Cultural Anthropology program at the same university. He is among the first group of students pursuing a double PhD degree in NES and Anthropology. Hikmet's research interests include representation of gender and national identity in contemporary Turkish mass media.

Beth A. Latshaw is a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Beth teaches "Sex and Gender in Society," "Race, Class and Gender," and "Family and Society" at UNC, served as Associate Editor for the journal *Social Forces* in 2006-2007, and is the graduate assistant to the Social and Economic Justice Minor program. Her research focuses on shifting gender and family dynamics, particularly men's increased participation in childcare and housework.

Katherine Cumings Mansfield is a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Administration specializing in Educational Policy and Planning and pursues a *Women's and Gender Studies Doctoral Portfolio*. This first generation college graduate has taught and administered educational programs throughout the preschool-to-college pipeline since 1985 and currently works as a Graduate Research Assistant for Dr. Michelle D. Young, Executive Director of *University Council for Educational Administration* and Faculty Affiliate of CWGS. Mansfield's research interests include philosophy, history, and politics of education and the relationship of gender, race, religion, and socio-economic status on educational and vocational access and achievement.

Jane B. Meek is a M.A. candidate in Women's Studies at the University of Cincinnati

and also serves as the university's LGBTQ Coordinator. She earned a B.A. in English from the University of Mississippi ('99) and an M.A. in English from the University of Alabama ('04). She has recently presented her research at Queertopia! An Academic Festival and at the National Women's Studies Association Conference in Cincinnati.

Emily Neff-Sharum is a Ph. D. candidate at the University of Washington and graduate fellow with the Center for American Politics and Public Policy. Her work seeks to better understand the role of problem definition for women's policy, particularly the influence of the courts in this process. Her other primary research interests include policy coherence and the influence of institutional rules for problem definition.

Devon Wallace is a first year MA student studying English Literature at New York University. Her research focuses on the literary utopia in and her academic interests include post colonial theory, feminist theory and political satire.

Heather Wollin is a graduate student in the Sociology Department at the University of Texas at Austin. Her interests include queer spaces and histories, and LGBT health. This is her first publication.

CALL FOR PAPERS Fall Issue 2009: Performing Gender

Intersections: Women's and Gender Studies in Review Across Disciplines is an interdisciplinary graduate student publication welcoming work from current graduate students. We are committed to the interdisciplinary research of women's and gender issues and are affiliated with the Center for Women's and Gender Studies. The journal encourages scholars in every field to contribute book reviews, scholarly essays, creative writing, and artwork relating to this issue's theme, "Performing Gender." We hope that the theme will inspire you to think creatively and broadly about how gender is performed in a multitude of ways and arenas.

Submissions might address the following topics, but are not limited to them:

- The gender performance(s) of genderqueer and/or transgender people
- How gender is performed and reified through the state, the home, corporations, etc. in a transnational comparative framework
- The connections between gender performance and sexuality
- How gender intersects with other identities such as race, class, sexuality, nation, religion, etc to create unique identities and performances
- Representations of femininity, masculinity, and/or sexuality in the media
- Gender in institutions (such as prisons and schools)

Submit a 200 – 300 word abstract to intersections.journal@gmail.com by December 1, 2008. Completed papers and artwork are due by February 1, 2009. All submissions should include the author's name, institution and department, contact information, title of submission, and word count. Papers should conform to APA style. Book reviews should be of recent texts (published within the last two years) and 750 – 1250 words. Include publication information about books reviewed. Contact us via email to receive a copy of the book you would like to review. Scholarly essays and creative writing should be less than 5000 words. Artwork will be accepted for the cover and for the inside of the journal. Artwork for the cover should be in color and in .jpg format, 600 dpi. Artwork should be no smaller than 8 ½ x 11. Artwork for the inside of the journal should follow the same guidelines as art work for the cover.

Questions should be sent to the editors at: intersections.journal@gmail.com

Please forward this call for papers to anyone interested in women's and gender studies.