
Journal of Feminist Scholarship

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FROM THE EDITORS

We are proud and excited to introduce the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Feminist Scholarship* (*JFS*). The fundamental aims of *JFS* are to offer an open-access academic forum for the publication of innovative, peer-reviewed feminist scholarship across the disciplines and to encourage productive debates among scholars and activists interested in examining methodological directions and political contexts and ramifications of feminist inquiry. As a field of human endeavor whose political goals are inseparable from the intellectual perspectives it embraces, feminism has both matured and diversified tremendously over the past several decades of its dynamic development throughout the world. Its engagements and its effects are always necessarily global and local, historically rooted and intensely contemporary. As editors of *JFS*, we wish to contribute to the ongoing empowerment and expansion of feminist research while encouraging reflexive inquiry into the evolution of feminist scholarship and its relationship to political action.

We created the *Journal of Feminist Scholarship* because we felt it is a time to explore the state of feminist thought at the turn of the new century and a time to examine where feminism itself is heading in the future. To help launch this conversation, we turned to feminist scholars and activists and asked them to share their ideas about feminism and feminist scholarship today. We are pleased to present ten statements from significant figures in feminist movement and feminist studies: Amrita Basu, Jennifer Baumgardner, Debra A. Castillo, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Agnieszka Graff, Elizabeth Grosz, Joy A. James, Michael Kimmel, Toril Moi, Karen Offen, and Amy Richards. These voices alert us to the transformative power of feminist scholarship in the classroom for younger generations, the open space of feminism that resonates with many voices beyond the Western core, and the enduring centrality of gender to feminist work. Further, we hear calls not only to engage in more substantive ways with non-Western and non-academic feminism, but also to connect intellectual work to real-world challenges and events more meaningfully and productively. We are reminded to hold onto the historicity of feminist thinking and experience and to recognize the contributions of anti-racist writers, artists, and activists to feminist scholarship in the US academy. We are pushed to invent new questions that address more than the individual—that turn to the world beyond the self—and that return us to valuable relationships like those between feminism and various art forms, while never losing sight of human freedoms and social justice. In addition to these inspiring statements, we have also received some very welcome expressions of support for our venture. For example, Moira Gatens writes that *JFS* is “an exciting and timely initiative that promises to reinvigorate contemporary feminist scholarship and challenge complacency. The open-access policy is brilliant and entirely appropriate to the aim of the journal to make a significant contribution to the urgent issues and concerns of interdisciplinary international feminist studies today.” We give our heartfelt thanks to all these voices for setting the stage for our inaugural issue.

With our first issue of *JFS*, we are pleased to introduce a regular section titled “Viewpoint.” We envision “Viewpoint” as a space to showcase new directions in feminist inquiry and practice and to feature commentaries on ongoing debates in contemporary feminist scholarship. We also see “Viewpoint” as a forum for reconsiderations of issues central to feminism at large, as well as a space to share information on innovative and useful resources for feminist studies. Our inaugural viewpoint essay comes from Eric Anderson, who explores the concept of “homohysteria” to trace how Western masculinity has moved from homosocial intimacy to prohibition of such intimacy and back again to acceptance, a movement that Anderson suggests creates “inclusive masculinities” and a positive shift in how Western cultures consider sexual and gender binaries.

For the main section of our first issue we selected four articles that demonstrate the breadth of contemporary feminist inquiry. Despite their differences, the articles combine well for our journal because they each demonstrate a different facet of feminist scholarship: exploration of feminist activism and critique of traditional systems (specifically, Taiwanese Buddhism); the application of a feminist theoretical framework to the contemporary issue of the “war” on obesity; the development of the notion of a gender continuum to deepen our understanding of masculinity and gender in contemporary US society; and analysis of revisionist practices in the arts from a perspective that brings focus on gender to bear on global historical and political concerns. When the reader stands further back from these articles, however, she cannot help but be struck by how much they are both embedded in the political and social present and yet remain rooted in the central concerns of feminist scholarship that can be traced back as far as Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (and perhaps even before): the tensions between religion and feminism, gender identity, socialization, women’s appearance, and female agency and representation.

Chiung Chen explores contemporary debate in Taiwanese Buddhism on the rules governing behavior of Buddhist nuns in “Feminist Debate in Taiwan’s Buddhism: The Issue of the Eight Garudhammas.” Chen shows how this debate has led to a greater awareness of gender inequality in traditional texts and the monastic system, but also how the controversy it generated has thrown light on the culturally and religiously specific restrictions faced by feminist reformers within Taiwanese Buddhism. Chen’s stress on understanding the Taiwanese debate within its historical, cultural, and religious contexts helps the reader apprehend the diversity of the needs of Buddhist women throughout the world and thus to understand that there may not be one feminist approach within Buddhism.

Talia L. Welsh examines the so-called epidemic of obesity in America and government responses to that epidemic through a feminist theoretical lens influenced by Foucault and socialist feminism. Welsh demonstrates, in “Healthism and the Bodies of Women: Pleasure and Discipline in the War against Obesity,” how the seemingly innocuous “good-health” imperative to lose weight for our own well-being is another way of controlling the bodies and lives of women. The regimen required to achieve the “healthy” body requires as much Foucaultian discipline as the more standard practices associated with beautifying women’s appearance. Welsh shows that this shift in societal focus on the appearance of women from looking good (presumably for men) to being healthy in order to take care of themselves and their children is ultimately directed at the poor, as it is the poor who are more likely to be obese and who lack resources to engage in elaborate weight-control regimens. In failing to become healthy, however, it is the individual who is blamed, while the systems and policies within which poverty is maintained are ignored. In this way, Welsh offers a new element to the feminist debate on body weight and female physical appearance.

In “Grappling with Gender: Exploring Masculinity and Gender in the Bodies, Performances, and Emotions of Scholastic Wrestlers,” Phyllis L. Baker and Douglas R. Hotek develop an alternative theoretical lens of a “gender continuum” for understanding gender and masculinity in contemporary US society through their empirical research of behaviors in scholastic wrestling. The young male scholastic wrestlers observed by Baker and Hotek exhibited standard “masculine” behaviors such as not showing emotion, but also forms of behavior that were “androgynous” or “feminine,” such as caretaking. Baker and Hotek conclude that our understanding of gender and masculinity requires a broader conceptual framework than that of gender binaries and hegemonic masculinity.

Finally, Patricia Lapolla Swier’s “New Age Fairy Tales: The Abject Female Hero in *El laberinto del fauno* and *La rebelión de los conejos mágicos*” offers a psychoanalytic reading of Guillermo del Toro’s

film *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006) and Ariel Dorfman's children's story *The Rabbits' Rebellion* (1986) that explores their engagement with the politics of memory and the transformation of social consciousness in, respectively, post-Franco Spain and post-Pinochet Chile. Swier adroitly conjugates perspectives and insights drawn from Joseph Campbell's writings on myth and Julia Kristeva's theorization of the abject in order to illuminate the gendered agency and representation of the young female heroes of del Toro's and Dorfman's narratives who traverse the hyper-virile nightmare landscapes of dictatorial violence and control in their symbolic quest for transcendence and reconciliation.

The double-anonymous review process followed by *JFS* necessitates that our manuscript reviewers remain unnamed, but we would like to take this opportunity to extend a thank-you to them as a group. The willingness of busy people who did not know us to act as reviewers is confirmation of a true alliance among feminist scholars, an intellectual and political community that we do not believe can be found elsewhere in academia.

FEMINISM AND FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP TODAY

AMRITA BASU

The links between feminist theory and activism are at an exciting new juncture amidst the growth of transnational women's movements. Feminist theory grew out of women's movements. As it evolved and became institutionalized—through state agencies, women's studies programs, and women's NGOs—its links to activism attenuated. What to some represented feminism's coming of age, to others represented cooptation. The growth of transnational women's movements has reinvigorated the relationship between feminist theory and activism. This has not put to rest difficult and productive debates. Transnationally as well as domestically, feminists continue to dispute the value of mainstreaming gender, the meaning of feminism, and the alliances women's movements should forge. But questions concerning the demise of feminist theory and activism seem antiquated in face of women's vital roles in challenging state repression, religious orthodoxy, civil wars, and neoliberal policies. Women and women's movements are at the forefront of democracy and human rights movements in the Middle East, South Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Their activism has generated new ways of thinking about the relationship between the local and the global, the cultural and the political, and the state and civil society. If the strength of women's movements, like that of all social movements, ebbs and flows, feminism and women's movements remain the most enduring and powerful forces for social justice and social change.

Amrita Basu is Professor of Political Science and Women's and Gender Studies at Amherst College. She is the author or editor of several books, including Two Faces of Protest: Contrasting Modes of Women's Activism in India (1994) and Women's Movements in the Global Era: The Power of Local Feminisms (2010).

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER AND AMY RICHARDS

Feminist scholarship was born out of necessity. Before it, education meant studying men and cultivating their potential. For more than 40 years, Women's and Gender Studies has ensured that the experiences, perspectives, and contributions of women are a part of academia. Not only has Women's Studies survived and thrived as a unique discipline, it has transformed other fields by challenging campuses to understand and use a gender lens, just as they would use a lens of race, class, or ability—both in approaching intellectual pursuits and making an inclusive campus. Although the world has been influenced hugely by feminism—and feminist ideas are often embedded in courses not labeled as such—there has never been more need for the type of inquiry Women's and Gender Studies pioneered. Students raised in a standardized-testing environment are increasingly dependent on answers being “right” and “wrong”—and less interested in the process of learning. Feminist Studies is the rare department that prioritizes sustained inquiry. In feminist academia, students are encouraged to challenge, think, debate, and to bring their unique selves into the decision-making process. The take we most often hear about Women's and Gender Studies from students is that they had heard it was an easy course. Two classes in they realize it's going to be their most challenging and transformative class. More often than not, it sets them on a thrilling new course for their lives. What could be a better endorsement for its continued relevance and value than that?

Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards are third-wave feminist activists and authors of Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future (2000) and Grassroots: A Field Guide for Feminist Activism (2004), in addition to their many other individual and joint publications.

The question of feminist studies today inevitably takes us through a series of intellectual positions that tend to derive from a presumed universalism in our analytic work—the more familiar formalisms of mid to late twentieth-century feminism, postfeminism, gender studies, masculinity studies, queer theory, transgender theory. Terms like these remain controversial in the West and, as such, the subject of bitter battles or, worse, official indifference and accusations of irrelevance. This is a matter of deep concern. Nevertheless, even more worrisome to my mind is the fact that our understandable immersion in local polemics means we often tend to neglect unrecognized culturally grounded differences outside the narrow confines of the Western academy, or limit our pedagogical practice to what Chandra Mohanty calls “carefully placed and domesticated” token voices (212). Ofelia Schutte would agree. She writes, “the speaker from the dominant culture is basically saying: communicate with me entirely on the terms I expect; beyond this I am not interested” (56).

So, here’s my essay test question for the day: “What do Rigoberta Menchú, Malalai Joya, Ayaan Hirsi Ali have in common? Contrast with Virginia Woolf, Leslie Marmon Silko, Anna Akhmatova.” Answer: The first three are activists, from Guatemala, Afghanistan, and Somalia respectively, whose works (none of them fiction, sometimes co-authored) have become staples of gender-studies modules in world literature and culture courses in the United States in the last decades. They tend to be read, thus, as sociological case studies rather than prose stylists. The second three, all associated with high art, come from Great Britain, the United States, and Russia; they represent the complete list of the overlap of modern women writers from three standard US anthologies of world literature (Norton, Bedford, and Longman), the token women admitted to the very select men’s club of the very best ever thought and written. These two lists thus in some ways complement each other and frequently share space in our pedagogical practice in the “gender” module of literature courses. Yet the obvious tokenism, and the breakdown between the West (where thought and art happen) and the rest (the lands of precarious forms of political practice), continue unexamined. In brief: despite the now-canonical status of works by women and people of diverse ethnicity and sexuality in many of our courses, our challenge is to get beyond the familiar token voice, to reach outside the expected terms of discussion, and to imagine rethinking feminist scholarship today as a vast compendium of many voices and many legitimate forms of thinking, where English and the West is but one thread.

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RACHEL BLAU DUPLESSIS

Though I am a little shy of pointing this out so baldly, I come from a generation that helped to make a canon revolution in the university and in general culture—and I bring work to this table that contributed to that shift within twentieth-century Anglo-American studies. I am interested in maintaining what I have called feminist reception (gender-inflected reception of texts), though I am agnostic on feminist production—meaning any works that tell you how you should think. Interesting writing, interesting poetry is more complicated and less monochromatic than that.

If you want to make a canon revolution, time your life so you emerge professionally at a time of intense social change where—whether or not you are ready to make a cultural intervention or trained in how to do it—you just have to, and so you will! That’s a generalization from my generational experience. That is, my interests in gender, in modernist women, and in an array of poets were motivated by massive, staggering intellectual discontent that had a historical and social dimension. The best I can delineate several quickly overlapping moments that add up to my version of “the sixties” would be, first, a consciousness that the current, happening shifts in contemporary US poetries were NOT a feature of anything like my later undergraduate or graduate training. “The” university—my zone of choice—was at that point indifferent to or ignorant of the breakthrough Donald Allen anthology *The New American Poetry* (1960), put out by the popularity of *Howl* (1956 on), and ignorant of the reverberations of such work as Charles Olson’s “Projective Verse” (1950), or even of later long poems by Pound and Williams. This (poetry) is where I began. Second, there was a generational increase of consciousness about the American War in Vietnam (to give it that name...) and its basis in massive lies, especially during the period of escalation in 1964-67. We all felt that public language was filled not with fact but with ideology (in Theodor Adorno’s definition), overcome with obfuscation, disinformation, and manipulation, and saturated in assumptions that had to be deconstructed for the health of citizens and the polis.

Indeed, in one of the first courses in Freshman Composition that I taught (at Columbia College in Columbia University, as one of the first three women preceptors allowed to teach in the English Department there), I analyzed *New York Times* news stories of—for example—the secret use of nerve agent VX (at the Dugway Proving Grounds, a biological, chemical, and radiological warfare testing site in Utah), a fact suddenly revealed when a lot of sheep died (almost 7000); and that was political allegory, too. Third, as I have elaborated in *Blue Studios: Poetry and its Cultural Work* (2006), with the growth of African-American political and cultural consciousness, there came the ancillary realization of female second-class civic status. In the university zone, this propelled both cultural and economic/political consciousness within that professional identity. For example, the fact that few women authors had been part of my required curriculum as an undergraduate or graduate student led to my curiosity and interests in rectification (once the canard of “but there was no one good enough” had been rejected as mystification). So after a dissertation on long poems by Pound and Williams (reflecting the first realization about poetry), I passed to the analysis of gender and ideology, by preference now using Raymond Williams’s dialectical definition. I became part of that new field of what was eventually called women’s studies. I have spent a good deal of my career in feminist analyses of culture and cultural products.

The intensity of revolutionary realizations emergent in that 1970-1990s cultural and political turn may not be as actively felt now. Still, there are many currents of great political and cultural liveliness.

Commitments are passionate, but there is something that differs from the moment of the sixties. Cross-national studies of many kinds (including postcolonial), class interests and struggles, renewed interests in religious cultures, the politics of exclusion and inclusion around ableist issues and a post-ableist set of realizations about networks of care in which we all are implicated, queer studies, and some of the political and ethical issues around the environment that propel ecological works and therefore criticism are all current centers of intense thought and action. Genders (including maleness and masculinity in this area), sexualities, and ethnicities were put on the agenda not by theory first (though thinking was involved!) but by praxis first, sometimes innocent but driven, and then by theory, with a strong sense of necessity. In my view, only a loop between action, choices, and practices and theory (including self-critique and evaluation) can bring about helpful continuations and changes in both a cultural and an extended field. So what now is the task? Pluralism and diversity are to be maintained and expanded by using the lessons of that efflorescence, though not so much by its emphasis on fixed identity groups but on the historicity of cultural products and their responsiveness both to the moment in which they were conceived and written and to our moment. A driven and excited intermix of cultural and political/social struggles brought us here; those origins need to be acknowledged. Such a dialectical loop between theorizing and practices needs continually to be active in a critical and “negative” way, not a positive and affirmative way. This is my feminist hope.

***Rachel Blau DuPlessis** is a feminist critic and scholar with a special interest in modern and contemporary poetry, as well as a poet and essayist. Her many books include *The Pink Guitar: Writing as Feminist Practice (1990)* and *Blue Studios: Poetry and Its Cultural Work (2006)*.*

Feminism as a Balancing Act

My identity as a feminist scholar and activist in Poland is a hybrid one; perhaps it is even incoherent and fractured. I keep going back and forth between (1) the academic world of feminist analysis of literature, film, and media, and US women's history; (2) my work as an essayist and columnist addressing the general public (I publish in the mainstream press and have a regular feminist column in a popular parenting monthly); and (3) the various spaces where feminist organizing and strategizing takes place (the left-wing think tank Political Critique, several women's NGOs, the annual women's march known as Manifa, the Women's Congress). I generally view my mix of roles—academic, activist, writer—as a useful combination of theory and practice, but at times it feels like a dangerous balancing act that may end in a harsh fall. It depends on the day, my level of exhaustion, and the nastiness of attacks against me. But I keep doing a bit of everything and enjoy my many faces and styles.

I yearn for theory that is helpful in strategizing and understanding the “here and now” of feminist politics. As I see it, the “here and now” of Poland is a bizarre mix of neoliberalism, politicized religion, nationalism, and good old misogyny. The reality the women's movement must confront includes a lack of basic reproductive rights, the indifference of the state towards domestic violence, a largely dismantled welfare system, and the swindling of women employees in the name of “flexibility.” Since 1989, traditional gender roles have come to function as Poland's “specialty” in Europe. I needed to understand how and why this happened, so I picked my readings in feminist theory accordingly, looking for frameworks that link gender, nation, and religion, and for analyses of scenarios somehow analogous to ours. I found my answers in works of Nira Yuval Davis, Floya Anthias, Cynthia Enloe, Anne McClintock, Anne Phillips, Ruth Lister, as well as in scholarship on and from Eastern Europe and the Balkans (Barbara Einhorn, Lynne Haney, Julie Mostov, Tamar Mayer, and others). If I were to name two books that had the greatest impact on me, it would be the edited volume *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* (Susan Okin's essay and the polemics that followed) and Joan Wallach Scott's brilliant study *The Politics of the Veil*.

The “here and now,” however, is not my favorite place to be. The most worn books on my feminist shelf are histories and memoirs (among them Ruth Rosen's *The World Split Open* and *The Feminist Memoir Project*, edited by Ann Snitow and Rachel DuPlessis) and anthologies from the early 1970s. The feminists I read and reread for pleasure tend to be ones associated with the second wave in the US, both classic and more recent texts. My favorites are Adrienne Rich, Susan Brownmiller, Joreen, Audre Lorde, Katha Pollitt, Ellen Willis, and—yes!—Betty Friedan. What brought me into feminism and keeps me there is not high theory, but a tone of ethical and political commitment, a belief that change is possible, even inevitable. I like feminist essays that are emotional as well as intelligent. And I love feminist anger of the late 1960s. Valerie Solanas's SCUM continues to thrill me, as does Hedegus and Pennebaker's documentary film *Town Bloody Hall*, which records Norman Mailer's encounter with “Women's Lib” in the person of Germaine Greer and other radicals. My personal commitment to feminism is perhaps nostalgic at heart—what I truly yearn for are the good old days of the feminist revolution.

Academia is my origin and home base, but I thrive in confrontation and lose patience with feminism that locks itself in the safe spaces of gender-studies programs and specialized journals. In my view, today's scholarly feminism—especially as it functions in the West—is too often busy talking to itself, too distanced

from political struggles of the day. While I respect the need for professionalization, institutionalization, and for theorizing at a high level of abstraction, I must admit that doing pure “theory” has lost its appeal to me years ago. I read and write texts that aim to convince; my best work happens when I imagine my addressee as someone who has never taken women’s rights seriously. Feminism is about social change, and preaching to the converted is not my idea of affecting history. In Poland, feminist academics tend to wear multiple hats: many of us venture into politics, we are present in the media, we set up and run women’s organizations, organize public debates, etc. When I travel to the States, Britain, Norway, or France, I talk to academics and I talk to activists, but find that they are rarely the same people, and the two groups don’t seem to know each other well. This split may be the greatest difference between Western feminism and the women’s movement in my country (as well as what I have seen of other Eastern European contexts, the Middle East, and Third World countries).

***Agnieszka Graff**, a leading Polish feminist activist, is a professor at Warsaw University and author of many publications on women’s rights and gender relations in post-Communist Poland and Eastern Europe.*

Feminist theory has the possibility of an auspicious and exciting future, more exciting perhaps than its illustrious past. Its promise—for the promise is a way of propelling the present into the future—is that it may provide new ways of understanding ourselves and our world(s), ways that are more commensurate with and expressive of women's positions and perspectives. While much of feminist thought in the past has been directed to a critique of the patriarchal past and present and while much feminist activism is directed to challenging and overcoming the forces of patriarchal thought and practice, it may be that, in the future, feminist thought could direct itself instead to the creation or invention of positive alternatives, and not just the critique of patriarchy itself. It may be that feminist theory must reinvent itself as a form of invention.

And what it may invent are a new series of questions and new ways of addressing them. Instead of the questions we are already familiar with—who am I, what is my identity, what forms of oppression characterize my position, how might I express who I am?—questions that have assumed feminist thought is directed to questions of identity and subjectivity, we need to invent new questions, questions that address the world as much as they address the subjects in that world, questions that position the subject in a context in which other forces than the human and the patriarchal are addressed. Questions about the real, about materiality and about force may be asked, but their answers do not require us to address identity and its cognates. Feminist theory in the future may come to look not only within, but also primarily outside, beyond the self, beyond even the collective in which the self finds itself represented or repressed, into a world that is larger than subjectivity and makes subjectivity possible. A world that includes the nature as much as culture, and the animal as much as the human. Feminist theory holds the promise of a new kind of knowledge of the real, a new making of the real, new forms of creativity and conceptualization that may make it a positive force in the recognition of all kinds of differences.

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Anti-racist feminisms in their plurality emerged within a larger political struggle that challenged the academy's exclusivity and imparted to it new desires to both theorize about freedom and labor for it. What Alice Walker called "womanism," bell hooks "black feminism," and the Combahee Collective "revolutionary praxis" entered classrooms a generation ago. Those in solidarity with such black feminisms, or in opposition, have learned from practices that understood the importance of autonomous intellectuals. With the return of the elite exclusivity of the academy, and the taming of radical politics in officially recognized scholarship, the transformative agency of feminist studies seems increasingly downplayed.

Diverse anti-racist feminist artists, writers, and activists—Toni Morrison, Toni Cade Bambara, Audre Lorde, Barbara Smith—directly or indirectly contributed to feminist scholarship in the US academy. Few may be aware of the significance of such a lineage. If the academy becomes increasingly shaped by corporate culture, or state legislatures and budgets, and feminist scholarship follows the dominant trajectory, what are its dynamic contributions to human value and dignity?

Historically, feminist scholarship and intellectualism swam against the tide, into the academy. Overlapping and merging with black studies and ethnic studies, queer studies, labor studies, they coupled an ability to satirize imperial nakedness with an ability to organize intellectual, spiritual, and material clothing drives and food banks for the disenfranchised. Not embarrassed by personal disarray, operating a parallel universe as an alternative to the corporate-state academy, like an Octavia Butler novel, feminist studies could chart a future for critical, imaginative thinking in the pursuit of freedom and justice.

***Joy A. James** is Presidential Professor of the Humanities at Williams College and Visiting Scholar in African and African Diaspora Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. She is the author or editor of several books, including *Shadowboxing: Representations of Black Feminist Politics* (2002; 2nd ed.) and *The Black Feminist Reader* (2000).*

Three and a Half Things Men Have Learned from Feminist Scholarship

Feminist scholarship has inspired me. Indeed, it rebooted my professional career away from an investigation of seventeenth-century French tax policies (the subject, I promise, of my PhD dissertation) and toward both helping to build a new subfield of gender studies centered on the critical investigation of men and masculinities and participating in that investigation myself through my research, mentoring, and writing.

Here are several axiomatic statements about what I think we've learned so far:

1. Gender matters. Before the advent of feminist scholarship, gender was largely invisible: women were excluded, written out, and men were the generic, the universal. I often tell a story about how I gave a guest lecture in a course taught by a female colleague, and when I entered the class, one student looked up and said "Oh, finally, an objective opinion!" Women were biased; men were objective. By making women visible, feminist scholarship also made gender visible—and made visible the privilege men experienced that enabled us to believe we somehow embodied objectivity.

2. Gender is diverse. No sooner did feminist women make gender visible than we also had to understand that it is diverse. Not all men and not all women are similarly situated. Other master statuses—race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, age, religion, disability status—shape and construct our sense of ourselves as men and women. Men are not from Mars, women are not from Venus. Indeed, the differences among men and among women are far greater than any small mean differences one might find between women and men. I often ask my students to imagine two American men: one is black, 77 years old, gay, Catholic, and lives in Chicago, and the other is white, 19, heterosexual, evangelical, and lives on a farm 100 miles outside Chicago. Wouldn't they have some different ideas about what it means to be a man? And, wouldn't they have some similar ideas as well? Inspired by these insights, we use the plural term "masculinities" in our research to indicate the horizontal plane along which different men are differently situated.

3. Gender is about power. Just because we understand gender to be plural and diverse does not mean that we ignore the hierarchies. Gender is horizontal and vertical: different masculinities (based on race, class, sexuality, and so on) are hierarchically arranged. Gender is about the power that men as a group may have over women as a group, but it is also about the power that some men have over other men. All axes of privilege and inequality complicate and undermine efforts to establish a fixity of positions. Those two hypothetical men mentioned above would slip between center and margin along a variety of dimensions.

3 1/2. Feminism is about men. This is only one-half, because, obviously, feminism is about women, for women. And feminist scholarship is also for women. But it would be both intellectually and politically mistaken to assume, therefore, that feminism had little to do with men. Feminism demands nothing less

than a renegotiation of the political arrangements between women and men at every level—political, institutional, and personal. And this renegotiation both invites and insists on challenging traditional notions of masculinity that left many men emotionally shut down, suppressing their capacity to love and nurture children, to be passionately caring and empathic friends, partners, and husbands, and to be supportive colleagues and coworkers. As Greenwich Village writer Floyd Dell wrote in an article entitled “Feminism for Men,” in 1916, on the eve of one of the great suffrage parades (in which Dell would march with the Men’s League for Woman Suffrage): “Feminism will make it possible for the first time for men to be free.”

Michael Kimmel is a Professor of Sociology at SUNY Stony Brook and the author of many books, including The Gendered Society (2010; 4th ed.), Manhood in America (2011; 3rd ed.), and Guyland (2008). He is the founding editor of the scholarly journal Men and Masculinities.

TORIL MOI

1. It would be interesting to read more feminist reflections on fundamental problems of theory. What is the task of theory in general and feminist theory in particular? Do we need a theory of every phenomenon in the world, just because that phenomenon exists? Should we rather think of theory as an effort to get clear on a problem that keeps tripping us up? What do feminists use theory for? In short: what work do we think that theory can do for feminism? (I assume, of course, that there are different kinds of feminists, and different kinds of feminisms, and that there may be more than one answer to any of these questions.)

2. I take a strong interest in writing, not least in the writing of theory. Can we find a way to discuss the writing of theory, which does not simply redraw the old boundary lines between those who consider that difficulty and obscurity help to unmask the ideological commitments of the seemingly simple and commonsensical, and those who consider that a certain kind of theory writing is self-indulgent, off-putting, and elitist? Must theory be written in ways that appeal only to specialists?

3. Finally, I would genuinely enjoy reading new reflections on the relationship between feminism and literature, film, and other art forms. A generation ago literature, poetry, painting (and so on) were not just sources of exciting work in feminist criticism, but also of crucial work in feminist theory. Nowadays it is not uncommon for core courses in women's studies to pay very little attention to different art forms. The question is why? Is it a matter of disciplinary shifts, academic fashions, or the general decline of the humanities? Have we discovered that literature and the other arts are irrelevant to the main goals of feminist theory? In short: What's at stake in this development? And, crucially, should feminists be concerned about it?

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The “Missing” Element in Today’s Feminist Studies: The Long View of Women’s History

Women’s historians (including both women and men), most of whom would categorize themselves as feminist historians, are completely revising our picture of the past, not only for the United States but around the world. When I am asked to explain women’s history to people who hold a conventional idea of history, mostly the product of their earlier education, I provide the following capsule summary. This is not a sound-bite-length summary, but the subject is complex:

Women’s history encompasses the history of humankind, including men, but approaches it from a woman-centered perspective. It highlights women’s activities and ideas and asserts that their problems, issues, and accomplishments are just as central to the telling of the human story as are those of their brothers, husbands, and sons. It places the sociopolitical relations between the sexes, or gender, at the center of historical inquiry and questions female subordination. It examines the closely intertwined constructions of femininity and masculinity over time in one or more cultures, looking for evidence of continuities and changes. It also exposes and confronts the biases of earlier male-centered historiography, asking why certain subjects and choices of themes for study were favored over others and posing new questions for investigation. Women’s historians have expanded the scope of research on women and gender both temporally, from prehistory to the present, and geographically, from dealing only with the West to encompassing the globe.

Not only do we now know more about what women did and said in many diverse settings and periods, but we have also come to understand the ways in which various societies have constructed gender and the myriad ways in which it informs all societal organization. We have come to appreciate how these constructions work and how they are intertwined with class, race, ethnicity, religion, age, and other categories that mark the human condition.

The list of fascinating publications by feminist historians continues to expand week by week. At the college and university level, however, some lip service may be paid to women’s history—and to the history of feminisms (women’s political and intellectual history)—by feminist scholars in other fields of knowledge, but seemingly few of them actually take the time to read the proliferation of books and articles, encyclopedias, and documentaries that have appeared since the 1970s. Few works in women’s history are assigned in women’s studies programs that do not have one or several resident historians to offer a full menu of women’s history courses. What is worse, high-school students have virtually no exposure to this new knowledge unless their history teachers have already developed some expertise in the field. Such expertise can only be acquired through immersion.

When I speak about women’s history at women’s clubs and other public gatherings outside the university, the audience generally includes indignant women who exclaim: “This is so interesting! Why didn’t we learn about this in school?” or “I would have been much more interested in history if we could have learned about these women.”

Without exposure, even immersion, in women’s history, women—who have long constituted over 50% of the population—have no memory of their female forebears, no sense of heritage, no pride in their womanhood, to draw on. What is worse, many young women today don’t even understand why memory of women’s past should be important to them. Didn’t “women’s lib” start in the Year Zero, they say? Isn’t the

future all that counts?

Without knowing our past, without having “memory,” we do not have the tools we need for confronting the future. Without understanding how and why the subordination of women “works,” we continue to have difficulty unraveling its effects in the present or pushing back against those who object to women’s emancipation, who do not believe that “women’s rights are human rights.” Look at today’s headlines and you will see who our opponents are.

Reinventing the wheel, reopening the search for antecedents, is not an option. We must learn from the past and from the work of the wonderful scholars in women’s history. Amnesia, not lack of history, is feminism’s worst enemy today!

The past as reconfigured by women’s historians in the last forty years has much to teach us. Anyone who doubts this should consult the newsletters of the International Federation for Research in Women’s History, which are now all online at www.ifrwh.com. Feminist scholars in all fields should consult the women’s history journals: *Journal of Women’s History*, *Gender & History*, *Women’s History Review*, *Aspasia*, to mention only those that are published in English. It is easy to find out about the women’s history findings that are being produced around the globe. The American Historical Association also publishes a very helpful pamphlet series, which provides background and bibliography in a variety of fields in women’s and gender history. Websites and blogs abound and the knowledge they encompass is there for the taking.

For feminist scholars in other fields, as well as budding feminist historians, teachers, and parents—and for those who still say, “I’m not a feminist, but...”—I would highly recommend acquiring and consulting two indispensable reference works. The first is the four-volume *Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History* (2008), edited by Bonnie G. Smith, and the second the two-volume *Feminist Writings from Ancient Times to the Modern World*, edited by Tiffany Wayne (Greenwood/ABC Clio, 2011). Let the adventure begin!

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ARTICLES

Feminist Debate in Taiwan's Buddhism: The Issue of the Eight Garudhammas

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Abstract: In 2001, during an academic conference on Humanistic Buddhism in Taipei, Venerable Shi Zhaohui, accompanied by a few Buddhist clergy and laypeople, tore apart a copy of the Eight Garudhammas (Eight Heavy Rules), regulations that govern the behavior of Buddhist nuns. Zhaohui's symbolic act created instant controversy as Taiwan's Buddhist community argued about the rules' authenticity and other issues within Buddhist monastic affairs. This paper examines the debate over the Eight Garudhammas and situates the debate within Taiwan's cultural terrain as well as the worldwide Buddhist feminist movement. I argue that while Zhaohui's call resulted in the abolishment of the rules neither at home nor abroad, it profoundly affected nuns' position in Buddhism and contributed to broader discussions on women and religion. In making this argument, I revisit the impact of Western feminism (and Western Buddhist feminists) on Eastern religions and reconsider the tensions this relationship encompasses.

Keywords: feminism, Buddhist feminist, Taiwan Buddhism, Eight Garudhammas, Shi Zhaohui

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Introduction

During a 2001 academic conference on Renjian Foijiao (Humanistic Buddhism 人間佛教) in Taipei, and accompanied by a few Buddhist clergy and laypeople, Venerable Shih Chao-hwei (Shi Zhaohui 釋昭慧) tore apart a copy of the Eight Garudhammas (Eight Heavy/Special Rules 八敬法), regulations that govern the behavior of Buddhist nuns.¹ Chao-hwei, a Buddhist reformer and arguably Taiwan's most outspoken nun, claimed the precepts reflect gender hierarchy and inequality within the Buddhist *sangha* (monk/nun community) and have functioned as a "tyrant," enabling monks' male chauvinism and dampening nuns' self-esteem.² She asserted the rules were not from Buddha but were later inventions by the male Buddhist hierarchy to discourage the development of *bhikkhuni* (nuns') monastic order. After two thousand years of consequences, Chao-hwei argued, it was time to drop the regulations. Chao-hwei's symbolic act created instant controversy as Taiwan's Buddhist community argued about the rules' authenticity and other issues within Buddhist monastic affairs.

This paper examines the debate over the Eight Heavy Rules and situates the debate within Taiwan's cultural terrain and the worldwide Buddhist feminist movement. I argue that while Chao-hwei's call resulted in the abolishment of the rules neither at home nor abroad, it profoundly affected nuns' position in Buddhism and contributed to broader discussions on women and religion. It also provides insight into the parameters within which feminism within Taiwan's Buddhism currently operates. The paper first explores feminist discussion of gender within Buddhism. It then identifies the social context that contributed to the rise of Buddhist feminist consciousness on the island. An explanation of the Eight Heavy Rules and their historical development is provided before the main part of the paper, which focuses on the debate over the call for terminating the rules. The paper concludes by assessing the impacts of the

incident and connecting the debate to the broader international Buddhist women's movement.

Buddhism and Gender

Although commonly recognized as containing a liberating egalitarian theology (i.e., the belief that all living things are equal), Buddhism, like many organized religions, is “an overwhelmingly male-created institution dominated by a patriarchal power structure” (Paul 1979, xix). Issues concerning women in Buddhism have increasingly attracted the interest, not only of religious scholars and feminists, but also of the general public, as Buddhism has experienced revitalization in Asia and gradually become popular in the Western world. Gender and Buddhism as a subject of academic inquiry, however, remains in its infancy and mostly in a peripheral position, despite being a millennia-long issue (Faure 2003; Li 2002).

Much of this field's literature deals with textual studies. Concentrating on Pāli texts in the Theravāda tradition, I. B. Horner (1930), for example, surveyed early Buddhist portrayals of women and feminine symbols, finding that females, especially in terms of their sexuality, were often described as mysterious, sensual, elusive, polluted, corrupted, and destructive; thus, the tradition implied, they needed to be controlled and conquered.³ In examining various Mahāyāna texts, Venerable Shi Yinshun (印順) questioned the Eight Heavy Rules' legitimacy in the 1960s by pointing out their inconsistency in Buddhist scriptures (see Shi 1981; 1988; Qiu 2001a; Shih 2002). Diana Y. Paul (1979) similarly examined texts in the Mahāyāna tradition and found a wide spectrum of portrayals of women, some positive and many negative. Unlike Horner, who asserts that the larger (misogynist Hindu) culture led to inconsistencies between Buddhist texts and ideals, Paul regards the ambiguous images as highlighting the development of Buddhism from a primitive stage to the next. Gu Zhengmei (古正美 1985) confirms the presence of sexism in the Buddhist canon while pointing out other ambiguous and contradictory portrayals of women. Rita Gross's *Buddhism After Patriarchy* (1993) examines Buddhist canonical literature from Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna traditions, providing arguably the first feminist analysis of Buddhist texts and theology in the United States. Employing the analytical framework Western feminists used to critique Christian patriarchy, Gross explains gender ideology in Buddhism as well as male dominance in monastic orders.

Another area of feminist scholarship in gender and Buddhism emphasizes the connections between theory and practice. Through interviews with American Buddhist nuns and lay female practitioners, Sandy Boucher ([1988]1993, xi), for example, illustrates these women's “spiritual paths within the context of Buddhist practice and establishments.” Utilizing a feminist framework, the book provides critical insight on the tension between feminism and patriarchal Buddhism, religious activism and spiritual conviction, monasticism, and laity, etc. Gross (1993), on the other hand, calls for a feminist transformation of Buddhism in the Western world through creation of a new type of monastic community, reconstruction of an androgynous view of Buddhism, and incorporation of serious meditation practice with work and motherhood responsibilities (see also Tsomo 1995). Shih Chao-hwei (1999) approaches gender inequality, within monastic orders, from Buddhist discipline and ethics. Her work reflects Western feminist critiques of religion while embodying strong local consciousness and subjectivity (Li 2002). Li Yuzhen (李玉珍 1999) and Cheng Wei-yi's (Zheng Weiyi 2007) ethnographies explore women's experience with Buddhism and their interpretations of Buddhism. Chen Meihua (陳美華 1998) and Cheng apply postcolonial theory and Third World feminist analysis to the Western feminist critique of Asian Buddhism. Both argue that Western Buddhist feminist scholars often presume superiority over Asian Buddhist women by stereotyping them as patriarchy's victims and by speaking

for them. In envisioning the future of the field, however, Li (2002) deems postcolonialism impractical and ineffective in promoting an international Buddhist women's movement. She argues that Taiwan Buddhism's diverse nature and modernization have long promoted a dismantling of the stereotypes of weak, passive, and helpless Buddhist women. Postcolonial discourse cannot explain the phenomenal achievement of Taiwan's bhikkhuni saṅgha (Li 2002). She urges future inquiry into gender and Buddhism that will locate Taiwan's Buddhism in a global context and encourage dialogue between Taiwanese and international scholars.

Buddhist Feminist Consciousness-Raising in Taiwan

Taiwan seems an ideal place for a Buddhist feminist movement because of Buddhism's current social prominence. Buddhism benefitted greatly from the island's economic growth since the 1960s (particularly after the '80s). As people could give more economically, they contributed to traditional religions, which also benefited from a growing connection in people's minds to grassroots identity. With Taiwan's economic success, people pushed for greater political openness and the lifting of Martial Law (obtained in 1987). Democratization further decentralized religious activities and allowed religious groups to expand. Charismatic Buddhist leaders arose. In the past two decades, the Buddhist population increased fourfold, from about two million in the mid-1980s to more than eight million currently, about 35 percent of the island's 23 million people (Laliberté 2004; "Religion" 2010). Major Buddhist organizations have woven themselves into Taiwan's social fabric by running multi-million-dollar enterprises, including temples, schools, hospitals, and other social institutions.

Economic prosperity and political democratization in Taiwan also liberated women from traditional gender roles and stereotypes. The contemporary women's movement in Taiwan took root in the 1970s when Lü Xiulian (呂秀蓮, later the island's only female vice president, 2000-2008) proposed the so-called new feminism, promoting the idea that people should be human first and men and women second, and calling for a rise in feminist consciousness (Qiu 2001a). Li Yuanzhen (李元貞) later instituted *Awakening* (婦女新知) magazine and a foundation of the same name in the 1980s to campaign for equal education, equal work, and equal pay. Since then, a wide range of women's organizations arose promoting diverse agendas relating to women's rights (Li 2005). In general, the women's movement has transformed Taiwan from a traditional patriarchal society into one more willing to challenge authority and open to gender negotiation and discussion. Women's lives, especially for the younger generation, have dramatically improved.

Taiwanese society's openness and the improvement of women's rights contribute to the success (both quantitative and qualitative) of the island's female Buddhist monastic orders. The current ratio between nuns and monks in Taiwan is about five to one (Yang 2002). Women play a crucial role in major Buddhist organizations. Venerable Zhengyan (證嚴) of the Tzuchi Foundation (Ciji or Buddhist Compassion Relief Foundation 慈濟基金會), for example, is probably the most respected woman in Taiwan. Other women also hold key positions and constitute the majority of volunteers. Even the male-led Foguanshan (佛光山) and Fagushan (法鼓山) monasteries, two of the most influential Buddhist organizations in Taiwan, rely heavily on nuns' assistance. All executives of Foguanshan's five branches are female, and women usually constitute over 80 percent of seminary and activities participants. Taiwanese nuns' educational level is also impressive, particularly among the younger generation. About 80 percent in the Xiangguang (香光) Female Monastery are college educated. Many nuns hold master's and Ph.D. degrees, often from Western institutions (Cai 1998). The Dalai Lama has visited Taiwan twice to observe Buddhism's Taiwanese

experience, particularly the so-called “bhikkhuni phenomenon,” in order to assess the possibility of re-establishing female monastic orders in Tibetan Buddhism. Buddhist historian Jiang Canteng (2003) finds three factors crucial to the success of Taiwanese nuns: the increasing education in Taiwan, society’s openness, and nuns’ economic independence. He asserts that nuns have become the keystone of Taiwan’s Buddhism; if nuns were to strike, Jiang posits, the whole Buddhist system on the island would immediately collapse (see also Cai 1998).

Another significant factor in the strength of Buddhism and the bhikkhuni saṅgha in Taiwan is the implementation of Humanistic Buddhism, which sets the island’s Buddhism apart from other Buddhist traditions, including those of its counterparts in Japan and Korea. This school of thought came from Venerable Taixu (太虛) and his student Yinshun, who envisioned universal salvation instead of selective salvation. They encouraged monks and nuns to actively participate in the secular world, help improve society, and build the Pure Land on Earth instead of waiting for it in the afterlife. Most major Buddhist organizations in Taiwan claim lineage from Humanistic Buddhism and vigorously engage in secular affairs (i.e., building hospitals, schools, charities, and media outlets) and social movements (i.e., environmental protection, anti-nuclear power, anti-corruption, and anti-gambling). Among the island’s prominent Buddhists, Chao-hwei probably most keenly connects the ideals of Humanistic Buddhism with actions. Since her national debut in 1989 condemning media stereotypes of Buddhist nuns, and in addition to her protest against the Eight Heavy Rules, Chao-hwei has regularly participated in social movements, walking hand in hand with secular protestors to, for example, fight against nuclear waste as well as for animal rights and, later, women’s rights (Shih 2008).

The Establishment of the Bhikkhuni Monastic Order and the Eight Garudhammas

Buddhist feminists have questioned the merit and the validity of the Eight Heavy Rules for more than a century. The precepts remain controversial within the Buddhist community, both in Asia and worldwide. The call by Chao-hwei to abolish the rules rekindled the controversy and generated heated debate.

Narratives about the Buddha’s reluctance to establish the first bhikkhuni saṅgha are well documented in Buddhist canon (see for examples Gross 1993; Cheng 2007; Shih 2000). These stories state that five years after the Buddha Siddhāttha Gotama achieved enlightenment and founded the *bhikkhu* (monks’) monastic order, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, the Buddha’s aunt and stepmother, asked him to set up a monastery for women. He rejected the request of Mahāpajāpatī and her 500 female followers three times. Discouraged but persistent, the women shaved their heads, put on monastic robes, and traveled on foot to the Buddha’s next stop. Moved by the women’s determination and miserable condition, Ānanda, the Buddha’s closest aide and half-brother (son of Mahāpajāpatī), pleaded for a bhikkhuni monastery on behalf of the women. Again, his proposal was rejected three times. According to Davids and Oldenberg’s translation (*Vinaya Texts*, 322), Ānanda then asked the Buddha, “Are women, Lord, capable—when they have gone forth from the household life and entered the homeless state, under the doctrine and discipline proclaimed by the Blessed One—are they capable of realizing the fruit of conversion, or of the second Path, or of the third Path, or of Arahatsip?” The Buddha assured Ānanda that women possessed the same potential as men to achieve enlightenment and perfection. Ānanda then asked why—since women could benefit from the monastic order and since Mahāpajāpatī had been very kind in caring for the Buddha—her and the other women’s wish could not come true? The Buddha finally relented under one condition: “If then, Ānanda, Mahāpajāpatī [Mahāpajāpatī] the Gotamī take upon herself the Eight Chief Rules let that be reckoned to her as her initiation” (*Vinaya Texts*, 322). When she heard the rules, Mahāpajāpatī was

said to have accepted the rules without hesitation.

According to an oft-quoted statement, the Buddha expressed concerns over the negative impact the bhikkhuni order might have on the fate of Buddhism:

If, Ānanda, women had not received permission to go out from the household life and enter the homeless state, under the doctrine and discipline proclaimed by the Tathāgata, then would the pure religion, Ānanda, have lasted long, the good law would have stood fast for a thousand years. But since, Ānanda, women have now received that permission, the pure religion, Ānanda, will not now last so long, the good law will now stand fast for only five hundred years. (*Vinaya Texts*, 325; see also Gross 1993, 32)

By admitting women into Buddhist orders, as the Buddha was said to predict, Buddhism's worldly life span would be reduced to half its natural duration. The Buddha used a further unflattering analogy to describe the damage female monastic orders would produce:

Ānanda, in whatever religion women are ordained, that religion will not last long. As families that have more women than men are easily destroyed by robbers, as a plentiful rice-field once infested by white bones will not long remain, as a sugarcane field invaded by red rust will not long remain, even so the True Dharma will not last long. (Quoted in Goodwin 2008, 207)

His prescription for the potential disaster, recorded in Buddhist literature, was the Eight Heavy Rules: "Even, Ānanda, as a man, looking forward, may build a dyke to a great reservoir so that the water may not overflow, even so, Ānanda, were the eight important rules for nuns laid down by me" (Quoted in Gross 1993, 33).

The Eight Heavy Rules vary in different Buddhist texts, but generally include the following:

1. A nun, however senior, must always bow down in front of a monk, however junior.
2. A nun is not to spend the rainy season in a district in which there are no monks.
3. After keeping the rainy season, the nun must hold the ceremony of repentance of their offences before monk and nun saṅghas.
4. A nun who has committed a serious offence must be disciplined by both saṅghas.
5. A nun must not admonish a monk, whereas a monk can admonish a nun.
6. A nun must receive the upasampada ordination from both monk and nun saṅghas after two years of studying the Precepts.
7. Every half month the nun must ask the monk saṅgha to give exhortation.
8. A nun must not in any way abuse or revile a monk.

These rules appear to position nuns as abjectly inferior to monks. Respect flows one way, from nuns to monks. Buddhist texts often use gender stereotypes that favor traditional masculine characteristics over traditional femininity. While women's potential to become enlightened is not entirely denied, male as the norm is never doubted. For example, a perfectly enlightened human image is embodied in a male (the Buddha's) figure with the so-called 32 physical signs/characteristics of a Great Man. To be born as a woman, on the other hand, is a result of negative karma accumulated in the previous life. Some Buddhist canonical literature attributes 84 acts/attitudes to women, including being envious, greedy, weak in wisdom, prideful, jealous, stingy, lustful, sensual, etc. Because of their perceived flawed nature, women are said to be born with five obstacles preventing them from achieving enlightenment and becoming rulers/monarch, the king of Gods, the king of death, warriors, and Brahmā. Nuns are thus to obey more disciplines and rules than monks.⁴ Men may enter and withdraw from the monastic order seven times, while women receive only one chance. Many observers attribute Buddhist misogyny to Hindu culture

or East Asian Confucianism. However, while cultural influence on religion might be worth scholarly exploration, it is not good scholarship to place the blame on culture alone without being critical of dynamics within the religion itself. As Diana Y. Paul points out, “if Buddhists accepted nonegalitarian beliefs from outside their original teachings and incorporated them as sutras [scriptural canon] ... they had to have accepted such beliefs as worthy of the status of scripture. To that extent, they could not have considered such nonegalitarian views as the antithesis of the Buddha’s doctrine” (Paul 1979, xxiii).

Challenging the Eight Garudhammas

Chao-hwei’s call to abolish the Eight Heavy Rules involved an almost decade-long process. She first engaged in a pen fight with advocates of the rules in the *Saṅgha Magazine* (僧伽雜誌) in 1992. Two articles in back-to-back issues of the magazine emphasized the importance of nuns following the Precepts, citing a long list of monastic ethical standards for relationships between monks and nuns. These include:

- When a monk speaks, nuns should put down what they are doing immediately, listen, and reply to the monk respectfully, without moving their bodies or avoiding eye contact.
- Monks should be provided with desirable food (before nuns are served) and they should also be given a larger quantity (than that given to nuns).
- Nuns should not claim any success for their achievements; rather, they should attribute their success to monks.
- By nature women/nuns like to reveal others’ privacy and to gossip in their spare time.
- It is typical for women to be good at concealing their own mistakes.
- Nuns should study and memorize the 84 Acts of Women in order to avoid such actions. They should also follow the Eight Heavy Rules strictly (see Shih 2002, 31-2).⁵

To Chao-hwei this was “enslaving education,” “brainwashing” nuns to accept and rationalize their inferior position in the Buddhist community. She contested each of the claims and accused the magazine of distorting Buddhist doctrine and of advocating “male chauvinism” (Shih 2002, 32, 67).

Chao-hwei frequently wrote thereafter to protest incidents of gender inequality within Buddhist circles and denounce *Saṅgha Magazine’s* use of the Eight Heavy Rules to discipline nuns and advance male privilege. Her most critical remarks came in mid-2000 after the magazine published three articles presumably by nuns (pen names were used), detailing their “fun experiences” performing the 84 Acts of Women as instructed by their superiors in order to remind the nuns to avoid those behaviors. Chao-hwei asserted that such a performance not only violates Buddhist discipline and ethics, but also forces nuns and other women to unconsciously confirm those “hysterical stereotypes” about women as truth. She criticized the nuns’ male superiors (monks) as “anomalous playboys” and “chauvinist pigs” who “obtained sexual satisfaction/gratification through voyeurism” by watching nuns perform those acts (Shih 2002, 113, 120, trans. by author).

The call to end the Eight Heavy Rules was strategically planned to coincide with two important events in early 2001: a conference commemorating Venerable Yinshun’s 96th birthday and lifelong achievements, and the Dalai Lama’s visit to Taiwan. A founder of Humanistic Buddhism, Yinshun was among the first monks to advocate for gender equality in Chinese/Taiwan’s Buddhism (Qiu 2001a). In preparation for the conference, Chao-hwei wrote an article describing how the rules have become an “unequal treaty” between monks and nuns and a “tight shackle” limiting the development of nuns’ potential. She argued both that the Heavy Rules contradict the central doctrine of Buddhism and that the Buddha permitted abolishing/modifying trivial rules incompatible with local tradition and culture (Shih 2002, 139-48).

Chao-hwei also attempted to use the Dalai Lama's visit to make her call more salient internationally. She wrote three days before the conference that gender issues should be a major part of Buddhist ethics for the new century—the theme of the Dalai Lama's speeches in Taiwan. She suggested that actions were more important than talk and urged the Dalai Lama to help restore nuns' orders in Tibetan and Vajrayāna Buddhism (Shih 2002, 169-73).

The conference took place on March 31, 2001 in Taipei. During one session, Chao-hwei read a declaration to abolish the Eight Heavy Rules. In the document, she emphasized Mahāpajāpatī's role in Buddhist history by calling her a "brave woman with revolutionary consciousness" (Shih 2002, 175). Chao-hwei entitled the declaration "The Second Revolution of Modern Mahāpajāpatī" to echo Mahāpajāpatī's first (failed) attempt to get the Buddha to reconsider the rule that requires a nun to bow down in front of a monk, regardless of the seniority of the two. As Chao-hwei read the declaration, eight other prominent Taiwan Buddhists (two monks, two nuns, two laymen, and two laywomen, intended to represent the unity of clergy and laity) symbolically tore up the rules one by one. Shi Chuandao (釋傳道 2002), one of the monks participating in the event, affirmed the act as the nuns' declaration of independence—asserting freedom from their current subordinate position. Jiang Canteng (2001a, 110), a well-known historian of Buddhism who also participated in the rending of the rules, called the incident a "daring act," and, "the first of its kind in thousands of years of Mahāyāna tradition," one with "great potential to affect Buddhism in Asia and in other regions" (trans. by author).

In spite of its potential historical importance, the act faced immediate condemnation and generated passionate debate. The Buddhist establishment's conservative faction questioned its legitimacy and severely criticized Chao-hwei for violating the Buddha's teachings; some even called for her expulsion from the Buddhist order. The following section analyzes four central issues emerging from the debate.

The Authenticity of the Rules

The most intense debate concerned the Eight Heavy Rules' authenticity. Proponents claimed the Buddha laid the rules down as a precondition for organizing the nuns' order and therefore should not be overruled. The reformers, however, argued that the rules were not authentically from the Buddha but were instead later additions to Buddhist *sutras*.⁶ Chao-hwei pointed out four major problems with the rules. First, according to Buddhist literature, the rules were a preventive guide given before the bhikkhuni order was originally established. This is inconsistent with all other monastic regulations, which always *followed* mistakes. Thus, in Chao-hwei's opinion, the rules are unattributable to the Buddha. Second, contradictory canonical descriptions invoke suspicion about authenticity. Some texts regard the rules as fundamental disciplines, others do not mention them; some treat rule violations as severe offenses, while others regard them as minor. Third, according to Chao-hwei, the Buddha taught that all living things are equal, the core Buddhist principle; the rules manifest gender inequality, however. Fourth, Chao-hwei suggested that if the rules were laid down by the Buddha, then he must be seen as not only law giver, but also law breaker. She cited a Buddhist story: Mahāpajāpatī complained about some monks' mischief. The Buddha scolded the monks in response, not Mahāpajāpatī. If the rules were followed, Buddha would have disciplined Mahāpajāpatī for wrongly admonishing monks. Reasoning that he would not contradict himself, Chao-hwei concluded that the rules did not come from the pro-equality Buddha (Shih 2002, 207-11).

Granting the power of Chao-hwei's main moral message, her supporting arguments can nevertheless be questioned. Like many other practicing Buddhist feminists, Chao-hwei tends to romanticize the

Buddha as a flawless godly figure. She is reluctant to entertain the possibility that the Buddha might be a product of his time and culture. While the Buddha clearly challenged some social norms of his time (i.e., eventually allowing women to enter monastic life), he might have also been affected by the prevailing misogynist Hindu culture and occasionally followed the era's conventions. The rhetoric Chao-hwei uses, seemingly effective at first glance, is sometimes contradictory and undercuts her point. One example is Chao-hwei's use of Mahāpajāpati's "first revolution"—asking the Buddha to reconsider the rule on nuns bowing down to monks—to sustain her own "second revolution" in abolishing the rules. Another example is the story of Mahāpajāpati's complaints about monks. Both instances affirm, rather than challenge, the existence of the Eight Heavy Rules during the Buddha's time. On other occasions, Chao-hwei seems to admit that the rules, or at least parts, in fact came from the Buddha and that the Buddha was indeed not fond of organizing the bhikkhuni saṅgha in the first place. However, she reasons that both originally not allowing nuns to create an order and issuing the rules stemmed from the Buddha's love and mercy for women, to protect them from danger and attack (Shih 2002, 359; Shi 2002, 76). This explanation, again, romanticizes the Buddha and contradicts her main thesis.

Whatever her inconsistencies, Chao-hwei's opponents—represented by the high hierarchy of the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China (BARCO), the governmental organization overseeing Buddhist activities in Taiwan—failed to provide substantial counterarguments. Instead they asked Yinshun to verify the rules' authenticity. His brief reply (35 words) contains two points. First, the Eight Heavy Rules are indeed Buddha's teaching. Second, any modification to fit contemporary cultural norms would need to follow proper procedure: consensus from the Buddhist elders and passage in a council meeting (Shi 2001, 232). Yinshun's response surprised most reformers, since he was the first in Mahāyāna Buddhism to question the rules' authenticity. Seeing contradictions between Yinshun's current position and his early statements, historian Qiu Minjie (2001b) asked for further explanation. In response, Yinshun referred to Venerable Qingde's (清德) *Yinshun's Thoughts on Buddhist Disciplines* (印順導師的律學思想, see Jiang 2001b). Interpreting this move, Jiang (2001b) suggested that Qingde and Chao-hwei's main arguments are in agreement; both assert that parts of the rules may indeed have come from the Buddha but that the male Buddhist hierarchy likely added other parts later.

Chao-hwei's opposition argued that while Yinshun questioned parts of the rules, he never called for modification or termination. Qiu (2001b) nevertheless considered it simply a matter of time: the Buddhist environment in the 1960s—when Yinshun raised his doubts—did not allow him to propose any gender reforms. Jiang (2001b) agreed, claiming that the new generation can turn the page as society changes. Although deeming Yinshun "the greatest monk since Xuanzang"⁷ ("玄奘以來第一人" see Shih 2002, 226), Jiang (2001a; 2001b) nevertheless considers him a "historical figure" and "a giant in thinking but midget in action" in regards to Buddhist reforms. Jiang sees Chao-hwei, on the other hand, as the one to implement Yinshun's thoughts and Humanistic Buddhism (Jiang 2002, 3).

Involvement of Laity

Another key issue concerned lay involvement. Chao-hwei's opponents insisted on the concept that only saṅgha should be involved with resolving saṅgha's problems. They argued that the Eight Heavy Rules are monastic ethics with no relevance to the laity. Chao-hwei disputed her opponents' view by accusing them of being hierarchical, seeing themselves as superior to the laity. She argued that Buddhism will not survive without the laity and its financial support. She further asserted that the meeting by the Buddhist Association following the conference was illegitimate because the convening nuns were not

included. Chuandao echoed this point, asserting equality between the monastic orders and the laity and the importance of a transparent process (Shi 2002). Qiu (2001b) took a different tack, explaining that members of the Buddhist order led the event, while the laity only supported it; therefore, the call to end the rules did not violate the principle at stake. She also pointed to many cases in Buddhist history in which the laity helped solve problems among the clergy. The opinions of laypeople, she claimed, have been important and respected historically.

To End or Not to End the Garudhammas

Many in the Buddhist community questioned the need to formally abolish the Eight Heavy Rules, reasoning that the rules were typically not followed anyway. For example, Venerable Xingyun (星雲) of the Foguanshan Monastery asserted that the rules had long been “frozen” in his monastery. He claimed that time would eventually eliminate the rules; there was no need for a dramatic ending (see Su 2001). Chao-hwei (Shih 2002, 217) responded that “The Emperor’s New Clothes” is an appropriate analogy for those who refuse to see gender inequality. She noted in many monastic orders a recent resurgence in emphasizing the rules through various venues, including Buddhist seminaries and media. This “demeaning trend,” Chao-hwei claimed, was the tipping point that led to her call to abolish the rules (Shih 2002, 161).

Many have spoken out in support of Chao-hwei. Historian Yang Huinan (楊惠南 2002), for example, told of a nun who immolated herself in protest because she was not able to rationalize the teaching that women are by nature inferior to men and thus unable to achieve enlightenment.⁸ One restaurant owner, Li Dsheng (李德昇 2001), observed gender inequality within monastic practices. From his vantage point as a layman active in Buddhist circles, he concluded that one’s sex, not one’s ability, education, talent, seniority, integrity, or moral conduct, determined the position one held in the Buddhist hierarchy. Li noted that he feels unsettled when seeing nuns, always the ones carrying out day-to-day monastic business, usually positioned at the periphery of power. Chen Minhe (陳明和), a business professor, argued that the bottom line is that the rules are outdated, unfit for modern life, and therefore need changing. Modernization of Buddhist disciplines, he claimed, would positively impact Buddhism (Conference 2002, 190-1).

Means to Bring Out the Issue

Critics gave two main objections to Chao-hwei’s methods. First, many considered tearing the Eight Heavy Rules in a public gathering to be too dramatic. Take Buddhism historian You Xiangzhou (游祥洲), for example. Although supporting Chao-hwei’s cause, he nevertheless thought her methods were somewhat abrasive. In his opinion, reforms such as this should be promoted more gently (Conference 2002, 196-7). A layman, Xie Dakun (謝大焜), with no apparent awareness of his male privileges and with a bias toward a backlash against feminism, accused Chao-hwei of creating a showdown with the (male) establishment. He suggested that

women should understand their bodies’ limitations. They need to first seek to control their reproductive issues and develop their knowledge and economic ability. Only then they can gradually become equal with men. I hope that all nuns, including Venerable Chao-hwei, will rise up. Then they will naturally be equal with all monks without needing to fight for equality. (Conference 2002, 192-3)

Venerable Hokuan (厚觀) similarly questioned whether nuns can really achieve equality even if the

rules are terminated. He argued that women, like Buddhists in the early days, should “bear persecution without complaining” and “be rational and forgiving” (Quoted in Shih 2002, 199, trans. by author).

Chao-hwei fought back, arguing that it would have defeated the declaration’s purpose if it had not been presented publicly. She admitted that nuns might not receive equal treatment after abolishment of the rules, just as women are not necessarily treated equally in everyday life despite constitutional protections. But, she claimed, that should not be the excuse for perpetuating gender inequality (Conference 2002, 205).

Some nuns also expressed discomfort over Chao-hwei’s forcefulness and preferred a more modest method of resistance, not wanting to display family feuds in front of others. In a study about nuns in both Taiwan and Sri Lanka conducted not long after the controversy, Cheng (2007) found herself entangled in the controversy. She claims that nearly all of her Taiwanese nun informants, regardless of individual opinions about the rules, expressed disapproval toward Chao-hwei and her supporters due to their sharp language, blunt criticism of opponents, and tendency to create factions within the Buddhist community. Cheng quotes a typical response:

[Chao-hwei’s] appeal was right, but her method was wrong... [M]ost people cannot accept the method she used... If you based your appeal on theory, or to hold a conference so that both men and women could discuss together calmly, then perhaps everybody would accept the result... In the Buddhist tradition, the Vinaya is sacred and should not be stained. But she openly called people to tear apart [the rules] in public... But what right [did] she have to ask the laity to tear apart the rules... In traditional Buddhism, the laity did not have any right to interfere with the monastic affairs... It’s just like no one should interfere in the domestic affairs of your family... She made a big issue out of it and gained lots of fame... I don’t feel what she did benefited her appeal. But I completely agree with her appeal.⁹ (2007, 88-9)

The second objection to the event’s execution concerned who should call for abolishment. Opponents claimed that due to the importance of the issue, many more than the handful of people who participated in the event should have been involved in the decision. They suggested that the elders of the monastic orders, through appropriate protocol, should discuss the matter extensively and come to a consensus (“Minutes” 2002, 234; Qiu 2001b). In Chao-hwei’s opinion, however, consensus creation among Buddhist elders is problematic for two reasons. First, it does not solve the problem of a small number of people making the decision for the whole group. Second, the current power structure within Taiwan’s Buddhist hierarchy benefits male privilege and dominance by excluding women from decision-making processes. Sharing power with Buddhist women, in her opinion, will not occur without a forceful call for gender equality (Conference 2002, 196-7).

Conclusion

In spite of her failure to end the Eight Heavy Rules within Taiwan’s Buddhism, and despite some questionable tactics in the attempt, Chao-hwei’s efforts deserve admiration from feminists with an interest in greater equality within religion. This paper focuses on four themes that emerged from the debate over the Rules. Collectively the themes point to some of the current limits for feminism in Taiwan’s Buddhism. The debates over the Rules’ authenticity and whether or not they should be ended point to a literalistic stance toward (even questionable) traditional Buddhist texts that feminist Buddhists must negotiate. Questions over the involvement of laity and Chao-hwei’s methods suggest the difficulty of pushing conventional bounds of propriety through novel feminist action. The debates arguably show that

while Taiwan's Buddhist feminism may in some ways be at the forefront of feminism within Buddhism more generally, it operates within a context in which Buddhist traditional practice often takes precedence over the central concept of the equality of all living things.

Chao-hwei's call to end the Eight Heavy Rules unfortunately did not produce a consensus among Buddhist organizations. However, at least one short-term consequence seems apparent as Taiwan's Buddhist governing bodies lifted gender restrictions on leadership positions and recruited more women into their offices (Wongyen 2001; Taipei's 2001; "Personnel" 2002). In a broader sense, the controversy brought gender issues in religion forward in both academic discourse and public awareness on the island. Prior to the event, essentially only a few scholars paid attention to gender issues in Taiwanese religion or Buddhism. Many practicing Buddhists were unaware of gender inequality in either Buddhist texts or the monastic system. The event also exposed the need for feminist consciousness-raising in religious circles. Seeing great accomplishments from Buddhist women, many people in both Taiwanese society and the Buddhist community more broadly have celebrated the achievements. To some, the controversy itself illustrates the power women hold, as Chao-hwei was able to challenge the system, even if not entirely successfully. Many observers, however, overlook the more subtle, but perhaps more stubborn forms of sexism in Buddhism beyond the structural problems such as the Eight Heavy Rules. Strongly distinctive attitudes toward men and women still exist. These might be residues from sexist images of women in Buddhist canon and/or from patriarchal cultural norms.

An argument can be made that this more subtle sexism affects more Buddhist women than does the issue Chao-hwei is fighting. The Buddhist Compassion Relief Foundation is arguably the largest and most effective women's organization in Taiwan. Women volunteers are its backbone. Their active involvement in charity, medical aid, and social movements has won wide respect from the government and public. On the surface, the foundation's women embody the new, empowered women who claim independence through volunteerism. In reality, however, its core belief is centrally based on conservative family values and division of labor. Jobs in the foundation divide between men and women according to conventional gender traits and stereotypes. Field studies reveal that women participate more in the private sphere with the organization, while its men are more active in the public sphere; men are privileged in organizational activities. In other words, women in the foundation might have achieved "body liberation" by walking out of their homes, but their minds remain constrained by traditional gender roles (Chen 2004).

The Buddhist Compassion Relief Foundation's Zhengyan often perpetuates gender stereotypes and unequal relationships. When discussing marital infidelity, for example, she seldom places responsibility on unfaithful husbands; instead she advises women to look into themselves to understand their husbands' behaviors. If women improve themselves, show tenderness and merciful hearts, she suggests, the husband will eventually return. Zhengyan even asks wives to accept their husbands' mistresses—"Love the person he loves, so everybody will be happy" (Shi n.d.; see also Chen 2004, trans. by author). Foguanshan's Xingyun, likewise, often invokes gender stereotypes in his talks on family ethics. He asserts that women should uphold the five goodnesses in order to maintain a happy family. That is, women should take care of housework, be patient and not complain, remain chaste, respect and serve their husbands, and treat relatives and friends with care. In warning monks to resist sexual temptation, Xingyun recites stories from Buddhist literature describing women as corrupt, dangerous, and ugly beneath their appearance (Lin 2001). Thus, with these currently most respected Buddhists' teachings, the liberation of women's minds seems far away.

Intercultural Implication

Issues derived from the call to abolish the Eight Heavy Rules involve the position of nuns in Taiwanese Buddhism in the larger context of the international Buddhist women's movement, and more specifically, the question of whether Buddhist women can achieve common goals cross-culturally. The controversy foregrounds tension between different Buddhist traditions. With their phenomenal success, and also because the bhikkhuni order exists only in Mahāyāna Buddhism, some Buddhist women in Taiwan might regard themselves as superior or at least in a better position than their Buddhist sisters elsewhere, especially in Theravāda and Tibetan traditions. Some carry their own version of the "white man's burden," feeling obligated to help other Buddhist women. In justifying going public against the Eight Heavy Rules, Chao-hwei, for example, claimed that

if Taiwan's bhiksunis were not be [*sic*] able to serve as the spokespersons for female Buddhist practitioners in the world on gender issues, then it's wholly impossible for those in Tibetan Buddhism and Theravāda Buddhism to expect that "one of these days their time will come" in such a patriarchal society as Asia! Therefore, on second consideration, I decided that I really should not be subtly impeded by the status of Buddhist women in the Tibetan and Theravāda tradition[s], and maintained a discreet silence thereby. (Shih 2008, 132-3; for support for the notion that Taiwanese nuns lead Buddhist reform in Asia, see Qiu 2001b)

Like those long-criticized Western feminists, these Buddhist women feel a need to speak for the Buddhist women of South Asia and Tibet whom they stereotype as helpless victims of male dominance. Chao-hwei's challenge to the Dalai Lama to promote women's rights and restore the bhikkhuni saṅgha, although well-intentioned, appears prideful and disrespectful to some.

This sense of superiority provides an interesting contrast to how some Buddhist women in Theravāda and Tibetan traditions view Mahāyāna Buddhism because of the questions regarding the legitimacy of the Mahāyāna nuns' order (or of the entire Mahāyāna tradition). One of Cheng's Sri Lanka informants, for example, disapproved of the Mahāyāna tradition bluntly: "Mahāyāna Buddhism is not the real Buddhism. It was forged! After Lord Buddha preached Dharma, there was a disagreement and some people became astray from Dharma... that's why they made up Mahāyānaism..." (Cheng 2007, 179-80). The origin of the Mahāyāna bhikkhuni ordination in Sri Lanka does not alter many Theravāda women's opinions. Another informant, in fact, felt threatened by Mahāyāna Buddhism: "People think that people from America, Taiwan, Korea, Burma, all these Mahāyāna countries want to come to destroy our Theravāda Buddhism... Monks and nuns in Mahāyāna countries live together. That's why we don't like Mahāyāna Buddhism..."¹⁰ (Cheng 2007, 80). Many Theravāda women believe their Buddhism is more authentic and more closely reflects the original Buddhism (Tomalin 2009). Some Theravāda women therefore prefer the status quo to diffusion of bhikkhuni ordination from Mahāyāna Buddhism.

After observing Taiwan's nun orders twice, the Dalai Lama called a meeting to discuss the possibility of restoring bhikkhuni saṅgha in Tibetan Buddhism. The issue has been put on hold, probably due to concerns over the "legitimacy" of Mahāyāna bhikkhuni ordination. Chao-hwei has been frustrated by the Dalai Lama's non-action, arguing that the benefit outweighs formality issues. The Dalai Lama explained his position more explicitly in June 2005:

Although there has previously been discussion regarding bhikshuni [ordination], no decision has been reached. However, we need to bring this to a conclusion. We Tibetans alone can't decide this. Rather, it should be decided in collaboration with Buddhists from all over the world. (Quoted in Chodron 2005)

During the first Conference on Tibetan Buddhism in Europe two months later in Zurich, the Dalai Lama repeated the same opinion, but suggested that Western nuns should organize a committee and to carry out the work. He personally donated 50,000 Swiss francs to the cause (see Chinvarakorn 2007). His speech disappointed many conference participants who anticipated the Dalai Lama would deliver a more promising announcement regarding bhikkhuni ordination (Tomalin 2009).

To bridge the gap between women from different Buddhist traditions, the International Association of Buddhist Women, also known as Sakyadhita (Daughters of the Buddha), was organized by Karma Lekshe Tsomo, Ayya Khema, and Chatsumarn Kabilisinh in 1987. The association positions itself as the governing body of the international Buddhist women's movement. It has two major objectives: educating Buddhist women and restoring the bhikkhuni saṅgha (Fenn and Koppedrayar 2008). Through conferences and networking, the organization has promoted dialogue among Buddhist women from different cultures. Major issues remain, however. The association helped some Theravāda women receive bhikkhuni ordination through Korean nuns in 1996 and Taiwanese nuns in 1998 as "international" or "transnational" rather than Mahāyāna ordinations. Insisting on their Theravāda identity and integrity, none of these nuns consider themselves Mahāyāna, nor do they wear robes as in Korean or Chinese traditions (Tomalin 2009). However, their ordinations are not recognized by other Theravāda women, who ironically question the ordained nuns on which version of the Eight Heavy Rules the latter observe (Cheng 2007). The gap between the three traditions seems to have narrowed very little.

Cross-cultural differences may also be a problem for Sakyadhita's education objective. Buddhism attracts many upper-middle-class intellectuals in the Western world (beyond the diasporic Asian population). With the advantages in language (English hegemony) and training in feminist theory, Western Buddhist women appear to dominate the conversation, although some efforts to merge the needs of Western Buddhist women with those of their Asian sisters have been consciously cultivated. In studying Sakyadhita, some observers point out that the organization tends to "prioritize and reflect western feminist approaches and interests" and values Buddhist scholarship/theory over practice (Tomalin 2009, 94; Fenn and Koppedrayar 2008, 50). Although it may be unavoidable, the creation of a Western Buddhism might further divide Buddhism rather than promote unity. The needs for women in existing Buddhist traditions vary greatly. Whether Sakyadhita's current objectives can benefit all Buddhist women and whether it is even possible to promote one common agenda given the diverse nature of Buddhism and feminism remain to be seen.

Notes

1. This paper uses the pinyin system for Chinese names and phrases in English because it is the most commonly used system internationally. However, exceptions are made for those authors who prefer the Wade-Giles system with works published in English. In these cases, pinyin romanization of their names is provided in parentheses after the Wade-Giles romanization.

2. This paper generally uses Pali spelling for Buddhist terms except for in quotations and references, where I have retained the authors' original spellings.

3. Buddhism developed into three major schools. Theravāda is generally viewed as the oldest surviving Bud-

dhism and the school that most closely resembles the original Buddhism, with the most conservative theology and practice. It is popular in South and Southeast Asia, including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Thailand, Myanmar, and Vietnam. Mahāyāna is viewed as a reformed Buddhism with a relatively liberating ideal of gender equality. It became a mainstream movement in the fifth century and eventually spread northeast from India to East Asia, including China, Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. The third school of Buddhist thought is Vajrayāna, also known as Tantric Buddhism, practiced in Tibet, Mongolia, and Western China. It is an offshoot of Mahāyāna Buddhism and is classified as the fifth or the final period of Indian Buddhism.

4. For instance, there are 227 rules for monks and 311 for nuns in Theravāda tradition; 253 for monks and 264 for nuns in Vajrayāna tradition; and 250 for monks and 348 for nuns in Mahāyāna tradition. Most additional rules are gender specific and thus apply only to nuns (see Tsedroen 2006; Tomalin 2009).

5. As indicated in the *Saṅgha Magazine's* website (<http://www.sanghamag.org>), the publication is for nuns and monks only. The general public has no direct access to the magazine. I therefore rely on Chao-hwei's account for the content of the story.

6. Buddhist feminists argue that the Eight Garudhammas resulted from the First Buddhist Council, held three months after the Buddha passed away. The Council's purpose was to safeguard the purity and orthodoxy of Buddhist doctrines and discipline. One result was the compilation of Buddhism's canon, which came to be especially important for Theravāda Buddhism. Five hundred arahant (enlightened monks) attended the meeting—neither nuns nor laypeople were invited. The conservative Mahākassapa, the principle disciple of Buddha, led the meeting and hand-picked the participants, against the more reform-minded Ānanda who was castigated for violating Brahmanical rules. Half of Ānanda's accused errors involved women (i.e., assistance in establishing the nuns' monastic order; permission given to women to pay respect to Buddha's body before men were allowed to do so; and assumed carelessness in not preventing women's teardrops from falling on the Buddha's body). In defending himself, Ānanda argued that Buddha instructed his disciples not to be confined by minor rules. Mahākassapa pressed for specification of such rules. The Buddha did not define them, Ānanda answered. Mahākassapa concluded that without specification from Buddha, no rule would be considered minor (see Laohavanich 2008).

7. Xuanzang (c. 602–664 CE) was probably the most well-known Chinese Buddhist monk in history. Ordained at the age of twenty, he spent much of his adult life searching for and translating Buddhist scriptures. In 629, he reportedly embarked on a seventeen-year overland pilgrimage to India. This journey later inspired Wu Cheng'en's (吳承恩) classic novel *Journey to the West* (西遊記).

8. Self-immolation is one form of body offering in Buddhism and has been practiced in Chinese Buddhism since the early medieval period. The *Lotus Sutta*, a major Mahāyāna scripture, contains probably the most famous case of self-immolation: the Bodhisattva Medicine King sets himself on fire to express his devotion to the Buddha. In this Sutta, the Buddha praises his action and opens up the practice to all. This story of auto-cremation has provided the scriptural inspiration and authority for the practice. In examining accounts of self-immolation in Chinese Buddhist history, Benn (2007) points out that Chinese Buddhists have believed that the practice is a selfless stimulus that evokes a cosmic response. The practice could (often simultaneously) produce at least three types of responses: the rulers responding to the needs of the people within human society, the cosmos responding to human's petitions, and the soul's (possibility of) becoming a Buddha. Benn argues that in the minds of many Buddhists, self-immolation is "far

from being a disrupting force, [but] an act that [is] supremely in harmony with the universe....” (Benn 2007, 6).

9. While Cheng deserves praise for giving voice to her nun informants, her failure to point out problems with such a quotation could lead to misunderstandings. First, anyone who pays attention to the controversy should have known how frequently Chao-hwei uses theory and Buddhist literature to support her claims. Second, a call for a conference to resolve the issue might not have been viable because the Buddhist hierarchy was still mostly controlled by males. Third, Chao-hwei does not dispute the sacredness of the Vinaya, but the quotation misses the central point she was trying to make: at least parts of the Eight Heavy Rules were not entirely laid down by the Buddha, but were a later addition to Buddhist literature. Fourth, the claim about the rights of the laity within the Buddhist community can be disputed (see above). Fifth, there are cases where few would dispute the need for outside interference in one’s family affairs, particularly when domestic violence is involved. Sixth, Chao-hwei had been in the national arena for a few decades by the time of this incident and thus had accumulated fame for herself over the preceding years. Accusing her of using the event merely for her personal gain cannot be entirely justified.

10. This informant incorrectly includes the United States and Burma in Mahāyāna Buddhism and fails to understand that only Japanese Buddhism allows monks to have a married life.

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Healthism and the Bodies of Women: Pleasure and Discipline in the War against Obesity

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Abstract: This paper explores how the discipline required for good health influences female embodiment. It examines the justification in the United States for a war against obesity and the criticism of that war made by Health at Every Size (HAES) proponents.¹ It finds that a “good-health imperative” operates within both the fight against obesity and the size-acceptance movement. I question how such an imperative curtails the range of possibilities for pleasure. The self-monitoring required in eating and exercising for health demands a constant reading of one’s behavior as good/healthy or bad/unhealthy. In addition, attention to health achieved through behavior modification draws focus away from underlying socioeconomic issues. I posit that a feminist position on the war against obesity clearly argues against a focus on weight, but that the larger issue of behavior modification for health remains much more difficult to solve.

Keywords: obesity, discipline, HAES, health, Foucault (Michel), biopower

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Introduction

Fat women occupy a nebulous space in contemporary ethical discourse.² Equating the value of a woman with her appearance clearly violates contemporary standards of academic research. Even in everyday discussions, it would be rare to enter a college classroom in the United States and find a group of students who were unaware and unable to discuss how the contemporary obsession with a highly managed and typically quite thin body has been deleterious to women’s psychological health. The exclusive and narrow model of beauty is the material for many a talk show and popular magazine article. Yet, one can simultaneously support the concept that Americans, and increasingly the rest of the world, are too fat, even if one remains critical of the assumption that thinness is required for attractiveness. Significant differences exist on what should be done about the growing girth of Americans. Should unhealthy foods be taxed? Should health insurance be more expensive for the overweight and obese? Should children be made to exercise more at school? In any case, the idea that something *should* be done remains.

The ability to reject the demonization of fat in one context and to accept fat’s negative status in another is based in the idea that one view of fat (the bad one) arises from sexism and that the other (the good one) arises from a concern about health. It is wrong to equate a woman’s value with her looks, but it is acceptable to encourage that same woman to lose weight if it would augment her health. Thus, while many feminists are sympathetic to canonical works where dieting for “looks” is seen as a practice that encourages demeaning and sexist views of women (Beauvoir 1989; Bordo 2004; Heyes 2007; Lintott 2003; Orbach 1986, 1998, 2009), the same feminists might agree that monitoring weight through behavior modification is positive for women.

For instance, such concerns have caused Rosemarie Tong (2004) to argue that despite risks to the

infringement of individual rights, concerns about body image, and a weight-obsessed population, the costs of an increasingly overweight society justify certain initiatives to help reduce the size of Americans. Tong supports “common-sense” approaches, such as legislation that bans soft drinks at schools, funds nutrition education, subsidizes walking and bike paths, and provides tax incentives to employers that allow for fitness breaks (53). Tong writes that the culture is unhealthy in its excessive overconsumption of all things, including food, and possesses a desire for quick and easy solutions to complex problems. While she makes a passing reference to the epidemic of eating disorders as tied to unrealistic beauty ideals in young women, she does not think that gender is the primary factor in the need for better public health.

In this paper, I consider the effects on female embodiment of theories that encourage behavior modification designed to improve health. I examine how attention toward health, instead of appearance, has shifted attention away from feminist concerns about the objectification of women toward seemingly gender-neutral concerns of proper nutrition and adequate exercise. First I examine two sides of the controversy over weight. One of them is the “good-health imperative” side, which I have divided into two camps. The first is the “anti-fat” camp, which is by far the largest and loudest. This camp encourages viewing fat as an enemy to be conquered in the populace. I will explore the research and public policy proposals surrounding the need to engage in weight monitoring and weight loss (CDC, “Strategies”; Park 2007; Satcher 2001). The other camp, the “health at every size” movement, is composed of researchers who are critical of the focus on weight as a barometer of health (Bacon 2008; Gibbs 2005; Kolata 2007; Mitchell and McTigue 2007; Oliver 2006). This camp investigates how the fear of fat may be unjustified and, moreover, dangerous. It suggests that public health policies designed to curtail weight are more likely to cause poorer health than to improve health.

However, both sides of the debate about weight are allied in their focus on the goal of policy to be better health. This “good-health imperative” argues that our modifiable behaviors should be directed toward improving our physical well-being for our own good, as well as that of others. I argue that close attention should be paid to the actual and possible products of such a seemingly innocent and valuable goal. The good-health imperative requires women to increasingly conform to standards that have obvious alternative economic and social motivations. It passes over structural socioeconomic reasons for weight and poor health disparities and identifies the individual and her poor health choices as its target. Such a move is particularly focused on poor women who are the primary caregivers of children and disproportionately suffer from obesity-related illnesses. Based on these concerns, I address another side, what I call the “critical” side. With attention to fat activists, I will explore the idea of subverting dominant models of appropriate aesthetics. I appeal to the work of Samantha Murray in her book *The ‘Fat’ Female Body* (2009). Murray notes that underlying both the traditional war against obesity and fat activism is a strong implicit theory of the subject. The subject is essentially a free, autonomous agent capable of either modifying herself to be “healthy” or modifying her self-evaluation to love her looks despite social norms. The second discussion will be to consider how modifying one’s body for health entails a different kind of bodily monitoring that limits pleasure. Not only do modification rituals split the subject into a controlling mind over a wayward body, they also imply a far greater reduction on the pleasures of the poor than those of the rich. In conclusion, I call for feminists to follow the empirical and theoretical work that underlines how damaging a focus on weight is for the well-being of women. However, a clear feminist position on the larger issue of health as being produced by behavior modification remains elusive.

The Good-Health Imperative: Anti-Fat and the War against Obesity

A shift in the media campaigns of diet plans in the last several years has been to highlight diets as healthy lifestyles rather than diets as merely providing women with the ability to look better in their swimsuits. The testimonials of success stories usually highlight not only looking good, but being fitter, more active, and able to run around with the children. In the TV show *The Biggest Loser*, where contestants undergo extreme diet and exercise regimes to lose weight, there is much discussion of this challenge being one of “life or death.” If these contestants don’t succeed in conquering their poor health habits, they will “kill themselves.”

But it isn’t just a tactic of sensationalist reality shows and the diet industry to make us think that our fat is killing us; the government also engages in this rhetoric. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have commissioned numerous studies and distributed various public policy proposals for the war against obesity (CDC, “Strategies”). First Lady Michelle Obama has made conquering childhood obesity her cause. Private corporations and state and federal governments propose a variety of policies designed to slim down Americans, including banning junk food in schools, taxing soda, and providing wellness incentives (Mello and Rosenthal 2008; Singer 2010; Pear 2010; Zamosky 2010).

Heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, sleep apnea, asthma, fatty liver disease, osteoarthritis, and polycystic ovary disease are related to obesity, and individuals have shown improvement when they lost weight (Malnick and Knobler 2008). Given these concerns and the rising rate of overweight and obesity over the last several decades (CDC, “U.S. Obesity Trends”), there has been a strong push in governmental recommendations in the last ten years to consider obesity a public health crisis. Former US Surgeon General David Satcher (2001) summarizes the position of the government by saying that “overweight and obesity may soon cause as much preventable disease and death as cigarette smoking.” The comparison to smoking provides the theoretical framework needed to justify a war against obesity. First, smoking is a set of behaviors that are modifiable. While difficult, it is possible for the overweight person to change her habits like a smoker can quit smoking. Second, to quit smoking is achievable. The campaigns against smoking in the United States and Europe are seen as victories for public health advocates (Khuder et al. 2007; Lemmens et al. 2008). A policy-directed war against obesity, the reasoning goes, would yield similar positive results.

In addition to health concerns, the economic cost of obesity-related illnesses strongly motivates the call for action. Many news reports have highlighted, with varying degrees of alarm, the costs of obesity for the US taxpayer (Finkelstein, Fiebelkorn, and Wang 2004; Herper 2006). A recent study (Finkelstein, Trogdon, Cohen, and Dietz 2009) puts the estimate at \$147 billion for 2008. Indeed, the desire of the CDC to quantify the cost of being overweight even extends into reports on the amount of excess airline fuel larger bodies require (Associated Press 2004). An article by Philip J. Cafaro, Richard B. Primack, and Robert L. Zimdhal (2006) argues that obesity is contributing to the loss of biodiversity. The fat are not only unhealthy, they are too expensive and more responsible for global warming than others.

For women, this normalizing force to obey the good-health imperative is tightly connected to the care they provide for others and the primary role they play in feeding and raising children. Women are encouraged to lose weight to be healthier and thus capable of providing better care for their children, as well as to feed their children appropriately so that they do not become overweight. The rising rate of childhood overweight and obesity is worrisome to researchers, since early obesity greatly predicts a variety of negative health outcomes, from asthma, sleep apnea, and polycystic ovary syndrome to type 2

diabetes (Daniels 2006). One of the odder concerns about the rising weight of children is its connection to national security. In 2001, a former US Surgeon General, Dr. Richard Carmona, warned that “America’s obesity epidemic is a national security problem as the more than 9 million overweight and obese children in the country threaten to shrink the pool of eligible servicemen and women in the future” (Gosik 2007).³ Too many fat children will produce too few recruits for the military. Michelle Obama’s campaign against childhood obesity is, in her own words, justified not just by a concern for children’s health, for lowering health care costs, and for creating a healthy workforce, but also out of fear that the United States will run out of soldiers. Recently, the First Lady has echoed Carmona’s words by saying that the “epidemic” of childhood obesity is dangerous for our national security. In her words, “This epidemic also impacts the nation’s security, as obesity is now one of the most common disqualifiers for military service” (Keating 2010).

The attempt to attack childhood obesity can be seen as a more easily defensible public means to obtain more funding and support for wellness initiatives. It also acknowledges the ineffectiveness of “treating” obesity through dieting and hence attacks the problem at its root. But obesity is not primarily a problem for the rich. Obese people—adults and children—are, like military recruits, more likely than their non-obese counterparts to be poor (Enger 2009; Jeffery and French 1996). Poor children are much more likely to be raised by single parents (Dowd 1997) and single parents are overwhelmingly women. The war against obesity is very much a war fought on the bodies of poor women and their children.

The Good-Health Imperative: Health at Every Size

Research that documents the growing proportions of overweight and obese Americans, the cost associated with illnesses correlated with fat bodies, and the health concerns facing the fat underscores the view that better public health requires addressing the weight of the American citizenry. Without attention to weight, other public health goals will be difficult, if not impossible, to address. Even those not classified as overweight or obese are presented with a combination of warnings about the dangers of extra pounds. Everyone should engage in weight maintenance; anyone could slip over that boundary into poor health. If one falls outside of the appropriate weight limits for one’s height, then diet and exercise activities should commence. If a regime of diet and exercise is not initiated, one runs the risk of having one’s behaviors viewed as immoral and pathological (Heyes 2006). It is immoral to be fat because the guiding idea of the war against obesity is that obesity is preventable. It is possible to not become obese; if one does become obese, then one has failed to moderate one’s behavior appropriately. The argument appears to be that obesity is pathological because it is inherently irrational not to do things that are good for your health and to do things that are bad for your health.

However, despite this rhetoric around the need for a war against overweight and obesity, critical discussion does surround the focus on weight as an important measure of health (Gibbs 2005; Kolata 2007; Mitchell and McTigue 2007; Oliver 2006). Recent data on women show that obesity has plateaued in the last decade, suggesting that there might not be an “epidemic” of obesity after all (Flegal et al. 2010, 239). Data on mortality and weight have varied, many having a U-shaped relation between BMI and mortality, where both the very thin and the very large are at risk (Flegal et al. 2010; Keys 1980; Menotti et al. 1993; Waaler 1984). As a nation, Americans are living longer during the same time we are getting fatter (although this is usually attributed to improvements in health care; NIH, “Americans Living Longer”). Indeed, in 2010 there were signs of America’s overall health slightly improving (“America’s Health Rankings” 2010). But despite these positive statistics, the studies note that the health of the poor

continues to deteriorate. The focus on weight obscures much deeper economic and social disparity issues.

Critical assessments of the war against obesity have also drawn attention to how damaging the prejudice against the overweight is. Weight discrimination in the workplace and lower wages for the obese and overweight have been repeatedly documented (Cawley 2004; Haskins and Ransford 2000; Roehling 2002). The idea that the overweight and obese are necessarily unhealthy helps reinforce prejudices that have their origins in less politically correct models of acceptable aesthetics. Non-smokers can loudly rail against smokers, not only with impunity but with moral self-praise, in a way they could not against people of a different skin color. The overweight fall into the category of what could be call “the discriminatable” (and don’t even have the benefit of “coolness” that smokers enjoy in some movies and popular culture). Since the war against obesity is hoping to repeat the behavioral modification gains obtained in the war against smoking, little advocacy exists against the demonization of fat people.

The high failure rate of diets (Kolata 2007; Mann et al. 2007) and the increasing rates of eating disorders provide us with additional evidence of the harmful effects of obsessions over size. Diets are notoriously ineffective in promoting weight loss. One study found that

the potential benefits of dieting on long-term weight outcomes are minimal, the potential benefits of dieting on long-term health outcomes are not clearly or consistently demonstrated, and the potential harms of weight cycling, although not definitively demonstrated, are a clear source of concern. The benefits of dieting are simply too small and the potential harms of dieting are too large for it to be recommended as a safe and effective treatment for obesity. (Mann et al. 2007, 230)

If diets were merely ineffective, their potential harm would be less worrisome. The authors note that it isn’t just that dieting often fails to succeed in taking pounds off; it also results in yo-yo weight gain and loss, which has serious health risks. Dieting takes up a tremendous amount of time and financial resources of the dieter. In addition, the psychological cost of not only being obese, but then “failing” to lose weight, is not insignificant. The comparison to smoking also obscures important differences in the relationship of the overweight person to food and the smoker to cigarettes. Obviously, eating is not possible to “quit” as smoking is. Eating disorders that arise from an original investment in a healthy diet plan provide evidence that modifying eating can have unintended outcomes.

The National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) reports that around 10 million women live with eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia. The highest rates are among girls and young women (Hoek and van Hoeken 2003; NEDA). Only a minority of people who meet “stringent diagnostic criteria” for eating disorders receive mental health care (Hoek and van Hoeken 2003, 394). What is alarming about the lack of treatment for persons with eating disorders is just how dangerous having an eating disorder is: anorexia nervosa has the highest mortality rate of any psychiatric condition, including schizophrenia and bipolar disorders (Park 2007). However, the funding to cure anorexia pales in comparison to less common but more widely publicized disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease and schizophrenia. In 2005, approximately 2.2 million people lived with schizophrenia and NIH funded 250 million dollars for research. Approximately 10 million people have eating disorders, but only 12 million dollars was given to study anorexia nervosa (NEDA). The idea that obesity is a preventable disease would also suggest that anorexia is likewise under the control of the individual and hence, unlike those coping with a “real” disease like Alzheimer’s, individuals experiencing eating disorders should simply start eating normally.

Such data have led to the celebration of the “health at every size” (HAES) movement, whose activists refer to it as “the new peace movement” (Bacon 2008). The thrust of HAES literature is to suggest that

health is possible for people of many different sizes and that a negative rather than positive focus on weight affects one's health. It underlines that dieting is rarely successful and often dangerous; thus, the best approach to greater health, both for the individual and the society, is to stop focusing on weight as a measure of health. If one embraces HAES, one quits dieting and pledges to find "the joy in moving one's body and becoming more physically vital" (HAES, "The Pledge"). As a movement, its very basis is the imperative toward good, or better, health.

The bible of HAES is the book *Health at Every Size* (2008) by Linda Bacon. Therein, Bacon outlines recommendations about nutrition that in many ways are strongly similar to the recommendations found in many health-centered diet plans. One is to eat slowly, increase whole foods, educate oneself about the dangers of packaged and unhealthy foods, such as high-fructose corn syrup (253-55). But the modification plan is based on the idea that instead of dieting per se one finds an intuitive, body-driven way of eating. Bacon argues for a "set-point" theory of weight that suggests one's body intuitively knows a good weight for itself, and if one "listens" to it, it will settle on a healthy weight (11-28). She writes that while education about nutrition is valuable—and indeed the book contains a fair amount of it—ultimately one should trust one's intuition about eating: "As valuable as academic research may be, your intuition is much more effective in guiding you to feed yourself well" (75).

The continuity between HAES and the war against obesity is the imperative to do what is healthy. On the side of the war against obesity, it is imperative to monitor weight and reduce the number of overweight and obese persons. On the side of HAES, it is imperative to stop monitoring weight as the marker of good health and to engage in a variety of healthy practices, including self-esteem building exercises.

Critical Assessments: Fat Activism

In *The History of Sexuality. Vol. 2: The Use of Pleasure* (1990), Michel Foucault explores how the growth of "priestly power" in early Christianity moved against the "arts of existence" and "techniques of the self" of the classical age (11). These early practices are more reflective of a connection with the real nature of embodiment. While Foucault is famously difficult to read as an advocate, one can read in his texts the preference for the counter-aesthetic to any particular dominant norm that has acquired the status of a stable, static truth. In *The Use of Pleasure*, one finds a celebration of these ancient techniques and a call to complete such projects: "Still, I thought that the long history of these aesthetics of existence and these technologies of the self remained to be done, or resumed" (11).

What might such a "completion" look like? One example of this kind of technique can be found in the case of the size-acceptance movement and fat activism providing a counter-aesthetics to the overwhelming media exposure of limited models of beauty (Wann 1998). Images of fat women as beautiful, sexy, confident, and, most of all, not hiding their fatness are disruptive to the consensus of what beauty requires. The "fat-o-sphere," the ever-developing online community of fat activists and size-acceptance bloggers, provides a place for women-of-size celebrations and a community that mobilizes against the prevailing norms and for advocacy and education ("Big Fat Deal" 2011; "Big Fat Facts" 2011; Harding and Kirby 2009). As with other largely online communities, it is difficult to suggest that there is a simple consensus about health, but many fat-activist bloggers do ally themselves with HAES insofar as it proclaims that the war against obesity is pointless and destructive for the psychological and physical well-being of fat people.

Samantha Murray's *The 'Fat' Female Body* (2008) provides one of the most extensive considerations

of how fatness is constructed both within the fat activist movement and within the larger anti-fat world. Murray writes that public health policies directed toward encouraging “proper” eating and exercise are not educational so much as *disciplinary* (29). But this discipline is not to be administered centrally by the government; rather, it is to be instituted at the individual level. People in the developed world are aware of the correlation of obesity and overweight with poor health, thus public health policies do not inform people of the problem; rather, they provide different methods, rules, and tools for how to master the wayward body. Murray notes that despite the seemingly population-wide focus of public health policies, they depend upon a certain idea of the individual controlling her behavior.

Take Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move!” program. On the website of “Let’s Move!” is a link to “5 simple steps to success” (www.letsmove.gov). Clicking on this link will take one to a variety of groups that each have their own “steps” to success: parents, health-care providers, children and older youth, community leaders, chefs, schools, and elected officials. Each subgroup then has five things an individual member of that community is supposed to do. The subgroup of children, those who one might think are least empowered to have self-directed health, are also targeted as capable of behavior modification. Children should: (1) Move everyday!, (2) Try new fruits and vegetables, (3) Drink lots of water, (4) Do jumping jacks to break up TV time, and (5) Help make dinner. This assumes that it is individuals who control the future of health. Even children must be encouraged to regard their bodies and behaviors as improvement projects directed toward better health.

Murray (2008) notes that this kind of “humanist/individualist logic” is so powerful that any data provided to contradict it are often rejected (71). The overwhelming evidence of the failure of diets, as cited above, is such an example. Medicine itself is filled with the blind insistence that the individual has the power to change her weight; thus, obeying the good-health imperative becomes a moral issue. “Given the oft-proclaimed ‘objectivity’ of medicine, it is telling that the very ways in which we separate ‘pathological’ bodies from ‘normal’ bodies is just as much about upholding morality as it is about ‘health’” (71). The consequence of fatness being something one can overcome with proper action implies that those who have not overcome it are to blame. The fat itself is not the problem, it is the individual *within* the fat, the self who controls the fat. This creates a divided self, where the true self is some kind of disembodied will that exerts, or fails to exert, its influence over the mundane body.

But in her discussion of fat activism Murray draws a different face on the same problem. She provides an important examination of how the autonomous liberal subject haunts the seemingly emancipating politics of fat activism. Murray argues that a type of disembodied autonomy underlies fat activism, where one is replacing one set of negative stereotypes with positive, celebratory ones. In order for such a model to work, a type of Cartesian dualism must be implicit, where the mind is seen as free in relation to the body. The celebration of fleshliness and of fat is counter to the dominant norms. “The ‘fat goddess,’ standing firm against the world with her cottage-cheese thighs akimbo refuses normative ways of knowing: the knowledge others believe they have of her” (97). But to celebrate one’s fatness against the dominant aesthetic norm requires the now-liberated fat person to be separated in a different fashion from her body. “One must be ‘fat and proud,’ with no grey areas, no contradictions, no questions, no ambivalence” (99). Such a project is based in the idea that the core self is the individual’s will. I am what I judge myself to be; I am not what others judge me to be. Murray observes that the same humanist/individualist logic appears to be at play in much fat-positive literature, and the true nature of our embodied selves remains hidden. “As women, our bodies have been made strange to us: projects we are set apart from, and even the language we employ to talk about our bodies constantly moves from our flesh

to our selves” (166).

Thus I can either, in the case of the war against obesity, modify my eating and exercise to fit a certain model of health and beauty, or, in the case of fat activism, I can alter my mind to stop seeing my body as loathsome. If the public health outcry tells us to change our bodies, fat activists tell us to change our minds. As Murray justly points out, we are always embodied and intersubjective and thus have no ability to independently think our way into a world where fat equals fabulous. My beliefs about my own body are not separate from having a body, nor are they separate from the long history of discourse about bodies in my social world.

Certainly, in the online community that considers fat activism and fat acceptance, one finds both the kind of dualism Murray notes and a clear understanding that the kinds of changes called for require a social, not just an individual, revolution. Take, for instance, the web page about facts that is part of *Big Fat Blog* (www.bigfatfacts.com). The page summarizes much of the work of HAES and outlines how many “facts” about obesity are overblown, if not altogether false. The page ends with this call:

OUR COLLECTIVE TRUTH: What do you suppose would happen if size were no longer an issue?
What if there was no such thing as being too fat, obese, overweight, heavy, super-sized, or girthy?
Would we be liberated to create more art?
To write more books?
To be involved in more theater?
To participate more as global citizens of the world?
To see more of the world?
To see more of each other?
To revel in our meals?
To revel in our bodies?
To revel in one another?
To dance naked in the sunlight, pleasuring in bodies big enough to contain all our possibilities?
Here's to boldly living the questions.

A call to a world free from the confining stereotypes of fat hatred is appealing and common to other feminist calls for emancipation from norms that harm rather than help. But, as Murray notes, if I “revel in my body,” who is “reveling”? Am I something separate from my body? While the identity politics of changing the valuation of fat to one that is, at minimum, inclusive or even celebratory does provide important counter-aesthetics, it repeats the sense that the self is in charge. The individual, through some kind of action, can obtain the proper body or the proper attitude toward the body.

Critical Assessment: Modifying Pleasure

For many, a healthy body image remains elusive in a culture inundated with the emphasis on how weight is related to health and beauty. For women, this struggle is particularly trenchant, and writers have long drawn connections between feminism, fat prejudice, and eating disorders (Bartky 1990; Bordo 2004; Braziel and LeBesco 2001; Orbach 1998; Wann 1998). In a society that embraces a more and more plastic and photoshopped model of beauty, women aren't just told to be thin, but to *manage* their appearance. The idea of managed bodies encourages the view that if you are willing to devote yourself to self-improvement, you can have an ideal body. Dieting, chemically treated and dyed hair, makeup, a skincare regimen, toning exercises, cosmetic surgery, clothes, and teeth-whitening have all made the female body a site of infinite improvement and modification. Admittedly, men's bodies are also increasingly a site of

such improvements, but women are by far the main target of the diet and beauty industry.

A diet-centered life requires a divided position toward one's embodiment, regardless of whether one undertakes dieting because of health concerns or aesthetic ones (or, as many people do, a combination of both). My body becomes the place where I engage in a project, like building a house. I have a blueprint (my diet plan), the raw materials (my body), and a move-in date (a certain weight, lower blood pressure, etc.). I think that it is difficult, if not impossible, for the individual being asked to limit her consumption in order to obtain a thinner body for health reasons to separate out this goal from that related to the overwhelming cultural aesthetics of thin bodies as beautiful ones. But, assuming one can at least focus on health as the goal, the body offers significant resistance. The goal of a healthy body, and the subsequent control that pursuing such a goal requires, can be equal in discipline to, if not more disciplinary than, dieting to obtain an aesthetic standard. Sandra Bartky (1990) highlights how much dieting impairs the lived reality of the dieter, since it causes the body to become the enemy. As she writes,

Dieting disciplines the body's hungers: Appetite must be monitored at all times and governed by an iron will. Since the innocent need of the organism for food will not be denied, the body becomes one's enemy, an alien being bent on thwarting the disciplinary project. (66)

I will assume that the readers of this paper follow Bartky's assessment that there is something dangerous about our culture's obsession with modifying the bodies of women to fit cultural norms of beauty and acceptability. However, it would appear that a woman in pursuit of a health goal, who is changing her diet to a healthier one, would be just as engaged in a disciplinary project, and that her project would be lived without the input provided in large part by feminist work that critiques beauty norms. If Mary chooses not to diet due to a rejection of limiting beauty norms, she can find in this rejection a path of liberation. If Mary chooses, against well-researched medical advice, not to modify her diet, she will have a difficult time justifying this decision in standard discourse.

Hunger does not only appear as an indication that the body requires food. Hunger can appear after a good meal, as a demand for unhealthy foods in unhealthy quantities. Indeed, many persons in the Western world have never experienced the extreme hunger that arises from a survival instinct. Our hunger is deeply shaped by desires that far transcend health. The pleasure we receive from eating is as complex and multifaceted as the pleasure we receive from sexuality.

To eat healthily, I must spend a sufficient amount of time informing myself about nutrition. I must purchase and cook healthy food (something that is not always easy). I must make sure to assess options when I travel or go out to eat. I must guard against excess in my consumption. I must make sure to guard against my desires for fattening, artificial, and comfort foods. The latter requires, for many, breaking with familial and social settings where favorite foods and the mutual enjoyment of them are front and center. The benefit of such discipline is supposedly the increased pleasure that comes with better health—such as more energy and less need for medication.

Permissible pleasures are thus healthy pleasures. Forbidden pleasures are fatty comfort food, the satisfaction of eating too much, the double pleasure experienced when consuming good things that are forbidden, and the abatement of anxiety that comes with a rush of blood to the stomach. These pleasures are increasingly associated with dangerous behavior that must be curtailed. On the glossy website of *Obesity, Fitness & Wellness Week*, America's Health Rankings (a joint project with the United Health foundation, American Public Health Association, and Partnership for Prevention) proclaims: "Inaction is no longer an option where our nation's health is concerned."⁴ It is vital for us to act to ensure better public health, and the populace is encouraged to take "steps" to personally modify their behavior to obtain this

necessary goal. Appropriate pleasures are physical activity, moderate levels of healthy food consumption, and the occasional treat of an unhealthy beloved food. Such modification plans acknowledge hunger as an important part of our embodiment, one that should not be denied in anorexia or ignored in an extreme diet. However, the individual is encouraged to respond only to “real” hunger—hunger that is related to the continuation of one’s existence—and to reject and modify “false” hunger—hunger related to emotional needs, historical associations, and social situations.

Even the pleasures one might obtain in dieting are now curtailed under the ideal of health. You can modify your diet, but only because it is good for your health. The popular American morning news show, *The Today Show*, often features Dr. Nancy Snyderman and nutritionist Joy Bauer discussing the dangers of poor eating and the successes of men and women in “The Joy Fit Club” who have lost weight. However, Snyderman is also often presenting stories about the worrisome excesses of dieting—such as “Mommy-rexia” (where pregnant women diet in order to not gain too much weight)—and the rising rate of teen eating disorders. These people are either pitied or strongly shamed (in the case of “Mommy-rexia”). The imperative is clear—dieting must be part of a health project; it cannot be an aesthetic one alone.

Given the high failure rate of diets and the sheer impossibility for most women to achieve a culturally “ideal” body, it is surprising that so many women continue to reinvest in this likely doomed project. In the chapter “Foucault Goes to Weight Watchers (Redux),” Heyes (2007) explores how dieting produces self-transformative possibilities for dieters. While admittedly oppressive and restricting, dieting allows for an attentiveness to the self. Heyes notes how the very practices of monitoring food and tracking weight loss provide a place in which women can take pleasure in the power that comes with a care of the self, even if, ultimately, the very reasons for engaging in such practices are suspect. Heyes does not suggest that the power that results from dieting is a reason to continue such practices, largely concurring with the verdict that they are politically motivated and failed endeavors for women, but argues rather that feminists must recognize the positive experience women have in diet rituals and realize that their erasure would be missed if not replaced.

Lintott (2003) also discusses how dieting is not without its pleasures. Extreme dieting can be read as obedience to an aesthetic norm, but it also affords women the opportunity to experience the “sublime.” In anorexia, for instance, the individual with an eating disorder feels a kind of triumph over nature, in particular over the insistent force of hunger. The body is now vanquished—“the eating-disordered individual believes she is a being with a body, but she cannot entirely identify herself with her body”—and the dieter is “stoked as it is by starvation and deprivation, the hunger of the eating-disordered individual is as immense and formless as the sky above” (75). Dieting thus becomes a pleasure in itself, devoid of any needed connection to health or beauty.

We find a similar path in Foucault’s discussion of avoiding the normalization of pleasures into ones guided by moderation. He advocates pleasures that must not be “middle pleasures” (such as having a nice glass of wine or a good sandwich). Instead, Foucault wants a pleasure that is “so deep, so intense” that he “couldn’t survive it” (1996, 378). Lintott suggests that the reason for the continuation of extreme dieting might indeed be the fact that women are presented with few options to enjoy a sublime experience, and the desire for this kind of pleasure might lead women into the risky business of excessive forms of self-monitoring. The pleasure of sating hunger with excess or of refusing hunger altogether might be two pleasures we increasingly are encouraged to erase in the march toward healthy bodies.

It is important to acknowledge the tremendous force, both social and individual, that one experiences when violating the good-health imperative. The continual association of certain behaviors with poor

health encourages spending one's time monitoring food intake, activity levels, and appropriate healthy psychological states. I am both to love my body and modify my body. I should change who I am, but not too much, not so much that my psychological or physical health suffers. An elusive and shifting model of the "self" and the "body" appears, and one is trying to negotiate now both attitudes and behaviors around an endless supply of health recommendations. One should want appropriate pleasures and restrict inappropriate ones to "healthy" sizes, like the small bags of cookies that have only 100 calories. Excessive, intense, sublime pleasures are forbidden if they are harmful to one's well-being.

The tightest noose around bodily pleasures today is the set of norms regarding health. I cannot engage in any behavior without processing it as healthy/good or unhealthy/bad. The spread of the knowledge about health now extends far beyond the endless prescriptions regarding diet and exercise. Everything from watching TV (Mistry, Minkovitz, Strobino, and Borzekowski 2007), getting an education (Ross and Wu 1995), and working late at night (Klitzman, House, Israel, and Mero 1990), to having friends (Marmot 2005) is codified. Each activity is studied for how it is correlated with one's health. No matter how apparently removed a behavior, thought, or feeling is from the physical operations of one's body, they are accompanied by a sometimes quiet, sometimes loud running commentary on their relative health risks and benefits. While HAES offers an important corrective to the zealotry of the war against obesity, it too is replete with a set of prescriptions about proper and improper attitudes and behaviors.

The public's relationship with food is increasingly monitored by those interested in the good-health imperative. As one of the most obvious sites of combating behavior-related disease and disability, getting the populace to change its eating habits is seen as an imperative in developed societies. Whether it is with attention to weight or without, proper diet is seen as a precursor to good health. Rejecting and transcending healthy food behaviors is a source of pleasure to some, but the argument goes that more pleasure is available to those who maintain good health, even if the price is the limitation of certain pleasures. I am healthier if I do not overindulge and limit my intake of poor-quality food choices. This economy of pleasure is very much an economy that is sensible to those who have access to other kinds of pleasure. To the poor in the United States, pleasures of food are likely to be available and affordable. The good-health imperative remains deeply embedded in the privilege of the middle class, not just in its economic assumptions but insofar as those assumptions include a modification of pleasure that more adversely affects the poor than the rich.

Conclusion: Feminist Approaches to Health

The fact that America, as a rich nation, provides its poor with such minimal health care should weigh heavily on our consciences. We lack fresh, local foods in low-income areas and have a paucity of safe spaces in which we can be active and explore the natural world. It is no laughing matter to see ever younger children suffer from obesity-related illnesses, such as type 2 diabetes. Many of Michelle Obama's proposals, like those of the CDC and the NIH, are reasonable. If all other things were equal, the following of these proposals by the populace would likely result in certain health markers—blood pressure, glucose levels, cholesterol—shifting to levels that are correlated with better health outcomes. It remains unclear, given how rarely dieting results in weight loss, whether Americans would become significantly smaller, but likely they would have better health.

But all things are not equal. Such health policies encourage and promote a set of practices designed to track and monitor the population's behavior. The monitoring would increasingly become the responsibility of the medical community and of the health insurance industry. The focus moves away

from poverty and toward “preventable” behaviors, thus taking attention away from the structural issue—socioeconomic disparity—toward the individual issue of one’s weight. The amount of attention given to weight highlights the lack of attention given to poverty. As Nancy Tuana writes, “What we attend to and what we ignore are often complexly interwoven with values and politics” (2008, 785). Socioeconomic issues are acknowledged and studied in the war against obesity, but the rhetoric goes that since good health is good for everyone, the poor also need public health programs, rather than focusing on the causes and possible solutions for poverty. In addition, good health programs augment the idea that fat people need to be saved from themselves by the intervention of public service campaigns, wellness incentives, and diet and exercise regimes. As I wouldn’t hesitate to pull a stranger back from stepping out in front of a car, I apparently should feel no hesitation to cajole and blame the overweight for any and all health problems they face. The promotion of diet and exercise programs under the guise of “it’s good for you!” presents a message ridden with normative assumptions.

Where to now as a feminist interested in promoting the well-being of women? The “good-health imperative” party described above seems clearly biased in its first, anti-fat, formulation, but far more feminist-friendly in its health-at-every-size approach. HAES avoids the obvious pitfalls of conflating health policies with our deeply embedded aesthetic values, which themselves are often grounded upon highly restrictive objectifications of women. Feminists could advocate against using weight as a measure of health and encourage approaches that value healthy eating, active lifestyles, and a removal of attention to looks or weight. For instance, feminists could call for a modification to public health programs like Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move!” Instead of focusing on weight as the standard of healthy children, feminists could argue for a straightforward focus on health without worrying about children’s weight. Benchmarks of progress, such as blood sugar levels and blood pressure, would be free from prejudicial stereotyping and would likely be far more objective. At first glance, such an approach is attractive. It doesn’t throw the baby out with the bathwater: it doesn’t eschew focus on the betterment of the health of women and children in reaction to the sexist, objectifying, and classist attitudes that inform the rhetoric of the war against obesity. It appears clear to me that the use of public funds and attention toward monitoring weight is neither ethical nor functional. Instead, the kinds of practices that are clearly demonstrated to promote health can be encouraged without assuming that their effect on weight proves or disproves their success.

But upon closer examination, some of the critical points raised above remain. A rather monolithic view of the need to modify one’s behavior for health persists. The notion of the good-health imperative says that reasonable, well-informed persons should be engaged in projects of self-improvement if they violate medical standards of health. As I have argued above, there are a couple of problems with such an approach. The kinds of food-related pleasure marked as excessive and unhealthy, such as overeating, are pleasures that are more affordable. Thus, while to wealthier persons the loss of these pleasures might be minimal, this is not necessarily the case for the poor.

In addition, self-improvement projects targeting better eating and increased activity, even if they are stripped of a focus on weight, assume a subject who is both capable of a distanced approach to her body and not fundamentally entwined with other persons. To engage in a bodily self-improvement project, I must be capable of taking a split view of myself, where my mind controls the wayward body. In addition, the self-improvement perspective assumes that health is an individual concern addressable by individual decisions and behaviors. Since we are beings dependent upon and caring for others, few of my decisions are made simply for myself, by myself. This is particularly the case for women who take on the lion’s share

of caregiving for dependents.

The nuances of biopower playing out in public health discourse have only been cursorily explored here, and they deserve greater examination. How is the war against obesity funded in research institutions and within the government? What are the implications of having medical providers monitor the population? What are the expectations of good health behaviors for a community with limited resources? While important critical voices about the war against obesity, such as HAES, do exist, I believe they will only be listened to as long as they support the fundamental premise of the good-health imperative: all discussion must obey a directive toward health. Health becomes an argument-ending trump card.

Finally, I wish to ask: should the goal of good health take precedence over other feminist values? I am deeply concerned about the value of public projects—such as public health policies—that are directed at modifying our behavior. In particular, I find the increasing corporate, governmental, and social pressure to eliminate unhealthy habits from one's behavior disturbing. Such pressure assumes a simple type of agency behind behaviors that are far more complex than a series of "choices," ignoring one's intersubjective and embodied condition, and consequently passing over the fact that the war against obesity is not a gender-neutral battle. The exclusive focus on health turns our attention away from the economic and social situation of poor women toward the shape of their bodies and those of their children, and it reinforces the unquestionable authority of the medical field. Promoting good health appears to be a politically neutral and universally valued goal, and this claim alone should call for greater scrutiny from feminists.

Notes

1. In the interest of space limitations, this paper will consider the media attention and public health policy surrounding the war against obesity and overweight in the United States alone. It is important to note, however, that the empirical and experimental research that guides media reports and US public health policy often draws from studies conducted outside the United States.

2. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) qualifies someone as overweight if her Body Mass Index (BMI) is 25-29.9, obese if her BMI is 30-39.9, and extremely obese if her BMI is above 40. (To calculate BMI, divide weight in pounds by height in inches squared, then multiply the results by a conversion factor of 703.) Some discussion exists whether BMI is an accurate measurement of fatness (Burkhauser and Cawley 2008). One of the main problems with BMI is that it does not measure waist to hip ratio, which causes some very fit persons to be considered overweight or obese. Studies have shown that for adults waist-to-hip ratio is a better predictor of mortality than BMI (Srikanthan, Seeman, and Karlamangla 2009).

3. Richard Carmona is now the Health and Wellness Chairperson of the STOP Obesity Alliance. According to the organization's website, "The Strategies to Overcome and Prevent (STOP) Obesity Alliance is a collaboration of consumer, provider, government, labor, business, health insurer and quality-of-care organizations united to drive innovative and practical strategies that combat obesity" (STOP). The close connection between business, health insurance, government, and research institutions (STOP operates out of The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services), and the fact that many anti-obesity researchers receive substantial income from studies funded by the diet and health-care industry, are important to highlight. For more, see Oliver's *Fat Politics*.

4. This research-gathering institution is funded by United Healthcare, a private insurance company. As with much scientific research, it is difficult to find studies that have not been sponsored by corporate interests.

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Grappling with Gender: Exploring Masculinity and Gender in the Bodies, Performances, and Emotions of Scholastic Wrestlers

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Abstract: We contribute to the sociology of sport and gender literature with an ethnographic analysis of scholastic wrestling by observing the current climate of masculinity and gender. Our results suggest that it is necessary to understand men and sporting behavior within a broader framework of gender, not just masculinity, because the behavior of high school wrestlers fell along a gender continuum between an orthodox masculinity and femininity. Our exploration of the body, performance, and emotion practices of scholastic wrestlers gives credence to the current critiques of a hegemonic masculinity in men's sports. We show that gender is not dichotomous and that even in the highly masculinized sport of wrestling, feminine behavior by men is evident.

Keywords: gender, gender continuum, hegemonic masculinity, inclusive masculinity, orthodox masculinity, sports, wrestling

Social scientists and other scholars have long been interested in the social construction of masculinity as a way to understand and address gender inequality. The scholarly disciplines of women's studies, men's and masculinities studies, and gender studies emerged with similar interests in gender equality. As these disciplines matured, so have their assessments of the causes and consequences of the structures of power in which some men dominate women and some groups of men. An early conceptual development in these fields was *hegemonic masculinity*, which is seen as playing a pivotal role in continued gender dominance. Using the context of scholastic wrestling, we comment on the debates surrounding the relevance of hegemonic masculinity in masculinities and gender studies and offer the conceptual tool of a *gender continuum* as a way to better explain masculinity and gender in contemporary society.

Theoretical and Empirical Considerations

Hegemonic masculinity is commonly used in social science and humanities literature to explain the prevalence and tenacity of men's gender dominance (Brod 1987; Connell 1995). Working through ideological domination, compliance, and acceptance (Anderson 2005), hegemonic masculinity is tied to structures of power and refers to "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Connell 1995, 77). Discussions using the concept of hegemonic masculinity highlight its outcomes, including physical strength, exclusive heterosexuality, competitiveness, homophobia, and emotional detachment (Brod 1987; Connell 1987; McDonald 2009; Messner 2002; Pascoe 2007; Wellard 2002). Thus, the concept of hegemonic masculinity is used to explain male dominance and to describe a set of gendered outcomes.

Despite the ubiquitous emphasis on the concept of hegemonic masculinity, some long-standing

problems exist with its use. Some key theoretical concerns are that it cannot adequately account for men's subjectivity and agency (Demetriou 2001; Messerschmidt 2000; Miller 1998; Seidler 2006) or for the emergent and context-specific characteristics of social life (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Hearn 2004; Swain 2003; Van Lenning 2004). Another concern is that masculine behavior is conflated with male bodies, assuming that male bodies are the location of masculinity. However, a wide array of orthodox masculine behavior can be seen in female bodies (Halberstam 1998; Pascoe 2007), and a wide array of feminine behavior can be seen in male bodies. Pascoe (2007, 5) asserts that masculinity should not be tied to male bodies, but rather to sets of behaviors that are dominant and expressed through sexualized discourse. Focusing on the male body reifies the biological basis of gender and creates simplistic categorization and power dynamics as based on male bodies. As critiques of hegemonic masculinity develop and emerge, the ability of the concept, in all its theoretical guises, to explain gender inequality becomes even more problematic because in attempts to explain everything, it ends up explaining very little. Research on masculinity needs to push beyond the recognition of the hegemony of masculinity (Hearn 2004; Pronger 1990) and develop more complicated tools to understand men and masculinity (Van Lenning 2004).

Some recent sport and cultural research reveals highly nuanced gender experiences in a variety of sporting cultures and thus further engages debates about the usefulness of hegemonic masculinity as a concept. Within literature on sporting cultures, orthodox and alternative masculinities are identified. In many cases, orthodox masculine behavior is dominant but alternative masculinities are just as much a part of the culture. In a study of surfing cultures in Australia, Waitt and Warren (2008, 356) found a strong orthodox masculinity along with other types of masculinities. Domination, subordination, institutional authorization, and complicity were evident and created particular styles of masculinity as hegemonic. However, "the subjectivities of surfer [sic] are always contingent upon how the spatial, temporal, desires, abilities, practices and experiences of bodies reside in each other" (Waitt and Warren 2008, 363). A similar argument about the contingent though dominant nature of orthodox masculinity is made by Robinson (2008) in her study of rock climbing, Wheaton (2000) in her research on windsurfers, and Pringle and Markula (2005) and Pringle (2009) in their work on rugby.

Anderson and McGuire (2010) and Adams, Anderson, and McCormack (2010) offer an analysis of British football in which orthodox and alternative masculinities coexist rather than orthodox masculinity being dominant. These authors found two dominant discourses in sporting masculinities. One discourse is orthodox, with principles of homophobia, misogyny, and excessive risk taking (Anderson and McGuire 2010) that use narratives of war, gender, and sexuality to enhance performance (Adams, Anderson, and McCormack 2010). This type of discourse is used primarily by the football coaches. The other discourse challenges orthodox masculinity through processes of segmentation of sporting and social identities (Adams, Anderson, and McCormack 2010) and the contestation of the fundamental principles of orthodox masculinity by inclusive masculinity making (Anderson and McGuire 2010). This discourse is used primarily by football players. Adams's (2011, 579) ethnographic work with a US university soccer team shows that the team as a whole generally demonstrates "metrosexual and inclusive behaviors and attitudes." Thorpe's (2010) research on snowboarding and Miller's (2001) general overview of sport show that traditional understandings of gender and orthodox masculinity are absent in some sport settings. Taken together, this empirical research on sports makes a strong case that what is needed is a broader definition and understanding of masculinity and gender that goes beyond that offered by the concept of hegemonic masculinity and the dichotomous gendered framework of femininity and masculinity.

Pringle and Markula (2005, 247) argue that dominant orthodox masculinity is not consistently or unambiguously present in sport. Using ethnographic and interpretive data and focusing on sport, they propose instead that gender dominance is about contextual power and sets of behavior. Men and boys create multiple definitions of “what it means to be a man,” with a number of choices and paths (Fisher and Shay 2009, 3). Anderson (2009) argues that in the United States and Western Europe there is no hegemonic masculinity but an inclusive masculinity in which there are multiple masculinities that hold dominant positions and that none of them have cultural hegemony. Thorpe (2010, 184) comments that “unlike hegemonic masculinity or masculine domination, a feminist interpretation of field also encourages us to move beyond conceptions of men as the bearers of power and question the tendency in previous studies to dichotomize the experiences of men and women.” Mindful of the critiques of hegemonic masculinity, the clear need for more nuanced analyses of masculinity in sport, and the new lenses for research on sport and gender and masculinities, we developed a research design to study gender and masculinity in scholastic wrestling.

Methodology

Making use of one’s life course events to conduct qualitative sociological research, such as observing and/or coaching an extracurricular activity of one’s child, is sometimes termed opportunistic (Riemer 1977). Adler and Adler (1997) and Fine (1987) demonstrate the successfully managed fieldwork sites of their children’s lives and topics in which scholars have other personal interest (e.g., Fine 1996, 1998). As parents of a high school wrestler (one, a coach), we managed multiple selves while in the field (Reinharz 1997). Given the multiple roles held by us, including father, mother, coach, fan, and researcher, we were able to access the research site and collect and analyze data from varied perspectives, giving us richer data sets and analyses.

We collected and analyzed data using an inductive approach, and we employed the qualitative method of participant observation in the research sites, making close observations, while there, and making field notes upon leaving the research sites (Duneier 1999; Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995; May 2001; Montemurro 2006). Participation with and observations of wrestlers, parents, fans, and coaches at youth and high school wrestling events during seven wrestling seasons, Fall 2003 to Spring 2010, were used to collect data for this project. Our research roles in the field were, for the most part, covert. For the vast majority of the time our behavior in the field was not any different than it would have been had we been only parents and coaches and not researchers. We did not attend events, talk to anyone, or observe anyone that we would not have had we been only parents and a coach. We were not granted any special access, nor did we ask questions or behave in any way that was outside the normative behaviors of parents and coaches in order to fulfill our researcher roles. To protect those involved in the study, we use pseudonyms throughout the analysis and in the data presentation. As with most participant-observation strategies, while in the field, we held uncountable numbers of conversations with parents and other observers. We attended wrestling practices, meets, and tournaments, alone and together. While in and out of the field sites, we discussed wrestling observations and took individual and joint field notes.

During the collection and analytical stages of this research, we used a “constant comparative method” to weave analytical conversations amongst the participant observation and informal interviewing data (Glaser and Strauss 1967), and to reassess our fieldwork roles and analytical foci. This method kept the analysis true to the data by checking and rechecking pieces of data analysis against prior analyses. In this way, we made sure that the analyses were congruent; in cases where some pieces of data did not make

sense or contradicted other pieces, we were able to reformulate analysis to take into consideration the new data. During data collection stages, we had multiple analytical conversations, both in and out of the field, discussing the common themes and patterns we had observed. This was how we selected the events for inclusion in the project. As themes emerged, and we returned to the literature and then came back to the data again, behaviors kept falling into sets of patterns. The events included in our findings section are those that we found best typified the theme. After collecting data over seven wrestling seasons, we were seeing very little new information in the field, so we agreed that we had reached theoretical saturation (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

Description of Research Context

We observed three different age levels of scholastic wrestling: a youth wrestling club, a middle school wrestling team, and a high school wrestling team. The wrestlers included in this study were almost exclusively boys and young men, white, from the United States (although there was one Canadian), working and middle class, and apparently heterosexual. The youth, middle school, and high school teams most closely followed were from Midwestern Catholic schools. Over the seven seasons of observation, only two youth girl wrestlers were members of the teams we observed. Each wrestled for only one season. Except for the brief careers of those two youth wrestlers, women's roles in the wrestling communities were as family members, friends, or cheerleaders. Mostly, but not always, mothers of the wrestlers were in the background when fathers were present.

Regardless of where the wrestling took place, rules for all age levels called for wrestling to be performed in the center of a large thirty-eight foot by thirty-eight foot square mat made of thick shock-absorbing vinyl-covered foam (Diehl 2003). Unlike the professional wrestling one might see on television, the rules for amateur wrestling are very specific and safety minded. There are three periods to a wrestling match. Depending on the age level, the duration of a period can be from thirty seconds to two minutes long. Both wrestlers begin the first period standing in the center of the mat where they try to take each other down. At the start of the second period, one wrestler is given the choice to choose the offense position (where he is up on one knee, and his opponent is down on both hands and knees), the defense position (where he is down, and his opponent is up), or neutral position (where both are standing). At the start of the third period, the opposite wrestler is given the same choices. Points are scored by gaining a takedown (two points) an escape (one point), a reversal (two points), or a near fall (two, three, or four points). The wrestler with the most points at the end of the third period wins the match. An exception to this, and possibly the most exciting part of wrestling, is the rule that either wrestler, no matter what the current score, can immediately win the match by scoring a fall (pin). "A fall occurs when any part of both shoulders or scapula of either wrestler are in contact with the mat for two seconds," to be silently counted by the referee (Diehl 2003, 20); then, he or she slaps the mat signaling the end to the match. As a closing gesture of sportsmanship, both wrestlers shake hands. As a final show to the crowd, the referee grasps their hands during the hand shake and holds up the winner's hand, and both wrestlers exit the mat.

Sites in which we observed wrestling and masculinity were places such as the daily practice room, dual meets, and tournaments. The practice room in our study was only big enough to tightly fit two, full-sized, wrestling mats, with padded walls all around from floor level to about six feet high. Temperature in the room is intentionally kept high (about ninety degrees Fahrenheit) to keep the wrestlers' muscles warm so they are less apt to experience pulls and strains. This also facilitates excessive perspiration for those who are trying to "make weight."

Dual meets are where two wrestling teams compete, typically at the home team's school gymnasium. In a dual meet situation, a wrestling mat is placed directly in the center of the gym, where only one wrestling match takes place at a time. Fold-up-style steel banquet chairs are lined up along two sides of the mat, where coaches and wrestlers sit, often in order of weight class. The two teams are basically facing one another, and throughout the meet, wrestlers are typically sitting right across from the person they will be competing against or have competed against. During the meet, wrestlers either sit in their respective seats while others are wrestling, or they warm up behind their team's chairs. Although the setup of a meet seems orderly, the neatly lined-up chairs become scattered from the excitement of a particular match or the need for wrestlers and coaches to converse with one another.

Wrestling tournaments also usually take place in school gymnasiums. However, there may be three or more wrestling mats in the center of the gym, depending on the size of the tournament and the gym. In a tournament setting, unlike a dual meet, there are no chairs set up for the wrestlers. Upcoming wrestlers warm up in an inconspicuous location, many times off to the side or out of sight of the crowd. Other wrestlers on the team usually sit in the stands, in a group, watching the matches, eating and talking. Some wrestlers pay close attention to those matches within their own weight classes to take note of their competitors' technique. Others do not watch their competitor's matches because they prefer to focus on what they need to do to win and/or because they do not want to get anxious. Coaches and parents will also carefully watch their wrestlers' competitors in order to strategize matches.

The Social Construction of Gender in Wrestling

Scholars who do research on the social construction of gender and masculinity frequently fashion their analysis assuming gender as a kind of binary construction, either masculine or feminine (Brod 1987; Chodorow 1978; Connell 1987; Kanter 1977; Luker 1984; Messner 2002). Traditionally, masculinity calls to mind a man who is strong, rational, determined, competitive, physically strong, emotionally detached, and non-feminine (Brod 1987; Connell 1987; Messner 2002). A woman is someone who is physically attractive, nurturing, emotional, and caring (Chodorow 1978; Kanter 1977; Luker 1984). Like some men's and masculinities authors who identify multiple masculinities (Coles 2009), subordinate masculinities (Waitt and Warren 2008), and inclusive masculinities (Anderson 2009), our ethnographic observations and analyses of scholastic wrestling reveal wrestlers' behaviors as falling along a continuum of gendered behavior. To illustrate this continuum we identify three points along it: traditional masculine, androgynous, and feminine (see Table 1). We use as evidence wrestlers' body, performance, and emotion practices because these practices systematically emerged as central in the wrestlers' sport world.

Table 1: Gender Continuum			
	Masculine	Androgynous	Feminine
Body Practices	Being strong Taking pain	Making weight	Physical intimacy
Performance Practices	Never wrestle a girl Cool dude	Indifferent individual	Manic man
Emotion Practices	No crying	Rejoicing	Care work

Masculine Wrestling Behavior

Our analysis of youth and high school wrestling reveals orthodox masculine behavior in the (a) *body practices* of being strong and taking pain, (b) *performance practices* of never wrestling a girl and the “cool dude,” and (c) the *emotion practice* of no crying. On the masculine end of the gender continuum, orthodox masculine body, performance, and emotion practices are expected, given traditional characteristics of masculine behavior.

Body practices: being strong, taking pain. Sociologists of sport and leisure substantively and methodologically have accomplished much in researching the body in relation to sport and leisure. In many respects, masculinity is embodied within the physical body (Bordo 1993; Butler 1990; and Foucault [1979] 1990). Klein’s (1993) research on bodybuilding, Baker and Boyd’s (1997) edited volume on sports, gender, and identity, and Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) reveal that the construction of masculinity is heavily linked to the body performances and bodily skill that construct orthodox masculinity in sports. In wrestling, as in other sports, participants value the physicalness of their sport. Wrestlers sustain and support the construction of an orthodox masculinity through their emphasis on physical strength and being tough. Strong bodies are a key site for orthodox masculinity construction.

A highly masculinized body practice we identified in scholastic wrestling sites is *being strong*. Being strong includes the proper amount and kinds of muscle and endurance. Muscle comes from lifting weights and doing exercises, such as push-ups and sit-ups. One day we took a tour through the weight room at the local high school to find senior wrestlers Andrew, Steve, and Ron doing their routine lifts at the bench press. Ron had the largest body, followed in size by Steve, and then Andrew. Andrew was on the bench and attempting to lift an amount equal to that just lifted by Ron and Steve. Judging from the facial expressions of Ron and Steve, this weight appeared to be too much for Andrew. However, Andrew tried with all his might to lift it. He was given encouragement by Ron and Steve as they “spotted” for him, guarding the weight from dropping on Andrew. They exclaimed, “It’s all yours, Andrew! You got it, man!” Andrew’s arms shook with effort, as he let out a grunt and then a loud howl. Amazingly, Andrew lifted the last inch or two required and placed the set of weights on the rack over his head. The two spotters

congratulated Andrew and spoke of him being “ripped” as he “pumped that iron.”

Another example of strength as a body practice is the building of endurance. Wrestlers gain endurance by performing extensive and sometimes complicated cardiovascular conditioning drills both during practice and in individual workouts. For example, it was typical to witness the end of a high school practice with an endurance drill. A popular endurance drill we observed had wrestlers standing at one end of the wrestling room in a single line, where each wrestler immediately after another would run on his hands and knees down and back the length of the room. Upon his return, he was required to go back to the end of the line and wait for his turn to do it all over again. This was repeated over and over until the endurance drill was complete, usually until each wrestler went through a half dozen cycles. If the coach noticed wrestlers appearing fatigued, he would continue the drill until no one acted tired.

A second highly masculinized body practice that is integral to wrestling is that of *taking pain*. As Messner (1992) notes, taking pain is an essential element of orthodox masculinity and creates some of the most costly consequences. Young and White (2000, 115) comment that “there are numerous ways that men, more than women, take risks, endure pain, and suffer ill health through sport and play.” Whether during practice or at a match or meet, successful wrestlers experience pain. Although it is against the rules in scholastic wrestling to intentionally inflict pain on one’s opponent for its own sake, pain is normative for wrestlers, as it takes place within the process of the legal and illegal moves of wrestling.

For example, we saw a high school wrestler get slammed hard by his opponent just as they were falling out of bounds. The wrestler’s head bounced on the unprotected gym floor outside the mat, causing him to lay motionless, calling for immediate attention from the wrestler’s coach and trainer of the host team. The match was discontinued by the coach, and the other wrestler was disqualified by the referee for performing an illegal slam. Having to stop the match and win through disqualification rather than points aggravated the injured wrestler. Although he suffered an illegal slam warranting a discontinuation of the match, he wanted to wrestle through the pain for a “real” win.

Some of the legal moves and holds in wrestling can also cause extreme pain. For example, we observed a youth wrestler, Andy, do the “cross face.” This is a defensive move where a wrestler crosses the face of his opponent with his forearm, usually to break the hold of his opponent. Another example is the “double arm bar,” a favorite hold of a high school wrestler named John. When he is in the “up” position and his opponent is on his hands and knees in the “down” position, John is able to grasp his opponent’s arms from behind, just above the elbows, pull both of his opponent’s arms behind his opponent’s back, and using the captured arms as levers, wrench the opponent onto his back. Judging from the looks on the opponents’ faces, these holds are extremely painful.

Performance practices: never wrestle a girl; cool dude. Performance practices, while wrestling, that support an orthodox masculinity are those that demonstrate such traits as heterosexuality, physical strength, competition, and emotional detachment. Rationality and control are the common characteristics of these traits. Performance practices that uphold an orthodox masculinity include never wrestling a girl or woman and maintaining a composed, determined, and strategic demeanor.

A decision made by some wrestlers, before going onto the mat, that upholds an orthodox masculinity is to *never wrestle girls and women*. Many times we heard wrestlers and parents present reasons why male wrestlers should not wrestle female scholastic wrestlers. Typically the reasons are based in a stated assumption that the male wrestlers would be in a “damned if you do and damned if you don’t” position. This means that if a male wrestler wrestles a female wrestler and wins, he just beat a girl, and it is meaningless. If a male wrestler loses to a female wrestler, then he would be humiliated. When the

opportunity presented itself for a male wrestler to wrestle a girl/young woman, some of them would not do it and forfeited the match.

During our observations of middle school wrestling, there were two girl wrestlers. One girl named Kathy weighed in somewhere in the middle range of the weight classes, where many of the boys wrestled as well. During competitive meets, she usually won her matches by pinning her (always male) opponents. We found out that her father, Donovan, was a former high school and college wrestler and came to the wrestling room almost every night during practice. Donovan was very strict with Kathy, always criticizing her and pushing her to the limit. Kathy was a very good wrestler. Very few of the boys ever wanted to wrestle her. The second girl was Melissa. Her father also came to watch her during practice but stayed on the sidelines like all the other parents. Melissa was a decent wrestler, but no better or worse than the average boy wrestler.

Short bursts of unofficial wrestling matches, called wrestling “drills,” were a common strategy for coaching during routine nightly practices. During these wrestling drills, two thirds of the wrestlers paired up by weight class, while the other third sat and rested along the sidelines, waiting to wrestle the winner of the first pair. The wrestlers on the mat chose their opponents at random, and this process worked well as long as there were no girls on the mat. However, when either Kathy or Melissa, or both, were on the mat for wrestling drills, the coaches had to assign partners. When coaches attempted to assign partners for Kathy and Melissa, it did not always work out well. Most of the middleweight boys did not like to wrestle (and lose to) Kathy, and many of the boys in the lightweight range were reluctant to wrestle Melissa as well. In fact, Jordan and Andy outright refused to ever wrestle Kathy—or any girl for that matter. The fathers of these two requested that their boys never be forced to wrestle a girl. When we asked Jordan and Andy why they would not wrestle girls, Jordan said, “It’s a no-win situation. If you wrestle and beat a girl, well, then you’re a jerk for beating a girl.” Then Andy responded, “If you wrestle and lose to a girl, then they make fun of you for losing to her. So the best thing is to never wrestle a girl.” When we asked Jordan’s father, Mike, why he would not let his son wrestle a girl, he simply stated, “No son of mine is going to wrestle a girl, period.” When pressed as to why he had such a stern disposition on the question, Mike said, “Girls don’t belong on the mat.” Consequently, it became a standing rule that no boy had to wrestle a girl.

Another performance practice of orthodox masculinity is to present a kind of demeanor that is composed, determined, and strategic. This kind of performance is undertaken by a type we label a *cool dude*. Before the match, this kind of wrestler may walk back and forth behind the row of chairs calmly, often looking at or toward the opposite team’s bench, presumably at his opponent. This is a kind of stare down in which the wrestlers size up their opponent while also trying to instill fear. While on the mat, cool dudes may stretch and jump up and down to keep their leg muscles warm. Their wrestling moves are primarily slow and methodical. The slowness illustrates the intense concentration it takes in making precise offensive and defensive moves. Cool dudes appear deliberate, intentional, and in control. After the match, the cool dude shakes hands with both his opponent and the opponent’s coach. Typically, there is not much show of emotion, whether win or lose; a calm and controlled appearance is presented. Cool dudes appear balanced, controlled, dignified—and successful—both at wrestling competitively and in presenting a cool masculinity. This pose is highly respected and appreciated by fans and coaches and falls in a very successful range for orthodox masculinities relying on physical strength, a competitive spirit, and emotional detachment.

Emotion practices: no crying. An orthodox masculinity closely regulates emotions, mandating that

men be stoic and rational. Emotions are to be kept in check, illustrating the emotional detachment detailed by Bird (1996) in his description of masculinity. A highly masculinized wrestler's performance calls for carefully managed emotion practices. Shield's (2002) work on emotion and gender comments on how sport brings a very public dimension to gender performance: "The emotion of competitive sports is also very public emotion, and the rules of expression, and the violation of those rules or deviation from the guidelines, are matters of public discussion" (109). Crying is a closely regulated activity with rules for when it is appropriate and when it is not. At the orthodox masculinity end of the continuum, *no crying* is preferable.

We witnessed great efforts to avoid crying after losing a match or because of pain and being hurt. We witnessed a wrestler named Ron, who lost a very close match, make a sincere effort to hide his emotions. After losing, he put his warm-up jacket over his head and ran to the locker room to avoid crying in front of his teammates. Another example of having to hold back tears was when one wrestler laid on the corner of the mat, covering his face with a towel, after losing a match. His coach gently nudged him in the side and motioned for him to get up. We speculate that the wrestler was lacking emotional detachment, and the coach did not want him to do so in the public space of the tournament and lose face as a successful performer of masculinity.

The youth wrestlers we observed were more likely than the high school wrestlers to cry, and they would often blame their crying on pain. In a youth tournament we attended, one dad had to literally drag his son, Jordon, from the center of the mat after Jordon clearly and cleanly was "pinned" and went into a tantrum. Jordon shook himself loose from the referee's attempt to orchestrate the ceremonial handshake of sportsmanship between opponents at the end of the match. Instead of congratulating his opponent, the losing wrestler jumped up and down, grasping the back of his own neck, while screaming. As the father forcefully escorted Jordon off the mat, he told his son to stop crying. The boy could be heard by many spectators blaming his tears on the pain he received from trying not to get pinned. We often wondered if crying due to pain was a cover-up for being disappointed and crying due to loss of match. We never witnessed a wrestler cry due to pain after a win. Crying due to pain is unacceptable generally, but it is more acceptable than crying due to sadness over losing a match. We suspect that many of the younger youth wrestlers use pain to cover up for sadness after losing a match, in order to perform orthodox masculinity. Displaying sadness was not acceptable.

Androgynous Wrestling Behavior

Androgynous behavior in wrestling includes behaviors that are not traditionally masculine but did not strike us as particularly feminine. Androgynous behavior is apparent in body, performance, and emotion practices in that we found (a) a *body practice* of making weight, (b) *performance practice* of the "indifferent individual," and (c) *emotional practices* that included rejoicing.

Body practices: making weight. One crucial body practice for wrestlers is *making weight*, and we include it in the middle of the continuum because it is something that is culturally associated with women but is a very important body practice for wrestlers. Men wrestlers and women non-wrestlers focus on body weight for very different reasons. Making weight for male wrestlers means that they have to lose weight to be able to wrestle in a specific weight division. The focus on women's body weight is about cultural attractiveness. Because making weight and losing weight are things that both men and women do, we defined making weight as androgynous and put it in the middle of the gender continuum.

Unlike much of the research on men's bodies that finds a hegemonic aesthetic (Filiault and Drummond

2007), which defines men's bodies as visually pleasing when they have muscle and are lean, the wrestlers in this study lose weight and worry about muscle, not because of an aesthetic, but because of wanting to wrestle well and win. Losing weight is about getting to the right weight class so they can do their best in competition. Making weight was one of the most dreaded necessities of the sport.

There are only a limited number of competitive weight classes on wrestling teams, and rules prohibit more than one wrestler in any weight class during a meet. There is usually a small weight range within which a wrestler must stay or will be unable to compete. If there are two wrestlers on the same team at the same weight, they usually have to "wrestle off" to determine who competes at the next tournament or meet at that weight class. Typically, the less skillful of the two wrestlers will either lose weight in order to compete in a lower weight class or compete in a higher weight class with wrestlers heavier than he or she.

Some wrestlers will lose weight, at times excessively, to avoid a better wrestler at their more "natural" weight. The following are examples of the extremes to which wrestlers are willing to go to make weight in order to be competitive. At the youth level, Tim, an eight-year-old boy competing at the state level, lost weight to avoid wrestling a better wrestler at the state level. Tim appeared to be so dizzy from lack of food that he could hardly wrestle that day. Ironically, the wrestler Tim was trying to avoid also cut weight, so these two wrestlers met on the mat despite Tim's weight loss. The attempts to cut weight seem more pronounced at the high school level. We observed Steve's routine weigh-ins during practice. Over a period of one month, we watched him cut twenty pounds to get to a specific weight class and be able to wrestle on the varsity team. Observations of this routine weigh-in process also allowed us to witness Joe, another high school wrestler, lose eight pounds in one day. He said he skipped classes during the school day and spent the time running in a plastic suit in order to make weight. Another example is Tom who told us one day he went through school without eating and then ran stairs for ninety minutes to lose five pounds in order to maintain eligibility for a tournament.

Performance practices: indifferent individual. Some performance practices are outside the orthodox standards for masculinity because they display a lack of competitive spirit. We labeled this performance practice as that of the *indifferent individual*. Here the wrestler appeared not to care about winning or losing. In this way, the behavior was neither masculine, which would be competitive, nor feminine, which would indicate caring about winning. This type of wrestler was not highly respected like the cool dude.

The indifferent individual pose is dominated by a wrestler's lack of emotional display. He is not pacing quietly, like cool dude, nor is he overly aggressive and angry. He only looks at the floor and does not stare down his opponent. He presents a basically passive, emotionally detached disposition, indicating that he was not giving it his all. We notice this especially during close matches when a this type of wrestler loses because he does not pursue victory, as is compulsory with the mandates of orthodox masculinity. In this case, the androgyny categorization is a result of our interpretation of this behavior as not particularly masculine but not feminine either.

Emotion practice: rejoicing. Emotion practices within the androgynous range of the gender continuum include those kinds of behaviors that we would expect of both men and women, given the context. For example, an emotion display we noted was *rejoicing*. Rejoicing can be seen when a winner jumps up and down, raises both arms up high, and walks or struts around on the mat. For example, at a state tournament, winners often jumped into the arms of their coaches or jumped up and down and slapped each other on the back and butt emphatically. This display of emotion is quite acceptable, but only when attached to winning behavior. Brian, a high school junior, upon winning a very close match during the state tournament, was so happy that he ran to his nearby coach and jumped into his arms. The coach

caught Brian in open arms, and for a moment tears of joy ran down both of their faces as they stood there hugging each other, with Brian's legs wrapped around his coach's waist. A photograph of this appeared in the newspaper the next day. During the awards ceremony, Brian sobbed openly while saluting his grandfather, who had also been a state champ many years prior, but who was now watching (also in tears) from the stands. Tom, a sophomore who is normally very stoic, won a close match during a regional tournament, walked over to the crowd, and without any warning, bear-hugged his assistant coach. Tom had tremendous joy on his face, indicating an expression of emotional involvement. Within this sporting culture, rejoicing is appropriate but not as masculine as being stoic because it lacks an amount of control.

Feminine Wrestling Behavior

It is on this part of the gender continuum that the wrestlers' behaviors contribute most significantly to an understanding of gender. The behaviors included on this end of the gender continuum are those that we observed but did not at all expect given the highly masculinized setting. Here the legitimacy of the use of the concept of hegemonic masculinity and the binary concepts of masculinity and femininity, as tied to male and female bodies, are most clearly called into question. Our data analyses revealed (a) *body practices* of physical intimacy, (b) the *performance practice* of "manic man," and (c) the *emotion practice* of care work.

Body practices: physical intimacy. One of the most fascinating illustrations of body practices of the wrestlers takes place during tournaments. These are situations where the wrestlers are together in a gymnasium for long periods of time. During breaks, the wrestlers often gather together on the mat and engage in *intimate physical interactions*. Anderson, Adams, and Rivers (2010) studied male students in the United Kingdom and found that a large percentage of heterosexual men kissed other men on the lips. They theorize that the men are able to do this because there has been a loosening of cultural homophobia. We found similar public intimate behavior by young male wrestlers who identified as heterosexual.

For example, while waiting for a tournament to resume, Josh and Tony had just finished practicing a hold. While they both lay on the mat where they were doing wrestling moves, they were in a position that was almost indistinguishable from "spooning." At another time, a group of eight wrestlers from a high school team gathered on the floor during a long break, talked, and practiced wrestling moves. This entailed speaking very closely and face-to-face, lying close with arms around each other and ending up on top or bottom of one another. This kind of touch goes against the masculinity directive that a man be 100% heterosexual and not act in ways that are attributed to women and/or gay men (Anderson 2005; Pascoe 2007).

Performance practices: manic man. Emotions within traditional femininity are oftentimes described as irrational, lacking control, and uncalculated. We observed some wrestling performances that were out of control rather than calculated and rationally performed. We typologized this set of practices as made by the *manic man*, who was quite unlike the cool dude in masculine wrestling behavior or the indifferent individual in androgynous wrestling behavior.

Rather than appearing to be ultimately composed, the manic man presents an agitated and distracted demeanor, which is highly aggressive but not highly regarded. He appears out of control and displays unsportsmanlike conduct. Before a match, the manic man warms up behind his team but does so in a hurried way, oftentimes slapping muscles and looking distracted. While on the mat, his agitated behavior increases in intensity, waiting for the match to begin. It appears as though he is too anxious to keep control. During a wrestling match, the moves of the manic man seem out of control, quick, and

less measured. He relies on strength or quickness to do well on the mat but can often fail due to lack of control. After wrestling, he tends to show more emotion both positively and negatively. The manic man is less apt to shake hands with his opponent or the other coach, showing less respect. Additionally, he may storm off the mat and into the locker room. For example, during a state tournament, a match between two middle school wrestlers was decided at the closing buzzer. The favored wrestler had lost and gotten up from the mat arguing with the referee, while the other wrestler simply stood up gracefully. When the referee told the two of them to shake hands, as is customary, the loser refused to shake his opponent's hand and instead went running off the mat and into the locker room. The crowd deemed this wrestler as a poor loser by booing him as he ran off. When some wrestlers lose, they become distraught, throw equipment (e.g., leg bands or head gear), argue with the referee over a call, and/or refuse to shake hands with opponents and coaches.

The manic man performance practices are not highly regarded by teammates, coaches, and fans. Although the performance practices of the manic man can be thought of as very masculine because they are aggressive, we identify the manic man as feminine because his performance practices are out of control, irrational, and uncalculated.

Emotion practice: care work. Emotions on the feminine end of the continuum are highly caring. We were struck by the range of caring behaviors exhibited by the wrestlers and coaches. Most of the time this care work took the form of nurturing behavior.

Emotional expression of care is done by wrestlers in a multitude of ways. Before a match, it can be used to help nurture or "psych-up" a colleague. A fellow wrestler may stand behind a teammate getting ready to go on the mat. He might rub his neck and shoulders, pat him on the butt, and hold onto his headgear with both hands, putting his face close to talk. Sometimes when a wrestler goes on the mat to shake his opponent's hand, he may also tap him on the shoulder with his other hand. This was a way to reassure a nervous wrestler, usually one who is expected to lose quickly. In other instances, we witnessed wrestlers and coaches breaking orthodox masculine standards to console or congratulate a wrestler. For example, after winning a state title, a high school senior jumped into the arms of his coach, who held him in an embrace as they danced with joy. In a similar vein, during a youth tournament, Terry lost an advancing match and was eliminated. When he left the mat, his coach and father consoled him by putting arms around him, holding him close, and talking calmly into his ear. Each of these situations is an expression of care and were nurturing. Wrestlers subtly construct sporting identities that fall outside the definitional boundaries of orthodox masculine behavior because they behave in caring, intimate, and emotional ways.

Conclusion

Our data show that an understanding of masculinity and gender necessitates a broader framework than that offered by the concept of hegemonic masculinity and the assumption that masculinity is tied to the male body. Rather, gender should be seen as falling along a continuum between highly masculinized and feminized, regardless of biological sex. Even within the highly masculinized setting of wrestling, where there is an assumed emphasis on physical strength, homophobia, competitiveness, and emotional detachment, we found a continuum of behaviors, some of which we considered quite feminine. The bodies, performances, and emotions of wrestlers evidence an inclusive masculinity (Anderson 2009) through feminine and androgynous behaviors within an environment that tenaciously clings to orthodox masculinity.

It is obvious in this setting that the behaviors along the gender continuum are not equally valued by

the wrestlers or other participants in the setting. The cool dude, who is strong and maintains weight classification, wrestles methodically with strength, wins the match, shakes his opponent's hand, and smiles, is at the top of the status hierarchy. Other body, performance, and emotion practices are evaluated in relationship to those. However, it is equally clear that the wrestlers care deeply for one another, are physically intimate, and hold a wide range of emotions. As in other sports, an analysis of gender in wrestling requires a theoretical escape from the binary, reductionist, and essentialist constructions that often tie masculinity and femininity to the male and female body. These data also make it difficult to accept the notion of hegemonic masculinity as useful for understanding gender inequality if it cannot adequately explain men's behavior.

Adams (2011, 590) suggests that the wearing of pink cleats by a US men's university soccer team, without negative repercussion, illustrates "changing gender relations among youth, compared to those just a decade older." Inclusive attitudes and behaviors are increasingly becoming an acceptable part of contemporary college athletes' performance of masculinity (Adams 2011, 592). Unlike Adams's (2011) findings, our research reveals an orthodox masculinity that is more highly valued than inclusive masculinity because wrestling is a sport that is highly masculinized and the setting is a US Midwestern Catholic school system. Although the inclusive masculine behaviors reported here are not as widely accepted or as enacted as those described by Adams (2011), our research indicates a lessening of the dominance of orthodox masculinity. Observations of scholastic wrestling led us to grapple with gender and masculinity as theoretical and empirical concepts and conclude that there is a growing cultural shift away from orthodox masculinity.

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New Age Fairy Tales: The Abject Female Hero in *El laberinto del fauno* and *La rebelión de los conejos mágicos*

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Abstract: In totalitarian regimes, the Other is marginalized, prosecuted and often eliminated from the national spectrum. While Spain is just beginning to confront the violations of the post-Civil War era, the nations of the Latin American Southern Cone have continued to struggle with the trauma and memory related to the violence perpetrated by the dictatorship. Through a psychoanalytic reading based on Julia Kristeva's theories of the abject and Joseph Campbell's investigations of myth within the hero's journey, I show how the young female heroes of *El laberinto del fauno* (*Pan's Labyrinth*) and *La rebelión de los conejos mágicos* (*The Rabbits' Rebellion*) embark upon a journey of personal self-discovery and self-transcendence in the marginal space of the abject, and how, by doing so, they release the repressed stories of the victims of these dictatorships. Through their journeys in these fairy-tale settings emerges a transformation of consciousness that provides more comprehensive readings of history at the universal level.

Keywords: abject, myth, memory, dictatorship, fairy tale, del Toro (Guillermo), Dorfman (Ariel), *El laberinto del fauno*, *La rebelión de los conejos mágicos*, Kristeva (Julia), Campbell (Joseph)

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The outbreak of dictatorships in the twentieth century has left a legacy of violence and human rights issues that has yet to be completely comprehended or addressed by their respective nations. In Spain, the recent memory boom has sparked a series of investigations concerning the number of victims of the dictatorship in contest to the mythical documentation of restraint on the part of General Francisco Franco. Some of the more significant manifestations of a discourse of memory in Spain include the exhumations of former Civil War veterans in 2000, the emergence of the Association for the Recovery of Memory in the mid-1990s, and the passing of the Law of Historical Memory in 2007, all of which have yielded significantly higher incidences of human rights abuses than what were previously known (Camino 62). Similar distortions of reality took place during the seventeen-year dictatorship of General Augusto José Ramón Pinochet in Chile (1973-90). Experts note that among the many atrocities committed during his rule, an estimated 2,279 persons disappeared, approximately 31,947 were tortured (according to the later Valech Report), while 1,312 were exiled (Stern 180-81). The rising interest in a recuperation of the past has become the impetus of a memory boom in many nations, prompting a series of oppositional and resistance writing that continues to emerge into mainstream media to this day.

This investigation contributes to current research directed to a politics of memory, focusing on the crucial role gender plays in the disruption of authoritarian discourse characteristic of repressive regimes that thrive on fantasies of wholeness and the exclusion of the Other. In Guillermo del Toro's film *El laberinto del fauno* (*Pan's Labyrinth*, 2006) and Ariel Dorfman's story *La rebelión de los conejos mágicos* (*The Rabbits' Rebellion*, 1986), the theme of ruthless dictators is revealed through the demonic

characters of Captain Vidal and “el nuevo rey de los lobos” (the new king of the wolves). In both these narratives, the genre of fairy tale intersects with historical accounts of the brutal settings of Franco’s rule following the Spanish Civil War and Pinochet’s dictatorial regime in Chile. Creatures from the other world provide connections to the unconscious, as the young female protagonists move in and out of realistic and fantastic perceptions of reality. Through a psychoanalytic reading based on Julia Kristeva’s theories of the abject and Joseph Campbell’s investigations of myth within the hero’s journey, I will explore the more profound workings of these stories that both challenge and subvert the repressive mechanisms of the political climate of their respective nations.

While Kristeva and Campbell do not seem to encourage mutually compatible approximations to these works, there are striking similarities in their theories of a transcendence of the rational order and the introduction of a renewed transformation of consciousness in culture. Kristeva, who is a leading philosopher in psychoanalytical thinking, is best known for her theorizations of the semiotic as she points out the integral role that the maternal plays in disturbing the stagnant and often fixed components of the symbolic order. American mythologist, writer, and lecturer Joseph Campbell also advocates the transcendental qualities found in myths. In his groundbreaking work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), he provides a schema of the hero’s journey that he believes to be a repetitive pattern found in myths and narrative of cultures all over the world. Despite the importance given to female deities and the hero’s interaction with the feminine, universally recognized heroes continue to be predominately male. Thus, Campbell’s study of the hero’s journey provides a viable framework in which to follow the journey of del Toro’s and Dorfman’s main protagonists into the unknown; however, unlike the largely male universal heroes of Campbell’s myths, their works feature young female heroines who resist the oppressive atmosphere of the dictatorship and, by doing so, provoke the expansion of renewed levels of consciousness into more universal settings.

In his investigation concerning the morphology of *El laberinto del fauno*, Thomas Deveny places the story of the protagonist Ophelia, played by Ivana Baquero, within the context of Campbell’s hero’s tale, in that it shares the latter’s principal components: separation and departure, trials and victories of initiation, and return and reintegration into society (2). According to Campbell, the principal role of the hero, as evidenced by Moses, Jesus, and Buddha, is to engage in a series of trials and tribulations in order to bring about a transformation of consciousness.¹ For this to occur, there must be a shift in consciousness from the static and rigid ideologies associated with Fascist Spain, which is realized in the film through the introduction of the abject manifestations of the fairy-tale characters associated with Ophelia’s quest. Mexican director, producer, novelist, and screenwriter Guillermo del Toro relies on the gruesome themes of fairy tale and myth in the brutal setting of post-Civil War Spain in his exploration of more universal concepts of the dangers of totalitarian ideologies that plagued the Western world in the twentieth century.

In a recent interview concerning the film, del Toro points out his use of embryonic themes in the movie, emphasizing the rebirth that Ophelia experiences.² He then points to the promotional poster of the film, which depicts Ophelia at the forefront of a labyrinth that curiously houses fallopian tube symbols to form the entrance. A psychoanalytic reading of this movie, therefore, is instrumental as we trace Ophelia’s journey back to the womb, which, as we shall see, is surrounded by elements of the grotesque and horrific, or what Kristeva defines as the abject.

The abject is described as the human reaction to a threatened breakdown in meaning caused by the loss of the distinction between subject and object or between self and Other. It is provoked by the corpse, the open wound, feces, sewage, and even the skin that forms on the surface of warm milk (Kristeva 1982, 10).

Kristeva points to the corpse as “the most sickening of wastes” because “it is a border that has encroached upon everything” and “it is no longer I who expel, ‘I’ is expelled” (4). It is important to note that the abject, which brings the subject to the borders of its existence, also serves as a crucial prelinguistic stage that occurs before entrance into the symbolic order, or what Lacan refers to as the phallogocentric realm of the Law of the Father (10).

Separation and Departure

Guillermo del Toro’s appropriation of the image of the corpse in *El laberinto del fauno* breaks down those boundaries or borders between self and Other to which Kristeva refers, while at the same time signaling Ophelia’s departure from the underworld. The opening scene of the film evokes abject feelings of revulsion, compounded with those of confusion, as the lifeless body of Ophelia is seen with dark red blood running from her nostrils, while the soothing yet haunting melody of a lullaby plays in the background. This scene is shown in reverse as the narrator recounts the tale of a princess of long ago, a story that is interwoven with the historical events of post-Civil War Spain under the rule of Franco, saying, “Cuentan que hace mucho, mucho tiempo, en el reino subterráneo, donde no existe la mentira ni el dolor, vivía una princesa que soñaba con el mundo de los humanos” (Long ago in the underground realm, where there are no lies or pain, there lived a princess who dreamt of the human world).³ The idyllic space of the underground is quickly eclipsed by the white screen, as the camera descends onto the bombed buildings of the devastated village of Belchite (Smith 4). The princess now finds herself with her pregnant mother en route to a military camp, where the recently empowered Fascist regime sought to eradicate the relentless Republicans who took refuge in the mountains.

In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva describes those repudiated aspects of the self or the collective unconscious in Western culture through the psychological theory of abjection. “*Ab-ject*,” literally meaning both “to throw off” and “to throw under,” can be defined as a process of ejecting or displacing preconscious multiplicities of the self into an externalized alter ego, through which what is preconscious, and is already quite disguised, is thrown under the eventual dominance of sanctioned cultural discourses and other forms of social control (Hogle). This process of individual psychosexual development is mirrored in the film in the historical reference to post-Civil War Spain during the tumultuous transition toward Fascism led by Franco. In the constitution of renewed national identity, the political Other was ostracized, set apart, and deemed to constitute abject components of the Spanish nation. This is made evident in Captain Vidal’s repudiation of the surviving Republicans who took refuge in the mountains, hopeful of regaining power with the help of allies during World War II. The task of Vidal (Sergi López) is to exterminate “los del monte” (the guerillas in the mountains) and to secure a new legacy of power, which he had inherited from his father and which would be passed down to his son. Vidal says:

Yo estoy aquí porque quiero que mi hijo nazca en una España limpia y nueva. Porque esta gente parte de una idea equivocada, que somos todos iguales. Pero hay una gran diferencia: que la guerra terminó y ganamos nosotros. Y si para que nos enteremos todos, hay que matar a esos hijos de puta, pues lo matamos y ya está.

I choose to be here because I want my son to be born in a clean, new Spain. Because these people have the idea that we’re all alike. But there’s a big difference: The war is over and we won. And if we need to kill each of those motherfuckers to agree on it, then we’ll kill them all. And that’s that.

The arrival of Vidal’s new wife, Carmen (Ariadna Gil), soon to produce an heir to this male-founded nation, provides a sense of solidarity and heredity that strengthens the national image already in place.

Del Toro aligns the national ideal of Franco's Spain with male lineage, focusing on the importance of time and order characteristic of the phallogocentric realm. The belief system that Vidal embodies in the film provides a caricature of Francoist ideology, depicted as a brutal, triumphalist, and intrinsically patriarchal manifestation of Fascism.

Del Toro relies on the juxtaposition of Lacan's symbolic order (the masculine) and the presymbolic order (the feminine) within the context of post-Civil War Spain in order to break down the rigid components of totalitarian regimes. In the film, Vidal is an enforcer of Franco's new regime and is therefore explicitly associated with the Law of the Father, made evident by his strict adherence to binary oppositions, concepts of time, and male lineage.⁴ Throughout the movie, he displays a curious obsession with time and punctuality as he spends his respite moments working on the watch that he had inherited from his father. It is said that his father, who fought in the Moroccan wars, purposely broke the watch the moment before his death so that his son would know the exact time and day when his father had died heroically for his country. The continuity of male lineage, reinforced by this heirloom, accentuates a rigid adherence to a dominion of time and order, which is tainted by force, domination, and control.

Paul Julian Smith points out the detailed emphasis given to gender relations in this film, focusing on Vidal's embodiment of an exclusive form of masculinity that is fundamental to fascism. His "fetishist attention to uniform" and "his amorous investment in the tools of torture" suggest a fatal narcissism that is as much libidinal as it is political (Smith 6). Jane Hanley further asserts that the action in *El laberinto del fauno* is established early on in the film through the creation of dichotomies: interior and exterior spaces, law and lawlessness, and, most obviously, male and female (40). However, as the film progresses, these dichotomies begin to break down with the introduction of ambiguities that are provoked by Ophelia's engagement with the abject related to the presymbolic realm.

The protagonist Ophelia, who serves as the hero of this fairy tale, provides links with the presymbolic stage related to the mother/child dyad that Kristeva calls the semiotic *chora*. This prelingual stage, which rejects the linear division between signifier and signified, is described as "a multiplicity of expulsions, ensuring its infinite renewal" (1998, 134). Early on in the movie, we see an inversion of Lacan's mirror stage when Ophelia examines her lunar-shaped birthmark in the mirror as she is running the water for a bath. Instead of assimilating with the symbolic realm of law and language, she retreats into the underground fantasy world and begins to carry out the tasks assigned to her. Ophelia, whose name links her with the mad components of the rewritings of Shakespeare's Ophelia, holds a strategic positioning of distance with regard to the rational realm of the symbolic, which in this case is represented by the callous actions of Captain Vidal.⁵

Pan is another key character who provides connections with the presymbolic realm in the parallel world of the labyrinth. Del Toro's choice of this Greek mythological figure as one of his star characters is significant for the hybrid status that he carries as half man and half animal, his supernatural powers, and his connections to nature and the underworld. It is fitting, therefore, that the dubious character of this satyr serves as Ophelia's guide into the uterine-fashioned labyrinth where she will embark upon a transcendental journey into the unknown.

The Road of Trials

Campbell writes that "if anyone—in whatever society—undertakes for himself [*sic*] the perilous journey by descending, either intentionally or unintentionally, into the crooked lanes of his own spiritual labyrinth, he soon finds himself in a landscape of symbolical figures" (2004, 101). Del Toro chooses the

amorphous space of the labyrinth as the setting for the hero's journey, where Ophelia must undergo a series of tests, tasks, or ordeals that are necessary to begin the transformation. Here Ophelia will engage in a multitude of tasks that are intricately linked to the unsavory elements of the abject, such as rickety insect-like fairies, an oversized slime-spewing toad, and a child devouring a skeletal pale man. In the following image, she is seen crawling through mud, with cockroach-like insects slithering all over her body. Her first mission is to retrieve the golden key from a large, grotesque toad whose ingestion of bugs causes him to grow so immensely that he strangles the life forces of the tree.



Scene from *El laberinto del fauno* with Ophelia in the tree
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Ophelia is instructed to feed the toad three pellets that cause him to vomit a repellent mucous-laden film that is flung onto the frightened girl's body. He then deflates into a slow and ineluctable death, leaving a puddle of bug-ridden vomit. Ophelia quickly retrieves the key and takes her leave. The abject components of this scene produce primal feelings of disgust in the spectator, pointing to deeper layers of meaning that lie beyond the superficial exterior.

The mission related to the toad recalls ancient myths of dragons in European tradition that represent a deeper psychological growth of the individual. Campbell argues that the dragon, which hoards and protects monetary goods and virgins for which he has no use, is representative of one's own binding of oneself to one's ego. In an interview given before his death (included in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*), Campbell identifies the dragon (ego) in these myths as the limitations that we set for ourselves when we follow too strictly the script of the social order. He believes that the old skin has to be shed before the new one can come, so that we can experience the life that is waiting for us (148-49). This task, which takes place below the earth's surface at the depths of the roots of the tree, represents the break from the limitations established by the parallel realm of the Captain, providing a space in which the hero can release a new level of consciousness relegated to the unconscious space of the labyrinth. This is perhaps most clearly exemplified with the parting words of the doctor (Álex Angulo) to the Captain, right before his execution: "Es que obedecer por obedecer, así, sin pensarlo, eso es sólo para gentes como usted, Capitán" (To obey without thinking, just like that, well, that's only something that people like you can do, Captain).

Another crucial scene relaying elements of the abject is the frightening pale man that almost devours Ophelia in the labyrinth. Ophelia is instructed to enter a luxurious banquet room in the middle of the

night and to use the key in order to retrieve a golden dagger. Using the magical chalk given to her by the faun, she slips from reality into the fictitious world of demons and encounters a frightening pale man sitting at the table. The banquet room of the underground is filled with images of wealth and abundance absent in the parallel world above. The gilded walls and religious imagery of the palace surround a banquet table full of delicacies, including delectable fruit, an array of meats, and red wine. As Ophelia completes her task, she reaches over and grabs a handful of grapes, explicitly disobeying the instructions of the faun. Campbell points out the prevalent theme in the monomyth of eating the forbidden fruit, which ostensibly produces serious repercussions. Ophelia's transgressions in this case cause the pale man to slowly, yet methodically, rise from the table and place his detached eyeballs in his hands, as seen in the image below. Distracted by the fairies that fly about him, he reaches up and grabs them one at a time, ripping their bodies in half with his small, sharp teeth. The pale man proceeds to pursue Ophelia in an effort to consume her, as he has just done to the innocent fairies that served as Ophelia's guides.

This scene reveals complex implications of postwar Fascist Spain, given the religious imagery that prevails in the room and the abundance of food available, while rations are being distributed in a poverty-stricken nation. Franco's political posture took on crusade-like dimensions following the outbreak of the Civil War in 1936, when he received undying support from two bishops of Salamanca. In a long pastoral letter entitled "The Two Cities," the clerics demonized the "earthly" ideas of the Republic against the "celestial city" of the Nationalists, where the love of God, heroism, and martyrdom were the rule (Preston 184-85). Del Toro provides a not-so-subtle criticism of the subsequent complicity of the Roman Catholic Church in the cruel machinations of the Franco regime, epitomized here in a setting of horror and contradictions. Furthermore, parallelism with the patriarchal positioning of the Father at the head of the table, which will be cross-referenced with Captain Vidal in an upcoming scene, provides a frightful premonition of the conscious realm in which Ophelia resides.

One of the more immediate and compelling aspects of this scene, however, is the abject depiction of a repulsive, faceless man who has just devoured two fairies and continues to chase Ophelia as blood is dripping from his mouth. The skeletal image covered loosely in wrinkled, sagging skin provokes reactions of fear and horror on the part of the spectator, partly because he recalls ghostly impressions of the corpse, but also because he attempts to pull Ophelia into the frightful world of the unknown, or what Kristeva refers to as the most abject space of all—death.



The Pale Man in the film *El laberinto del fauno*
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Horror and anxiety of the unknown are recurring themes in this film that can be better defined within H. P. Lovecraft's definition of cosmic horror in "Supernatural Horror in Literature" (1927): "A certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces must be present; and there must be a hint ... of that most terrible conception of the human brain—a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature, which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the daemons of unplumbed space" (quoted in Hodgen 19). Del Toro also addresses the level of fear in the film as he poignantly comments: "It's like doing a deep tissue massage to the soul, to try and reach the point where you will react to the violence and say, 'Oh, my God.' It's so over-the-top that it will affect you. And the fantasy is also so over-the-top that it will affect you" (Murray). The phobic sensations produced as a reaction to this horror refer to Kristeva's theories of the abject as it produces subliminal sensations, "triggering the eruption of the Real into our lives," and recharges "what is essentially a pre-lingual response" (1982, 6).⁶ This prelingual response brings the spectator to the borders, or that abysmal line between life and death, allowing them to reevaluate the rational order of the parallel realm, governed by the even more frightful actions of Captain Vidal.

Captain Vidal's cruelty in the film is unprecedented, dissolute, and even supersedes the horror provoked by the grotesque creatures in the underground world of the fairy tale. The use of the fairy-tale villain within the the post-Civil War historical context accentuates the brutality against the Republicans in Fascist Spain. On more than one account, the spectator discerns the Captain's ruthless systematic torturing practices, where he displays a shuddering sense of cruelty and power over his victims.

In one particular scene, Vidal offers the recently captured Republican the chance to escape the torture session if he can count to three without stuttering. A sense of hope and further anxiety mounts as the spectator prays for the prisoner's ability to move beyond the number two, which he arrives at with extreme effort. He is unsuccessful, of course, and the gruesome torture session begins. Vidal triumphantly takes out his arsenal of weapons as he explains the intimate process of torture to the prisoner, relishing in the ceremoniousness of this task. One might argue that the spectator is spared the more grotesque details as the camera abruptly cuts to the next scene. Others might find that scene to be even more disturbing for its suggestive aspects of abject imagery, related to bodily fluids, following the torture session. In any case, the camera flashes to the muddy streets of this military camp, where Vidal now stands washing the human blood of his victim off his hands in the pouring rain. This scene provides a public spectacle of violence related to the abject components of bodily fluids, specifically those of the recently tortured and physically maimed Republican, who now desperately pleads with the doctor for his own death. The lingering close-up shots of his battered face, featuring a string of blood hanging from his swollen lip, allow the spectator to perceive more clearly "the sickly, acrid smell of sweat and of decay that offers us more palpable approximations of death" (Kristeva 1982, 3).

The exclusive and excessive detail in the film given to bodily fluids and defilement associated with death "bring[s] us to the border of our condition as a living being" (Kristeva 1982, 3), which is a positioning that Ophelia represents throughout the film. Her role as a lost princess of another world trying to regain her throne places her in a precarious space on the border of life and death, fiction and reality, straddling the abject space of the primal animalistic order of the faun and the symbolic world of the Captain. Del Toro juxtaposes this prelingual, presymbolic realm associated with the abject with the rational order of the law under the rule of Franco in order to reveal the even more primitive and animalistic primal urges toward violence executed by the despotic figure of Captain Vidal.

The Captain, who is representative of Fascist Spain, reveals a compulsive adherence to law and order in the film that is perceived as detrimental and even pathological. His repudiation of the Other can be linked to his own process of psychosexual development, demonstrating significant conflicts between the ego and the superego. In *The Ego and the Id*, Freud argues that the more intense the Oedipus complex was, and the more rapidly the subject succumbs to repression (under the influence of discipline, religious teaching, schooling, and reading), the more exacting later on is the domination of the superego over the ego (quoted in Felluga). He concedes that because of its connection to the id, the superego has the ability to become *excessively* moral and thus lead to destructive effects. In the film, Captain Vidal exercises excessive activity of the superego in his repression of the abject Other, which in this case points to the surviving Republican faction that takes refuge in the mountains.

Stephen Frosh points out that the seeds of masculine sexuality in Western culture are embedded deeply in relationships, both concretely and figuratively, and are founded on domination and control. They are also found in a cultural order “built around fantasies of wholeness and rational perfection, safe from dissolution but always bereft of emotion; and they are to be found in specific family relationships in which asymmetry and denial of femininity are structuring dimensions” (115). In this film, Vidal’s atavistic psychosexual development, constituted in Franco’s Fascist Spain, is representative of the fantasy of a homogenized nation, founded on the repudiation of the Other and inspired by a return to a glorious past. Ophelia’s journey into the borderless space of the abject disturbs these illusions of wholeness that had become the driving principles of the national imaginary of post-Civil War Spain and opens up a space for a new level of consciousness.

The Rebellion of the Magic Rabbits

Ariel Dorfman’s *La rebelión de los conejos mágicos* (*The Rabbits’ Rebellion*) is a fairy tale that tells the story of a similarly ruthless dictator in Chile, General Augusto Pinochet. This children’s book draws on the theme of the “Big Bad Wolf” in its tale of an evil wolf who proclaims himself king, declaring himself to be the *Lobo, el lobísimo, or el gran loberador*.⁷ The epithets that the Lobo creates for himself call attention to the significant role that language plays in the construction of a discourse designed to eliminate the Other: “Cuando los lobos se apoderaron del país de los conejos, lo primero que hizo el jefe de la manada fue proclamarse rey. Lo segundo fue anunciar que los conejos ya no existían” (When the wolves conquered the rabbits, the first thing the leader of the pack did was to proclaim himself king. The second was to announce that the rabbits had ceased to exist [5]).⁸ As in all totalitarian regimes, the control of the body politic is enforced through violence, fear, and the manipulation of language, and, as happens also in del Toro’s film, the wolf demonizes his enemies in his construction of a new nation. The rabbits are not only prohibited from society, they are also eliminated from speech and images:

Y para asegurarse de que lo obedecerían, el nuevo rey de los lobos se puso a revisar todos los libros del reino con un grueso lápiz negro hasta que, rayando palabras y arrancando dibujos, se dio por satisfecho, convencido de que sus enemigos habían desaparecido para siempre.

Just to be on the safe side, the new Wolf King went over every book in his realm with a big black pencil, crossing out words and tearing out pictures of cottontails until he was satisfied that not a trace of his enemy remained. (6)

Dorfman’s fairy tale is also linked to the abject in that it represents the negation of the Other and, therefore, implicates the primal repression allocated to the space of the unconscious. The Republicans and the rabbits refer to “a dialectics of negativity” in that their lives are not sustained by the desire of

the objects in power. Their dynamics challenge the theory of the unconscious, seeing that the latter is dependent upon a dialectics of negativity (Kristeva 1982, 7). Both groups exist outside of the symbolic realm because they are repudiated from it. Although the “unconscious” contents are excluded, Kristeva argues that they remain inside the symbolic in a strange fashion: “not radically enough to allow for a secure differentiation between subject and object, and yet clearly enough for a defensive position to be established” (7).

In an effort to delineate boundaries between the self and Other within the context of the Law, the “Gran Loberador” hires a photographer, the *mono* (monkey), to take pictures of his magnificence, including the many cruel acts that he inflicts on the inhabitants. These pictures are to be dispersed all over the land, thereby revealing the implementation of a culture of fear through linguistic and visual imagery. The wolf’s discourse is further reinforced by tying loudspeakers onto the birds’ necks, resulting in a broader, more expansive spectrum of his ruling discourse that is now descending from the sky. Besides the *mona chiquita*, the birds are the only other inhabitants that admitted to the existence of the *conejos*, as they had reported seeing them with their aerial vision. The wolf drowns out the witnesses’ voices, in the same way that the monkey was instructed to erase or “hacer desaparecer” (make disappear) the rabbits from the photographs.

Kristeva points out that the mechanisms of the abject come into play when “an unshakable adherence to Prohibition and Law” is exercised, causing “that perverse interspace of abjection ... to be hemmed in and thrust aside” (1982, 16). She refers to the “deject” as the one who strays from the borderlines, or the seemingly fixed positions of the conscious and the unconscious, and wishes to know its abjections: “Often, moreover, he includes himself among them, thus casting within himself the scalpel that carries out his separations” (8). The deject, whom she considers “as equivalent to a Third Party,” strays, while actively demarcating his universe whose fluid confines are described as “essentially divisible, foldable, and catastrophic” (8). In *El laberinto del fauno*, Ophelia strays into the world of the labyrinth, engaging with the abject components surrounding the faun. Armed with the magical tools of keys, chalk, and her hero’s quest, she defies boundaries between fiction and reality and hangs in the balance of the sublime.⁹

The *monita chiquita*, the monkey’s daughter, also functions as the deject, and in her ability to create a space for the rabbits within the current oppressive order, she is also the hero of this story for children. By refusing to accept the current rational order, in this case the elimination of the rabbits, she disturbs the border between the Law of the Father and the repressed components cast into the dialectics of negativity. Like Ophelia, she serves as the link to the unconscious, and through her dreams she both communicates and identifies with the rabbits: “percibiendo en sus sueños la verde lluvia de sus voces que canturreaban cerca, entre los árboles vecinos, en túneles subterráneos, y cuando despertaba, a su lado siempre había un minúsculo regalo” (But in her dreams she perceived hearing the green rain of their voices singing nearby, among the neighboring trees, in underground tunnels, and when she woke there was always a small gift beside her bed [my translation]). The fluid poetic trope of synesthesia in reference to the “verde lluvia” and the onomatopoeic qualities of the “voces que canturreaban” deviate from rational thinking and represent the presymbolic space of the semiotic, which in this story takes place in the unconscious space of the dream.

Campbell uses the image of the belly of the whale in his explication of the hero’s passage of the magical threshold, which he describes as a “transit into a sphere of rebirth” (2004, 83). Instead of conquering or conciliating power in the threshold, the hero is swallowed into the unknown. While the abject components of *El laberinto del fauno* are representative of the repressed space of the unconscious,

providing Ophelia with an unfamiliar terrain in which to carry out her trials, the *monita chiquita* emerges into the unconscious through dreams. Her innocence as a child and her proximity to the sublime offer her a privileged status of seeing things that were otherwise prohibited in the legal discourse of the Lobo. Despite the fact that she is told not to speak about these things by her mother, she pleads with her father to bring her a picture of her beloved friends, asking, “Tú me vas a traer una foto de Conejos algún día, ¿no papá?” (You’ll bring me a picture of them someday, won’t you Dad? [10]). Like del Toro, Dorfman creates a labyrinth through the use of *mise en abyme*. The rabbits are represented in a visual reproduction (photograph) of a repressed image portrayed within the context of a fairy tale that merges with the subliminal space of dreams. The child’s interaction with the rabbits and her insistence to represent them in language and through the visual imagery of a photo requested from her father represent a break in the linguistic discourse mandated by the Lobo.

Kristeva relies on the investigations of Freud concerning primal repression, referring to that which can be repressed but not held down (1982, 13). While the symbolic function governs unity, the semiotic function demonstrates the heterogeneity of meaning, and much like the movement in dance, it erupts into language through “fissures” rather than in the denotative meanings of words. In Dorfman’s work, the rabbits are considered to be the abject Other and are initially repressed into the collective unconscious. Slowly but surely, they systematically emerge in discourse through the fissures of language—first through dreams, then through images, until they are able to gnaw away at the throne of the soon-to-be “Gran Loberador” and, finally, “el mundo estaba lleno de conejos” (the world was full of rabbits).

Return Home: A Transformation of Consciousness

A closer interpretation of *El laberinto del fauno* and *La rebelión de los conejos mágicos*, with reference to Campbell’s hero and Kristeva’s abject, features even more profound destabilizing considerations of consciousness made evident in the climax and conclusion of each work. According to Campbell, the theme of self-sacrifice in the hero’s quest is essential in the fulfillment of a “transformation of consciousness” (2004, 65), which is of course the ultimate goal of the hero as seen in the legacies of Moses, Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammed. Kristeva points to similar goals that are accomplished through the abject and are indicative of Ophelia’s quest. She argues that abjection is a resurrection that has gone through death (of the ego). It is an alchemy that transforms the death drive into a start of life, of new significance (1982, 15). Ophelia eventually retreats into the presymbolic realm through death, provoked by her resistance to obey the rules assigned to her by both Captain Vidal and Pan. In what appears to be a display of Freudian tendencies of the death drive, she gradually yet persistently moves toward her own demise, which culminates with her decision to save her young brother from being sacrificed, despite Pan’s demands.

Ophelia’s decision both to take the child from her vicious stepfather Vidal and to refuse to offer the innocent newborn to the faun, as a sacrifice necessary to reclaim the throne, marks her resistance to both realms, indicating an agency that is the definitive test for the hero. The ultimate aim of the quest, states Campbell, “must be neither release nor ecstasy for oneself, but the wisdom and the power to serve others” (1988, xv). According to Campbell’s theorizations, the hero’s apotheosis occurs when he or she realizes a godlike status through death by moving beyond oppositions and entering into a state of divine knowledge, love, compassion, and bliss: a stage that has striking similarities with Kristeva’s semiotic *chora*, or the return to the presymbolic dyad with the mother (Campbell 2004, 157).¹⁰ This stage is depicted in a unique way in del Toro’s film as he combines allusions to popular universal myths of the search for the father with Ophelia’s return to the presymbolic stage, or the reunion with the mother. However, in this

film, it is Ophelia's father who awaits her in the prelinguistic space of the "subterráneo" (underground), accompanied by her mother, the faun, and the fairies. By providing representations of male, female, and animal in Ophelia's "return home," del Toro disturbs conceptualizations of gender in both traditional literary convention and psychoanalytical thought.

This return home, which is realized through the hero's fulfillment of the tasks, is described by Campbell as a rebirth or an awakening in another realm (2004, 157). The end of *El laberinto del fauno*, therefore, comes full circle as we recall the opening narration of a princess who dreamt of the world of humans ("soñaba con el mundo de los humanos"). The realm formerly identified as rational is now constituted as the oneiric sphere, which is posited as the repressed discharge of the unconscious of a more civilized world, formerly related to the abject in the corpus of the film. Instead of providing a clear-cut conclusion, del Toro pulls us into his labyrinth as he blurs the fine lines between fiction, reality, and dream in a realm devoid of binary oppositions.

The end of Dorfman's children's story is also instrumental in disturbing traditional thoughts of time and space, as he introduces significant conflicts between fiction, reality, and dream. The image on the back cover of the book provides a provocative positioning of the rabbit that was formally relegated to the unconscious space of dream. The rabbit is now situated outside of the frame of the picture looking in as he or she steps on the passive body of the Lobo, formerly representative within the conscious realm of the dictatorship. The fairy tale just told is now represented as the world captured within the photo, providing an inversion of our initial perception of the story. The rabbit currently occupies the space of the subject of the gaze within the rational world of the observer, who is now in control.

Despite the fairy-tale setting, most readers would have identified more readily with the world of the wolf, because it represents a closer representation of our reality than the dream world of the rabbits. We are further displaced as we see the rabbit look at a picture that represents a fairy tale in which a dream has manifested itself as reality. In this way, we become involved in the irrational timelessness of the fairy tale, unsure of our own current positioning. One must consider a further decentering of this image as it is located not within the text, but on the back cover of the book, placing it outside of the frame of the story. Dorfman has blurred the lines between fiction and history, inside and outside, and the real and the imaginary, thereby embracing, as del Toro has, the borderless elements of the abject in his introduction of a new level of consciousness.

Memory and Trauma

As heroes of these journeys through the space of the unconscious, Ophelia and the *monita chiquita* engage with themes of memory, death, and mourning relegated to the postdictatorial era in Spain and Chile. In *La rebelión de los conejos mágicos*, the little girl's connection with the rabbits, which occurs through the unconscious space of dreams, clearly indicates a reading of memory or mourning of the disappeared victims of the Southern Cone and the denial of the government to recognize their disappearance or death throughout the dictatorship and in the transitional years toward democracy. Dorfman's fairy tale was published in 1986 with the Argentine press Ediciones de la Flor. Although Pinochet was still very much in power during this time period, the stifling economic crisis of the 1980s in Chile allowed room for political dissent (Lagos, Munoz, and Slaughter 28). Dorfman saw an opportunity to address one of the more pressing issues of the nation, which was the disappearance of the opposition in the early years of the regime and the lack of information concerning the many victims of the repressive government. The Pinochet regime wielded a national history very different from the one witnessed by

victims and their families. Their experiences had been erased from the national narrative in the same way in which, in Dorfman's story, the photographer uses a special liquid in order to "hacer desaparecer cualquier detalle que pudiera desagradar a un cliente" (to erase any detail that might bother a client [16]). Despite the wolf's efforts, the rabbits reappear through the unconscious space of dreams and ultimately form part of the discourse of this fairy tale.

The oneiric associations between the young girl and the rabbits in *La rebelión de los conejos mágicos* point to more complex interpretations than those traditionally found in fairy tales. The rabbits in this story for children represent the outlawed opposition during the Pinochet regime, which consisted of the leftist parties that had constituted Allende's Popular Unity coalition. During a seventeen-year reign of terror (1974-90), the government instilled a culture of fear and violence directed against the opposition, resulting in torture, disappearances, and exile of many inhabitants, including family members and civilians. The overall repression of crimes committed by the government against the people resulted in the suppression of many victims' stories, a phenomenon that trauma specialists argue will eventually resurface into the national spectrum, manifesting itself in different ways.¹¹ Dorfman, who is better known for his play turned Hollywood movie *Death and the Maiden* (1990), uses the tropes of music and hysteria in order to uncover the suppressed voices of the victims, including those of the "desaparecidos," in postdictatorial Chile. In the play, Paulina provides a vehicle to release the repressed voices of many victims through a temporal "hysterical" attack of reprisal against a man she believes to be the perpetrator of violence against her.

In Dorfman's fairy tale, the rabbits, which existed on the periphery ("entre los árboles vecinos" [among the neighboring trees] or "en túneles subterráneos" [in underground tunnels]), emerge into the symbolic through magic. Motivated by their desire to communicate with the story's hero, they enter into her dreams on a nightly basis: "Habían aprovechado aquella facultad mágica que les permitía atravesar murallas, como si fueran agua, para pasar por su habitación justo antes de que amaneciera cada mañana" (They had taken advantage of that magical ability to cross through walls, as if they were water, in order to pass through her bedroom just before daybreak each morning [my translation]). As proof of their existence, the rabbits leave the young girl a gift, thereby validating their existence despite the government's efforts to exclude them from the national consciousness.

Del Toro also addresses themes of trauma and memory in *El laberinto del fauno*. At the film's beginning, Ophelia loses her memory when she enters the world of the humans: "Una vez en el exterior, la luz del sol la cegó y borró de su memoria cualquier indicio del pasado, la princesa olvidó quién era, de donde venía" (Once outside, the brightness blinded her and erased her memory... She forgot who she was and where she came from). The trials and victories related to the hero's journey are carried out in order to recover her memory and reclaim the throne of the underground. In her article, "Blood of an Innocent," Mercedes Camino argues that the characters Mercedes (Maribel Verdú) and Ophelia provide connections with the *maquis*, the anti-Fascist resistance group who fought from the mountainous areas of Spain following the Civil War (48).¹² According to this critic, Mercedes's contact with the rebels and Ophelia's parallel struggles within the labyrinth unleash the many stories of those unnamed participants who offered refuge and aid to the *maquis* and were often tortured and murdered. Through these key characters, the movie pays homage to the unidentified voices that supported the guerrilla movement and therefore form an active and integral part of the historiography of post-Civil War Spain (49). Camino maintains that the true dimensions of the struggle and repression of this anti-Fascist group are only slowly coming to light in twenty-first-century Spain (62).

Recent investigations of trauma bring to light the critical role that memory plays in the recuperation of national trauma. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub in *Testimony* and Cathy Caruth in *Unclaimed Experience* point out the importance of confronting trauma in order to avoid the manifestations of the traumatic event on the psyche. As we have seen, the repressed voices of the opposition in these stories reveal a manipulation of language and history on the part of the governing forces that did not allow accounts other than their own to be told or to be heard. Del Toro and Dorfman choose to draw on the innocence of the young female hero within the context of the genre of a fairy tale in their provocation of a “transformation of consciousness” of the ways in which we interpret the past, present, and future. Their appropriation of the presymbolic realm is vital in disturbing the binary oppositions that make up the rational sphere of authoritative discourse, providing a space in which meaning can be renegotiated toward a reconciliation of opposing parties that encompass the national spectrum. The extensive investigations of Joseph Campbell show us that fables, tales, and myths provide the foundation of meaning in culture, influencing us in ways that we are unaware of. In this sense, Dorfman and del Toro go the root of culture in order to tell a new kind of fairy tale, one that heeds against singular interpretations of meaning and truth and leaves space for the multifaceted dimensions involved in storytelling.

Notes

1. This theory is also addressed in Mikhail Bakhtin’s 1941 essay, “Epic and Novel: Towards a Methodology for the Study of the Novel” (included in *The Dialogic Imagination*), where he differentiates between the epic and the novel, arguing for the malleability of the latter. Unlike the rigid consistency of the epic, Bakhtin sees the novel as a more flexible genre, capable of engaging with contemporary reality and possessing an ability to reconceptualize the individual in complex ways that interrogate his [*sic*] subjectivity and offer the possibility of redefining his image. A coincidental feature of the theorizations of both Bakhtin and Campbell is the relevance of the evolution of the hero within the story, which in turn serves as a catalyst toward a new beginning for a more extensive worldview.

2. In this interview, del Toro states that the girl is reborn at the end of the movie: “She is really going back to the belly of her mother.” He also differentiates the bright vivid colors of the magical world, which are scarlet and golden, from the cold and uninviting colors of the real world. See Murray, “Guillermo del Toro talks Pan’s Labyrinth.”

3. English translations of the script are taken from the Daily Script website, accessed October 15, 2011. <http://www.dailyscript.com/scripts/PansLabyrinthEnglishScreenplay.pdf>.

4. In “Women’s Time,” Kristeva traces the evolution of feminism according to feminist reactions to maternal or cyclical time, based on repetition and eternity, and to linear time, which has its basis in history and language. While the notion of cyclical time has been instrumental in developing a voice for second-wave feminists, Kristeva sees the danger in falling into the same marginalizing and exclusionary practices that feminist thought had initially tried to discard (190). She calls for a new wave of feminists who can reconcile “maternal” time with linear time, by emphasizing “the relativity of ... symbolic as well as biological existence” (210), a goal which to a large extent is carried out in the two texts discussed in this investigation.

5. Ophelia’s madness and association with water also became a chosen theme for nineteenth-century writers and

artists. Bram Dijkstra points out that although Ophelia was a secondary character in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, renditions of her "flowery madness" and "watery death" on canvas reinforced male fantasies of feminine dependency (42).

6. Kristeva offers an alternative model to Lacan's mirror stage and his order of the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic. Lacan defines the Real as the state of nature from which we have been forever severed by our entrance into language. Kristeva adds to Lacan her sense that language is ultimately a fetish, an effort to cover over the lack inherent in our relation to death, materiality, and the abject (Felluga).

7. In Spanish, superlative endings such as *-ísimo* can be attached to many adjectives in order to intensify the meaning of the modified word. While this suffix is not typically used with nouns, Dorfman employs the terms *el lobísimo* or *el gran loberador* to emphasize the self-aggrandizement of the wolf in his regime. In the English version, *The Rabbits' Rebellion*, Dorfman creates a similar effect using the following terms: "His Wolfinity" (26), "His Wolfhood" (33), and "The Wolfiest of Wolves" (53).

8. I suspect that in an attempt to further resist confines of space and time of the rational order, Dorfman chose to omit page numbers in the original Spanish version of his fairy tale. Unless otherwise specified, all English translations of this work are taken from *The Rabbits' Rebellion*. While Dorfman himself is the author of the English version of *La rebelión de los conejos mágicos*, the minor additions and changes he made to the translated text occasionally result in a distinct reading of the original work. My own translations are provided when such alterations in the text occur.

9. According to Kristeva, the sublime collapses distinct boundaries with abjection: "The abject is edged with the sublime. It is not the same moment on the journey, but the same subject and speech bring them into being ... the sublime is a something added that expands us, overstrains us, and causes us to be both here, as dejects, and there, as others and sparkling" (1982, 11-12).

10. At this stage (0-6 months of age), the child does not distinguish its own self from that of its mother or even from the world around; rather, it spends its time taking into itself everything that it experiences as pleasurable without any acknowledgment of boundaries (Felluga).

11. In his investigation of trauma in postdictatorial Argentina, Antonius C. G. M. Robben argues that the ongoing conflicts of memory construction are surface manifestations of unresolved traumas about past atrocities (122). Among the many support groups and organizations that have emerged in Chile following the dictatorship are the Rettig Commission, Reparation and Reconciliation Corporation, Derechos Chile, and Agrupación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos.

12. The word *maquis*, a short version of *maquisards*, was first coined in Corsica where it referred to the mountainous landscape that harbored the nationalist fighters on the island. Like their Corsican counterparts, the Spanish *maquis* mostly fought from and sought refuge in the mountainous areas of Spain (Camino 48).

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The Rise and Fall of Western Homohysteria

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Abstract: In this essay, I draw upon my pro-feminist background to describe the formulation of the concept of homohysteria and explain its heuristic utility in conceptualizing historical shifts in heterosexual men's gendered regimes. I suggest that in times of high homohysteria, heterosexual men are compelled to align their identities and behaviors with orthodox (hypermasculine) notions of men's masculinity. This is in order to avoid homosexualization. Conversely, heterosexual men retain considerably more gendered freedom in times of low or no homohysteria. I describe this as a cultural process related to homophobia and define the term homohysteria as men's fear of being homosexualized, through association with feminized behavior. I suggest that there are three elements necessary in its production: (1) mass awareness that homosexuality exists as a static sexual orientation, (2) a cultural *Zeitgeist* of disapproval of homosexuality, and (3) the conflation of femininity with homosexuality. I then show how, through identity politics, homohysteria can eventually give way to less homosexually panicked masculinities, something I describe as inclusive masculinities.

Keywords: gender, homohysteria, homosexuality, inclusive masculinities, masculinity

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Gender has long been implicated with sexuality (Seidman 2003). Like gender, sexual identities are also socially constructed and continuously contested (Flowers and Buston 2001) categories of social power (Foucault 1984). Occurring against a backdrop of homophobic social stigma, heterosexuality maintains hegemonic dominance (Rich 1981; Rubin 1984). But the stigma associated with men's homosexuality reflects more than just the dislike of sex between men: male homosexuality is also disparaged because it is culturally conflated with femininity (Barrett and Pollack 2005; Kimmel 1994; Nardi 1995; Pronger 1990), something Schwartz and Rutter (1998) describe as the gender of sexuality.

Boys (Epstein, O'Flynn, and Telford 2001; Pollack 1999) and men (Anderson 2005a; Messner 1992) wishing to avoid homosexual stigma generally do not work (Williams 1995) or play (Adams 1993; McGuffey and Rich 1999) in feminized terrains, or act in effeminate ways (Kimmel 1994) if they desire to be perceived as heterosexual and masculine (heteromasculine) among peers. Accordingly, boys and men traditionally position themselves away from femininity to show they are not feminine and therefore not gay (Anderson 2005a; McGuffey and Rich 1999). Epstein et al. (2001, 135) note, "Even little boys are required to prove that they are 'real boys' in ways that mark them as masculine, even macho, and therefore (by definition) heterosexual." Hence, homophobia does more than just marginalize gay men; it also limits the behaviors of many straight boys and men.

The promotion of a heterosexual form of men's masculinity is theorized (Connell 1987) as promoting a patriarchal dividend. For most males, however, the desire to be associated with a hegemonic form of heterosexual masculinity has more to do with the personal avoidance of stigma than with the promotion of all men over all women. The desire to be perceived as heteromasculine is understandable in a culture that distributes privilege unequally according to gender and sexuality (Connell 1987; Lorber 1994). Consequently, when heterosexual boys and men fear the stigma of homosexuality, they normally conceal

their homosocial intimacy. This is because same-sex intimacy is normally conflated with a homosexual identity in North American and Western European cultures (Anderson 2005a; Nardi 1995).

Accordingly, heterosexuals and homosexuals wishing to be thought heterosexual are compelled to avoid associating with anything coded as homosexual. This is accomplished through the repeated association with cultural codes of heterosexuality and disassociation from codes for homosexuality. This promotes the degradation of gay men and women, alike.

But what happens when, collectively, heterosexual male youth cease to care about whether their male friends are gay or straight? What happens when heterosexual men proudly adopt the codes of homosexuality and thus remove the homosexualizing agency from them? What benefit might this have on male patterns of stratification and women?

In this article, I theoretically explore the notion of *homohysteria*, contextualizing it within its historical-temporal frame. I do this in order to help understand how a Western notion of men's masculinity has shifted from permitting homosocial intimacy to prohibiting it and then (most recently) back to accepting it again. I suggest that a decrease in cultural homohysteria has positive impacts on the partial erosion of sexual and gender binaries. While the data I use to support my arguments come from white, working-class youth, the theoretical concept should apply to varying demographics of boys and men.

Modern Bromance

Jake is a sixteen-year-old, ostensibly heterosexual male. He lives in a somewhat impoverished neighbourhood in Bristol, England, with his mother and sister. Jake, however, has a rich network of friends, both male and female. For example, Jake publicly expresses his love for his best mate, Tom (who is of the same socioeconomic and racial background). He exuberantly expresses his love for Tom, on Facebook, to his mates in person, and to me (as a researcher). In fact, he expresses his love for his best mate as much as he does love for his girlfriend (of over a year), something easily verifiable by examining his Facebook posts. Here, Jake speaks of Tom in endearing terms, openly identifying his friendship as love. This intimacy, oftentimes described as "bromance," simulates ancient notions of Greek and Roman brotherhood; a time in which men's homosocial bonds were culturally prized (Spencer 1995).

Jake is not alone in his outright expression of love for his friends. The florid language that Jake uses to describe Tom is not at all unusual in contemporary British youth culture. In research on English working and middle class, white, sixth-form students (McCormack and Anderson 2010), we show that the style of men's masculinity most esteemed among these youths approximates what I call inclusive masculinities (2009). We show that a decrease in homophobia simultaneously permits an expansion of heteromale boundaries, so that boys are able to express physical tactility and emotional intimacy without being homosexualized by their behaviors.

Illustrating this, Jake told me that he was preparing to go on a thirteen-day holiday to Spain with Tom. When I inquired as to whether he feared that they might fight being together this long, he answered, "No mate, we're too close for that."

"Fair enough," I responded. "And what does the girlfriend think of the fact that you're taking your best mate on holiday, and not her?"

"She knows how close we are, she's gotta share me."

While Jake still lives in a heterosexist culture, it at least permits him to have the same level of emotional and physical intimacy with his best male friend as it does with his female partner. For example,

Jake tells me that he has a busy weekend coming up. He's spending Friday night with his girlfriend, including sex and cuddling, as she will be staying the night. He will then be spending Saturday night with Tom, doing all of the same activities with the exception of sex. He informs me that he and Tom sleep in the same bed, a very regular practice for young men in England (Anderson 2009). They oftentimes cuddle, something confirmed by forthcoming research where my research assistant and I find that twenty-nine of thirty undergraduate men (in one university class in England) have cuddled with another man. In fact, Jake spends as many nights in bed with Tom as he does with his girlfriend.

"Look at this message Tom sent me yesterday," Jake tells me with pride.

He hands me his mobile phone and I read the message aloud, "Love you, this week has made me realise how weak I can be without you. And I don't like not being with you :/x."

"Oh, your girlfriend is sweet," I tell him.

"No, that's from Tom," he states matter-of-factly.

"What did you respond?" I ask. Jake laughs.

"K., but a half hour later I sent him a message saying I was just kidding and that I appreciated his text and felt the same way." I then asked Jake to forward the text to me for my research.

What is interesting about Jake's story, however, is that he is not alone in expressing this type of homosocial intimacy. Jake does not think his friendship any different than the friendships his peers share with their best male friends. For Jake, this type of emotional intimacy is commonplace, something McCormack shows in his forthcoming book from Oxford University Press (2012), *The Declining Significance of Homophobia*. Here McCormack shows that boys in England today express physical tactility to show their love in ways unheard of between heterosexual boys in the 1980s (Pollack 1999). In Britain today, it is a normal experience for heterosexual boys to sleep together in the same bed, not because they have to, but because they desire to. Here, they bond not just over talk of cars, girls, and video games, but also over disclosing secrets and building intimacy. They bond over intimacy the way men once used to over a century ago.

Abraham Lincoln: Exemplifying Prehomophobia

In 1999, playwright and AIDS activist Larry Kramer told Salon Magazine, "There's no question in my mind [Lincoln] was a gay man and a totally gay man. It wasn't just a period, but something that went on his whole life."

I had little trouble believing this when I read it. A few years earlier I had early read a biography about the sixteenth president, revealing that Lincoln maintained a deep relationship with a same-sex friend, James Speed. Explicating this in a 1999 Salon Magazine article, author Carol Lloyd writes (<http://entertainment.salon.com/1999/04/30/lincoln/>):

The 28-year-old traveler was tall, with rough hands, a chiseled jaw and unforgettable, deep-set, melancholy eyes. He arrived in town, his worldly possessions in two battered suitcases, and inquired at a general store about buying some bedding. But the price was far beyond his budget. The strikingly handsome 23-year-old merchant took pity on the man and invited him into his own bed, free of charge, which happened to be just upstairs. The traveler inspected the bed and, looking into the merchant's sparkling blue eyes, agreed on the spot. For the next four years the two men shared that bed along with their most private fears and desires.

I frequently used Lincoln as an example of a gay man when describing historically influential sexual minorities. When my students inevitably protested, I simply pointed out to them his four-year bed-

sharing with Speed. I added that Lincoln continued to share a bed with multiple other boys and men well into his years as a statesman. None of my students contested this evidence.

To my male students of the mid 1990s, sharing a bed with another man as a permanent feature of one's living arrangement served as indisputable evidence that one was gay. Supporting this, when I began coaching in the late 1980s (Anderson 2000), my high school students did not want to share a bed when the team travelled, not even for one night. Because it was an economic necessity, they frequently heterosexualized themselves to their bed-sharing peer, "You better not make a move on me." From this perspective, Abraham Lincoln's willingness to sleep in the same bed with another man clearly identified him as gay.

Although I did not know it at the time, Larry Kramer, my students, and I were all making judgements concerning the past based on our current Zeitgeist. I made my Lincoln-as-gay analysis through a contemporary lens, something historians call presentism. However, I would later name the lens of viewing bed sharing, or any other form of physical or emotional intimacy between men, as being indicative of same-sex desire, homophobia. I suggest that homophobia exists as a product of a homosexually panicked culture in which homosuspicion permeates (2009).

John Ibson: A Century of Picturing Men

Professor of American Studies, John Ibson (2002) thought he hit the jackpot. Ibson found, for sale, photographs taken at the dawn of professional photography, photos of men posed together. Although clothed, the men in the photos were positioned intimately. Recognizing them as gay ancestors, Ibson was delighted to learn that the vendor he purchased them from had many others to sell—all capturing a similar level of tactile intimacy between men. The outright visibility of gay men one hundred years earlier fascinated Ibson. Had sexuality historians missed something about turn-of-twentieth-century America? Ibson embarked on a quest to find more photographs so that he could, perhaps, rewrite gay history.

However, somewhere between collecting his first few photographs and his final collection of over 5,000, Ibson figured out that these were not necessarily gay men pictured. Instead, they were perhaps heterosexual men doing what heterosexual men did at that temporal moment in American culture, expressing affection for a friend.

After years of careful analysis—and in what must be the most significant yet underappreciated gender studies book ever written—Ibson used his collection of 5,000 photos to describe the history of men's relationships from the 1880s until the 1980s. Ibson was very careful not to explain what the photographs mean to us today, but rather what they meant to the subjects at the time the photos were taken. Specifically, Ibson used the photos to illustrate the changing nature of physical intimacy between men in response to the cultural contextualization of homosexuality in modern society.

For example, his book contains images of athletes before the 1920s, as well as friends, servicemen, brothers, and collegiate and prep-school boys in many settings. The boys and men are lavishly dressed or provocatively undressed, wrapping arms around each other, embracing, lying in piles, sleeping in the same beds, holding hands, and sitting on each other's laps in order to show their affection for one another.

It was these photos (and Ibson's astute analysis) that heavily influenced my thinking about the role of homophobia in producing gendered behaviors and men's masculinities (2009). The photographs he collected suggested that the gradual awareness of homosexuality as a static identity (not just an abhorrent behavior) resulted in an equal growth in cultural homophobia.

This was temporally displayed in the photographs, which, when organized by passing decades, clearly

suggested that as American culture grew increasingly aware of homosexuality, men began to pry intimacy away from fraternal bonding. This mass awareness of homosexuality, combined with social homophobia, increased men's fear of being falsely homosexualized by their behaviors, attitudes, emotions, or associations. Accordingly, as the awareness of homosexuality grew (in the presence of homophobia), so did the space between men.

This growing distance between men is clearly illustrated through multiple subsets of the photographs Ibson collected. Through them, Ibson showed that cultural space was being added between men in many walks of public and private life. However, none were more germane than the photographs of men's sports teams. Here, Ibson uses images of teams to illustrate the evolution of the team portrait and the consequential growing rigidity that athletes displayed through the passing years. For example, prior to the 1920s, the photographs showed athletes hugging, laying their heads in each other's laps, holding hands, or draping their arms around each other. Soon after, however, teams appeared in the now familiar structure of rows. Men first stand with their hands at their side; years later, their arms are folded across their chests.

I use the photographs in Ibson's book while lecturing on men's masculinity, finding them immensely useful. They provide impactful visual evidence regarding the relationship between homophobia and male intimacy. They help one understand that homophobia has greatly limited the expression of gender and intimacy among all men. However, the progression of the photographs also made me wonder how and why the existence of a homosexual identity came to be in Western cultures. The answer, I propose, largely began with the conviction of famed British author and playwright Oscar Wilde.

Oscar Wilde: Establishing a Gay Identity

Although little is known about premodern women's sexualities, it is largely believed that the sexual desire of one man for another was an acceptable, often venerated, form of love in ancient cultures. Intolerance toward homosexual behavior grew particularly in the Middle Ages, especially among adherents of Christianity and Islam.

To understand the wider cultural impact of homophobia, awareness of the general societal consensus on the nature of homosexuality is necessary. In Western cultures in the later nineteenth century, some psychologists began to view homosexuality as more than a temporary behavior—instead, understanding it as an immutable aspect of one's life.

One can imagine that agrarian life was lonely for gay men. Finding homosexual sex and love in pastoral regions was likely difficult. However, the industrial revolution brought structural/demographic changes in the form of migration, which provided population density and therefore anonymity (Cancian 1987). As industrialization brought migration from rural to urban areas, the greater density of people in cities permitted same-sex attracted individuals to organize (initially under the cloak of anonymity), which ultimately led to greater visibility and the scientific study of homosexuality. It was perhaps because of the anonymity the city provided that gay culture could begin to flourish (Spencer 1995).

This coincided with a growing body of scholarly work from Westphal, Ulrichs, and Krafft-Ebing, early pioneers of the gay liberationist movement. These scholars sought to classify homosexual acts as belonging to a *type* of person: a third sex, an invert, or homosexual (Spencer 1995). From this, they could campaign for legal and social equality.

Previously, there were less entrenched heterosexual or homosexual social identities. In other words, a man performed an *act* of sodomy, without necessarily being constructed as a sodomite. Under this new

theorizing, however, homosexuality was no longer a collection of particular acts, but instead, as Foucault (1984, 43) so famously wrote:

We must not forget that the psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was characterized—Westphal’s famous article of 1870 on “contrary sexual sensations” can stand as its date of birth—less by a type of sexual relations than by a certain quality of sexual sensibility, a certain way of inverting the masculine and the feminine in oneself.

Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species.

The 1895 conviction of Oscar Wilde for “gross indecency” animated this newly created deviant identity. So extensive was the media coverage and public discussion around the trial of Britain’s celebrated author and playwright, that it breathed public awareness into homosexuality and consequently engendered elevated social homophobia. In Wilde, homosexuality found a spokesperson.

All of this is to suggest that the cultural awareness that some men existed as a different type of sexual person, a homosexual, came into existence during this period. Thus, one might describe the trials of Oscar Wilde, not only as giving birth to modern homophobia, but also as contemporary homohysteria.

Sigmund Freud: Explaining Homosexuality as the Product of Men’s Feminization

Whereas Wilde put a face on homosexuality, Sigmund Freud explained its etiology. In his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), Freud theorized that sexuality was not innate. Instead he suggested that childhood experiences influenced men to become heterosexual or homosexual, which he called inversion. Homosexuality, Freud said, was a process of gendered wrongdoing, particularly through the absence of a father figure and an overdomineering mother. In one of his footnotes he wrote, “the presence of both parents plays an important part. The absence of a strong father in childhood not infrequently favors the occurrence of inversion” (146). Freud even gave child-rearing tips to help parents lead their children to heterosexual adjustment.

Freud’s theories are certainly more complex than I present, but what’s important toward the understanding of homohysteria is the process of explaining how homosexuals came to be. It is here that Freud cemented the notion that an absent father and/or an overdomineering mother could make boys homosexual.

This created a moral panic among Victorian-thinking cultures (Kimmel 1996). It seemed that industrialization had structurally created a social system designed to make children “inverts” because it pulled fathers into the factories and away from their families for large periods of time. Accordingly, in this *Zeitgeist*, what it meant to be a man began to be predicated in not being like one of those sodomites, inverts, or homosexuals (Kimmel 1994).

Accordingly, one condition of homohysteria was met: there must be mass awareness that homosexuality exists as a static sexual orientation. Freud and Wilde created this cultural awareness. Wilde exemplified what it meant to be a gay male through his flamboyancy, and this culturally cemented men’s femininity as a signal for homosexuality. Freud explained how this came to be.

The next major contribution to the development of a homohysteria culture came through the work of Alfred Kinsey. It is here that the second antecedent of a homohysteria culture emerges.

Alfred Kinsey: The Development of Homospeculation

Largely regarded as the first sexologist, Alfred Kinsey's book, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* ([1948] 1998), received considerable cultural attention (and scrutiny). Key to my discussion of homohysteria is not that he showed high frequencies of infidelity or masturbation, but that Kinsey reported that 10% of the American population was either homosexual or had such tendencies.

It is possible that Kinsey got higher response rates to homosexuality than any research that followed because he took a more aggressive approach. In a face-to-face memorized interview script, Kinsey and his associates privately asked of the men they studied, "How many times have you had sex with a man?," and not, "Have you had sex with a man?" When the participant said that they had not, Kinsey refused to believe it. This is a more aggressive approach than sex researchers use today (Laumann, Gagnon, and Michaels 1994). But what is important about Kinsey's research for my theory of homohysteria is not whether his 10% figure is correct—but instead, it is that people *believe* it to be correct.

Thus, with Wilde, we had an identity of what it meant to be a gay male (i.e., feminine); with Freud, we had an understanding of what made one gay (absence of the father); and with Kinsey, we learned that 10% of men were gay. Thus, Kinsey's research began the processes of men looking to their homosocial groups, knowing that one in ten must be gay and speculating as to who it was. This homospeculation, however, remains just speculation. This is because, apart from "acting feminine," nobody could (or can) accurately determine who is straight.

Reagan, AIDS, and Rambo: Homohysteria of the 1980s

It would be difficult to call the 1950s, 60s, and 70s gay-friendly. But Western cultures hit an apex in both homophobia and homohysteria in the 1980s. This period ended the heterosexualizing veil that muscularity and masculinity alone could bring to closeted gay men. The stereotype of the flamboyant gay man certainly remained, but the public understood that this was just one form of homosexuality. This was because the gay community was hit by two substantial sociopolitical events that raised the general public's exposure to homosexuality (Peterson and Anderson forthcoming). These events impacted not only gay masculinities (Levine 1998) but men's gendered understanding as a whole. The first came in the form of a backlash to the gains made by gay men and feminists of the 60s and 70s.

The 1980s ushered in a revival of fundamentalist, homophobic, and patriarchal religious fundamentalism. At a time in which church attendance began to decline, the advent of cable television brought various ministries into millions of living rooms. Christianity used the hysteria about homosexuality to milk money from callers who could donate with their credit cards over their new push-button phones. Christianity found political purpose in Anita Bryant, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and other perpetrators of inequality. Unfortunately, this further helped inspire Christianity to move from the pulpits and into the political arena.

The true propellant for homohysteria, however, came in the form of a virus. In the early 1980s AIDS brought such visibility that it solidified in every citizen's mind that homosexuals existed in great numbers. It secured a public awareness that homosexuals lived and worked alongside "the normal" in every social institution. The ubiquitous presence of gay men could no longer be denied; they were dying in normal families in great numbers. Homosexuality was now not only pathologized as a lack of masculinity, but it was associated with viral genocide (Peterson and Anderson forthcoming). Gay men were now stigmatized as being both effeminate and diseased. This stigmatization, combined with the religious right's crusade to demonize homosexuality, meant that Americans were hell-bent on having yet another crisis in men's

masculinity (Kimmel 1996). Heterosexual male gender roles were to be recalibrated through organizations like Promise Keepers, films like *Rocky*, and a cowboy president in Ronald Reagan.

Freud's explanation of homosexuality as the product of an absent father figure found renewed emphasis in the 1980s. The "men's movement" of the AIDS era was, just as it had been during the early part of the twenty-first century, a way for men to distance themselves from what one was not to be. This time, however, Americans (in particular) had more than just a religious reason to "prevent" homosexuality; it was now epidemiological.

Loftus (2001) uses *General Social Survey* (GSS) data to show that throughout the 1970s, an average of 70% of Americans said that homosexuality was always wrong, but those numbers increased to 77.4% in 1988). Other studies are even more dramatic. For example, a Gallup poll shows that in 1985, 44% of Americans thought homosexuality should be legal, but that number dropped to 33% in 1987 (Loftus 2001).

Attitudes toward homosexuality have been substantially and consistently better in Britain than in the United States. Still, the US trend of rising homophobia throughout the 1980s is paralleled in Britain. I have previously shown (Anderson 2009) that the *British Social Attitudes Survey* shows that in 1983 (the first year the question was asked), 49.5% of the population said that homosexuality was always wrong. However, that number climbed to 63.6% in 1987. In other words, either 1987 or 1988 seems to be the apex of homophobia in both countries.

The point is that homophobia steadily grew in Western societies as the awareness of homosexuality did. AIDS severely elevated homophobia because scores of dying gay men proved how ubiquitous gay men were. And, as almost everyone knew now that homosexuality existed, heterosexual men felt compelled to distance themselves from the highly stigmatized homosexual identity. Homophobia therefore remained at its all-time high during this period, and gender signs coded as "feminine" consequently edged toward extinction. Thus, the 1980s created a culture in which men were compelled to publicly align their social identities with heterosexuality (compulsory heterosexuality) in order to avoid homosexual suspicion.

Understanding Homophobia

I use the term homophobia to describe the fear of being homosexualized, as it incorporates three variables: (1) mass awareness that homosexuality exists as a static sexual orientation, (2) a cultural Zeitgeist of disapproval towards homosexuality, and (3) disapproval of men's femininity because it is associated with homosexuality (i.e., feminine men are thought gay). This creates a need for men to publicly align their social identities with heterosexuality (compulsory heterosexuality) in order to avoid homosexual suspicion. In other words, a homophobic culture might look disparagingly at homosexuality, but without mass cultural suspicion that one might be gay, it is not homophobic. Thus, fundamental to the creation of a culture of homophobia is the necessity of public awareness that reasonable and "normal" people can also be homosexual.

There are many cultures in which people know that homosexuality exists, and where homosexuality is reviled, but in which they also do not believe that it can exist among their friends and family or even within their community, culture, or religion. For example, in 2007, President Ahmadinejad of Iran said to an American audience, "In Iran we don't have homosexuals like in your country." Thus in Iran, like many other non-Western countries, homosexuality is known to exist but mostly as a Western construct.

This cultural denial of the existence of homosexuality gives males in those cultures social permission to

display homosocial gendered behaviors, such as physical tactility, that are unacceptable in homohysteria cultures. Thus, boys can hold hands in many countries but not the United States. These prehomohysteria cultures have not yet had their Oscar Wilde and Kinsey moments.

Conversely, a homohysteria culture is characterized by a viscous game of homosuspicion. I have previously called this “fag not it” (Anderson 2005a) as young boys know that someone must be gay, and they therefore point fingers at others to reduce their own homosuspicion. When one adds homophobia to the social understanding that homosexuality exists in great numbers and that it is not easily identifiable by one’s aesthetics or negated by one’s religious affiliation, we have a culture of homohysteria.

I argue that the awareness of homosexuality existing as a static trait, an unchanging sexual orientation, was first thrust into Anglo-American culture through the visibility of the Wilde trials. However, the unusual aesthetic appearance that Wilde represented, and his penchant for aesthetic art and beauty, helped formulate homosexual suspicion only for men who resembled Wilde’s flair. This stabilized the stereotype of the homosexual for decades, excusing all others of homosexual suspicion unless they acted in Wildean ways. Under this model, James Dean or Rock Hudson are not suspected of maintaining sexual desire for men, while Harvey Fierstein and Stephen Fry are. Quite simply put, what this means is that if members of a culture do not believe that homosexuality is possible, there is no need to prove to one’s peers that one is not gay. Consequently, men are given more freedom of gendered expression.

While Kinsey made us aware of the ubiquity of homosexuality, it was only abstractly. If one was living with his best friend for fifteen years, they were still considered bachelor roommates, and not homosexual, as long as they didn’t represent the Oscar Wilde archetype. But this changed in the 1980s. Here, with normal men dying in normal families, the veneer of heterosexuality that average masculinity brought wasn’t enough. Now, anybody could be gay. Accordingly, men tried to prove to their peers that they were not one of the 10% by adopting and valuing the most extreme masculine behaviors.

Ibson measures this homohysteria through decades of photographs, but another way comes from studies of idealized men’s body sizes. Flawless men’s bodies of the late 80s and early 90s were increasingly buffer (think of Rambo and the Terminator) than in decades prior. This idealization served to show that one was not gay and not effeminate (Pope et al. 2000).

What is significant to gender scholars is that the new age of masculinities studies emerged during the epoch of heightened homohysteria of the 1980s and early 1990s. Embedded in this new sociology of men’s masculinities was the role of homophobia in constructing heteromascularity and the use of sport in accomplishing this. Don Sabo was one of the first to tackle the issue, publishing *Jock: Sports and Male Identity* in 1980, which was shortly followed by R. W. Connell publishing *Gender and Power* in 1987, in which she applied hegemony theory to the study of masculinities. Michael Messner and Don Sabo’s highly influential edited volume *Sport, Men and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives* was published in 1990, the same year that Brian Pronger published *The Arena of Masculinity: Sports, Homosexuality and the Meaning of Sex*. Messner’s next book, *Power at Play: Sports and the Problem with Masculinity*, came out in 1992, and Michael Kimmel’s highly influential chapter, “Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity,” was published in 1994. His influential book, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, came out two years later in 1996.

These scholars, and others, set the framework from which the new sociology of masculinities developed. As Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1985) point out, men’s studies of the 1970s failed to account for the importance of men’s heterosexuality in retaining male domination, as well as the importance of gay men’s masculinity in undermining it. Profeminist men and women, Messner, Sabo, Kimmel, Pronger, and

Connell, understood this.

The extreme homophobia of the period in which these scholars emerged means that they were keenly aware of the utility of homophobia in polarizing genders, limiting men's behaviors, and homosexualizing those who dared to be different. If homophobia was not as prevalent during this period, however, one wonders whether the model Connell conceptualized to describe the positioning of masculinities in relationship to dominance would include a hegemonic archetype and/or whether it would have been as influential in the masculinities literature.

Thus, as influential as hegemonic masculinity theory has been to sports and men's masculinities literature, it is also a product of homophobic culture. If, however, the Western world were to lose its homophobia, hegemonic masculinity theory may no longer be an appropriate model for understanding the relationship between men and their masculinities (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

Moving toward Posthomophobia: Inclusive Masculinities of the New Millennium

If AIDS did anything positive for the gay community, it started us talking about homosexuality from a "rights" perspective. Then, as the virus later took hold in the heterosexual community, the stigma it brought to those infected slowly began to wane, bringing a further emancipatory call for gays and lesbians. This is not to say that AIDS was not (and is still not) overly associated with homosexuality or that it is not still stigmatized, but today we are at least more nuanced in our understanding that AIDS is not caused by homosexuality. As this occurred, social attitudes began to change.

The late 1990s and first decade of the new millennium have seen the political labor of feminist and queer identity politics come to fruition. Sexual minorities have come together under an umbrella of coalition politics to promote not only equality in legislation (i.e., the overturning of sodomy laws and the advancement of gay marriage), but also to erode cultural homophobia. For example, the percentage of British citizens saying that homosexuality is always wrong has dropped a few percentage points each year. In 2006, just 23.7% of respondents on the *British Social Attitudes Survey* maintained that homosexuality was always wrong. In the United States, the *General Social Survey* shows that matters improved ten points when Clinton took office in 1993 (Anderson 2009). That number has slowly but steadily decreased a few percentage points each year, and in 2006, 56.2% of Americans thought that homosexuality was always wrong. However, only 42% of those aged 18-30 years said that homosexuality was always wrong in that same year, and they were matched by 41% who said that it was not at all wrong (Anderson 2009).

I have advanced my career by examining the changing nature of men's gendered behaviors as homophobia and homophobia diminish. In studying young men in both the United States and the United Kingdom, I show that today's white, undergraduate men (particularly athletes) are eschewing the homophobic orthodox masculinity of the 1980s. Instead men are establishing homosocial relationships based on (1) increased emotional intimacy, (2) increased physical tactility, and (3) decreased violence and sexism. I argue that these improving cultural conditions result in decreasing homophobia among adolescent males.

I show that inclusive masculinities are gaining cultural, institutional, and organizational power among white, middle-class, university-attending heterosexual men (Anderson 2009). Most of the youth I study are distancing themselves from the corporeal pissing contest of muscularity, hyperheterosexuality, and masculinity of the 1980s, something evidenced through the sexualization of young, thin boys in mainstream culture. One no longer needs to be muscular and violent, and one no longer needs to be a team sport athlete, to be popular (McCormack 2011a).

Data from my dozens of ethnographic studies of heterosexual men in both feminized and masculinized spaces support this. After spending the previous decade researching openly gay athletes (Anderson 2011), fraternity men (Anderson 2008a), football (Adams, Anderson, and McCormack 2010) and soccer players (Anderson and Adams 2011), cheerleaders (Anderson 2005b, 2008b), rugby men (Anderson and McGuire 2010), and a host of other groups of university-aged men (Anderson, McCormack, and Lee 2011; Anderson, Adams, and Rivers 2010) on both sides of the Atlantic, the evidence suggests that inclusive masculinities are increasingly dominant in university and sixth-form settings (McCormack 2011b) and that the homophobia, misogyny, violence, and homosocial separation associated with orthodox masculinity are increasingly unfashionable (McCormack and Anderson 2010). Collectively, this research suggests that we at least need to be measured in our claims when we generalize about the orthodox nature of undergraduates and university athletes in Anglo-American cultures.

I do not, however, claim that inclusive masculinities, of which one characteristic is being free of homophobia, are completely free of oppression and subordination. A diminished state of homophobia is not to be mistaken as a gender utopia. Men categorized as belonging to one archetype of a set of inclusive masculinities might still be heterosexist (McCormack and Anderson 2010); they might still sexually objectify women (Anderson 2008b); they might still value excessive risk taking (Adams, Anderson, and McCormack 2010); and they might still use homophobic discourse without intent to wound (McCormack 2011c). Furthermore, I have not analyzed race, religiosity, or other demographic variables (with the exception of class) as important variables of social stratification alongside my research into these new inclusive masculinities. So generalizations are necessarily limited.

My data do, however, indicate that in the process of proliferating inclusive masculinities, gender itself, as a constructed binary of opposites, may be somewhat eroding. I argue that the efforts of the first, second, and, now, third waves of feminism—combined with the gay liberationists and gay assimilationist efforts of the past four decades—are slowly withering at the gender binary (Anderson 2009). Increasingly, gender is the business of decreasing polarization, at least for white undergraduate men.

This has sociopositive implications for the tolerance of gay men, as well (Bush, Anderson, and Carr, forthcoming). Many of the long-held codes, behaviors, and other symbols of what separates masculine men from feminized men (who were therefore homosexualized) are blurring, making behaviors and attitudes increasingly problematic to describe as masculine or feminine, and thus, gay or straight (Anderson 2008b). Yesterday's rules no longer seem to apply. The codes of gay are increasingly adopted by heterosexuals and, therefore, become meaningless as symbols of sexuality. There is also evidence to suggest that this maintains sociopositive impact for the manner in which straight men relate to women (Anderson 2008a), viewing them as friends in gendered equality.

Homophobia as a Macrolevel Heuristic Tool

The gendered history I show occurring in Western cultures is useful for explicating my notion of homophobia. I developed the concept organically but also in response to the need to delineate varying types of homophobia beyond the traditional homophobia-heterosexism binary. The term helps us understand why when two sixteen-year-old boys hold hands in the United States, they are policed by homophobia, but why when the same two boys hold hands in many Eastern and Middle Eastern cultures, they are not met with epithets of homophobia—while these nonetheless remain homophobic cultures. In other words, homophobia helps us understand that homophobia has a very different effect on men when people believe that someone they know can be gay.

The inability of the concept of homophobia to explain this variance highlights the need for more sociological analysis, and corresponding terminology, to theorize the impact of homophobia on these varying cultures. This was my original intent in developing the concept of homohysteria under my larger theoretical umbrella of inclusive masculinity theory (Anderson 2009).

While research validates the utility of homohysteria as a heuristic tool in Western cultures (Anderson 2009; McCormack 2012), it is also possible that the term homohysteria might be linked to larger concepts of identity politics. Specifically, I suggest the concept might be useful in both charting and predicting what will occur in various cultures concerning their relationship to homosexuality. For example, it is currently understood that the Internet, alongside the hegemony of American television and film, has made other (highly homophobic) cultures aware that homosexuality exists. While this is frequently attributed to be a problem endemic in white cultures, the awareness that homosexuality exists within these cultures is growing. Uganda serves as a prime example. Here, homosexuality is thought to be a product of white culture; nonetheless, the government (influenced by American Christian leaders) is currently positioning to make homosexuality punishable by death. It is likely that as awareness spreads that Ugandans can be gay, sixteen-year-old boys will not be holding hands soon. One can only hope that after decades of identity politics, matters will improve.

Conclusion

Gender has long been implicated with sexuality, and the trials of British writer Oscar Wilde, who in 1895 was convicted of gross indecency (male homosexual behavior), furthered this belief. The unusual aesthetic appearance that Wilde represented, alongside his penchant for aesthetic art and beauty, helped formulate homosexual suspicion for men who shared Wilde's feminine flair. Wilde's conviction thus helped promote the stereotype that homosexuality existed among feminine men, thereby erroneously disqualifying masculine-acting men from homosexual suspicion.

The power of homophobia is that homosexual individuals often feel culturally compelled to misrepresent their sexuality (something known as being "in the closet") in order to avoid social stigma. However, homophobia also impacts heterosexuals, as it is impossible to definitively prove one's heterosexuality. Accordingly, heterosexuals and homosexuals wishing to be thought heterosexual are compelled to avoid associating with anything coded as homosexual. This homosexual panic is accomplished through repeated association with cultural codes of heterosexuality and disassociation from codes for homosexuality.

Conversely, the suspicion that someone is a homosexual has often been cast upon whoever displays gendered behaviors coded as appropriate for the opposite sex. For men, competitive team sports, violence, cars, beer, and an emotionless disposition have been associated with masculinity (and thus heterosexuality), while men with an appreciation of the arts, fine food, individual sports, and emotional expressionism have been associated with femininity and, therefore, ultimately homosexuality. This equation is reversed for women.

The awareness that homosexuality exists (largely because of the work of Alfred Kinsey and then four decades later because of HIV/AIDS), coupled with a high degree of homophobia, creates a culture of homohysteria. In this homosexually panicked culture, it is believed that anyone might be gay, and as a result, heterosexuals' social, sexual, and personal behaviors are limited because men fear association with femininity and women fear association with masculinity.

In a homohysteria culture, individuals are concerned with proving their heterosexuality because

homosexuality is stigmatized. Conversely, when cultural homophobia is so great that citizens do not generally believe that homosexuality is even possible (as in many contemporary Middle Eastern, African, and Asian cultures), there is no need to prove to one's peers that one is not gay. It is in this type of culture that boys and men can express emotional and physical intimacy between same-sex peers.

Homophobia should therefore maintain heuristic utility in analyzing both local and global cultures. Although more work needs to be done in the area, we may find that cultures transgress from a disposition of disbelief that homosexuality exists within to a recognition that members of that culture can be/are in fact gay. It is unlikely that this awareness will be met with acceptance, as these are also cultures of fundamentalist faith. Thus, it is likely that multiple other cultures will experience a temporal shift away from emotional and physical intimacy between men to one of homophobia. It will then likely take a coalition of identity politics to begin to undo such hysteria.

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