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ABSTRACT

The Commission on the Status of Women section of the Proceedings contains the following eight papers: "Post-Title IX Gender Bias in Local and National Media: A Literature Review with Recommendations" (David S. Fearn); "Interrogating Desire: Pornography, Sexuality and Epistemic Responsibility" (Robert Jensen); "Women in Southeast TV Newscasts" (Sonya Forte Duhe' and others); "Using the 'F' Word: Feminist Legal Theory and the Rape Victim Identification Debate" (Kim E. Karloff); "Two Paths to Maturity: The Depiction of Motherhood on Television Shows Popular among Austrian and U.S. Teens" (Myra Gregory Knight); "Coverage of 'Bride Burning' in the 'Dallas Observer': A Cultural Analysis of the 'Other'" (Radhika E. Parameswaran); "Identity and Sensibility in Women Journalists' Autobiographies, 1900-1940" (Linda Steiner); and "Magazine Coverage of First Ladies from Hoover to Clinton: From Election through the First 100 Days of Office" (Liz Watts). (CR)

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION (78th, Washington, DC, August 9-12, 1995). Commission on the Status of Women.

Post-Title IX Gender Bias in Local and National Media: A Literature Review with Recommendations

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Abstract

An abundance of research has indicated that women athletes are under-represented and stereotyped by the national media. However, there has been little research applied to gender bias in the local sports media. The purpose of this critical literature review is to examine existing national studies on gender bias in sports media in order to provide recommendations for future research on the local level.

Post-Title IX Gender Bias in
Local and National Media:
A Literature Review
With Recommendations

Statement of the Problem

The passage of Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, prohibiting discriminatory practices in educational institutions, contributed to a boom in women's participation opportunities in sports (Kane, 1989). With that expansion came an increased interest in discrepancies in media coverage of male and female athletes. It is widely acknowledged that, overall, the media fall well short of equality (Kane, 1989). The research problem presented here is that there has been little differentiation between the coverage of national media and that of local outlets, a distinction that could potentially provide insights into media's gender bias. For example, if local media are found to be less biased than national media, it could indicate that some variables exclusive to the local markets, such as civic pride or parental boosterism, have a dulling effect on inequitable coverage.

Statement of Purpose

The intent of this paper is to provide an overview of the existing literature comparing media coverage of male and female athletes in order to provide recommendations for future research, specifically in the area of local print media.

Limitations

The research examined was limited to those studies published since the passage of Title IX in 1972. Also, the research focused mainly on the print media, with the inclusion of electronic media studies for perspective.

Definitions

National media: Of or pertaining to media products or services distributed throughout the country (Ellmore, 1991).

Local media: Communication media whose audiences are primarily drawn from the same locality as the media; these media customarily have a preferential rate for local advertisers (Ellmore, 1991).

Scholastic athletics: Any sporting events sanctioned by schools (grade school through college).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

It is often stated that Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, which prohibited discrimination in educational institutions receiving federal funds, created a dramatic rise in athletic opportunities for girls and women from the elementary school level on up (Kane, 1989; Karr-Kidwell & Sorenson, 1993). Although questions and legal challenges remain regarding Title IX's effectiveness in bringing about total equality in opportunity (Blum, 1994), it is generally accepted that Title IX has put increased focus on gender equity in most facets of athletics.

Focus on women's athletics extends past the educational

institutions covered in Title IX into the arenas of professional and Olympic sports. It is assumed that the Title IX legislation, by increasing opportunities on lower levels of participation, will have a "trickle up" effect and create a climate of success and acceptance that will infiltrate higher levels of competition. Indeed, Kane (1989) cites substantially increased winnings in women's professional tennis after Title IX as an argument for the existence of a new, improved climate.

One aspect of equal opportunity is media coverage, which is considered both an indicator and facilitator of gender equity. Kane (1989) notes that media coverage is an index of Title IX's effectiveness; the collective attitude of the population toward female athletes is seen through the media. Murray (1991) contends that frequent and positive portrayals of female athletes in the media will encourage more women to enter sports and eventually become leaders, thus facilitating gender equity. Boutilier and SanGiovanni (1983) note that mass media constitute one of the strongest forces in modern society--a major shaper of values and attitudes. Thus, Boutilier and SanGiovanni assert, "Regardless of what is actually happening to the relationship between women and sport, it is the media's <u>treatment</u> and <u>evaluation</u> of that relationship that will shape its direction and content" (p.184).

Prior to the passage of Title IX in 1972 there were few studies done on the coverage of female athletes. The mid to late 1970's, however, brought a rash of studies on publicity (Miller, 1975; Leavy, 1977; Reid & Soley, 1979) that has continued to this

day. Although some modern studies (Kane, 1988; Salwen & Wood, 1994) have included material published prior to the 1972 passage of Title IX, many focus solely on the current state of media coverage.

Most of the studies conducted since the passage of Title IX, including works by Boutilier and SanGiovanni (1983), Lumpkin and Williams (1991), Higgs and Weiller (1992) and Salwen and Wood (1994) reach similar conclusions: Female athletes as a whole receive much less media coverage than males and the females are frequently depicted in stereotypical ways.

Despite the large body of work related to gender equity in the media and the many research techniques employed, there is a gap. Almost all studies have focused on the national media (Sports Illustrated, Associated Press, Cosmopolitan, Washington Post, etc.), while local media (weekly and small daily newspapers, radio sports shows, cable access channels) have been largely ignored.

The lack of research dealing with local media's coverage of athletics and gender stereotyping is troubling. Logically, the local media should be the starting point for analyzing the portrayal of female athletes. After all, by definition, the local media are those primarily concerned with local scholastic athletes, the ones directly affected by Title IX legislation. Therefore, local media should be the first to see any climatic changes Title IX brings. Since Title IX has no direct legislative effect outside educational institutions, changes in national

media coverage of professional and Olympic-caliber post-Title IX athletics should be merely a byproduct of change on the scholastic level.

If, as widely believed, media coverage is a measure of Title IX's effectiveness, it would be logical to focus on the media that cover the athletes most affected by Title IX. Since the national media must appeal to a wide audience, they usually cover professional and Olympic athletes and include only a small dose of the highest-profile college sports, such as NCAA Division I football and basketball. Scholastic athletics, however, is the bread and butter of the local media. Civic and school pride create a narrow geographic area of interest in these athletes. It is the local media that satisfy this interest. Scholastic sports and the local media go hand-in-hand. In order to study portrayals of scholastic athletes and the tangible effects of Title IX, local media must be examined.

Local media's portrayal of women's athletics on the scholastic level, particularly the high school level and below, has rarely been the focus of published research. When the local media are mentioned, it is frequently brief. For instance, Boutilier and SanGiovanni (1983) simply note, "Although we believe that coverage of women's sports has shown some slight improvement over the past five years, this improvement seems to be truer of the newspapers with smaller circulation and a more local market" (p. 198). The researchers then shift back to national media, without explaining why they believe their premise

or commenting on any positive or negative ramifications of increased local coverage. Higgs and Weiller, in a 1989 study of gender role portrayal by the media, uncritically repeat the assertion of increased local coverage made by Boutilier and SanGiovanni without additional detail.

One reason for the lack of local studies is the way many studies define the media population to be examined. In many cases researchers attempt to make national observations, so they utilize rationales that exclude local media. Wanta and Leggett (1989) conducted a gatekeeping study of Associated Press photos from the Wimbeldon tennis tournament. The researchers chose Associated Press photos because "they are the most widely distributed of all wire photos." Boutilier and SanGiovanni (1983) and Salwen and Wood (1994) examine the depiction of female athletes in Sports Illustrated. Both sets of researchers chose Sports Illustrated because of its high profile. Salwen and Wood note, "It's America's most prominent and largest circulation sports magazine and has been published continuously since 1954." Boutilier and SanGiovanni point toward Sports Illustrated's large circulation and professional reputation.

The design of studies that, intentionally or not, largely exclude athletes most affected by Title IX, coupled with the dismissal of local media in works such as Boutilier and SanGiovanni's often cited text, suggests several things.

One assumption could be that researchers view local media and scholastic athletes as unworthy of study or unimportant in

the progress of gender equity; that equality can only be measured at the top levels of competition or on a national scale. In other words, the researchers could be saying that equality will not be achieved unless and until the national media and their coverage of professional athletes is free from gender bias. Therefore, any strides in equality made at other levels are irrelevant.

It could be inferred that researchers see the national media as a bellwether; that increased acceptance of professional, Olympic and the few high-profile college athletes covered in the national media will seep down to the high school, lower-profile college and other amateur athletes covered in the local media. However, this view goes against the philosophy of Title IX, which is to attack potential gender bias starting with the earliest levels of education. Moreover, this "trickle down" theory can be discounted by Boutilier and SanGiovanni's generally accepted comment that coverage seemed to be improving locally, while national media were standing still, thus indicating the intended "trickle up" effect.

The lack of specific local research might also indicate that some scholars feel that national studies can be applied to the local media. It might be thought that all media work under the same guidelines, standards and practices, so there is no reason to differentiate between national and local products. Looking at some examples of the research, however, shows the faults in this logic.

Higgs and Weiller (1989) examine national television

coverage of the 1987 men's and women's NCAA Division I basketball finals and semifinals. Using a consciousness scale developed by Paisley and Butler, the researchers set out to discover the percentages of television advertisements aired during the 1987 semifinals that were geared toward men, toward women and toward a general audience. Higgs and Weiller find the majority of ads in both the men's and women's tournaments (78 percent and 80 percent, respectively) were geared toward men, leading to the conclusion that broadcast executives and advertisers consider the sports audience to be largely male, regardless of the sex of the competitors.

Higgs and Weiller make some other observations regarding sex role and national television coverage of the 1987 NCAA Division I basketball tournament. Among the observations are the sexist phrases used by commentators to describe women (such as "little lady"), more technical information given out during the men's contest, more emphasis on women's injuries than men's, and more identification information (numbers, names) in the women's game (indicating a less knowledgeable audience).

The research and observations of Higgs and Weiller clearly show that there is a long way to go for equal coverage of high-profile collegiate sports on the national level. However, for various reasons, only in the broadest sense can the findings have any connection to coverage of scholastic athletics on the whole.

The extent of media coverage is a major difference between high-profile NCAA Division I sports, such as football and

basketball, and the rest of the athletic programs covered by Title IX. Only a limited amount of scholastic athletics appears on national television (or radio). Rarely do any high school or small college sports or even major college sports such as tennis, golf, cross country or softball appear on nationwide broadcasts. So, with this lack, analyzing national electronic media can't provide any answers about how female athletes on these levels are depicted.

While the national television networks do not routinely cover high school and small college sports, local and regional broadcast outlets do. State high school playoffs in various boys' and girls' sports are often covered by local broadcast television outlets or regional sports channels. It might seem appropriate to assume that the results of research such as that done on gender-directed ads by Higgs and Weiller (1989) would apply to local broadcasts as well as national. However, different variables and standards make comparing local and national media like comparing apples and oranges.

For example, regarding television, local advertising may or may not be as gender-targeted as national advertising. Perhaps lower budgets for local ads result in simple spots, such as still pictures of products with short, descriptive voiceovers, that defy being gender-targeted. Maybe community standards discourage some of the gender-targeting that exists on the national level, such as appealing to men by using women in bikinis. Also, the products advertised may make a difference in

the level of gender-targeting. Maybe local advertising features more restaurants, bookstores, and travel agencies and national advertising features more beer, trucks, and cleaning supplies. The latter products lend themselves more readily to gender-targeting than the former. Such variables as budget, community standards and advertised products point out a major problem in assuming the results and methodology of studies on national media also apply to the local level. If there are fewer gender-targeted ads in the local media than in the national media, a study patterned after Higgs and Weiller's would inevitably find fewer gender-targeted ads directed toward men on local sports broadcasts than Higgs and Weiller found on the national level. But while researchers could conclude that local broadcasters have a more balanced view of the target audience than their national counterparts, the influencing factor would not be ideology, but merely the dynamics of local versus national advertising.

Identification level is another of Higgs and Weiller's findings that could shift from the national to local level. Presumably, a local audience that has an active interest in the hometown athletes will require a different level of identification and background information than a national audience. While Higgs and Weiller note that national broadcasters give more identification information about female athletes than they do about male athletes, local broadcasters might give similar amounts of identification for males and females based on the assumption of prior knowledge of local fans. If so, it would

mark a level of equality not found by Higgs and Weiller and other researchers.

The demographics of broadcasters could also be a factor in gender bias. Local broadcasters are likely to be more familiar with the hometown athletes, through either previous coverage or personal relationships, than the national broadcasters, who may be familiar with the national sports scene, but who usually have no ties to the school or community. It's possible that this familiarity might make local announcers more sensitive to potential gender or personal bias and more aware of the athletes as individuals instead of stereotyped males or females.

It could be theorized that factors such as different gender-targeting in local ads and local versus national announcers, among others, would alter the levels of bias and stereotype found by Higgs and Weiller (1989) and other researchers, calling into question uncritical assumptions made about the local media from national findings. Whether these variables actually make a difference or not will be unclear until extensive research on the local broadcast media is done.

Print media studies on gender-related coverage pose similar problems. Most examine the national media and consider all athletes together. Good examples are the numerous surveys of Sports Illustrated magazine. Boutilier and SanGiovanni (1983) and Salwen and Wood (1994) conduct similar content analysis of Sports Illustrated covers, while Lumpkin and Williams (1991) examine Sports Illustrated's feature stories. The three sets of

researchers reach similar conclusions. Boutilier and SanGiovanni report women appearing on fewer than 5 percent of the covers from 1954-1978. Salwen and Wood find that female athletes appear on 6.6 percent of covers pulled in a random sample of issues from the 1950's to the 1980's. Lumpkin and Williams find that, of 3,723 feature stories from 1954-1987, only 280 (8 percent) have women as the subjects. All three sets of researchers also report that female athletes are portrayed in stereotypical ways by Sports Illustrated, suggesting that women are valued for their looks and their assumed ability to be a wife and mother instead of their athletic prowess. Boutilier and SanGiovanni and Salwen and Wood note that women are less likely to appear in active poses than their male counterparts. Lumpkin and Williams add that Sports Illustrated's writers often use sexist descriptions, such as figure dimensions and references to beauty when writing about female athletes.

As with the national television studies, research done on print media focused on the national level, such as the studies of Sports Illustrated, can not be taken as a general finding of biased media climate for all female athletes, particularly on the local level. Once again, there is the problem of exclusion of the scholastic athletes most affected by Title IX. An important aspect that research such as the Sports Illustrated studies brings into the mix is the question of promotion, which makes national findings all the more inappropriately generalizable to the local level.

The national print sports media, with Sports Illustrated a flagship, has often been criticized for showing women in stereotypically feminine ways. For example, Murray (1991) takes the magazine to task for running a photo of tennis star Steffi Graf "perfectly coiffed, wearing a skintight black dress, leaning over to pull on a super-spiked heel" and for announcing Chris Evert's retirement from tennis with the caption, "I'm going to be a fulltime wife." Although these are considered sexist depictions, there is some debate as to how much the media can be blamed and how much can be blamed on what Creedon, Cramer and Granitz (1993) call "the sports/media/marketing complex," which they define as "a largely invisible, hegemonic economic structure that makes it impossible to earn a living as an athlete without bowing to its demands" (p. 182). The authors include agents, promoters and sponsors, as well as the press and broadcasters in this sport/media/marketing complex.

If accepted, this sports/media/marketing complex points to the need for local studies. The presence of big money in professional sports clouds the issue of bias toward female athletes. Does a small daily newspaper feel the need to use sexy or domestic photos of high school athletes to raise circulation? Do high school athletes, without the lure of potential endorsements and the pressures of agents and managers, pose in skintight black dresses in the local paper? Examining the portrayals of athletes in the local media can take much of the sports/media/marketing complex out of the equation, since high

school and amateur sports covered locally are not income providers to the participants and are largely exempt from big-money sponsorship. With economics largely removed from the mix, a clearer picture of media treatment of female athletes can be seen on the level directly affected by Title IX legislation.

As national studies can't be viewed as an indicator of local coverage and as purely local studies are not popular among researchers, the best information regarding local media is either anecdotal or from bits and pieces of studies that primarily examine professional sports and/or the national media.

An example of an anecdote comes from Higgs and Weiller (1989), who cite media coverage in the Dallas Morning News, a major metropolitan daily. Higgs and Weiller look at the paper of March 31, 1986, two days after the University of Texas at Austin won the NCAA Division I women's final and prior to the men's final. The researchers discovered that coverage of the women's team was limited to three columns of type and two black-and-white photos on page nine, while the men's final (in which no Texas team appeared) was covered on page one. While an interesting note, the findings are merely a casual observation. Therefore, no conclusions can be made. Further, the Dallas Morning News is located in a different corner of Texas than Austin. Thus, the Morning News could be considered a regional outlet for the University of Texas. It would be more interesting to see how the local Austin outlets, with a closer connection to the University and its athletes, covered the same events.

Maguire (1991) is one of the few researchers to cite examples of high school sports coverage, albeit as a part of a non-differentiated study that also includes professional sports. Maguire uses a semiological perspective to analyze the sports coverage of the San Francisco Chronicle and the Sacramento Bee, metropolitan dailies that feature a wide range of athletic coverage.

This semiological approach consists of breaking the text (including photographs) into three readings: dominant, residual and emerging. Using an approach developed by Williams, Maguire defines a dominant reading as one in which the value system of the reader is the same as the value system represented by the codes of the naturalized text. In other words, the dominant reading of the signifiers in a newspaper--articles, headlines, captions and photographs--is consistent with the dominant ideology of the culture. The content of the signifiers is seen as a fair and accurate reflection of reality. In the case of newspaper sports pages, Maguire categorizes a dominant reading as coming from heterosexual assumptions since dominant culture is categorized by such assumptions (p.6).

Maguire's residual reading of the sports pages comes from the perspective of liberal feminism. The liberal feminist reading accepts the dominant paradigm of two opposite sex categories (female/male, masculine/feminine), but argues that the female's place in the structure needs improvement (p.6).

Maguire defines an emergent reading as using the terms of

the dominant culture while attempting to reject the sexist practices of the culture in favor of equity. In other words, the emergent reading differs from both the dominant and residual readings in its rejection of binary opposite sex categories and rejection of the existence of an essential gendered individual (p. 6). An emergent reading rejects the dominant power relations grounded in the identification and maintenance of binary opposites and founded on the ideology of exclusion and the politics of power.

Although not examining high school sports per se, Maguire's study is one of the few to make any analysis of that level of competition. Among the photos Maguire selects are two featuring high school athletes. The two pictures, from December 1, 1988 and June 1, 1989, have similar content. The December photo (p.25) featured a large color picture of "All-Metro" football player and coach of the year posed in street clothes. The photograph and a long story accompanying it are set off by a box. The June photo (p.26) Maguire chooses concerns "All-Metro" teams for spring sports; a color photo (about 1/3 smaller than the December photo) on the front sports page depicts two high school students--the (male) baseball and (female) softball players of the year--side by side, sitting on the shoulders of teammates. The photo stands alone. The cutline refers the reader to page six for the accompanying story.

Maguire's three semiological readings interpret the set of photos in three distinct ways (pp.27-28). Maguire notes that a

dominant reading indicates the photos are a natural representation of high school athletes, while a residual reading might say that the coverage of "All-Metro" players is an unusual example of parity in coverage, indicating strides made in women's access to athletics. Maguire's emergent reading, on the other hand, contends that the June story is given less coverage despite involving two sports. Maguire argues that this seems to place football in a superior position, noting that football does not have a counterpart played by high school age females. Baseball and softball, however, can be considered "sibling" sports. Maguire suggests that men's sports in which there are female parallel sports enjoy less coverage than those that are male only, such as football.

Maguire also includes a photo of small-college football players in the semiological study (p.29). A photo from the Sacramento Bee of December 4, 1988 shows two Sacramento State football players embracing each other in a dim hallway following a defeat. Maguire states that a dominant reading would find the picture to be a typical display of emotion in athletics, while a residual reading might point out the rare portrayal of males expressing emotions and engaging in physical touch. In other words, the male athletes are being shown in the same vulnerable, emotional position that many researchers (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983; Salwen & Wood, 1994; Murray, 1991, etc.) describe as a female stereotype.

For an emergent reading, Maguire takes the position that the

display of emotions by the football players is negated by the realm of the sports arena. Maguire argues that the men are not censured because the violence of football gives them freedom to stretch the dominant culture's idea of appropriate behavior. Maguire contends that the touching behavior, if exhibited in another context, could label the men as homosexuals, deviant preference and behavior in the dominant culture (p.30).

Maguire's preferred emergent readings indicate that society keeps sports as the realm of masculine behavior, thus shutting out women. Her comparison of the all-star photos shows that football, because it is man's alone, receives a loftier place in media and society. The semiological analysis of the football players embracing shows that sports is defined as so masculine that otherwise socially unacceptable behaviors are forgiven in that arena. Thus, Maguire's research tends to indicate that scholastic athletes can be victimized by gender bias in much the same way as the extensive research has shown professional and Olympic athletes are victimized.

To agree with Maguire's findings, however, means aligning with the emergent reading. As Maguire notes in the analysis, a dominant or residual reading would lead to different conclusions. In fact, the liberal feminist residual reading of the photos in question could very well indicate a level of equality in the depictions of female athletes. By picturing the baseball and softball players together and showing the football players in what is typically regarded as feminine behavior, the media are

showing improvement in gender portrayal.

Maguire's research is significant on two levels. First, it is one of the rare studies that includes high school athletes in its analysis and, by doing so, helps validate high school sports as worthy of study. Secondly, unlike most studies, it acknowledges the possibility of, although does not buy into, a level of equality in the media. While Maguire's conclusions are subject to personal interpretation depending on which readings are accepted and rejected, her research does provide impetus for further study. By hinting at the possibility of an equality level not found in previous studies and by acknowledging high school sports as a legitimate subject, Maguire has shown that there's room to dig further into the area of gender equity in the sports media.

Recommendations

It has been well documented that female athletes have been covered less frequently than and in different ways from males on the national level since the adoption of Title IX in 1972, while local media coverage has been virtually ignored. What is unclear is how the portrayals of scholastic athletes by the local media have been affected by the gender equity legislation designed to have a direct effect on educational institutions.

In order to understand the complete picture of how media depict female athletes in the wake of Title IX, it is recommended that an intense survey of the local media be undertaken. Some methodology and assumptions of the national studies can be used

as a starting point, which may enable a direct comparison of findings. For example, since Maguire's methodology has already been used with high school athletes, perhaps a semiological study can be fashioned exclusively around scholastic sports and the local media. However, for any study, care must be taken to consider the different variables of the local media. For instance, girls' basketball may receive a lot of coverage in one community because of tradition and winning programs. Less coverage in another community with a weaker tradition would not necessarily mean a greater level of bias or stereotype. Also, a small newspaper may very well have a one-person sports department, meaning the selection, writing and placement of stories are all in the hands of one person. Obviously, the chance for personal bias and whim is greater in that situation than at a larger newspaper with a series of checks and balances in the form of separate writers, editors and layout people. These variables, which can be difficult to measure, may be partially to blame for researchers' reluctance to study the local media. However, care in the sample selection process and an awareness of the potential problems can help control for these variables. Controlling for these variables would also enable accurate local comparisons and contrasts, perhaps eventually resulting in a type of network of studies, from which community portraits could be drawn.

It is recommended that the studies concentrate on the print media and begin with analyzing the quantity, rather than quality, of coverage. Print media should be used because of the abundance

of sources on the local level. Radio and television coverage are less prevalent and less consistent in their frequency. The local newspaper would probably cover the high school basketball team all season, but the local television station may just pick up the state playoff games. Also, it is difficult to obtain recordings of past local broadcasts, while back dates of newspapers are frequently stored in archives or on microfilm. Thus, the print media give a wider population of research material and allow better opportunity to compare local coverages with each other and with national coverage as well as a more convenient way to compare coverage over time, such as before and after Title IX.

Studies examining quantity of coverage are recommended initially because of the dearth of existing research. Examining how often male and female athletes are portrayed lays a groundwork for future research into the quality of coverage.

Analyzing local coverage of scholastic sports can help scholars see the direct effect of Title IX on media coverage and, by extension, societal acceptance of female athletes. Until the local studies are done, however, many questions will remain unanswered.

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INTERROGATING DESIRE:
Pornography, Sexuality and Epistemic Responsibility

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Interrogating Desire:
Pornography, Sexuality and Epistemic Responsibility

Introduction (the Author).

Someone who read an earlier version of this paper asked, "Where is the author's voice in this?"

Here I am. I am 37 years old. I'm white. I'm a professor. I used to be straight, sort of. I wrote the first drafts of this paper when I was straight. Now I'm gay, sort of. But I haven't changed my mind about the paper.

STRAIGHT BOB: Are we really going to talk about our sexual desire in front of these people?

GAY BOB: I guess so. But I'm a sexual minority at risk of persecution in a heterosexist culture. You go first.

Introduction (the Paper).

> "What is pornography to one man is the laughter of genius to another" (Lawrence 1955, 195).

That statement by D.H. Lawrence has been revised and repeated often in the contemporary debate over pornography. That view--what might be called the "sex liberal" view[1]--stresses the variation in individuals' interpretations of sexual material. The implication is that society should not address pornography legally, and individuals should not judge it morally, because there is nothing that is pornographic to us all.

Working from the radical feminist critique of sexuality and pornography (Cole 1989; Dworkin 1981, 1987, 1988; Jeffreys 1990a; MacKinnon 1987; and Russell 1993), this paper attempts to counter the "to each his/her own" approach to sexuality and pornography by suggesting that we need to question our desires, always highlighting issues of

1 A note about definitions: The terms "sex liberal" and "sex libertarian" are used interchangeably at times by some, although finer distinctions can be made. Sheila Jeffreys, for example, offers these definitions: "Sexual liberals are those who subscribe to the 1960s agenda of sexual tolerance, to the idea that sex is necessarily good and positive, and that censorship is a bad thing. Sexual libertarians have a more modern agenda and actively advocate the 'outer fringes' of sexuality, such as sadomasochism, with the belief that 'sexual minorities' are in the forefront of creating the sexual revolution" (Jeffreys 1990b, 15). I will use the term "sex liberal" to include both of Jeffreys' categories: those who endorse and engage in sexual practices such as sadomasochism and those who may not be practitioners but believe others should not judge such activities as politically problematic. The common political and moral position both groups hold that is of concern to me is opposition to most regulation of sexually explicit materials.

the politics of gender and other identities, and that such questioning needs to take place in dialogue with others. I argue that we have an epistemic responsibility to go beyond simply saying, "This is my desire, and leave me alone with it." Instead, we need to explore the roots of our desires in community. The result is not likely to be definitive decisions, but from such work we can begin to make collective judgments about sex and politics. The goal is not the imposition of a single set of sexual norms and the elimination of diversity--as the radical feminist critique is often accused of seeking--but an expanded conversation that creates opportunities to understand the intersection of sex and power.

This paper begins by taking issue with two different defenses of that liberal position. One is essentialist, which suggests there is a natural human bent toward the pornographic that makes any attempt to restrict pornography futile. Another defense suggests that the complexity of sexuality--the interplay of biology and constructed social meanings--makes it counterproductive or authoritarian to make judgments. I argue that first defense is wrong in its essentialist assumption and that the second draws the wrong conclusions from a social construction view. Taking a social construction view, I contend pornography and sexuality are proper topics for discussion and definition by members of a society. The goal is not to justify legal controls on sex between adults but rather to make a case for why, if we are to be epistemically responsible, we must examine our sex practices, including our use of sexually explicit images, and act to construct them differently if warranted.

Essentialism: The Animal in Us All.

One defense of the liberal position is essentialist, suggesting that power is a natural part of sexuality and that an element of dominance and submission is to be expected in sex. From this view, sex that involves power games need not be problematic; what is natural or biological need not be questioned. This can be seen in the recent work of three male scholars, from philosophy, political science, and sociology.

F.M. Christensen, a philosopher, takes the position that traditional sexual attitudes rooted mainly in religion have resulted in the repression of sexuality and suggests that most of society's problems with pornography are the result of a sex-negative culture. He concludes that "pornography, together with the desires that underlie it, is natural and healthy" (Christensen 1990, 14). Although he acknowledges that much of the difference between men and women is the result of social training, Christensen has a tendency to rely on biology to explain sexual differences. He sees male sexuality as strongly visually cued and focused on the female body, compared with a woman's focus on the male interest in her body. Sexual arousal for men, he argues, is more intense and frequent. Christensen repeatedly suggests

that these differences are natural and that it is folly to try to modify them; to him, anti-pornography feminists are intolerant for denying outlets for "sexual feelings that are natural for males" (Christensen 1990, 50).

Christensen looks to other species for validation, suggesting that mock violence in sexual encounters may be connected to biology, much like the ritualized flight and capture in the mating of many species. In an attempt to naturalize this behavior, he writes:

> Anyone who has watched a little girl tease a little boy, then run screaming in mock terror to get him to chase and grab her, may suspect that the reasons transcend culture. (Christensen 1990, 66).

Later, Christensen rejects the feminist analysis of rape as the use of sex to gain power over women, suggesting that most rape stems from "refusal to believe that sex is a powerful need for men" (Christensen 1990, 123). Rape happens when men are blocked from access to sex. Christensen casts men as the long-suffering group in gender politics and suggests that men have been told they are morally inferior and made to feel hatred for themselves "for attributes that are a basic part of their nature as males" (Christensen 1990, 151). With those assumptions, it is not surprising that Christensen lays much of the blame for sexual problems between men and women on women. The real problem, he argues is women's prudishness and aversion to nudity and sexual openness.

The basic message from Christensen, then, is that (1) men naturally want more sex than women; (2) men are taught to be ashamed of this immutable fact; and (3) women have been trained to deny their sexuality. From those points, it is not surprising that Christensen's solution is to retrain women to want more sex more often, and one way to do that is to expose them to more pornography, not less. In an odd way, Christensen and anti-pornography feminists make the same argument: Pornography is part of a system that helps maintain compulsory heterosexuality. The only difference is that Christensen thinks that a system that enforces heterosexual norms is a good thing, marred only by its lack of complete success.[2]

In a book that deals mainly with political strategies used by the feminist anti-pornography movement, political scientist Donald Alexander Downs suggests there is a basic conflict in people between reason and passion, mutuality and animalism. This tension is part of being human, according to Downs, and we should strive for "a healthy dialectic between equal respect and objectification" (Downs 1989, 181). As support for his viewpoint, he compares sex

2 A reviewer of an early draft of this paper asked why I devoted any time to critiquing such a blatantly misogynistic writer. While Christensen may be more overtly sexist than most academic writers on this subject, my experience suggests that his book reflects the views of a large number of men in the United States.

to hunting, observing parallels in "the pursuit of the "game" by both sexes and the ambivalence of the participants toward the more visceral aspects of animal embodiment" (Downs 1989, 183).[3] Some of the "progressive" (the quotation marks are Downs') critiques of pornography fail to understand this, according to Downs, and so "recoil from the animalistic or biological aspects of sexuality, seeking refuge in a political meaning designed to purify sexual relations in the name of equality" (Downs 1989, 184). Downs suggests that one explanation could be that:

> the gender separatism espoused by some radical feminists and lesbians and the sexual denial advocated by some conservatives are nihilistic because they represent a puristic recoiling from the inevitable travails of the heterosexual encounter. The absence of humor in so many of the conservative and feminist attacks on pornography is indicative of this suffocation of life, for laughter is the emotional bridge between human animality and reason. Laughter heals the pain of the cardinal split in human nature and is a sign of psychic health (Downs 1989, 181).

From Downs' assertions, one might conclude that (1) feminist and conservative concerns about pornography should be conflated, despite the fundamentally different moral and political assumptions on which they are based; (2) heterosexuality is the sexuality that counts; and (3) the appropriate response to a picture of a woman being sexually abused is a hearty chuckle.

Richard Randall, a sociologist, makes a similar, though slightly more sophisticated case. He distinguishes between pornography in the world, which comes and goes in different forms, and "the 'pornographic within,' an imagistic resolution of erotic impulses or wishes to violate sexual taboos, mores, conventions" that is always present in humans (Randall 1989, 4). He suggests that the internally pornographic will survive the suppression of pornography and simply attach itself to new objects. People are, according to Randall:

> psychodynamically programmed by nurturance rather than birth to be pornographic--to have transgressive fantasies, to represent them and respond to their representation, and to try, sometimes desperately, to suppress or otherwise restrict them (Randall 1989, 261).

Randall suggests that the attractiveness of pornography is precisely that it violates our taboos and norms; because it is transgressive, it is compelling. "Such license is bound to portray the subordination and degradation of women and aggression against them" (Randall 1989, 115, emphasis added).

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3 In a culture in which men do literally hunt down women and rape them, I find it mind-boggling that a scholar could use such a metaphor with a wink and a nudge.

Randall apparently equates transgressive images with sexist images, allowing this rationalization: (1) The urge toward transgression of sexual norms is an unavoidable, thereby natural, human characteristic; (2) such transgressions inevitably will portray the degradation of women; hence (3) the degradation of women in pornography is natural.

How these observers of sexuality obtained access to knowledge of natural human instincts and drives is unclear; they do not describe the method by which they step outside culture to divine these essential traits. Instead, we might wonder whether their theories are in some ways a product of their culture and that those theories reflect the misogyny of that culture.

If the construction of sexuality is based not on essential, immutable "truths" but is greatly affected by institutionalized gender inequality that has been sexualized, our questions and concerns about pornography and sex will be quite different than these writers'. However, as is clear in the work of anti-censorship and pro-pornography feminists, accepting a social-construction point of view on sexuality does not necessarily lead to anti-pornography conclusions.

Getting It.

STRAIGHT BOB: I remember using this kind of line once on a girlfriend in college, about men's sexual needs being different, more intense than women's, how once men got aroused, they had to achieve orgasm. The details aren't important (meaning, it makes me feel too creepy to talk about it now), but it worked. She and I did what I wanted her to do.

GAY BOB: Was it what she wanted to do?

STRAIGHT BOB: I'm not sure. Probably not. But I don't think that was a relevant question for me at that moment.

GAY BOB: These days, I'm usually in the other position. Because I'm openly celibate these days--or, exclusively autoerotic-by-choice, as feminist philosopher Leslie Thielen-Wilson (who's also my friend) says--men sometimes tell me why the kind of sex they want is "natural." Men just need it like that, whatever "that" may be: quick sex, sex without emotion, anonymous sex.

STRAIGHT BOB: Do you ever feel like you just need it because you are a man?

GAY BOB: Sometimes.

STRAIGHT BOB: What do you do at those times?

GAY BOB: Sometimes I go for a walk. Sometimes I masturbate. Sometimes I ponder what it would be like to the gay movie theater and have sex with a stranger. So far, I haven't done that.

STRAIGHT BOB: What if you ponder sex with a stranger in a gay movie theater while you masturbate?

GAY BOB: I'm not suggesting all the difficult questions fade away just because one is autoerotic.

Social Construction of Sexuality.

> Pleasure itself is neither natural nor innocent. Pleasure is learned and is thus intimately bound up with power and knowledge (Kellner 1995, 39).

This paper takes the view that the meaning of human enterprises is primarily socially constructed, not derived from an essential human nature or from biology, and that there is no reason to exempt sexuality and its representations from that claim. That does not mean sexuality is completely independent of biology, only that the specific practices engaged in and our understanding of them are socially constructed. In Nancy Hartsock's words, sexuality is "a series of cultural and social practices and meanings that both structure and are in turn structured by social relations more generally" (1985, 156).

It is a curious aspect of the feminist sexuality debate that many people on both sides see sexuality as socially constructed but disagree on whether that is a valid reason for questioning certain desires. In this section I will summarize some arguments from pro-sex, pro-pornography or anti-censorship feminists.[4]

In her influential and widely reprinted argument for "an accurate, humane, and genuinely liberatory body of thought about sexuality," Gayle Rubin (1984, 275) rejects sex essentialism and agrees that sex needs to be examined in its social, historical, and political contexts:

> [S]exuality is impervious to political analysis as long as it is primarily conceived as a biological phenomenon or an aspect of individual psychology. Sexuality is as much a human product as are diets, methods of transportation, systems of etiquette, forms of labor, types of entertainment, processes of production, and modes of oppression (Rubin 1984, 277).

From there, Rubin both highlights and ignores issues of power that are so important to understanding how sex is socially constructed. She rightly focuses on the ways coercive use of state power can enforce sexual norms on people with "deviant" sexualities, such as gays and lesbians. But she avoids grappling with how power can work in certain sexual practices, as seen most clearly in her defense of men who are sexually involved with boys. Rubin argues that the act of questioning whether certain sexual practices, such as sadomasochism, are healthy is oppressive, since supporters of traditional sexual

4 The choice of labels reveals much about one's opinion on this question. This discussion will only briefly touch on the specifics of the often divisive disagreements within feminism, such as the split over lesbian sadomasochism. This is partly because, as a man, I lack standing to be putting forth opinions about those practices. Also, I am more interested in this paper in the underlying ethical and epistemological assumptions than in debates over specific practices.

practices aren't forced to defend themselves. I agree that the majority avoids similar questioning, and one of my goals in public presentations about pornography is to suggest that "normal" heterosexual men should scrutinize their practices. But that does not mean minority groups need engage in denial. The unwillingness to confront questions of power in sadomasochism runs counter to Rubin's willingness to see sexuality as a social construct, but it is a common position among anti-censorship feminists.

A number of others focus on the difficulty in changing sexual desires. Carole Vance and Ann Barr Snitow argue that it is wrong to think that "if sexuality is constructed at the cultural level, then it can be easily reconstructed or deconstructed at the social or personal level" (Vance and Snitow 1984, 127). Because we know little about the "mutability of sexuality," they argue, it is uncertain how much individuals can change.

Linda Williams, a film scholar, takes a similar position in arguing that a condemnation of a woman's rape fantasies is unwise:

> The trouble is that existing power relations between the sexes are <u>inextricably</u> tied both to our fantasies and to the expressions and enactments of sexual pleasures (though not necessarily in directly reflective ways)... (Williams 1989, 18, emphasis added).

Again, the implication of that position is that there is no way to break the hold that existing power relations have on the construction of our sexuality.

Amber Hollibaugh also acknowledges that fantasy life is constructed in a variety of ways and that sexual desire is channeled. "But what the [anti-pornography] view takes from me is my right to genuinely feel, in my body, what I want" (English, Hollibaugh and Rubin 1981, 44). This seems to suggest that to challenge the ways in which power constructs sexuality--maybe even to ask the question at all--is a violation of a person's rights.

To engage in discussion about social practices, however, is not an act of taking something from someone. All the writers just quoted seem implicitly to acknowledge that the socially constructed nature of sexuality suggests that we should be able, at least in theory, to consciously shape our sex practices. But they seem to believe that in the world such a task is either too difficult or demands that individuals give up too much.

There obviously is good reason to be concerned with how one goes about changing sexual desire and to what degree such change is possible, and I have no easy, step-by-step plan. From my own ongoing experience in trying to shed certain aspects of a traditional male sexuality (aggressiveness aimed at conquest, tied to objectification, wrapped up in the sexualization of power, and learned in part through pornography of all kinds), I have no illusions about the difficulty of this project. It is fair to ask if

it makes sense to argue against the liberal position with so little firm ground on which to make a case for reconstructing a sexuality not rooted in patriarchal power. For me there is no other choice; recognizing how the patriarchal construction lives in my body makes it impossible for me not to try. Although that is a personal judgment, a broadened discussion and sharing of narratives is crucial to this project. My own victories, small as they may be, have come as a result of such discussions.

For now, then, I will suggest that we should reject both the determinism of the sexual essentialist position of Christensen, Downs, and Randall that naturalizes violence and subordination, and the liberal view that sees practices as socially constructed but resists any attempt to problematize certain desires. While it is important to reject attempts to establish a single correct egalitarian sexuality in its place, a social construction view can help us work our way through the problem.

If we are to be epistemically responsible, we must examine our sex practices, including our use of sexually explicit images, and be willing to try to construct them differently if necessary.

The Cum Shot.

STRAIGHT BOB: When I was sexually active in my 20s, I used to have this desire to ejaculate on a woman's body. Most of the time I didn't dare voice this. This was before AIDS and with women who were on the Pill; I wasn't worried about disease or pregnancy. I can't recall where I got the idea, but in every pornographic movie or magazine, this happens. I think it had more to do with control, being able to do it because I could, just like the guys in the movie did, and with watching, seeing myself having sex. In a way, I was having sex with myself more than with the women. Maybe it had something to do with defiling women's bodies. At the time, all I knew is that it was a turn-on, it felt sexy.

GAY BOB: If we're going to be honest, I still have that urge sometimes, even though I'm gay.

STRAIGHT BOB: So, did I hate women?

GAY BOB: Do I?

The Social Construction of Food and Sex.

Sex liberals sometimes use an analogy to food: Because certain people like the taste of certain foods and others do not, trying to make all people like the same foods would be authoritarian. To attempt to mandate such uniformity in sexual practices, the argument goes, would be equally oppressive. Rubin contends that, just as hunger gives no clues as to the "complexities of cuisine," the existence of sexual desire does not explain the variety of sex practices (Rubin 1984, 276). She observes that a person "is not considered immoral, is not sent to prison, and is not expelled from her or his family, for enjoying spicy cuisine" (Rubin 1984, 310).

Comparing food and sex can be helpful, but the analogy can be framed differently from Rubin's. Food is like sex in that it has biological (sustaining cells, in the case of food; reproduction, in the case of sex), aesthetic/pleasure (tasting good; feeling good), and spiritual (connecting to the Earth and a larger cycle of life; connecting to another person) aspects. That eating and sexuality are natural is obvious; that a specific type of food or sexual practice is natural is contestable. But that does not mean there can be no collective standards or ethical judgments.

First, no one would doubt that what tastes good to any individual is in part a product of socialization. We see that cross-culturally: Americans, as a rule, do not like horse meat, while in other parts of the world it would be a welcome dish. A large part, if not all, of the reason for those differing judgments is cultural. We can also see it in our personal lives: As a child I despised vegetables and beans, while today they are the bulk of my diet. The taste sensation has not changed drastically; instead, how I view those foods--how I construct their meaning and am open to their taste--has changed. The analogy to food, then, suggests that, instead of preferences for sexual tastes being a mysterious facet of an individual taken in isolation, such tastes are to a large degree socially constructed. And, as with anything that is a product of social forces, we can ask whether the forces that produced it were good--that is, based on such values as compassion, honesty, integrity, respect, and equality. While this seems to answer the sex essentialists, the analogy also can be used to challenge Rubin's position.

Apart from our individual decisions about taste, it is possible to make more generalizable judgments about the healthfulness of foods. We would not hesitate to say that a person who dines three times a day on root beer, pork hocks, deep-fried cheese sticks, and Twinkies has an unhealthful diet, no matter how the individual characterizes such a meal. While it may be authoritarian to outlaw Twinkies, there is nothing oppressive about labeling them unhealthful. Indeed, it would be irresponsible to pretend that nutritionally vacant snack cakes could be the centerpiece of a healthful diet simply because someone who craves their taste would like that to be true. It is, of course, easier to be secure of a consensus about the nutritional value of a Twinkie than about which sex practices are healthful; the ingredients of a Twinkie are easy to describe, and there is wide agreement on the effects of ingesting excessive quantities of those ingredients. We don't know the absolute "truth" about Twinkies, nor can we say exactly what effects they will have on any specific individual, but we have come to some collective judgments about them. Likewise, there is no reason to reject the possibility that an expanded conversation about sexuality could lead us to some common conclusions. If so, then we may indeed come to see certain "spicy" sex practices as politically regressive or

emotionally unhealthful.

Finally, decisions about the food we eat involve a variety of ethical and political considerations. An obvious example is meat eating. I like the taste of bacon, yet I do not eat it because of certain judgments that led me a decade ago to be a vegetarian. My rejection of the domination, violence, and cruelty that is involved in the contemporary food industry's abuse of animals affects my decision to refrain from acting on my sense of taste. That does not mean I stop desiring the taste of bacon; walking by a restaurant grill at breakfast time still provokes a desire for bacon.[5] Similarly, certain sexual practices strike erotic chords in me, but I reject them because of the dominance and submission involved. That does not mean I no longer see the erotic potential in them, any more than to reject bacon means I no longer smell the taste-satisfaction potential in it. It does mean I place more value on an ethical and political decision.

So far, it could be suggested this is simply an argument that individuals need to make individual decisions about these issues: Just as we all decide to eat or not eat meat, we all can decide which sexual practice to engage in and whether or not to use sexually explicit material. But, again, the analogy to food is instructive. Not so long ago vegetarianism was a marginal practice, one so far out on the fringe that it was not taken seriously by most people. While still a minority view, it has become less unusual in recent years. Our society is beginning to see it as a subject worthy of discussion and moral consideration. We are also paying more attention to other moral issues involving food production and consumption. For example, many meat-eaters are expressing moral concern about the conditions under which animals are raised for slaughter. As we become more aware of our fractured relationship to the earth, we consider questions about chemical farming and its effect on our food. Discussion of our relationship to the physical world increasingly takes on moral and political tones.

Wendell Berry points out that there is a "politics of food" that touches everyone who eats and that is related to our freedom; to eat responsibly is to live free, he suggests. He goes on to say that:

> if there is a food politics, there are also a food esthetics and a food ethics, neither of which is dissociated from politics. Like industrial sex, industrial eating has become a degraded, poor, and paltry thing (Berry 1990, 147).

Berry explicitly makes the connection I am striving for: How we construct and engage in sex, just as how we grow and consume food, says something about our relationships--to

5 I realize that my experience is not universal, and maybe not typical, for vegetarians, many of whom find the sight and smell of meat repulsive. For many, the moral choice can condition new physical responses.

each other in the case of sex, and to each other, animals, and the earth in the case of food. Those relationships cannot be isolated from politics and ethical thinking, any more than any other practice.

We need not view sexual desire as mysterious, elusive, untouchable, unknowable, and totally individual, even though at times it appears to be all of those things. The fact that at this point in history we seem to have a hazy understanding of how we come to possess a certain sexuality does not mean that is the best understanding we can hope for. And if such a position on human sexuality deserves further discussion, then further discussion of the representations of that sexuality also are important. If there is no reason to think we cannot come to better understand our sexual practices in light of their social construction, there should be no reason we cannot use that understanding to make judgments about pornography. In fact, that kind of investigation is not only possible but required if we are to be epistemically responsible.

You Gotta Get It.

GAY BOB: My friend Jim Koplin says there is one bedrock rule about sex in patriarchy: You gotta get it. If you aren't getting it, there's something wrong with you.

STRAIGHT BOB: That goes for straight and gay alike. The same rule applies. The locker room talk is the same for most gay and straight men.

GAY BOB: Sometimes when I talk to people about these things I suggest that if we are as messed up about sex as I think we are, maybe one thing to do is to stop for a while. Just quit having sex. I think it's easier to sort out difficult questions if you take a break and give yourself time to reflect and question, without being right in the middle of it.

STRAIGHT BOB: How does that suggestion go over?

GAY BOB: Not so well. Because it breaks the main rule of sex in patriarchy. I think it scares people. I think the same thing happens when I suggest to people that they stop eating meat for a while, just to give themselves time to think about it outside of the daily practice of meat eating.

STRAIGHT BOB: Are you ever going back?

GAY BOB: To eating meat? Probably not.

STRAIGHT BOB: To sex?

GAY BOB: I think that depends on how well I do at imagining something new.

Epistemic Responsibility.

In her discussion of epistemic responsibility, Lorraine Code asserts that "knowing well" is of considerable moral significance (Code 1987). On matters of sexuality, knowing well requires attention not just to what our desires are but to where those desires come from. To simply <u>know</u>, "This is what arouses me," without attempting to understand <u>why</u> it does is epistemically irresponsible.

Because sexuality is important to us, it is easy to understand why people might reject attempts to examine in detail the source of sexual pleasure. That is true not only of those who have what society might label an "outlaw" sexuality such as sadomasochism, but also of people whose "normal" sexuality is rooted in patriarchy's concept of eroticized power. We tend to want to hold on to what we know will work for us, and digging too deeply can threaten the ways in which we know how to feel pleasure. Code reminds us that it can be easier "to believe that a favorite theory is true and to suppress nagging doubts than to pursue the implications of those doubts and risk having to modify the theory" (Code 1987, 59).[6] But being epistemically responsible requires that we investigate those nagging doubts.

Code suggests that when epistemology is construed as a quest for understanding, the appropriate question becomes not "What can I know?" but "What sort(s) of discourse does the situation really call for?" (Code 1987, 165). It is in conversation and the sharing of richly detailed narratives that answers, even though they are likely to be tentative, can be found. Discourse about sex and pornography that stops with simple descriptions of what arouses a person is not enough. For me to say, "this is my sex and I have a right to it" is to stop before I get to the more important questions about why it is my sex and how it connects to the rest of my life and to the world. It is often suggested that radical feminist anti-pornography activists want to police the sexual imagination and censor sexual fantasies. But I think the radical approach simply asks that we interrogate those fantasies and ask questions about their source. When we do not do that, we are at risk of being controlled by fantasies rooted in the eroticization of domination and subordination, or those rooted in specific histories of abuse.

For example, a man who had been sexually abused as a child by his father told me that as a young adult he would go to pornographic bookstores and look for pornography that reproduced that abuse. He would scan the magazine covers,

6 This is not to say that every individual in every situation need engage in discussions about these matters. People whose sexuality is under attack by the established social structure--lesbians, gay men and, in some sense, many heterosexual women--might feel that social conditions make it unsafe to engage in such open discussion. For example, a lesbian high school teacher in a small town likely cannot openly be part of a discussion about sexual practices in that community. I also do not dismiss casually the reluctance of sexual minorities to support potentially restrictive laws, such as an anti-pornography ordinance. Fears that such a law may turn repressive for, say, lesbians are well-founded. Still, the idea of epistemic responsibility does suggest we should make whatever efforts are possible to pursue knowledge about sexuality and its social construction.

looking for the one that would "click" with his memories. He told me that after extensive therapy and self-reflection he no longer used pornography. But for the period that he was a consumer of those images, was pornography healthy sexual expression for him? Does the fact that those images produced arousal in him mean that he should not have questioned the urges that drove him to those images? Or, was his use of pornography, at the very least, problematic. The underlying question here can be taken from Jean Grimshaw, who asks if there might not be "desires (or intentions) which are not 'autonomous,' which do not originate from 'within' the self, which are not authentic, not really 'one's own'"? (Grimshaw 1988, 91).

No one grows up in American culture free from sexism. Because that sexism is so often made real in sexual terms, part of our sexuality is likely to be connected to it. This suggests that we should examine our sex practices, fantasies, and pornography for ways in which sexism and misogyny may be implicated in them. That is not to suggest that there exists in each person a true, unified self waiting to be tapped, or a pure, natural sexuality waiting to be expressed. The sexuality that the man mentioned above settled into after rejecting his pornographic one also was a construction, influenced by a variety of social factors. But instead of accepting his desires without question simply because they are his desires, he asked questions and discussed them with others. There is no guarantee that he, nor anyone, will find simple and neat answers; as Grimshaw says, the self can be too complicated for that:

> The self is always a more or less precarious and conflictual construction out of, and compromise between, conflicting and not always conscious desires and experiences, which are born out of the ambivalences and contradictions in human experience and relationships with others (1988, 103-104).

The difficulty in sorting through and understanding those ambivalences and contradictions, however, is not a reason to abandon the task. There may be no way of resolving disputes over sexuality and pornography to everyone's satisfaction. But, as Code suggests, this does not require us to declare there are no better or worse ways:

> Actions can be judged laudable, or less than perfect, in a number of specific respects even without spelling out the characteristics of perfection in definitive detail; such judgment can be just as valid for cognitive actions as for moral actions, for skills, or for other more purely practical forms of activity that admit of qualitative degree (Code 1987, 246-247).

In the sex and pornography debate, we need to accept that our discussions will not spell out the perfect position. What is crucial, then, is that we not cut off the discussion with a definitional dodge which suggests that

since there is no universal agreement, there can be no judgment.

This effort is not just an individual task; we have a responsibility to create collectively the tools for this investigation. As Code suggests:

> Thinking individuals have a responsibility to monitor and watch over shifts in, changes in, and efforts to preserve good intellectual practice. ... In principle, everyone is responsible, to the extent of his or her ability, for the quality of cognitive practice in a community (Code 1987, 245).

While it is easy to talk about such community, it can be difficult to achieve. My experience is that there are different levels of community at which different levels of conversations can happen. I have done most of this work in a fairly small community that includes a core of five to ten trusted friends, colleagues, and students (fellow students when I was in graduate school, and on rare occasions now, students whom I meet as a professor). Beyond that, I sometimes meet others with similar interests and convictions with whom I have important, though perhaps not ongoing, conversations. What defines this group of people is that there is an understanding--sometimes stated but often simply understood--that we won't have sex, now or in the foreseeable future. These kinds of conversations involve strong emotions and physical responses, and it is easy to want to channel that energy into sex. Also, there are ways in which talking-about-sex in a certain manner is a type of having-sex. It takes constant monitoring, and sometimes considerable effort, to reject patriarchy's rule and simply not engage in sex. But we do not always learn more about our desire by acting on it. I believe that having sex and talking/having sex in my core epistemic community would undermine real progress. It would erode trust, not just between the people involved in the sex but in the whole community, and would make it difficult, if not impossible, for the conversation to continue.[7] Such activity suggests that no matter how much one tries to redefine sexuality or talks about change, in the end we're all most interested in fucking each other.

Beyond those small communities in which we are likely to feel most safe in searching to understand sexuality, important conversations can, and must, go on in a larger context. This paper is one attempt to create an epistemic community (both in the room when I present it, and with those who read it later). I make myself somewhat vulnerable

7 This is especially true when the sex happens across differences in status that reflect potential power imbalances, such as a large age gap, significant wealth or class gaps, and gender. Most devastating, I believe, is sexual contact between people in institutionalized roles of unequal power, such as student/teacher, client/therapist, parishioner/clergy, etc. I believe that sexual activity in such situations is always wrong.

by discussing aspects of my own desire that confuse or trouble me, though not nearly as vulnerable as I am with trusted members of my core community. Implicit is an invitation for others to join the conversation. My search for community at this level happens at conferences, in the classroom, in anti-pornography and anti-rape public presentations, and in conversations with a variety of people I meet. Most often, I am sharing things I have learned in my core community with others and asking for feedback. These conversations are unpredictable but always, in some sense, productive for me.[8]

My investigations into sexuality and pornography within my circles of friends and colleagues have led me to endorse a radical feminist approach to sexuality and to take an anti-pornography position. I do not expect that everyone else will reach the same conclusions, although I believe that people who take questions of gender politics seriously will at least be able to understand the path that led me to those positions.

Postscript #1 (Women and Men).[9]

In this and other work, I tend to focus on the objectification, aggression, and violence that is central to the dominant construction of male sexuality in this culture. I believe this focus is proper, especially because I am a man and I work from my experience as a man. However, epistemic responsibility in regard to sexuality is as crucial for women as men. This does not mean I claim the right to tell women what their sexuality should look like. It does mean that we all must acknowledge that, to varying degrees, our lives have been shaped by patriarchy and men's values, and that we must examine the effects.

An example: While having sex, a man finds it sexy to put a woman's arms behind her head and hold them down at the wrists, rendering her fairly immobile and intensifying the experience of intercourse for him. I am arguing that the man should consider: Where did he learn the practice? What

8 I don't want to appear naive about this wider community. As troubling and divisive as these investigations can be in communities committed to feminism and liberatory politics, they can be dangerous in mainstream and reactionary political circles, where people may want to ignore or undermine a feminist analysis. My goal, and the goal of the feminists whose work informs my analysis, is the exploration and celebration of diversity, but the goal of those to the right is often the suppression of diversity. It is disingenuous and diversionary to dismiss the radical feminist critique solely on the basis that it "is in bed with the right," but those political realities are important to consider. The kind of open discussion that is crucial to expanding our understanding may be safe in some contexts but not in others.

9 Thanks to Rebecca Bennett for reminding me of the importance of discussing this and for her insights into the question.

is it about rendering a woman immobile that feels sexy? Why does having control over a woman in such a manner intensify his orgasm? All of those questions are central to epistemic responsibility; to act morally, he needs to know. But what if the woman in that scenario also finds the practice exciting? What if the sensation of being unable to move her arms while having intercourse intensifies her sexual response? What is it about being immobile that feels sexy?

I believe women have the same epistemic responsibility as men. However, in a society where women are often blamed for being in some way responsible for the injuries that men inflict on them, such a call for epistemic responsibility can appear to be asking women to blame themselves for the ways in which they may have internalized patriarchy's values. But this is not about blame or guilt; it is about the search for understanding, for freedom, for a way out of patriarchy. Just as pornography teaches men to rape, romance novels teach women to be rape victims. Just as fathers often instill rapist values in sons, mothers teach daughters how to submit to the boys. I believe there are compelling moral and political arguments for men to change. It also seems clear that to survive, women must change.

Postscript #2 (The "Prude" Question).

In a pornographic culture, one of the most feared labels is "anti-sex" or "prude." Any challenge to the existing sexual system of eroticized domination and subordination is likely to elicit this accusation, and, following the logic of sex in patriarchy, to be anti-sex is to be not fully human.

If one defines sex as patriarchal sex then I am anti-sex. But as Susan Cole writes, it is more accurate to say, "I am against sexual pleasure as pornography and mass culture construct it" (1989, 107). To work for change in a sexual system is not to work against sex.

People who generally accept that position, however, still often suggest that my argument is Draconian, that it is too difficult to move through the world with this level of introspection, individual and collective, about sex. At the heart of that view, I think, is a fear that if we tell the truth about just how deeply we are affected by the patriarchal sexual system, we may be left with nothing to take its place. Any sex, one might contend, is better than no sex. But, when sex comes with the cost of a loss of personal integrity, is that true? I think we must accept some uncertainty about the future. It's not at all clear to me where this exploration will lead, nor I am certain how much progress I will make. As Cole puts it:

> We have a long way to go before we uncover the full extent of the damage. We may not see the full repair in our lifetimes and it may not be possible to chart the entire course for change (Cole 1989, 132).

Imagining.

STRAIGHT BOB: You said it depends on how well you imagine something new. What's that mean?

GAY BOB: My friend Jim says part of the problem is that we don't have the language to describe what a new sexuality might be. We're still stuck in the old words. It's about imagination, about breaking through to something new.

STRAIGHT BOB: That's the second time you mentioned Jim.

GAY BOB: He's the first person I ever talked about this stuff with. He was the beginning of my community, of my coming to understand that I had a lot of talking to do about sexuality and gender. I can't do this alone. I need an epistemic community, a community in which I can feel that it's safe to know, a community to which I can go back to talk about what I learned.

STRAIGHT BOB: Have you figured out any new words?

GAY BOB: I think I figured out that it's not about producing heat. People talk about sex in terms of heat: That was hot. She's really hot. We had hot sex. I think it's more about producing light. Sex is something that we can use to shine light in, to see each other and to see ourselves better. That's about all I've figured out so far. I don't know how to do that yet. I'd like to think I'll know more some day. But that's enough for now.

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Commission on the Status of Women Division

WOMEN in Southeast TV Newscasts

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WOMEN in Southeast TV Newscasts

When one reflects on the television coverage of the 1994 Winter Olympics, for many, the two faces that most often come to mind are Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding. Never before had Americans learned more about U.S.A.'s ice skaters -- and two females -- until the dramatic assault (Friedan and Woodhull, 1994).

CNN's Executive Vice President, Ed Turner:

> It's a magnificent piece of American drama....It has greed, ambition, avarice, talent. You have the beauty attack, the kid from the wrong side of the tracks but with a feisty spirit, the rotten husband, trailer trash versus the junior league. All the things that make up a daily soap opera menu, only this is for real.
>
> Atlanta Constitution, February 23, 1994
> (Friedan and Woodhull, 1994)

It was also the first time top female athletes received so much media attention -- attention though not about these women's extraordinary skating skills, but rather on an extraordinarily sad story (Friedan and Woodhull, 1994).

During that drama, America watched through the eyes of television. That's important when one considers that television news plays a role in setting the nation's agenda.

More people claim they get their news from television than from any other source (Robinson and Levy, 1987). "In order for citizens to make truly informed decisions in a democracy, it is imperative that this forum feature the maximum possible amount of diversity" (Croteau and Hoynes, 1990, p. 95). Researchers have also suggested that lessons learned from news go beyond the information contained in the stories (Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978). Gray posits that the presentation of news stories in multiracial societies "orients the public to racial groups, their social status, structural location and

the level of their participation in the general society" (Gray, 1987). News is a "window on the world and through the news frame, Americans learn of themselves and others of their own institutions, leaders and life styles..."(Tuchman, 1978, p. 1). Television news provides us with a "window through which we observe, transmit and reflect our valuation of society to each other" (Singer, 1972, p. 251). Furthermore, sources may play a large part in building the television news agenda, and ultimately, in shaping information from which people unconsciously build their images of the world (Berkowitz, 1986).

In addition, the Kerner Commission in its report on the causes of civil disorders suggested that the news media should condition the viewer's expectations of what is "ordinary and normal" in society. The Commission found African Americans appeared primarily in the context of disorder and argued such a portrayal added to the "black-white schism in this country" (The Kerner Report, 1988, p. 363). Some 20 years later, Gans (1979) and Gray (1987) concur with the findings of the report. According to Gans, the news media reflect a white male social order and "is a supporter of the public, business and professional, upper middle-class sectors of society" (Gans, 1979, p. 61). News coverage needs to be diverse for healthy debate in society (Croteau and Hoynes, 1990).

TV news can give status and importance to those individuals and events which make the news (Lazerfeld and Merton, 1957). Likewise, the negative picture or lack of coverage of individuals sends a message as well. Because women are under represented in television news (Friedan and Woodhull, 1994; Media Watch, 1995; Stephen, 1992; Ziegler and White, 1990; Berkowitz, 1986; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1977), this

can be particularly problematic for them.

Females make up almost 52 percent of the population in the United States (U.S. Census, 1990). With that statistic, one could expect parallel coverage in TV news if a true reflection of society were to occur (Simpson, 1993). (U.S. Census figures representing females are consistent with the states used for this study.) However, that's not happening.

The purpose of this study was to explore the frequency women appeared in television newscasts in Southeastern states and determine how those women were portrayed.

On network news, while some studies reveal women's presence has increased over the past few years, others do not. And still, even when women have appeared more often in the news, it is not even near the reflection of the percentage of women in the United States.

As correspondents, a 1994 study titled, "Women, Men and Media," (WMM) revealed the 1994 average for females reporting the news on ABC, CBS and NBC was 21 percent, up from 14 percent in 1992 and 1993. This was primarily due to CBS' effort to feature women correspondents more (32%) (Friedan and Woodhull, 1994).

As sources, that same study reveals an increase in women's presence on network news as well. Although female interviewees have more than doubled since 1989, 1994's figure shows a drop of one percentage point over the year before (25%). Of the 1,428 people interviewed for the network nightly news showed during the study period, only 347 or 24 percent were female. It is interesting to note that CBS carried the highest

number of interviews with females (28 percent) in 1994 since that network had made an effort to hire women. One should note, however, no cause and effect relationship has been determined. Twenty-eight percent of CBS' sources in 1993 were also women compared to 24 percent in 1992 (Friedan and Woodhull, 1994; Sanders, 1992).

It is not only at the network level however that women are under represented. In a 1995 study of evening newscasts from 50 television stations in 29 U.S. cities, as sources, females appeared in only 18 percent of the stories compared to males 82 percent (Media Watch: A Day in the Life of Local TV News in America, 1995).

Research from The Image of Women in Television and Newspapers: April 1974 revisited April 1991, shows women actually lost ground. In straight news stories, women's presence dropped from 10 percent to 3 percent. In feature news, women also were shown less, from 16 percent to 15 percent (Stephen, 1992).

Earlier studies though represented much more of an alarming trend. For example, in 1987, 11.8 percent of the newsmakers during the period studied were female. Two years later, in 1989, only 10.9 percent of the newsmakers were women (Ziegler and White, 1990). A 1977 study conducted by the United States Commission on Civil Rights concluded that women were so under represented they could be considered insignificant and unimportant to the media. In a sample of 230 news stories, only three were pertinent to women and women's issues. Of 141 newsmakers, only 11.8 percent were women.

In "Television News Sources and News Channels: A Study in Agenda Building," research revealed women in the 1986 study made up only 5.6 percent of network news

sources examined and 11.3 percent of local news sources (Berkowitz, 1986).

More important, however, may be the change in how women appeared in the news. When women were seen in the news, they appeared negatively, meaning a victim, criminal, wrong doer/accused, sex object, in about half the stories (47 percent) females were discussed or referred to. Also, positive news about women, defined as winner, authority, talent/entertainer, heroic, leader, was more often reported in the middle or latter part of the newscasts. For example, when Nancy Kerrigan won the silver medal, NBC ran the story midway through the newscast. The story led the news when Kerrigan was portrayed as the victim of foul play. Thus, negative news about women tended to be played at the beginning of a newscast (Friedan and Woodhull, 1994).

This latest Women Men and the Mass Media (WMM) study is somewhat consistent with earlier research regarding women's portrayal on television news. A 1991 study by Rakow and Kranich that explored how women appeared as sources in television news revealed when women did appear, it was in a "ritualized role." Researchers also determined, after analyzing the evening newscasts of ABC, CBS and NBC, the majority of women appeared as "private individuals." This category included women affected by crime, disasters, public policy or the actions of their families (Rakow and Kranich, 1991, p. 14). Also coded as private individuals were child abusers, cancer patients, women addicted to television, shopping and women who love to quilt. Weighted heavily by the feminist viewpoint, Rakow, a self-described "...white radical feminist," (Rakow, 1992, p. 4) and Kranich, concluded that women predominantly spoke in the news as an "anonymous example of uninformed public opinion, as housewife, consumer, neighbor,

or a mother, sister, wife of the man in the news, or as victim of crime, disaster, or political policy. Thus, not only did women appear less frequently, but they tended to speak as passive reactors...rather than as participants...." (Rakow and Kranich, 1991, p. 14). In only 16 percent of the stories did women appear as experts. They appeared as spokespersons in 13 percent of the stories and as candidates and politicians in only 8 percent of the stories (Rakow and Kranich, 1991, p. 16).

Again, in the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights study, female news sources were categorized as government officials, public figures, criminals and private individuals. Some 35.5 percent of the female sources were private individuals in the traditional gender role of wife and mother; 19.28 percent were public figures; and only three percent were government officials (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1977).

Possibly there is a silver lining to the research on women portrayed in television news. For example, in the WMM study (Friedan and Woodhull, 1994) -- while women are still seen as "appendages to men," women are also appearing on network television as authorities and leaders -- from 11 percent in 1989 to 24 percent in 1994.

So while the overall percentage of women as newsmakers dropped, the trend as to how they were portrayed in television news is somewhat promising. In another study, women as government officials increased from 2.7 percent in 1987 to 3.6 percent in 1989. Women also made tremendous gains being represented in the area of public figures from 12.1 percent in 1987 to 21.9 percent in 1989. Women shown as criminals dropped from 6.9 percent to 0 percent and women as private individuals dropped from 27.2 percent to 25.9 percent (Ziegler and White, 1990).

Methodology

Researchers received videotape of television newscasts from four of the top rated television news stations in the capital cities of southeastern states. Southeastern TV stations were chosen because of their proximity to the researchers' institution. Researchers promised anonymity therefore specific states will not be revealed because denoting such would automatically allow readers to identify stations. Researchers did tell news directors that their newscasts would be evaluated; however, news directors were not told the nature of the research.

News directors in the selected geographic area provided researchers with a copy of the station's prime early evening newscasts for the week of October 2, 1994. This week was randomly selected to avoid a sweeps period when stations might put forth their best effort to maintain or increase ratings.

A researcher viewed all newscasts and the following information was coded for each story: 1) the overall frequency of women and men appearing in television news stories, 2) the gender and role of each person appearing in the story and 3) the topic of each story. A graduate student also coded stories. Intercoder reliability was 81.4 percent

The role of each person was put into several categories: *politician* or government official: *spokesperson* for an organization or office operationally defined as non-governmental: *expert* or professional speaking as individuals not as representatives of organizations: *resident*, defined as a private individual not working or in an official capacity: person on the *street*, defined as individuals surveyed as examples of public

opinion; *educator* or administrator in education; *business person* speaking for an organization, business or group; *shopper*; *celebrity*; *law enforcement*; *journalist*; *student*; *worker*, defined as non-professional person or laborer; *medical person* defined as any person in the medical field, for example, nurse or doctor; *soldier*; *criminal*, defined as a person convicted or accused of a crime; and *other*.

Story topics included *crime* operationally defined as either occurrences of criminal acts, crime statistics and trends; *entertainment*; *political*; *general news* defined as everyday life activities ranging from stories about the state fair and local cultural activities to the opening of a soup kitchen; *economics*, defined as dealing with business and economic issues, for example an unemployment or banking story; *education*; *health*; and *civil rights*.

The newscasts varied in length from one-half hour to one hour. Only the news segments were analyzed. Not analyzed were weather and sports unless they were presented as news stories during the news segment. Syndicated news segments, stories that were repeated during a later part of the newscast unless the story was changed significantly; public service announcements, such as a health screening to be held and promotions for stories to appear later in the newscast or on a later newscasts were not analyzed.

Frequencies and percents were observed. Cross tabulations were run to determine statistical significance at the .05 level.

Findings

Researchers found that of a total of 395 persons appearing in television news

stories during the period examined, more than twice the number of males appeared in stories as compared to females. (See Table 1)

When examining the role of the women appearing in TV news stories, when women were shown, they appeared nearly one-quarter of the time as a (21.4 percent) resident -- a private individual not working or in an official capacity. Women were seen in the role of a student in 15.4 percent of the stories with females. Like the role of resident and student, women appeared as a worker in 8.5 percent of the stories. These categories, resident, student and worker, all place women in non authoritative roles.

As a spokesperson, women appeared in 9.4 percent of the stories. In only one story (.8 percent) was a women portrayed as a business person or expert. Women were seen as a politician or governmental official in only eight stories (6.8 percent).

Overall, women were portrayed more often than men as residents, shoppers and students (See Table 2).

Furthermore, when combining the traditionally non authoritative roles of resident, student and worker, women are portrayed nearly 50 percent of the time (45.3 percent).

On the other hand, when males appeared in TV news stories, they were most often seen as a politician or governmental official -- 21.7 percent. Males were also portrayed in high percentages as law enforcement officials (15.2 percent) compared to females 2.6 percent. Thus men are proportionally shown 8 times more in the "authority" positions of law enforcement than women. This illustrates how males were seen more in "power" or "authority" roles -- unlike women. Additionally, men were seen as experts in two percent of the stories. That's nearly three times more than women. Both these

categories alone, expert and law enforcement, reveal men are proportionately seen much higher in authority roles. Thus, when cross tabulating the gender of the person by the role he or she appeared in the story, results are statistically significant (See Table 2).

Researchers also coded each story by its topic or news peg. When comparing the story topic by gender, results were significant. (See Table 3)

Almost 50 percent of the time, women appeared in the general news category (everyday life activities) compared to just more than one-third of the males. In stories about politics, women appeared in 17.1 percent of the stories compared to nearly 30 percent for men. In stories about education, of the women, they appeared in 12.8 percent of the stories compared to males 5.4 percent. Since Table 2 shows us the high percentage of women were seen as students (role of person in story), one can assume these women in stories about education are students. One should note that women as students then are seen nearly three times more than men in such stories. Thus, once again, women appear in stories in powerless or non authority positions. (See Table 3)

DISCUSSION

In the past years, while some studies reveal an increase in women on network television news, other studies do not. Certainly, it is clear, women have never been seen in representative numbers of their population (52 percent).

While this study is not comparative to earlier data from the same stations, it too reveals women's under representation in television news. The WMM 1994 showed only 24 percent of those on network television were women. Thus, this study is consistent with such national data showing that just under 30 percent of those in television news

stories were women.

In this study, it is significant that when women were shown, they were most often (21.4 percent) seen as a resident, an individual not working or in an official capacity, followed by a student (15.4 percent). Women were seen as a spokesperson in fewer than one in ten stories; as a political or governmental official even fewer times, and they were portrayed as experts in only one story.

Compared to men, women were seen more often as residents and students and even shoppers. The portrayal of women in this study is not surprising. In fact, it is consistent with earlier data where women were viewed most often in ritualized "female" roles and in non authoritative positions.

Men, on the other hand, were most often portrayed as political figures or governmental officials as well as law enforcement officials. This reveals the significant portrayal of men as "authority" figures compared with women as individual citizens without authority or power.

Regarding the examination of gender by story topic, it is interesting to note that the highest percentage of both males and females fell into the general category, meaning they were portrayed in everyday life activities. However, proportionally, nearly half of the females were seen in general news category stories compared to just more than one-third of males.

After the general news category, males were seen most often in stories about politics -- women too. But again, in proportion to women, men were seen in political stories nearly twice as many times in that category. While it may be fair to say that

there are more men in politics than women -- is it twice as many? Thus, once again, fewer women than men are seen in an "authority" role like politics, law enforcement, expert and business.

These finding agree with other data revealing that women are not only under represented in television news, but also their portrayed roles continue to be "traditionally" female. This study, like others, should send up a red flag. If most people do claim they get their news from television and one agrees with the literature that news can reflect our valuation of society -- then the portrayal of women in television news rooms across the Southeast is certainly problematic. First, the number of women in news stories in southeastern states is not representative of the numbers of females in society across the U.S. or in regions examined in this research. Secondly, southeastern television stations continue to portray women in traditional female roles -- with very few examples of women as authorities or experts.

Further research in this area is important. A replication of this study over time would be beneficial. Replication of this study in other areas of the United States could also be used to determine if geographical regions differ in their portrayal of women. Are such traditional roles for women an effect of southern stereotypes?

Additionally, it would be interesting to determine if newsrooms run by females made a significant difference in its frequency of coverage and portrayal of women?

For now, at least, while some studies show women have made "some" progress, this study confirms, females continue to be under represented in television news in southeastern states and the roles they are seen in may be even more damaging to their

fight for equality.

TABLE 1

Women Appearing in Television News Stories

Males	Females	Total
278	117	395
70.38%	29.62%	100%

TABLE 2

The Role of Women Appearing in Television News Stories

	MALES		FEMALES	
Political	60	21.7%	8	6.8%
Spokesperson	27	9.8%	11	9.4%
Expert	5	2.0%	1	.8%
Resident	23	8.3%	25	21.4%
Street	4	1.4%	1	.8%
Educator	8	3.0%	5	4.3%
Business	15	5.4%	1	.8%
Shopper	4	1.4%	5	4.3%
Celebrities	5	2.0%	4	3.4%
Law	42	15.2%	3	2.6%
Journalist	4	1.5%	2	1.8%
Student	11	4.0%	18	15.4%
Worker	15	5.4%	10	8.5%
Medical	2	.7%	1	.8%
Soldier	9	3.3%	0	.0%
Crime	7	2.5%	0	.0%
Other	35	12.7%	22	19.0%
Totals	276	100.0%	117	100.0%

DF=16; Chi-Square 67.37;p=.0001

TABLE 3

Gender by Story Topic

	MALES		FEMALES	
Crime	39	14.0%	11	9.4%
Entertainment	18	6.5%	7	6.0%
Political	83	29.8%	20	17.1%
General	110	39.4%	57	48.7%
Economics	9	3.2%	3	2.6%
Education	15	5.4%	15	12.8%
Health	4	1.4%	3	2.6%
Rights	1	.4%	0	.0%
	279	100%	116	100%

DF=8; Chi-Square 17.708; p=.0235

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USING THE 'F' WORD:
FEMINIST LEGAL THEORY AND THE RAPE VICTIM IDENTIFICATION DEBATE

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USING THE 'F' WORD:

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> Rape is not the same as homicide. I haven't found one (rape victim) yet who wants such publicity.
>
> -- Stephen A. Land[1]

> Identification without consent can certainly feel like a second victimization.
>
> -- Letter to The Daily Iowan[2]

> Just as women's work is not recognized or compensated by the market culture, women's injuries are often not recognized or compensated as injuries in the legal culture. The dismissal of women's gender-specific suffering comes in various forms, but the outcome is always the same: women's suffering ... is outside the scope of legal redress.
>
> -- Robin West[3]

> It hurt.
>
> -- Patricia Bowman[4]

The press has been grappling with the issue of identifying rape victims long before the likes of Nancy Ziegenmeyer, Patricia Bowman, and the Central Park jogger made headlines.[5] So, too, have the courts. The U.S. Supreme Court has twice faced the issue of whether to identify rape victims in the pages of the press. The decisions in Cox Broadcasting Corp. v. Cohn[6] and Florida Star v. B.J.F.[7] serve as the Court's statements on the legal debate.

Although the Court has recognized the notion of protecting the privacy of rape victims, the press continues to have the right to publish such information, including a crime victim's identity. In a more recent lower court case, the Florida Supreme Court ruled that a Florida statute which imposed criminal sanctions for the publication of a rape victim's name, or other identifying information, violated the First Amendment.[8] Relying on the U.S. Supreme Court's 1989 decision in Florida Star v. B.J.F., the state court's ruling also recognized the notion of protecting the privacy of rape victims. But in the words of the court:

> Where important First Amendment interests are at stake, the mass scope of disclosure is not an acceptable surrogate for injury.[9]

Again, protection against potential, and in Bowman's and others' cases quite real, harm (caused by the press) is only a notion.

How does/could/would the law, particularly communication law, need to change in order to accommodate women's experiences? Is it possible to strike a balance between harm and press privilege?

The purpose of this paper is to examine feminist legal theories and how such theories about women's experiences can/could/should shape the rape victim identification debate. Part I reviews the two major Court decisions that illuminate this issue. It is in their light that the shadows of rape victims', often womens', experiences are cast. Part II is a discussion of a recent debate between First Amendment attorney Floyd Abrams and feminist legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon. Their debate is in many ways analogous to the debate surrounding the identification

of rape victims in the press.

Part III of this paper raises the concerns and recent works of several leading feminist legal scholars, including Susan Estrich, Carol Smart, Rosemarie Tong, Martha Minow, Robin West, and Carolyn Stewart Dyer. Abandoning the First Amendment[10] is not what most feminist legal scholars have in mind. Rather, as Dyer suggests:

> It seems likely that if women held equal power -- not merely equal numbers -- in the legal system and in the media, women's conception of harm would be incorporated into the definition of the generalized public interest or public significance and their harm would be taken into consideration in privacy cases and balanced against the media's interests in publicizing what people consider private facts.[11]

Striking a balance between press freedoms and privacy concerns is at the heart of these feminist legal scholars' work. If law were based on women's experiences, they contend, then law might indeed be differently structured. This paper is about using the 'f' word, employing <u>feminist</u> theory, and examining how such theorizing about women's experiences can become part of the legal, social and newsroom policy-setting solutions to the identification debate.

I. <u>Cox Broadcasting Corp. v. Cohn to Florida Star v. B.J.F.</u>

> Six youths went on trial today for the murder-rape of a teenaged girl.
>
> The six Sandy Springs High School boys were charged with murder and rape in the death of 17-year-old Cynthia Cohn following a drinking party last August 18.
>
> The tragic death of the high school girl shocked the entire Sandy Springs community. Today the six boys had their day in court.
>
> -- WSB-TV, April 10, 1972[12]

Invasion of privacy suits brought against the press for identifying rape victims have been largely unsuccessful. In Cox Broadcasting Corp. v. Cohn, the Supreme Court ultimately refused to allow tort recovery for invasion of privacy arising from the publication of a rape victim's name. Cynthia Cohn's name was taken from a court record.

Georgia law had prohibited the publishing or broadcasting of a rape victim's identity, such as Cynthia Cohn's.[13] On April 10, 1972, Thomas Wassell, a staff news reporter for Atlanta's WSB-TV, licensed and operated by the Cox Broadcasting Corporation, attended the trial of the six youths indicted in the murder and rape of Cynthia Cohn. The trial was held in open court at the Fulton County Courthouse. Following the proceedings, Wassell prepared the news story above; it was filmed on the steps of the county courthouse. This news report was based on information obtained at the trial and from the indictments on record with the clerk of the Superior Court of Fulton County.[14] In sum, the victim, Cynthia Cohn, was identified in these public records, and WSB-TV (Cox Broadcasting) used her name in its coverage of the trial.

Less than a month later, on May 8, 1972, Martin Cohn, the victim's father, sued the television station, saying the broadcasts identifying his daughter invaded his right of privacy.[15] Cohn's action for monetary damages against Cox Broadcasting and Thomas Wassell was based on the Georgia law prohibiting such a broadcast. While Cox Broadcasting and reporter Wassell did not dismiss the content of the broadcast, including the naming of Cynthia Cohn,

they did claim that such newsgathering was privileged under both state law and the First and Fourteenth Amendments.[16]

The Georgia Supreme Court upheld the law against publishing or broadcasting a rape victim's identity. The court said that the State, through its legislative body, had the constitutional authority to protect the anonymity of victims of rape or attempted rape by prohibiting their identification in the media. The court, in interpreting the state statute, said:

> ... there simply is no public interest or general concern about the identity of the victim of such a crime as will make the right to disclose the identity of the victim rise to the level of First Amendment protection.[17]

The court went on to say that the First and Fourteenth Amendments are not absolute. Simply put, the state court said it is necessary to balance the protection of an individual's privacy with the interests of public disclosure of that individual's identity.[18]

The U.S. Supreme Court reversed the Georgia court's decision nearly two years later.[19]

As Justice White put it when he wrote in the majority opinion: "The interests in privacy fade when the information involved already appears on the public record."[20] Explained the Court:

> We are reluctant to embark on a course that would make public records generally available to the media but forbid their publication if offensive to the sensibilities of the supposed reasonable man. Such a rule would make it very difficult for the media to inform citizens about public business and yet stay within the law. The rule would invite timidity and self-censorship and very likely lead to suppression of many items that would otherwise be published and that should be made available to the public.[21]

Like Georgia, Florida law also prohibited the printing, publishing or broadcast of a rape victim's identity.[22] On October 20, 1983, a woman whose initials are B.J.F. reported to the Duval County, Florida, Sheriff's Department that she had been robbed and raped at gunpoint. The department prepared a report on the incident, which identified B.J.F. by her full name, and placed it in the department's press room.[23]

A Florida Star reporter-trainee sent to the press room copied the police report verbatim, including B.J.F.'s full name. Another Florida Star reporter then used the report, including B.J.F.'s name, in a one-paragraph item about the crime. The reporter wrote the article, excerpted below, entirely from the reporter-trainee's copy of the police report.[24]

> B ... J ... F ... reported on Thursday, October 20, she was crossing Brentwood Park, which is in the 500 block of Golfair Boulevard, enroute to her bus stop, when an unknown black man ran up behind the lady and placed a knife to her neck and told her not to yell. The suspect then undressed the lady and had sexual intercourse with her before fleeing the scene with her 60 cents, Timex watch, and gold necklace. Patrol efforts have been suspended concerning this incident because of lack of evidence.
> -- The (Jacksonville) Florida Star, Oct., 29, 1983[25]

In printing B.J.F.'s full name, The Florida Star violated its own newsroom policy against printing the names of rape victims. On September 26, 1984, B.J.F. filed suit in the Circuit Court in Jacksonville against the sheriff's department and The Florida Star. B.J.F. claimed that they had invaded her privacy, caused her emotional distress, and that the newspaper had negligently violated

the Florida statute making it a crime for the press to publish or broadcast a rape victim's identity.[26]

At trial, the judge ruled that the Florida statute was constitutional because it properly balanced the First Amendment and privacy rights. The judge also found that The Florida Star had been negligent as a matter of law by violating the state statute. In December 1985, the jury awarded B.J.F. $75,000 in compensatory damages and $25,000 in punitive damages.[27]

The First District Court of Appeals affirmed the judgment in December 1986.[28] In May 1987, the Florida Supreme Court declined to hear the newspaper's appeal.[29] The Florida Star appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. On June 21, 1989, the Court reversed the lower court's decision. The Court concluded that imposing damages on The Florida Star for publishing B.J.F.'s name violated the First Amendment.

In B.J.F., the Court ruled that rape victim B.J.F.'s name was obtained lawfully from a police report. As Justice Marshall wrote in the majority opinion, the newspaper account involved a matter of public interest -- the investigation of a crime. Although the state of Florida, according to the Court, also recognized the notion of protecting the privacy of rape victims and encouraging them to report such crimes, imposing liability on the Florida Star newspaper was "too precipitous" a means of advancing such interests.[30]

II. First Amendment, Free Speech and Potential Harm

In a recent article in The New York Times Magazine,[31] First Amendment attorney Floyd Abrams and Catharine MacKinnon, author of "Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law" and "Only Words,"[32] battle over what MacKinnon sees as distortions of the First Amendment (including those cases in which the First Amendment actually protects direct harms to individuals) and what Abrams sees as too much movement toward the restriction and limitation of speech and press freedoms. In a discussion of student newspapers, Abrams makes the point that newspapers are "permitted to publish what they choose."[33] To Abrams, it is important that there be public debate about any and all subject matter. MacKinnon, on the other hand, suggests that some published material causes harm to individuals. The harm that free expression causes is not addressed by the First Amendment, MacKinnon notes. She calls for a balance between what she terms "equality rights" and First Amendment freedoms of the press.

In a discussion of rape, Abrams argues:

> Rape is not being taught in a lot of law schools now because it's just not worth the hassle. Anthropology students are not being taught about race because it isn't worth the risk to professors involved. I know professors who have found themselves in a situation where the choice they have made is to teach other things.[34]

Abrams' argument is that just because a number of people (in this case, students) "feel bad" about what is said in class or is printed in the daily press doesn't mean that such persons should

have the power to "prevent, to bar or to sanction the speech involved."[35]

MacKinnon, however, contends:

> There are a great many more women in law schools than before. They are speaking out in opposition to the way rape has always been taught, which frankly has often been from the standpoint of the perpetrator. Much of the rape law is written from that standpoint, and it has implicitly been taught largely as a defendant's rights issue. A lot of women and some men are dissenting from that. They won't sit quietly and take it anymore, because it affects the conditions of their lives. There's been a challenge to the power of professors to control discussions from the point of view from which they've always controlled it. Instead of taking the chance to become educated, some professors take their marbles and go home.[36]

What MacKinnon has alluded to here is standpoint epistemology. "Standpoint epistemology," as Katherine Bartlett, Martha Minow, Patricia Cain, Ruth Colker, among others, refer to it, is the "positionality (that) recognizes that truth is partial and provisional." As Bartlett in particular suggests, such positionality requires that various perspectives be sought and examined. As Bartlett puts it:

> It (positionality) imposes obligations both to consider values that have emerged from methods of feminism and to be open to other perspectives. Instead of being a strategy that seeks to reconcile competing interests, it seeks to reconcile the existence of experience-based claims of truth with the need to question and improve these claims.[37]

Standpoint epistemology is the primary theoretical tenet of the concluding section of this paper. While MacKinnon's views are highlighted here, the views of other legal theorists follow in Part III.

In MacKinnon's and Abrams' continued discussion about free speech, rape and harms, MacKinnon posits that the First Amendment does not help sexually violated women because these women's voices are not heard precisely because the First Amendment, often, allows them to be harmed.[38] While MacKinnon refers to the rape of women, as she also does in her text "Only Words," as an acted upon expression of ideas, Abrams more or less says he doesn't get it. As Abrams puts it: "She (a woman) has a perfect right not to be raped."[39] Although Abrams says legislation is one way to counter the harms effected by the First Amendment, such legislation would have a chilling effect on the press. The suppression of expression in itself harms the First Amendment and is, according to Abrams, the ultimate violation. To Abrams, MacKinnon's notions of balancing individual rights with First Amendment rights is foolhardy. To MacKinnon, not to provide some sort of balance is to continue to subordinate and to harm women who have not been allowed an "equal voice." For victims of sexual assault, such legal ambivalence may be perceived as being raped again.

The debate between Abrams and MacKinnon is analogous to the debate surrounding the identification of rape victims in the press. Whereas Abrams embraces the values of a totally free press, MacKinnon calls for the examination of victims' perspectives. Their problem, like those in the legal, journalism and crime-victim communities, is that they fail to listen to one another. Abrams is so wrapped up in First Amendment discourse that he doesn't hear MacKinnon's feminist and legal views. And vice

versa.

So, too, has it gone in the victim identification debate. Proponents of naming rape victims, such as Geneva Overholser, formerly of The Des Moines Register, suggest that publishing names adds credibility to such stories and helps erase the stigma attached to the crime.[40] Others, including Margaret Gordon and Stephanie Riger, authors of "The Female Fear: The Social Cost of Rape," suggest that the victims should be able to control who knows about the crime.[41] Gordon and Riger recognize that some victims may want their names publicized. Most others, as Cox v. Cohn attorney Stephen Land has noted, do not wish their names to be printed in, or broadcast by, the daily press.

Legal scholars, while discussing such precedent-setting cases as Cox Broadcasting Corp. v. Cohn and Florida Star v. B.J.F. and such popularized cases as The Globe's and The New York Times' coverage of the William Kennedy Smith and Central Park jogger trials, almost always reiterate that, legally, journalists can publish the names of rape victims when their names become a part of the public record.[42] Few, with the exception of Kimberly Wood Bacon, Ellen Fishbein, Patricia Cain, and Estrich, among others, tackle the ethical and moral considerations of such debate.[43] These few do, however, provide a feminist slant. They are not afraid to use the 'f' word. They are not afraid to address "the woman question." As Francis Olsen wrote in "The Sex of Law:"

> 'Justice' may be depicted as a woman, but according to the dominant ideology, law is male, not female."

III. "As If Women Mattered"[44]

> Law is so deaf to core concerns of feminism that feminists should be extremely cautious of how and whether they resort to law.[45]

It has been suggested that what journalists and legal scholars really need to do is stop rehashing old principles and start asking "the woman question." Look at the wording in the Cox decision: "forbid publication if offensive to the sensibilities of the supposed reasonable man." Reasonable man? The reality, as Diana E.H. Russell and FBI statistics indicate, is that women make up the majority of rape/sexual assault victims, at least 70 percent, according to Russell.[46] The percentage is made up of women like Cynthia Cohn. Women like B.J.F. Women like Patricia Bowman, Nancy Ziegenmeyer, the Central Park jogger, Desiree Washington.[47] Where, then, is the consideration of the "sensibilities" of the reasonable woman? Feminist perspectives, such as those offered by MacKinnon, Estrich, West, and Dyer, among others, suggest that women have been left out of the formula.

Law, as Estrich, Colker and West have argued, has often excluded women's experiences, let alone women's "sensibilities."[48] The male point of view historically has been the standard.

> Women are seen as 'other' and rape is seen as a 'women's issue.' ... men write the rape laws, enforce the rape laws, interpret the rape laws, judge the accused and the victim-survivors, and rape.[49]

To Estrich, the law imposes a "double bind" on female rape victims by limiting their judicial options. To Colker, the law often

privileges some groups over others. In her examples, an individual's racial and class perspectives must not be ignored when interpreting "standpoint." To West, the very real notion that women experience pain, true pain, particularly in rape and rape's aftermath (including press coverage), must be addressed as a means by which women's oppression can be understood. And like Martha Minow, Dyer argues that we must listen to women's stories, the narratives that transpire before and during the rape trial and prosecution. None see legal reform as futile. Rather, these scholars envision the implementation of feminist and feminist legal theory in reshaping current law and press practices.

Josephine Donovan in her text "Feminist Theory: The Intellectual Traditions of American Feminism," writes: "For feminism to be successful as a mass political movement, it is important that large numbers of women come to see their standpoint as critical, as subversive."[50] This is one way in which standpoint epistemology grants, as Katharine Bartlett suggests, "access to understanding."[51] Standpoint epistemolog is a consciousness-raising element of feminism. It is a "way of knowing." What must be considered when making policy -- press policy or legal policy -- is that, as Colker suggests, one group's standpoint is not privileged over another's.[52]

Susan Estrich, in her text "Real Rape," argues that if law were based on women's experiences then the law would be structured much differently. As Estrich puts it:

> The people actually 'describing' women's responses were of course always men; at the time these cases were decided, women were not permitted to practice law in many states, let alone serve as appellate judges. The resistance requirement may have been more accurate as a description not of the reactions of women, but of the projected reactions of men to the rape of their wives and daughters. Certainly they, who knew how to fight, would have. They would have punched and kicked and screamed and maybe even killed. Or at least they thought they would. And maybe it was better for the judges to think that their wives would, too.[53]

As Dyer notes in her discussion of how the law changes: "When judges modify the law, they attempt to determine what traditional, accepted, everyday practice -- known as common law -- is and use it to establish a new rule of law."[54] But what if law has a deaf ear for women's experiences? What if law's "reasonable person" standard is really a standard based on a "reasonable man?" What then becomes of a woman's voice within and through law and the legal systemic structure? And if the law is deaf to women's experience, as Smart, Tong, West, and MacKinnon argue, might not the press, as the "watchdog," the Fourth Estate, also become somewhat deaf to women's experiences as well? If Patricia Bowman's full story, Desiree Washington's story, Nancy Ziegenmeyer's story about pain and the experience of being violated are not heard completely in court, how can the press hope to weave complete, and ultimately "unharming" (West's term) tales? Is this deafness, then, not cyclical?

Conclusion

> To print a victim's name is to guarantee that whenever somebody hears that name, that somebody will picture the victim in the act of being raped. ... As long as our society has any sense of privacy about sexual acts, rape will have a humiliating stigma. Not necessarily a stigma blaming the victim for what happened to her, but a stigma linking her name irrevocably with an act of sexual violence, with intimate violation.[55]

Identification opponents suggest that publishing names and addresses endangers rape victims. Many also note that the use of names often discourages rape victims from reporting the crimes or testifying at trial. Many victims fear that their privacy has been, or will be, invaded or lost upon disclosure of their identities. "Sexual assault is a different type of crime," they say.[56]

On the other hand, proponents of publishing names maintain that by not identifying rape victims the stigma surrounding the crime continues. Identification proponents also say that to publish the name of the accused but not the name of the alleged victim is unfair and, in many ways, pre-judges the accused.

Is it possible, then, to strike a balance between harm and press privilege? U.S. Supreme Court rulings in Cox v. Cohn and Florida Star v. B.J.F. suggest that the press' freedom to publish public information trumps individual privacy concerns. The rulings do not state, however, that the press must publish the names and identifying information of rape and sexual assault victims.

Feminist legal theorists suggest that by listening, truly

listening, to women's experiences and stories, in this case of rape and sexual assault, the law can be better structured.

Let us in the press, then, go a step further. Let us not wait for the law. Let us draw upon feminist and feminist legal theory to tell our stories, to tell better stories. Newspapers such as Philadelphia's Inquirer have done so. So, too, have The Dallas Morning News and The Des Moines Register. They're using the 'f' word. They're listening to the Patricia Bowmans when they respond, "it hurt."

ENDNOTES

[1] Stephen A. Land, Esq., Land, McKight & Cowen, Atlanta, in panel discussion on "The Evolution of the Privacy Rights of Rape Victims: Two Decades Since Cox Broadcasting Corp. v. Cohn," Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 77th Annual Convention, 11 Aug. 1994, Atlanta, Georgia. Land represented Cynthia Cohn's father in the 1975 U.S. Supreme Court case.

[2] Meredith Jacobson, "Keep Victims' Names Out of Newspapers," The Daily Iowan, 6 March 1994, 8A.

[3] Robin West, "The Difference in Women's Hedonic Lives: A Phenomenological Critique of Feminist Legal Theory," 3 Wisconsin Women's Law Journal, 82 (1987).

[4] Personal response, in panel discussion on "Sex in the Media: Some Case Studies," Sex in the Media: The Public's Right to Know Vs. The Victim's Right to Privacy media seminar was sponsored by Texas Christian University, 3 Dec. 1994, Fort Worth, Texas. Patricia Bowman is the Florida woman who accused William Kennedy Smith, Senator Edward Kennedy's nephew, of rape in April 1991. Bowman's identity was first revealed by The Globe, a tabloid newspaper. Bowman's response here was in reference to her reaction to a New York Times account of the case. Bowman went on to say: "Personal struggles are just that ... personal."

[5] The discussion concerning Ziegenmeyer's November 1988 kidnapping and rape surfaced following a five-part series in the Des Moines Register, February-March 1990. The series, written by Jane Schorer, later won the Pulitzer Prize. The 28-year-old New York woman who eventually came to be known by many as the "Central Park jogger" first made headlines in April 1989. See William Glaberson, "Times Article Naming Rape Accuser Ignites Debate on Journalist Values," The New York Times, 26 April 1991, 12A, as well as Chapter 6 of Helen Benedict's Virgin or Vamp: How the Press Covers Sex Crimes, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 189-249.

[6] Cox Broadcasting Corp. v. Cohn, 42[illegible] U.S. 469, 95 S.Ct. 1029 (1975).

[7] Florida Star v. B.J.F., 491 U.S. 524, 109 S.Ct. 2603 (1989).

[8] State of Florida v. Globe Communications Corp., No. 82,377, Dec. 8, 1994. This is Patricia Bowman's case. Her name and photograph were published by The Globe after she accused William Kennedy Smith of rape.

[9] Florida v. Globe Communications Corp., 23 Media Law Reporter, (24 Jan. 1995), 1119.

[10] "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." U.S. Constitution, Amendment I.

[11] Carolyn Stewart Dyer, "Listening to Women's Stories: Or Media Law As If Women Mattered," in Pamela Creedon's Women in Mass Communication, (Newbury Park, London, New Delhi: Sage, 1993), 331.

[12] WSB-TV, Atlanta, Ga., report as quoted in Cox Broadcasting Corp. and Thomas Wassell v. Martin Cohn, 231 Ga. 60, 200 S.E.2d 6 (1973), from the transcript of the original televised report. The sole reference to Cynthia Cohn was made in this manner, in the opening of the filmed news report. The report goes on to name the six boys and the fact that the murder charges were dropped against all of the defendants. It also is noted in the news story that one of the defendants later withdrew his guilty plea. The other five boys pleaded guilty to charges of rape. Their sentences are reported in the rest of the story.

[13] The Georgia code, adopted in 1911 and updated in 1968 reads:

> It shall be unlawful for any news media or any other person to print and publish, broadcast, televise, or disseminate through any other medium of public dissemination or cause to be printed and published, broadcast, televised, or disseminated in any newspaper, magazine, periodical or other publication published in this State or through any radio or television broadcast originating in the State the name or identity of any female who may have been raped or upon whom an assault with intent to commit rape may have been made. Any person or corporation violating the provisions of this section shall, upon conviction, be punished as for a misdemeanor.

1968 Ga. Laws 1335-1336 (Ga. Code Ann. 26-9901).

[14] Cox Broadcasting Corp. v. Cohn, 420 U.S. 469, 472-474 (1975). Wassell describes the way in which he obtained the information reported in the broadcast:

> The information ... was obtained from several sources. First, by personally attending and taking notes of the said trial and the subsequent transfer of four of the six defendants to the Fulton County Jail, I obtained personal knowledge of the events that transpired during the trial of this action and the said transfer of the defendants. Such

> personal observations and notes were the primary and almost exclusive source of the information upon which the said news report was based. Secondly, during the recess of the said trial, I approached the clerk of the court ... and requested to see a copy of the indictments. In open court, I was handed the indictments, both the murder and the rape indictments, and was allowed to examine fully this document. As is shown by the said indictments ... the name of the said Cynthia Cohn appears in clear type. Moreover, no attempt was made by the clerk or anyone else to withhold the name and identity from me or from anyone else and the said indictments apparently were available for public inspection upon request.

It should be noted, too, that Wassell was no fledging reporter. Although he had not been involved with the Cohn case before the morning of April 10, 1972, he had been in the employ of WSB-TV as a news reporter for the past nine years. This was not his first trial.

[15] Id. at 474.

[16] Id. Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, in part:

> No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

[17] Cox Broadcasting Corp., et al v. Cohn, 231 Ga. 60, 200 S.E. 2d 127 (1973).

[18] It is here where the Georgia Supreme Court cites State v. Evjue, 253 Wis. 146, 33 N.W.2d 305 (1948):

> ... there is a minimum of social value in the publication of the identity of a female in connection with such an outrage. ... There can be no doubt that the slight restriction of the freedom of the press ... is fully justified.

[19] Cox Broadcasting Corp. v. Cohn, 420 U.S. 469, 95 S.Ct. 1029 (1975).

[20] 420 U.S. 469, 470 (1975).

[21] Id. at 496.

[22] The Florida statute adopted in 1911 was updated in 1987 and reads:

> Unlawful to publish or broadcast information identifying sexual offense victim: No person shall print, publish, or broadcast, or cause or allow to be printed, published, or broadcast, in any instrument of mass communication the name, address, or other identifying fact or information of the victim of any sexual offense within this chapter. An offense under this section shall constitute a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in 775.082, 775.083, or 775.084.

Fla. Stat. 794.03 (1987).

[23] Florida Star v. B.J.F., 491 U.S. 524, 109 S.Ct. 2603, 16 Media Law Reporter, (1989), 1802, 1803.

[24] 16 Media Law Reporter, 1803.

[25] Excerpt from The Florida Star's October 29, 1983, "Police Reports" section. The one-paragraph item appeared in the "Robberies" subsection of the "Police Reports." Note that B.J.F.'s full name was used; it is omitted here. Also, The Florida Star is a weekly, not a daily, newspaper; circulation about 18,000.

[26] Id.

[27] Id. See also "Paper Not Liable to Rape Victim," 13 The News Media & The Law 3, (Summer 1989).

[28] 499 So.2d 883 (1986).

[29] "Paper Not Liable to Rape Victims," 3. See also, "Rape Victim Name Law Tested," 11 The News Media & The Law (Fall 1987), 7, 8.

[30] Florida Star v. B.J.F., 109 S.Ct. 2603, 2611 (1989).

[31] Anthony Lewis, "The First Amendment Under Fire From the Left: Whose Free Speech? A Discussion Between Floyd Abrams and Catharine MacKinnon," The New York Times Magazine, 13 March 1994, Sect. 6, 40-45, 56-57, 68, 71, 81.

[32] MacKinnon, Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987) and Only Words, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[33] Lewis, "The First Amendment Under Fire From the Left," 43.

[34] Abrams as quoted by Lewis, 45.

[35] Ibid.

[36] MacKinnon as quoted by Lewis, 45.

[37] See D. Kelly Weisberg, ed., Feminist Legal Theory: Foundations, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 534.

[38] Consider Patricia Bowman's personal testaments as well as Florida v. Smith: A Trial Training Videotape (New York: Courtroom Television Network, 1993) as an example. The videotaped series of outtakes of the Florida v. Smith sexual assault case is used as a "trial training" video in many law schools. Without attempting to do so, the tape makes a case for Robin West's central argument regarding the standpoint of such victims: women's suffering often falls outside the scope of legal redress and/or hearing. Bowman is reduced to a "blue blob" on the screen; Bowman's friend is considered a "loose woman."

[39] Abrams as quoted by Lewis, 57.

[40] Geneva Overholser, "Covering Rape: A Time of Transition," ASNE Bulletin, October 1990, 12-14, 16, and "We Should Not Have to Keep Hiding Rape," ASNE Bulletin, November 1989, 32. See also Jack Katz, "What Makes Crime 'News'?" Media Culture and Society, (Newbury Park, London, New Delhi: Sage, 1987), 47-75.

[41] For a detailed discussion, see Chapter 10 of Gordon and Riger's text The Female Fear, (Urbana and Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 125-136.

[42] See, for example, Terence Clark's "Epilogue: When Privacy Rights Encounter First Amendment Freedoms," 41 Case W. Res. L. Rev. 921 (1991), Ellen Fishbein's "Identifying the Rape Victim: A Constitutional Clash Between the First Amendment and the Right to Privacy," 18 J. Marshall L. Rev. 987 (1985), and Jody Freeman's "The Disciplinary Function of Rape's Representation: Lessons From the Kennedy Smith and Tyson Trials," 3 Law and Social Inquiry 517 (Summer 1993).

[43] See Kimberly Wood Bacon, "Florida Star v. B.J.F.: The Right of Privacy Collides With the First Amendment," 76 Iowa L. Rev 139 (1990), Fishbein, "Identifying the Rape Victim," 18 J. Marshall L. Rev. 987 (1985), Patricia Cain, "Feminism and the Limits of Equality," 24 Ga. L. Rev. 803 (1990), and Estrich, "Rape," 95 Yale L.J. 1087 (1986).

[44] Partial quotation taken from Carolyn Dyer's title "Listening to Women's Stories: Or Media Law As If Women Mattered," essay in Pamela Creedon's Women in Mass Communication, 317.

[45] Carol Smart, Feminism and the Power of the Law, (London, New York: Routledge, 1989).

[46] See Chapter One of Russell's Sexual Exploitation: Rape, Child Abuse, and Workplace Harassment, (Beverly Hills, London: Sage: 1984), as well as Rus Ervin Funk, Stopping Rape: A Challenge for Men. (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1993).

[47] Consider the example of Desiree Washington, the young woman heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson raped four years ago. In a Sunday London Times news article by Jonathan Rendall, (19 March 1995), sect. 1, 19, a photograph of Washington is published with the caption: "Washington: forgotten." The article's second paragraph notes: "Tyson may be a convicted rapist, but that will be forgotten as 5,000 or so journalists and fans jostle one another to get the first glimpse of the man who, a decade ago, was the most vicious fighting machine the boxing world had ever seen." Tyson was released from an Illinois prison March 25, 1995. As for further comment on Washington, see paragraph 15: "Washington's family is tortured by the thought Tyson will walk out of jail and into an instant fortune. She is still haunted by the attack and trial. She has cut off her hair and uses her middle name so people will not recognize her."

[48] See Susan Estrich, Real Rape, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987); Ruth Colker, "Pornography and Privacy: Towards the Development of a Group-Based Theory for Sex-Based Intrusions of Privacy," 1 Journal of Law and Equality, (1983); Robin West, "Jurisprudence and Gender," 55 University of Chicago Law Review, (1988) and "The Difference in Women's Hedonic Lives: A Phenomenological Critique of Feminist Legal Theory," 3 Wisconsin Women's Law Journal, (1987). West's "Jurisprudence and Gender" article also is found in the D. Kelly Weisberg text Feminist Legal Theory: Foundations, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 75-98.

[49] Funk, Stopping Rape, 36.

[50] Josephine Donovan, Feminist Theory, (New York: Continuum, 1992)m 199.

[51] D. Kelly Weisberg, Feminist Legal Theory, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 559.

[52] Colker as quoted in Weisberg, 313.

[53] Estrich, 31.

[54] Reference is to Edward Levi's analysis of legal reasoning. See Dyer essay in Pamela Creedon's Women in Mass Communication.

[55] Helen Benedict, Virgin or Vamp: How the Press Covers Sex Crimes. Quote is from Benedict, "Don't Print the Names," The Quill, July-August 1990, 4.

[56] Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Abuse, A Resource Guide: News Coverage of Sexual Assault (Des Moines: ICASA, 1987), 6. Another example, an anonymous journalist, commenting on the Des Moines Register's coverage of the Ziegenmeyer rape, writes in the pages of The Quill. July-August, 1990:

> To those of us who are rape victims, the hell that Nancy Ziegenmeyer went through is old news. The feelings she experienced, the fear, are common to all of us. But maybe newspapers need to print this kind of thing over and over again to pound it into the public's heads (and the political heads and the media heads).

Two Paths to Maturity:
The Depiction of Motherhood on Television Shows Popular Among Austrian and U.S. Teens

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Abstract

Two Paths to Maturity: The Depiction of Motherhood on Television Shows Popular Among Austrian and U.S. Teens

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To test the possibility of a link between high rates of teen-age pregnancy and the depiction of motherhood on television, a content analysis was conducted comparing female characters portrayed on favorite teen television shows in Austria, a country with low teen pregnancy rates, and the United States. Eight cross-country differences were identified that could influence teens' perceptions of the value of being a mother and of the developmental pathways open to teen-age girls. For example, mothers on U.S. television were more likely to direct or control other characters than Austrian TV mothers and were less likely than Austrian mothers to play a minor role in control situations. U.S. mothers also were more likely to have active sex lives with their partners. By contrast, childless women on U.S. television did not hold professional jobs and seldom had caring, supportive boyfriends.

Introduction and Literature Review

Teen pregnancy is a concern throughout the industrialized world. But the problem appears to be greater in the United States than in other developed countries. In Austria, for example, teen mothers constitute only 5% of all mothers, and the proportion has dropped since the early 1980s (Hirsch, 1994). In the United States, however, births among teen-age mothers continue to rise. Among women having their first birth in 1988, 23% were teen-agers. Among whites, two in 10 first births were to teen-agers; among blacks, four in 10 were to teen-agers (U.S. Public Health Service, 1990).

The cross-country difference in pregnancy rates among teen-agers exists despite striking similarities between Austria and the United States. Both countries maintain high standards of living. Education is highly valued and well-compensated with good jobs and social prestige. Many women hold jobs outside the home, and many have assumed leadership roles in professional, cultural and political affairs. Residents of both the United States and Austria are bombarded with pop music and images of sexy fashion models, to which many observers have attributed at least part of the United States' teen pregnancy problem (Alter, 1994; Hudson & Ineichen, 1991; Lindsay & Rodine, 1989). In addition, teen-agers in both countries become sexually active at early ages. In the United States, 27% of unmarried 15-year-old women and 75% of unmarried 19-year-old women have had vaginal intercourse (Sonenstein, Pleck & Ku, 1989). In Austria, the average age of first sexual intercourse occurs even earlier--at 15.5 years (Nostlinger & Wimmer-Puchinger, 1992). It remains unclear whether Austrian teens receive more formal sex education than do American teens, despite Austria's approval in the 1980s of a sex-education program for high school students. One research group in the predominantly Roman Catholic country recently reported that sex education remains so controversial among Austrian biology teachers that few have employed the instructional materials prepared to help them with their sex-education duties (K. Smetz, Ludwig Boltzmann Institut fur Gesundheitpsychologie der Frau, personal communication, May 9, 1994). In the United States, only 10 percent of high

school students receive comprehensive sexuality education (Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S., 1992).

Questions about the causes of teen pregnancy are no less complex than the political and social issues surrounding it. Still, the wealth of research about television and gender produced over the past few decades has left little doubt that television plays at least some part in shaping attitudes about sex roles and sexuality. Researchers have examined the pervasiveness of sexual acts and references on television in genres ranging from detective shows to soap operas (e.g. Lowry & Towles, 1989; Smith, 1991). An overview of studies on TV effects and the development of sex roles (Brown, Childers & Waszak, 1990) concluded that the mass media present sex as glamorous, exciting and risk free. In the 1980s, trend studies indicated that the prevalence of sexual innuendo and references to sexual intercourse and sex between unmarried partners was on the rise (Greenberg et al., 1980; Sapolsky, 1982; Sprafkin & Silverman, 1981). A follow-up study indicated that the magnitude of sexual content was even greater than in the 1980s, with the lowest rate identified at 2.7 sex acts per hour (Greenberg et al., 1993).

Another body of research has concentrated on the portrayals of women in television. Few if any of the studies, however, have dealt specifically with the portrayal of mothers on television. In the 1970s, several studies of prime-time programming found that women often were excluded or underrepresented (Gerbner, 1972; Tedesco, 1974). Henderson, Greenberg and Atkin (1980) found that women gave orders less frequently than their male counterparts, even after the initial disproportion in frequency of gender presentation was taken into account; women's orders were less frequently obeyed. Another study (Long & Simon, 1974) looked at family-oriented programming and found that women appeared subservient, dependent and less rational than their male counterparts and never appeared to occupy positions of authority either at home or on the job. Signorielli (1988) found that TV women were younger, more nurturing, and more focused on romance than their male associates.

The television industry, perhaps prompted by growing numbers of job-holding women in the audience, has introduced several new ``career women" to the prime time line-up over the past few years. The characters include Murphy Brown, Anne Kelsey of ``L.A. Law" and Maggie O'Connell of ``Northern Exposure." Some critics have hailed these characters as better role models than their predecessors. Betsy Sharkey of Adweek magazine (1992) sees progress in the innovation of an assertive wife and mother in the TV series ``Home Improvement": ``Whether it's a question of Jill getting her first job rather than staying home with the boys or a fight over how to unclog a sink, Ms. Richardson and Mr. Allen explore a range of male-female friction points." Similarly, Daniel B. Wood of The Christian Science Monitor finds there are ``more single, career-oriented women leading satisfying lives on TV than at any time in the 50-year history of the medium." (Wood, 1990).

Television depictions have serious implications for the socialization of children and adolescents. Bandura's social learning theory (1977, 1986) suggests that children will learn and possibly imitate behaviors that are rewarded on television. Others theorize that television shapes children's view of the world--and limits their perceived options--through the sameness of its characters and the consistency of those characters' behavior (Gerbner, 1972; Hawkins & Pingree, 1982; National Institute of Mental Health, 1982). Thus, the developmental pathways open to children and adolescents may be defined or limited by what they see on television, especially among heavy viewers in the absence of real-life role models.

Though television probably is just one factor among several contributing to teen-age motherhood, the medium's potential as an important factor has been cited by both sociologists and mass media researchers. Some researchers have found evidence that TV viewing and teen sex are related. Baran (1976) found the media image was both inaccurate and unrealistic when compared with the reality of common sexual behavior, and that it gave rise to inflated expectations and consequent dissatisfaction with sexual experiences. A 1980

study found that high exposure to television predicted negative attitudes toward remaining a virgin (Courtright & Baran). Another survey of teen viewing habits and sexual practices concluded that teens who watched more sexually explicit TV were more likely than other teens to have had sexual intercourse (Brown & Newcomer, 1991). The possibility of a linkage between TV viewing and early sexual activity was tested by analyzing data from the National Survey of Children 76/77. No strong or consistent evidence of such a relationship was found, but the study concluded that more rigorous tests of the hypothesis was merited (Peterson, Moore & Furstenberg, 1991). A research group that examined the media-viewing habits of pregnant teens found that pregnant youngsters watched more television overall and viewed more R-rated films than their non-pregnant peers, possibly receiving more overall exposure to sexual content, but that non-pregnant teens watched sexier shows, perhaps indicating greater curiosity about sexual behavior (Soderman et al., 1993).

Several researchers have reported evidence linking TV viewing with gender, ethnicity and family structure. Of particular interest is that girls, blacks and children from single-parent homes watch more TV than their peers (Greenberg, 1993; Greenberg & Linsangen, 1993). According to the National Research Council, black and Hispanic girls and the daughters of unwed, teen-age mothers are at greater risk than those from other backgrounds of becoming teen-age mothers (1987). Some researchers also have found that race can influence the meanings that viewers draw from TV shows or movies and that the meanings may differ from those of mainstream viewers (Bobo, 1995; Bodroghkozy, 1995).

Sociologists frequently have suggested that television and other media contribute to the problem of teen-age pregnancy. They note the prevalence of sexual activity, the absence of references to contraception and see few attempts to promote virginity. Since television has been found to influence sexual behavior, they argue, it also may influence the desire of some teen-age girls to become mothers. Another facet of the problem could be that remaining childless often carries a social stigma. Lindsay, in a book dealing with teen-age

pregnancy (1989), cited media influence as one of a variety of factors contributing to the problem:

> The media--primarily radio and TV--bear heavy responsibility: Listen to the words of the music on any radio station which targets the adolescent audience. Watch MTV, and listen to the words. Watch a few evenings of prime-time television and note the number of sexual innuendoes, references to unmarried sexual activity, unmarried pregnancies, and other indicators that ``everybody's doing it.'' The most powerful measures of communication in our society are giving teens strong messages about sex.

Few, if any, researchers have examined the question of whether a positive portrayal of motherhood might add to teen-agers' desires to emulate the mothers they see on television. Teens, however, may view motherhood itself as a desirable goal, possibly as desirable as sexual experience. One approach to the question is to compare the TV models of mothers presented in the United States, which has a high rate of teen pregnancy, with those of countries having a substantially lower rate. If viewing has an effect, then one might expect the highest rates of teen pregnancy where motherhood is portrayed most positively. Similarly, one might expect the lowest rates of teen pregnancy where childlessness is portrayed most positively. In addition, pregnancy rates might be higher among teen-age girls who watched more television and lower among those who preferred shows other than family series.

As a first step in addressing these hypotheses, a content analysis was conducted to compare the portrayal of motherhood on favorite teen television shows in the United States and Austria. The expectation was that either motherhood was portrayed less idealistically in Austria than in the United States or that entertainment shows focusing on family units were less popular among Austrian teens than among their U.S. counterparts.

The study was intended to answer the following questions: 1) How are mothers depicted on the shows most popular among teen-agers in the two countries? 2) How do mothers compare with childless women on the shows? 3) How do the depictions of mothers and non-mothers on Austrian television differ from the depictions of the two groups on U.S. television?

Background

In preparation for the study, interviews were conducted with youth and communication experts in Austria to gain perspective on the research environment. Several differences between Austrian and U.S. television and teen culture are worth noting. Austrian Television (ORF) is more akin to the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) than to the ``big four" commercial stations (ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC) in the United States. ORF receives state funding and attempts to make the range of shows it broadcasts as wide as possible. Choices range from opera performances to sexy movies shown occasionally during late-night hours. TV series typically have shorter runs than in the U.S. Few shows appear more than a few months at a time, except news and weather. Like major broadcasters in the United States, ORF is received in virtually every television home in the country--99% by the system's own reckoning. Cable is widely available from sources outside the country, such as Switzerland and southern Germany. ORF is so well established, however, that private broadcasters in Austria have yet to obtain a foothold.

Officials attribute at least part of ORF's success to massive audience research. Its studies indicate that adults in Austria spend less time watching television than do Americans. Viewing patterns traditionally vary with weather, but on average in 1993, adults watched 133 minutes of television per day (J. Stelmach, personal communication, June 1994). Separate figures for the teen audience were not available. But based on a study of children and youth conducted for ORF in 1992, the viewing behavior of young Austrians probably more closely mirrors that of their elders than of U.S. teens. Although 20% of Austrian youths have their own TV sets by age 14, they devote large portions of free time to activities other than watching television, including sports, hobbies, school work, or family and friends (Integral Marketing Research, November 1992). U.S. teens, on average, spend almost three times longer in front of the set than their Austrian counterparts: 5.43 hours, or about 326 minutes, according to one recent study (Greenberg

& Linsangen, 1993). Thus, one might expect that TV portrayals would have a greater effect on American than Austrian teens.

Method

The shows that were sampled were drawn from rankings of favorite television shows of teen viewers supplied by Austrian Television (Osterreichischerrundfunk, or ORF) in Vienna, Austria, and Nielsen Media Research in New York. The Austrian list was based on market research of viewing patterns among 12-19 year olds conducted for ORF in 1993 and compiled in early 1994. The U.S. list was drawn from the Nielsen Television Index Ranking Report for September 18, 1994, a season-to-date ranking of shows based on viewing patterns of U.S. teens 12-17 years old. The lists represented the most current information on teen television-viewing preferences available at the time the sampling began. Top-ranked shows that had been canceled or were not being broadcast during the sampling period were not included. All the shows sampled, however, ranked within the top 20 based on the industry rankings. The lists encompassed all dayparts, or viewing times, although no daytime soap operas were represented. The Austrian shows were broadcast in May and June, 1994. The U.S. shows were broadcast in October and November, 1994. The sample included three episodes of 10, top-ranked shows from each list, 60 shows in all. Each female, adult character older than 16 years old was coded for a total of 184 adult, female characters, including 82 mothers. The shows, their program category, and the approximate ranking by ORF and Nielsen are listed in Table 1.

A coder recorded demographic information about each character, including age, race, motherhood and marital status. Five ``positive" attributes were examined: attractiveness, competence, material success, interpersonal relationships and sex life. The coder pre-tested the applicability of the coding scheme to German-language television by asking a native speaker of German to code several shows. The coders achieved an 85.3% rate of inter-coder reliability. The same scheme then was applied to the U.S. list.

``Attractiveness" was measured on the basis of grooming (good, bad); weight (slim or average, heavy); and clothing style (stylish, frumpy). ``Competence" was evidenced by each character's job outside the home (professional, other, none or unclear); housekeeping skills (neat and clean, other or unclear); control behavior (directs others, directed by others, unclear or neither); and counseling behavior (gives advice, seeks advice, neither or unclear). ``Material success" was gauged according to each character's social class (wealthy or middle class, working class or poor); residence (elegant or reasonably tasteful, unattractive, not shown); and eating habits (restaurants or family meals, fast or junk food, unclear). The quality of each character's interpersonal relationships was assessed based on her happiness throughout and at the end of the show (yes, no); the behavior of her husband or boyfriend (caring or supportive, noncommittal, abusive or unsupportive, not shown); the appearance of elderly relatives (independent, dependent, not shown); and the behavior of friends and neighbors (friendly or helpful, unfriendly or critical, neither or not shown). Finally, each character's sex life was assessed based on her touching or kissing her husband or boyfriend (touching, kissing, both, neither) and her participation in implied sexual intercourse (yes, no). Any use of contraceptives, discussion of sexually transmitted diseases or discussion of pregnancy as a possible consequence of intercourse involving the character also was noted. A sample coding sheet is attached in Appendix A.

Results

Motherhood status in the shows sampled was nearly always clear. Among 184 characters analyzed, motherhood status was uncertain in only 23 (12.5%). Results have been reported only for the 161 characters coded either as a mother or non-mother.

Depictions of mothers and non-mothers

Demographics. As can be seen in Table 2, television mothers in both Austria and the United States were depicted as older than non-mothers, white rather than black or Asian, and married rather than divorced, separated or single. Most U.S. mothers (89.7%)

and Austrian mothers (81.4%) were either young or middle-aged adults, between 20 and 59 years old. The prevalence of mature mothers was reflected among the leading characters in many of the U.S. shows. Examples included Roseanne and Peg Bundy of ``Married . . . With Children." Non-moms were younger as a rule, with 100% of the characters in the U.S. group of non-moms and 94.9% of the characters in the Austrian group of non-moms under age 40. Nearly all female characters over age 60 were mothers. They were represented by Grandma Kim in ``All-American Girl" in the U.S. group and by Francie in ``Der Bergdoktor."

Most mothers and non-mothers in both groups were white. The Austrian sample contained a larger percentage of white characters (81.4 percent compared with 69.2% in the U.S. group), and a smaller percentage of ``other" racial groups--Asians, Hispanics, etc. (4.7 compared with 15.4% in the U.S group). One U.S. show about an Asian family, ``All-American Girl" featuring comedian Margaret Cho, contributed substantially to the representation of ``other" racial groups in the U.S. sample.

Only a small percentage of mothers in both groups (10.2% in the U.S. group and 14% in the Austrian group) were unwed. Non-moms in both the United States and Austria were likely to be single (85% and 92.3%, respectively). Marriage appeared to be less important as a characteristic among mothers in the Austrian group, among whom 28% were single or of uncertain marital status. Austrian mothers occasionally appeared only with their children and without allusion to their husband, as was the case with the mother of a teen-age patient in one episode of ``Freunde Furs Leben."

Appearance. Almost all female characters in both the Austrian and U.S. groups were attractive. As can be seen in Table 3, all the Austrian moms and non-moms analyzed were judged well-groomed and slim or average in weight. Moms in the U.S. group were less uniformly slim or average size (84.6%). Austrian mothers also were more likely to be stylishly dressed than their U.S. counterparts (88.4%, compared with 79.5% in the U.S.). Roseanne was a rare example of a ``heavy" and ``frumpy" mother in the U.S. group.

Occasionally other characters, such as Grandma Kim, appeared either heavy or frumpy, but they seldom combined the traits.

Competence. Mothers in both groups are depicted as competent in terms of counseling and housekeeping, as is shown in Table 4. They are depicted as less competent than non-mothers in jobs other than homemaking. In terms of counseling, mothers in both groups predominated as advisers, while childless women typically functioned as advisees. In ``Grace Under Fire," Grace's childless sister sought advice from Grace after breaking up with her husband. Similarly, Jill Taylor of ``Home Improvement" provided her husband with investment advice. Mothers in both groups were depicted as good housekeepers, with about three-quarters of both U.S. and Austrian moms judged to preside over ``neat and clean" homes. The housekeeping skills of non-moms were more difficult to assess, particularly among the U.S. characters. Typically, they lived with their families, making it unclear whether they did their own housework, or their living quarters were not shown. Lynn, for example, lived with her family in ``Alf," while Kate, a nurse in ``The Flying Doctors," was never shown other than on the job at a clinic or in a plane.

Material Success. Most adult female characters also were portrayed as materially successful. More than 80% of both mothers and non-mothers were classified as wealthy or middle class. More than 80% of moms in both groups also lived in elegant or reasonably tasteful homes. Even Roseanne and Grace, two U.S. moms from working-class families, ruled over attractive bungalows with plenty of space. The mothers' eating habits tended to highlight the portrait of a well-to-do lifestyle. Most ate in restaurants or with their families. Childless women were more likely to be shown eating alone, on the run, or in fast-food restaurants and less likely than mothers to be shown eating meals at all.

Interpersonal Relationships. Table 5 reveals that mothers generally tended to have more successful interpersonal relationships than non-mothers and tended to be happier in general. A larger percentage of mothers were happy throughout the show (64.1% in the U.S. group and 58.1% in the Austrian group) than non-mothers (22.5% in the U.S. group

and 30.8% in the Austrian group). Similarly, more mothers than non-mothers were happy at the end of the show, and more mothers than non-mothers had supportive and caring husbands or boyfriends. Mothers and non-mothers were equally likely to be shown with friendly, helpful neighbors.

Sex Lives. Austrian and U.S. characters led similarly intimate sex lives, except in terms of sexual intercourse. As shown in Table 6, mothers in both groups were more likely than non-mothers to be shown touching and kissing their husbands and boyfriends. The Huxtables in ``Die Cosby Show," for example, kissed and touched frequently. One episode centered around their efforts to get rid of the kids in order to spend a romantic evening together. In contrast, Margaret Cho, the unmarried student in ``All American Girl," was seldom portrayed with a man, except when out on the town with a group of friends. Unmarried women in ``Beverly Hills, 90210" dated more frequently but often were portrayed arguing with their boyfriends about drugs, alcohol or other women.

Neither Austrian nor U.S. characters were likely to be portrayed using or discussing the use of contraceptives, discussing sexually transmitted diseases--including AIDS--or discussing pregnancy as a consequence of intercourse. One episode of ``Step by Step" did include a fairly frank discussion of pregnancy and its effects on a household of older children. And one episode of ``Grace Under Fire" alluded to marital difficulties stemming from a wife's inability to have children.

Significant Cross-Country Differences

Several differences among the women depicted on U.S. and Austrian television occurred in terms of competence. Childless women on Austrian TV were significantly more likely to hold professional jobs than their counterparts in the United States (25.6% compared with 0% in the U.S., $z=-3.42$, $p=.01$). In addition, the percentage of Austrian professionals who were childless exceeded that of Austrian professionals who were mothers, but the reverse was true among the U.S. women. No childless women in the U.S. group held a professional job compared with 10.3 percent of mothers in the U.S.

group. Chris Randall, the attractive general practitioner in ``The Flying Doctors," was one example of the accomplished non-moms popular among Austrian teens. She not only could set broken bones, but also best her colleagues at shooting skeet. Most non-moms in both groups, however, held non-professional jobs. Female students--such as Margaret in ``All-American Girl" and Brenda in ``Beverly Hills, 90210"--were well-represented, as were waitresses and store clerks. Stephanie and C.J. in ``Baywatch" were lifeguards. Most mothers in both groups were either homemakers or employed in an unspecified job outside the home (69.2% of the U.S. group and 65.1% of the Austrian group).

U.S. mothers, however, were significantly more likely than Austrian mothers to direct other characters (82.1% compared with 55.8%, respectively, $z=2.56$, $p=.05$), while U.S. non-mothers were significantly more likely than Austrian non-mothers to be directed by others (57.5% compared with 23.1%, $z=3.11$, $p=.01$). In one episode of ``Married . . . With Children," for example, Peg and Al discussed where they should go for an evening on the town. Peg suggested a hockey game, but Al was opposed. The next scene showed them in the stands at the game. Austrian moms, conversely, were significantly more likely to be neither directors nor recipients of direction (37.2% compared with 12.8% among U.S. moms, $z=-2.53$, $p=.05$). The U.S. and Austrian groups also differed significantly in one type of counseling situation. Childless women on U.S. shows were significantly more likely than childless women on Austrian shows to be neither advisers nor advisees (67.5% compared with 41% of Austrians, $z=2.36$, $p=.05$). In ``Family Ties," for example, Mallory supported her boyfriend emotionally when his dog was injured and had to be put to sleep, but did not advise him on the decision.

If the U.S. mothers lacked competence in the boardroom, they made up for it in the bedroom. They were significantly more likely than mothers on Austrian shows to have sexual intercourse with their partners (38.5% compared with 14% of Austrians, $z=2.54$. $p=.05$). Among non-moms, however, Austrian women were significantly more likely to

have supporting and caring partners (53.8% compared with 27.5% of U.S. non-moms, z=-2.38, p=.05).

In terms of appearance as well as clout, U.S. mothers carried more weight. They were less likely than Austrian moms to be judged ``slim or average" for their age and height (84.6% compared with 100% of Austrians, z=-2.67, p=.01). It is not clear whether their heftiness is a symbol of importance or a reflection of different cultural standards.

Conclusions

The portrayal of mothers on Austrian and U.S. television was similar in many respects, at least partly because so many of the favorite shows of Austrian teens were produced in the United States. Austrian favorites included six English-language shows, five from the United States and one from Australia. One show, ``Beverly Hills, 90210," appeared in both lists. The shows preferred by Austrians, however, included a wider range of genres: two action shows, two dramas, and six family series. By contrast, 80% of U.S. shows were family series and the one cartoon show on the list, ``The Simpsons," focused on a family unit. Austrian teens, then, may have received less exposure to ``Americanized" portrayals of motherhood because their choices were different.

The TV mothers popular in both countries were older than non-mothers, almost all Caucasian, well-groomed and stylishly dressed. In addition, most were married and led genteel lives as full-time mothers and homemakers. Among those who worked outside the home, non-professional jobs were more common than professional. The TV mothers in both countries were generally wealthy or middle class, occupied elegant or tasteful homes and seldom indulged in fast food or junk food. Their interpersonal relationships were smooth. They usually were happy throughout the show and nearly always at its conclusion. They also tended to have loving, supportive husbands or boyfriends and friendly, helpful neighbors. They seldom were forced to provide personal care or financial support to needy, older relatives.

However, the study identified several differences between the mothers portrayed in the two groups:

* U.S. mothers were more likely to direct or control other characters than Austrian mothers.

* U.S. mothers were less likely than Austrian mothers to be neither director nor recipient of direction in control situations.

* U.S. mothers were more likely than Austrian mothers to have sexual intercourse with their husbands or boyfriends.

* U.S. mothers were more likely than Austrian mothers to be portrayed as overweight.

The exalted position of the U.S. mothers was highlighted by the lesser status of their childless counterparts. Although demographically comparable to childless women in Austria and equally attractive in appearance, the childless women on U.S. shows were significantly less competent by some measures and had less satisfying relationships with men:

* No U.S. non-mothers held professional jobs; many Austrian non-mothers did.

* Childless women in the U.S. group were more likely than their Austrian counterparts to be directed in control situations.

* Childless women in the U.S. group were less likely than their Austrian counterparts to take an active role, either as advisers or advisees, in counseling situations.

* Childless women in the U.S. group were less likely than childless Austrians to have caring, supportive boyfriends.

Neither group of shows included many teen-age mothers, and neither included many childless wives. But on Austrian TV, attractive mother role-models were counterbalanced by attractive non-mothers. Childless women were shown leading successful professional lives and having rewarding relationships with caring and supportive partners. On U.S. TV, the contrast between mothers and childless women was sharper. Non-mothers sat on the sidelines and were controlled by others. They did not get

far in the workplace, and they did not get far in their relationships with men. Nadine, Grace's childless sister in ``Grace Under Fire,'' was typical of the group in both her occupation--cocktail waitress--and the dismissals she received from both an elderly aunt and Grace's young children. After breaking up with her fourth husband, she tells her sister, ``I need you, Grace!'' On American television, non-moms were portrayed as perpetual adolescents, always in need of advice and incapable of getting their acts together. The portraits suggested that the road to maturity passes through motherhood.

Discussion

Television occupies a significant portion of the day for many teens, particularly in the United States. Thus the developmental paths, or ``worldviews,'' the medium offers take on added significance. Research suggests that real-life decisions may hinge on the extent to which a viewer adopts or rejects the paths that are offered. In the United States, young women are offered paths of unequal attraction. Based on television depictions, the route through motherhood would seem quite rosy. It includes marriage, a middle-class lifestyle and authority at home and on the job. The childless path is less appealing. It is associated with immaturity, absence of love, and subservience. In Austria, where teens spend less time viewing television and possibly gain more real-life experience, the paths appear more equal. Though motherhood remains attractive, a childless life has advantages. Children are less symbolic of either sex or status.

Though television viewing cannot completely explain the differing teen pregnancy rates in Austria and the United States, the role of television models in suggesting what is possible or expected in the two countries should not be overlooked. Still, television viewing does not occur in a vacuum. The influences of family, culture, attitudes about sex and other variables undoubtedly play an important role in the choices that teens in both countries make. What does seem clear is that despite the proverbial European sophistication about sexual matters and despite a national sex-education program in the schools, Austrian teens get no more information about sex from their favorite television shows than do

Americans. Content about contraception, fertilization and sexually transmitted diseases is all but non-existent. Unlike Americans, however, Austrians are provided models of successful, childless women.

As in most content analyses, further research is needed to demonstrate whether a cause-effect relationship exists between variables. In the case of teen-age pregnancy and the viewing of ``supermom" role models, it also remains unclear what conclusions teens draw from television messages about motherhood and what effects those messages have on their attitudes and beliefs. The relationship might be clarified through a survey correlating teens' attitudes toward motherhood with incidence of teen pregnancy, or with experiments to determine whether teens' attitudes about motherhood change after viewing TV shows that feature less idealized mothers and more favorably depicted non-mothers.

Despite a variety of public efforts meant to address the problem of teen-age pregnancy, many young women continue to become mothers at an early age and too often fail to fulfill their potential in other spheres. Communicators concerned about the high rate of teen pregnancy in the United States might well strive for a more balanced, Austrian-style portrayal of female TV characters. Childless women need not always take direction from stronger characters and might even develop satisfying sexual relationships. Mothers need not solve every problem, and need not always be appreciated by their husbands, partners or friends. They might look frazzled, wear sloppy clothes and fail to meet their families' needs. This is not to say that shows should be peopled entirely with struggling teen mothers and confident, self-centered career women. More variety in the types of mothers and non-mothers depicted, however, would go far in dispelling the myth of ``supermotherhood."

Table 1

Favorite Television Shows of Austrian and U.S. Teens

Show	Type	Nielsen/ORF Ranking
	Austria	
1. Baywatch [a]	action	1
2. Beverly Hills, 90210 [a]	other (drama)	4
3. Der Bergdoktor	family series	7
4. Freunde Furs Leben	other (drama)	9
5. Jede Menge Familie (Family Ties)	family series	11
6. Die fligenden Arzte (The Flying Doctors)	action	12
7. Die Cosby Show [a]	family series	14
8. Forsthaus Falkenau	family series	15
9. Der Landarzt	family series	16
10. Alf [a]	family series	18
	United States	
1. Home Improvement	family series	2
2. The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air	family series	3
3. The Simpsons	cartoon	4
4. Blossom	family series	5
5. Roseanne	family series	6
6. All-American Girl	family series	8
7. Beverly Hills, 90210	other (drama)	10
8. Grace Under Fire	family series	12
9. Married . . . With Children	family series	13
10. Step by Step	family series	14

Note. The favorite shows sampled do not precisely match the top Nielsen and Osterreichischerrundfunk-ranked shows because of cancellations or lapses in scheduling during the sampling period. Austrian television, particularly, tends to vary its programming and seldom airs any show for more than a few months at a time.
[a]These shows originated in the United States.

Table 2

Demographics of Mothers and Non-mothers in Favorite TV Shows of Austrian and U.S. Teens

% of women who were:	Mothers U.S. (n=39)	Mothers Austrian (n=43)	Non-mothers U.S. (n=40)	Non-mothers Austrian (n=39)
Age				
teens (16-19)	---	2.3	32.5	23.1
20-39	48.7	39.5	67.5	71.8
40-59	41.0	41.9	---	5.1
60+	10.2	16.3	---	---
	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0
Race				
white	69.2	81.4	87.5	97.4
black	15.4	13.9	5.0	2.6
other	15.4	4.7	7.5	---
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Marital status				
married	84.6	72.1	10.0	7.7
not married	10.2	14.0	85.0	92.3
unclear	5.1	14.0	5.0	---
	99.9	100.1	100.1	100.0

Table 3

Appearance of Mothers and Non-mothers in Favorite TV shows of Austrian and U.S. Teens

% of women who were:	Mothers U.S. (n=39)	Mothers Austrian (n=43)	Non-mothers U.S. (n=40)	Non-mothers Austrian (n=39)
Well-groomed	92.3	100.0	97.5	100.0
Slim or average wt.	84.6 a	100.0 a	97.5	100.0
Stylish	79.5	88.4	92.5	100.0

Note. Proportions having the same subscript differ significantly at $p < .01$ based on the z-test of comparisons.

Table 4

Competence of Mothers and Non-mothers in Favorite Television Shows of Austrian and U.S. Teens

% of women who were:	Mothers U.S. (n=39)	Mothers Austrian (n=43)	Non-mothers U.S. (n=40)	Non-mothers Austrian (n=39)
Job				
Homemakers; unclear	69.2	65.1	45.0	30.8
Non-professionals	20.5	14.0	55.0	43.6
Professionals	10.3	20.9	--- a	25.6 a
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Housekeeping				
Neat/clean	76.9	74.4	7.5	25.6
Unclear; other	23.1	25.6	92.5	74.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Control				
Decision-makers	82.1 b	55.8 b	7.5	23.1
Neither;unclear	12.8 c	37.2 c	35.0	53.8
Manipulated	5.1	7.0	57.5 d	23.1 d
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Counsel				
Advisers	69.2	65.1	12.5	28.2
Neither;unclear	30.8	30.2	67.5 e	41.0 e
Advisees	---	4.6	20.0	30.7
	100.0	99.9	100.0	99.9

Note. Proportions having the same subscript differ significantly at $p < .05$ based on the z-test of comparisons. Some columns do not sum to zero because of rounding error.

Table 5

Interpersonal Relationships of Mothers and Non-mothers in Favorite TV Shows of Austrian and U.S. Teens

% of women who were:	Mothers U.S. (n=39)	Mothers Austrian (n=43)	Non-mothers U.S. (n=40)	Non-mothers Austrian (n=39)
Happy at end of show	89.7	86.0	47.5	66.7
Happy throughout show	64.1	58.1	22.5	30.8
Supported, cared for by husband/boyfriend	71.8	76.7	27.5 a	53.8 a
Shown with friendly, helpful neighbors	41.0	46.5	45.0	48.7
Shown with independent, elderly relatives	7.7	23.3	5.0	15.4

Note. Proportions having the same subscript differ significantly at $p < .05$ based on the z-test of comparisons.

Table 6

Sex Life of Mothers and Non-mothers in Favorite TV Shows of Austrian and U.S. Teens

% of women who were:	Mothers U.S. (n=39)	Mothers Austrian (n=43)	Non-mothers U.S. (n=40)	Non-mothers Austrian (n=39)
Shown touching/kissing husband or boyfriend	69.2	62.9	37.5	56.4
Having implied sexual intercourse	38.5 a	14.0 a	30.0	15.4
Discussing contraceptives, sexually transmitted diseases or pregnancy as a consequence of intercourse	10.3	---	12.5	2.6

Note. Proportions having the same subscript differ significantly at $p < .05$ based on the z-test of comparisons.

Appendix A

Mothers and Television Coding Sheet
Fall 1994

Program Title:
Character Name:

Network:
Date Aired:

Program Type: ____ (1-Family series, 2-Action series, 3-Soap, 4-Cartoon, 5-Other)

Character Demographics:
Est. Age: ____ (Teens=1; 20 through 39 = 2; 40 through 59 =3; 60 or older=4)
Race: ____ (Black=1; White=2; Other=3)
Marital Status: ____ (Married=1; Not married=2; Unclear=3)
Motherhood Status: ____ (Mother=1; Non-mother=2; Unclear=3)

Attractiveness:
Grooming: ____ (1=Good; 2=Bad)
Weight: ____ (1=Slim or average; 2=Heavy)
Clothing style: ____ (1=Stylish or average; 2=Frumpy)

Competence:
Job outside home?: ____ (1=Professional; 2=Other; 3=None or unclear)
Housekeeping skills: ____ (1=Neat and clean; 2=Other or unclear)
Control: ____ (1=Directs others; 2=Directed by others; 3=Unclear or neither)
Counseling: ____ (1=Gives advice; 2=Seeks advice; 3=Neither or unclear)

Material success:
Social class: ____ (1=Wealthy or middle-class; 2=Working class or poor)
Residence: ____ (1=Elegant or reasonably tasteful; 2=Unattractive, 3=Not shown)
Eating habits: ____ (1=Restaurants or family meals; 2=Fast food or junk food; 3=Unclear)

Interpersonal relationships:
Happiness throughout show: ____ (1=Yes; 2=No)
Happiness at end of show: ____ (1=Yes; 2=No)
Husband or boyfriend: ____ (1=Caring or supportive; 2=Noncommittal; 3=Abusive or unsupportive; 4=Not shown)
Elderly relatives: ____ (1=Independent; 2=Dependent; 3=Not shown)
Friends, neighbors: ____ (1=Friendly, helpful; 2=Unfriendly, critical; 3=Neither; 4=Not shown)

Sex life:
Touching or kissing husband or boyfriend: ____ (1=Touching; 2=Kissing; 3=Both; 4=Neither)
Implied sexual intercourse: ____ (1=Yes; 2=No)
Implied use of contraceptives: ____ (1=Yes; 2=No)
Discussion of STDs: ____ (1=Yes; 2=No)
Discussion of pregnancy as a possible consequence of intercourse: ____ (1=Yes; 2=No)

Appendix B

Coding Definitions for Mothers and Television
Fall 1994

Character Demographics

Family series--focused on a family unit with at least one parent and child.

Action series--focused on adventure; for example, a detective or police show.

Soap--focused on heterosexual relationships, and the plot line typically continues from episode to episode.

Cartoon--featured animated characters and may be targeted toward either children or adults.

Other--encompassed any type of show not included in the preceding categories, including shows that focus on school or work situations.

Estimated age--the group that most closely approximated the character's age. Most college students were coded as ``20-39"; mothers with college-age children as ``40 to 50"; and grandmothers as ``60 or older."

Attractiveness

Good grooming--characterized by generally flattering hair and make-up, with clothing not obviously wrinkled or dirty.

Heavy weight--substantially beyond the weight most people would consider ideal for a character's height.

Professional jobs--those that require at least some college training. Examples would include lawyers, teachers, journalists and administrative or ownership positions of all types. Students were coded ``other." Grace, the industrial worker in ``Grace Under Fire" was not a ``professional," but nurse Kate in ``The Flying Doctors" was.

Competence

Directs others--behavior that led others to accept direction, with or without protest, or that allowed a character to get her own way in the end. For example, a mother who told her children to go to bed and whose children then exited the room, apparently accepting the order, was a ``director." A more passive character who usually followed another's suggestions, such as Grace's sister, Nadine, was ``directed by others."

Material Success

Unattractive residences--disorderly, junky or decorated with obviously cheap and tacky furniture, as opposed to suitable for residents of moderate means with reasonable standards

of cleanliness. Roseanne's daughter's apartment was ``unattractive," but Roseanne's house was not.

Interpersonal Relationships

Happiness--characterized by a smiling face and peaceful demeanor; the character seldom appeared angry or stressed.

Caring and supportive--behavior that demonstrated interest in a partner's problems or active participation in housekeeping or child-rearing activities.

Independent--behavior that did not require physical or financial assistance. For example, grandparents who came to dinner and then left, as did those on ``The Cosby Show" were ``independent."

Friendly, helpful--behavior that showed interest in a friend or neighbor's daily activities or problems. Stopping by to chat, offer advice or make jokes was ``friendly, helpful" behavior. ``Unfriendly or critical" behavior, on the other hand, created or compounded problems.

Sex Life

Touching--included any instance of petting, stroking, grabbing, massaging, patting, holding hands, hugging, etc.

Kissing--included both pecks on the cheek and long, elaborate kisses.

Implied sexual intercourse--included the appearance of a man and woman together in a bed or bedroom, other than in a hospital, and any references to sleeping with a member of the opposite sex.

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Coverage of "Bride Burning" in the *Dallas Observer*: A Cultural Analysis of the "Other"

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Coverage of "Bride Burning" in the *Dallas Observer*: A Cultural Analysis of the "Other"

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> My feminist theory class met today at the library. I listened to the reference librarian, who was giving us information on feminist sources in the library. She began talking about feminist journals from foreign countries. She picked up the feminist journal *Manushi* from India and said, "I read this two or three times a year, when I feel bad or depressed. After reading this, I feel much better about my own situation. I encourage all of you to read this."
>
> I looked at her and felt a strange and inexplicable pain and a feeling of numbness. Undoubtedly, she was trying to be nice. She was doing her bit to motivate students to read about women of other countries. Then, why was I angry?

And what does this incident in my personal life have to do with the coverage of a "bride burning" case in the *Dallas Observer*, the topic of this paper? Plenty. Although I could not name the phenomenon that took place at the library (racism seemed inadequate), later it came to me like a flash, crystal clear. This was what "othering" was all about. What the reference librarian did openly and overtly was what lurked within the text of the article I analyze in this paper. The reference librarian located Indian women firmly within an oppressive framework and distanced their experiences from her own by viewing them as much more oppressed than women like her who lived in the "progressive" Western world.

What are the consequences of identifying the experiences of third world[1] women with patriarchal oppression alone? Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1991), an Indian feminist scholar, explores the production of "third world woman" in Western feminist discourse and asks what the prevailing image of third world women as victims of oppressive traditional structures does to their agency. She argues that acknowledging difference in terms of oppression may be a step forward from universalizing Western white middle-class women's experiences yet continues the

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[1] I am fully aware of the problems associated with using the term "third world." It has been contested as hierarchical and derogatory. However, even today people from postcolonial and developing nations continue to be classified as "third world people" within dominant discourses such as reports of the United Nations and the World Bank. I use the term self-consciously; Chandra Mohanty (1991) points out that the term not only makes concrete the economic relationship between the first world and the third world, but it also takes into account our history of colonization and relationships of dominance between first and third world peoples.

ethnocentrism of postcolonialism. The framework of "traditional oppression" makes Western feminists the only feminist subjects and objectifies third world women as victims. It renders their experiences as "exotic" and "different," and allows violence to become a characteristic of "them" (third world societies) and not "us" (Western societies).

It is this same distancing, the same "us" versus "them" that we see recurring throughout the *Dallas Observer*'s coverage of the death of Aleyamma Mathew, a member of the Indian diasporic community living in the United States (Sherman, 1993). Although Chandra Mohanty makes her arguments in the context of Western feminist writing on third world women, much of what she has to say is relevant for my critique of Western media discourse and how it chooses to cast Indian women as victims of male violence. The article in the *Dallas Observer* attempts to probe in depth the neglected issue of domestic violence in the Indian community and is therefore in a sense breaking the silence around this issue. However, what is problematic is that we find Indian culture being essentialized and defined as a patriarchal culture that *only* oppresses women. Analyzing the tendency of the media to essentialize the third world, a strategy that ultimately serves to cast the third world as "other," Peter Dahlgren and Sumitra Chakrapani (1982) observe:

> Incessant glimpses of disorder and violence serve as a reminder that these societies continue to act out their essential character; they are virtually driven by violence. "We," on the other hand, the industrialized West, are typified by order and stability, a higher form of civilization (p. 53).

Dahlgren and Chakarapani suggest that the problem is not only that violence in the third world is always the center of attention in the media, but it is also the way in which the media *present* violent situations: "Devoid of social, political, and historical causation, the manifestations of disorder and violence take on the quality of eternal essences which define the nature of these countries. 'That's just the way they are '(p. 53)."

In this paper, I argue that the *Dallas Observer* constructs Aleyamma Mathew as the "other" by framing her death as the natural and essential consequence of oppression stemming from Indian culture and tradition. Discussing the challenge postcolonial scholars pose to "mimetic theories of representation," Keya Ganguly, an Indian feminist scholar writes:

> Among the most important arguments offered from these quarters is the

> insistence on the need to shift debates on representation from the terrain of truth or transparency to a consideration of "regimes" of representation; that is, to a specification of the machineries and discourses that constitute both the possibility of representing an *"other"* [my emphasis] and the criteria by which such representations function in the field of knowledge (p. 71).

Taking the analytical direction pointed out by Keya Ganguly, I focus the discussion in this paper on the *Observer*'s exoticization and "othering" of her death. It is important to critique media representations of non-Western cultures not merely because they may be false or stereotyped, but because representation as ideology[2] constitutes and defines the creation and production of knowledge about these cultures.[3] As Sander Gilman (1982) says in his book *Seeing the Insane*, "We do not see the world, rather we are taught by representations of the world about us to conceive of it in a culturally acceptable manner" (p. xi). While this paper focuses on dismantling the process by which the *Observer* constructs Aleyamma Mathew as the "other," I also point out instances where more attention and sensitivity could have been paid to differences between Western and Indian cultures. I analyze how the *Observer*, by focusing on Aleyamma's oppression as a universal element of Indian culture, objectifies Indian women and produces a seamless, homogenous image of a diverse community. Further, I also briefly examine how the urge to portray her as a victim undermines Aleyamma's struggles and denies her human agency.

The problems with media representations of India or Indians in the United States media are undoubtedly influenced by Western perceptions of India acquired through previous mainstream media representations. The *Dallas Observer*'s coverage of Aleyamma Mathew's death, as this

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[2]Carl Bybee (1990) in "Constructing Women as Authorities: Local Journalism and the Microphysics of Power" suggests that the news-as-ideology position forces recognition of the intersection of power and knowledge (p. 199). His assertion that domination may be "exercised not simply as coercive force but as through the creation of a "reality" that naturalizes the reasonableness and the inevitability of oppression" (p. 199) is particularly relevant to this paper.

[3]Nancy Lays Stepans (1986) writes about the role metaphors and analogies played in linking race and gender (linking women with "lower races") in scientific research in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She argues that human variation and difference were experienced through a metaphorical system that "structured the experience and understanding of difference and that in essence created the objects of difference" (p. 265). Analyzing how metaphors directed and constituted the parameters of research or knowledge production on race and gender, Stepans looks at how metaphors organized reality and constructed signs of inferiority. See Stepans (1986), "Race and Gender: The Role of Analogy in Science."

paper will demonstrate, draws on dominant, mainstream representations of India to construct her experience as an inevitable and essential aspect of Indian culture. A study of representations of India in the United States print media, conducted in Bloomington, Indiana, shows that three themes dominated across media like *The New York Times*, *Time* magazine, *National Geographic*, *The Economist*, and local Bloomington papers; these three themes are "India as over-populated and impoverished, India as exotic and primitive, and India as a land of turmoil" (Cecil, Jani, and Takacs, 1994, p. 4). Specifically discussing the United States media's coverage of violent situations in India, Wes Cecil, Pranav Jani and Stacy Takacs note that the pervasiveness of reporting on religious riots and political unrest "naturalizes" these events as endemic to India. Further, they also find that the media exacerbate the problem by pathologizing and essentializing violence in India by the indiscriminate use of words and phrases such as "hurricanes of hate, " "primal violence," and "born in blood."

The persistence of depictions of India in the United States mass media as impoverished, exotic, and violent serve to not only constitute India as a "backward" third world country, but also to reinforce the superiority of Western civilization. Pointing out the implications of representations of "third world woman" in Western feminist writing for the construction of the West as superior, Chandra Mohanty writes:

> Without the overdetermined discourse that creates the *third* world, there would be no (singular and privileged) first world. Without the "third world woman," the particular self-presentation of Western women mentioned above [Western women as secular, liberated, having control over their lives] would be problematical. I am suggesting, then, that the one enables and sustains the other (Mohanty, 1991, p. 74).

Drawing on Mohanty I suggest that similarly media representations of India in the United States cast India as chaotic and primitive not only to exoticize India but also to reify the modernity and stability of Western nations.

The coverage of Aleyamma's death by the *Dallas Observer* indicates that the problem is not only that the media in the United States tend to cover minority communities only when acts of "deviance" take place, but it is also the portrayal of the nature of such deviance. As an Indian feminist it is troubling for me to note the rigid framework of "Indian tradition" within which the

Dallas Observer locates Aleyamma Varughese's death. Such a framework freezes the image of Indian women into a series of metaphors and renders them solely as victims of Indian culture. The "othering" of the situation of Aleyamma encourages the distancing of her experiences from the experiences of women of other cultures and prevents an examination of crucial issues common to the lives of most women who are subjected to violence.

I begin the paper by locating Aleyamma Mathew as a member of the Indian/South Asian diasporic community in the United States, discuss the image of this community, and the perception of domestic violence in the community. I then identify critical elements in Aleyamma's life that are neglected due to this focus on the "horrors" of Indian culture and provide some suggestions for culturally sensitive approaches to covering issues related to the Indian community.

Aleyamma Mathew: A Brief History

Aleyamma Mathew, a registered nurse at Parkland Hospital in Carrolton, Texas, died of burn wounds at her home in the same town, on April 5, 1992. Aleyamma was the wife of Mathew Varughese, a machinist at the Texas Instruments Plant in Carrolton. The couple had emigrated to the United States from India two decades ago and they now had three daughters, Dixie, Deepa, and Dimple. Aleyamma and Mathew were both Christians from Kerala, a state in the southernmost part of India. According to the *Dallas Observer*, the couple had been having marital problems since 1987, when Mathew Varughese began consuming huge quantities of alcohol, and often, Mathew used to abuse his wife verbally and physically. Matters between the couple came to a head on April 5, when Mathew and Aleyamma had a bitter argument at about 11:30 p.m. at night. Minutes later, Aleyamma was found by her children, writhing in pain from the flames which engulfed her and she soon succumbed to the severe wounds inflicted by the burning flames of the ignited gasoline that had been poured over her body.

Aleyamma Mathew and her family are part of the growing Indian diasporic community in the United States, a community that has been called a "model minority." In the next section, I

provide a brief sketch of the Indian diaspora in the United States to provide a context to the problem of domestic violence in the South Asian community.

The Indian Diasporic Community: A Model Minority?

The Indian community, in the 1990s, represents one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in the United States. There are around 815, 447 Indian Americans living in the United States as reported by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of the Census and they present one of the most rapid growth rates among Asian groups (Vepa, 1992, p. M19). The Indian population increased by a record 125.6 percent since the 1980 census, surpassed only by the Vietnamese population rise of 134.8 percent (p. M19). While Indians have been emigrating to the United States since World War I it is only with the liberalization of the immigration law in 1965 that large numbers of Indians began arriving (Singh, 1989, p. 36; Mehta, 1986; p. 126).[4]

The wave of immigration to countries in the West like the United States in the 1960s consisted largely of educated and technically qualified people (Singh, 1989, p. 36) and the phenomenon of the exodus of educated Indians from India to the United States has been called "brain drain." Gayatri Spivak (1990), a noted Indian feminist and literary critic in the United States, who belonged to the group of Indians who came to the United States during the sixties says, "The Indian community in the United States is the only coloured community which came in with the brain drain. This is quite different from Indians and Pakistanis in Britain, and certainly very different from Indians of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora" (pp. 61-62).

Due to the nature of Indian immigration to the United States (primarily educated and professional) since the sixties, the Indian community in the United States has been quite visible in universities, corporations, hospitals, computer firms, large manufacturing companies, and in other kinds of white-collar jobs. More recently, since the 1980s, Indians are also becoming owners of

[4]Discussing the flood of Indian immigration to the United States in the sixties, Mehta (1986) writes, "In 1965 when the discriminatory laws based on national origin quotas that had blocked Asian immigration for half a century were abolished, the large number of Indian immigrants started arriving . ." (p. 126).

busin ss motels, liquor stores, gas stations, and convenience stores, especially in the bigger cities like New York, Dallas, San Francisco, etc. The economic success of the Indian community in the United States, coupled with the low incidence of violence, drug abuse, and other crime in the community, has produced an image of Indian Americans as a "model minority" (Vora, 1993). This image of the Indian diasporic community as a model minority, however, is not as seamless as it is presented, a fact which becomes quite clear from the tragic story of Aleyamma Mathew's life.

The Indian diasporic community in the United States is both different from and similar to Indians living in India; while Indian-Americans have assimilated in some ways, they have also attempted to retain their cultural identity. Although many Hindu Indian-Americans celebrate festivals like Thanksgiving, Halloween. and Christmas, they also maintain contact with Indian culture by building Hindu temples, celebrating Hindu festivals, and learning the Hindu scriptures. Indian Christians in the United States like many Asian-Americans have their own churches that have sermons in Indian languages. Some of the ways in which all Indian-Americans--Hindu, Christian, and Muslim--maintain their cultural identity is by speaking Indian languages at home, eating Indian food, wearing Indian clothing at home or for special occasions, visiting India periodically, and by associating with other Indians.

Domestic Violence: A Growing Problem in the Indian Community

Aleyamma Mathew, who died of burn wounds and choking in a fire in her bedroom, was a member of the Indian diasporic community. Her experiences with violence and abuse in her marriage is symptomatic of the looming problem of domestic violence among the South Asian community, a problem which is surrounded by silence due to the "externally imposed and internally perceived image that we as South Asians are a model minority" [Margaret Abraham quoted in Vora, (1993)]. Sayantani Dasgupta (1993) touches on the problem with silence in the Indian community with regard to domestic violence and writes, "Silence has long been considered a virtue for South Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Nepali, and Sri Lankan) women. The

powerful image of the long-suffering but dutiful daughter/wife/mother is firmly rooted in our cultural consciousness. Breaking that silence is not an easy task (p. 17)."

Given the silence that surrounds the issue of domestic violence in the South Asian community, the *Dallas Observer*'s in-depth story on the murder of Aleyamma Mathew is significant. Responding to the story in the *Observer*, a reader comments in a letter to the editor regarding the shattering of his idealistic image of the Asian community, "Your article was extremely thought-provoking and filled me with many emotions. Sympathy for the victims, rage at the perpetrator, abhorrence at the act, and anger at myself for projecting an unrealistic, idyllic view of the Asian community" (Clemson, 1993, p. 3).

The *Dallas Observer* Constructs Aleyamma: The Shaping of the "Other"

The story in the *Observer* is one of the first attempts made by a publication in the United States to go beyond the cursory few lines accorded to such deaths in the crime news section of the mainstream newspapers. Months after Aleyamma's death (approximately 8 months later), the *Dallas Morning News*, on January 22, 1993, published a brief article (Thurman, 1993) discussing Mathew Varughese's conviction by the court for killing his wife and an even more brief article was published by *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution* (January 23, 1993, p. 4) on the next day. The *Dallas Observer*'s detailed treatment of the story, which ran to nine pages, is definitely proof of this weekly's stance as an alternative magazine. Vince Rodriguez, a former reporter of the *Dallas Morning News* , describing the *Dallas Observer*, said in an interview, "The *Observer* is an alternative news weekly. It tries to cover stories that the mainstream media pay very little attention to."

The story behind Aleyamma's death is vividly described by a journalist Rebecca Sherman, who avoids the usual dry and detached style of writing, and instead constructs in a very literary and fictional style, the events that led to Aleyamma's death. Congratulating her for her thought-provoking story, a reader, Jorge Pinada (1993, p. 3) responds in a letter to the editor, "I just wanted to congratulate you [The *Dallas Observer*], or rather compliment you, on your article.

Rebecca Sherman's near-invisible presence allowed the story to unfold on its own." Apart from an engaging style, Sherman also takes the trouble to unearth facts and statistics on "bride burning" in India, to provide a historical background to Aleyamma's life, and to interview a wide range of sources to piece together the complex threads of the story.

What is troubling, however, is that while writing in the third person (especially in a fictional style) allows for greater creativity and imagination in constructing a story, it erases the subjective nature of the interpretation of events and gives the reporter a lot of power to establish objective, "normative" reality (Bybee, 1990, p. 209). By writing in the third person, Sherman's treatment of Aleyamma's death as an inevitable and logical consequence of her being an Indian gains legitimacy and a sense of "truthness."[5] The third-person narration conceals Sherman's interpretive role and enables the reader to accept more easily her incrimination of Indian culture as the sole motivating factor for Mathew Varughese's criminal action. And it is through this emphasis on Indian culture that the "Other" is constructed as a victim of a non-Western culture, the essence of which constitutes the brutal oppression of women.

The headlines on the cover page of the *Dallas Observer* (April 15-21, 1993) declare: "Battered by her husband, Parkland Nurse Aleyamma Mathew remained true to her culture. In the end she became its victim." In this construction, Aleyamma's death becomes a synecdoche for Indian culture. By establishing at the outset that Aleyamma's situation is unique to her culture, the story ensures that the reader is given a glimpse of the savage culture of India, a strategy which "exoticizes" Aleyamma's predicament. Roland Barthes (1972) identifies the problem inherent in confronting difference and writes, "How can one assimilate the Negro, the Russian? There is here a figure for emergencies: exoticism. The Other becomes a pure object, a spectacle, a clown (p. 152)."

Such an objectification and exoticization of non-Western cultures is not recent; it has a long history dating back to European colonization of Asia. By objectifying Asian peoples and by

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[5]See Carl Bybee (1990, p. 209) for a discussion of how writing in the third person helps to establish authority and "truthness."

investing them with "savage," "primitive" or child-like qualities, the benevolent colonialists justified their imperialistic rule for hundreds of years. Peter Dahlgren and Sumitra Chakrapani (1982) trace the historical origins of the tendency of Western culture to "other" Asian or African people and observe:

> The origins of such perceptions can be traced back to the colonial and imperial legacy which Europe and America imposed on these societies. For centuries, "the native" has been seen as sorely deficient in civilization, . . .In transforming third world societies, often by force, into instruments to serve their will, Westerners assured themselves of their cultural superiority (p. 54).

In defining and describing the "other," there is often a tendency to draw on stereotypes that have existed, regardless of how irrelevant or erroneous these representations might be for the particular instance. The cover of the *Dallas Observer* depicts a painting of a Hindu woman with a bindi (dot/mark) on her forehead, when in fact Aleyamma, an Indian Christian, featured in the photographs inside, does not wear a bindi.[6] The Indian woman on the cover is also shown wearing white to signify an Indian widow, when in reality it is Mathew, Aleyamma's husband who is left the widower. Additionally, it is also ironic that the widow is shown wearing the bindi when in fact according to the traditional custom in India, widows are not supposed to sport the mark on their foreheads.

The cover also proclaims Aleyamma to be a "Burning Bride" when in reality she has been married for over two decades and hardly qualifies to be a "bride." The term "burning bride" is a problematic phrase that has been used by Indian media and Indian researchers to discuss "dowry deaths," that is, the deaths of young married women in India who were in many cases suspected to have been killed by husbands and husbands' relatives because these women brought insufficient dowry (Willigen and Channa, 1991, p. 369).[7] In a book titled *Brides Are Not For Burning*,

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[6]Some Indian Christian women who belong to certain denominations do wear "bindis" on their foreheads. However, Aleyamma in all the photographs featured in the story did not wear it. The painting of the woman with a "bindi" on her forehead to represent Aleyamma, an Indian Christian, is problematic because to a Western audience this automatically signals someone who belongs to the Hindu faith.

[7]The legal definition of a dowry death is, "where the death of a woman is caused by any burns or bodily injury or occurs otherwise than under normal circumstances within seven years of her marriage and it is shown that soon before her death she was subjected to cruelty or harassment by her husband or any other relative of her

Ranjana Kumari (1989) analyzes the phenomenon of "dowry deaths" in India; she examines the nature of harassment suffered by young wives due to dowry demands that continue soon after marriage and she traces the history of the legislation that have been enacted to curb the problem. Yet another essay called "The Burning Bride: The Dowry Problem in India" by Wanda Teays (1991) studies the religious basis for dowry in India, the historical antecedents for dowry, dowry legislation, and feminist attempts to stop "dowry deaths."[8] Discussing the use of this phrase "burning bride" to describe "dowry deaths,' Willigen and Channa (1991) write, "The woman is typically burned to death with kerosene, a fuel used in pressurized cook stoves, hence the use of the term "bride burning" in public discourse" (p. 369). Clearly the term "burning bride" has a specific connection with dowry and with the death of young women who suffer at the hands of mercenary husbands soon after their marriage. The inappropriate association of Aleyamma's death with "dowry deaths" through the phrase "burning bride" is an example of how Western media can use popular phrases without considering the implications and history behind these phrases.[9] A similar instance can be seen in the indiscriminate use of the word "veil" to signify the oppression of women in the Middle East. For example, in the series on violence against women in the world featured by the *Dallas Morning News*, the story on violence against women in Egypt carried the headline "Veil of Oppression"[10] when the story mainly dealt with spouse abuse and had two lines that mentioned the veil in passing (Reifenberg, 1993, pp. 31A-34A).[11]

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husband for, or in connection with, any demand for dowry, such death shall be called "dowry death," and such husband or relative shall be deemed to have caused her death (Government of India, 1987, p. 4).

[8]For more information and analysis of dowry deaths see also Rehana Ghadially and Pramod Kumar (1988), "Bride-Burning: The Psycho-Social Dynamics of Dowry Deaths."

[9]Within the story itself, Rebecca Sherman briefly explains the connection between "burning bride" and "dowry deaths" and then writes, "Clearly, Aleyamma Mathew and Rachel Kalluvilayil were not burned for their dowries" (p. 12). One wonders why, despite her awareness, the misleading term "burning bride" was used in big type on the cover.

[10]In a personal discussion on June 3, 1994 with Patricia Gaston (assistant Foreign desk editor) who supervised the series on violence against women in the world in the *Dallas Morning News*, she agreed with me that headlines in the case of stories on non-Western peoples often draw on existing stereotypes regardless of the appropriateness of the headline for a particular story. Gaston also pointed out to me

The distortions in the *Observer*'s representation of Aleyamma by are not just mere mistakes committed by oversight, rather they are manifestations of how the different stereotypical images of Indian women overlap and merge in Western media discourse.[12] What influences the collapsing of these different circumstances by the *Observer*? Sander Gilman's insightful observations regarding the psychology behind stereotyping might give us a clue:

> Qualities assigned to the Other readily form patterns with little or no relationship to any external reality. Since all of the images of the Other derive from the same deep structure, various signs of difference can be linked without any recognition of inappropriateness, contradictoriness, or even impossibility (Gilman, 1985, pp. 20).

Making a similar observation, Wahneema Lubiano (1992) who conducts a textual analysis of media coverage of the Clarence Thomas hearings, finds that in the process of "othering" illogical links are often made. Citing media representations of Anita Hill as both lesbian and spurned woman, Lubiano (1992) writes, "That lesbian and spurned woman cannot be rationally linked together simply means that a debased discourse doesn't care whether the terms of "othering" are logical or not" (p. 342). Through the contradictory representations of Aleyamma (Bride/Widow), her figure becomes a blurred set of metaphors like "victim," "dot on the forehead," and "burning," all of which mask the facts and concrete realities of her life.

Aleyamma's "Indianness" is subtly reinforced by the beginning of the story, which describes her as cooking spicy curry[13] in the kitchen: "Aleyamma Mathew's kitchen filled with the

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that the problem of inappropriate headlines could also be due to the fact that in newsrooms, frequently, the people who write headlines are not the same as the people who write the stories.

[11]The veil has become the predominant motif in discussions of the oppression of Muslim women. See Chandra Mohanty (1991, p. 66-67) for a critique of why the constant citation of the veil as evidence of Muslim women's oppression can be problematic. Mohanty cites an instance where in fact middle-class Muslim women in Iran wore the veil as a political gesture to indicate their solidarity with working-class women.

[12]For further details of how stereotypes in mass media work see Ellen Seiter(1986), "Stereotypes and the Media: A Re-evaluation." Ellen Seiter calls for more detailed analyses of stereotypes that would take into account how stereotypes arise out of certain historical and social structures. Seiter suggests that rather than just documenting stereotypes we must also study the content of stereotypes and their relationship to one another.

[13]The words "spicy" and "curry" are often associated with Indians due to popular cultural notions of Indian food. Frequently when I have been introduced to people in the United States for the first time, I have been asked, "Wow, do you eat all that

pungent scent of curry as she stirred the mixture of chili powder, turmeric, ginger, kariapala leaves, and chicken in hot oil. Her mother in India had taught her how to make curry, and she always added a little extra chili powder to make it spicy . . ." (Sherman, 1993, p. 11). The words "spicy" and "curry" are two words among a host of others such as "saris," "yoga," "snake charmers," "Kama Sutra," etc. that have come to stand for India in popular Western discourse. In a survey of freshmen university students at Indiana University one of the ways in which students characterized India was "a place where the foods are very spicy" and "people wear dots between their eyes" (Cecil, Pranav, and Takacs, 1994, p. 5). Cecil, Pranav, and Takacs (1994) note that media representations of India shape people's perceptions of India in these ways and people's perceptions in turn shape the course of future media representations, thus producing an endless cycle.[14]

It is interesting that the first image of Aleyamma portrayed to the reader is one of a domestic housewife, when in fact the writer could have begun with a description of her day at the hospital as a professional nurse. Contrasting Aleyamma's personal life with her professional life, Rebecca Sherman (1993) writes:

> Although Aleyamma earned a good salary--more than $35,000 a year--and had won the respect of doctors and nurses in a decade of service as a registered nurse at Parkland hospital, when she came home she was a traditional Indian wife. After work she took off her white nurse's tunic and pants and covered her body in a full-length *pabada*, or, cotton skirt, over which she slipped a shorter cotton gown. At home, she only spoke Malayalam, the official language in her native state of Kerala (p. 11).

"Traditional" here quite clearly is equated to wearing traditional Indian attire and to speaking one's native language, equations that are made due to Western notions of what constitutes "traditional" and "modern." The possibility that people from non-Western cultures may wear traditional clothing and yet not espouse the traditional patriarchal values of their culture is not even a

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spicy curry every day?" Of course there are also other icebreakers such as yoga, meditation, the Hare Krishna movement, etc.

[14]A recent Oprah Winfrey talk show aired on television in March 1994 featured Indian immigrants in the United States. Predictably the show featured an "exotic" element-- arranged marriages among the Indian immigrant community. For an analysis of this talk show see Caitrin Lynch (1994), "Arranged Marriages on the Oprah Winfrey Show: What Difference Does it Make?"

consideration--in fact such an outlook overlooks the fact that many feminist activists in India today wear saris *and* are committed to fighting oppression against women within traditional patriarchal structures. Pointing out the problems with using Western standards of evaluation in writing about third world women, Chandra Mohanty (1991) observes, "Legal, economic, religious, and familial structures are treated as phenomena to be judged by Western standards. It is here that ethnocentric universality comes into play (p. 72)."

The urge to stress the cultural aspects of violence in non-Western cultures often leads to sweeping statements that tend to treat people of the culture as homogeneous. It is disturbing that the phrase "Like other Indian immigrants/women...." is frequently used in the description of specific characteristics of Aleyamma's life to produce a monolithic concept of the Indian community. Aleyamma, as an Indian Christian is a member of a minority community among Indians, a majority of whom are Hindus, both in India as well as in the United States. Yet the story in the *Observer* suggests that Aleyamma "Like *other Indian immigrants* [my emphasis] wore her best silk saris to *church* {my emphasis] on Sundays . . .(Sherman, 1993, p. 11)" A majority of the Indian immigrants in the United States who are Hindu do not go to church but to Hindu temples--it would have been more appropriate in this case to say, "Like other Indian *Christian* immigrants . . ."[15] Similarly, Sherman also observes that "*Indian women* " do not date, "*Indian women*" never reject marriage proposals, and that "*every Indian family* " (p. 12) worries about unmarried daughters (all italics are my emphasis). Universalizing Aleyamma's experiences, the *Observer* casts all Indian women as a homogenous social group characterized by what Chandra Mohanty (1991) calls "common dependencies" and "powerlessness" (p. 59). Such a universalization denies "historical specificity" (p. 59) to the experiences of particular Indian women who have different experiences based on the structures of caste, class, geographic location, and

[15] Statistics on the number of Indian Christian immigrants in the United States are not available. However, the fact that Hindus who form the overwhelming majority in India comprise 83% of India's population and Christians comprise only 2.43% gives us a strong indication of the composition of the Indian immigrant population in the United States. Statistics on the Indian population, which were compiled in 1993, are cited from *Britannica Book of Year*, 1994.

religion within which they are located. Sweeping and universalizing statements regarding the social lives of women in India also produce static images of a country; while it is true that dating is not an established social ritual in India as it is the West and that many marriages are arranged it is also true that the situation has changed over the past two decades.

Apart from attributing universal qualities to the diverse Indian community, such a tendency to homogenize also leads to some serious errors. Sherman (1993, p. 14), the writer of this story, contends that dowries were not common "among Christians in South India" when in fact the prevalence of the dowry system among certain groups of Christians in South India is quite well known. Christians in South India constitute a heterogeneous group; there exist wide differences among South Indian Christians based on class, the caste to which they originally belonged to before conversion to Christianity, and the region they come from. In a study of Christians in the state of Kerala located in South India (the state which Aleyamma Mathew came from), Mathew Kurian (1986), who makes a distinction between Syrian Christians and other denominations of Christians, writes that Syrian Christians are those Christians who originally belonged to the Brahmin and other upper castes, while a majority of the other Christians in Kerala belonged to the lower castes (pp. 1-6). A distinction between these two groups of Christians, Kurian notes, is the strong prevalence of the dowry system among Syrian Christians (pp. 65-66). Making a similar observation about Syrian Christians in Kerala, another scholar George Kurian (1961) also notes, "Among Syrian Christians dowry by the parents of the daughters is a custom which is very strong" (p. 76).[16] Thus the practice of dowry varies across Christian denominations in South India. It is critical therefore that writers and reporters when writing about social practices like dowry in India specify which groups they are describing.

Discussing Aleyamma's familiarity with English, Sherman (1993) makes the statement, "*Like other Indian immigrants*, she struggled with written English " (p. 14). While this may be

[16]Lionel Caplan (1984) writes about the practice of dowry among Christians in Madras, the capital of Tamilnadu, a state in South India. Caplan who did his fieldwork in Madras in 1974-1975 documents the rapidly spreading practice of dowry among Christians in Madras. See Caplan (1984), "Bridegroom Price in Urban India: Class, Caste and 'Dowry Evil' among Christians in Madras."

true of *some* Indian immigrants who come to the United States to open businesses or to seek employment in manufacturing and technical areas, if Sherman had taken the trouble to get some facts on this issue, she would have learned that a majority of the Indians who come to the United States do speak and write English fairly well. When India was a British colony, English was established as a medium of instruction in schools and colleges across the urban areas during the nineteenth century (Sridhar, 1977). As a consequence of British intervention in education in India, today schools and universities in cities and towns continue to offer English as the medium of instruction. The large numbers of Indians who come to the United States for higher education therefore arrive with previous knowledge of English--this advantage of knowing English has aided Indians in gaining success here and in being a "model minority."

To firmly ground Aleyamma's death within Indian tradition and culture, the practice of Sati is described early on in the story, and a connection is established between Sati and "bride burning." Aleyamma's death is invoked as an inevitable and irreversible conclusion to an Indian woman's life: "Aleyamma Mathew may have been fated to die by fire" (Sherman, 1993, p. 11). Sati, which is "widow burning" is identified as an earlier form of wife burning or "bride burning," which takes place in contemporary India. Sherman suggests an organic and traditional link between Sati and wife burning when she notes that Sati has been outlawed but still wife burning continues: "Sati was outlawed in the late 1800s, and only a handful of cases have been reported in the last two decades. Yet the *tradition* of wife burning continues" (p. 11). Describing Sati, Sakuntala Narasimhan (1990) writes, " . . . sati in popular usage has now come to mean a woman who burns herself along with the body of her deceased husband" (p. 12).[17] "Bride burning," as described earlier in this paper, is a contemporary phenomenon where young married women are burnt to death for not bringing a large enough dowry to the homes of their husbands. It is difficult to see how the two practices, Sati and "bride burning," are connected except for the superficial "burning" element--the burning of a widow takes place for reasons completely different from why

[17]For more information on Sati, see Kanta Grover (1990), *Burning Flesh* and Sunder Rajan (1993), "The Subject of Sati."

married women (not widows) are burnt by their husbands today. In addition to the differences between these two practices, it is also important to note that Sati unlike "dowry death is an uncommon practice in India today.[18]

Linking Sati, an older practice, to wife burning or "bride burning," a more widely prevalent, contemporary practice, through the use of the word "tradition" locates the murder of Indian women solely within religious discourse and Hindu traditions.[19] Dowry deaths or "bride burnings," which are on the increase in India today, are much more complex phenomena than merely a continuation of Hindu traditions. Modernity, capitalism, upward mobility, increasing consumerism, the spread of education among both men and women, unemployment, and the fact that women are joining the workforce in increasing numbers are all factors that have played critical roles in the problem of "dowry deaths" (Teays, 1991). By erasing all these factors and concentrating on "Indian tradition" alone the story neglects the role of other socioeconomic conditions that contribute to the problem of "dowry deaths."

The practice of Sati has been widely debated and discussed in Western discourse (especially in the media and academia) as a prime example of women's oppression in India. As a result of this focus, all burning becomes Sati and all women in India are constantly trying to escape the clutches of Sati. Geeta Patel (1993), an Indian feminist scholar, describes a conversation with a colleague who was curious whether Geeta had left India for the United States to save herself

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[18] 5157 dowry murders were reported for the year 1992 (Indian National Crime Records Bureau, 1992). Sati on the other hand does not occur on this scale. Since India achieved independence, a few incidents of Sati have been reported. Citing the reported cases of Sati, Santosh Singh (1989) writes, "After 1955 every year at least one or two instances have been taking place here and there even though it is believed that the custom has completely died out because of social and legislative measures taken in this regard. The well-known instance is of Roop Kanwar who performed Sati on 4th September 1987 at village Deorala in Rajasthan (p. 24)."

[19] Although I have not documented this I have noticed that words like "tradition," "ancient," "custom," and "culture" are used frequently in the media with reference to practices and events in non-Western societies. The frequent use of such words conveys the impression of static, tribal societies untouched by time.

from being burnt through the practice of Sati.[20] Commenting on the image of the "archetypal victim, the burnt bride," Patel (1993) observes:

> What I found curious about the figure of the burnt woman (including in my encounter with my colleague) was the tenacious hold she seemed to have on the representational possibilities open to Indian women. But striking at her to dislodge her was like tilting at a medieval straw woman. Like the ghost image from some fantasy, she manifested when someone took aim at her, but disappeared immediately after. At the same time, because she was treated as though she were "real," each time she reappeared she acquired the solidity often possessed by "orientalist" colonial stereotypes (p. 3).

In the obsessive focus on Sati, the specific context of the violence surrounding Aleyamma's death disappears and is replaced by the all encompassing figure of the "burnt woman" represented in discourses on Sati. The inappropriate discussion of Sati with reference to Aleyamma's death ensures that Indian women become "not like us" to the non-Indian reader and helps establish a distance between the victim's life and the reader's life.

The intense effort on the part of the *Observer* to sensationalize Aleyamma's death as a possible future for all Indian women who express dissent precludes the possibility of looking at Indian women in other ways. The tendency of Western culture to focus on Indian women as *victims* of bride burning prevents discussions of them as possessing human agency. Lata Mani (1993), an Indian feminist scholar, who analyzes British colonial accounts of Sati in India discusses the construction of Indian woman as victims of certain cultural practices in Western discourse. She discusses reductive representations of Indian women within accounts on Sati and articulates the consequences of such representations:

> Such a constrained and reductive notion of agency discursively positions women as objects to be saved --never as subjects who act, even if within extremely constraining social conditions. This representation of Indian women has been fertile ground for the elaboration of discourses of salvation, in the context of colonialism, nationalism, and more recently, Western feminism (pp. 276-277).

The *Dallas Observer* portrays Aleyamma Mathew as the helpless victim of a patriarchal Indian culture that only annihilates women. The overwhelming focus on this depiction fails to bring into

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[20]Geeta Patel (1993) analyzes two brief articles in the *New York Times* and looks at how words (semantics) and sentence structures in news stories subtly create a distance between Western and non-Western cultures. See Patel (1993), "Killing the Other Off."

the foreground the efforts she made to be economically independent, her struggles to escape her abusive situation, and her courageous attempts to protect her children from their father's abuse.[21]

Aleyamma left her husband several times and even consulted a lawyer about getting a divorce--actions that are hard to take for Indian women far away from the familial ties and support structures available to them in India. Describing the situations of women from South Asia in the United States, Sayantani Dasgupta writes, "Bereft of this supportive network in the unfamiliar culture of the U.S., immigrant women are too often alone and resourceless in the face of adversity. Furthermore, fear of social sanction and family shame ensnare South Asian women facing violence (Dasgupta, 1993, p. 17). Given that the stigma of divorce still remains very strong in the Indian community, Aleyamma's act is noteworthy, despite the fact that she returns to her husband. Instead of viewing Aleyamma's struggles within the specific context of Indian culture, the *Observer* chooses to look at divorce as it takes place within Western culture and fails to understand the courage it takes for immigrant Asian women in the United States to divorce their husbands. The *Observer* describes Aleyammma "losing her nerve" about getting a divorce and minimizes her struggles: "Despite it all--despite years of drunken threats and vicious beatings--Aleyamma had

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[21] The media in the United States persistently portray third world women as "victims" of tradition and culture. While this problem cannot be alleviated by merely including more positive stories, that is, stories where third world women have mobilized against their oppression, one wonders still why the actions of third world women to combat oppression remain invisible or get marginalized in the Western media. A brief story in the *Washington Post* (Moore, 1993) discusses the successful protest of rural women from hundreds of villages in Andhra Pradesh, India to ban the sale of cheap liquor. This movement called the "anti-liquor" movement was launched by rural women who were subjected to violence from their alcoholic husbands; these poor, rural men would spend their money on cheap liquor sold by the Indian government in the evenings, on their way home from work, and abuse their wives in their drunken state. Discussing the success of their campaign, Molly Moore (1993) writes, "The odds seemed overwhelming from the start; poor, illiterate village women taking on one of India's most powerful political lobbies and generations of rigid social codes. But in a campaign hailed by many as India's first major grass-roots women's movement, some of the country's most destitute women have forced a large Indian state to ban the sale of cheap, government-produced liquor (p. A33). Such stories inevitably remain tucked away in the inside pages of newspapers and magazines and never hit the front pages or become cover stories.

resolved once again to preserve the traditions of her ancestors and her homeland, whatever the personal cost."[22]

The *Observer* subtly portrays the Varughese children also as victims of "tradition" through the description and analysis of the causes for the children's refusal to testify against their father. The *Observer* comments, "Like their mother before them, they are willing to suffer for their father" (p. 21). The Varughese children, Dimple, Dixie, and Deepa, had just lost their mother and were soon going to lose their only parent, their father. Completely overlooking the obvious anxiety of these confused children who were desperately clinging to their only hope of support and love, the *Observer* prefers instead to see their behavior as an extension of their mother's suffering as an Indian woman.

By emphasizing the cultural aspects of Aleyamma's murder, the *Observer* fails to bring forth other issues that may have been as relevant to her murder as the dark side of Indian culture. It also fails to provide information that could be of critical use to Indian women trapped in abusive relationships.

Consequences of Othering: The *Observer*' Neglects Critical Issues

Throughout the story of Aleyamma's married life in the *Dallas Observer*, there are recurring references to Mathew Varughese's alcoholism. In fact, even before their marriage 20 years ago, Mathew Varughese had a reputation for drinking. And the drinking problem only worsened after he came to the United States. The *Dallas Observer* graphically describes Varughese's drinking habits and the violence that would ensue after heavy bouts of drinking. In one particularly grisly incident that took place in October 1988, when Aleyamma's nephew comes to her rescue after the children phoned him, the description of Aleyamma's condition is particularly moving (Sherman, 1993):

> Blood streamed from a gash on her nose and from a bald patch on her head where hair had been ripped out. Her three daughters surrounded her.

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[22]Note once again the use of words like "traditions," "ancestors," and "homeland" to describe Aleyamma's decision to stay with her husband.

> Reiji could smell the alcohol on his uncle's breath from several feet away. Varughese sat in a stupor on the living-room sofa, and there were glasses of whiskey on the coffee table in front of him (p. 14).

I cite these lines from the story to demonstrate the extent of the effects of Mathew's alcoholism on his behavior. In 1988 and 1989, Aleyamma's work in the hospital began suffering and she used to come to work sometimes with gashes and bruises on her body (p. 16). Mathew's problem becomes so acute that he even began physically abusing his daughters. His drinking, as his daughter's diary indicates, continued throughout 1991, until the day of Aleyamma's death in April 1992 (p. 17). From the *Observer*'s account it is obvious that Mathew when under the influence of alcohol became violent and at the time of Aleyamma's death the police found him intoxicated.

In the *Observer*'s treatment of Mathew's alcoholism, his drinking problem is emphasized and described in fair amount of detail, but as a parallel story and not as an *integral* part of Aleyamma's life. Mathew's alcoholism is not even discussed as a factor which may have exacerbated existing problems in their relationship. The *Observer* briefly discusses Mathew's pursuit of wealth and his desire to acquire possessions; Mathew and his wife clearly disagreed on matters of how they should spend their money (p. 16). In 1988 when Mathew wanted to buy a bigger house, Aleyamma wanted to save the money for their daughters' education. When Mathew decided to buy a new car it was Aleyamma who went into considerable debt to help him buy the car. Thus there is evidence that the couple did not see eye to eye on financial matters and also that there may been financial pressures on them due to Mathew's desire for a bigger house and a new car.

Towards the end of the story, Sherman quotes Mathew complaining about Aleyamma's role as a wife and mother, "She worked all the time. That's all she had time for. She didn't take care of me or the children so good anymore" (p. 21)." Here we see that Mathew resented Aleyamma's work as a nurse interfering with her family life. In addition to his complaints about Aleyamma not spending sufficient time with him, Mathew, as Sherman's quote indicates, also felt dissatisfied with his sexual relationship with Aleyamma, "She used to like to go to the bedroom with me, you know, but she didn't like it so much anymore" (p. 21). Thus there were several

issues related to financial matters, work pressures, and personal/sexual matters that led to a rift between Aleyamma and her husband. These issues may have influenced Mathew's increased consumption of alcohol; alcoholism in turn affected his relationship with his wife.

In spite of the overwhelming evidence regarding the influence of alcohol on Mathew's violent behavior, The *Dallas Observer* chose to let this issue take backstage and preferred to put on stage "Sati" and "Indian culture." The headlines on the cover page, and on the first page of the story and the text on the first page of the story, all highlight the role of Indian culture in perpetrating Aleyamma's murder and make invisible Varughese's alcoholism.

The problem of alcoholism, one of the most important factors in the battering of many women in the United States by husbands or boyfriends (Shupe, Stacey, and Hazelwood, 1987, pp. 113-114),[23] obviously could not be a factor in Aleyamma's death--the choice of "exoticizing" her death proved irresistible. Research on the link between domestic violence and alcoholism shows that while alcoholism cannot be directly linked to violence through a cause-effect relationship, there does exist "a strong link between alcohol use and physical abuse of wives" (Kantor and Straus, 1987, p. 223). Murray Straus and Glenda Kantor's research on the relationship between alcohol use and violence indicates that in one out of four cases of wife abuse, alcohol was consumed immediately before the violent act (p. 224). Straus and Kantor stress that alcohol alone cannot be held responsible for domestic violence. However, heavy drinking, they point out, allows men to be violent in order to assert power and control (p. 224). Ann Jones and Susan Schechter (1992) also maintain that alcohol and drugs by themselves cannot cause violence, rather they can be used by men to attack women without feeling "guilt or remorse (p. 56)." Thus we see that alcohol consumption in men has a complex relationship with physical abuse and violence.

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[23] See table in Shupe, Stacey, and Hazelwood (1987, p. 114) for factors that contribute to violence among couples in the United States. From the percentages in the table one can see that alcohol is the second most important factor next to financial pressures, conflict over children, and jealousy, all of which are equally important (carry the same percentage).

I an not proposing here that the *Observer* should have laid the blame on alcoholism for Aleyamma's death instead of Indian culture. Instead I would like to suggest that rather than indicting alcohol alone for being the sole actor in causing Aleyamma's death at the hands of Mathew, the *Observer* could have problematized (discussed and debated) Mathew's alcoholism and looked for its embeddedness within other financial and interpersonal problems the couple were facing. It is both troubling and painful that in the urge to make Aleyamma's death exotic, the *Observer* did not examine Mathew's alcoholism as a symptom of problems that had been simmering between the couple over the past few years.

The *Observer*'s portrayal of Aleyamma's death becomes intelligible only by portraying her as (1) the victim of a blatantly patriarchal culture where wives who say no to husbands are burnt (Aleyamma had said no to her husband's decision to take the family back to India) and (2) as the victim of the practice of Sati. Such a framing of Aleyamma's death enables the *Observer* to sensationalize the event and to portray it as out of the ordinary and deviant.

Media critic Todd Gitlin (1980) explains a concept called "media framing" and writes that these frames are unavoidable because they "enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely: to recognize it as information, to assign to it cognitive categories, and to package it for efficient relay to their audiences (p. 7)." He also adds that stories that do not fit neatly into the accepted reality can be channeled into frames that convey some sort of deviance. Standard news values tend to skew the coverage of minorities whose "difference' can be attributed to culture and exploited to provoke "horror" in readers. It is not surprising therefore that mainstream newspapers like the *Dallas Morning News* do not even mention Varughese's alcoholism and instead focus only on the "Indian culture" aspect. The *Morning News* (Thurman, 1993) writes that prosecutors made a point of attributing the cause of Aleyamma's death to the dispute between the couple over going back to India. Discussing the defense, the newspaper (Thurman, 1993) observes:

> Defense attorneys at one point suggested that the woman's death might have been suicide, based on the ancient Indian custom of immolation, which is now outlawed in that country Immolation required widows to throw themselves on their dead husbands' burning funeral pyres (p. 25A).

With absolutely no mention of Varughese's alcoholism, Aleyamma's death unquestioningly becomes one more event in the pageant of Sati. The *Observer* gives us additional information about the prosecutors: "Convinced that Varughese's native culture played a key role in his decision . . . the prosecution summoned an expert in Indian culture to testify about the prevalence of wife burning in India." The prosecution, the defense, and the *Observer* all invoke culture as the cause of Aleyamma's death and thus there is overwhelming consensus among the various agencies--the media and the courts--regarding the role of Indian tradition in Varughese's murder of Aleyamma.

One question stayed with me after I finished reading the story of Aleyamma's death in the *Observer*: Could Aleyamma have sought professional help or support for her problems? Although Aleyamma had close relatives living in the area, the stigma of separation or divorce often makes women suffer in private. Sayantani Dasgupta (1993, p. 17) discusses the different problems faced by South Asian women in the United States and comments, "Furthermore, fear of social sanction and family shame ensnare South Asian women facing violence in a web of silent suffering." Aleyamma's situation thus raises an extremely important issue of practical significance for women who may be victims of domestic violence, an issue which is not even discussed by the *Observer*: Where can South Asian women in Aleyamma's situation seek help? Are there any support groups or women's groups that can address her needs, which may be different from those of Western women? It is in the omission of such critical information in an otherwise in-depth article that I find indicative of the *Observer*'s superficial interest in Aleyamma's death. Although Sherman briefly quotes Anannya Bhattacharjee who works with Sakhi, a South Asian women's organization, she makes no effort to describe the efforts of this organization to help immigrant South Asian women in abusive situations. Describing these organizations run by Indian and other South Asian women would probably have destroyed the image of Indian women as helpless submissive victims, an image that the *Observer* is so bent on portraying.

Organizations like Sakhi in New York and Manavi in New Jersey, were the first organizations to break the silence surrounding the issue of domestic violence in the South Asian community. Describing the goals of their organization, Sakhi in its mission statement writes, "Our

primary goal is to end violence against women, especially in the home." Manavi's mission is to "empower women of South Asian descent through awareness of social rights and bringing about social changes" and it is also committed to eliminating violence against women (Dasgupta, 1993, p. 17). An indication of the success of their efforts is the help Sakhi gave to an Indian woman who tried to escape from a husband who physically and mentally tormented her for not bringing a good dowry (Hays, 1993, p. B3). This woman sought help from Sakhi on the advice of her sister who had seen a flier advertising the organization. She praises their efforts and comments, "They really understood what I'm going through. Their being Indian really helped" (quoted in Hays, 1993).

Omitting useful information about organizations that offer help to South Asian women has unintended consequences. An Indian woman (an acquaintance of mine) who happened to read about Aleyamma's death in the *Observer*, when asked to react to it said, "Oh, that's terrible, but what could she do? She has nowhere to go and nobody could have helped her--it's such a disgrace to ask people you know for help in this situation." It is precisely this problem that the *Dallas Observer* could address if it were even the slightest bit interested in assisting other women who might be facing Aleyamma's problems as well as in increasing its circulation.

The *Observer*, like most media organizations, is not genuinely interested in helping women--if it was, it undoubtedly would have at least discussed these women's groups and their efforts to help women in Aleyamma's situation. The media, in their coverage of the third world, prefer to highlight and sensationalize disaster and death rather than provide positive information. This tendency as we have seen influences the coverage of diasporic peoples from third world countries living in the United States.

Conclusion

The *Dallas Observer* in covering the murder of Aleyamma Mathew, a person from a non-Western culture, failed to adopt a culturally sensitive attitude that would have led to a story that was

less stereotyped, less "Orientalist,"[24] and a more accurate portrayal of Aleyamma's situation. To enable their audiences to process information easily, the printed media sensationalize problematic incidents and often revert to stereotypical representations. Frequently, this results in distortion, factual errors, and more seriously to the suppression or marginalization of some critical aspects that may be relevant to the problem.

As a feminist, media coverage of domestic violence is particularly disturbing to me because it can often cause further problems for South Asian women. When the media trace the causes for domestic violence to certain practices in a culture, without looking at other factors, the community is often offended and may even ostracize the woman for talking to journalists. Blaming the culture and not paying enough attention to other issues can only encourage apathy toward these problems. The media also fail to be socially responsible in their urge to exoticize these incidents of domestic violence and to portray women like Aleyamma as archetypal victims of their culture. As a consequence they often do not provide practical information that can be useful to other women who may find themselves in Aleyamma's situation. The *Observer* made no effort to interview South Asian women from women's groups regarding the assistance they provide to women wanting to escape abusive situations.

The media should also be careful in attributing violence in the family only to cultural practices that exist within the community. The *Observer* could have taken the trouble to verify the exact definitions of Sati, "bride burning," and wife burning, before it associated Aleyamma's death with these practices. An in-depth story like the one analyzed in this paper also warrants much more careful research to ascertain facts regarding the Indian community on religious practices, language, and regional differences.

In writing about people from a country/subcontinent as diverse as India, which is characterized by very complex caste, class, regional, and religious differences, journalists must

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[24] "Orientalist" is an adjective drawn from the work of Edward Said (1979) on *Orientalism*. Citing Edward Said's work *Orientalism*, Keya Ganguly (1992) writes, "Orientalism, in this usage, refers to discursive apparatus by means of which the Orient is actively produced, fixed, and objectified in Western imagery and imaginations" (p. 73).

tread very carefully when they use the adjective "Indian" to produce a homogenous image. The frequent use of this word is no doubt unavoidable, but it would probably not hurt to verify if the use is indeed appropriate. It would also be advisable to avoid slipping into easy generalizations. For instance, the story on violence against women in India, the first among several stories featured in the series on violence against women in the world in the *Dallas Morning News* (Landers, 1993) begins in the following manner:

> Bhateri, India—Bhanwari Devi learned about life as a village woman of India wrapped in dust, cooking smoke, and faded garments meant to last a lifetime. She was engaged before she was born, married at age 7 and the mother of four when she was about 25 (p. 29A).

While the information in the first line does describe the life of many poor village women all over India, the second line containing information about Bhanwari Devi's early engagement and early marriage is more typical of Indian women who come from Rajasthan, the state in which Bhateri village is located. The construction of Bhanwari Devi in the opening sentence as "a village woman of India" suggests that what follows is also true of all village women in India. Rather than constructing her as "a village woman of India" it would have been more appropriate to say, "Bhanwari Devi, a woman from Bhateri village in India, . . ." As far as possible if specific information can be found about people, events or phenomena, specifics should be preferred over generalizations.

Geeta Patel (1993) proposes one strategy to question or problematize generalizations that homogenize and create a distance between readers and the subjects of discussion. Taking a paragraph from a story in the *New York Times* (Crossette, 1991) on women's abuse, specifically "dowry deaths," in India, she suggests a reading strategy that will could turn us "from readers positioned as outsiders pruriently perusing tales of horror from other cultures, to readers who begin to 'reverse the gaze' " (pp. 7-8). The paragraph she examines in the *New York Times* reads:

> In India's system of arranged marriages, the bride is often regarded as a source of dowry income and in some cases little more than a servant in her husband's family home (Crossette, 1991, p. 8).

Suggesting that we momentarily imagine this to a be a story about the United States in the Indian media, Patel (1993) asks us to substitute "U.S." for "India" in the first paragraph, with a few word

changes, which would then make it, "In the U.S. system of marriages, the bride is often regarded as a source of income and is in some cases little more than a servant in her husband's home" (p. 8). Such a substitution she argues would then produce a generic statement about all women in the United States, a statement that would link all women in this country in a frozen and static manner to being devalued. Patel also analyzes a second paragraph in the same story which reads:

> Mothers-in-law often put the most pressure on the young woman, who has no protector in a marriage contracted without love. Indian husbands and wives do not meet until the wedding day, and . . .(Crossette, 1991, p. 8).

Here she points out that operative phrases such as "India's system of arranged marriages" in the first paragraph above, "marriage contracted without love," and "Indian husbands and wives," in the second paragraph serve to subtly "create and reinforce the chasm between India and other countries/cultures" (Patel, 1993, p. 7). Patel's reading strategy, if judiciously used, illustrates one way that writers and journalists can turn questions back on themselves to challenge generalizations that homogenize and distance cultures.

I have shared my thoughts on this story in the *Dallas Observer* with Rebecca Sherman, the journalist who wrote the story for the *Observer*. I have also sent her a copy of an earlier version of this paper. My conversation with Rebecca Sherman and the paper I have shared with her gave me the feeling that it is only through such dialogues between feminist scholars and other institutions, even if such dialogues are only micropolitical forms of intervention, can we even hope to provoke reflection on issues related to women. It is important to remember though that criticizing the media alone for contributing to the problem of "othering" is not sufficient, rather it is the presence of "othering" in all forms of discourse, including academic discourse, that must also be critiqued.

In addressing domestic violence in the media, in the academy, or in support groups, it is important to remember that it is a problem that affects women from all over the world, regardless of race, culture, or class. Going back to the incident in my life that took place at the library, I would like to suggest that framing the oppression of Indian women within the parameters of primitive cultural practices alone or suggesting that their victimization is much more horrific, only distances their experiences from the experiences of other women. In doing this there is an implicit

assumption that such problems are invisible in the West--the "othering" of the situation of Indian women facilitates turning away from the problem of domestic violence in the United States by projecting it on Indian women. As Anannya Bhattacharjee from Sakhi, a South Asian women's group said in an interview (April 3, 1994), "The story was written by a person looking down from above at the Indian community." Looking "down" from above does not help to alleviate the problem of "othering," rather what is needed is a looking "at" with sensitivity to the specifics of the situation whatever race, class, gender or ethnicity issues may be involved.

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Identity and Sensibility in Women Journalists' Autobiographies, 1900-1940

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Identity and Sensibility in Women Journalists' Autobiographies, 1900-1940

Elizabeth Jordan began her 1938 autobiography Three Rousing Cheers by pointing out that the title expressed her devotion to good friends, who used the expression as greeting, farewell, and rallying cry. In hastening to deny that her title was"the offspring of any delusion as to my individual importance" (vii), Jordan provided nearly a paradigmatic example of the self-effacement some critics have claimed characterizes women's autobiography. Later Jordan commented, "I have been pianiste, reporter, newspaper editor, magazine editor, public speaker, playwright, dramatic critic, and novelist, which helps to explain why I have never done any one thing superlatively well" (11).

An even more self-deprecating remark came from Milly Bennett, who explained that friends had encouraged her to describe her experiences covering the Chinese Revolution. But, she said, reading drafts of her autobiography made her sick. "Good God! Did I write this---this nonsense?"

According to Carolyn Heilbrun, until 1973, when May Sarton published her second autobiographical book, women's autobiographies tended "to find beauty even in pain and to transform rage into spiritual acceptance" (1988, 12). In Writing a Woman's Life, Heilbrun accuses female autobiographers of refusing to acknowledge their anger, their desire for control over their own lives, and their interest in public power. Well into the twentieth century, Heilbrun adds, looking at a range of autobiography and biography, women could not admit their ambitions or achievements, such that even women of considerable accomplishment attributed their success to luck or to the generosity of others.

Other feminist historians and literary scholars find passivity and sentimentality tainting the stories of women's lives. Patricia Spacks (1976) says eighteenth-century women's autobiographies always managed to transform feminine strength into a confession of inadequacy. Moreover, even decisive twentieth-century heroines, such as Emma Goldman, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Golda Meir, underplayed their own importance; they accepted responsibility for failure but avoided claims of ambition (Spacks, 1980). According to Jill Conway (1992), Progressive era women similarly represented themselves in their autobiographies as nurturing or as swept along by forces outside their control, although their letters and diaries reported assertive behaviors. Several literary critics speculate that the woman autobiographer essentially re-writes stories already about women already in currency, since by seeking to publicize herself she violates "an important cultural construction of her femininity as passive or hidden" (Anderson 1986). Uneasy at having violated cultural expectations, women adopt a modest tone to win readers'

sympathies (Winston 1980).

This research examines autobiographies by five women who worked for general interest newspapers in the early twentieth century, to see whether these reporters' lives follow the pattern described by Heilbrun, Spacks, and Conway. The question is how these women defined themselves in terms of gender and/or as journalists. The corollary issue is whether they expressed a sense that others--their editors, publishers, colleagues, sources, readers--regarded them as women, even when they saw themselves as journalists. Particular attention is paid to occasions when these women discussed whether they saw themselves as having a "woman's point of view" or "women's standpoint," even if they did not use that particular vocabulary, that might affect the way they approached story choice or assignment, ethical dilemmas, and other professional issues. The point is not to determine why they construed their lives the way they did.[1] Rather than speculate about the individuals' psyches or womankind, the goal is to understand the professional status of women journalists as perceived by these women, and the way they reconciled conflicts between work and family life, if they addressed such conflicts. After summarizing the relevant theoretical literature on the gendered nature of autobiography, therefore, the paper deals with what these five women said about specific questions: how they came to work as journalists and who helped them, differences in women's and men's work, money, and romance and domestic life.

Elizabeth Banks (1870-1938) was probably the first woman journalist to publish (in 1902) her life story. Banks wrote for a couple of American newspapers, but was best known for free-lanced work serialized in the British press. A second autobiographer is Florence Finch Kelly, self-described "dean" of American newswomen, whose autobiography appeared shortly before her death, at age 81, in 1939; she worked for newspapers in Kansas, Illinois, Massachusetts, California, and New Mexico and then wrote for the New York Times Book Review for thirty years. Elizabeth Jordan (1865-1947) worked for the New York World for ten years, before going to Harper's Bazar; she published her autobiography in 1938. In 1933 Joan Lowell (1900-1967) described finding adventure, pay, and "regeneration" as "Gal Reporter" for the Boston Daily Record.[2] Milly Bennett (1897-1959) worked for various organs of the Chinese Nationalist Party, then returned to the San Francisco News, and later served as a foreign correspondent in Russia; because her autobiography, which was not published until 1993, illustrates somewhat different points, Bennett is primarily discussed in the conclusion of the paper.

Several historical dynamics make these autobiographies particularly interesting. The period under

study involved tremendous growth in the number of newspapers and of journalists, including women. Enough women were employed as journalists in the United States to understand themselves as a category--but a category still distinctly in the minority, in a profession widely acknowledged as male. Furthermore, the changing roles of women was frequently a subject of heated discussion and emerging models for "modern" women brought greater self-consciousness about gender.[3] Certainly, these five women were modern in their identification with work (Good 1993).[4]

Second, autobiographies of early twentieth-century journalists are significant for the way they show press workers struggling with questions of identity, a self that increasingly had to be suppressed in newswriting, as the conventions and routines of objectivity became codified (Schudson 1978). As R. E. Wolseley noted in one of the few studies of journalists as autobiographers (1943), almost no nineteenth-century journalists followed the footsteps of Benjamin Franklin, who published his Autobiography in 1787. About 50 journalists published autobiographies or reminiscences between 1900 and 1934, and in the next decade, twice that many (Wolseley 1943, 42). Wolseley points to journalists' newly-won professionalism to explain this dramatic increase. I would argue that autobiographies show journalists as caught between "story" and "information" modes of journalism, and the emerging professional model was particularly problematic for women, even if they did not outwardly chafe at the ridigity of the editing process. Thus, autobiography--a genre always bound up with self-constructed identity (Anderson 1986)--is an ideal resource for examining how these women might have understood themselves as women practicing journalism.

To say that autobiography was, for press workers after the turn of the century, an increasingly important means of personal expression is not, however, to evaluate these autobiographies in terms of fidelity. The focus here is how these women wrote about themselves, not "facts" about the women, or even "truth" about their lives. Recent theorizing makes impossible any acceptance of autobiography as recitation of fact. Indeed, in discussing women's attempts to stitch together self-portraits emphasizing a romantic kind of femininity and womanhood Heilbrun draws on Virginia Woolf, who commented that "very few women yet have written truthful autobiographies." Yet, unlike critics such as Howard Good (1993), neither do I assume that these autobiographers significantly, consistently, or intentionally distorted their accounts.[5] In any case, women reporters are a particularly interesting group of women writers to study, since, at least during the time period under study, their intrusions into a male territory

were more obvious, relative to poets and novelists, or, for that matter, other women professionals who happened to produce autobiography.

The five autobiographies were selected because they seemed representative of the range and focus of autobiographies published by women journalists before World War II, as located through standard bibliographies. Of course, not all women journalists wrote autobiographies. Whatever regularities appear, therefore, the authors are not necessarily representative of women journalists of the era. More importantly, those who did write them were not necessarily either the "best" reporters, by any criteria, or the best known. It may speak to autobiography's relatively marginal status as a literary genre (Smith 1993) that not only have women long published autobiography, but also little-known figures have written their lives. Confirming the ambiguous status of self-writing as a genre, the territory covered in these books varies. Perhaps illustrating the others' modesty--it being apparently enough of a public declaration to reveal oneself at all--only Florence Finch Kelly produced a full-scale autobiography that began with her ancestors and progressed chronologically through the period of writing. Kelly's 571 page narrative, complete with index and tables of content for each chapter, included not only detailed accounts of her life but also extensive sermonizing on sundry topics, from the value of college education to the problems of youth, as well as chapters on the history and status of journalism and of women in journalism. Nonetheless, whatever their literary goals, all five focussed on work, with only enough mention of early education and adolescent ambition to justify their career choice.

The Gendered Culture of Autobiography

Friedrich Schlegel commented in 1798 that pure autobiographies are written by neurotics fascinated by their own egos; authors of "a robust artistic or adventuresome self-love"; born historians; pedants who refuse to leave the world without commentary; and "women who also coquette with posterity" (in Folkenflik 1993,3). The observation is notable in two respects. First, although theoretical interest in autobiography as a genre has essentially developed over the last two decades, autobiography itself has a long tradition. Moreover, women have been writing autobiography for a long time. Already in 1786 the so-called "milkmaid poet" described strained relations with her patron in an "autobiographical narrative" (Folkenflik, 1). The first woman to compose her life story in English, Margery Kempe wrote an account of spiritual development between 1432-1436, although it was not actually published until 1940 (Glenn 1992). Nonetheless, much of the initial theorizing and academic literature about

autobiography ignored that by women. Indeed, a peculiarly ironic parallel emerges with women's journalism and women's writings, which have been disparaged, it seems, merely because they were, or were perceived to have been, written by women. So, too, autobiography has been a positive term when applied to the male canon --Rousseau, Augustine, Adams. But it takes on negative connotations applied to women's writing, referencing the notion that women only record, but not transcend, their private concerns (Stanton 1984). Quite possibly, the general marginalization of autobiographical writing, until recently, has resulted from its access to women, especially when diaries, memoirs, and letters are considered within the genre. The flip side of the argument is that autobiography's reputation as a "lesser form" (i.e., compared to epic poetry or drama, which make grand claims to high artistic achievement, requiring divine creativity) assured its survival as a genre for women and other marginalized people (Marcus 1988).

Regardless of history of women's autobiography, feminist critics assert that the critical theory was long based on a male canon, particularly Augustine's dramatic story of conversion and victory of spirit over flesh, and Rousseau's secular story of self-discovery. This, they say, results in misreadings of women's texts--to misunderstandings of how women's autobiographical writings highlight different themes and different models of the individuated self (Friedman 1988). Mary Mason (1980) uses four early autobiographies to posit a "distinct mode of interior disclosure." Mason believes female autobiographers' preference for self-disclosure through identification with some "other" continues to the present. Estelle Jelinek (1980) says men tend to make their lives into a coherent whole; conversely, women's narratives are "disconnected, fragmentary or organizing into self-sustained units rather than connecting chapters" (17). Criteria such as orderliness and harmonious shaping, imported from the male tradition, not only are irrelevant to women's autobiographies but also misrepresent their value, Jelinek adds.

"The Kindness of Mankind"

Florence Finch Kelly's 1939 autobiography is exceptional in many respects, not the least is which the bitterness of her pointed critique of her difficulties--as a woman--securing a foothold in journalism. Kelly did not explicitly call herself a feminist, but she expressed her admiration of several "feminists" and consistently used a feminist vocabulary. For Kelly, the key to every era, every paper, and every city was its treatment of women. Of the Boston Herald editor who tried to cheat her, she insisted: "It was my first,

but far from my last, experience of the ruthless injustice to which my sex would submit me in the newspaper world. For I did not believe that he would have tried this crooked game upon me if I had been a man." (1939, 155). She emphasized how she "burned with indignation" at the various injustices done her and at the implausible explanations editors and publishers used to exclude women or treat them unfairly once hired. "In office after office I was met by the stereotyped statement, 'We don't believe in women in journalism,' uttered with an air of finality that evidently was intended to destroy all hope in any skirted applicant" (155). Kelly (then Finch) was not deterred; instead of retreating from the siege, as she put it, she continued to butt her head against "the stone walls of entrenched conservatism."

At one point, Kelly's autobiography suddenly adopted a more conciliatory tone, saying editors of the 1880s should not be judged by the very different views of the 1930s: "They were representatives of the ideas then almost universally held, the voices of their own time; and if the desires and ambitions of any young woman led her to challenge those ideas and to try to do battle with them in their strongest entrenchments, inevitably she would have a hard road to travel" (159). Furthermore, she stipulated, once hired, she was treated respectfully and courteously by male colleagues. But she punctuated her account with accusations that men marginalized or trivialized her work, simply because a woman had produced it. After one such incident, she said: "The injustice of my situation stung me to the quick. Viewing my work objectively and with all modesty, I knew that it was quite as good and as important as that of my men colleagues, and that it was more varied and more difficult than that of most of them" (189). That the men earned at least twice as much compounded the insult.

Elizabeth Banks' descriptions of her early efforts to find journalism work expressed a far more common theme: the generosity of men, despite her own naivete and immaturity, and the cruelty of women. The Wisconsin-born Banks dedicated The Autobiography of a Newspaper Girl (1902) to her editor, "who, being modest and retiring in his disposition, would not wish me to name him." Banks maintained a flat, self-mocking tone to describe how, even after she prepared herself for journalism by learning stenography and typing, no editor wanted her "valuable services." She was forced to accept a secretarial job, where, to her embarrassment, she sat by a window where passersby could watch her. But what seemed to have been significant to her was not this effrontery but her ability to use this experience to write a story about her work as a "typewriter girl." More importantly, she quit her job as soon as her story appeared and then demanded a job from the newspaper that published it. According to Banks, the

publisher responded, "Don't think of it, my poor child. Be anything, but don't be a newspaper girl" (6). Nonetheless, in the face of pleading and threats, he agreed to use her as a secretary in the morning. In the afternoons, he helped her with her stories, at first primarily fashion pieces.

After Banks returned from a stint in Peru as assistant to the U.S. ambassador, she resumed her career as "a newspaper girl" at a Baltimore paper. On one hand, Banks opposed the "old-fashioned" notion of her editor, an ex-confederate colonel, that a pressroom was outside "woman's sphere." In any case, the publisher believed they needed one woman. Banks received carte blanche to do what and as she wanted. Male staffers decorated her cubicle with flowers and curtains, and even once raided a competitor's composing room so that Banks would win a scoop. Banks admitted that after she once overheard her managing editor defend her privileges, she stubbornly repudiated her special treatment. But when he therefore sent her out in the rain to cover a story, she no longer wanted to be treated like a man. "So I was restored to my former happy state of mind" (44). According to Banks, kindly male reporters and editors on both sides of the Atlantic often helped her.

Although the other women were far less complacent about their special status, a couple of the other autobiographers used remarkably similar self-effacing language to recall how men gave them getting work, despite their inexperience. Elizabeth Jordan described how the World editor granted her an interview and a job (on her own unreasonable terms) despite her evident immaturity. "Never before, I am sure, had he come into contact with such a combination of ignorance and ambition, frankness and reserve, self-confidence and childish modesty, as I was revealing" (19). But Jordan also remembered some unpleasant experiences as a young reporter, including some "horribly degrading" winks and passes. "There was a period when I was wretched over them--when I felt that they not only smirched me but that, in a way, I might be responsible for them." Apparently, she stopped blaming herself when she realized that her friend Margaret Sangster, then in her 60s and an editor at Harper's Bazar, endured the same thing.

Joan Lowell began Gal Reporter (1933) by ridiculing her ignorance of newsroom jargon and structure. Given her own earlier unpleasant experiences with the press, she had looked on reporters "as a special brand of lice who butted into your affairs and then wrote lies about you..." (4).[6] She found reporters to be very different from the drunken monsters seen in film. Lowell called her editor "a marvel of quiet, low-voiced efficiency" and she appreciated both his patience and his confidence in her. Referring to Walter Hovey, she said, "I didn't see any lecherous look in his eyes that would bespeak a life

devoted to digging up exposes of love nests, unwed mothers and yellow sheet scandal." Unlike Kelly, Joan Lowell also complained of rude colleagues and crude competitors. Lowell described several sexist incidents involving sources and colleagues. She claimed she did not stoop to their tricks, although she also explicitly advised would-be women reporters to follow her model and exploit their femininity, when advantageous. Becoming a "good Gal Reporter" required a woman to pocket her pride and use her feminine wiles (49).

. These journalists also complained of mistreatment by women. Regarding her job as full-time society editor, Banks said: "Honesty compels me to say that during those first few months of my journalistic career there were not very many kind hands stretched out to me by the members of my own sex with whom my reportorial duties brought me in contact" (13). Society women were particularly arrogant and inconsiderate. Banks explicitly contrasted the "thoughtlessness of the womankind" with the "kindness of the mankind" (15). She went to some effort to clarify that men helped her, apparently anticipating that otherwise readers might imagine the men were merely being patronizing. For example, the policemen who chivalrously escorted her home after covering late-night parties apparently called her "the little reporter" (a couple of policemen and reporters were willing to marry her so that she shouldn't have to work at all). She hastened to add that she "felt it no dishonor and not derogatory to my dignity to be known among the police only by that name." Lowell, too, appreciated the genial, generous Irish cops who looked out for her. "I can't say as much for those of my own sex. To paraphrase Bobby Burns, 'Woman's inhumanity to woman makes countless thousands mourn.'" (54).

Disparaging the Women's Page

All five women saw worthy work as that written for general sections of newspapers. For the most part, generalness was the benchmark for their own work. They reserved some of their most severe criticism for the kinds of writing they understood to be typically, and demeaningly, associated with women. Kelly, again the exception, was extremely proud of her "serious" writing about women, including articles about feminist heroines, about legislation affecting women, and her columns for women for the Globe and the Los Angles Times. She saw herself as path-breaking in her ability to break out a wholly new form of writing for and about women that had nothing to do with traditional women's pages. Moreover, Kelly, whose first job was covering millinery openings, admitted a brief stint writing society news gave her basic training in journalistic technique. Nonetheless, Kelly equated society

reporting with unimportant work.

Jordan's first job one she learned shorthand at a local business school) was editing the woman's page of a Milwaukee newspaper owned by a family friend. Jordan was not thrilled with the opportunity to supply "light and warmth to the women of the universe": "It is a miracle that the stuff I had to carry in 'Sunshine' did not permanently destroy my interest in newspaper work." Later, too, Jordan specified her willingness to work hard at any assignment except society news. "I drew the line at that." Furthermore, Jordan was not happy to get caught in a power struggle between Colonel Cockerill, who hired her but whose authority was waning, and Ballard Smith, the managing editor. Yet, she did not complain, even when temporarily banished to the World's Brooklyn edition. She merely commented coolly, that once she returned to Smith's good graces with a scoop, "My real working life had begun."

Elizabeth Banks clearly regarded her position as society editor as lesser in value than "straight" reporting. But she accepted it as her due after she failed, in male terms, to put journalism first. Banks described her agonized decision when an unhappy actress, after pouring out her woes to Banks (when male reporters were unable to get the story), suddenly announced that she had made her confession to Banks as a woman, in confidence. Banks was to publish nothing about their conversation. Banks first replied that, as someone with a living to earn, she must print it. But the actress convinced Banks that no woman should help send another to ruin in a world already hard on woman. "Promise that you will never for the sake of your own success tread on another woman and try to crush her." Banks reluctantly agreed. The editor did not fire her, as would have been the case, she suspected, had she been male. Appalled, however, the editor told Banks: "As you are a woman, I will say that you have not the journalistic instinct. You will never be able to do big things in journalism....The fact is, you're all woman and no journalist."

Banks agreed to stick to the women's page and produce no more "special features," the exclusive preserve of "real" journalists. Ironically, Banks spent much of the remainder of her professional life in England, where she was a tremendously successful journalist, famous for her enterprising investigations. Based on a two-week stint as a maid, Banks produced a long series on the hardships of servant life; she became, again on false pretenses, a flower girl, a laundry worker, and a dressmaker's apprentice.

Ethics

These women virtually echoed one another in describing conflicts between their identities as reporters and their sensibilities as woman. As Banks' debate with the actress illustrated, these women

primarily experienced their sense of membership in a female sorority as undermining their professionalism. Yet, ethical dilemmas were not always occasioned by loyalties to women. In a chapter titled "Story of a Failure," Banks quoted her editor assigning Banks to interview a Washington, D.C. diplomat: "You've got diplomacy, tact, shrewdness, discretion, and above all, you are absolutely feminine, and you haven't got 'newspaper woman' and 'interviewer' placarded all over you" (249). Whether it was because of Banks' femininity, the man, whom she knew from her days in Peru, spilled some important secrets whose publication would allegedly have damaged American interests. Again, Banks agonized over the question: "Should she govern her womanhood and her honor by her journalistic instinct, or should she govern that journalistic instinct by that honor and that womanhood?" (256). Ultimately, having stacked the deck against work, Banks decided he had talked to her as a woman, not a reporter. Banks lied to her editor about the diplomat's willingness to talk.

Banks devoted one highly sentimental chapter to the pitiful e of a colleague who, as assigned, covered a funeral in a highly professional manner, never telling anyone that the deceased was her fiancee. Banks did not assume, however, that all women journalists would be guided by noble feelings. Banks once received a marriage proposal through the mail from a reader who believed she really was living on $3 a week. She speculated that some women reporters would have obtained material for yet another story by contacting the man but continuing to pose as a poor working girl. She claimed she would not exploit her reader that way.

A short story Jordan published in Cosmopolitan and then included in a collection of fiction (1898) may have illustrated Jordan's approach to ethics. Jordan's heroine, reporter Ruth Herrick, was assigned--because her managing editor realized no one else could do it--to interview a woman on trial for murder. The defendant poured out her soul to Herrick, regaling her with an awful tale of being cruelly abused by her husband, who she had poisoned, after he attacked her mother. The reporter promised not to publish the pitiful confession of the dignified, regal, noble defendant, who eventually was acquitted. Believing that Herrick simply failed to get the story, the managing editor asserted, "But, after all, you can't depend on a woman in this business." Jordan's tale ended: "The managing editor was more nearly right than he knew" (1898, 29).

Forty years later, in her autobiography, Jordan denied, despite widespread rumor to the contrary, that this story represented an autobiographical response to the real trial of Lizzie Borden.[7] Even Jordan's

own managing editor said, after reading the fiction, "So that's the kind of reporter you are." According to her autobiography, when she told fellow newsman Julian Ralph that she believed (as did many feminists of the day) in Borden's innocence, her friend looked suddenly relieved. With rare sarcasm, Banks commented: "All the newspaper men had been afraid that being a woman, and therefore without man's great natural sympathy, I would show a bias in my reports that might divert some of the current of popular feeling which was sweeping toward Miss Borden" (120-21). The issue is not whether Jordan based her story on Borden. Rather, the point is whether Jordan--and her female colleagues--believed they should treat people as subjects, not objects. Apparently they did.

Like Banks, Jordan was willing to forgo a good story for reasons of sympathy that she did not always explicit mark as gendered. Jordan once worked on a story about a poor woman whose wealthy son-in-law would not help her, until Jordan put the fear of God and the newspaper world into him. She did not publish the story, however. "Its withholding was the price of an aged gentlewoman's safety and comfort" (48). Lowell reversed this type of story, self-critically confessing that she once volunteered to do a sensational, tabloid story about a young unmarried girl who had suffocated her baby. Her editor told her to drop the idea, and investigate instead homeless and jobless women. The suggestion apparently inspired Lowell to undertake a number of disguises--dishwasher, charwoman, rag picker, taxi-dancer, and sweat shop worker--as a way of investigating exploitation of poor girls.

Money

All five autobiographers emphasized their financial worries. Their anxieties proably underscore the overall precarious financial status of journalists during this period. But their adamancy about their need to support themselves shows their determination to align themselves with their more hard-boiled male colleagues and to distance themselves from the image of both frivolous society dilettantes and idealistic social reformers. In a society where work was increasingly paid in cash and status was correlated to income, these women argued that they needed money and deserved to be paid no less than men. Once she realized the possibility of supporting herself with newspaper work (as a prelude to creative writing), Kelly explained: "I leaped to my feet aglow with hope. In that moment my newspaper career was born. It was born out of economic necessity, and economic necessity kept it going until it ended" (121). Kelly was consistently specific about how much (that is, how little) she was paid. More to the point, she connected her ill-pay to male prejudice. For example, Kelly conceded that the $10 a San

Francisco editor once paid her was a lot of money in 1880--when she was desperate for cash. "Nonetheless, I am very much inclined to think that if I had not been a woman, young, inexperienced and not very prosperous in appearance, the smiling editor would have given me a larger order on the cashier" (129).

Banks saw several potential conflicts between journalism and womanhood exacerbated by economics. Having somewhat defensively explained both her reluctance to become a yellow journalist and her justification of yellow journalism, she added that not all women would succeed with sensational stories. Moreover, although she both retained her self-respect and kept the "pot-aboiling" with exotic stories, she told editors not to assign her anything they wouldn't want their sisters to do. She outright refused to let herself get arrested as a prostitute, for example, merely to dramatize the need for reform. On the other hand, although Banks' stories led to certain institutional investigations (for example, of the practice of buying British "pedigrees") and reforms, she took pains to point out that she was far more concerned with earning a living than reform. Her autobiography frequent referred to money woes and her need to support herself. Jordan also underlined her concern with money, after her father went down in the panic of 1893. "After years of regarding it as a trivial detail, the amount I earned had suddenly become important" (105). According to Lowell, she only stooped to journalism when she lost all the money earned from her 1929 book.[8]

Romance and Domestic Life

Kelly's autobiography is interesting both for the relatively little that she said about her personal life and for how she discussed the conflict between personal and professional life. After Allen Kelly, an editorial writer with whom she had worked at the Globe, proposed both a business partnership and marriage, Florence Finch Kelly described fighting "the battle between love and ambition." Although as a "normal" woman, she said she certainly had expected marriage and motherhood, she assumed these would come in the distant future, "after the desires and ambitions of intellectual life had been at least partly gratified." In any event, after privately wrestling with her dilemma, she accepted Allen's proposal; she recalled waving herself good-by in a mirror before going to the small Globe ceremony (226). In late 1885, she resigned to have a child and did not resume regular professional work for several months. In the choice between work and motherhood, she chose the latter. Being a "first-class Jersey cow" was important to her, she said, and trying to write lessened her ability to produce enough good milk (232).

Although Kelly explained her husband's frequent job changes, she never discussed their marital relationship. Despite her philosophizing on many issues, she said nothing about marriage, much less hers. Kelly skipped over the death of her first son and only occasionally mentioned her second "boykin," who apparently suffered serious health problems. Eventually she chose to live in New York City, believing that colder weather was better for her son. Apparently her husband believed that California sunshine was necessary for his own health. Allen Kelly remained in Los Angeles until his death, which she casually mentioned in one sentence (357).

Banks was silent on the subject of her personal life, except for her maid and her dog. When her black maid decided to ignore Banks' protestations and return to her abusive husband, Banks expressed concern about Dinah's future in Alabama. Dinah's love for an unworthy man illustrated a problem that, in Banks' stated view, all women, black and white, shared. Although her autobiography was dotted with references to men who proposed marriage out of professional chivalry, Banks never mentioned romantic possibilities or relationships.

Jordan, who attended a convent high school and had considered becoming a nun (until her father begged her to try newspaper work instead), extensively discussed close, long-lasting friendships with men, including male reporters and writers, and women, including a number of reporters and writers, as well as society women, social reformers, and activists. One of her best friends regularly provided escort service, especially to mass; at her urging, he called her "Mother" and treated her as such. But Jordan was ambiguous in her discussion of the animosity between this somewhat under-employed journalist and another close male friend, although she implied a level of jealousy over her, and she said nothing about romantic ideas regarding either man. Jordan did openly speculate on why she never fell in love with Arthur Brisbane, journalism's "Napoleon," under whom she worked as assistant Sunday editor of the World. She supposed that much of the reason was her "basic and lifelong prejudice against any combination of office work and sentimental dalliance--a prejudice Mr. Brisbane and other fine men I have worked with obviously shared" (128).

Another of Jordan's fictional "tales" concerned a woman who left the convent to go into journalism. (The advice a nun gave this character was precisely the advice Jordan received from a nun quoted in her autobiography.) The reporter found herself mislabeled after she volunteered for a somewhat sleazy reporting assignment. The reporter soon realized she had made a horrible mistake. To

her relief, the paper's political editor offered her an alternative assignment: marry him. Marriage was, as the title suggested, "Miss Van Dyke's Best Story." "After all, a woman's place is in a home." Like Banks, Jordan herself never married. For at least some 40 years she shared an apartment with two women friends, with her widowed mother a frequent guest.

Conclusion

Jelinek (1980) asserts that women's autobiographies rarely mirror the establishment history of the times; they deemphasize the public aspects of their lives, concentrating instead on domestic details, family difficulties, close friends, and people who influenced them. Mentioning autobiographies by several women writers, she finds that even women famous as professionals referred only obliquely to their careers. "This emphasis by women on the personal, especially on other people, rather than on their work life, their professional success, or their connectedness to current political or intellectual history clearly contradicts the established criterion about the content of autonomy" (10). Jane Marcus says the autobiographies of certain privileged, successful women at the turn-of-the-century represent a "re/signing" of their names in women's history. "Enacting a deliberate resignation from the public world and patriarchal history, which had already erased or was expected to erase their names and their works, they re/signed their private lives into domestic discourse" (1988).

This (re)turn to the personal does not seem apply to women journalists, who for the most part ruthlessly excised their personal life, or emphasized that work required them to do so. Gender is not necessarily or always the "hermeneutic key" to authorial intention and textual production (Peterson 1993). But the five autobiographies share certain features. Consistent with the era and the theorizing, these women were close to their parents, especially mothers, whom they regarded as influential. Kelly told mothers specifically not to worry if their children seemed not to appreciate their advice. They also mentioned good friends--usually friends who were public figures and/or writers. Nonetheless, these women, as reporters, focussed on their careers, dedicated themselves to their work, and measured themselves by male standards. They varied in their modesty but they all underlined their career ambition. Heilbrun would not regard these women as "angry." On the other hand, they announced their sense of injustice and inequity. Ironically, Kelly, who was the most openly resentful, claimed that the re-living she experienced while drafting the book was more satisfactory that the actual living, since it brought "ampler and serener tolerance of events and conditions and personalities that formerly had deeply disturbed and

perhaps irritated" (xv).

While the stereotype insists that personal narrative are relatively introspective and intimate, these autobiographers generally avoided emotional life, especially painful memories (cf. Jelinek 1980). One might expect that women journalists in particular would avoid a female literary tradition. More importantly, the exceptions are highly significant, especially as they not only elicit particular responses from critics and readers, but also illustrate the impact of publishers' decision-making, including how manuscripts are selected (or rejected). This is evident with Bennett's autobiography. Only Milly Bennett was forthcoming about personal affairs, including relationships with particular men. Milly Bennett confessed that, as a seasoned reporter in San Francisco, she covered fires just to be near the cub reporter she had fallen in love with. She followed him to Hawaii, where, as she described it, she could not think straight for thinking about Mike Mitchell. Bennett poured out details about her despair at the eventual disintegration of her marriage. Bennett agonized over work and career choices, although at one point she claimed to prefer living hand-to-mouth while doing stories about Chiang Kai-shek to being trapped inside an apartment, sterilizing bottles. Notably, Bennett's autobiography essentially did not get published. Bennett stopped working on her manuscript in 1939, unable to interest a publisher. Moreover, Tom Grunfeld, who found her papers and finally published an annotated version of her autobiography in 1993, told Bennett's story almost exclusively in sexual language. Much of his introduction outlined her three husbands. (The second marriage was an unsuccessful attempt to protect a homosexual Soviet dancer; the third husband, whom she met while covering the Spanish Civil War, died.) And Grunfeld himself claimed Bennett's friends saw her embodying a "contradiction between her physical appearance and her strong emotional allure, and especially her strong sexual attractiveness to men" (xv).[9] Grunfeld recalled a newspaperman giving "a wink that suggested Milly's charm lay not strictly in her ability to gather and write the news" (xv).

Another angle on this emerges in Howard Good's treatment of women autobiographers. Of Joan Lowell's gory description of how a notorious "white slaver" literally attacked her during an under-cover investigation (he was eventually convicted for this attack), Good comments: "Sex gave her power over sources and readers, or at least the illusion of it, but power...tends to corrupt. Lowell was so corrupted--so lost in tabloidism--that even when she described herself being assaulted...she was tempted to titillate" (1993, 92). Good is much gentler on Jordan, whose autobiography was considerably more modest, self-

deprecating, and critical of women who would flaunt their sexuality. Jordan described walking home very late one night and being approached by a driver who tried to get her into his cab. She ran away in terror when inside the cab she saw a repulsive cadaverous-looking man staring back at her, his skin "indescribably horrible--yellow, with an undertone of green." Good comments, "She was still running years later" (85).[10]

In my view Jordan expressed healthy, valid satisfaction with career, religious commitment, and good friends--not fear of sex. The point is that on one hand, these women's autobiographies have arisen, and continue to be judged, in terms of particular constructions of womanhood and particular notions about what is appropriate for female narrative. And on the other hand, these women were clearly struggling to be heard on their own terms, as reporters who understood their cultural positioning as women. All five autobiographers addressed--more and less explicitly--women readers, offering them both warning and encouragement.

The first personal document by a woman to be called an autobiography was written in 1814 by Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle. Cavendish answered the question she imagined others would ask: "Why hath this Lady write her own life...[I]t is to no purpose to the Readers, but it is to the Authoress, because I write for my own sake, not theirs...." (in Stanton 1994). Yet, her story and stories of subsequent women **are** instructive to readers. Neither as individuals nor as a group do the five women studied here offer solutions to the problems of being perceived as female in a male profession or to the problems of combining career and domestic responsibility. By visibly struggling over these dilemmas, however, they dramatize the problems that women reporters confronted in the 1900-1940 period. They address a tradition confronting, and perhaps even confining, women journalists years later.

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1. Howard Good, the one recent journalism scholar to take autobiography seriously, assumes psychological motives, seeing autobiographers as essentially driven by personal or historic upheaval to create literary fictions that "plug the sudden cracks in their identities" (1993, 3).

2. Joan Lowell's obituary in the New York Times said she was "about 67 years old" ("Joan Lowell is Dead," 1967).

3. At least for journalists, the World War II period, and later eras of the feminine mystique, the woman's movement, and the "post-feminist" period would expected to be experienced quite differently. Furthermore, activists for social causes, such as the suffrage movement, may have unique uses for autobiography; their "oratorical autobiographies" (the term is from William Howarth) prove personal examples of the particular ideology enacted in real life (Solomon 1991). Therefore, research on different issues in autobiographies of print and broadcast reporters published later in the century and of women who worked for feminist and alternative media will be presented separately.

4. Good found this with the journalists whose autobiographies he studied: Jacob Riis, Julian Ralph, Samuel Blythe, Elizabeth Jordan, Joan Lowell, Agness Underwood, Vincent Sheean and H. L. Mencken.

5. Despite the literature on autobiography as literary fiction, biographical accounts of individuals, including those studied here, often rely heavily on autobiography. For example, one biographical article about Florence Kelly was almost entirely based on her autobiography (Mencher 1971). In any case, having acknowledged that the self constructed in an autobiography is not equal to the self who lived, for the purposes of economy, this paper will not consistently use qualifying words ("apparently" or "she claimed") to question the fidelity or lack thereof in these autobiographies.

6.Lowell was cryptic at best about her 1929 best-selling book, The Cradle of the Deep, which described her upbringing aboard a schooner captained by her father. The Book-of-the-Month Club ultimately offered subscribers the chance to return the book after skeptics contended that Lowell had spent most of her childhood in California, not sailing through the South Seas. Lowell told an interviewer, "truth is contained as much in the dreams and legends of people as in the factual chronicle of their lives" ("Joan Lowell is Dead," 1967).

7. Jordan covered the trial of Borden, who was acquitted in 1893 of killing her father and step-mother; debate continues a century later over who killed the Bordens and why.

8. Like Lowell, Bennett denied interests in reform, but these protestations usually followed debates with her friend and co-worker, Rayna Proehme, whose own primary commitment was political rather than journalistic and who criticized Bennett for having forgotten her principles.

9. Grunfeld repeatedly implied that Bennett was ugly, apparently a reference to her thick glasses, unless curly black hair was a problem.

10. This is certainly not dispositive of Jordan's psyche, of course, but Ishbel Ross, who prominently featured Jordan in her 1936 "insider account" on women reporters, emphasized Jordan's elan, her calm self-confident manner, and her dashing clothes (see pp. 177-179).

Magazine Coverge of First Ladies from Hoover to Clinton
From Election Through the First 100 Days of Office

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Spy magazine's cover depicted Hillary Clinton, the first lady of the United States, as a Dominatrix,[1] clearly a different role--a deviant role--from those usually associated with the spouse of the President .

Clinton assumed a highly visible position in her husband's campaign for President and as an adviser once he was in office. In doing so she opened herself to attacks from President George Bush's re-election staff and from Republicans who portrayed her as a leftist and a radical feminist, opposed to the traditional family.[2]

In spite of the criticism, Clinton decided that she was a wife who would be "noted," as opposed to the wives of other dignitaries and officials whose names are not even listed among the "notables" in attendance at political and government events. She would not be invisible.[3] Instead she would serve as her husband's trusted partner, a key advisor and a crafter of policy.

In doing so she was not unlike a number of her predecessors--Nellie Taft, Florence Harding, Ellen Wilson, Rosalynn Carter and Eleanor Roosevelt. Clinton was just more open about it.[4]

The collective American memory forgets that many Presidents' wives have chosen political roles for themselves, and this collective forgetfulness forces citizens and media alike to view the current first lady as "being deviant from women's proper role."[5]

The media play a critical role in transmitting both the image and the substance of a first lady. As Richard Cohen notes, the modern day first lady and U.S. Vice President are creations of of the national news media who have made them constitutional monarches, people with limited powers who receive unlimited coverage.[6]

MaryLouise Oates, writing in the *Los Angeles Times*, defined the political wife this way:

> Look good, but not too good, or people will wonder how you can afford all those great clothes, Be thin, but not too thin--maybe you've got an eating disorder. Be warm with your husband in public, but not too clingy, or there will be rumors of marital troubles. Be independent, but not a free thinker, or there will be expectations of marital troubles.
>
> Keep the kids nearby, but not in the way, or you'll look exploitative. Bring in an outside income, but not too much, or you'll look greedy. Be up on the issues, but not too outspoken, since you're only the wife anyway, and what are you supposed to know.
>
> Campaigning is tough. Have smiles for supporters and snacks for reporters and don't dare get caught with a bourbon and soda in your hand. Spend weeks being told where to go and what to say and who to talk to, all by staff hired by someone else, all praying that you won't slip up and cost them the election.[7]

The role of the President's spouse is not constitutional. Her power does not derive from any document. She is, as Anthony observes, the wild card of American politics. Her power simply is.[8]

In spite of formal definition and recognition, the role of President's spouse has been defined as manager of the White House, hostess of dinners, receptions and parties, and participant in social causes and politics. From the days of George Washington, the social calendar has been viewed as a political tool,[9] and the task of selecting menus, dishes, decorations and even chairs for White House socializing has been that of the first lady. After making the appropriate arrangements, she is then to greet the guests, make them feel comfortable and charm the uncommitted or recalcitrant politicos into sharing the views of her husband. Not all first ladies have accepted this

role--Letitia Tyler, Margaret Taylor and Abigail Fillmore did not make many social appearances--but the majority acted as social hostesses and homemakers at some level.[10]

The *New York Times Magazine* featured Lou Hoover in its March 10, 1929, edition and observed:

> The gifted wife of a distinguished husband has a difficult role if she is to keep her own individuality intact without overshadowing his. This is an achievement we demand of our Presidents' wives, even in this day of universal suffrage and of theoretical equality of the sexes. They must be in the middle foreground but never in the limelight. They must meekly follow their illustrious consorts when going in to dinner and even, it is said, when entering an elevator. They must be faithful helpmeets {sic} and constant inspirations, yet it must never so much as be suspected that they are running the administration. They have to know the gravest secrets and not whisper one of them to their dearest friends. They have to be paragons of tact, discretion and unfailing charm. There is no doubt whatever that Mrs. Hoover, by reason of temperament and long experience, comes as near this superwomanly ideal as any feminine occupant of the White House ever has.[11]

From the visibility acquired as the leading hostess of the nation's capitol, the first lady's visibility now extends beyond the home to include social causes and politics.

This study will examine the magazine coverage of first ladies from Lou Hoover to Hillary Clinton from election through the first 100 days of their respective husband's first terms of office. The study will analyze the content of all articles in the defined timeframe to determine if the coverage falls into predictable categories and to see if the personality of the respective first lady impacts the amount of coverage she receives.

Literature Review

While the media coverage of women and of the U.S. President have been analyzed by various researchers, the media coverage of first ladies has not been extensively examined.

Individual first ladies have been the subject of research such as Beasley's work on Eleanor Roosevelt's press conferences, use of radio and work as a magazine journalist and the contrasting media relations styles of Bess Truman and Mamie Eisenhower.[12]

Two studies have been helpful in framing this research. Gutin examined the backgrounds and communication activities of first ladies since 1920. She concluded that they assumed one of three communications stances: social hostesses and ceremonial presences, emerging spokeswomen, and political surrogates and independent advocates.[13] Social hostesses and ceremonial presences were the first ladies who either chose to be or were cast into the role of inactive communicators. They were the "White Housekeepers," as Gutin labeled them, and they were not encouraged to be public communicators.[14] She included Florence Harding, Grace Coolidge, Bess Truman and Mamie Eisenhower in this category.They performed the expected first lady role of entertaining and little more.[15] The emerging spokeswomen were more active privately and publicly. They expanded the ceremonial role, and as Gutin said, they gave some thought to communicating their ideas to the public and made use of the mass media to transmit their ideas.[16] Through this activity came the realization that the first lady could be a political asset.[17] Three first ladies were included in this category: Lou Hoover, Jacqueline Kennedy and Pat Nixon. The third group received the hearty support of their husbands to become actively involved, to participate in presidential decision making and to communicate publicly.[18] Eleanor Roosevelt, Lady Bird Johnson, Betty Ford, Rosalynn Carter, Nancy Reagan and Barbara Bush were included in this category.

Streitmatter analyzed the role of personality on coverage of Presidents in major newspapers and found that Presidents with appealing personalities received more coverage than the ones who were less outgoing.[19] He paired a reserved/introverted President with an outgoing/extroverted one and examined both general news coverage and personal news coverage of each pair. He found that overall the extroverted Presidents received 49 percent more general news coverage and 87 percent more personal news coverage than their reserved counterparts.[20]

Although "first lady " is not an official position, responsibilities assigned to the job have included hostess, homemaker and public figure.[21] Only two Presidents have come to the White House without wives, James Buchanan and Grover Cleveland; and Cleveland married before his first term ended, in response to criticism he received as a bachelor chief executive.[22] The two Presidents whose wives died remarried while in office, accentuating "that Americans expected their chief executive to come in pairs."[23]

By being married Presidents have gained in various ways--education, social standing, wealth and cultural sophistication,[24] qualities that have contributed to the definition of first lady. Since the Civil War, Rizzo noted, the candidate's personal character and domestic life have contributed to the symbolism of the presidency.[25] Domesticity is an important element, and it has chiefly been supplied by the President's wife. Although there is ample evidence that they held the interest and the ability to do so, many first ladies decided to forgo their own careers to focus on their husbands'.[26] Florence Harding in 1922 wrote that one career was all that any couple could manage,[27] a theme echoed by Mamie Eisenhower, Nancy Reagan and Barbara Bush and endorsed by Hillary Clinton in some respects because she gave up her law practice.[28] This emphasis on domesticity will not diminish, as Williams noted, until the "new" political spouse continues to follow a career unrelated to her husband's. [29]

Emphasizing domesticity has been a function of women's magazines since the late 18th century. List found that the three magazines she studied from that time did not portray women as politically active, and reinforced the idea that women's place was in the home.[30] In a study of a much later time period, 1911-1930, Hynes found that *Atlantic Monthly, Cosmopolitan, Ladies' Home Journal, and The Saturday Evening Post* did not portray the "flapper" or the politically, economically, and socially liberated woman in the 1920s as either typical or as an ideal of American women. Instead, many traditional norms and values were reinforced while the real-life activity and accomplishments in the political and economic sphere were underrepresented.[31] Women were discouraged from working during the Depression years, but from 1942 to 1945 advertising in magazines encouraged women to work. At the end of World War II, magazines told women to go home.[32] Spieczny's examination of how women's magazines covered the Equal Rights Amendment showed that the top circulation magazines did not pay much attention to the proposed amendment unlike the smaller and more specialized magazines. The women's magazines followed the lead of their readership in covering the ERA.[33] Johnson and Christ's study of *Time* magazine covers from 1923-1987 indicated that very few women in powerful roles were portrayed. Artists and entertainers were depicted most frequently.[34]

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed:

R[1] Do the women's magazines cover the first ladies more frequently than other magazines?

R[2] Does the coverage of first ladies in magazines from election through the first 100 days of their respective husband's first terms fall into predictable categories that reflect a standardized definition of first lady that emphasizes personal information, relationship information, social information or political activity?

R[3] Do the personality and the communications style of the first lady impact the amount of coverage she receives? Is there a difference between the coverage of a first lady who serves in a ceremonial role to that of a first lady who supports a cause or participates actively in politics?

R[4] Is the magazine coverage of first ladies from election through the first 100 days of their respective husband's first terms positive, negative or neutral?

Method

All magazine articles about first ladies from Lou Hoover to Hillary Clinton published between the November election and the first 100 days of office of the first term served were examined. In the cases of Truman, Johnson and Ford, whose husbands became President because of deaths or resignation, articles were coded for the first 100 days of their respective husbands' administrations. Articles were identified from the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature. Any articles that could not be found were obtained through interlibrary loan.

The first ladies included in this study were chosen because they are among the first ladies who have used modern mass communications. Hoover, for example was the first first lady to

speak on the radio. Roosevelt was the first to conduct press conferences, and Kennedy was the first to conduct a tour of the White House for television.[35]

The unit of analysis was the complete story. Each story was coded to determine if it were primarily about personal, relationship, social or political information and to determine the tone of the coverage defined as positive, negative or neutral. Personal information included family background, education, life at home, interests, hardships, successes, work training or career, reputation, religion, holiday plans and travel/vacations. Relationship information included daughter/sister, friend, wife, husband's helper, mother/grandmother, romance, birthdays, anniversaries and family obligations. Social information included hostess, entertainer, decorator, fashion trendsetter, ball gown and hair, supporter of the arts or causes, fundraiser. first visit to the White House and homemaker. Political activity included campaigner, organizer, speaker, at husband's side while making a campaign or political appearance, voter, policy setter, advising or deciding, naming staff and conducting first press conference. All stories coded could be marked for one or more of the four categories.

The coverage was marked positive if the overall tone of the story was complimentary, flattering and upbeat; negative if it were critical or found fault; and neutral if it were neither complimentary nor critical.

Relationships between attributes of the coverage were shown by the Chi Square statistic. The significance level of .05 was used.

Analysis of Data

One hundred and forty-five articles were found for the 12 first ladies included in this study. Hillary Clinton received the most coverage and Bess Truman received the least.

Table 1

Magazine Articles about First Ladies
From Election through the first 100 Days of first Term

First Lady	Year	Articles
Lou Hoover	1928-29	5
Eleanor Roosevelt	1932-33	4
Bess Truman	1945	1
Mamie Eisenhower	1952-53	9
Jacqueline Kennedy	1962-63	11
Lady Bird Johnson	1963-64	11
Patricia Nixon	1968-69	4
Betty Ford	1972	10
Rosalynn Carter	1976-77	11
Nancy Reagan	1980-81	15
Barbara Bush	1988-89	14
Hillary Clinton	1992-93	50
Total		145

Thirty-nine different magazines covered first ladies from election through the first 100 days of their respective husband's first terms of office. Although it was expected that the women's magazines would cover the first lady most extensively, this was not the case.

Table 2
Magazines Providing Coverage of First Ladies 1928-1993

Magazine	Articles about first ladies	Magazine	Articles about first ladies
Business Week	2	New Yorker	2
Delinator	1	Newsweek	28
Glamour	1	People	8
Good Housekeeping	4	Pictorial Review	1
Harper's Bazaar	3	Progressive	1
House and Garden	1	Reader's Digest	1
Jet	5	Redbook	1
Ladies' Home Journal	4	Review of Reviews	1
Lear's	1	Sassy	1
Life	3	Saturday Evening Post	2
Literary Digest	3	Scholastic Update	1
Maclean's	4	Spy	1
Mademoiselle	2	Time	23
McCall's	5	TV Guide	2
Mother Jones	1	U.S. News	16
Ms.	2	Vogue	4
National Review	3	Washingtonian	1
New Leader	1	Working Woman	1
New Outlook	1	World's Work	1
New Republic	1		
Total			145

The traditional women's magazines, *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies' Home Journal* and *McCall's*, contributed about 9 percent (n=13/145) of the total coverage. All the magazines which are aimed at women or teenaged girls contributed 21 percent (n=31/145) of the coverage. Clinton received 22 percent (n=7/31) of the coverage in these magazines, and Carter received about 19 percent (n=6/31).

Table 3
Articles about First Ladies in Women's and Girls' Magazines
From Election Through First 100 Days of First Term

	Eisenhower	Kennedy	Johnson	Nixon	Ford	Carter	Reagan	Bush	Clinton
Good H.	1		1			1			1
LHJ		2	1						1
MLLE		1							1
McCalls			1	1	1	2			
Harper's B							1	1	1
Ms.							1	1	
Working W.								1	
Vogue					2	1		1	
House & Gard.						1			
Redbook						1			
Sassy									1
Lear's									1
Glamour									1
Total	1	3	3	1	3	6	2	4	7

There are three decades included in the timeframe of this study in which comparisons between first ladies can be made, the 1960s, the 1970s and the 1980s, and examination of these decades show that over time the coverage of first ladies has increased. During the 1960s the average amount of coverage was 8.66 articles. This increased 21 percent in the 1970s to an average of 10.5 articles and 38 percent in the 1980s to an average of 14.5 articles. However, Clinton received more than three and a half times the coverage of Barbara Bush. Clinton received the most coverage (n=20) of any of the first ladies included in the study from the news magazines, *Time*, *U.S. News* and *Newsweek*, which together contributed the largest amount of coverage--46 percent (n=67).

Table 4
News Magazine Coverage of First Ladies
From Election Through First 100 Days of First Term

First Lady	Time	U.S. News	Newsweek	Total
Lou Hoover	0	0	0	0
Eleanor Roosevelt	0	0	0	0
Bess Truman	1	0	2	3
Mamie Eisenhower	2	3	2	7
Jacqueline Kennedy	1	1	2	4
Lady Bird Johnson	2	3	2	7
Patricia Nixon	1	0	0	1
Betty Ford	2	3	2	7
Rosalynn Carter	3	1	1	5
Nancy Reagan	4	1	5	10
Barbara Bush	1	0	2	3
Hillary Clinton	6	4	10	20
Total	23	16	28	67

After the news magazines Clinton received the most coverage in *People* ,which provided six stories. *TV Guide* provided two stories about Clinton but did not cover other first ladies in the timeframe. In addition the women's magazines covered her to a greater extent than it had other first ladies during the timeframe of the study. *Good Housekeeping, Ladies' Home Journal, Mademoiselle, Sassy, Lear's, Harper's Bazaar* and *Glamour* all provided coverage, but *McCall's, Vogue* and *Redbook* did not offer any coverage of Clinton during the timeframe.

A variety of other magazines provided coverage of the first ladies during the timeframe of this study. *Life* covered Eisenhower and Kennedy. *Business Week* and the *New Yorker* covered Kennedy and Clinton. *The Saturday Evening Post* covered Johnson and Bush. *Maclean's* covered Reagan and Clinton. In addition to its coverage of Clinton, *People* covered Reagan and Bush. *Reader's Digest* and *Scholastic UpDate* covered Bush with one story each, and *Jet* presented two stories on Bush and three on Clinton. *New Leader*, the *Washingtonian*, *Progressive*, *National Review*, *New Republic* and *Mother Jones* together provided nine stories about Clinton, but did not cover any other first ladies during the timeframe.

All but four first ladies received comprehensive coverage to the extent that magazine articles about them during the time period mentioned at least one item of each of the four categories established for the study. The four who did not receive complete coverage were Eleanor Roosevelt, Bess Truman, Patricia Nixon and Rosalynn Carter. For Roosevelt, Truman and Carter, none of the articles about these women mentioned relationship information such as being a daughter, sister, friend,wife, husband's helper and mother or grandmother. The article about Truman did not mention any personal or relationship information or political activity. The articles about Nixon did not mention any political activity.

Table 5
First Ladies' Communications Style by Magazine Article Content

Style & Number of First Ladies	Number of Articles	Personal N	%	Relations hips N	%	Social N	%	Political N	%	Total
Social Hostess (2)	10	4	.01	2	.005	9	.02	3	.008	18
Emerging Spokesw.(3)	20	8	.02	7	.002	14	.04	3	.008	32
Political Surrogate (5)	65	51	.14	31	.08	65	.18	36	.10	183
HRC Style (1)	50	38	.10	25	.07	23	.06	47	.13	133
Total (12)	145	101		65		111		89		366

$X^2 = 26.13$
DF=9
p>.001

Table 5 indicates there is a statistical difference in the type of coverage first ladies received in magazines based on the style adopted. The first ladies who adopted the social hostess style together garnered a smaller amount of the total coverage (7 percent, n=10/145) in magazines between the election and the first 100 days of office, and half (n=9/18) of the references in that the coverage concentrated on social aspects such as playing the role of hostess, entertainer, decorator or fundraiser. Twenty-two percent of the references (n=4/18) in these articles were about personal information, 17 percent (n=3/18) was about political activity and 11 percent (n=2/18) was about relationships. Truman and Eisenhower were included in this group.

Emerging Spokeswomen, Hoover, Kennedy and Nixon, got 14 percent (n=20/145) of the total coverage with Kennedy accounting for 11 of the articles. The coverage about them again concentrated on the social aspects to a slightly lesser degree than the coverage of the Social Hostesses, 44 percent (n=14/32) to 50 percent (n=9/18). However, they received slightly more coverage than did the social hostesses about personal information such as family background, education, interests and life at home--25 percent (n=8/32) to 22 percent (n=4/18).

The political surrogates and independent advocates, Roosevelt, Johnson, Ford, Carter, Reagan and Bush, together got 45 percent (n=65/145) of the coverage, and it continued to focus on the social area, however to a lesser degree than the Emerging Spokeswoman and Social Hostess. Coverage of these first ladies included more references to personal information and political activity, 28 percent (n=51/183) and 20 percent (n=36/183) respectively.

The coverage of Clinton, who got 34 percent (n=50/145) of the total coverage, reflects the overt political style she adopted. However, while the coverage of her did not refer often to social or relationship information, it did continue to refer to personal information in 29 percent (n=38/133) of the cases.

This data also indicate that the coverage about the first ladies fits the first ladies' communications styles. Articles about social hostesses, who were encouraged not to be public communicators, concentrated on the social aspects 50 percent of the time (n=9/18). Articles about the emerging spokeswomen, political surrogates and Clinton did not emphasize the social as much--44 percent for emerging spokeswomen (n=14/32), 35 percent for political surrogates (n=65/183), and 17 percent for Clinton (n=23/133). After the social hostesses, the first ladies were supposed to be more communicative, and, in the cases of the political surrogates and Clinton, more political. This is supported by the data that show they got more coverage as well as more mentions about political activity. Political activity was mentioned 19 percent (n=36/183) for political surrogates and in 35 percent (n=47/133) for Clinton.

Table 6
Content of Articles About First Ladies In Magazines
From Election Through First 100 Days of First Term

First Lady	Personal		Relationships		Social		Political		Total
	N	%*	N	%*	N	%*	N	%*	
Lou Hoover	3	.3	2	.2	4	.4	1	.1	10
Eleanor Roosevelt	2	.22	0		2	.22	5	.55	9
Bess Truman	0		0		1	1.	0		1
Mamie Eisenhower	4	.24	2	.12	8	.47	3	.18	17
Jacqueline Kennedy	4	.24	3	.18	8	.47	2	.12	17
Lady Bird Johnson	9	.3	6	.2	10	.33	5	.17	30
Patricia Nixon	1	.2	2	.4	2	.4	0		5
Betty Ford	11	.37	5	.17	7	.24	6	.21	29
Rosalynn Carter	4	.24	0		6	.35	7	.41	17
Nancy Reagan	10	.34	4	.14	12	.41	3	.10	29
Barbara Bush	15	.22	16	.23	28	.4	10	.14	69
Hillary Clinton	38	.28	25	.19	23	.17	47	.35	133
Total	101		65		111		89		366

*Percentages =row percentage

When the data for individual first ladies are examined, the personal style of each still seems to be intact. Truman's only article emphasized the social. Eisenhower and Kennedy's coverage emphasized social aspects nearly 50 percent of the time. Hoover, Nixon, Reagan and Bush's coverage emphasized the social aspects at least 40 percent of the time, while Johnson and Carter's coverage emphasized this aspect at least a third of the time. Ford's coverage included social references 24 percent of the time and Clinton's 17 percent of the time.

Four first ladies' coverage mentioned personal information at least 30 percent of the time--Hoover, Johnson, Reagan and Ford, while the coverage of Nixon, Bush, Roosevelt, Carter, Kennedy, Eisenhower and Clinton mentioned this aspect at least 20 percent of the time. Nixon and Truman's coverage did not mention this aspect at all.

The references to relationship information ranged from a high of 40 percent for Nixon to a low of 0 for Roosevelt, Truman and Carter.

The Democratic first ladies received more coverage of political activities than their Republican counterparts. Roosevelt's coverage mentioned this aspect 55 percent of the time, Carter's 41 percent of the time, Clinton's 35 percent of the time, Johnson's 17 percent, Kennedy's 12 percent and Truman's 0. Ford's coverage reported political activity 21 percent of the time followed by Eisenhower, 18 percent; Bush, Reagan and Hoover, 10 percent each; and Nixon, 0.

Table 7
Tone of Magazine Coverage by First Lady
From Election Through First 100 Days of First Term

First Lady	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Lou Hoover	4	0	1	5
Eleanor Roosevelt	2	0	2	4
Bess Truman	0	0	1	1
Mamie Eisenhower	6	0	3	9
Jacqueline Kennedy	7	0	4	11
Lady Bird Johnson	11	0	0	11
Patricia Nixon	0	1	3	4
Betty Ford	9	0	1	10
Rosalynn Carter	10	0	1	11
Nancy Reagan	8	3	4	15
Barbara Bush	14	0	0	14
Hillary Clinton	21	6	23	50
Total	92	10	43	145

The majority of the magazine coverage of first ladies from election through the first 100 days of their respective husband's first term of office was positive. About 65 percent was positive (n=92/145), 30 percent was neutral and 7 percent was negative.[36]

While Clinton achieved the most positive coverage, 14 percent of the total (n=21/145), the coverage of Johnson and Bush, was totally positive. Three first ladies received coverage negative in tone: Nixon, Reagan and Clinton. Clinton's negative coverage amounted to about 12 percent of her total (n=6/50).

Table 8
Tone of Coverage by Style of First Lady
From Election Through First 100 Days of First Term

Style of First Lady	Number Included	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Total
Social Hostess	2	6	0	4	10
Emerging Spokesw.	3	11	1	8	20
Political Surrogate	6	54	3	8	65
HRC Style	1	21	6	23	50
Total	12	92	10	43	145

It appears that the communications style adopted by the first lady may have some impact on the tone of the coverage she receives. The Political Surrogate style achieved 83 percent positive coverage (n=54/65) and only 4 percent negative coverage (n=3/65). Clinton's coverage was less positive and more negative than the other first ladies included in this study, 42 percent positive coverage (n=21/50) and 12 percent negative coverage (n=6/50), while first ladies adopting the Social Hostess and Emerging Spokeswoman style achieved 60 percent and 55 percent positive coverage respectively and either no negative coverage or a minimal amount of negative coverage.

Neutral coverage ranged from a high of 75 percent for Nixon, (n=3/4) 50 percent for Roosevelt (n=2/4),46 percent for Clinton(n=23/50), 36 percent for Kennedy (n=4/11), and 27 percent for Reagan (n=4/15). The communications style of the Political Surrogates got the least neutral coverage--12 percent (n=8/65).

Discussion

Modern first ladies received more coverage than their earlier counterparts. The latter day first ladies also received more coverage in women's magazines and news magazines.

Until Hillary Clinton, first ladies realized modest increases in the amount of coverage they received in magazines, a 21 percent increase in the 1970s over the previous decade to a 38 percent increase in the 1980s. Nancy Reagan and Barbara Bush's coverage was similar in amount, 15 articles and 14 articles respectively. Their coverage reflected modest increases over the coverage of Carter who got 11 articles and Ford who got 10. However, Clinton's coverage eclipsed all of the other first ladies included in this study. In the timeframe she received 50 articles in a variety of magazines.

The women's magazines and the news magazines covered Clinton more than any other magazines in the timeframe. She was the subject of 20 articles out of a total of 67 in the news magazines and of seven articles out of a total of 30 in the women's and girls' magazines. By the same token Nancy Reagan took second place for number of articles in the news magazines with 10 articles. Rosalynn Carter was second place for the women's magazines with six articles. Hoover, Roosevelt and Truman were not covered in women's magazines during the timeframe.

Together, the women's and girls' magazines contributed about 21 percent of the coverage while the news magazines provided 46 percent. As weeklies, the news magazines have a higher rate of consumption for stories, and this study seems to indicate the first lady apparently makes good copy during the timeframe of election through the first 100 days of office. On the other hand, many women's magazines are monthlies and have a longer lead time, and they may have preferred to wait to develop a more detailed report.

Because she got the most coverage. Clinton was the subject of articles in a diverse grouping of magazines. *New Leader*, the *Washingtonian*, *Progressive*, *National Review*, *New*

Republic and *Mother Jones* covered her when they did not cover previous first ladies, while *McCall's, Vogue* and *Redbook* did not cover her at all during the timeframe.

After the news magazines, *People*, also a weekly, provided a total of 8 stories about three first ladies, Reagan, Bush and Clinton.

The coverage of the first ladies included in this study does fall into predictable categories, but it appears that two categories, social and personal, attract the most mentions. References to social information accounted for 30 percent of the total, followed by personal information, 28 percent; political activity, 24 percent, and relationship information, 18 percent. From Hoover to Bush, the coverage focused on the social with few exceptions--Roosevelt and Clinton's coverage focused on political activity and Ford's focused on personal information. This accent on social information shows that the magazines have adopted a standardized definition of first lady because even when such first ladies as Carter said they intended to pursue other activities, they still received coverage about the social aspects of their roles. Clinton, with her overt political style, was the first first lady in 65 years to garner less coverage in this category. Prior to her becoming first lady, no other first lady had gotten less than 22 percent and recent first ladies, Reagan and Bush, got as much as 40 percent.

The communications style adopted by the first lady did impact the amount of coverage. Bess Truman, who did not want to be first lady and who came to the position because of the death of Franklin Roosevelt, was the subject of only one article in Time, which used an unflattering photo of her.[37] On the other hand, her Democratic descendent, Hillary Clinton, who eagerly sought the role of first lady, captured the most coverage. This study seems to show that the communications style, the personality and the political party of the first lady impact the coverage she receives. Social Hostesses attracted the least coverage. Political Surrogates who had their husbands' approval to be in the public limelight, attracted a good deal more, and Clinton who ventured further into the political aspects than any other first lady had before, attracted the most.

Personality impacted the coverage as well. Nixon was taciturn. The four articles about her included relationship information as often as it did social information. She was the only first lady to be covered in this way. Betty Ford, on the other hand, was open and more personal information was reported about her than that of the other first ladies.

Eisenhower's coverage highlighted the social role she adopted. News magazine articles about her in November and December 1952 and January 1953 described her as a homemaker and hostess. *U.S. News* said the household would be her principal assignment and that she would not "assert herself as a public figure, a maker of opinion and influence on policy as did Mrs. Roosevelt, nor would she tend to withdraw to the background as did Mrs. Truman."[38] *Time*'s Jan. 19, 1953, cover article revealed a mix of personal and social information. It noted that she was not a "grande dame. Her social attributes are amiability, small talk and an ability to put people at ease." It described the work of the first lady as dealing with 700 letters a day, giving at least six state dinners and managing 65 servants in a 54-room house. In addition, the article mentioned her bangs and her clothes, allowing that "{d}espite owning a few Paris gowns, {she} is a great one for ordering little $17.50 dresses and $16.95 hats from department stores."[39]

More personal information was revealed in the articles about the first ladies who were the Emerging Spokeswomen, and this was emphasized in the coverage of Jacqueline Kennedy who garnered more than half of the coverage in this category (n=11/20). These articles described her background of wealth and high society, her education and her sense of fashion and elegance. *Newsweek* noted that fashion designer Oleg Cassini had been selected to make her inaugural ball gown because of his "synthesis of Mrs. Kennedy's elegance."[40] Both *Life* and *Ladies' Home Journal* provided photo displays of her, with *Life* titling one of its two displays "An Abundance of Beauties: Gina and Rita and Ava and Marilyn and Jackie."[41]

Another *Life* article told about the Jackie look alikes and concluded that "she wears her clothes with such effortless grace, that despite herself, she is becoming the nation's No. 1 fashion influence." However, in another article in the same week that noted "her political role is mostly visual," she was quoted as saying, "I am determined that my husband's administration--this is a speech I find myself making in the middle of the night--won't be plagued by fashion stories."[42]

Political Surrogates claimed 45 percent of the total coverage. While the social information reported about them remained as high as 40 percent in the cases of Nancy Reagan and Barbara Bush, collectively the reporting in this area declined slightly as the reporting increased in personal information and political activity. Reagan and Bush's first magazine articles may have been more in response to the communications styles of Ford and Carter, who preceded them.

One of the first headlines about Betty Ford signaled a change: "Betty Ford will set a different style," *U. S. News and World Report* announced.[43] While magazines credited Johnson with candor, they concentrated on the personal information of her business acumen and her family fortune. On the other hand, the coverage of Ford, the next political surrogate first lady, hailed her personal strength and described her candor as a political asset. She answered questions other first ladies had avoided for years.[44]

Shortly after her husband took office, Ford was diagnosed with breast cancer and she underwent surgery in October 1974. Magazine coverage focused on the surgery, but it also incorporated her political views. *Newsweek* 's cover story, "Betty Ford's Operation," observed that "{s}he promised to devote herself to the usual bland pastimes of first ladies--arts and children--but she also let it be known that she would campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment, and she favored 'liberalized' abortion and marijuana laws and even that she thought trial marriage might be a good thing."[45]

Carter signaled another change from the social hostesses and emerging spokeswomen first ladies when the articles about her reported that she planned to bring her own clothes to the White House along with her sewing machine and that she cut her own hair. She would not be redecorating the White House, but she did plan to sit in on cabinet meetings and to hold issue-oriented press conferences of her own.[46]

Nancy Reagan turned the coverage away from the political and back to the social and personal. While Carter admitted in an interview that it bothered her to be asked who made her clothes, the former debutante Reagan's coverage immediately zeroed in on appearances. *Time* focused on the "Reagan Look: Assured, Affluent, and Yes Conservative," while *U. S. News and World Report* hailed the "Nancy Touch" and *People* touted her as "Elegant, Opulent {and} Right Minded."[47] Articles that did not focus on her skin, hair and inaugural ball gown told of her plans to redecorate the White House. *Time* observed that "{f}ew other First Families have plunged into redecoration right away."[48] By February 1981, Reagan had already replaced her press secretary; and according to Melinda Black of *Newsweek*, Reagan was "searching for a role."[49] However, to Gloria Steinem, writing in *Ms.*, Reagan still had the role she had chosen for herself when she married--"{t}he Marzipan Wife. The rare woman who can perform the miracle of having no interests at all; of transplanting her considerable ego into a male body."[50]

Barbara Bush's magazine coverage likewise featured her appearance, but in a different way than Reagan's did. *Vogue* noted that Bush "had been stung repeatedly ... by the media observation that she looks more like George Bush's mother than his wife."[51] *Reader's Digest* pointed out that she dyed her hair, and Maclean's said she represented the elegant older look and on the cover it called her "Everybody's Grandmother." Yet the same article said "her no nonsense style... could liberate American women from the tyranny of dieting, face lifts and high fashion."[52] Unlike Reagan, Bush did not have to find a role. She had already established herself as an ardent supporter of literacy programs and 13 of the 14 articles about her in the timeframe mentioned her support of such.

Kennedy did not like the title first lady and for a time forbade her staff from using it.[53] With Hillary Clinton, the magazines did not hesitate to replace the title with such labels as "Superwoman," "Co-President," or "the First Advocate in Chief," while referring to the presidential couple as "First Friends," or the "The Dynamic Duo."[54]

These labels were the magazines' attempts to make sense out of a first lady who was not going to be content figuring out the seating arrangements for state dinners when that apparently was what the public expected of her. A *U.S. News and World Report* poll reported in January

1993 that 39 percent of the respondents did not want her to be a major adviser to her husband on politics and personnel and 70 percent preferred that she serve as a "traditional" first lady.[55]

That was not Clinton's plan, and as her friend, Linda Bloodworth-Thomasen, explained in a *TV Guide* article. "Hillary will never sit in the back of the bus. Nor should she. The irony of Hillary's life is that she's qualified for any post in government, starting with Attorney General. and now, because of the election, she's supposed to act like Mamie Eisenhower?"[56]

"The idea that I would check my brain at the White House door, just doesn't make sense to me," Clinton told *Maclean's* writer Scott Steele, who noted that her decision to be her husband's politically active assistant began the media's "demonization" of her.[57]

It appears that the magazines are willing at least initially to present reports on the new first lady in a positive light. Overall the tone of the coverage was positive. Less than seven percent of the 145 articles were negative (n=10/145). The first ladies who adopted the Social Hostess communications style did not receive any negative coverage, and the Emerging Spokeswomen category only received one negative report. However, the first ladies included in these two categories received not more than 60 percent positive coverage. They did not actively communicate and got fewer reports than the other categories of first ladies and thus limited the positive effect their coverage might have had.

The Political Surrogate first ladies, on the other hand, achieved a greater amount of positive coverage than any of the other categories. The coverage of the first ladies in this categories focused on the social aspects and then the personal. Two first ladies in this category received only positive coverage.

Hillary Clinton who adopted a much more political style than her predecessors, received a little more negative coverage--six of the 50 articles were negative in tone. It must be noted, however, that nearly half of the articles about her were neutral--not complimentary or critical (n=23/50). Nixon was the only first lady to attract more neutral coverage than Clinton, and she got 75 percent (n=3/4). However, she got no positive coverage at all.

The magazines, it appears, failed to provide neutral coverage of the political surrogate style, and only succeeded in providing neutral coverage of the other categories about 40 percent of the time.

The positive nature of the coverage the magazines gave the first ladies in this study may stem from the recognition that Presidents are expected to come to the White House with wives who are supposed to be socially active in supporting causes, entertaining and setting fashion trends and only somewhat active in political decision making. Magazines recognize that the first lady as the nation's most prominent hostess makes good copy, and if she stays within the proscribed role, the magazines are apparently willing to make the coverage positive. If the first lady steers away from the proscribed role as Hillary Clinton has done, the magazines appear to make an effort to be neither complimentary nor critical. However, the first lady must expect a little more negative coverage if she takes a more political than social role.

Conclusion

This research shows that the magazine coverage about Hillary Clinton reflects her decision to be overtly political and to de-emphasize the social aspects of the first lady role. It also shows that when a first lady defines her role differently such as Clinton did, the magazines apparently are willing to cover her in a more neutral manner. If the first lady decides to retain the social role and to occasionally highlight political activity, the coverage may be quite positive as it was in the case of Johnson and Bush.

This research also shows that the magazine articles about the other first ladies reflected the communications styles they adopted. The coverage does fall into predictable categories with one exception. Relationship information was not a significant element of the coverage for most of the first ladies. In the case of Patricia Nixon relationship information played a bigger role than personal and social information and political activity, but this was an exception. The social and personal category were the important elements of the coverage, and together they accounted for 58 percent of the total.

The accent on social information shows that the magazines have adopted a standardized definition of first lady because even when a first lady said she intended to pursue other activities,

the magazine coverage still focused on the social aspects. Clinton, with her overt political style, was the first first lady in 65 years to garner less coverage in the social category. Prior to her becoming first lady, no other first lady had gotten less than 22 percent and her immediate predecessors got as much as 40 percent in the social category.

Finally, a variety of magazines cover first ladies from election through the first 100 days of their husband's first terms, but the women's magazines do not seem to cover them extensively during this timeframe. The weekly news magazines provided the most coverage.

Gutin's categories of the first ladies' communications styles were tested in this research and it was found that there is a difference in the magazine coverage of a first lady who adopts the social hostess style as opposed to one who adopts the political surrogate style or Hillary Clinton's style.

This research is restricted by the timeframe and the number of first ladies included. More comprehensive research especially on how the magazines' coverage of first ladies is impacted by their communications style should be done.

Notes

[1] See *Spy*, February, 1993.
2 Michael Wines, "First Lady Rises to Defense of Successor," *New York Times*, Dec. 2, 1992, B10.
3Robin Abcarian, "Can't We Redefine the Perfect Political Wife?" *Los Angeles Times*, June 30, 1993, E1.
4Carl Sferrazza Anthony, "First Ladylike, After All," *Washington Post*, Jan. 31. 1993, F1.
5*Ibid.*
6Cohen, Richard, "All the News That Meets Our Needs,' *Washington Post, Washington Magazine*, Dec. 11, 1989, 11.
7MaryLouise Oates, "The Political Wife--an Enduring Breed," *Los Angeles Times*, June 24, 1993, B7.
8*Ibid.*
9Daniel C. Diller and Stephen L. Robertson, *The Presidents, First Ladies, and Vice Presidents White House Biographies 1789-1989*, Washington, D. C. Congressional Quarterly, 1989, 7.
10*Ibid., 8.*
11"The Lady of the White House," *New York Times Magazine,* March 10, 1929, V:1.
12See Beasley, Maurine, "The Press Conferences of Eleanor Roosevelt, " Paper delivered at the 66th annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Portland, Oregon, August 6-9, 1983; "Eleanor Roosevelt: First Lady as Radio Pioneer, "Paper delivered at the 68th annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Memphis,Tennessee August 3-6, 1985; "Eleanor Roosevelt, First Lady as Magazine Journalist," Paper delivered at the 67th annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Gainesville, Florida, August 5-8, 1984; "Bess Truman and the Press: Case Study of a First Lady as Political Communicator," in William F. Levantrosser, ed., Harry S. Truman: The Man from Independence (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986) 207-216.; and "Mamie Eisenhower as First Lady: Media Coverage of a Silent Partner," Paper delivered at the 67th annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Gainesville, Florida, August 5-8, 1984.
13Gutin, Myra G., *The President's Partner*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1989, 4.
14*Ibid.*, 41, 175.
15*Ibid.*, 7.
16*Ibid.*, 41.
17*Ibid.*, 72.
18*Ibid.*, 175-177.
19Streitmatter, Rodger, "The Impact of Presidential Personality on News Coverage in Major Newspapers," *Journalism Quarterly* 1985, 66-73.
20*Ibid.*, 68.
21Diller and Robertson, 7-8.
22Betty Boyd Caroli, *First Ladies*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1987, 307.
23Ibid.
24*Ibid.*, 307-330.
25Sergio Rizzo, "Presidential Wives: The Unacknowledged Legislators of the Race," *Journal of American Culture*, Winter 1991, 23.
26See Carl Sferrazza Anthony, "First Ladylike, After All," *Washington Post,* Jan. 31, 1993, F6.
27Florence Harding as quoted in Caroli, 164.
28Mrs. Eisenhower, for example, said she was a career woman--her career was Ike. See "Dateline: The Last Word on First Ladies," *U.S. News and World Report,* March 30, 1992, p.17. Mrs. Reagan said her greatest ambition was to have a successful, happy marriage. See "First Lady is a Former Debutante," *People*, Nov. 17, 1980, 46. *People* also pointed out that Barbara Bush was "no stranger to personal sacrifice for her husband' career." See G. Gilford Gurry, "At Long Last Rainbow's End," Nov. 21, 1988, 56.
29Marjorie Williams, "First Ladies, Why Political Wives Make Such Bad Role Models," *Washington Magazine, Washington Post,* Nov. 1, 1992, 25.
30Karen List, "Magazine Portrayals of Women's Role in the New Republic," Paper delivered at the 69th annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Norman, Okla., August 3-6, 1986.

31Terry Hynes, "Magazine Portrayal of Women, 1911-1930," *Journalism Monographs*, No. 72, May 1981.
32Nancy Roberts, "Riveting for Victory: Women in Magazine Ads in World War II," Paper delivered at the 62th annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Houston, Texas, August 5-8, 1979.
33Sandra Spieczny, "Dancing Backward: Women's Magazines and the Equal Rights Amendment," Paper delivered at the 70th annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. San Antonio, Texas, August 1-4, 1987.
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35Gutin, 4,.56, 95.
36There was a statistical difference between the positive and neutral coverage of the Democrat first ladies and the Republican first ladies (X^2=19.84, DF=3, p>.01).
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38"Ike and Mamie: What They'll Be Like," *U.S. News and World Report*, Nov. 14, 1952, 54-55.
39"The New First Lady, 'Politics Can Be Fun," *Time*, Jan. 19, 1953, 17-20.
40"Fit for the First Lady," *Newsweek*, Jan. 30, 1961, p.60.
41"An Abundance of Beauties: Gina and Rita and Ava and Marilyn and Jackie." *Life*, Dec. 26, 1960, 54.
42"You Don't Have To Look Hard To see Another Jackie," *Life*, Jan. 20, 1961, 16.
"Jackie: First Lady of the Land," *Time*, Jan. 20, 1961, 26.
43"Betty Ford Will Set a Different Style," *U. S. News and World Report*, Aug. 19, 1974, 20.
44See Nan Robertson, "Our New First Lady," *Saturday Evening Post*, Feb. 8, 1964, 20-25; "Story of the Johnson Family Fortune," *U. S. News and World Report*, Nov. 16, 1963, 75; and "Three Other LBJ's," *Newsweek*, Dec. 9, 1963, 264, which notes that she made a fortune investing her inheritance. Also see, "Betty Ford, Role on the Election Circuit," *U. S. News and World Report*, Oct. 7, 1974, 31.
45"Betty Ford's Operation," *Newsweek*, Oct. 7, 1974, 33.
46See Bonnie Angelo, "Rosalynn: So Many Goals," *Time*, Jan. 10, 1977, 12; Charlotte Curtis, "What Kind of First Lady Will She Be?" *McCall's*, Jan. 1977, 24; "Change Comes to the White House," *U. S. News and World Report*, March, 21, 1977, 31-33; and "Rosalynn on the Road," *Time*, Dec. 13, 1976, 16.
47See, Change Comes to the White House," *U. S. News and World Report*, March, 21, 1977, 31-33; M. Demarest, "American Pie at Its Best," *Time*, Jan, 19, 1981, pp 78-79; Patricia Avery, "At White House; Now Its the Nancy Touch," *U. S. News and World Report*,, Jan. 26, 1981, 24-25; and "Elegant, Opulent, Right Minded," *People*, Jan. 19, 1981, 38-40.
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49Melinda Black, "Nancy: Searching For a Role," *Newsweek, Feb. 2, 1987, 54.*
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51"Winning Style: Kitty Dukakis and Barbara Bush on First Lady Dressing," *Vogue*, Nov. 1988, 444.
52Margaret Carlson, "Barbara Bush: Down to Earth First Lady," *Reader's Digest*, April 1989, 83-87; and Maree McDonald, "A Favorite Grandmother," *Maclean's*, Jan. 23, 1989, 30.
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54See Sally Quinn, "Look It's SuperWoman," *Newsweek*, Feb. 15, 1993, 24-25;"First Friends," *People*, Nov. 16, 1992, 92-94; Matt Cooper, "Co-President Clinton," *U.S. News and World Report*, Feb. 8, 1993, 30-32; Kenneth T. Walsh and Thomas Toch,"Now, The First Chief Advocate," *U.S. News and World Report*, Jan. 25, 1993, 46-47; Margaret Carlson, "The Dynamic Duo," *Time*, Jan. 4, 1993, 38-41.
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56Mary Murphy, "Bill&Hillary&Harry&Linda," *TV Guide*, Jan. 16-22, 1993, 32.
57See "Scott Steele, "Buy One, Get One Free," *Maclean's*, Nov. 16, 1992, 42-43.