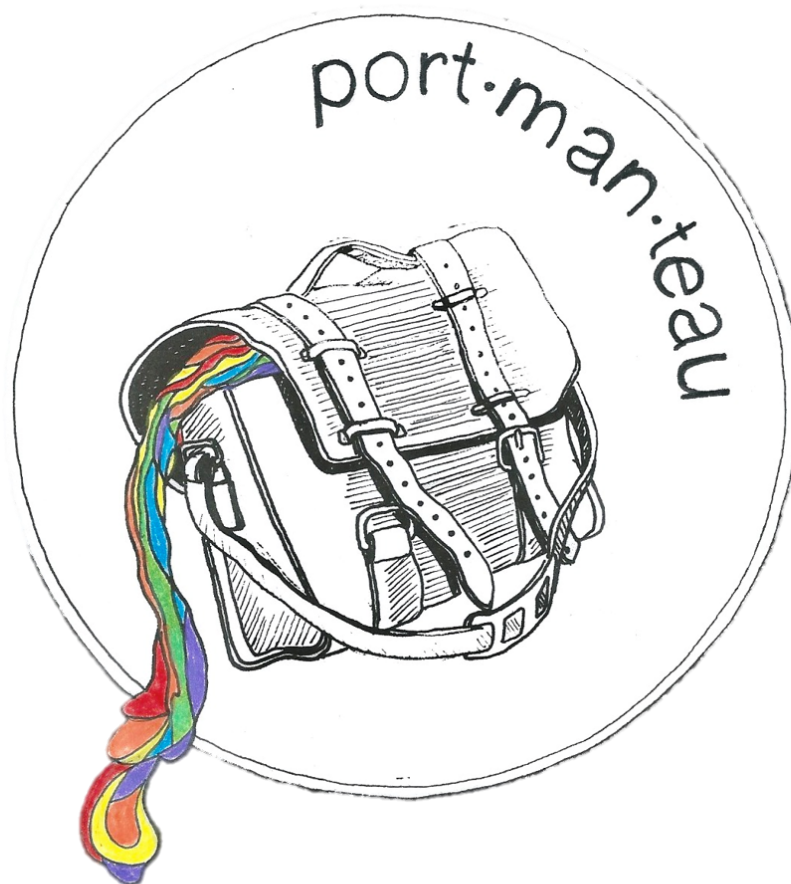


# Portmanteau

Vol. 3

A Publication by the Gender Studies Program  
at Slippery Rock University



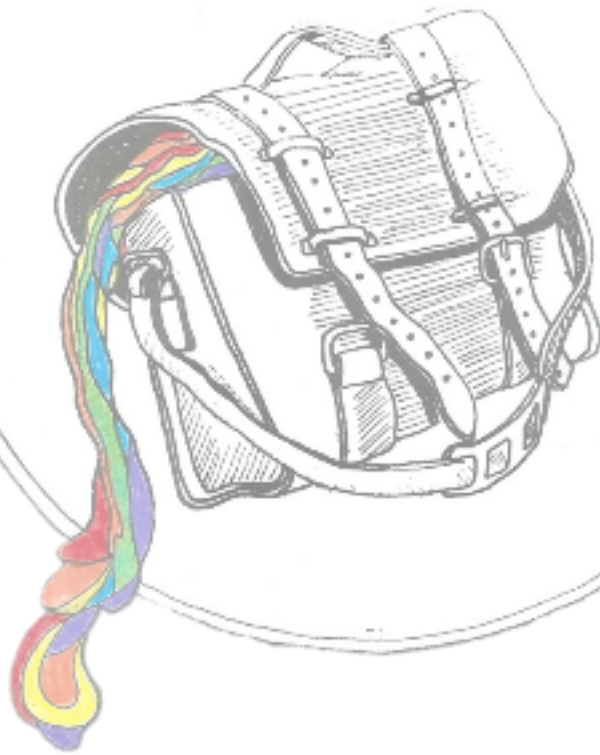
Edited by Cierra Naglowsky

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port·man·teau



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Thank you to the Gender Studies Program  
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# Foreword

How are you doing? It seems imperative to check in with each other, now more than ever, as we collectively try to make sense of a global pandemic and a reckoning with centuries of white supremacy in the United States. The events of the last year have served as stark reminders of embodied contingencies and how structural inequalities and oppression can exacerbate them. COVID-19 has had global impacts, but it has ravaged communities of color, indigenous people, and older and disabled people with especial fierceness. When George Floyd's murder by Minneapolis police was filmed in May, it ignited sustained protests and demands for police reform around the country. Fractious, difficult, empowering, unifying, and monumental – these are just some of the words I think of when I reflect on the last year. Most of the essays in this volume of *Portmanteau* were submitted before the seismic waves of change began in mid-March. Yet, with almost prescient clarity, they critically analyze consequences of structural racism and systemic inequality, the contestation of embodied stigma, and the power of individual voices in concert with others to ignite change.

In “Name that Feeling: Facing Abjection,” Lauren Courtright contemplates the collapse of borders, the messiness of abjection and the reasons why we might so often fear and recoil from it. But ultimately, we cannot – that messiness and liminality are part and parcel of our lives and our communities, and we are witnessing that in protests that blur public/private boundaries and in rage that refuses to be contained. Unruliness is often necessary for change, and COVID has served as a stark reminder that control is often illusory, that chaos and discomfort are inescapable elements of our day-to-day lives.

In sharing the story of Sojourner Truth, an abolitionist and women's rights activist whose faith fed her resilience and whose famous question, “Ain't I a woman?” putting intersectional oppression at the center of her work, Tabitha Rathman contemplates the abject nature of Truth's spirituality through its varied and sometimes difficult transformations. Authors Jessica Solomon and Luke Franchuk also consider the historical context of racial equality movements, focusing on the New Negro Movement and some of the individuals who played key roles in challenging racism and transforming national attitudes. None of this was easy or

comfortable; in navigating the thicket of early twentieth-century bigotry, individuals like Amy Ashwood and Marcus Garvey confronted the legacy of slavery and the inequities which stitched together and held in place white privilege and power. Sarah Kuehn and Vica Combs move us to the present to analyze a school-to-prison pipeline that exposes Black boys and men to state violence and material, physical and mental abuse in a criminal justice system which is, in fact, deeply unjust.

Margaret Calvert and Samantha Burkhouse extend an analysis of embodied bias in their thoughtful and evocative essays which examine how sizeism, sexism and stigma produce and manage women's bodies in a culture that celebrates a thin ideal. This ideal potentially damages women and girls in terms of self-esteem, sexuality and sexual expression. But as Calvert and Burkhouse remind us, we have options, opportunities to resist and reject culturally constructed ideas of desirability and worth. And for skeptics who might remain unconvinced that the thin ideal exerts a pervasive force, Destiny King's superb research and her conclusion that thinness correlates to body image concern offers evidence to the contrary. Taking a focus on women's embodiment in a slightly different direction, Tiffany Shrom discusses the ways in which gender and race intersect in the world of jazz dance, where women's bodies are still framed, choreographed and consumed by men to a depressing extent. While many of us think of dance as more egalitarian than the rest of the world, Shrom reminds us that parity does not yet exist.

In yet another take on embodied oppression, Piper Jones and Kourtney Kotvas argue that porn culture damages children and negates feminist values, and that this is in part the consequence of capitalism. When bodies are turned into capital commodities, the most vulnerable are often victimized. Vica Combs extends this argument in her essay on human trafficking, analyzing both the policies used to combat trafficking and the potential weaknesses of said policies.

And policies matter; despite the neoliberal element of reform through policy change, they can change lives, as can their absence. We see this in Katie Holler's essay on the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19. Her argument that the national diminishment of disabled and older people as "acceptable" victims of the virus, coupled with a sharp analysis of the media silence around race disparities, amounts to a policy of eugenics, demands that we address this silence, re-write this epistemology of ignorance. As part of that effort, we are called upon to be better allies. Conversations about allyship and its role in Black Lives Matter protests have raised (or

returned us to) questions about when allyship becomes colonization, about when allyship is more virtue signaling than action. Though there are no simple answers, Madeline Murphy offers us thoughtful ways to be better advocates and allies. As she notes, “being an ally should not be -- cannot be -- a single-act occurrence.” In our ongoing social justice work, and as we navigate the continuing challenges of a global pandemic, this is an important reminder.

Yet this work can be demanding, can feel limitless. Julianna Sabol reminds us that boundaries are a necessary and important part of the self-care that makes advocacy possible. As she puts it, “Healthy boundaries often come from a healthy understanding of our self-worth.” And so finally, the incredible art of Rachel Peterson serves as a visual and aesthetic instance of the power of art as advocacy. She writes in her Artist’s Statement, “I want my work to be a sanctuary.” And it is – every time I return to her art, I feel empowered. It seems right to end with her words: “we deserve to rest and know that we are allowed to feel beautiful, be seen, and know that someone is fighting for us. And loving us.”

Indeed.

## Dr. Cindy LaCom

Director of Gender Studies at Slippery Rock University

# Name that Feeling: Facing Abjection

Lauren Courtright

What are the first thoughts you have that come to mind when looking at each of these photos?



How do these photos make you feel?

Do they make your stomach turn?

Do they make you uncomfortable?

Most people shit and piss—so why might confrontation with these bodily acts cause us to recoil?

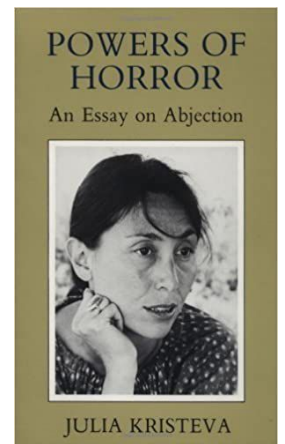
Does the skin of milk make you feel uneasy? Why might this be? After all, milk is supposed to be a source of nourishment for consumption, but the skin on top of it causes it to exist in an in-between state of nourishment and decay.

What about the rotting fruit? We usually think that fruit is good for us, but how might this remind us of corporeal decay and deterioration?

### Unpacking Abjection

Julia Kristeva, a French psychoanalyst, critic, novelist, and educator, wrote *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980) to attempt to explain what causes humans to feel horror and disgust and better understand why. As part of this, she uses theories of abjection, which she describes as having one primary quality: “that of being opposed to I.” Going back to those pictures, did you feel any sense of opposition to them, a kind of “not-me”? If so, this may reflect the experience of abjection. The viewing of other images which might evoke that sensation are a corpse, an open wound, sewage, bodily fluids, the victim of murder, disease, or deformity.

To begin to unpack abjection, the first thing we should know is that it is based on a human reaction, one that is located in a desire to reject something or expel it: we are disgusted; we feel a pure sense of horror. This reaction can be triggered by a threat to the understanding of reality as we know it. We may experience abjection when there is a loss of distinction



between self and not-self, or when there is a fear of “contamination,” such as with disease. The abject does not respect borders, positions, or rules, and it has the ability to exist on a border of life and death (such as the picture of fruit decaying)—somewhere within a liminal space.

Liminal spaces exist between two worlds and lack meaning, like a hospital waiting room—you have made it inside, although you have yet to reach what you are seeking. It is often the space

between the familiar and the unknown or alien: hallways that are new to us or a familiar landscape made alien because of dense fog. In them, we are between two worlds, which can be both awkward



and destabilizing. And though I have discussed abjection in terms of space or images, it can also exist in relation to our own embodiment, specifically when we become aware of our bodies as fragmented, a kind of dissolution in that space between self and not-self.

### Abjection and Ableist Views

Revising Sigmund Freud’s theories of psychosocial development, theorist Jacques Lacan argues that part of human development is a splintering which occurs when we enter the Symbolic order – language with its many rules, which simultaneously “produces” us but produces us as fragmented selves. Lacan argues that this leads to a desire for wholeness (though this may be unconscious), a longing which is unobtainable and

delusional. To this end, when reminded that corporeal integrity is only an illusion, many of us may recoil, and that recoil may be stronger in an ableist and first-world society where



“whole” corporeality is understood as the norm. This norm is reinforced especially where most citizens can afford nutritious meals, comprehensive quality health care, and reconstructive surgeries that might support the illusion of corporeal “wholeness.”

When coming into contact with a person with disabilities, people who consider themselves nondisabled and without physical “blemish” or visual “deformity” may feel abjection because they are reminded that their body is capable of becoming the same, even in a split second. It is a reminder that their body will deteriorate, if it has not already, regardless of the privilege of living in a first world country, and will ultimately face death. Their body is fragile, and not invincible—ableists may legitimately find horror in disability due to their own “fear of contamination” and struggle to exist on a border of life and death. These feelings of abjection toward disability are often reinforced in the media, where people with disabilities are often antagonists and villains, especially in the horror genre. Think of villains from Frankenstein’s creature to the Hunchback of Notre Dame to Freddie Kruger, all ideologically coded as evil by physically stigmatized markers.

Physical and visual differences have long been symbolically coded, and today's horror movies which rely on this trope extend from another ableist tradition which makes use of the abject by provoking an “us/them” narrative in regard to people with disabilities: the so-called “freak” shows.

These shows gave people the opportunity to look at fat women, little people, people with facial deformities, and more as a form of entertainment. It gave them a space to think and even speak: “Look at them! They aren't even human!” and “My body could never look like that!” These shows were the ultimate in both exposing the illusion of corporeal integrity and supporting viewer's ableist biases and delusions by creating an “us/them” boundary which was liminal and unstable and thus terrifying. One way that viewers might work to impose control over that liminality is the very space of the “freak show,” whose popularity depended on efforts to manage abjection by separating self and not-self: human “oddities” were displayed on stages, sometimes hidden behind curtains before being dramatically exposed, sometimes confined to cages to exaggerate their “barbarism” – and almost always, spatially segregated from viewers. In this way, an “us/them” binary was produced and reinforced both psychologically and physically.



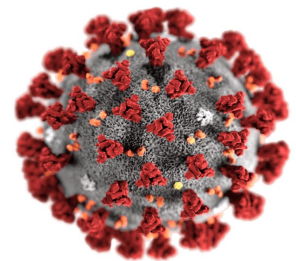
The reiteration of this alignment of abject embodiment with disability or deviance might foster internalized ableism, especially for those for



whom a suddenly acquired disability leads to a sense of fragmented self. Amanda Leskovic, in “Presence of Another,” describes her experience of becoming a quadriplegic in a car accident, becoming suddenly disabled. In one passage, she writes, “I try to detach myself, become ‘Amanda, the quadriplegic,’ need to let go of *before* and dive into the *after*.” In this quote it becomes clear that she is experiencing abjection through a fragmented self. She is currently living in a liminal space between her pre-accident self, who she has known and written about in journals, and her post-accident self, who she is continuing to learn about as doctors write her story through charts. Not only is the illusion of a “whole” body taken from her, but in this piece, her narrative ability to “write” her body is taken from her as well, displaced by medical narratives – a kind of discursive abjection, perhaps.

### Abjection Today: COVID-19

Today, almost all of us are experiencing some form of abjection with the global novel coronavirus pandemic. I would argue that we are currently living in a liminal space, a space that is in between the transition of pre-pandemic and post-pandemic. COVID-19 creates a fear of contamination; everything from the air we are breathing (once taken for granted by most), our own hands (once appendages so familiar that most of us barely noticed them), to the food we bring home or, now, get delivered (once seen as a source of nourishment and social pleasure, now potentially



mortal morsels). Almost everything has the potential to become contaminated, including our own selves, with this virus—there is a great and deeply unsettling sense of the unknown.

Respiratory droplets from coughing, sneezing, and even talking have evoked immense fear, creating a new level of abjection toward even the smallest of bodily fluids. Going in public for basic necessities, such as toilet paper or medicine, has now turned into a radical game of life: while picking up a necessity to live, will I become contaminated with my potential cause of death? Is it worth taking the risk of living on the border of life and death? And if I do contract the virus and make it out alive, will my lungs, kidneys, neurological functions, even my own skin be permanently altered and diminished? These questions portray a new reality many are facing in these times. How might this idea of “survival” itself negate a “well/ill” binary which Kristeva’s theory of abjection reminds us is mythic? As death tolls and infection rates rise, so do the feelings of abjection and horror.

There is this desire to “produce” ourselves as whole, nondisabled, and healthy, to reject and resist the abject. However, the coronavirus pandemic has revealed that producing ourselves as such is a futile endeavor. How might our experience of the novel coronavirus be different if we already understood our lives, our embodiment, our very “selves” as always already fragmented and liminal? This is not a naïve suggestion that we face the pandemic with “courage” or “resilience” – but that it might be an

opportunity to re-think ableist biases, stemming from Kristeva's theories of abjection, which privilege "whole" bodies and "healthy" bodies at significant costs to all of us.

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Lauren Courtright is a junior Sociology major with a minor in Gender Studies at Slippery Rock University. She is an active member of the Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity and the campus's Anthropology and Sociology Honorary.

# Artist's Statement

Rachel Peterson

Spending life uncomfortable every day makes you tired. Living outside of the margins of where society operates, we have experienced the abstract discomfort of being in the world and just not *fitting*. It's not that we don't fit in, but the world and society we live in weren't designed to fit everybody, and so it makes groups of people who are tired of pretending, squeezing, hiding, rearranging and feeling like they are *holding their breath* every day just to fit and keep the wheels spinning. And then we're exhausted and we collapse and we repeat. Society isn't living in blissful ignorance about what it's doing and we aren't unknowing victims. It's a fight every day and we need to be reminded every day that we aren't alone and that we are seen.

Over the last couple of years, as I've grown and experienced more, I've thought heavily on the conceptual aspects of my work. At first, I thought my ideas and work had changed a lot but I realized it grows to include more under its wings. When I learned about intersectionality, I learned that I needed to move my work to figure out how to express and speak up for the interconnected groups that are at a disadvantage. Who can't breathe all day.

I want my work to be a sanctuary. What I hope is for my work to change a mind or a heart, for someone who feels uncomfortable to find solace in my work. I know what it looks like and feels like. The first time someone came up to me and said, “I’ve never seen something that I’ve seen myself in,” with a tear down her cheek, she stared at my work and that gave me peace. When I sleep where I work on my paintings, they are the only reasons I get out of bed. Sometimes, though, I only stare, or cry. But I find peace in them, I feel soaked into them. On the days I paint I feel good, purposeful. I think I’m better, but the next day I’ll stare. And I want people to know it’s okay to have those days where they just stare.

An artist with a mental illness feels like a trope sometimes, but I feel like it makes me a stronger artist. I understand and see more. I don’t know what I’d paint if I had never felt what I’ve felt or been in the abyss that my mind has thrown me into. Would I even paint it? I think if my brain were chemically balanced in the first place, I would’ve never desperately needed to find sanctuary in art. And now I get to push myself to provide sanctuary because we need it.

While we work to build a place for ourselves in society and make it so that we fit, we deserve to rest and know that we are allowed to feel beautiful, be seen, and know that someone is fighting for us. And loving us. I want to

be loved and protected and a guardian. My work fights because while it gives someone the freedom to cry and have the comfort of being *validated*, it also makes someone else uncomfortable. Whether they think it's pornographic, or loud, too intense, too big, they give some reason for it to be taken off the wall. I'm always going to fight for my work to be seen so my subjects can be heard.

I want my work to be the Sanctuary while we build a society, for the world to be Better.

Rachel Peterson is an artist originally from Houston, TX, now living in Slippery Rock, PA, while going to school. Her work is primarily figurative paintings, but she has worked with a variety of subjects and mediums such as graphic design and fiber arts. Outside of creating, she enjoys knitting, horticulture, and being with her dog.

# Do Better





# The school to prison pipeline: How overly harsh school discipline pushes minority youth out of schools and into the criminal justice system

Dr. Sarah Kuehn and Vica Combs

The over-representation of minority groups at all stages of the criminal justice system has been well documented (Howell et al., 2013; Merlo & Benekos, 2017; OJJDP, 2017). More specifically, this disproportionate minority contact (DMC) is reflected in higher arrest rates, more referrals to court, and harsher sentencing for minority groups compared to their white counterparts. In 2017, for instance, 15 percent of youths under 18 years of age were Black (OJJDP, 2017), yet, of the 2016 juvenile courts cases, more than twice the amount (35.5 percent) were Black (Sickmund et al., 2018). Some research indicates that the over-representation and harsher treatment of minority group members can be explained through youth's *differential offending* caused by their complex risk profile (OJJDP, 2014). In other words, minority youth's legal factors such as prior record and seriousness of the offense explain their greater involvement in the criminal justice system. In this regard, the National Research council (2009) stated that

The totality of these risk factors is such that minority youth are born into and raised in severely compromised familial, community, and



educational environments that set the stage for a range of adverse behaviors and outcomes, including problems in school, relationships, and engaging in prosocial behavior. (p. 224 in OJJDP, 2014, p. 3)

While minority groups have been shown to be more likely to commit, especially more violent, crimes, the extent of the over-representation cannot be explained solely by their differential offending. For instance, while Black and white offenders have similar rates of self-reported drug use, Black offenders are more likely to get arrested and sentenced for drug offenses (Howell et al., 2013; Rovner, 2014).

A contrary perspective attempts to explain DMC not by *differential offending* but by *differential treatment* that starts early in the criminal justice system and carries forward throughout the different stages (OJJDP, 2014). There is consensus, however, that DMC cannot be explained by either perspective alone. Rather, a combination of many individual and societal factors and the interactions thereof exacerbate the adverse situation of minority groups in the CJS. The results of a study by the National Research Council's (2013) emphasizes this consensus:

We know that racial/ethnic disparities are not reducible to either differential offending or differential selection. Many other factors affect the disproportionality of minority youth in the juvenile justice system, including the troubling entrenched patterns of poverty,

segregation, gaps in educational achievement, and residential instability. DMC exists in the broader context of a ‘racialized society’ in which many public policies, institutional practices, and cultural representations operate to produce and maintain racial inequities (p. 239 in OJJDP, 2014, p. 4).

However, racial disparities do not *just* start in the criminal justice system. Rather, they affect minority youth as early as kindergarten. Even at age four or five, minority children are disproportionately disciplined and/or suspended for minor infractions (Schiff, 2018). This difference in processing continues into schools and sets children onto a path of the so called *School to Prison Pipeline (STPP)*, “[which] refers to the practice of pushing students out of educational institutions, primarily via zero-tolerance and harsh disciplinary policies, and into the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems” (Castillo, 2014, p. 44). The *STPP* is also used to portray the criminalization of schools as an institutional form of social control that prioritizes security concerns over the education of their youths. While minority youth are most likely affected by this national trend, generally, children with learning disabilities or histories of poverty are suffering from these punitive educational policies (ACLU, n.d). Instead of receiving services to address their needs, they are “placed in restrictive special education programs, repeatedly suspended, held back in grade, and banished to

alternative ‘outplacements’ before being pushed out of the school system into the criminal justice system” (Wald and Losen, 2003, p. 11).

This paper discusses how certain educational policies, including zero-tolerance policies, police presence in schools and criminalization of normative behavior, and high stakes testing contribute to the *STPP*. The paper also examines disparate application and consequences of these punitive educational policies, especially for minority youth. The paper concludes with recommendations to disrupt the trajectory of the *STPP*.

### **Zero-Tolerance Policies**

Zero-tolerance policies play an important role in the *STPP*. These policies refer to strict policies and laws that were originally introduced as an approach to drug enforcement (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force [APA], 2008). In the 1980s and 1990s there was an increase in violent crimes and drug crimes, which led people to believe that the upcoming youth were going to be brought up in violent environments and become violent themselves. Based on this fear about a rise in juvenile crime, the term “super predator” was coined (Wilson, 2014, p. 49). However, the spike in violent crimes and the wave of “super predators” did not rise as predicted and some believe it might have been because of these punitive actions taken. Further, high profile school shootings pushed for the enactment and continuation of harsh weapon and drug laws and policies, to

a large extent to reassure the public that something was done to keep schools safe (Schiff, 2018; Wilson, 2014; Yang et al., 2018). In 1994, Congress passed The *Gun Free Schools Act*, which dictates to expel any student for a year or more and report all firearm incidents at government funded schools (Castillo, 2014). Consequently, these crime control policies have been kept in place, and trickled down to the school level where they paved the way for more punitive school policies such as harsh, predetermined consequences for weapons, smoking, drinking, fighting, disruptive behavior, and dress codes in schools. The underlying assumption was that to maintain a safe learning environment for students, mandated, severe penalties should be applied to certain behaviors without exceptions and regardless of the individual circumstances. Rule breakers would be removed through suspensions or expulsions, and others be deterred from committing similar actions (APA, 2008; Wilson, 2014).

These policies, while well-intentioned, raise the concern that some behaviors are dealt with disproportionately and sometimes even without common sense. The following four examples illustrate this. In one example “[a] fifth grader was recently suspended from his elementary school for three days because he pointed his finger ‘in the shape of a gun’ and pulled an imaginary trigger while playing with his friends; the letter from the principal to the parents cited his finger as a ‘level 2 lookalike firearm’” (Wilson, 2014, p. 50). Another example is the story of a parent who

stated that “my son had received in-school suspension for the hideous crime of being caught twice with his shirt not tucked in, and each time she sent a letter to our home address informing us that one more violation that year would result in his being suspended from school for three days” (Gabbard, 2013, p. 31). In a third example, “Two ten-year-old boys [...] were suspended for three days for putting soapy water in a teacher’s drink. The police charged the boys with a felony, which carried a maximum sentence of twenty years in prison” (Castillo, 2014, p. 46). In a fourth example, “an adolescent was expelled from school for violating school rules by talking to his mother on a cell while at school- his mother was on deployment as a soldier in Iraq and he had not spoken with her in 30 days” (Torpy in APA, 2008, p. 852). While schools have the obligation to provide and maintain a safe and disciplined learning environment, these examples show how unforgiving zero-tolerance policies can be and that they can potentially backfire. Further, zero-tolerance policies have not been shown to be effective in terms of increasing school safety or academic success (APA, 2008; Castillo, 2014; Schiff, 2018). Schools with zero-tolerance police had higher numbers of suspensions and expulsions and more negative reports of the school climate (APA, 2008; Castillo, 2014). Children and juveniles are being disciplined for minor infraction and harmless acts the same way as they are for more serious behaviors without any apparent benefits. This is especially puzzling since overall crime and youth crime have been

declining over the past two decades and schools, despite school shootings, are still one of the safest places for youth (Castillo, 2014; Schiff, 2018; Wilson, 2014).

### **Police Presence in Schools and Criminalizing Normative Behavior**

Zero-tolerance policies have often and increasingly been supplemented by police officer presence in schools to improve school safety. School resource officers (SROs) are usually sworn-in police officers who assist with enforcing school discipline. Their role is to improve citizen/police relationships, be a guide to students as well as aiding in security measures such as searching for weapons, breaking up fights, and assisting students out of the building/classrooms if needed (Schept et al., 2014). Along with more police presence in schools, the use of metal detectors, locker and body searches, and security cameras have risen as well to increase safety in schools (Castillo, 2014). While many schools support SROs, there are also some concerns with police officers' presence. For instance, with extra security measures, some schools actually start resembling prisons (Marchbanks III, 2018). SROs also carry guns sometimes, so children are being exposed to weapons and threats at a very young age. This can affect the way children start to perceive school, their safety, and authority in school (Mallett, 2015). Another concern of these SROs is that their mindset on juveniles comes from a law enforcement perspective

instead of an academic and developmental one. This becomes problematic when deciding how to handle a student and determining what legal action can be taken instead of determining what course of action will most benefit the child (McCarter, 2016). A further criticism of SROs is that disruptive yet normative child and adolescent behavior is being criminalized and treated with adult policing practice (McNeal, 2016). Behaviors such as disrespect, talking back, and fighting, which used to be informally handled within and by the school and parents, are now often resolved through police interventions and arrests (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP] Legal Defense Fund, n.d.; Scully, 2016). One example of this is a case that happened in fall 2019 in Orlando, Fl. It involved camera footage of an officer restraining and arresting a visibly upset and crying six-year-old girl at school (Zaveri, 2020). She was taken to the police car in zip ties and brought to a Juvenile Assessment Center. The arrest and later battery charge were initiated after the girl threw a “tantrum” at school in which she kicked a member of the school personnel.

Apparently, there was a police department policy in place that school resource officers have to get approval first before arresting anyone under the age of twelve. The officer got terminated, the charges were later dropped, and the senator of Florida introduced a bill that would make it much harder to arrest any child under 12 without the chief's deputy approving it (Zaveri, 2020); however, this distressing incident shows the

danger of a law enforcement approach to school children. Aggression is a normal aspect of growing up, and as people develop, aggression typically subsides. But with the introduction of police officers to handle aggression from a law enforcement perspective, children are now getting charged for normative behaviors. In fact, research has shown that the introduction of police officers at schools promotes the *STPP* with increased school referrals to the juvenile court system, primarily for childish misbehavior (Aull, 2012). Research has repeatedly shown that there is no evidence that officers in school improve safety (APA, 2008; Schept et al., 2014). Without significant correlations between SROs and legitimate increase in safety (compared to a perceived one), SROs and the criminalization of normative behavior creates a detrimental learning environment that does not take into account children's psychosocial development. In fact, the police academy training curriculum that covers how to deal with youth only reflects 1 per cent of the whole training. This suggests that police officers, if they do not receive additional training, lack the knowledge of developmentally appropriate strategies to deal with youthful misbehavior and its underlying causes (McNeal, 2016). Attending school and learning should happen in a safe place; however, it cannot happen when minor and developmentally normative mishaps are being punished by the justice system instead of being dealt with informally by schools and caregivers.



## High Stakes Testing

High stakes testing is another aspect that contributes to the *STPP*. According to McCarter (2016), “high-stakes testing too narrowly defines educational success, often removing underperforming students because they lower the aggregate scores and weaken the curricula by over-focusing on test preparation, which in turn can lead to student disengagement, alienation, and behavior problems” (p. 54). High stakes testing looks primarily at how much a student can learn in a set amount of time, instead of looking at individual skill sets. This can create strained school environments which push out those who have not grasped the material. Classes are designed at an average set pace, and the child is supposed to fall in line. Those who fall behind are labeled and isolated (Emmons and Belangee, 2018). The idea that low-performing students are not getting enough aid was initiated by the 2001 *No Child Left Behind Act*, which required public schools to hand out standardized tests yearly. Failure to meet certain average standards could result in staff replacement or closure (Nolen & Duignan, 2019). The intention of this Act was to increase school performance by having higher stakes for educators; however, in reality, this led to children who were troubled and underperforming to be pushed out so as not to affect the school’s average (Aull, 2012). These same children

being pushed out are not given the chance to get caught up, and harsh discipline policies provide schools with methods to remove specific students to hide their deficiencies (NAACP Legal Defense Fund, n.d).

## **Race**

While exclusionary disciplinary action is problematic for all children, it is well documented that children of color and with special needs are disproportionately affected by it (ACLU, n.d). Research has consistently reported that minority youth are more likely to be and more harshly disciplined than their white counterparts. More specifically, Black students have been found more likely to be suspended or expelled than their white peers (APA, 2008; Cramer et al., 2014; NAACP Legal Defense Fund, n.d; Marchbanks III, 2018; McNeal, 2016; Merlo & Benekos, 2017; Schiff, 2018; Wald and Losen, 2003). And it starts as early as kindergarten. Rovner (2014) reports that Black youth reflect almost one fifth (18 per cent) of the pre-school enrollment and nearly half (48 percent) of preschoolers' suspensions. Yang et al. (2018) comment on these findings, suggesting that the disparate application of school discipline appears to be less based on student behavior and characteristics. Rather, the findings point at more systemic, racially discriminatory practices that adversely target minority students (Yang et al., 2018). This sentiment has been shared by other researchers. For instance, Skiba et al. (2000) suggest that while factors other

than race certainly play a role in these expulsions and suspensions (e.g., prior history of disruptive behavior, prior offense, lack of parent involvement, etc.), minority youth “appear[ed] to be referred to the office for infractions that are both less serious and more subjective in their interpretations than white students” (p. 13). Examples for these subjective behaviors are “insubordination, disrespect, non-compliance, or disruptive behavior that is overlooked for white students” (Schiff, 2018, p. 124). Others suggest that minority youth are more likely to receive punitive disciplinary actions for the *same* kind of behavior as their white counterparts (NAACP Legal Defense Fund, n.d.; McNeal, 2016). Research also controlled for other factors and found that race remained the strongest predictor for school discipline even when controlling for other factors such as socioeconomic status, disability, family structure, and adverse experiences (APA, 2008; Castillo, 2014; Wald and Losen, 2003).

## **Consequences**

The consequences of punitive disciplinary measures can be detrimental for a child’s trajectory. The most obvious consequence is a loss of educational time. Suspensions and expulsions mean more time away from school and increase the chances of falling behind academically (NAACP Legal Defense Fund, n.d; Schiff, 2018; Wald and Losen, 2003; Yang et al., 2018). Often, children do not have much aid and resources for when

they come back, they are already academically behind, and will continue to fail classes (Wald and Losen, 2003). In fact, students who have been suspended once are more likely to be suspended again (Schiff, 2018). Research has repeatedly shown that retention, suspension and expulsion are all correlated with negative school outcomes such as a higher risk of dropping out (Castillo, 2014; NAACP Legal Defense Fund, n.d.; McNeal, 2016; Schiff, 2018; Wilson, 2014; Yang et al., 2018). Students who have dropped out and did not receive their high school diploma are more likely to be unemployed or earn inadequate living wages (Cramer et al., 2014).

Being away from peers and school can also negatively affect a child's prosocial and emotional development and can create or enhance negative mental health outcomes such as students' alienation and anxiety (APA, 2008). Research has shown that students from schools "with high suspension rates are more likely to perceive their school environment as unsupportive and discriminatory," which in turn has been shown to make them more likely to engage in risky behaviors (Yang et al., 2018, p. 318). Other research reports that if students feel less connected to their school and peers, they are more likely to show violent behavior and drug use by age 18 (Cramer et al., 2014). These studies show how important it is for students to not feel excluded from school, not just academically but for their prosocial development as well.

Besides lost educational time and negative impact on mental health, harsh disciplinary measures have also been shown to be a predictor for later involvement in the criminal justice system. Being out of school and on the street takes students out of safe and structured environments and raises the chances of getting into trouble and arrest for minor, and generally, nonviolent offenses (NAACP Legal Defense Fund, n.d; Schiff, 2018; Wilson, 2014; Yang et al., 2018). In fact, Skiba and colleagues (2014) found that “61% of youth found in juvenile justice detention facilities reported being expelled or suspended from school the year prior to entering juvenile justice custody.” Castillo (2014) reports that suspension is the “top predictor of contact with the juvenile justice system for students who become incarcerated by ninth grade” (p. 48). More than half of incarcerated people do not have a high school degree (Wilson, 2014).

Emphasizing security over education and utilizing SROs, metal detectors, etc. might also make students believe that teachers and schools “perceive all students as potential sources or targets of violence” (Marchbanks III, 2018, p. 243). This can create a school climate that does not promote a safe and effective learning environment but fear and resentment (Marchbanks III, 2018). Further, zero-tolerance policies and outsourcing school discipline to law enforcement also punishes students twice because juveniles, and especially students of color, often receive a suspension *and* a court referral (NACCP Legal Defense Fund, n.d.; Schiff, 2018; Wald and

Losen, 2003). Even if the discipline is not as severe, for instance, “just” a probation sentence, it will establish criminal records for juveniles, which will follow them through their lives and might prevent them from getting into college, receiving financial aid, or securing employment because of background checks.

### **Addressing the School to Prison Pipeline**

Some criticize the *STPP* phenomenon as being too simplistic. For instance, McGrew (2016) states that instead of a direct link between school failure and incarceration, the school to prison pipeline is “merely a metaphor [...]; though the end result distorts vision, making it appear as if there were” (p. 344). Therefore, he suggests that solutions to the outcomes of school failure and incarceration need to focus on the broader historical, economical, and social context (McGrew, 2016). Similarly, Marchbanks III (2018) suggests that instead of a causal relationship, “multiple pathways are possible, including educational failure, social exclusion, and juvenile justice contact, that could facilitate disproportionate criminal justice contact for disciplined youth” (p. 242). While these arguments are valid, there are several strategies that have been shown to be successful in addressing the *STPP*.

The Departments of Justice and Education jointly tried to address the problem by releasing suggestions to school districts in regard to how to

facilitate school discipline practices without discriminating on the basis of race, color, and national origin in 2014. Restorative Justice (RJ) was one of suggestions mentioned in the School Discipline Guidance Package (Schiff, 2018). RJ-based school discipline assumes that offenders or rule breakers are not held accountable by passively accepting the punishment. Instead, they have to take active responsibility for their behavior, understand the consequences and human impact of their actions, and then try to make amends to the ones they harmed (Schiff, 2018). While this approach makes it more difficult to remove students with behavioral problems from the classroom, it allows for connections to be made, discipline to stay within the school, and the involvement of families rather than the juvenile system. RJ views harm as a violation of relationships and communities rather than of rules and policy, and to fix these bonds there is a communal effort and support for those involved. It moves away from punitive punishments to an open dialogue and community building (Schiff, 2018). Norm breakers are reintegrated into their community instead of referred to the juvenile justice system (Castillo, 2014). This practice has been a global success for schools; RJ has shown to reduce the number of suspensions, expulsions, and disciplinary referrals, increase academic achievement, and produce other positive results such as an improved school climate (Marchbanks III, 2018; Schiff, 2018; Szymanski, 2016). Implementing (more) RJ should especially be emphasized in schools that have larger proportions of racial and ethnic

minorities as they have been shown to be less likely to use RJ and more likely to use harsher more punitive school discipline and refer fewer students with behavioral problems to school counselors (Marchbanks III, 2018; Schiff, 2018).

School programming such as the *Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports* has also been found to be successful. This program is highly structured and teaches behavioral expectations through rewards and consequences, targets at-risk students, and has more intensive and supportive interventions that include the family and community with those who have very serious behavior issues (Mallett, 2015). Similarly, there need to be programs and services in place that support students who return from suspension or expulsions. Intensive academic and counseling services can also assist students in a successful transition back to school (Police Executive Research Forum, 2018; Wald and Losen, 2003).

Another successful approach focuses on students' mental health concerns. Many youths with behavioral problems in schools have underlying mental health issues (McCarter, 2019). Research has shown that often school-based misbehavior is caused by experienced trauma, "specifically, many youth subject to the harshest form of punishment come from communities traumatized by poverty, violence, underemployment, inadequate nutrition, health care and education, resulting in youth that are



defensive, offensive and ill-equipped to deal with the structured, and often stressful, environment of public school” (Schiff, 2018, p. 123). Often, teachers and schools are not well prepared or do not have the resources to deal with the type of trauma that underlies the antisocial behavior (Schiff, 2018). This lack of adequate resources is indicated by a study that revealed that 85 percent of youth in juvenile detention facilities have mental health and/or learning disabilities and only 37 per cent received aid in school for it (Emmons and Belangee, 2018). One of the pushes for helping to address this is to add conduct disorder to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) so that children with this diagnosis can have access to individualized learning plans and services (McCarter, 2019). This becomes especially important for poor and minority youth. Research has found that they are at a disadvantage as they “despite an equal or even higher need, often receive lower quantity and quality of mental health services” (Alegria et al., 2010, p. 763 in McCarter, 2019). Some parents choose to place their kids with mental health needs into child welfare or juvenile justice so they can receive the services they need but which were not accessible at school (McCarter, 2019). Consequently, it is critical that schools connect with these youth and their families and address their needs. McCarter (2019) suggests early interventions, community-based services including the whole family, and systems of care as well as standardized screenings and assessments “through a culturally informed lens” (p. 12). This is mirrored by others who

recommend more early screenings and assessments which include the whole family to better identify the needs and mental health resources and community-based partnerships in schools (Police Executive Research Forum, 2018).

Another strategy that has been found to be successful in addressing youth's individual needs is to make the curriculum and teachers/school staff more diverse and provide culturally sensitive training. Recent research has found an "association between student-teacher racial incongruence and increased numbers of criminal justice referrals" (Marchbanks III, 2018, p. 254). While the authors of the study emphasize the need for further research, especially on the causal mechanism, they link their findings to other research which suggests that teachers rate children higher if they match the teachers' own race (Marchbanks III, 2018). Implicit bias, racial stereotypes, and a lack of culturally competent knowledge and practices have been shown to contribute to disproportionate discipline of students of color and need to be addressed with regular cultural competency training (APA, 2008; McNeal, 2016). This becomes especially important considering that nearly the entire sample in a 2004 Public Agenda survey revealed overwhelming support for the statement that "establishing and enforcing zero-tolerance policies so that students would know they would automatically expelled from school for serious violations would be 'very effective' (70 percent) or 'somewhat effective' (23 per cent) as a solution to

the discipline and behavioral problems found in the nation's public schools” (Public Agenda and Common Good, 2004 in Coggshall et al., 2013, p. 438).

Similarly, a teacher poll suggested that they believed that removing students from the classroom and placing them in alternative programs would be more effective than strategies that would reduce class size or improve professional development (Coggshall et al., 2013). Besides addressing attitudes like these which undoubtedly contribute to the continuation of exclusionary and punitive school discipline, training also needs to focus on effective classroom management, including de-escalation techniques (Police Executive Research Forum, 2018). Research has also shown a relationship between educators who have high expectations for their students and positive student outcomes (Coggshall et al., 2013).

Diversifying the teacher pool and recruiting more educators of color seems to be a necessary step, especially considering the current numbers - with white teachers making up 80 percent of all teachers and racial and ethnic minorities being projected to make up half of the public school student population (Marchbanks III, 2018). Further, exposure to multiracial literature and diversity within the school's staffing allows students of color to have a positive relationship to a teacher which is central in positive academic and social outcomes (Coggshall et al., 2013).

The lack of resources in the public school system is well known, especially in areas of concentrated poverty. Often, well-intentioned

teachers want to help their students, but due to a lack of programs and counselors they have no other means than removing students with behavioral problems from their classroom via suspensions or expulsions (NAACP Legal Defense Fund, n.d.). Providing the public schools with more resources, including experienced and certified teachers, counselors, extracurricular and after school activities, peer mediation, and intervention and conflict resolution programs would help achieving positive results, academically and in terms of students' engagement with the school (NAACP Legal Defense Fund, n.d.).

Finally, eliminating zero-tolerance policies and instead implementing graduated systems of discipline have also been found to be successful, combined with more guidance for teachers for different levels of interventions (APA, 2008; Police Executive Research Forum, 2018; Wilson, 2014). If not eliminating these policies, reserving the application of these policies to the most serious and severe disruptive behaviors and allowing for more flexibility for considering individual context and teacher expertise are critical (APA, 2008). This only applies, however, if teachers are culturally competent, well trained in de-escalation techniques, and equipped with adequate resources. SRO should be required to have training in youth development and normative (even if disruptive) child and adolescent behavior (APA, 2008). McNeal (2016) suggests in this regard the adoption of a federal school disciplinary bill to reform K-12 disciplinary policies and

practices. According to McNeal, a bill like this would require schools to implement School Disciplinary Community Review boards, which would hold schools accountable “for racial disparities in school disciplinary practices and address[ing] student misbehavior in an unbiased and equitable manner” (McNeal, 2016, p. 307). The bill would also force schools to facilitate alternative, evidence-based practices, which do not only address the misbehavior but the emotional and social root cause for the misbehavior” (McNeal, 2016).

## **Conclusion**

The goal of an effective disciplinary system in schools must weigh school safety versus the individual needs of students while also providing the greatest opportunities for students to learn and succeed. With the current emphasis on safety, and without any apparent success, students of color are disproportionately and adversely affected. Research supports the argument that gaps in exclusionary and punitive school discipline between white and minority youth cannot be explained alone by differential behavior (Yang et al., 2018). In fact, there appear to be parallels between the disparate treatment of minority groups in schools and the criminal justice system. To address this issue, interventions need to start early to interrupt the *STPP* that seems to begin with exclusionary and punitive disciplinary measures (Yang et al., 2018). Normative adolescent behavior is being criminalized.

Students who are deemed “problem children” are removed from schools, which makes their situation worse and sends them on a detrimental, and often irreversible, trajectory (McNeal, 2016). Instead, effective school discipline creates a more productive, inclusive, and caring school atmosphere when holding youth accountable while also focusing on their diverse academic, social, behavioral, and emotional needs and relationship building. Schools also need to be provided with the adequate resources to deal with difficult behavior outside of the justice system, including culturally competent personnel who have an understanding of youth development, trauma, and (mental) health.

While all the above-mentioned policy recommendations, programs, and strategies are important, there is no single policy that will succeed on its own. The NACCP Legal Defense Fund (n.d.) states in this regard that it will require “a true community reinvestment in our schools” to provide students with educational opportunities that will allow them to succeed (p. 8). Further, and similar to the criminal justice system attempt to reduce disproportionate minority contact, political, cultural, and social context needs to be considered and institutional bias and racism be tackled to improve disciplinary decisions, especially for minority youth in the educational system, and dismantle the *STPP*.

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# Boundaries Are Not Barriers: A Manual to the Ethics of Disclosure and Boundaries

Julianna Sabol

## Disclaimer:

I want to type a disclaimer before anyone continues to read this manual. I want to emphasize that we all have our own journey to finding what boundaries fit us best. This process and way of life is not linear, and it does not happen overnight. We must remember that when creating boundaries with ourselves and others, that we are healing and recognizing patterns and parts of ourselves that we might not have ever known existed. *This is a new you. A new you* that allows you to take control of your life and to stop living at the mercy of others. **You are not a bad person if you have not yet created your boundaries.** We are conditioned to produce for the collective and adhere to the structures. Dig deep and *listen to what you believe and who you are.* Not who your parents, society and the culture have produced you to be.

I've found that it is crucial to be aware that when we discuss boundaries that we also need to discuss that boundaries are not there to make us robotic and scripted. Sure, there are scripts and guidelines to follow for advice but remember to always be you. The point of boundaries is to claim them and make them part of how we live, to allow our soul and

mind to flow through the foundation we are creating. Be true to you and be confident in what you deserve and are willing to give. Boundaries are individual and as we all become more confident in creating individual boundaries, we find a safer place in our interpersonal relationships. Boundaries are not to create the same circumstances in every relationship; they are to ensure that each relationship is different and has a healthy pattern of growth. Boundaries are for preservation. After all, every flower grows beautifully if given the proper nutrition and growing conditions, right? Think of yourself as a flower and your relationship as a garden that needs to be tended to properly to ensure beautiful growth.

### Core Values of Disclosure & Boundaries

#### **1. Honesty.**

Be honest with yourself and with others. Being honest is uncomfortable but it is freeing.

#### **2. Accountability.**

Do not be afraid to hold yourself accountable; apologize, express your emotions, own your mistakes and successes. Also, hold your friends accountable. We all need a buffer sometimes.

#### **3. Uniqueness.**

This journey is unique to you. We grow in adversity and thrive in comfort. Be yourself when it comes to creating your boundaries.

#### **4. Prioritize yourself.**

Prioritize your needs and who you want to be. When we are true to ourselves, we can be true to others. When we do right by ourselves, we do right by others.

#### **5. "Yes." & "No." are complete sentences.**

Sometimes you do not have to explain yourself. Over explanation (in some situations) is a behavior that indicates we need to be accepted by others.

### 6. Self-disclosure ≠ self-exploitation.

You can disclose information to someone without feeling like you are violating your own privacy. You can also choose not to. You are allowed to keep things private.

### 7. Use discernment when exercising empathy.

You can put yourself in someone's shoes without walking in them. Remember that some things are not yours to harbor. Be able to distinguish your own emotions from someone else's.

The chart below can be used as an outline when identifying and defining what our personal boundaries look like. In the first column we can identify the thing we value (thought, emotion, relationship, object), in the second we can identify the behavior or communication needed to feel satisfied, and in the last column we define the action we can take to assure that we abide by the boundary we have set.

I value:	So, I need:	& I will honor it by:

What do healthy boundaries look like?  
They look like you.

**Boundaries** are the limits we set with other people, which indicate what we find acceptable and unacceptable in their behaviors towards us. Healthy boundaries often come from a healthy understanding of our self-worth. We must understand the difference between self-esteem and self-worth. Self-esteem correlates with confidence and how we identify based on our achievements in the world. Self-worth is how we care for and love our innermost self at the core; it deals with the value that we place on ourselves and our lives. Some boundaries that help us preserve our self-worth include:

- Intellectual boundaries- we are entitled to our own thoughts and opinions.

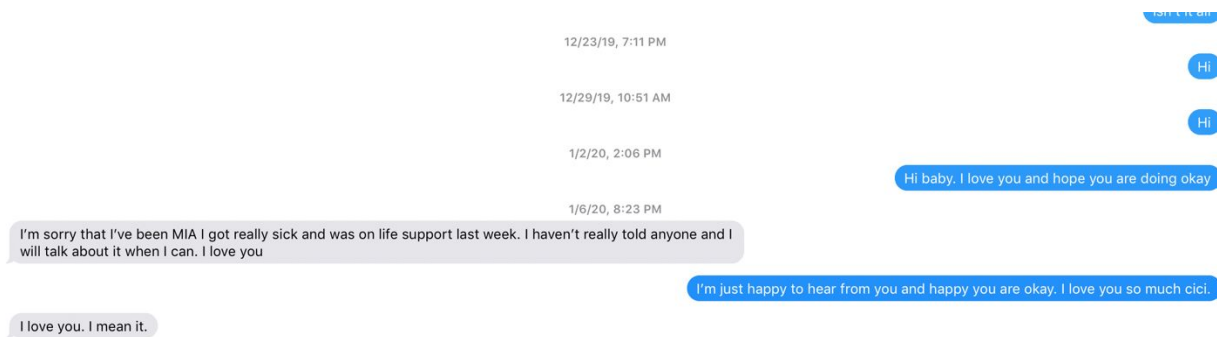
- Emotional boundaries- we are entitled to our own feelings for a given situation.
- Physical boundaries- we are entitled to our own space and decisions with our bodies.
- Social boundaries- we are entitled to our own friends and activities.
- Spiritual boundaries- we are entitled to our own beliefs and values.

We have created a culture where a number of factors mitigate against self-esteem. In a world of ableism, racism, ageism, sexism and classism, people who have intersectional identities can be stripped of their personal boundaries. This is reinforced by social constructs such as productivity. If self-esteem correlated to achievements in the world, how might that affect the *self-worth* of an disabled Black woman who uses a wheelchair for transportation? A homeless transgender man? A young girl who struggles with anxiety and abandonment? Erving Goffman's performance theory can explain the diminishing of boundaries as people must be actors in everyday life, playing a variety of roles. Allowing toxic relationships with family members, hiding our sexuality or gender, hiding our mental illness, forced narratives created for people of color, etc. are all damaging to the true self and self-worth.

### **Examples of healthy boundaries:**

1. The essay, "Too Pretty," by Francine Maitland, in which she discusses public responses to her being both disabled and "pretty"
  - a. Comment: "You're too pretty to be sick."
  - b. Francine's response: "When I look in the mirror and see the scars, lines and ostomy pouch, I don't see a body to be ashamed of. The changes I see are proof carved into my body I live a difficult life, and my determination to endure it. My life is worth living. Beautiful is not the best thing a person can be, and disabled is certainly not the worst. I am a beautiful disabled woman in a world telling me I cannot be both, and I refuse to accept that."

2.



3.

I just am not in the right state of mind to add everything back on right now.

4.

Let's talk through this if you feel comfortable

5.



6.



### **Why are boundaries so important?**

Anné Linden explains having boundaries as being “separate and connected.” Boundaries do not equate to barriers. Linden explains, “When [a] separation becomes too rigid and solid, it becomes a wall, making exchange of experience and connection impossible. When the permeability becomes too diffuse and excessive, there is no separation, and you merge, becoming the other person, nature, judgement or value, taking on the other’s emotions. Boundaries are lost” (n. pag.). They are so important because they allow you to be connected with others while remaining true to yourself. In the essay, “The Beauty and Care of Disabled Friendships” Reaume writes about spoon theory, which postulates that disabled and chronically ill people have a more limited amount of “spoons” or energy to be used throughout the day and that “spoonie relationships” between disabled people are often unique because they recognize and respect other’s “spoon capacities” more than non-disabled people are likely to. Reaume explains that “disabled love is so strong because it recognizes the ways in which other love often falls short.” The love that is conditional is a love without boundaries. It might seem contradictory, but boundaries frees a relationship because boundaries free people of unknown or unarticulated expectations. Boundaries open the door for responsibility and accountability in interpersonal relationships.

### **Why are boundaries difficult to create?**

Boundaries are difficult to create because the thought patterns and behaviors we have are often those we have unconsciously retrieved from childhood. Below is a condensed list from I will list from the book, *How the True Self Gets Wounded from the book Boundaries and Relationships: Knowing, Protecting and Enjoying the Self* by Charles L. Whitfield:

- Wounded themselves, including having unhealthy boundaries, the child’s parents feel inadequate, bad and unfulfilled.
- They project those charged feelings onto others, especially onto their spouse and vulnerable children. (e.g., “I always know what’s best for you!”)
- Children need to stabilize the parents, and to survive, the child will deny the inadequacies of the parent. With the learned unhealthy boundaries, the child internalizes the parent’s projections. (e.g., “If I’m really good and perfect, they will love me, and they won’t reject or abandon me.”)

- Because the child's True Self is wounded so often, it defensively submerges itself deep within the unconscious part of its psyche.

Above is the foundation for learning the contours of unhealthy boundaries. Whitfield explains that unlearning these behaviors and creating healthy boundaries involves self-discovery and recovery that is most effectively accomplished gradually in the presence of safe, compassionate, skilled and supportive people. The healing process may take from three to five years or more. As someone who has been in the process for roughly two years, I can attest to the intensity of this process. It is crucial to remind ourselves that healing is not linear. In order to re-learn, we must recreate or experience the event again. Setting boundaries can be a traumatic but also an enlightening experience.

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# Computer Generated Infants: Why *Ashcroft* Made a Mistake in Decriminalizing CGI Child Porn

Piper Jones

## *Introduction*

Look at the clock. Look back at the screen. Check the window to see if mom's home yet even though she shouldn't be. Blinds down. Look back at the screen. *Ding*. Finally. His best friend had promised to send the enticing link everyone was talking about at lunch today, and considering they had gotten home from school over an hour ago, they had really made him wait for it. As a thirteen-year-old boy, he's gotten pretty used to the routine that comes with these kinds of videos. Pants down. Ignore the erection he's gotten solely out of anticipation. Spot the dirty sock within arms-reach to keep it clean. Check the clock again. If everything goes as planned, he has 30 minutes. The video's only 20. Take into account the few minutes for download and buffering and the timing should be perfect. Deep Breath. Click the play button and get ready to dive into ecstasy.

The dull blue light from the screen dissipates to black as he clicks the laptop shut. His pants are still down but the sock he had planned on using is still hanging over the side of his desk, unused. *What the fuck was that?* Every time he blinks, the final scene paints the interior of his eyelids. Not to toot his own horn, but he's not a porn novice, and the entirety of the video had seemed frankly, unimpressive, aside from the fact that the girl getting railed

kind of looked like this cute girl in his gym class. Until the end. The final shot was focused on the girl on all fours, the much older man behind her. Just as it seemed like everyone involved was about to orgasm, the young boy included, he yanked her auburn pigtails back, picked up the kitchen knife next to him—*was that there the whole time?*—and decapitated her. Blood was spurting out of where her head should have been and the older man finished himself all over her already paling face, before dropping the head and letting it roll, leaving a trail of blood and semen behind. A zoom in on the head. The eyes are wide open and glassy, as if she had no idea that it was coming.

When he and his parents have dinner that night, he has to excuse himself to his room, unable to even pick up the steak knife to cut his food. Nightmare after nightmare keeps him from sleeping more than 20 minutes at a time and he thinks he sees her standing in the corner of his room, headless. When his friends come up to him at his locker and ask what he thought of the video the next morning, lack of sleep and an abundance of anger sends him into a frenzy, pushing his best friend up against the wall and immediately sputtering out phrases such as “How can you guys watch that shit?” and “We need to call the police. She is **dead**.”

For a second, everyone is quiet, and then he’s the laughing stock of the friend group.

“You idiot. It’s computer generated. It’s not even real.”

“Yeah. You wouldn’t even be able to take a head off with a kitchen knife that fast.”

“Chill out, man. It’s not a big deal.”

He tries to pretend he’s not embarrassed and attempts to laugh it off. No big deal. It’s not real. Right. Not real. But knowing it’s not real doesn’t stop him from getting the wind knocked out of him when he sees the cute girl in his gym class. Not only does he have an idea of what she looks like naked, but he knows what she would look like without a head. It’s not cute at all.

While this is a fictional story, it accurately depicts a possible outcome to watching Computer Generated Image, or CGI, Pornography. While pornography has been discovered dating back as early as 5200 BCE, the “Golden Age” of porn, *Playboy Magazine* and Alfred Kinsey’s *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* are typically credited, for mainstreaming porn in North America between 1969-1984 (Paasonen and Saarenmaa 23). Films such as *Deep Throat* (1972) and *The Devil in Miss Jones* (1973) were screened across the country, shining light on the potential pornography had as an economy-boosting industry. Coincidentally, computer generated imagery was also being developed at this time, with *Kitten*, the first CGI creation, coming out in 1968, and human representation being produced in 1981 (“A Visual Timeline of CGI Characters in Film;” “CGI History”). As with any industry, it was only natural in a capitalistic culture that porn directors had

to find different and innovative ways to get ahead of the competition. The Internet (1991) and the development of increasingly life-like CGI images in video games and Hollywood accelerated this, and many porn producers believed that if CGI images were earning a profit in other venues, then why couldn't porn follow the same model?

If Hollywood films like *Avatar* (2009) and the *Planet of the Apes* franchise use CGI to make fantasy a reality, we need to know that this is happening in porn as well. Sex positions that would break bones in real life and women and girls with outrageous proportions were now available to the naked eye. With the expansion of the pornography industry from 1991 to the present, however, the scenarios portrayed in CGI porn can turn from a fun fantasy to a disgustingly controversial experience quickly.

Niche pornography, a sub-categorical porn that focuses on fetishes and tastes that have a market but aren't generally common, began to emerge in the mid-1970s. During the so-called Golden Age of porn between 1969 and 1984, films were seen as hardcore just for showing intercourse in its entirety. However, after the internet made pornography available at our fingertips, porn sites grew by 1,800% from 1998-2007 and shock value became a main constituent of determining whether or not a video was successful ("The Evolution of Porn," n.pag.). Dr. Norman Doidge, in his book on neuroscience, *The Brain That Changes Itself*, explains that "...hardcore has evolved and is increasingly dominated by the

sadomasochistic themes ... all involving scripts fusing sex with hatred and humiliation. Hardcore pornography now explores the world of perversion, while softcore is now what hardcore was a few decades ago” (10). In recent years, pornography has normalized sadistic treatment and gives a platform to misogyny, racism, and more surprisingly, pedophilia.

### *Child Pornography Protection Act of 1996*

Of course, giving a platform to pedophilia does not mean that one can type ‘child porn’ into a search engine and automatically be presented with authentic videos of toddlers and tweens being molested and manipulated. However, with genres such as pseudo-child porn (PCP) which is the infantilization of adults for the sexual gaze and CGI porn being easily accessible, anyone can find imagery that is so similar to the real thing, that just as we see in the scenario above, they may believe they’re watching authentic child porn.

PCP and CGI child porn were not always legal, though. In 1996, Congress passed the Child Pornography Protection Act, or CPPA, which was introduced in order to deplete the loopholes in the federal child pornography laws that were being created and broadened by the rapid advancement of technology. This act banned any visual depictions that “appear to be of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct” or that are “advertised, promoted, presented, described, or distributed in such a

manner that conveys the impression that the material is or contains a visual depiction of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct” (Goldblatt, 12). This ruling encompassed not only actual child porn, but virtual and pseudo-child as well.

While most circuit courts upheld the constitutionality of CPPA, the Ninth Circuit in the case *Free Speech Coalition vs. Reno* held that the act was too broad and vague to be considered constitutional. Another circuit court in the case *United States v. Hilton* rebuked that claim by declaring that the virtual pornography being targeted was only a small selection that was indistinguishable to viewers from legitimate child porn. Several other circuit courts continued to apply CPPA under the impression that virtual child porn and PCP contributed little to no literary, educational, or scientific value. Nonetheless, the decision in *Reno* was compelling enough to be taken to the Supreme Court under the defense that only pornography that directly harms children should be acted on and that virtual child porn did not fall under this circumstance (Goldblatt, 14-15).

### ***Ashcroft v. Free Speech Coalition***

The Free Speech Coalition is a pro-porn lobbying association in California that dedicates itself to assisting filmmakers, producers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, and Internet providers in defending their First Amendment rights against censorship. Lobbyists work with over 600 businesses and all of them participate in the process of creating and selling

adult material. When the CPPA was enacted, the Coalition, along with several businesses, filed lawsuits out of fear that their content would fall under the new definition of child porn (Kennedy, III: A).

In April of 2002, during the *Ashcroft v. Free Speech Coalition* case, the Supreme Court took into consideration the constitutionality of the CPPA, specifically the expansion on the definition of child pornography to include displays that did not include actual children. The ruling said that the use of the phrases “appears to be” and “conveys the impression” were an unconstitutional infringement on the First Amendment (Kennedy, I).

When the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Coalition and against Attorney General John Ashcroft, they declared what we saw in the *Reno* case: that since virtual porn does not include authentic children, it cannot harm them or contribute to their abuse (Kennedy, IV). While there are multiple problems with this finding as a whole, here I will only be discussing the controversy behind the age of the ruling in relation to rapid development of quality in terms of CGI.

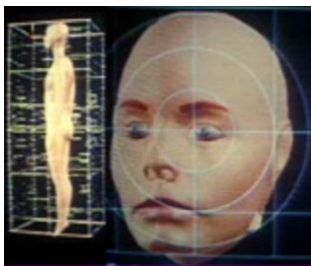
### ***Advanced Technology***

Perhaps the most compelling crack in the *Ashcroft* ruling is the advancement of technology. The criminalization of pseudo-child porn was also technically peeled back, but it can be argued that CGI porn has become increasingly more harmful in recent years and perhaps was more harmful than “regular” porn to begin with. While pseudo-child porn does indeed use

prepubescent features and childlike indicators such as stuffed animals, pigtails, and colorful, frilly pajamas, it is often marketed as ‘barely-legal’ and does not explicitly state that the person in the video is meant to be underage. Virtual child porn, on the other hand, can depict children as young as infants.

For instance, in 2003 a virtual reality world by the name of *Second Life* was introduced to the public. While it looked like a video game, there were no rules and its purpose was to give adults a way to live another life through roleplaying. While in order to join, one had to verify their age, the avatars could look however one pleased and the list of actions able to be performed delved into sexual content. By 2006, adult avatars were performing virtual sex acts with child avatars, causing an uproar in the community that now has almost a million users. Fortunately, *Second Life* has since coded the world so that child avatars can only perform appropriate child-like activities (“The Retro Futurism of Cuteness”).

In order to gauge the advancement of technology, I would like to bring attention to the history of CGI. We know the very first computer



generated image, *Kitten*, was developed in 1968 by a group of Russian scientists

(“CGI History”). We also know that the *Looker*, the first



“CGI History.” Preceden,  
[www.preceden.com/timeline/246195-cgi-history/](http://www.preceden.com/timeline/246195-cgi-history/)



fully shaded human representation in the CGI world, was released in 1981 (“A Visual Timeline”). So how advanced had CGI technology become by 2002, when the *Ashcroft* ruling occurred, and can it have advanced so much in the past 18 years that *Ashcroft* has become dated? In 2001, the first film to feature photorealism—a genre of CGI characterized by its lifelike



“A Visual Timeline of CGI Characters in Film.” CinePro, 7 July 2014. [www.cinepro.com/made-by-computer-stuff/a-visual-timeline-of-cgi-characters-in-film/](http://www.cinepro.com/made-by-computer-stuff/a-visual-timeline-of-cgi-characters-in-film/).

visuals—was released. While this feature is realistic, it is still obvious to the average human that the images are indeed computer generated (“A Visual Timeline”).

Fast forward to 2016: *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* created a computer-generated duplicate of the deceased actor, Peter Cushing, that was so realistic, it sparked a flurry of movies to use the same technology. In 2018, at the Game Developers

Conference in San Francisco, the company Epic Games unveiled the latest innovation in the CGI world, Unreal Engine. This technology is able to copy humans into real time, creating digital

avatars that are controlled by their movements (Haridy, n.pag.). Epic Games’ demonstration of

actor Andy Serkis was so detailed that one can see every fiber of stubble on his face. While the development in the CGI in terms of realism alone is enough to raise the question of how dated the *Ashcroft* ruling is, it is also important to ask this question: in the future, how can we be sure that these



Haridy, Rich. “‘Synthetic Human’ CGI Demonstrates Eerie Photorealism Generated in Real-Time.” *New Atlas - New Technology & Science News*, New Atlas, 23 Mar. 2018, [newatlas.com/realtime-digital-rendering-photorealistic-cgi-human/53922/](http://newatlas.com/realtime-digital-rendering-photorealistic-cgi-human/53922/).

CGI models are not designed using real children? With these devices that duplicate movement and features from real life by placing head and body gear onto whomever the device is copying, it will be impossible to say that a child was not explicitly harmed in the making of CGI child pornographic films.

### *Is CGI Child Porn Harmful?*

While it is or should be obvious that the production of authentic child pornography is harmful to children, specifically because in order to produce child porn, the direct abuse of a child occurs, it is critical to understand why virtual child porn can be harmful as well, even if we eliminate the possible use of real-time devices.

In an article by Marie Eneman, Alisdair A. Gillespie, and Bernd Carsten Stahl, they state that “It is also suggested that the possession and circulating of such images can legitimize and reinforce inappropriate perceptions of children, and while being unregulated, allow the development of a sense of social acceptance towards child sexual abuse” (4.1). While there is a lack in research that supports this claim directly, in large part because doing research on the impacts of child porn consumption is unethical and violates IRB processes on human research subjects, we can use elements of neuroscience to not only connect virtual child porn to the social acceptance of child abuse, but also to the consumer committing these acts themselves.

In 2008, results from a study by the journal *NeuroImage* showed that pornography stimulates a part of the brain associated with the “mirror neuron system.” This apparatus creates a desire to replicate the sex acts from the video. As Rizzalotti and Craighero put it, “If we want to survive, we must understand the actions of others. Furthermore, without action understanding, social organization is impossible. In the case of humans, there is another faculty that depends on the observation of others’ actions: imitation learning. Unlike most species, we are able to learn by imitation, and this faculty is at the basis of human culture” (169). Thus, perhaps too simply, what we watch, especially if we see that image or behavior repeated, can become a model for our own behavior. In relation to porn consumption, consumers who orgasm to repeated images of CGI porn come both to associate pleasure and the release of dopamine with images of child rape and to associate that behavior with “normalcy,” since they are watching others in the video do the same. While this does not mean that every person who comes in contact with CGI child pornography will go on to either watch real child porn, turn their back on child abuse, or abuse a child themselves, it does suggest that this is a possibility.

We can also see this possibility through the lens of the hyperreal, a theory developed by Jean Baudrillard that states that the hyperreal is “more real than real.” In a hypermediated culture like our own, the “real” has been replaced by images; the “maps” of our current world (so-called reality

television, music videos, political clips repeated over and over again -- and yes, porn images which permeate our media) have effectively replaced “reality.” This means that something artificial becomes even more accepted and valued than reality. The hyperreal is represented in its prime in the concept of Disneyland. Disneyland is full of fabricated nature and separate worlds such as Frontier Land and Tomorrowland. These worlds are an escape that overinflate the sense of joy and utopia and since these false realities are so realistic, it makes the fabrication more desirable for people to buy into. Disneyland becomes more real for consumers than the surrounding Los Angeles area (Macintosh et al.).

If we apply the hyperreal theory to child pornography, the inflation of acceptance of CGI child pornography introduced by *Ashcroft* makes the medium more desirable and more “real.” It then blurs the line of what is real and what is not real child pornography. This in turn can desensitize the viewer to authentic child porn, which they see as less real and more acceptable to watch. This is extremely significant in terms of the previously mentioned advancement in technology, as the two combine together in an effort to make reality indistinguishable. If one cannot differentiate between pornography and reality, what will stop them from acting on their desires?

### ***CGI Child Porn and the First Amendment***

In order to fully understand why CGI child pornography should be criminalized, it is important that we call into question the ruling of *Ashcroft*

at its very core: is the banning of virtual child pornography an infringement of the First Amendment? The answer is no and there are two main reasons for this, one being that virtual child porn is not an artistic expression and the second being that it does not protect children in any way.

In 1973, *Miller v. California* ruled that obscenity is not protected under the First Amendment and that obscenity is defined as something that “depicts or describes, in an offensive way, sexual conduct,” something the average person would find “that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest,” or anything that lacks “serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.” Since authentic child pornography is one of the only things that has been deemed obscene material by law, we need to analyze the more nuanced elements of legal decisions. In sum, in order to effectively critique *Ashcroft’s* ruling, we need to pick away at each tier of criteria.

Looking at CGI child porn, it may seem baffling as to why it has not been described as offensive sexual conduct. This ties into the evolution of hardcore pornography and the dating of the *Miller v. California* case itself. Since the threshold of what is considered hardcore pornography has increased tenfold since 1991, it is safe to say that the threshold for what is considered offensive has also increased at the same rate. The ruling is outdated and does not account for advances in technology or the ubiquity of the internet.

Prurient is defined as “having or encouraging an excessive interest in sexual matters,” a sexual desire that is “unwholesome.” It is taken from the Latin language, as meaning an “itching” or “longing” (“Prurient”). Since pedophilia is illegal, the term prurient could be applied to pedophiles, as there is a longing and unwholesome” desire for sexual conduct with a child. It serves no artistic or literary purpose. So now, we must ask what CGI child pornography could possibly offer to literature, art, politics or science. This criterion is subjective and probably should not have been included in the ruling in the first place. However, even if someone made the argument that CGI child porn contributed to any of the four, the harms that come from the consumption of it outweigh the contribution.

The banning of virtual child pornography was ruled as an infringement on the First Amendment. In actuality, the legality of the medium is doing more harm than protection. N. Levy is quoted as saying, "there is every reason to think that if virtual child pornography is legal, pornographers will abandon production of actual images of children in favor of it ... why take the risk of a jail term for producing actual pornography when a simulacrum can be produced legally?" (Eneman, Gillespie and Stahl) However, this is a misguided line of thinking. It assumes that CGI porn does not have an impact on real, live children, and it assumes that pornography producers are ethical enough, restrained enough, to draw the line at “real” child porn, when every financial indicator suggests

that they are quite willing to raise the bar on extreme images to generate profit. More directly, as stated before, between mirror neurons and the hyperreal, it is actually possible that CGI child porn is just a rung in the ladder leading to the direct harm of children. Since children are such a vulnerable population, they deserve more protection.

### ***Conclusion***

Imagine a world where *Ashcroft* ruled in favor of the CPPA's definition of child porn. Now, imagine the thirteen-year-old boy from the story before. Perhaps, instead of waiting for a link that has been passed excitedly through a line of pubescent boys, he waits for a link that was talked about with so much disgust and fear that he almost doesn't open it. Look through the blinds. Mom's still not home. Ignore the sock on the desk. If what his friends are saying is true, he won't be using it today. Suppress the anticipation that makes him more sick to his stomach than aroused. Click the play button and get ready for...what exactly? He's not sure.

This time, when he shuts his laptop, he is just as disgusted. An image of a female child no older than three or four lying bound and gagged as a man sodomizes her with the neck of a beer bottle stays in his mind. It's been silent for a few minutes, but he can hear the cries bouncing off the walls of his bedroom which is getting increasingly smaller. That night, when his dad cracks open a bottle of Miller Lite to have with his dinner, he has to excuse himself to expel the vomit that's pooled in the back of his throat. He can't

look at his younger sister. When his friends come up to him at his locker to see what he thought the next morning, the tone is more somber. Nobody wants to speak too loudly about it and by the circles under everyone's eyes, it's clear that none of them are sleeping.

He wants to shove one of them up against the wall, ask why they would send him that and why they're watching it in the first place, but melancholy is radiating off the group in waves and he knows immediately that just like him, equally disturbed and scarred. He knew it yesterday, when they were talking about it at lunch.

This time, when he utters the words, "We need to call the police," he's met with shallow nods and solemn inquiries on how to begin the process. However, his best friend who sent him the link in the first place speaks up and stops the boys dead in their tracks.

"But it's not even real. It's computer generated."

"You idiot. It doesn't matter."

"Whoever made that is sick. It's too realistic."

"This is a huge deal. Don't you see that?"

The group of boys spend the rest of the day discussing whose mom or dad would be the best to tell first through whispers and passed notes. Surprisingly he, who was the last to see it, is chosen as the representative and even though his mom cries when he tells her and the police take his



laptop later that week, he feels as though he's protected someone, especially his younger sister.

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# Hidden Figures of the New Negro Movement

Jessica Solomon

The New Negro Movement became symbolic in showing the world that the African-American community is more than descendants of slaves or second-class citizens, but people eager to defy their forced limitations did so by embracing their Black identity and culture. The New Negro Movement emancipated women from the shadows of men through self-expression, their progressive political stances, and economic independence. In Beatrice Morrow Cannady's speech in front of the 19th Annual Conference of the NAACP, she declared that "the Negro woman must first learn to believe in herself and in her race, ridding herself always of any false notion of racial or sexual inferiority."<sup>1</sup> The "New Negro Women" refused to be idle during this movement as these ladies were proud, passionate, assertive, and well-educated feminists who focused their efforts on being represented fairly for complete equal rights. Marcus Garvey, co-founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, and A. Phillip Randolph, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters,

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<sup>1</sup> Beatrice Morrow Cannady, "Beatrice Morrow Cannady Speaks to the NAACP" (speech, Los Angeles, CA, June 1928), BlackPast, <https://www.Blackpast.org/african-american-history/1928-beatrice-morrow-cannady-speaks-naacp/>

are known today because of their successful labor movements. Their achievements could not have been possible without the support of their wives, who embodied the meaning of a New Negro Woman. Amy Ashwood Garvey, Amy Jacques Garvey, and Lucille Randolph worked tirelessly to support their husbands by helping to fundraise for their organizations and used their connections to socially advance in the New Negro scene while continuing to denounce sexism through their political activism.

Dedicated to racial pride, economic self-sufficiency, and Pan-Africanism, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, founded by Marcus Garvey and Amy Ashwood in 1914, emphasized the need for racial uplift through political activism to improve the conditions of Black people all over the world.<sup>2</sup> The UNIA held the title of the most influential Black pan-nationalist movement in the United States and as a powerful anti-colonial organization in Jamaica.<sup>3</sup> Amy Ashwood made significant contributions in the Pan-Africanist movement through community engagement in the Caribbean, the United States, and England. She was the driving force that helped Marcus Garvey form the UNIA, for her family helped back the early phases of the association. The Ashwood household in Jamaica became the UNIA meeting place, where Garvey met prominent members of the Caribbean Black community. Garvey's vision of creating a thriving Black global economy through international trading of goods from

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<sup>2</sup> Keisha N. Blain, *Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 14.

Black businesses led to the creation of the Black Star Line Steamship Corporation. The steamship was funded by Amy Ashwood's family to help make that vision a reality, but the enterprise only lasted until 1922 due to the ill management of funds. Garvey relocated the UNIA headquarters to Harlem in 1917, as the New Negro Movement began flourished culturally and politically in the United States.<sup>4</sup>

Amy Ashwood reunited with Marcus Garvey in Harlem in 1918, and the couple continued their quest for racial uplift through the support of the Black urban working class. Ashwood became the first secretary of the UNIA and helped popularize the association in the United States. Ashwood spent many days on the busy street corners of Harlem, uttering the political agenda of the UNIA and their fight to end segregation, oppression, and the rise of Black political determination. As secretary, she had the fundamental role in helping publish the most circulated African-American publication and the official newspaper of the UNIA, *The Negro World*.<sup>5</sup> Amy Ashwood, a Pan-African feminist, vowed to have women participate in leadership positions, which empowered women to escape the restraints of domesticity. Unfortunately, Marcus Garvey preferred to have powerful male figures as the leaders of the association, causing women to face sexism even in a progressive organization. As a strong-willed woman, Amy Ashwood always

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<sup>4</sup>"Universal Negro Improvement Association," American Experience (Public Broadcasting Service), accessed March 19, 2020, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/garvey-unia/>

<sup>5</sup> Blain, *Set the World on Fire*, 17-8.

fought against the arching male-centric ideologies of Garveyism by creating the Ladies' Division, which ultimately turned to the Black Cross Nurses Arm. The Ladies' Division allowed women to have roles outside of the office and have public discussions on topics of civil rights, labor, and politics of respectability. Marrying in the winter of 1919, Marcus Garvey and his new wife, had a short and tumultuous marriage with claims of infidelity and Marcus prioritizing the association over his wife, who spent years helping to form it. Ashwood Garvey refused not to be a submissive wife but wanted to have her own career and use her voice to help women fight for racial and political determination.

Marcus Garvey's divorce from Amy Ashwood Garvey was finalized in 1922. Following the divorce, Marcus Garvey married another strong New Negro Woman named Amy Jacques, a close friend to his first wife and his private secretary. Amy Jacques, a Jamaican-born journalist with a passion for pan-Africanism and fair representation of women, came to New York City in 1918. She became fascinated with Garveyism and the work of the UNIA after hearing Marcus Garvey present a speech at a conference.<sup>6</sup> As a highly educated woman, Amy Jacques became involved with *The Negro World* newspaper and claimed that Marcus Garvey's speeches were a product of her own research because he used sections of her *Negro World* articles to help boost his Garveyism philosophy. At her husband's request,

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<sup>6</sup> Karen S. Adler, "Always Leading Our Men in Service and Sacrifice': Amy Jacques Garvey, Feminist Black Nationalist." *Gender and Society* 6, no. 3 (1992): 346-75. [www.jstor.org/stable/189992](http://www.jstor.org/stable/189992), 349.

she would read newspapers and essays and relay the essential facts for Garvey to use in his speeches.<sup>7</sup> Known to be an eloquent speaker, Amy Jacques Garvey traveled alongside her husband, giving speeches in front of large audiences, becoming the face of the women's division of the UNIA. Jacques Garvey supported women's progress and challenged the male ideology during these speeches, as her husband's claims were one-note and focused on manhood rights and racial purity. Marcus Garvey called for collective action in fighting racism but restricted and silenced women that were eager to help in the case of Black liberation. Amy Jacques Garvey captivated audiences all over the country as she embodied the Garveyite ideology of a good wife who supported her husband but also used her power to fight for women's rights.

The relationship Amy Jacques Garvey had with her husband closely related to other women in the association. The UNIA alledged to have a dual sex structure, where women and men held equal power, as there was a gender hierarchy in place.<sup>8</sup> If Garveyism and the UNIA allowed for equal opportunities for men and women, there would not be positions, like "Lady President," but only "President" within local chapters. At the 1922 UNIA National Convention, women involved with the UNIA came together and challenged Marcus Garvey with resolutions for equal opportunities in leadership positions for women. In their declaration called, "Unity for Our

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<sup>7</sup> Adler, "Always Leading Our Men in Service and Sacrifice," 353.

<sup>8</sup> Rhoda Reddock, "The first Mrs Garvey: Pan-Africanism and feminism in the early 20th century British colonial Caribbean," *Feminist Africa* (2014): 64-6.

Women,” these women knew that the fight against racism and segregation should not be a fight only fought by men, but a chance for the genders to become alliances. Some of the recommendations the declaration called for was “that women be given more recognition by being placed on every committee” and “ that more women be placed in the important offices and fieldwork of the association.”<sup>9</sup> Little came out of the resolution, and women continued to feel stuck in the shadows of the patriarchal hierarchy within the UNIA.<sup>10</sup> Their willingness to fight Marcus Garvey’s sexist ideology showed that women valued the work they did for racial progression and wanted equal recognition for their progressive actions. In Beatrice Morrow Cannady’s Speech to the NAACP, she discusses the women’s role in politics of respectability by stating “We must admit that this is often hard to do hampered as she is by her sex, what we sometimes term a man’s world, and by her race in a white man’s world. But it can be done. The Negro Woman must sell her race, first to herself before she can get others to believe in it.”<sup>11</sup> These women who stood up against the Garveyite misogyny did it to help themselves, but future women who will have to work harder to show their worth to society.

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<sup>9</sup>Robert A. Hill and Marcus Garvey, *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, vol. 4 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 1037.

<sup>10</sup> Blain, *Set the World on Fire*, 32-3.

<sup>11</sup> Beatrice Morrow Cannady, “Beatrice Morrow Cannady Speaks to the NAACP” (speech, Los Angeles, CA, June 1928), BlackPast, <https://www.Blackpast.org/african-american-history/1928-beatrice-morrow-cannady-speaks-naacp/>



On July 21, 1923, Marcus Garvey was convicted and sentenced to five years in prison by the FBI for mail fraud in connection to selling stock of the UNIA's Black Star Line Steamship.<sup>12</sup> While incarcerated, Amy Jacques Garvey became the de facto leader of the association, though she was never officially recognized as the official leader of the UNIA by Garvey, as her husband had too much pride to relinquish any power to a woman. She edited and published two volumes of her husband's works titled, *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, as a form of propaganda to clear his name of any judgment and bias Garveyism faced following his arrest.<sup>13</sup> As the de facto leader of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, Jacques Garvey became the editor of the women's page in *The Negro World* called, "Our Women and What They Think" dedicating that space for women to discuss feminist ideas, critiques of the patriarchy within the association, and other opinions they may have. The women's page became a place for women to project their feelings and remind men that without the triumphant assistance of women, the UNIA would not exist.<sup>14</sup> Through "Our Women and What They Think" granted women more political visibility to express themselves and to expose men who caused gender inferiority within an organization founded upon solidarity within Black pride.

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<sup>12</sup> "Marcus Garvey," American Experience (Public Broadcasting Service), accessed March 20, 2020, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/garvey-biography/>

<sup>13</sup> Blain, *Set Fire to the World*, 24.

<sup>14</sup> Keisha N. Blain, "Black Nationalist Women's Activism in 1920s Harlem," The Gotham Center for New York City History (The Gotham Center for New York City History, May 28, 2018), <https://www.gothamcenter.org/blog/Black-nationalist-womens-activism-in-1920s-harlem>

The New Negro Movement brought forth prominent Black organizations devoted to ending the struggle of Black inequality that plagued the country. Led by International President, A. Philip Randolph, a well-known labor organizer, and civil rights leader, the Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) fought for interracial trade unions throughout the country. BSCP fought on the principle of improving work conditions for railroad car porters through trade unionization all over the United States.<sup>15</sup> As the first Black labor organization recognized by the American Federation of Labor, Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters, focused almost exclusively on the men working under the Pullman Company, neglecting the women who also served alongside them as Railway Maids.<sup>16</sup> The Brotherhood promoted masculinity and Black manhood rights as “New Negro Men,” which pushed working women to Ladies Auxiliaries and economic councils belittling their importance in the incorporation of this union. Many women involved in the Women’s Economic Council were wives or relatives of the Sleeping Car Porters.

As “New Negro Women,” the Railway Maids fought against the male-dominated goals of the Brotherhood and fought for economic justice and racial solidarity.<sup>17</sup> The Railway Maids took a job outside of the typical

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<sup>15</sup> “A. Philip Randolph.” American Experience. Public Broadcasting Service. Accessed March 21, 2020.

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/garvey-philip-randolph/>.

<sup>16</sup> Melinda Chateauvert, *Marching Together: Women of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 2.

<sup>17</sup> Chateauvert, *Marching Together*, 36.

domestic servitude to provide for themselves and their families. Many of the maids feared retaliation from the Pullman Company because if they found out the women were involved in the secretive Brotherhood, but they still should have been given proper representation within the union.<sup>18</sup> The Women's Economic Council and A. Philip Randolph remained silent on the issues the Railway Maids faced because they believed if they fought for manhood rights and higher wages for men, then these women would not have to work anymore. This idea is a clear reflection of what women faced in society and the idea of domesticity prevailing. Within the 1920s, women barely supported themselves or received temporary jobs until they got married and can rely financially on their husbands. This was not the case for the New Negro Women, whose work was wholly undermined by the male unionists who ran Brotherhood.<sup>19</sup>

Though the Brotherhood prided itself on masculinity and the ability to make living wages for their families, A. Philip Randolph relied financially on his wife, Lucille Randolph, to be the breadwinner until he began to earn a salary in 1936. Lucille Randolph graduated from Howard University and worked as a schoolteacher until she enrolled in Madame C.J. Walker's Lelia Beauty College in 1910, graduating top of her class.<sup>20</sup> Opening a "posh hair

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 14-15.

<sup>20</sup> Misun Bishop, "Lucille Campbell Green Randolph (1883-1963)," Blackpast, February 25, 2020, <https://www.Blackpast.org/african-american-history/randolph-lucille-campbell-green-1883-1963/>

salon” on 135th Street in Harlem, Randolph gained wealthy and influential clients.<sup>21</sup> As a New Negro Women living in the heart of Harlem, she became a member of the Socialist Party of America shortly after meeting her husband, A. Philip Randolph. Through their passion for gender equality and Black pride, the couple worked together to spread their radical politics by handing out Randolph’s *The Messenger*, a political magazine promoting Socialist ideals during the New Negro Movement, to clients in her salon.<sup>22</sup> In order to continue with *The Messenger*, Lucille Randolph used the profits from her salon to finance the publication and used her elite Harlem connections to help gain supporters of the Brotherhood.

Unlike Marcus Garvey, A. Philip Randolph acknowledged the hard work and dedication his wife did to further his political career and the Brotherhood’s success. Lucille Randolph’s dedication to helping her husband did not go unnoticed and did not stop once he earned a salary as President. Throughout the years, Lucille’s husband was President of the BSCP; she always recruited her wealthy clients to donate money to the cause. She, with the help of other Harlem Socialites, helped planned fundraising efforts to hold events, like beauty pageants and dances. Due to Lucille Randolph’s rolodex of prominent figures in the Harlem scene, the Brotherhood flourished and grew to have chapters all over the county.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Chateaufort, *Marching Together*, 7.

<sup>22</sup> “A. Philip Randolph.” American Experience. Public Broadcasting Service. Accessed March 21, 2020.

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/garvey-philip-randolph/>.

<sup>23</sup> Chateaufort, *Marching Together*, 44-6.

Never once did A. Philip Randolph undermine his wife's influence but was proud to have New Negro Women supporting him.

The New Negro Movement empowered women through political self-determination and their desire to make a difference within the community. Women in the Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters constantly faced the challenge of proving themselves, as sexism plagued the male-dominated organizations. Marcus Garvey leveraged Amy Ashwood Garvey's family wealth to fund the early stages of the UNIA. After falling in love with his second wife, Amy Jacques Garvey, he coopted her progressive stances on racial and class consciousness to help him become one of the leading figures in the political initiative of the New Negro Movement. Without his wives' devotion to the UNIA, Marcus Garvey's vision would have failed. A. Philip Randolph received significant economic support in the formative years of the Brotherhood from his wife, Lucille Randolph. She did not just support her husband economically, but also his belief that Black workers should be treated humanely, without discrimination, and with unionized pay. Amy Ashwood Garvey, Amy Jacques Garvey, and Lucille Randolph were proud of their Black identity and used their progressive political ideas to help their husbands to forge the first successful Black labor organizations during the 1920s.

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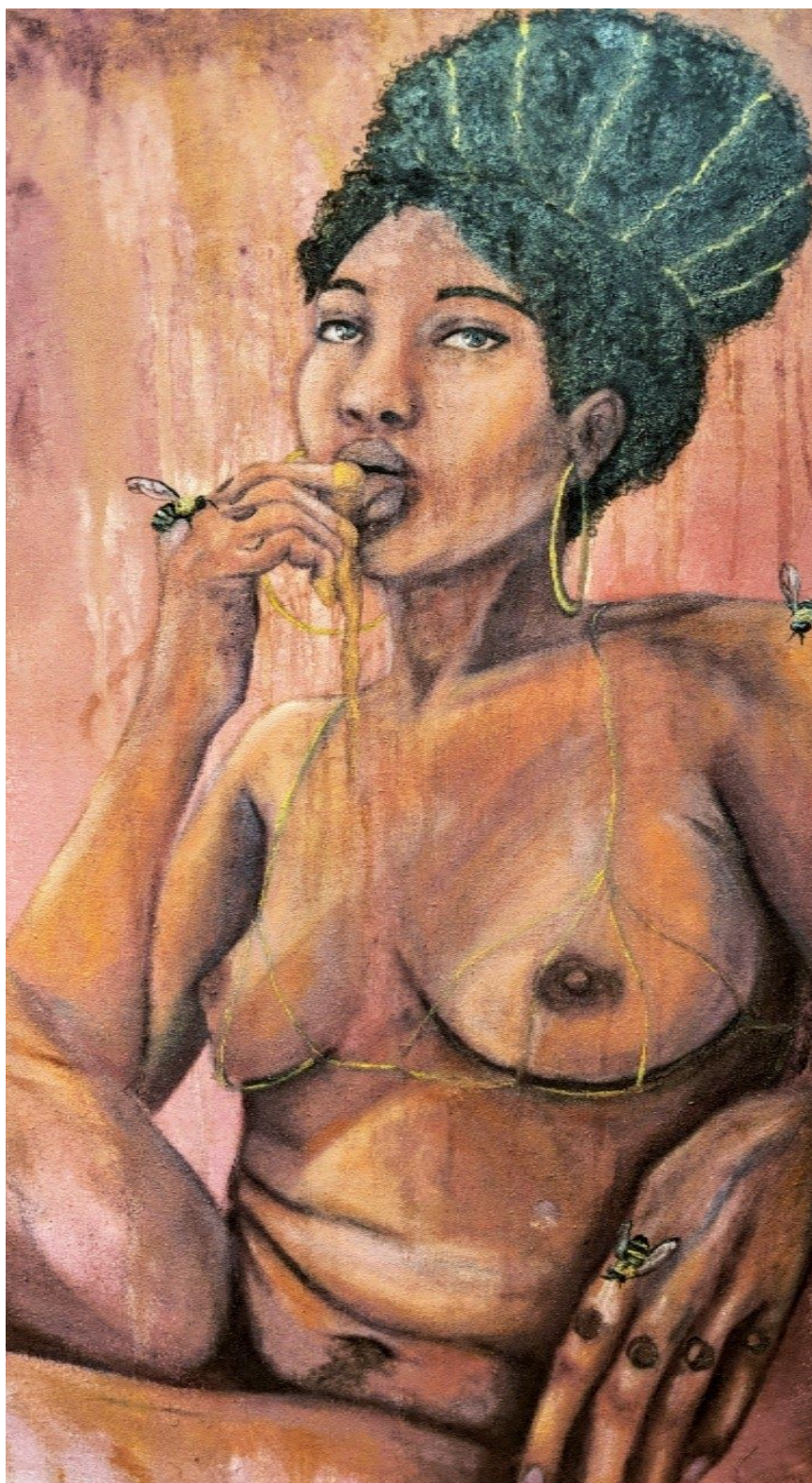
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## Priestess of the Bee

Rachel Peterson



# Fat Women, Sexuality and Sizeism in a Heteronormative World: Navigating Options, Negotiating Agency

Samantha Burkhouse

Fat women's sexuality is complicated, often intersecting with other parts of a woman's identity to create and inform specific experiences. Fatness, gender, and sexuality especially influence each other greatly (Snider, 2009). A fat woman's experience also depends on the context of the environment she inhabits, but too often, it seems that there are two extremes that our culture imposed on fat women – asexualization and hypersexualization. Other factors within these and affecting these include fetishization, sexual abuse, and media representation of fat women's sexuality. However, if it seems that fat women's agency is deeply diminished, there is also potential for the empowerment of fat women in terms of their sexuality.

## **Asexualization of Fat Woman**

In most settings, fat women are seen as entirely separated from sexuality (Asbill, 2009). The asexualization of them in this way is the result of a culture which thinks fat bodies are a source of shame (Kozlowski, 2018).



Our society teaches fat women to be “sexless” in conjunction with messages that they won’t have a sexual partner because the only relationship they can be in is a platonic one (Farrell, 2011). Fat women aren’t supposed to be sexual until they are able to conform to societal standards of beauty, in their case, by losing weight (Schoenwald, 2020). Essentially, society tells fat women that they aren’t attractive, sexy, or lovable, and understandably, given the pervasiveness of these messages in a fatist society, many fat women internalize the belief that having a love life or a sex life is unlikely, even impossible. Even when someone is interested in them romantically or sexually, many have a hard time believing it because of the internalized fatphobia that society has placed upon women (Kozlowski, 2018). I agree with Schoenwald that society essentially forces them into celibacy as they give up on fulfilling their sexual desires (2020). It’s no surprise, then, that a major study demonstrated that a fat woman, when compared to an average-size woman, a fat man, and an average-size man, was seen by participants as having less sexual desire and less sex, as well as being less sexually attractive, desirable, and skilled (Gailey, 2012).

Fat women are regularly perceived as passive, desexualized, and unworthy of sexual fantasizing (Snider, 2009). Masculine norms also program men to think a certain way (negatively) about fat women, and this is something that needs to be unlearned in order to be attracted to fat women (Kozlowski, 2018).

How society defines sex also seems to be a factor in the asexualization of women. Sex is most often defined as penetration, usually penile penetration of a vagina in heteronormative terms. This may be difficult for fat women for physical reasons or reasons related to their comfort or confidence (Askham, 2018). However, there are other ways to have sex that don't include penetration – endless ways, it seems, for fat women (and others) to explore their sexuality and find what works for them or their partner (Askham, 2018). People who have sex with fat women often try to avoid their stomach or other fat parts of their body, but this just makes things uncomfortable (Tonic, 2019). Larger parts of fat women's bodies might "get in the way," but that doesn't mean that they can't or shouldn't have sex, it just means they might have to get creative, and there is no right or wrong way to have sex (Askham, 2018). Fat people sometimes can't or don't want to have sex the same way that thin people do, and there should be nothing wrong with that, so other ways of having sex should be destigmatized in order for fat women to be able to be sexual, and be seen as sexual (Tonic, 2019).

### **Hypersexualization of Fat Women**

At the same time that society tries to convince fat women that they are unworthy of sex, that they are undesirable, the media presents fat women as hypersexual and willing to have sex with anyone who will have them (Schoenwald, 2020). Participants in one study indicated that they

thought fat women were “easy” because they are more insecure and desperate for a partner (Gailey, 2012). Fat women who are confident in their sexuality are often seen as delusional or as “faking it,” as overconfident, ridiculous or over-the-top, as they are in various other ways in society (Kozłowski, 2018). They take up space, and in a society which already rewards women for smallness (physical, emotional, and political), fat women are often seen as literally and metaphorically taking up more space than they are “supposed to.”

There is an interesting connection between sexual appetite and an appetite for food, and in many cases, fat women are seen both as lacking impulse control and as being out of control of their bodies and behaviors (Kozłowski, 2018). This contributes to the stereotype of hypersexualization by suggesting that since fat women can’t control their appetite, they probably can’t control their sexual urges either, and are therefore willing to do anything sexual with anyone (Kozłowski, 2018). Fat women who desire food or sex are considered deviant, whereas thin women can often want either of these things without any stereotypes being placed upon them – in some cases, it can even be considered sexy for a thin woman to indulge in food (Kozłowski, 2018). In this sense, indulgence, in both sex and food, is reserved for thin women, and fat women are viewed negatively for the same behaviors.

The hypersexualization of fat women is not a positive thing in contrast with asexualization, and can be just as harmful if not more so. In the 1997 play *Venus*, the main character, a fat woman, was portrayed as both sexualized and dehumanized (Jester, 2009). When fat women are hypersexualized, they are also objectified and often seen as a sex object rather than a sexual partner or a sexual being.

### **Fetishization of Fat Women and “Fat Admirers”**

Realistically, when speaking of the sexuality of any body that doesn't fit into society's definition of “normal,” there is a danger of fetishization (Snider, 2009). Although participating in a fetish isn't necessarily a bad thing, when a woman is fetishized without her knowledge or consent, she is objectified and often humiliated as she is used as a sex object (Gailey, 2012). Gina Tonic, author of the article “How to Have Sex With a Fat Girl,” says that she likes to hook up with someone with a fat woman fetish to “feel like a gorgeous goddess” (Tonic, 2019). In this situation, a fat woman consensually being the object of someone's fetish could be empowering. But, because of society's hostility towards fat women, sexual attraction towards them often manifests in complicated, and sometimes negative, ways (Kozlowski, 2018).

Fat admirers are people who prefer fat partners, and these individuals can be understood in both positive and negative terms within the fat

community and the fat acceptance movement (Farrell, 2011). Some of them prey on fat women who feel badly about themselves or have low self-esteem, but they can also provide pleasure for fat women (Farrell, 2011). Regardless of whether it is a good thing for the woman or not, fat women are generally expected to, and sometimes do end up with men (and, with less predictability, with women) who are fat admirers or fat fetishists (Kozlowski, 2018).

As noted, though, fat admirers can also exploit or abuse fat women, especially in a society which so unrelentingly says that fat women should be grateful for any sexual attention they get (Farrell, 2011). Some men fetishize sex with fat women but are disgusted by the idea of dating a fat woman (Gailey, 2012). They might keep their intimacy with their fat partners from their friends and family, ashamed of their attraction to fat women, who they are only interested in sexually (Kozlowski, 2018). Perhaps they're actually disgusted by their attraction to fat women, and they're just performing that disgust because they know that's what is expected of them in society. When the fat admirer is a man, it can also reinforce the objectification of women's bodies, as well as the idea that it is a woman's purpose to be sexually attractive to men (Farrell, 2011).

The existence of fat admirers might also be a positive thing for fat women. As stated above, they can provide fat women with access to men who find them pleasurable, while giving these men access to women whose

bodies they find pleasurable (Farrell, 2011). Fat admirers claim to be stigmatized as much as the women that they are attracted to (Kozlowski, 2018). There may be a place for these men in the fat acceptance movement as well, given that a central idea of the fat acceptance movement is combatting the shame around fat women and their sexuality, and these fat admirers (mostly male) have also experienced shame from other men about their attraction to fat women (Farrell, 2011). Some men who identify as fat admirers might be “closeted,” either because they are disgusted by their own desire, or because they are afraid of the negative stigma that they would experience (Kozlowski, 2018).

Another type of fetishization of fat women is feederism. This is a sexual practice in which one partner (the feeder), usually a thin male, gains sexual satisfaction from feeding their fat partner and/or encouraging them to gain weight, while the fat woman (the feedee) gains sexual satisfaction from being fed and being encouraged to gain weight (Kozlowski, 2018). Again, this is something that could manifest in positive or negative ways for both parties, and it is important that the fat woman in this situation is informed and knowledgeable about her participation in this fetish and that her consent is absolute, her participation freely chosen.

It is also important to address in this section that we avoid reducing the conversation about fat women’s sexuality to fetishization. Open desire and sexual attraction towards fat women is often only understood in terms

of fetishization of them, as if someone can't just be attracted to a woman who happens to be fat – far too often in our sizeist and sexist world, such attraction is unfairly reduced to or assumed to be some form of fat fetish (Kozlowski, 2018). Fetishizing fat people is one of the only arguably socially acceptable ways to express attraction to fat people, something that is seen as just as deviant as fat women themselves (Kozlowski, 2018). It is difficult to differentiate between fetishization of fat women and the desire for a genuine sexual or romantic connection with them, especially in our society where one of those is hidden behind the other to avoid taboo (Kozlowski, 2018).

### **Media Representation of Fat Women's Sexuality**

It is a very positive experience for fat women to see other fat women in sex scenes or portrayed as sexual in media (McCombs, 2019). When fat women aren't represented on screen in this manner (having sex, falling in love, being happy in their body), it can be difficult for fat women to imagine themselves in those scenarios, similar to other forms of representation of various groups (Koslowski, 2018). However, there is often a backlash that comes along with portrayals of fat women in sexual situations in popular media by people who think that it is disgusting, taboo, or unrealistic for a fat woman to be having sex (McCombs, 2019). Making fatness sexually explicit is a political act and is usually understood by a fatphobic culture as disgusting, even damaging to society (Snider, 2009). Fat

women are also often presented as more masculine than thin women in media (Kozlowski, 2018). The fat female body is seen as dominating, and in the context of hegemonic masculinity in our society, men are supposed to be the dominant ones (Gailey, 2012).

Fat people don't tend to play roles in popular media that are sexual (Kozlowski, 2018). Sex scenes that feature women of varying sizes have been extremely rare in the past, and are just starting to occur in popular media today (Snider, 2009). There are a variety of different media stereotypes of fat women. One of these is the image of a "lonely, sexless fat girl" (McCombs, 2019). For fat Black women dealing with the intersections of fatphobia, racism, and sexism, there is the desexualized "mammy" figure who serves as a contrast to a thin white woman in order to highlight her sexuality, since the "mammy" figure is not a sexual threat to her – the thin white woman's sexuality depends on the asexuality of the fat black woman (Kozlowski, 2018). The "mammy" exists to "quell anxieties about black sexual deviance" as "anxieties around black peoples' sexuality creates the desire to frame black women as asexual, therefore eliminating them as potential sexual threats" (Kozlowski, 2018).

Mixed-size relationships (meaning a fat person and an "average" sized or thin person) can also have a stigma (Schoenwald, 2020). Think about the relationships we see on television which include fat people. The first ones that come to mind are on shows such as "Mike and Molly" and "This Is Us,"



both shows that feature fat people in romantic relationships, which is arguably positive but at the same time reinforces the idea that a thin person could not be attracted to a fat person. Kate, the fat woman on “This Is Us,” even met her partner at a weight loss support group meeting, and was surprised that he was interested in her, even though he was also fat (Fogelman, 2016). One study showed that people thought fat women were deserving of a fatter and uglier romantic partner (Gailey, 2012). This reinforces this notion that fat people are supposed to only be with other fat people, and mixed-size relationships are taboo.

It is not uncommon for people who are uncomfortable with the idea of a fat woman’s sexuality to try and make a joke out of it (Schoenwald, 2020). Fat bodies are regularly used as a punchline to jokes, especially in sexual situations (McCombs, 2019). The practice of hogging, which I will discuss in the next section, reveals that to many men, the idea that someone would want to have sex with a fat woman is funny (Gailey and Prohaska, 2006). As I mentioned above, fat women are punished for their appetite for food or sex – in popular media, it’s often supposed to be so ridiculous that it’s funny when you see a fat woman on screen either eating food or being sexual (Kozlowski, 2018). In contrast, when thin women have an insatiable appetite or indulge in food, it can be considered attractive or even sexy, as can be seen in advertisements for establishments such as Hardee’s, which depicts thin models sexually eating hamburgers (Kozlowski, 2018). If a fat

woman starred in this same ad, the tone would change from sexual to funny. In general, fat women seem to not be allowed or able to be sexual and sexy at the same time – when they are being sexual, particularly in popular media, it is seen as ridiculous (Kozlowski, 2018).

### **Sexual Abuse of Fat Women**

Mistreatment of fat women is, unfortunately, quite common in various contexts and in various ways. Fat women with abusive partners are often subject to their partner's fatphobic insults and negative comments about desirability (Royce, 2009). Men might mistreat fat women or use them for sex because they perceive them as being desperate (Gailey, 2012). Women who don't fit into traditional feminine norms, including fat women, are expected to (and often do) "settle" for a romantic or sexual partner who treats them badly, or with whom they aren't happy, because society tells them that nobody else is going to love them (Kozlowski, 2018). The culture we live in can make it hard for fat women to leave an abusive or unfulfilling relationship if they are convinced that nobody else will want them because they're fat (Royce, 2009). Abusive partners of fat women often "critique" their body, and might try to control their eating and exercise or push them to lose weight (Royce, 2009). Sometimes they are being purposefully cruel in this, and sometimes they hide behind the guise of being "helpful" or caring about their partner's health (Royce, 2009). These tactics are also used by abusers on their partners if they are not fat, as

a mechanism to abuse and control them (Royce, 2009). Another disturbing fact is that fat women who have been sexually assaulted have had police officers not take them seriously and refuse to take their reports (Royce, 2009). This is presumably because women are not seen as sexual beings and therefore not seen as people who can be sexually assaulted, similar to the experience that disabled people have.

Men sometimes might have sex with a fat woman to degrade her and then brag about it to his friends as if it's a sort of masculine conquest (Askham, 2018). Hogging is a sexual practice in which men use fat women for sexual pleasure, to prove their masculinity to their friends, or make a joke, despite not being attracted to them (Gailey, 2012). This is based on the idea of humiliation, with men sometimes even placing bets with their friends on who can take home and have sex with the biggest woman (Gailey, 2012). It may be true that some of the men who partake in this are secretly fat admirers, which I discussed earlier, and don't want to reveal their true, shameful desires (Kozlowski, 2018). We are unable to gauge this, however, because these men would clearly not want to reveal this. Gailey and Prohaska offer a fairly comprehensive definition of what hogging can entail in "Knocking off a Fat Girl: an Exploration of Hogging, Male Sexuality, and Neutralizations":

Hogging usually occurs when a group of men are at a bar and decide to "spice" up the evening by placing bets on

who can either “pick up” (i.e., take home, get a phone number, talk to, or just dance with) the most overweight or unattractive woman, or it occurs when it is close to bar closing and a man decides that he will “settle” for an overweight or unattractive woman to satisfy his sexual urges (Gailey and Prohaska, 2006).

Fat women who are victimized by this behavior are reduced solely to sexual objects and objects of humiliation – they’re seen as fat and pathetic, but down for anything because, again, they’re supposed to be desperate for sex (Kozlowski, 2018). Men partaking in this practice believe that the fat women deserved to be treated as a joke and typically don’t believe that they’ve done anything wrong (Gailey and Prohaska, 2006). This degradation of fat women further satisfies these men as they discuss their conquest with their friends (Kozlowski, 2018). Another reason a man might partake in this behavior is to boost his own self esteem or because he hasn’t had sex in a while and he is horny – according to them, “having sex with a ‘hog’ is better than not having sex” (Gailey and Prohaska, 2006), perhaps not completely surprising in a society where boys and men are “supposed” to be perpetually aroused and where masculinity is often measured on number of (female) sexual partners..

### **Empowerment of Fat Women in their Sexuality**

Despite the vast social and cultural stigmas placed upon fat women, there are opportunities for empowerment, especially as fat acceptance movements gain more ground. One study found that fat women can have sexually satisfying relationships if they accept their bodies, while those who feel shame about their bodies tend to have less satisfying sex lives (Abbasi, 2012). Defying negative ideas about fatness empowers women and allows them to take control of their sexuality and have satisfying sex lives (Abbasi, 2012). When women have more confidence, they are more likely to have partners who treat them better, as well as enjoying their sexual relationships and have positive sexual experiences (Abbasi, 2012). Body image plays a role in sexual pleasure as having shame in one's body tends to result in them avoiding sex (Gailey, 2012).

One way that some fat women have come to find empowerment is through burlesque performance. Burlesque is a way for women who don't fit conventional beauty standards to display themselves and be sexual in public in a society that usually denies their sexuality to them, especially in a public setting (Asbill, 2009). The audience and dancers both get to experience fat sexuality, and performers regularly have women come up to them after the show and express their joy in seeing fat women be sexual on stage as performers (Asbill, 2009). The performances inspire women to have a new view of their own body and their sexuality, allowing fat women

to “experience their sexual embodiment in new and satisfying ways” (Asbill, 2009).

## Conclusion

There are obviously things that need to be changed in our society to make fat women feel happier and more comfortable in their sexuality. Fat women need to be able to reclaim and recover their sexuality (Farrell, 2011). A sex life is an important part of humanity to many people (excluding those who choose to be celibate or are asexual), and this aspect of humanity is denied to fat women in a society which tells them they can't or shouldn't have sex (Farrell, 2011). An important part of changing the negative attitude around fat women's sexuality is empowerment, but a larger part of this is changing our culture. The internet can play a key role in this, as the Internet opened the door to fat sexuality, allowing people to see fat women in a sexual context rather than just the thin women who were actresses on television or models for *Playboy* (Kozlowski, 2018). We need to ensure that fat women feel comfortable in their own bodies, but attraction to fat women needs to be destigmatized, sexual and emotional abuse of fat women needs to be taken more seriously, and the media needs better representation of fat women as sexual beings in order to move away from the asexual/hypersexual binary that fat women are forced to live in.

I also want to acknowledge that while the information in this paper is important, it is mostly specific to straight, cisgender fat women who seek relationships with men. Fat women come from all walks of life and all intersections, and in the future I would like to look further into how LGBTQ+ fat women experience their sexuality, and how society views it, considering that compulsory heterosexuality plays a big part in our society and within the experiences of fat women, even when they are straight (Farrell, 2011).

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# Paranoid With How They Perceive You

Rachel Peterson



# COVID-19 and Modern Day Eugenics

Katie Holler

In the year 2020, we would like to think that notion of eugenics would be outdated and looked upon in disgust. However, in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the current national response in many ways replicates a eugenicist policy in which some lives are deemed more disposable than others. Eugenicist ideations within our society are being uncovered as we prepare for the possible event of an overwhelmed health care system, in which decisions may have to be made about who lives and who dies. Eugenics are not-so-subtly shaping the response of the nation in terms of allocation of treatment, health care disparities leading to a disproportionate rate of infection among people of color, people with disabilities and the poor, and a disregard for the health and safety of prisoners and the homeless.

The most extreme of the eugenicist ideations in response to the COVID-19 outbreak is found in the discussion of who should and should not receive ventilators in the event of an overwhelming demand. The article, “In ERs overwhelmed by COVID-19, here’s who may get treated—and who might not,” discussed the possible ways health care professionals might “ethically” ration limited life-saving supplies. According to these ethics, the goal when rationing ventilators is to “maximize lives and life years.” The idea is to “give priority to those who are worst off in the

sense of being at risk of dying young and not having a full life” while also treating as many people as possible (Mole). There are many flaws I recognize in this system. First, it fails to acknowledge what would happen in the likely case of there being a relatively young person who is disabled or has underlying conditions and is therefore less likely to recover from their COVID-19 complications. What happens to them? Will they be given a ventilator because they are young in an attempt to let them live their “full life?” Will they be denied a ventilator in order to save someone who is more likely to recover? The impression I get from the article leads me to believe the latter. The article states that priority would be given to those who are most likely to recover, yet again enforcing the idea that disabled lives are more disposable than able-bodied lives.

The second flaw in this system of priority is with the concept of letting the young live a “full life.” What constitutes a full life? A definition would have been helpful, as this leaves a lot of room for personal interpretation. Is a full life one that is measured in longevity—simply not dying before one’s time? Is it one that is personally fulfilling, and therefore defined by each individual for themselves? Or is a “full life” one that benefits a capitalist society in terms of productivity and profit? The truth is that no person can really define what it means to live a full life, and this ambiguity is potentially dangerous. This essentially gives others permission to decide what someone’s life is worth, based solely on their preconceived

notions of what a full life means to them. In terms of disability, decisions might be made based on our ableist society's perception of disability being something that is pitiful and unfortunate, and therefore frankly not as worthy of saving.

These ableist notions of the value of life are very real and can also be seen in crisis standard of care policies. As a result of the 2009 H1N1 outbreak, states were urged by the Institute of Medicine to develop "crisis standard of care" policies to prepare for the next pandemic (Bagenstos). These policies were created with the intent to guide health care professionals through tough decisions in the event of a shortage of resources, just as we are facing today. I wish I could say that it is shocking that many states adopted blatantly ableist responses within their policies. Alabama's crisis of care policy "allowed for denying ventilator services to individuals based on the presence of intellectual disabilities, including 'profound mental retardation.' and 'moderate to severe dementia'" (Bagenstos). Tennessee's policy states that people with "spinal muscular atrophy who need assistance with daily living" would be among those who will not receive care (Bagenstos). Washington's policy says that health care providers should consider "pre-existing loss of reserves in energy, physical ability, cognition, and general health" when deciding whether or not to allocate resources to that individual (Bagenstos). Although Alabama has withdrawn their policy following a complaint from the Office of Civil

Rights, the others' remain in place (Bagenstos). These policies not only are horribly ableist, but they also reinforce a hierarchy of disability placing those with intellectual disabilities at the bottom. These are unprecedented times, and at first I thought that these decisions about who lives and dies were reactionary to an event all were unprepared for, but the existence of these policies prove that there have been preparative measures for the situation we are currently in, and despite having eleven years to figure out the best way to respond in this crisis, we are still adhering to ableist notions that non-disabled bodies deserve to live more than their disabled counterparts.

To return to the third flaw with this system of priority, the value that is placed on younger lives over older lives could be argued as eugenics against the older population. I understand the logic, to an extent: older people simply have had the opportunity to live more of their lives than their younger counterparts. Despite my understanding of this logic, I disagree with it. My disagreement may stem from a place of selfishness, as my father is now seventy-three years old and I do not want to accept the fact that if he were to need a ventilator, he might not get one. I read my dad the article "Why Choosing Between the Elderly and the Economy is a Phony, Barbaric Choice," and something that was notable to us was Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick of Texas stated that he and other senior citizens were "willing to take a chance on [their] survival to help return to daily life" (*The Washington*

*Post*). My dad's exact response to this statement was, "Speak for yourself, sir." The fact of the matter is that as long as we live in an ableist society, we live in an ageist one as well. Older people are simply viewed as expendable, and I believe this is because they have less value in a capitalist society. As people age, most will retire and many will need end-of-life care, meaning they not only are no longer actively contributing to capitalism, they are "burdening" others with their medical needs according to an ethos of productivity and usefulness. It might be cynical of me, but I believe this element of ageism has more to do with why older individuals will be prioritized last in the event of an overwhelmed health care system than simply the fact that they have "lived more life." My dad is seventy-three, but he still has years of life ahead of him, and he still has lots he wants to experience before he considers his life fulfilled. I am sure that many senior citizens across the country feel the same way. If we are truly rationing supplies based on letting people live "full lives," then older individuals should not be disqualified from treatment, as many have not yet accomplished that sense of fulfillment.

To dive deeper into my analysis of the ageism that is apparent during this crisis, I would like to raise a hypothetical question: how would the response be different if we imagine that the virus was more fatal to the younger generation and the older population was largely unaffected? Imagine that people under the age of eighteen were somehow more

susceptible to the virus and to death as a result. I feel as though there would be an overwhelming shift in the attitudes of citizens regarding the virus and the seriousness of it. Although many people are taking the virus seriously as is, I believe there would be much more compliance to the terms of social distancing and the stay-home order if the youth were the most vulnerable population. Many people my age and younger have had the attitude of “this only affects the elderly, I will be fine” without any regard that their actions can be the reason someone who is more at risk could contract the virus. I think that if the young were affected, the whole society would feel more of a pressure to protect the youth. I doubt that older people (who are less at risk in this scenario) would have the same attitude of “I am not at risk, so this is not my problem.” Based on the value our society places on the young and the lack of value for older people, I wholeheartedly believe the response would be much different.

The bottom line when it comes to the issue of rationing supplies is that I have a problem with putting human beings in the position of playing God. I personally do not think that any person should have to make the decision of who will live and who will die, especially when that decision is based mainly on physical attributes. The more fair way to ethically allocate care would be to grant ventilators on a lottery system as suggested by Beth Mole in her article. That way, people who belong to these stigmatized groups will not be discriminated against and everyone has an equal chance



for treatment. This lottery system also protects health care workers from the trauma of making such important decisions. It is too much pressure and no one should have to be on either end of a decision of this nature.

There is also a form of eugenics currently being practiced against people of color and the poor in terms of health care disparities. This issue has been magnified in the midst of this pandemic. With the data we have available in regards to COVID-19, it is evident that Black and Hispanic people are contracting the virus at a disproportionate rate in certain communities. In Chicago, Black people account for over fifty percent of the COVID-19 cases and almost seventy percent of deaths from the virus, but only make up thirty percent of the total population (Yancy). To make things worse, these deaths occurred mostly across just five predominantly Black neighborhoods in the South Side of Chicago (Yancy). Similar trends can be seen in places like Louisiana, Michigan, and New York City (Yancy). Johns Hopkins University conducted a study on 131 predominantly Black counties in the United States and found that their infection rate was three times higher than in predominantly white counties, and the death rate was six times higher (Yancy).

Health care disparities constitute more than simply access to health care. Other variables include environmental factors such as a high housing density, poor access to healthy foods, and in the case of COVID-19, being considered an essential worker. Many essential workers face either putting

themselves at risk or going without pay, which is not a viable option for many Americans. I have seen first-hand how even in the midst of a global pandemic, profit is still being placed over the health of workers. I work at local restaurant, and the majority of my coworkers are Black, many of whom have families and frankly cannot afford to not work. When I first arrived back to work after spring break, my place of employment was following CDC guidelines by only allowing ten people in the building at a given time, including the employees. Our store was open for online order pickups and take-out, but dining in was not allowed. As the threat of COVID-19 began to concern my staff, a manager spoke to her supervisor about the possibility of closing the doors to the public, so that we would only have one person running out online orders to customers as they waited outside. My manager was essentially told that if she felt uncomfortable, she could quit. Corporate later informed us that they were going to expand the ten person limit to now allow twenty people in the store at a given time. Luckily, I was fortunate enough to have the option to go on leave and miss paychecks without any impact on my livelihood, but I cannot say the same for my coworkers. The response of my company was really unsettling to me, and blatantly disrespectful to and uncaring about the health and safety of their employees. I am sure that it is not the only company that is putting employees at risk for a pretty penny, and this is a huge social justice issue. I have heard news coverage about the

disproportionate rate of infection among the Black community, and it has been accredited to many being essential workers. I have not heard any discourse on how to better protect these essential workers, and that is an important step that needs to be taken.

Essential workers are not only at risk from the virus itself, but also from backlash from fellow citizens. On Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, a security guard for a Family Dollar in Michigan was shot and killed after an altercation regarding the company's policy on facel masks. That man was a forty-three year-old father named Calvin Munerlyn. Munerlyn was murdered for simply doing his job and enforcing the Governor of Michigan's executive order that all retail employees and customers wear face masks (Snyder et al.) Munerlyn got into an altercation with a woman whose daughter was not wearing facial protection. The mother and daughter were asked to leave the building, before the woman's husband and another man came to confront Munerlyn for "disrespecting" the woman, ending tragically with the assassination of Munerlyn. This is completely senseless. A man lost his life in the pursuit of protecting the public from this virus. I have not heard any other situations like this resulting in death, but this is certainly a very tragic example of how essential workers are being treated by the public during this time. Workers who are doing their best to comply with CDC guidelines to protect the public have to consistently deal with people who are not compliant. I have witnessed this when I was still

working at the restaurant where I was employed; customers would continuously pick fights with employees over circumstances beyond our control. I really hope no one else has to lose their life because of this, and that no other family has to experience the excruciating senseless grief that Munerlyn's family is enduring now.

Among workers who are considered essential, I believe that workers within the meat industry are being done a gross injustice. A few years ago, I was able to give a speech in a civil discourse class about the poor working conditions within the meat industry. Through this research, I learned a lot about the violations of human rights these workers often face. These workers often need to wear diapers throughout their shifts as they are denied bathroom breaks, have unreported work-related injuries out of fear of termination, and are mistreated by employers without refutation out of fear of deportation as many are "illegal" immigrants (Abuses Against Workers Taint U.S. Meat and Poultry). If I were to rewrite that speech today, knowing what is happening to meat workers during the COVID-19 crisis, I would have had much more to say.

Throughout the country, meat plants have been a hot spot for the virus, and many workers have gotten ill. As of May 2<sup>nd</sup>, at least 5,000 workers within the industry have been contracted the virus, and at least twenty have died as a result (Laughland and Holpuch). After a short period of closures, Donald Trump has mandated that meat processing plants stay

open amidst the crisis (Laughland and Holpuch). This move has been disguised as an effort to save the American food supply, but I think it is really just an effort to keep one of the most profitable industries in our economy running, despite the adverse effect it will inevitably have on vulnerable and at-risk workers throughout the country. Michael Osterholm, an infectious disease epidemiologist, warned that there will be a continued transmission in this work setting, as the disease is airborne (Laughland and Holpuch). Despite the simple fact that the disease is transmissible through the air, another issue arises with the lack of ability to social distance within these plants. An immigrant worker for a Tyson plant in Arkansas explained that everyone is given bathroom breaks at the same time, and with only seven bathrooms in the building, there are hundreds of workers lined up to use them at a time (Laughland and Holpuch). To directly quote this employee, “Tyson doesn’t care about the worker. They don’t care if we get sick” (Laughland and Holpuch). Things must be very bad for an employee who has relied on this company for her livelihood for the past thirteen years to publicly scrutinize Tyson with such drastic revelations.

The current issue with the mistreatment of workers in the meat industry is absolutely one that intersects with issues of race and class. Roughly one third of workers in the industry are immigrants without U.S. citizenship (Cain). In 2019, the Immigration Enforcement Agency (ICE), raided four poultry plants in Mississippi, arresting 680 undocumented

workers but charging none of the companies over employment practices (Laughland and Holpuch). These spots were then filled by many poor people in need of work. This is who is being affected by the mandated reopening of these worksites: immigrants and the poor. Both of these populations have a history of being treated as less than human. These are people performing one of the most dangerous jobs in this country, a job that President Trump would not be caught dead doing for even one day. Still, the message being sent to these essential workers is “fuck you.” Would these plants still be open if it weren’t immigrants and the poor who will get sick? If somehow upper-middle class white citizens were the ones performing these jobs? Probably not, as the discourse circulating in public media is that there was no immediate threat to the American food supply. To make matters even worse, these workers do not even have the choice to stay home and claim unemployment, as a refusal to return to work is considered quitting, so unemployment benefits will not be given if that choice were to be made. They have the choice to either go to work in danger every day, or to have no income to support themselves and their families. They are being taken advantage of and it is completely enraging.

Another population that is very vulnerable during this outbreak is prisoners. There are major flaws with the way that the prison system is responding to the threat of the virus. Representative Nanette Barragan of California hit the nail on the head when she stated that “prison leadership

either had no idea how to protect the inmates in their care from this, or they simply did not pay attention, either of those is completely unacceptable” (Barr). James Johnson, an inmate at Rikers Island in New York, wrote an article about his experience as a prisoner during this pandemic, in which he states “everyone at Rikers is sick, and we can’t get any treatment” (Johnson). Johnson explained that ill inmates are not being taken to the medical center, they remain in their dorms with beds only sixteen inches apart. Not only are they not given treatment or adequate space to social distance, but the prison is described as dirty and with no air circulation, which is concerning for people like Johnson who have chronic asthma (Johnson). Inmates also have restricted opportunities to wash their hands, and hand sanitizer is often considered contraband as it contains alcohol (Westman). From an outside perspective, it seems that no one with the power to change the trajectory of the impact on prisoners cares enough to do anything. Convicts have historically been treated as less than human in our society, and the disregard for their safety in this time of crisis reinforces that. I understand that prisons are a unique setting that have high density of people in limited space, but surely more can be done to protect the safety of inmates. They should at least have the option to be socially distant, practice frequent hand-washing, and to be given medical attention when they are ill. A line stood out to me in one of the many articles I have read on this subject: “jail and prison health care is public health, it is

community health” (Westman). This pandemic should not be a death sentence to prisoners in the United States.

The limited measures that have been taken in regards to prisons still are flawed. U.S. Attorney General William Barr ordered that the Bureau of Prisons utilize and expand the use of home confinement to allow prisons to become less populated (Pitter). This means that some inmates will be allowed to be on house arrest, while others remain in danger in the actual prisons. The criteria for deciding which prisoners should or should not be released to home confinement is problematic. These decisions are very likely to have built in implicit racial and class bias. I would imagine that if a white man and a Black man both convicted for the same crime were to be considered for this release, the priority would be given to the white man. This is the nature of the systemic racism within the criminal justice system. Similarly, many people who could probably be considered for release would not be considered because of financial circumstances beyond their control at the time. By this, I mean people who are not in the position financially to provide for themselves would not be released over someone who has money stashed away, even if they are more deserving. This is yet another way for people to play God, determining who does and does not deserve to be safe and healthy. The general public has an overwhelming lack of concern for the health and safety of inmates. The attitude tends to be that they deserve whatever happens to them because they committed a



crime. This disregards the many people who have been wrongly convicted, or desperately committed non-violent crimes because of their social status.

The homeless population is another at-risk group that is being left unprotected, and largely undiscussed. One of the most important public health measures that has helped to slow the spread has been the stay home order, but what about people who do not have homes to stay inside? Of course, there are homeless shelters, but these are the perfect breeding grounds for a virus to spread, as they are often overpopulated and many times unsanitary and therefore not a practical option (Black). The Governor of California, Gavin Newsom, has announced that 50,000 homeless individuals will be housed in vacant hotel rooms, leaving over 100,000 homeless people in the state of California unaccounted for. This offers yet another opportunity for life-saving decisions to be made on a superficial basis: who of the homeless deserves to be granted this safer situation? This is a key question especially in California, which has the highest rate of homeless people in the U.S. Being homeless is not a situation that is conducive to health; there is a lack of access to maintain good hygiene or a healthy diet (Ellis). Because of the overall poor health of the homeless population, their bodies are already more susceptible to significant damage from the virus, but with the added factor of an inability to practice social distancing, these people are basically sitting ducks. Aside from the threat of the virus itself, resources that many homeless individuals rely on are at a

standstill. Many soup kitchens are closed as they are out of both food and workers, shelters are losing employees, and many places the homeless typically will seek shelter or a bathroom are closed such as gyms, libraries, and fast food restaurants (Ellis). They are not only at greater risk for the virus, but their daily living is being turned upside down.

The common thread between all of these issues discussed in this paper is that the demographics of people who are in the worst positions during this crisis are many of the same demographics that have been discriminated against historically in our society. During this pandemic, it has been made evident that the lives of the disabled, elderly, people of color, the poor, the incarcerated, and the homeless are expendable. One thing I have learned from this pandemic is that life as we know it is a social construct. In a matter of days, the economy was shut down, we were put on a stay at home order, and the function of society was put on pause. If we were able to restructure the function of our society, maybe it is possible that we can come out of this pandemic stronger and challenge other aspects of society that we assumed would remain stagnant, such as ableism, ageism, and health care inequalities. If the issues discussed throughout this paper were covered more heavily by the media, then maybe the American public would become more aware of these social justice issues and demand a change.

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# Dimensions of Body Image: Assessing Thinness Orientation

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## Author's Note

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## Abstract

The goal of this present study is to test the validity and reliability of a new scale designed to assess thinness orientation, which was hypothesized as one of many dimensions of body image. *Existing scales are inadequate and there is a need for a new measure. By testing new scale items against existing assessments, it will determine whether the new items can be used in future research as a valid and reliable instrument.* Participants ( $N= 359$ ) were recruited from psychology classes and completed the following scales: 1) Eating Disorder Inventory-3 (Clausen, Rosenvinge, Friberg & Rokkedal, 2010), 2) Eating Disorder

Examination Questionnaire (EDE-Q) Fairburn & Beglin (2008), 3) Thinness Orientation Scale (developed for the present study), Drive for Leanness Scale (Smolak & Murnen, 2008), 4) Drive for Muscularity Scale (McCreary, Sasse, Saucier, & Dorsch, 2004), 5) Body Shape Questionnaire (Evans & Dolan, 1993), 6) Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (Parent & Moradi, 2009), and 7) a short demographic survey. To test the hypothesis that thinness orientation is unique to body image, correlation analyses were conducted. Doing so has determined that the new scale has convergent and divergent validity. More specifically, for convergent validity, we examined whether there is a moderate to a strong positive correlation with the other scales assessing body image. For divergent validity, we examined whether the variable is unrelated (had a weak correlation) to variables that it should not be related to, such as age and conformity to masculine norms. Results have been discussed in terms of whether the hypothesized measure has the psychometric properties needed, to be used in future research.

The goal of the present study was to test the validity and reliability of a new scale designed to assess thinness orientation (i.e., a focus on obtaining a body without fat), which is hypothesized as one of many dimensions of body image (i.e., multidimensional appraisals and feelings of one's body (Chrisler & Johnston-Robledo, 2018). The present study is important because existing scales inadequately parse out the multiple dimensions of

body image. Having precisely defined dimensions of body image is essential given that body dissatisfaction is a risk factor for eating disorders (Moradi & Huang, 2008; Schaefer & Thompson, 2008), which is a public health concern. Women are disproportionately affected by eating disorders (Striegel-Moore & Bulik, 2007) leaving them more vulnerable to symptomology like low body dissatisfaction. For example, the overall lifetime prevalence for eating disorders (i.e., anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, purge eating disorder) is 13.1% in women (Stice, Marti & Rohde, 2013). According to Hudson, Hiripi, Pope, & Kessler (2007), men make up to 33% of those diagnosed with an eating disorder.

### **Body Objectification Theory**

The present study draws from Body Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; McKinley & Hyde, 1996), which highlights the tendency for women to internalize a critical gaze of their own bodies. More specifically, individuals might engage in body objectification or appraise their bodies from the perspective of others. For example, it is common for women to view their own bodies through the eyes of a critical male observer. Constructs related to body image (e.g., body-objectification) are maladaptive (see Moradi & Huang, 2008; Schaefer & Thompson, 2008). As such, it is important to understand the multidimensional nature of these related constructs.

### **The Present Study**

It was hypothesized that the proposed Thinness Orientation Scale measured a focus on obtaining a body without fat: Hypothesis (H1) be reliable, H2a) show convergent validity with pre-existing scales measuring similar constructs (i.e., restrictive eating, concern with problematic eating behavior, concern with body shape, concern with weight, drive for muscularity, drive for leanness, and body dissatisfaction) by being positively correlated with Thinness Orientation; H2b) would be most positively correlated with Drive for Thinness scale; H3) would show divergent validity by not being correlated with unrelated constructs (i.e., emotional control, winning, promiscuity, violence agreeability, self-reliance, likeliness to take a risk, power over women, the importance of work, heterosexual self-presentation) signifying they are unrelated to Thinness Orientation. All hypotheses were tested overall and separately for men and women.

To test these hypotheses, a correlational research design was used where participants were asked to self-report their answers to a number of questions on a survey.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

A sample of (N=359) Slippery Rock University undergraduate students ages 18-25 (126 men and 233 women) were surveyed for this study (M=18.95). Categorized by race/ethnicity, 89% of participants are



White/European American, 4% are Black/African American, 4% identify as Multi-ethnic, <1% are American Indian, 1% are Latino/Hispanic and 1% are Pan Asian. The sample is exclusive to cisgender participants, based on responses provided to the demographic items “What is your current gender identity?” and “What sex were you assigned at birth?” A total of 121 heterosexual men, 209 heterosexual women, 3 gay men, 5 lesbians, and 14 bisexual women participated in this study.

## Measures

**Thinness Orientation.** A focus on obtaining a body without fat was assessed by a 9-item scale (Thinness Orientation Scale; TOS) created for the purposes of the present study (results of a Factor Analyses were used to narrow our items from 13 to 9; results available upon request). Items were rated on a 6-point numerical scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*always*). Example items include “I have a set of rules I follow to be thin.” and “being thin is important to me.” Responses were averaged such that higher scores indicated a greater orientation to thinness than did lower scores (Overall, Range=1.0-6.0,  $M=2.87$ ,  $SD=1.36$ ,  $\alpha=.85$ ; Women, Range=1.0-6.0,  $M=3.18$ ,  $SD=1.33$ ,  $\alpha=.93$ ; Men, Range=0.0-3.86,  $M=2.29$ ,  $SD=1.24$ ,  $\alpha=.94$ ).

**Drive for Thinness.** The 7-item Drive for Thinness subscale of Eating Disorder Inventory-3 (EDI-3; Clausen, Rosenvinge, Friberg & Rokkedal, 2010) assessed participants' motivation to be slender which is a symptom of eating disorders. Items were rated on a 6-point numerical scale ranging

from 1 (*always*) to 6 (*never*). Example items include “I eat sweets and carbohydrates without feeling nervous” and “I think about dieting.”

Responses were averaged such that higher scores indicated greater drive for thinness than did lower scores (Overall, Range=0.0-3.86,  $M=1.47$ ,  $SD=0.89$ ,  $\alpha=.85$ ; Women, Range=0.29-3.86,  $M=1.66$ ,  $SD=0.91$ ,  $\alpha=.67$ ; Men, Range=0.0-3.86,  $M=1.11$ ,  $SD=0.73$ ,  $\alpha=.84$ ).

**Restrictive Eating.** To assess restrictive eating, a 5-item subscale of the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (EDEQ; Fairburn & Beglin, 2008) was used. Items were rated on a 6-point numerical scale ranging from 1 (no days) to 6 (every day). Example items include “Have you had a definite desire to have an empty stomach with the aim of influencing your shape or weight?” and “Have you gone for long periods of time (8 waking hours or more) without eating anything at all in order to influence your shape or weight?” Responses were averaged such that higher scores indicated greater restrictive eating than did lower scores (Overall, Range=0.0-6.0,  $M=1.12$ ,  $SD=1.25$ ,  $\alpha=.85$ ; Women, Range=0.0-6.0,  $M=1.30$ ,  $SD=1.37$ ,  $\alpha=.67$ ; Men, Range=0.0-6.0,  $M=1.04$ ,  $SD=1.34$ ,  $\alpha=.84$ ).

**Eating Concerns.** To assess eating concerns, a 5-item subscale of the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (EDEQ; Fairburn & Beglin, 2008) was used. Items were rated on a 6-point numerical scale ranging from 1 (no days) to 6 (every day). An example item is “Have you had a definite fear of losing control overeating?” and “Has thinking about food, eating or

calories made it very difficult to concentrate on things you are interested in (for example, working, following a conversation, or reading)?” Responses were averaged such that higher scores indicated greater eating concern score than did lower scores (Overall, Range=1.00-3.83,  $M=2.41$ ,  $SD=0.28$ ,  $\alpha = .83$ ; Women, Range=0.0-3.33,  $M=2.42$ ,  $SD=2.44$ ,  $\alpha = .81$ , Men, Range=1.0-3.83,  $M=2.36$ ,  $SD=0.34$ ,  $\alpha = .87$ ).

**Shape Concerns.** To assess body-shape concern concerns, an 8-item subscale of the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (EDEQ; Fairburn & Beglin, 2008) was used. Items were rated on a 6-point numerical scale ranging from 1 (no days) to 6 (every day). An example item is “Have you had a definite desire to have a totally flat stomach?” and “I am preoccupied with the desire to be thinner.” Responses were averaged such that higher scores indicated greater concern for body-shape than did lower scores (Overall, Range=0.0-6.0,  $M=1.92$ ,  $SD=1.71$ ,  $\alpha = .93$ ; Women, Range=0.29-3.86,  $M=1.66$ ,  $SD=0.91$ ,  $\alpha = .67$ ; Men, Range=0.0-5,  $M=0.97$ ,  $SD=1.12$ ,  $\alpha = 0.88$ ).

**Weight Concerns.** To assess weight concerns, a 5-item subscale of the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (EDEQ; Fairburn & Beglin, 2008) was used. Items were rated on a 6-point numerical scale ranging from 1 (no days) to 6 (every day). An example item is “Have you had a strong desire to lose weight?” and “Has your weight influenced how you think about (judge) yourself as a person?” Responses were averaged such that

higher scores indicated greater weight concern score than did lower scores (Overall, Range=0.0-6.0,  $M=1.69$ ,  $SD=1.64$ ,  $\alpha = .88$ ; Women, Range=0.0-6.0,  $M=2.35$ ,  $SD=1.75$ ,  $\alpha = .93$ ; Men, Range=0.0-5.0,  $M=0.97$ ,  $SD=1.16$ ,  $\alpha = .80$ ).

**Drive for Leanness.** A 10-item scale (Drive for Leanness Scale; DLS-10; Smolak & Murren, 2008) measured the desire to have a physique low in body fat with toned muscles. Items were rated on a 6-point numerical scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*always*). Items include “I think the best-looking bodies are well-toned” and “My goal is to have well-toned muscles” and “People’s muscles should be toned but not over-developed.” Responses were averaged to create an overall desire to have a body low in body fat with toned muscles score such that high scores indicate a greater desire to have a physique low in body fat with toned muscles than did low scores (Overall, Range=1.0-5.90,  $M=3.66$ ,  $SD=1.04$ ,  $\alpha = .89$ ; Range=1.10-5.80,  $M=3.54$ ,  $SD=1.03$ ,  $\alpha = .89$ ; Range=1.0-5.9,  $M=3.91$ ,  $SD=1.04$ ,  $\alpha = .89$ ).

**Drive for Muscularity.** A 7-item scale (Drive for Muscularity Scale; DMS; McCreary, et al., 2004) measured drive for a physique free from body fat with a high presence of muscle mass; Items were rated on a 6-point numerical scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*always*). Example items included in the measure was “My goal is to have well-toned muscles” and “I think I would feel more confident if I had more muscle mass.” Responses were averaged to create an overall drive for a physique free from body fat with a high presence of muscle mass score such that high scores indicate a greater

drive for a physique free from body fat with a high presence of muscle mass than did low scores (Overall, Range=1.0-6.0,  $M=3.21$ ,  $SD=1.35$ ,  $\alpha=.85$ ; Women, Range=1.0-6.0,  $M=2.86$ ,  $SD=1.17$ ,  $\alpha=.90$ ; Men, Range=1.0-6.0,  $M=3.85$ ,  $SD=1.43$ ,  $\alpha=.94$ ).

**Body Dissatisfaction.** A 16-item scale measured body dissatisfaction Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ 16-B; Evans & Dolan, 1993). Items were rated on a 6-point numerical scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*always*). Example items included in the measure were “Have you been so worried about your shape that you have been feeling you ought to diet?” and “Have you felt excessively large and rounded?” Responses were averaged to create an overall body dissatisfaction score such that high scores indicate a greater presence of body dissatisfaction than did lower scores (Overall, Range=1.0-5.88,  $M=2.62$ ,  $SD=1.33$ ,  $\alpha=.85$ ; Women, Range=1.10-5.80,  $M=3.54$ ,  $SD=1.03$ ,  $\alpha=.97$ ; Men, Range=1.0-5.90,  $M=3.91$ ,  $SD=1.04$ ,  $\alpha=0.96$ ).

**Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory.** A 45-item scale (Conformity to Masculine Norms Index; CMNI; Mahalik, Locke, Ludlow, Diemer, Scott, Gottfried & Freitas, 2003) measured an individual’s efforts to conform to the characteristics of masculinity ideology. Items were rated on a 4-point numerical scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). Items such as “I don’t like giving all my attention to work” were reverse-scored such that for all subscales higher numbers indicated greater conformity to masculine norms. The CMNI has 9 subscales:

*Control over Emotions.* To assess control over emotions, the 6-item subscale was used. An example item is “*I never share my feelings,*” (Overall, Range=1.0-3.83,  $M=1.42$ ,  $SD=.28$ ,  $\alpha = .90$ ; Women, Range=1.5-3.33,  $M=2.43$ ,  $SD=2.43$ ,  $\alpha = .92$ ; Men, Range=1.0-3.83,  $M=2.38$ ,  $SD=0.34$ ,  $\alpha = .87$ ).

*Winning.* To assess winning, the 6-item subscale was used. An example item is “*In general, I will do anything to win,*” (Overall, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=2.53$ ,  $SD=0.70$ ,  $\alpha = .87$ ; Women, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=2.36$ ,  $SD=0.70$ ,  $\alpha = .88$ ; Men, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=2.85$ ,  $SD=0.61$ ,  $\alpha = .81$ ).

*Promiscuity.* To assess promiscuity, the 4-item Playboy subscale was used. An example item is “*If I could, I would frequently change sexual partners,*” (Overall, Range=0.0-6.0,  $M=1.66$ ,  $SD=0.64$ ,  $\alpha = .75$ ; Women, Range=0.0-6.0,  $M=1.48$ ,  $SD=0.51$ ,  $\alpha = .66$ ; Men, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=1.99$ ,  $SD=0.71$ ,  $\alpha = .74$ ).

*Violence.* To assess violence acceptance, the 6-item violence subscale was used. An example item is “*I am willing to get into a physical fight if necessary,*” (Overall, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=2.47$ ,  $SD=0.74$ ,  $\alpha = .85$ ; Women, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=2.22$ ,  $SD=0.70$ ,  $\alpha = .85$ ; Men, Range=1.50-4.0,  $M=2.94$ ,  $SD=0.60$ ,  $\alpha = .85$ ).

*Self-Reliance.* To assess self-reliance, the 5-item self-reliance subscale was used. An example item is “*I never ask for help.,*” (Overall, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=2.40$ ,  $SD=0.76$ ,  $\alpha = .85$ ; Women, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=2.43$ ,  $SD=0.80$ ,  $\alpha = .86$ ; Men, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=2.40$ ,  $SD=0.76$ ,  $\alpha = .79$ ).

*Risk-Taking.* To assess risk taking, the 5-item risk-taking subscale was used. An example item is “I frequently put myself in risky situations,” (Overall, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=2.24$ ,  $SD=0.62$ ,  $\alpha = .81$ ; Women, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=2.13$ ,  $SD=0.58$ ,  $\alpha = .79$ ; Men, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=2.46$ ,  $SD=0.63$ ,  $\alpha = .79$ ).

*Power over Women.* To assess power over women, the 4-item risk-taking subscale was used. An example item is “In general, I control the women in my life,” Overall, Range=1.0-3.75,  $M=1.4$ ,  $SD=0.51$ ,  $\alpha = .88$ ; Women, 1.0-3.25,  $M=1.28$ ,  $SD=0.38$ ,  $\alpha = .51$ ; Men, Range=1.0-3.75,  $M=1.65$ ,  $SD=0.62$ ,  $\alpha = .75$ ).

*Primacy of Work.* To assess primacy of work, the 4-item primacy of work subscale was used. An example item is “My work is the most important part of my life” (Overall, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=2.53$ ,  $SD=0.67$ ,  $\alpha = .79$ ; Women, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=2.59$ ,  $SD=0.65$ ,  $\alpha = .79$ ; Men, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=2.41$ ,  $SD=0.69$ ,  $\alpha = .79$ ).

*Heterosexual Self-Presentation.* To assess heterosexual self-presentation, the 6-item heterosexual self-presentation was used. An example item is “I would be furious if someone thought I was gay” (Overall, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=2.32$ ,  $SD=0.76$ ,  $\alpha = .84$ ; Women, Range=1.0-4.0,  $M=2.18$ ,  $SD=0.73$ ,  $\alpha = .84$ ; Men, Range=1.17-4.0,  $M=2.63$ ,  $SD=0.69$ ,  $\alpha = .81$ ).

## **Procedure**

Students were recruited from entry-level Psychology courses and offered course credit for participation in the study. An alternative

assignment, for equal credit, was offered if participation was refused. All researchers and research assistants involved had proper ethical training preceding the present study. The study was approved by the researchers' Institutional Review Board and all board policies and requirements were met. The study also carefully followed the American Psychological Association's ethical standards, including informed consent. Data was collected through group-administered, paper and pencil surveys that consisted of a brief demographic section and the following 6 scales: 1) Eating Disorder Inventory-3 (Clausen et al., 2010), 2) Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (Fairburn & Beglin, 2008), 3) Thinness Orientation Scale (Developed for the present study), Drive for Leanness Scale (Smolak & Murnen, 2008), 4) Drive for Muscularity Scale (McCreary, Sasse, Saucier, & Dorsch, 2004), 5) Body Shape Questionnaire (Evans & Dolan, 1993), 6) Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (Parent & Moradi, 2009). Students were given 15 minutes to complete the survey and offered a brief period for questions prior to beginning.

## Results

To test the hypothesis (H1) that the proposed Thinness Orientation Scale would be reliable, we used Factor Analyses to narrow our items from 13 to 9 (results available upon request). As predicted, the reliability was above satisfactory (Overall,  $\alpha = .85$ ; Women,  $\alpha = .93$ ; Men,  $\alpha = .94$ ).



To test the hypothesis (H2a) that there would be evidence of convergent validity with the Thinness Orientation Scale and pre-existing scales measuring similar constructs (i.e., restrictive eating, eating concern, concern with body shape, concern with weight, drive for muscularity, drive for leanness and body dissatisfaction), Pearson correlations were calculated. As hypothesized, the constructs predicted to be most related to thinness orientation were positively correlated: restrictive eating (Overall, .58,  $p=.01$ ; Women, .64,  $p=.01$ ; Men, .48,  $p=.01$ ); shape concern (Overall, .77,  $p=.01$ ; Women, .79,  $p=.01$ ; Men, .61,  $p=.01$ ); weight concern (Overall, .71,  $p=.01$ ; Women, .71,  $p=.01$ ; Men, .56,  $p=.01$ ); drive for leanness (Overall, .41,  $p=.01$ ; Women, .54,  $p=.05$ ; Men, .42,  $p=.05$ ); body dissatisfaction (Overall, .72,  $p=.01$ ; Women, .74,  $p=.01$ ; Men, .58,  $p=.01$ ); with an exception to the eating concern measure (Overall, -.02, *n.s.*; Women, .07, *n.s.*; Men, -.15, *n.s.*) (see Table 1 & Table 2).

In addition, to test the hypothesis (H2b) that an orientation for thinness would be positively correlated with the scale most related to our construct drive for thinness, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated. In contrast to predictions, the thinness orientation scale and the drive for thinness scale were not the most highly correlated overall or for women (Overall, .71,  $p=.01$ ; Women, .72,  $p=.01$ ; Men, .61,  $p=.01$ ). The shape concern measure had the highest correlation with thinness orientation overall and for women (Overall, .77,  $p=.01$ ; Women, .79,  $p=.01$ ; Men, .61,

$p=.61$ ). However, the shape concern and drive for thinness measure had an identical relation with thinness orientation.

To test the hypothesis (H3) that there would be evidence of divergent validity with the Thinness Orientation Scale and pre-existing scales measuring unrelated constructs (i.e., conformity to masculine norms: control over emotions, the degree that winning influences behavior, promiscuity, agreeance with violence, self-reliance, likeliness to take a risk, patriarchal agreeability, the importance of work and heterosexual self-presentation), Pearson correlations coefficients were calculated. As predicted, the measures for control over emotions (Overall,  $-.02$ , *n.s.*; Women,  $.07$ , *n.s.*; Men,  $-.15$ ), degree that winning influences behavior (Overall,  $.03$ , *n.s.*; Women,  $.06$ , *n.s.*; Men,  $.14$ , *n.s.*), promiscuity (Overall,  $.04$ , *n.s.*; Women,  $.20$ ,  $p=.01$ ; Men,  $.18$ ,  $p=.05$ ), agreeance with violence (Overall,  $-.23$ ,  $p=.01$ ; Women,  $-.14$ ,  $p=.05$ ; Men,  $-.06$ , *n.s.*), autonomy (Overall,  $.20$ ,  $p=.01$ ; Women,  $.24$ ,  $p=.01$ ; Men,  $.06$ , *n.s.*), risk-taking (Overall,  $-.12$ ,  $p=.05$ ; Women,  $-.04$ , *n.s.*; Men,  $-.03$ , *n.s.*), power over women (Overall,  $-.03$ , *n.s.*; Women,  $.25$ ,  $p=.01$ ; Men,  $.25$ ,  $p=.01$ ), importance of work (Overall,  $.09$ , *n.s.*; Women,  $.25$ ,  $p=.01$ ; Men,  $-.01$ , *n.s.*), and heterosexual self-presentation (Overall,  $-.01$ , *n.s.*; Women,  $.06$ , *n.s.*; Men,  $.06$ , *n.s.*) all showed weak correlations with the Thinness Orientation Scale. This pattern of findings suggests that measures related to conformity to masculinity are not related to a focus on obtaining a body without body fat (see Table 1 & Table 2).

## Discussion

The present study showed evidence to support the hypothesis that the Thinness Orientation Scale is reliable, by producing an acceptable reliability score. The hypothesis that the Thinness Orientation Scale would be related to pre-existing scales measuring similar constructs was true for similar measures excluding the eating concern measure. This finding may be attributed to the eating concern measure failing to be unidimensional. The eating concern is a very complex construct, and it may consist of more than one aspect relating to body image; therefore it may be measuring more than one construct causing results to perform unexpectedly. The hypothesis that the focus to obtain a body without fat is the most positively correlated with the Drive for Thinness Scale was not supported. Although the drive for thinness measure did highly positively correlate with the Thinness Orientation Scale, the correlation was higher with the Shape Concern Subscale a part of the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire overall and for women, results were identical with the shape concern measure for men. This finding may be attributed to an inconsistent definition of thinness and thinness not being measured as a unidimensional construct. A lack of consistent definition for thinness may have caused a varying pool of items selected for either scale, leading to more than one construct being measured. Lastly, compared to existing scales like the measure for the drive for thinness, the Thinness Orientation Scale was created for use in a

non-clinical population, meaning this scale should not be used as a form of treatment or diagnosis with those who have eating disorders.

### **Strengths**

This study compared thinness with eight similar measures to fully represent the many aspects of body image. It is necessary for such a complex construct to be looked at from an intersectional perspective. In addition, the goal of confirming the validity and reliability of the Thinness Orientation Scale for future use was achieved.

### **Weaknesses**

The sample for this study was not representative. All of the participants are undergraduate students at the same medium-sized university in Pennsylvania. The majority of participants are White/European-American, and the sample was exclusive to those who identify as cis-gender. Also, all the measures used are self-report which can cause participants to respond in a socially desirable way, altering results. Finally, the present study cannot contribute support to a causal relationship.

### **Future Directions**

Future studies should consist of a consistent and concise definition for thinness and other constructs related to body image. Experimental data collection is advised to produce a cause and effect relationship and behavioral measures that can be used to take the environment (i.e., social and physical) into consideration. The majority of the sample in the present

study were White/European-American young adults, and cis-gender. In future studies gaining a more representative sample in terms of age, sexuality, and race/ethnicity is suggested.

## Conclusion

Although further research is necessary, the present study was able to verify the reliability and validity of the Thinness Orientation Scale. Body image is a very complex construct, and the ability to identify the components that make up body image and measure them separately can contribute to the identification of traits predictive of eating disorders (i.e., body dissatisfaction). Although a more concise definition is needed, thinness as described in the present study is most related to the construct of body-shape concern. By contributing to literature aimed at locating the differentiation between standard behaviors regarding body image, eating concern, and maladaptive behaviors, the present study offers insight on a way to measure thinness.

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Table 1 Intercorrelation among variables

	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		
1. Thinness Orientation	1																	
2. Restrictive Eating	.61**	1																
3. Eating Concern	0.02	-0.01	1															
4. Shape Concern	.78**	.61**	-0.03	1														
5. Weight Concern	.76**	.64**	0.01	.93**	1													
6. Drive for Muscularity	0.07	.14*	-0.05	.12*	.12*	1												
7. Drive for Leanness	.25**	.24**	-0.07	.28**	.24**	.59**	1											
8. Body Dissatisfaction	.73**	.53**	-0.11	.88**	.84**	.14**	.28**	1										
9. Emotional Control	0.03	0.06	-0.19**	0.1	.11*	0.09	0.1	.15**	1									
10. Winning	-0.08	-0.01	0.08	-.14**	-.15**	.28**	.30**	-.14**	-.16**	1								
11. Promiscuity	-0.01	0.05	.21**	-0.01	-0.01	.25**	.21**	-0.02	-0.09	.26**	1							
12. Violence	-.23**	-0.05	0.07	-.26**	-.23**	.17**	0.07	-.26**	-.12*	.31**	.24**	1						
13. Autonomy	.22**	0.1	.41**	.24**	.23**	0.02	0.01	.25**	0.07	0.01	.12*	-0.003	1					
14. Risk-Taking	-0.09	0.01	.11*	-.16**	-.13*	0.09	0.08	-.15**	-0.03	.22**	.30**	.33**	-0.06	1				
15. Power Over Women	-0.08	-0.02	0.1	-.12*	-.12*	.19**	.25**	0.09	.12*	.20**	.31**	.19**	0.01	.18**	1			
16. Primacy of Work	0.08	0.03	-0.1	0.09	0.09	.12*	.13*	.15**	0.06	-0.01	-.17**	-0.05	0.05	-0.02	0.05	1		
17. Heterosexual Self-Presentation	-0.05	-0.04	.14**	-.13*	-.11*	.20**	.27**	-.15**	0	.44**	.17**	.21**	0.03	.30**	.35**	0.03	1	
18. Focus on Obtaining a Body Without Fat	.71**	.58**	-0.02	.77**	.71**	0.1	.41**	.72**	.12*	0.03	0.04	-.23**	.20**	-.12*	-0.03	0.09	-0.01	1

Table 2 Intercorrelation among variables of interest by gender

Column1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1. Thinness Orientation	1	.57**	-.18*	.73**	.66**	.26**	.34**	.67**	-0.04	0.08	0.08	-0.03	0.04	-0.01	0.12	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	.61**
2. Restrictive Eating	.64**	1	-0.12	.55**	.55**	.22*	.24**	.51**	0.06	0.02	0.07	-0.04	-0.08	0.11	0.12	0.04	-0.06	-0.06	.48**
3. Eating Concern	.15*	0.05	1	-0.12	-0.15	-0.11	-0.07	-0.13	-0.11	0.16	.26**	0.01	.36**	0.04	0.12	0.01	.28**	-0.15	
4. Shape Concern	.77**	.67**	0.05	1	.89**	.33**	.33**	.77**	0.03	-0.03	0.16	-0.04	0.09	-0.12	0.12	-0.01	-0.13	-0.13	.61**
5. Weight Concern	.76**	.69**	0.1	.93**	1	.30**	.27**	.72**	0.11	-0.03	0.11	0.02	0.04	-0.07	0.1	-0.004	-0.95	-.56**	
6. Drive for Muscularity	.15*	.17*	-0.04	.27**	.24**	1	.61**	.32**	0.13	0.09	.23**	0.14	-0.03	0.06	0.15	0.17	-0.03	.20*	
7. Drive for Leanness	.31**	.28**	-0.1	.41**	.34**	.56**	1	.39**	.18*	.18*	.27**	0.09	-0.01	0.14	.34**	0.18	0.13	.42**	
8. Body Dissatisfaction	.71**	.56**	0.08	.88**	.84**	.30**	.38**	1	0.13	0.02	0.13	-0.02	0.04	-0.1	.18*	0.02	-0.14	.58**	
9. Emotional Control	0.05	0.05	-.22**	0.11	0.1	0.11	0.06	.14*	1	-.20*	-0.03	-0.09	0.04	0.01	.28**	0.07	0.02	0.15	
10. Winning	0	0.02	0.01	-0.003	-0.06	.23**	.31**	-0.02	-0.11	1	.31**	.23*	-0.01	0.16	0.13	.18*	.44**	0.14	
11. Promiscuity	.16*	0.12	0.12	.17*	.14*	0.1	0.12	.14*	-0.06	0.07	1	.22*	0.17	.22*	.39**	-0.01	.24**	.18*	
12. Violence	.15*	0.002	0.06	-.16*	-.17*	-0.07	-0.05	-.16*	-0.11	.18**	0.02	1	0.14	0.17	-0.12	-0.09	0.06	-0.06	
13. Autonomy	.28**	0.17	.44**	.28**	.26**	0.11	0.03	.31**	0.09	0.06	.16*	0.01	1	-0.1	0.02	-.18*	.19*	0.06	
14. Risk-Taking	-0.03	-0.001	.14*	-0.06	-0.05	-0.05	-0.003	-0.07	-0.02	.14*	.23**	.29**	0	1	0.07	0.08	0.16	-0.03	
15. Power Over Women	-0.06	-0.09	0.05	-0.08	-0.09	-0.03	0.08	-0.07	-0.004	0.07	0.004	.17**	0.03	0.13	1	0.13	.24**	.25**	
16. Primacy of Work	0.1	0.02	-.14*	0.1	0.09	.15*	.16*	.13*	.21**	0.09	0.05	-0.16*	-0.01	0.05	-0.06	1	0.08	-0.01	
17. Heterosexual Self-Presentation	0.07	0.01	0.07	0.05	0.03	.17**	.29**	0.01	0.03	.34**	-0.05	0.1	0.02	0.09	.32**	0.05	1	0.06	
18. Focus on Obtaining a Body Without Fat	.72**	.64**	0.07	.79**	.71**	.25**	.54**	.74**	0.07	0.06	.20**	-.14*	.24**	-0.04	.25**	-0.01	0.06	1	

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# Religion Through Truth

Tabitha Rathman

Sojourner Truth, going by her enslaved name Isabella in the late 1820s, was forced to walk miles with no shoes, back and forth between an attorney's office and a Quaker village, in order to try and free her son from an illegal slave trade. When she got him back, she could feel the topographical mapping of the scars on his back that told of the horrors her young son had gone through after he was torn from her. Throughout this ordeal and the many trials and tribulations before and after, Sojourner turned to a higher power. Scattered through the *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, religion is used as a panacea for her suffering and it was constantly changing as it evolved with her understanding of the world.

White men had ravaged ancestral homelands and violently forced men, women and children into slavery, but they could not strip them of the deep and rich culture of their foreparents. Thinking differently from those who were telling them what to do and think was an incredible act of defiance by those enslaved. They brought their own religious traditions and ideals with them. Having absolutely nothing else to their names, these rich traditions and cultural values would be interwoven into religious spirituals and adapted into religions many enslaved people practiced during the first and second Great Awakenings (between 1740 and the mid-nineteenth century). Enslavers could not deny that those they enslaved had their own



religious and spiritual beliefs, undermining in ironic ways that racist propaganda that enslaved Black Africans and African-Americans were “heathens.” Retaining elements of their history and wresting a new faith out of the ashes of their horrific conditions represented an incredible act of defiance that was practiced by many, including Sojourner Truth.

Religion is not innate; it is a structure, a set of beliefs and values that are culturally shaped and which may take a lifetime to fully grasp. Truth first heard about her God at the age of nine. After her first enslaver had died, she would often find her mother weeping over her three other children being previously ripped away from her and the impending fear of her remaining two children encountering the same fate. Truth’s mother began to teach her two children about a protector for their souls in times of trouble. After long days, the dwindled family would gather around the fire and Mau-mau Bett would begin: “My children, there is a God. He lives in the sky and when you are beaten, or cruelly treated, or fall into any trouble, you must ask help of him, and he will always hear and help you” (*Narrative of Sojourner Truth* 6). These words engrained themselves into young Truth’s mind and continued to guide her after her mother’s death.

She was soon sold away from her brother and sent to the Nealy family. There, she experienced language barriers (she spoke Dutch and they spoke English) and was frequently beaten simply for an ability to translate their commands. It was here she remembered and began to rely on her

mother's words about God being a shield if she would simply ask for His help. Since Truth's religious education from her mother was cut short, her understanding of God as she knew Him was as a being who could only protect her if her prayers were audible. For how could He shield her if she did not actively call for Him to do so? She was not aware of the omnipotent potential her God could have, of a God who knew her thoughts and could succor her even before she was beaten. Truth ruminated on this aspect of her faith after recounting a horrific bare-fleshed lashing she received: "When I got beaten, I never knew it long enough beforehand to pray; and I always thought if I had time to pray to God to help, I should have escaped the beating" (10). She rationalized her beatings and God not protecting her on a kind of technicality, but instead of shaking her faith, it solidified it. Truth began to pray out loud in solitude for a release from the abysmal Nealy's, and this time, her God came through.

In 1810, she was sold to the Dumont family. It was here that she began to be treated with a bare minimum of human decency and began to intertwine that with godliness. She writes about how her enslaver, Mr. Dumont, would often whip her, but she was not cross with him. Truth saw them as "just" beatings and at the time, she understood them simply them as "no more than she deserved." Mr. Dumont was a benevolent captor in her eyes, but when it was announced in 1827 that emancipation in New York State would be enacted, Mr. Dumont was not keen to let go of Truth.

He claimed that a bad hand she suffered from the year before meant that she “owed” him work for another year. Truth obliged Mr. Dumont’s demand, staying on and continuing to work until 1828, when it seemed as if her freedom papers were still not on the horizon.

Sojourner Truth and her God collaborated on a great exodus, where Truth played both the parts of Moses and the Israelites, leading herself to a promised land. She stole away in the night, bundled up and with her babe in her arms, setting off blindly in hopes of finding asylum. As the day began to break, Truth’s stamina was deteriorating, and she was seriously considering returning to the Dumont’s when she happened upon a cabin in the distance. Normally, approaching a strange dwelling in the woods is risky at best, and that risk is ten-fold for a Black woman, but it was a risk Truth had to take. Luck was on her side; the Van Wagener family who lived there was staunchly anti-slavery and happily took in Truth and her son. This basic level of human decency was nothing she had experienced before. When her former enslaver, Dumont, showed up to try and take Truth back, Isaac Van Wagener paid off the “debt” Dumont demanded. She was baffled by the Van Wagener’s insistence on being called by their first names and stressing to Truth that there was only one master to all beings on Earth: God.

In her small slice of Elysium with the Van Wagener family, Truth’s religious practices began to alter. With no troubles at her new abode, Truth did not need to talk to God anymore. She did not need Him to shield her

from a vengeful troglodyte of an enslaver and she did not need Him to help her rationalize any of her actions in response to how she had been treated. Truth's next vision from her only true master came a few months after her time with the Van Wagener's. Truth had had a type of premonition that her old enslaver Dumont would be coming by and she was going to go with him. This premonition came to pass; when Dumont showed up, Truth approached his cart to load her belongings and her son into the back, when she was hit with a divine intervention. God had come, but Truth did not feel his warmth, but a terror instead. She was ashamed of having used Him only when she needed something and was convinced that he had come to smite her. That is when Jesus had stepped between them; Truth had heard of Jesus but did not understand his place within her own religion. This experience led her to declare, "Let others say what they will of the efficacy of prayer, I believe in it, and I shall pray. Thank God! Yes, *I shall always pray*" (25). Truth decided not to return with Dumont after all and this encounter added a new figure into her evolving relationship with and understanding of her faith.

Sojourner Truth actively set out to devour any and all knowledge she could find about her God and his only begotten son Jesus. After her many readings, something began to happen which she would later recall with much shame: she began to question her God. Her discovery in Genesis that God worked during the day and rested at night left her dumbstruck. The

almighty master of all could not manage a full day's work, but she and her fellow enslaved peoples could manage that and more? It was not adding up. Truth discusses her doubt, writing, "why then it seems that God cannot do as much as *I* can; for *I* can bear the sun at noon and work several days and nights in succession without being much tired" (39) Truth came to the conclusion that since God was a spirit, there was no way He could possibly tire and that the passages about God resting were to make humans feel better about rest. She became so embarrassed at these "infelicitous" thoughts about the one she loved so much that she did not speak of them for years.

Truth's understanding of her religion and its role in her life allowed her to become more outspoken when people deigned to question her God. On one such occasion, after she had moved to Connecticut in her later years, she scolded a group of Second Advent practitioners for what she concluded was delusional practice. The preachers in her opinion were intentionally trying to agitate and excite their parishioners, whom she deemed already too riled up. Truth pulled herself up onto a stump and addressed the preachers and their flock, declaring, "Here you are talking about being 'changed in the twinkling of an eye.' If the Lord should come, he'd change you to *nothing!* For there is nothing to you" (40). With this scolding, her gift of oration was brought to the fore.

Even as she chided the audience, they were hanging on each and every word. Her speeches were so powerful, they literally quelled mobs. Her time at a Northampton camp was sullied by a pack of wild young men who began to disrupt the ground after they felt they were slighted. The camp had no idea what to do about it, but Sojourner, the only woman of color on the whole grounds, stepped up. She pushed down all of her fears and exclaimed, “Shall I run away and hide from the Devil? Me, a servant of the living God? Have I not faith enough to out and quell that mob...I’ll go to the rescue and the Lord shall go with me and protect me” (42). Completely alone, she set off in the middle of the night to shut down a mob of angry white men with weapons. Jesus could not manage to eat a supper alone, but Truth could trek into the darkness in solitude to stop a mob. Her absolute confidence in herself and her Lord is truly amazing.

As Truth made her way through the grounds, she sang a hymn aloud and was soon swarmed by the men. She does not recount how she felt at that exact moment, but it is safe to assume it was not a feeling of exhilaration. Truth asked why the men felt it was necessary to encircle her with their clubs and sticks. In an unexpected and powerful turn of events, the men expressed their wish for her to continue singing and moved back to give her space. They wanted to hear her experiences and threatened amongst each other to knock down anyone who showed her disrespect. Truth obliged the men and began to speak and to sing her hymns. She had

done what she set out to do. The mob was quelled, and she had made them promise in return for one more encore of hymns that they would leave and stop terrorizing the grounds. After she finished, the men left and though it was reported that a few men did not want to leave, the leader of the mob reminded them of their promise to Sojourner Truth and they disappeared into the night. Just as her God's words had been so powerful to her, Truth's words had a similar effect on multiple crowds.

Through the rollercoaster of her life, Sojourner's religion faced its ups and downs as well, but along with change came something more important: healing. During Dumont's final days, Truth went to see him, and he confessed his wrong doings in owning slaves. Truth felt grateful to hear him utter these words, writing, "Oh! How sweet to my mind was this confession! And what a confession for a master to make to a slave! A slaveholding master turned brother! Poor old man may the Lord bless him, and all the slaveholders partake of his spirit!" (52). After all he had put her through, the beatings, the enslavement and the forced work past her emancipation date, she found it in herself to forgive a man who once owned every aspect of her life. This, too, might be one element of her faith, a kind of power to reclaim her life, her history, and her story.

Her faith, introduced to her at the age of nine, gave her light in the darkness, helped soothe her wounds, and sparked an oratory talent that rivals the greatest speakers. Her strength, compassion and relentless

purpose in life were rooted in her faith and her religion, which informed her experiences from childhood until her death. There is a reason religion figures prominently in her narrative: because it is essential to understanding Truth herself.

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# The Objectification of the Female Body in Jazz Dance

Tiffany Shrom

While social ideas about gender change through time and across geographic borders, the dance world's ideas about gender have been more stagnant, more resistant to revision. Each genre of dance battles with gender in a different way and their approaches to gender will define important choreographic choices on stage. While the number of dancers still consists mainly of women, there is authoritative but sometimes silent power that is too rarely discussed, especially within the jazz dance community: the dominance of men, in dance in general and jazz dance specifically, especially in the earlier stages of jazz dance history.

Men have contributed to the jazz aesthetic we still see in today's dance in profound ways. This is due to the disproportion between male and female jazz dance artists while the genre was on the rise. Many jazz artists historically were men, and the movement vocabulary presented clear feminine qualities that objectified the female body. The gender imbalance in early jazz dance often promoted the female body as sexualized. The gender imbalance also revealed power dynamics and biases that exist and continue to be embodied in jazz dance.

One example of this is Josephine Baker. Born in 1906, Baker was an African American dancer who rooted her practice in African traditions

(Kraut 437). Baker's aesthetic, very much jazz-infused, often translated as self-objectification. Although she broke stereotypes and honored her culture, the public still viewed her as erotic and sexual. Her movement consisted of an arched back, protruding hips, and eye-crossing (Habel 130). She repeatedly performed wearing a banana skirt while topless. Many men responded with reviews that focused on her semi-nudity rather than her dancing. One critic even wrote, "Baker was a danger to Swedish culture as well as sexual mores" (Habel 131). The idea that she was honoring her heritage through jazz and African dance was disregarded. Across the board, critics were only fascinated by her skin color and body (Habel 128). An uneducated audience might think she is objectifying her body through her choreography, but in reality, it is cultural. It is important to note that objectification of women in dance is racialized, that African American women are often sexualized in different and more extreme ways than white women.

When we review jazz history more broadly, we can see a pattern of slight bias towards men, an argument made clearly in Wendy Oliver's *Jazz Dance: A History of Roots and Branches*. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, many jazz dance artists were on the rise, and men outnumbered significantly. The most influential choreographers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century included Pepsi Bethel, Jack Cole, Bob Fosse, Gus Giordano, Frank Hatchett, Eugene Faccuito (Luigi), Donald McKayle, Katherine Dunham and Lynn Simonson. Bethel

was a famous male choreographer, named by many as “one of the best of the authentic jazz dancers that America has ever produced” (Hubbard 75). Cole is referred to as the “father of theatrical jazz dance” (Darkenwalk 82). Fosse was considered one of “broadway’s foremost choreographer/director during the late 1960s and through the 1970s” (Mrozowski 97). Giordano is acclaimed as the “twentieth-century jazz dance innovator, master educator, and choreographer” (McStraw 103) and has also been described as earthy and masculine. McStraw claims the contributions Giordano made to jazz are so great that his role in converting this art into something credible cannot be overemphasized. When it comes to Hatchett, his “name instantly refers to what is hot and fresh in the world of jazz dance” and McKayle argues that his firsthand experiences must be documented considering he is still alive (Boross 109, 125). Luigi is viewed as an iconic figure in the jazz dance community who Simonson praises because he taught her to “dance like a lady” (Karpanty131). Dunham is known for including dance influenced by research and experience of African dance traditions into jazz vocabulary. The African diaspora was a major theme and focus in her work. Although she was a brilliant choreographer, racism accompanied Dunham throughout her journey. She was often deprived of rehearsal space and hotels (Corbett 91). Bethel was extremely successful as an African American man in the jazz community but Dunham was still struggling for her place. In *Jazz Dance: A History of Roots and Branches*, Oliver describes her as the

pillar of jazz dance, yet Dunham is less recognized in other histories, which tend to reiterate and center the importance of male jazz influencers.

Looking at the styles of each influencer, there is one in particular who stands out as using the female as an objectified focus: Fosse. Mrozowski writes that “Fosse instructed the female dancers to be seductive by keeping their chins down and teasing with their eyes” (97-98). While Fosse’s style has great clarity and distinction, the objectification of women was a central element in his work. Examining a few examples of his choreographic work portraying this are “Rich Man’s Frug,” “All That Jazz,” and “Big Spender.” “Big Spender” is described as having seductive moves, poses, and stances along with being sensual and erotic in nature (Mrozowski 98). It is important to keep in mind that the movement being created by Fosse had specific intentions when placed on and situated in the female body. Although spontaneous and captivating, the message behind his choreography presents women as sexually inviting. Female jazz dancers were trained to be sexy and suggestive, and it is intriguing -- and troubling -- that many “feminine” movements in jazz dance come from male teachers and choreographers.

Historically, a dancer’s gender typically dictates their character and movement quality on stage. Wendy Oliver and Doug Risner in their book *Dance and Gender* point out that female dancers appear to be seductive and often represent a role in a heterosexual romantic relationship. Oliver

admits that even though the female is a talented and athletic dancer, it often results in the female yielding to the dominance of the male partner. The male is to appear confident, masculine, and superior to the female. This compares in key ways to the Fosse style. The female is automatically put into a role that downplays her character as an individual when placed with a male dancer, creating an unbalance that is seen across the jazz dance community. A woman in the jazz dance community who illustrates this is Gwen Verdon.

Verdon was an American actress and dancer who married Fosse in 1960. Successful in her field in her own right, she nonetheless craved approval from Fosse. In the beginning, Fosse was unsure about working with Verdon because of her reputation of being a “snob,” and he wondered if she was good enough for him (Shelley 46). In later years, Verdon credited him with “creating her.” The power dynamic in this relationship was very clear in the jazz dance community. As Oliver and Risner make clear, Verdon was often motivated and driven by Fosse’s dominance. The famous piece “Hernando’s Hideaway” was written with the clear directive to only be choreographed by Fosse. And though the slides and turns in this dance signify that Verdon had a part in creating it, she gave all the credit to Fosse himself (Shelley 47). It appears Fosse’s fame was a priority in her life. She seemed determined to ensure he looked good in the public eye, even if it meant discrediting her abilities. Fosse was also known for creating dances in

shows for her especially (Gottfried 1), which begs the question: would Verdon have been as famous without the help of the dominant male presence, attention, and assistance of Fosse? Gender inequality and a power dynamic between the two lasted until the day he died, and even at that moment, Verdon tried to shield him from the crowd while he had his last heart attack so that he would not be embarrassed (Shelley 203). Verdon greatly influenced the jazz community, but her influence was mediated by Fosse.

After Fosse's death, Verdon received several acting roles and made guest appearances on programs such as NBC, HBO, and PBS. She continued to honor his memory. At his memorial, she only allowed men to speak for Fosse even though the *Sweet Charity* dancers wanted to do a performance. She also partnered with PBS in 1988 to create a documentary dedicated to Fosse's career (Shelley 208). Although he was gone, her aspiration for him lived on.

Fosse, Verdon, and Baker are leading historical examples of objectification and sexism in jazz dance. With that being said, jazz dance is not the only style of dance in which objectification occurs. George Balanchine brought his own aesthetic to the ballet world after he was influenced by jazz himself. There are many instances in which Balanchine incorporated jazz elements discovered from Africanist aesthetics into his ballets, such as displacement of the hips and torso, flexed wrists, and

attacking the beat (Gottschild 336), and many of the ballets choreographed by Balanchine objectify women. A duet excerpt from *The Four Temperaments* described by Gottschild reads as follows: “In both duets, the male twirl-turns the female on one spot, as social dancers do, except she is ‘sitting’ in the air in a plié while on point. The male then pumps his partnerships forward and back as he grips her waist” (337). The woman in this situation is guided by the male and required to follow his lead. Balanchine emphasizes her hips in a way that is unnatural and exaggerated. It alludes to the message that her body is on display for the audience and it is the male partner’s job to highlight this. The visual refers to the stereotypical delicacy a ballerina “should” have. This raises the question: did objectification of women in jazz later translate and present itself in ballet? Or was there already existing objectification in ballet that eventually crossed over to jazz? Because the objectification of women has existed for so long, and because the dance community is so male-centered, we may never know when the cross over truly began.

Other styles which present less objectification of women are modern and contact improvisation. There are well-known modern female choreographers such as Martha Graham and Twyla Tharp. Women were far more equal to men onstage, and that played out so frequently in postmodern dance that it has almost become a cliché to challenge (Jowitt 237). This mentality shift was mainly due to the women’s movement

starting in the 1960s. When Tharp lost one of her female cast members, she replaced her with a man, dressing him in the same attire the previous dancer wore. Gender was starting to be seen as fluid on stage, and female objectification was not as prominent a factor. Steve Paxton, one of the founders of contact improvisation, also joins this category of gender equality. No longer were the men lifting the women, and the women were not being choreographed to be erotic. Men and women were seen as equal partners who promoted weight sharing, consideration, and playfulness (Jowitt 237). The mindset within contact improvisation became, “Your strengths and weaknesses are yours to own” (Jowitt 239). The dancer was not subjected to an image that was degrading or objectified.

Although female objectification and male dominance can be seen strongly through jazz, it can be found throughout almost all disciplines of dance. Ann Daly claims, “Female/feminine in American culture, encoded in its dance icons, signifies the displayed: the dancer. Male/masculine signifies the doer: the choreographer, manager, artistic director” (23). The men continue to have the power in dance, even though it is a female-dominated world in terms of dancers themselves. It seems as if the female body is never truly her own in the dance community. It is constantly being manipulated, displayed, overpowered, or objectified. The dance world has



come a long way, but modern and contact improv offer hope for change and for a new direction in our future.

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## The Importance of Allyship

Madeline Murphy

Note: This paper is directed primarily at people who inhabit positions of structural privilege and power, especially white, cisgender, straight, nondisabled people.

We live in a society where many individuals believe that power and privilege do not exist -- probably as a result of their power and privilege. As a result, there are not enough genuine allies. Many people think they are allies for marginalized groups because “they aren’t racist/homophobic/sexist/ableist/transphobic/fatphobic, but...” However, if an ally states that they support an identity group, supporting them is not enough to stop systemic prejudice, and there are steps to becoming a better ally for minoritized people. If we make an effort to participate in events dealing with social justice, we become educated on issues that we may not have known were issues because of your power and privilege in society. When we are more educated, we can better speak out against and have more effective conversations with people who are prejudiced to try to make them cognizant of their privilege. Our role as allies is not to speak *for*

marginalized groups, but I think that unfortunately, bigots often listen to those who “look” like them more than they are likely to listen to the people against whom they’re prejudiced, and in this respect, our voices matter and can make a difference.

I see social injustice daily, and that’s especially true at a predominantly white institution. Outside of blatant, overt prejudice, I see it in the form of a lack of allyship. For example, last spring, a student at the school I attend vandalized a poster advertising Black History Month events. I know many people were disgusted by this, including me, and felt compelled to attend a Town Hall discussion with the president of the university to address the issue. But it struck me that despite the large number of people who expressed outrage at the hate speech penned on the posters, the turnout for the Town Hall was low and showed the Black community on campus who their real allies were on campus -- and that that number was distressingly low. And among white people who did attend, there were some at the Town Hall who tried to center whiteness, for example, by reiterating the tired idea that “all” lives matter. This is a great example of what allyship is *not*; these people trying to minimize or negate the severity of the situation were not listening to the Black voices who felt unsafe on campus.

I saw another issue of social injustice happening at a drag show on our campus, an annual event hosted by our LGBTQ+ student organization

during Pride Week, one that gets a good turn-out. At this particular event, everyone seemed to be having a good time and enjoying themselves, but I realized at the beginning of the event that not all of these people would otherwise advocate for LGBTQIA+ issues. They showed up to the event solely for the entertainment aspect. They might want to claim ally credentials for showing up, but that's not enough if they don't understand why LGBTQ+ pride is important and if they fail to protect and support LGBTQ+ rights on a daily basis.

Another example occurred during a Red Zone Panel which focused on the increased vulnerability to rape (especially for first-year college students and especially for women) during the first six weeks of school. A reporter from our university newspaper was there, took pictures, and left approximately ten minutes into the program. Not only is leaving in the middle of a panel disrespectful, but sexual assault is an extremely important intersectional issue that could potentially affect them or someone they know. The reporter should have stayed to further educate themselves but also to write a robust article that could educate others as a form of public allyship. Sadly, they did neither

Some of the most critical components of being an ally are listening and educating, speaking with and not for minoritized people during times of injustice, respecting safe spaces, and taking action steps, according to Ashante the Artist ("How to Be a Good Ally-Identity, Privilege, and

Resistance”). Ashante points out that white allies, for example, can use their privilege to educate people on racial issues, especially considering that racists will likely listen to other white people, as I’ve suggested above (“How to Be a Good Ally-Identity, Privilege, and Resistance”). I consider myself an ally as the Vice President of the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance, where we participate in and plan activism events. However, another aspect of being a good ally is knowing that there is always room to improve, an opportunity to grow and learn. I know that my own allyship can (and needs to) keep expanding.

I strive to be an attentive listener to other people’s opinions. These include the opinions of marginalized groups as well as the opinions of the majority. Listening to what marginalized groups have to say is fundamentally important to allyship. If I am attempting to advocate for Black women, what I, a white woman, have to say is not as important as what a Black woman has to say, for our experiences in society are very different. As I’ve said, I do not want to talk *for* Black women, I want to talk with them and advocate to the best of my ability. This distinction is where the concept of “white feminism” develops, which is toxic to the feminist movement. White feminism focuses on the experience of only white women and tends to silence the voices of Black women. Feminism has a history of racist exclusion and silencing, and that past continues to inform third and fourth wave feminist movements.

Rachel Elizabeth Cargle talks about “white feminism” in her piece when discussing the reactions of white feminists in regards to the murder of Nia Wilson, a young Black woman: “Instead of sharing in the outrage of Nia’s brutal murder, they came with fury for being tagged in a post that they felt challenged their own perceived feminist accomplishments. There were grand displays of defensiveness, demands they be acknowledged for all the things they had done for Black people in the past, and a terrifying lashing out that included racial slurs and doxing” (Cargle). In essence, these women centered their whiteness and particularly their white anger, guilt and paranoia, microaggressive acts. Instead, to uphold the true meaning of intersectional feminism, an ally should listen humbly to oppressed voices and take our cue for advocacy from those voices.

An important distinction to make is that allies are not oppressed the same way as the group for whom they advocate. For example, many argue that there is another “A” in LGBTQIA+ that stands for “ally.” But as a lesbian, while I appreciate their support, I strongly disagree with this position because allies for this community are often straight, and they do not face the same oppression that the LGBTQIA+ community does. This returns us to need both to listen and center the voices of the oppressed and to be aware of the dangers of saviorism in our allyship. We are not the rescuers; we are supporters in the fight for social justice.

And that fight can be challenging and scary. In my own life, I have often been hesitant to call people out when they are being problematic, but I recognize I need to do it more. For example, one of my teammates made a statement regarding feminism and how it “just wasn’t her thing.” I did not tell her that just because she does not recognize oppression in her experience does not mean that other members of society do not experience oppression. Given that she is a white woman, she is practicing her white privilege to deny the experiences of marginalized groups. I realize now that as an ally, I should have talked about this concept to her.

Last year, there was an instance in which an organization was advertising a drive to collect hygiene products for a local shelter, but the products listed, which included deodorant, razors, tampons, pads, etc. were all advertised as “feminine.” The poster was pink with flowers, images historically and symbolically aligned with femininity. FMLA decided to begin a conversation with the host organization regarding why their advertising was problematic (cisgender, trans-exclusive, gender stereotyped). We were practicing allyship because we know that it is not only women who go to shelters and need hygiene products, that homelessness, domestic violence, and unemployment are intersectional issues, not just “women’s” issues.

Respecting safe spaces means recognizing that those spaces are designated for groups to express their shared experiences of oppression. As

Cargle puts it, “When you walk into Black or brown spaces and ‘suggest’ how they can more aptly reach white people on the topic of the race you are basically mansplaining, only now it’s whitesplaining how people of color should approach their own activism” (Cargle). Denying the problematic experiences of the oppressed only reinforces how they continue to be marginalized. A true ally would sit and listen, not talk over people.

I have helped in taking action steps to uplift social groups in the form of planning and attending events pertaining to social justice issues. FMLA strives to be inclusive. We have sponsored productions of Eve Ensler’s *Vagina Monologues* on a regular basis for years, but after recognizing that this event is only inclusive of cisgender women, one of the co-presidents decided to take it upon herself to plan “Diversity Monologues” to be more inclusive of all identities. She is practicing allyship because she is creating a platform for people to write monologues about their oppression and perform them, so she is allowing them to speak for themselves and be uplifted by others around them.

Despite the need for allyship, too many still believe we live in a post-racist, post-feminist world, a world that has somehow moved beyond structural stigma. However, this position fosters social injustice by impeding our work. As I mentioned previously, being an ally should not be -- cannot be -- a single-act occurrence. Telling someone they made a racist claim one time does not solve the issue of racism altogether. Allyship is



constant; it's tenacious. Understandably, activism and allyship can feel draining and frustrating when the problem doesn't diminish (or does not seem to), or when others just do not seem to listen. Despite this, we must ask ourselves as allies, "How can I use my privilege to better the lives of others?"

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# Is Feminist Porn Possible in a Capitalistic World?

Kourtney Kotvas

## Introduction

The rise of *Hustler* and *Playboy* began during the late 1950s, feeding into the beginning of a cultural shift into a more pornified society. These magazines painted a new narrative for the “American Dream,” enticing society, particularly men, to want more. By the 1960s, there was a major increase of pornified images in the media, whether in magazines or by using marketing tactics such as “sex sells.” The integration of these pornified images into mainstream society was one of the sparks for the sexual revolution that occurred throughout the '60s. The porn industry is rooted from this time in history and with sudden growth, the industry started becoming dominated by major companies rather than individual producers (Pinsker, 2016). Not many people are aware of the term “porn industry,” meaning that they may not understand the level to which economics has a role when it comes to porn. As porn has become more mainstream, the market and the demand for it has increased, and this situates porn squarely

in a capitalist context. The global porn industry generates approximately \$97 billion annually, and the industry's primary objective is to grow and rake in more money (True, 2017).

The porn videos being produced by large corporations are not being made for sexual pleasure anymore but for profit. With the industry shaped to create new markets, innovate advertising streams, and consolidate -- in essence, with an industry driven by revenue generation -- it is difficult to imagine what porn might look like if it was not tied down by capitalism.

One way to arguably counter mainstream porn is through the creation and distribution of feminist porn, which has the potential to flip the narrative of mainstream porn, which is misogynist, heteronormative, and racist, by producing porn through a lens of respect and equality. It does exist in more isolated corners of the Internet, but the demand of the market keeps negative porn and predictably anti-women narratives at the forefront. I will return to the definitional question of what constitutes "feminist porn" later in this paper.

Capitalism is a market-driven system. While there are some limits imposed by the government, it tends to run on a "laissez-faire" (French for hands-off) system. This is specifically true for the porn industry; one major example is that there are limited economic regulations and it is not heavily regulated by laws or policies, allowing for extensive freedom when it comes to production. Although there are regulations surrounding aspects such as

child porn, bestiality, and murder, there are very few additional limits, which is why genres like rape porn, babysitter porn and pseudo-child porn thrive. Much like any other business, the porn industry works through supply and demand. As viewers “demand” certain genres and videos by providing them views and giving them popularity, the industry supplies consumers with more of them to keep viewership and increase revenue. Or, conversely, as consumer interest flags, the porn industry creates harder and more violent porn narratives to renew consumer interest and commitment.

### **Porn & Capitalism**

The economics of the industry are a mystery to most people and even most performers. There are problems within the industry dealing with the keeping of documents, and many production companies do not file records of any sort. This means that estimates about profit are necessarily fuzzy. What we do know is that the porn industry releases about two times more films than Hollywood does per year, and their profit from the new films alone is approximately \$15 billion (True, 2017). Most of society is aware of huge media companies such as Netflix, YouTube, and Hulu but not many people are as familiar with MindGeek. MindGeek is the provider and owner of the largest and most wealthy porn sites such as Pornhub, YouPorn, and RedTube. Besides the major porn sites listed above, MindGeek is responsible for roughly 100 hundred other sites. These porn sites receive

more online traffic monthly than do Amazon, Facebook, and Twitter combined (Auerbach & Auerbach, 2014). The monopoly that MindGeek has created within the industry allows them to control what we consume and to continue to hold and abuse their power.

The control MindGeek has regarding porn sites is only loosely governed by laws. MindGeek does not control or regulate stolen content, meaning that anyone can upload a video they found, and the performer would not receive any benefits. Porn sites market the fact that they have free content, but this allows easy access to pirated content and re-upload, creating a circle of profit. This creates a problematic environment for performers, where many feel as if they are not being respected or not fully compensated for their work. Performers live in fear of speaking their truths about issues, because of how powerful MindGeek is. If a performer were to complain to their agent about something, they could be putting her career at risk by the way the agent reacts. If the agent does not care about them or their problem, they could just drop them and blacklist them from the industry, and because MindGeek controls roughly 100 companies, they have the power to ensure they may never find work again (Schultz, 2018).

As I have said, the demand for more violent hardcore porn has increased, especially since an increase in access and popularity since the Internet went live in 1991. This raises the ubiquitous question of cause and effect: does the porn industry respond to consumers' desire for more

violent porn, or does the porn industry create such desire by delivering and marketing gonzo porn? Although someone may genuinely be into, say, racist rape porn, the pervasive availability of it arguably places a kind of pressure on consumers to consumer and thus become inured to its messages.

how the  
is capable of  
thoughts  
consumers'  
degradation



An example of  
porn industry  
putting  
into  
heads is by the  
of women in

porn videos. Rough sex is one of the most popular tropes in porn. The

Caramelbabyxxx. (2019) "I need a hood nigga to thrash my shit while degrading me" *Twitter Post*. Retrieved  
no from <https://twitter.com/caramelbabyxxx/status/1122883604940345344>  
se

be fucked hard and degraded, this tweet is a prime example of that:

This mindset already has such a presence in mainstream society that if you are looking at porn for the first time, you will almost certainly stumble upon the genre of “racist porn” or “hardcore fucking.”

The porn industry has and will continue to endorse the degradation of women, women of color, and teen girls (among others) so that it can make money. Porn videos from the beginning have included scenes depicting degrading acts towards women, but current porn narratives typically include violence: verbal (being called a “dumb slut” or a “cum dumpster”), sexual and physical (slapping, choking, spanking, etc.), and most culminate in the so-called “money shot,” when a man or many men ejaculate on a woman performer’s face or breasts (or both). For viewers taught by the porn industry to desire more and more hard-core fare, violence against women is thus not only normalized but eroticized and monetized in a capitalist context. .

### **How Feminist Porn Struggles in Capitalism**

So what might we do to alter this discursive and cultural pornified narrative? One option is to produce more feminist porn. According to Tristan Taormino in an interview with *Huffington Post*, “Feminist pornographers are committed to gender equality and social justice. Feminist porn is ethically produced porn, which means that performers are paid a fair wage and they are treated with care and respect; their consent,

safety, and well-being are critical, and what they bring to the production is valued. Feminist porn explores ideas about desire, beauty, pleasure, and power through alternative representations, aesthetics, and filmmaking styles. Feminist porn seeks to empower the performers who make it and the people who watch it.” Another definition is by scholar R. Claire Snyder-Hall who describes it thus: “Feminist pornography refers to a genre of film developed by and/or for those dedicated to gender equality. It was created for the purposes of encouraging the performers and consumers self-beliefs of freedom through sexuality, equality, and pleasure” (Snyder-Hall, 2010). Hearing those descriptions, feminist porn looks like it is revolutionary and groundbreaking. However, you cannot find it easily because it is so often hidden behind expensive paywalls. Much of feminist porn, simply put, costs money, and in a market that pushes free porn, this limits the number of consumers.

If feminist porn wants to be make money, it needs to be incorporated into the monopoly, marketing videos on sites such as Pornhub. But to be successfully marketed and consumed on sites like Pornhub, the videos almost have to circulate the same tired and predictable narrative of violence against women. An example of this can be seen with Tristan Taormino’s feminist porn. She was a smaller content producer but worked under Vivid Entertainment. Taormino’s “feminist porn” turned out to display the same problematic scenes as other mainstream porn. For instance, one of her most



popular genres is “brutal anal.” This suggests that there is a link between influence and content, whether that be Vivid Entertainment controlling the videos or Taormino trying to fit into the mainstream (Moye & Moye, 2013). Taormino’s porn was marketed on the same level as other videos, which made it popular, but its popularity also relied on the replication of degradation of women.

Money plays a major role in the connection between content created and influence, and the more traffic a video gets, the more revenue it will make. The big companies are typically dominated by white males, which creates a patriarchal industry whose CEOs of top porn companies such as Brazzers, Reality Kings, and Naughty America are the ones in charge of what becomes mainstream.

The industry works as a type of carnival ferris wheel, where people are constantly getting on and off the ride; it is easy to get lost in the thrill of it and forget it is not there for fun but rather for the owners to profit. The power of MindGeek forces many smaller companies and sites to work with them because their smaller, less influential content will drown in the sea of porn without their help (Schultz, 2018).

The demand for images of sexual violence against women is so high that videos that deviate will make a lot less money, and thus larger scale producers will not want to adopt them. As a result, independent feminist porn producers often have to decide between contributing to big porn

companies by integrating misogynist content or having their content marginalized, less likely to be viewed and less likely to create the revenue to fund further independent feminist porn productions.

### **Deconstructing “Feminist” Porn**

Feminist porn is ideally made to counter the harmful and toxic characteristics associated with mainstream porn. The goal of feminist porn is to be ethically produced and distributed. It also includes representation of all races, ethnicities, gender identities, sexual preferences, and disability. The crux of feminist porn is gender and race equality, communication, fair labor/pay, consent, sex-positivity, and pleasure. But in a capitalist society where profit is key, what kinds of market pressures might mitigate against these ideals?

Feminist porn is influenced by and dependent on mainstream porn, and we can see early works of so-called "feminist porn" falling into the traps of big porn. Taormino, whom I mention above, is one of the most well-known feminist pornographers. Her films were very progressive and diverse for the late 90s early 2000s, in terms of how the films were scripted and framed. However, she does include some common porn scenes that are problematic, degrading, and even racist, and this becomes more true as her work became more popular. Some of her films include violent gangbang scenes, degrading uses of the money shot, and racially charged language. Although these videos come from a feminist porn producer, should we

consider them feminist porn? Why is Taormino's "feminist porn" not so feminist?

Even though it may be hitting some of the aspects of feminist porn such as consent and fair pay, the message being sent to consumers is not feminist. Rather, Taormino trafficks in tired images of brutal sex which arguably objectifies women. Even if she intends her porn to be transgressive, the similarities between her porn “messages” and mainstream porn messages mean that most viewers, intent upon orgasm, will not critically understand or notice that she is attempting to empower women. Thus, the messages of what passes for “feminist porn” in mainstream porn sites is just as important as intent; Taormina might honestly “intend” her brutal anal porn videos to promote feminist values, and the performers might consent and have safe set accommodations, but if the final product looks like most other brutal anal porn narratives, then her efforts have failed.

### **How Can Feminist Porn Exist in Capitalism?**

Is producing profit everyone’s end goal when it comes to producing and making porn? Not always, but it is a grey area. This could include that of distributing porn videos and images for "fun" and entertainment rather than for a monetary reward. The porn industry has thousands upon thousands of "amateur" and "homemade" porn videos, but most of the time producers have labeled them that for viewers; in other words, the videos

might not actually be homemade or amateur. Most authentic homemade porn videos that get posted on a mainstream site for fun are hanging out backstage and they are not often talked about. A prime example of this can be found on sites such as Reddit that are not directly related to the porn industry but definitely have a lot of porn content. People will post naked pictures and sex videos onto the subreddit “r/GoneWild” for pleasure and entertainment. Through this specific subreddit, there is little to no money being made for the content creator, meaning that the creators are doing porn and posting it for fun and self-enjoyment. Reddit is not specifically a part of the porn industry, although the site still generates revenue off of the content uploaded. The ability to post porn freely on Reddit is empowering to some people. But I would argue that the success that “real” porn has had on Reddit creates a false sense of options when it comes to the industry itself (R/gonewild); because Reddit (and not the producers or posters of porn) is making money off the posts, even this porn, seemingly existing outside capitalist contexts, remains squarely framed by capitalism. The economics and perceptions surrounding the porn industry would have to change before there could be an increase in "porn for fun" videos.

Mainstream porn is the primary source of income for the industry, but if the industry were to lose the power it holds, how might the culture shift regarding porn? If money were to be removed from this equation, a good majority of the industry would fall apart. Porn would be scattered

across the internet without porn monopolies, and the effort and ability to create new porn videos would diminish. Without porn being monopolized by Mind Geek or Playboy, the industry more than likely will be torn asunder. There would be no money available to fund the sets, production costs, and to pay the performers. As porn would begin to fall out of mainstream use and hidden under the bed like an old magazine, society might finally start being socialized to a new stimulus. I believe that in a utopia, porn would change to be a multi-platform version of the “r/GoneWild” subreddit. This would include all types and genres of porn that people are willingly doing for fun, pleasure and empowerment. The shift from controlled content to open content would completely change how porn is viewed.

The industry limits society in many ways, and I would like to believe that if separated from a capitalist framework, the porn industry would work as an art medium for people rather than a paycheck. Porn sites would be higher profile versions of the subreddit, where creators could create their own page or add to the mix of random uploads. This could help to change the stigma around porn, by taking it from being heavily dominated and controlled to being potentially freeing and empowering. Society’s views could begin to change by accepting porn more as a “normal” act and could help to create a greater diversity of porn scripts. Creators would get to pick where it goes, how much to post, where and whom they are filming, and

what kind(s) of scenes they are doing. This is beneficial because then society would start to see that these creators are doing it for their pleasure, with acts that people actually enjoy and that are safe. Too, I believe that more of the porn being made would probably resemble that of “feminist porn,” where the producing and publishing are done in and for ethical consumption.

The need to pay for the porn is one of its major problems. Pornhub and other popular porn sites are often not your friends if you are looking for feminist porn. Uploading a video to Pornhub does not guarantee that your content is safe or that you will be paid accordingly (Valens). Although Pornhub may have videos labeled as “feminist,” this does not guarantee that what will be seen is in fact feminist.

In order for feminist porn to be able to have its place at the mainstream porn dinner, we have to unmoor the industry from its capitalist roots. Porn like that produced by Taormino is problematic in that it includes the more violent and problematic aspects so prevalent in mainstream porn, but there are more feminist inspired features. And more marginalized independent feminist porn often foregrounds the elements of equity, consent, mutual pleasure, and social justice. Once viewers begin to notice the progressive additions to these videos, ideally, they would want to see that trend continue, much like how anal and violence began to grow in popularity. This new genre of video would slowly integrate more diversity and ethical production means until it becomes the norm.

## Conclusion

As viewers become more interested in feminist porn, they will be exposed to a new set of ideas that can shape the future landscape of pornography and hopefully real-life sex. Outside a capitalist context, more porn producers would be more inclined to create a more positive work environment with regular STD/STI testing, set safety, consent, and discussions about preferences and dislikes to ensure everyone is having a good, safe time (Taormino, Shimizu, Penley, & Miller-Young). The narratives might include violence, but the script options would broaden to include other possibilities: tenderness, equality, non-penetrative intimacy and sex, dialogue, maybe even love or gentleness.

I think that to create porn from a feminist perspective, we have to treat the performers like they should be treated, respect and require consent, and send diverse messages about sexuality, sexual identity or orientation, gender identity, intimacy, consent and power to the viewers. In a heavily dominated porn culture where images of violence against women are the norm, feminist porn will not be able to flourish. But we have power; we have agency. While progress may be slow, it has to start somewhere. One step might be to demand that mainstream porn currently being produced is made ethically and that consent of all performers is central. It is critical that we start taking care of people and begin to implement these changes for a more a feminist future.

With the heavy influence that capitalism has in the industry and the current power of the porn company monopolies, feminist porn cannot survive among mainstream porn. The capitalist system of the industry would need to go through a major paradigm shift for feminist porn to live up to the popularity of mainstream porn. The demand for different porn videos would need to change from hardcore degrading porn to videos containing feminist viewpoints and ideas. Although I can't imagine this change happening anytime soon, we can make small changes to try to stop feeding into the big porn monopolies. One obvious step is to refuse to consume misogynist mainstream porn. Another is to educate your friends, family and community on the issues. Feminist porn producers need support and publicity from a number of vocal parties to help establish a larger identity for their production companies and films. My hope is that one day, this shift will occur and that feminist porn does not have to be “feminist” but is simply “porn.”

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## Taking Up Space: Misogyny and the Production and Policing of Fat Women

Margaret Calvert

Toxic masculinity has created a standard for men that must be adhered to in order to be considered truly a man. Men are not allowed to cry or enjoy traditionally feminine things such as art or dance. They cannot become preschool teachers or nurses but are expected to be engineers or scientists. A man should think twice about being flamboyantly gay. Arguably, the worst thing that a man can be in society is a woman. Anything related to femininity is strictly forbidden for men in a world of hegemonic masculinity. So what does this have to do with fat women? If the worst thing a man can be is a woman, then I believe the worst thing a woman can be is fat. The thing that these two ideas have in common is a deviance from the

standards created by society. Society has created certain expectations for what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman. When a man or woman strays from these expectations, they are often stigmatized and ridiculed by others. Fatness is arguably the most extreme form of deviation a woman can express, and this deviation can have horrible consequences for fat women in a fatphobic and misogynist culture like our own..

Girls are taught from a young age to hate their body and restrict their diets in order to be presentable to men. This heteronormative narrative extends well into the adult lives of women. A fat woman is worthless and the worst version of herself, according to society. Someone who is fat should aspire to be skinny, and self-loathing of a large body is produced as a norm. Thus, though unfortunate, it isn't surprising that "According to one study, 53 percent of thirteen-year-old girls are dissatisfied with their bodies, and that number increases to 78 percent when the girls reach eighteen. Seventy-five percent of those over eighteen believe they are overweight, including 45 percent who are technically underweight" (Hartley 60). The hatred of fat women's bodies by themselves, other women, and men constitutes the idea that the worst thing a woman can be is fat.

In this paper, I will discuss the regulation of fat bodies, focusing specifically on how the regulation targets women in more cases than it targets men. To show this, I will discuss regulations of fat women including dieting culture and eating disorders. I will talk about the stigmatization of

fat bodies as well as the medicalization and the moralization and how these two models may be the source of the stigmatization. I will argue that the medicalization, moralization, and stigmatization of fatness directly dehumanizes fat women. Then I will provide examples and discuss the portrayal of fat women in the media, specifically focusing on television and magazine representation. I will then discuss how all of these things lead to the abjection of the fat body and why fatness should be considered a disability worth discussing within the field of Disability Studies.

One of the reasons a fat woman is so heavily stigmatized is because of the rejection of the docile body. Part of being produced as docile as a woman includes being small and taking up as little space as possible (Hartley 61). The rejection of fat women in society perpetuates the idea that there is no room for women in a man's world, especially fat women who refuse to adhere to restrictive standards. As women have begun to make strides toward equality within society, the man's world becomes threatened. The apprehensiveness of the idea of the intelligent woman and gendered duties of women are no longer valid, but there is still a male desire to be more powerful than women. The best way to do this is by undermining the validity of their bodies (Hartley 62). Fat women seem to take away this power dynamic from men by resisting the attempt to control their bodies, which could explain why their bodies are so harshly rejected. Fat women

are not as easy to control as thin women and therefore, less docile. A woman who is not docile is not really a woman at all under a male gaze.

The male gaze is arguably why fat shaming and body hatred is so common for fat women. Referencing the theories of Michel Foucault, women are able to be disciplined and produced as docile bodies because of the ubiquity of the male gaze that regulates women's bodies. Fat women challenge the power of the male gaze by rejecting this regulation to a certain extent, considering that weight and body size are not the only way the bodies of women are regulated. Foucault argues that panoptic measures produce subjects rather than objects because the subjects learn to regulate themselves, as if they are constantly being watched by a prison guard in the hypothetical prison he discusses as an example in *Discipline and Punish* (1975). In the case of fat women, the male gaze has been internalized which in turn reinforces the expectation and desire to be thin. As a result of the panoptic mechanisms so rampant in our society, woman regulates herself based on the belief that she could be evaluated by a man at any point in time.

Regulation of the fat body occurs in a variety of different ways. The main way women regulate their bodies is through diet. Magazines are replete with dieting tips and women in bikinis with flat stomachs. When a woman celebrity gains any amount of weight, they risk being plastered over tabloids and ridiculed for their lack of self control. The articles praising

people for losing weight typically feature women, while men's weight is rarely in the spotlight. Women's magazine articles often focus on tips for losing weight as fast as possible and create standards that are practically impossible to achieve, and they shame women who cannot meet these standards. This shame is an example of external regulation of fat bodies because society is imposing a standard on what bodies are acceptable and what bodies are not. This in turn becomes internalized regulation when women feel obligated to adhere to these ridiculous and unrealistic standards in order to avoid feelings of shame and self loathing towards their figures, despite the reality that many studies show that diets do not work and can even be harmful. .

The diet narrative sets people up for failure, and most people gain their weight back after some time. This narrative is ubiquitous and affects too many women: "75% of American women surveyed endorse unhealthy thoughts, feelings or behaviors related to food or their bodies" (University of North Carolina). Because of the shame produced by magazines and tabloids, women feel compelled to diet and restrict their weight in order to conform to societal standards. They are told if they gain weight then they have lost control of themselves and they must regain that control by monitoring their lives more closely by restricting the things they eat, when they eat them, and how much they eat. This narrative focuses on self control, but often habits created by diet spiral out of control. Dieting can

lead to harmful behaviors that compromise the health of a body and the mind by normalizing activities such as skipping meals, not eating carbohydrates, and feeling hatred of one's body. The desire for thinness often creates severe problems for women, including disordered eating.

Girls as young as six years old are now developing eating disorders. Thinking that one is too fat and over-examining their body is increasingly normalized for young girls. Although the rate of men who are diagnosed with eating disorders is on the rise, they remain primarily an issue for women and girls. Young girls learn early how to restrict themselves to become presentable for men, often in terrifying ways. The occurrence rate of eating disorders within young girls continues to increase (National Eating Disorders). These prominent diseases result from the terrible narrative that diet culture creates but are normalized and even encouraged as a result for the demand aimed at girls and women to regulate their bodies. Bodies are regulated to the point of death in some cases: "Anorexia is the most lethal psychiatric disorder, carrying a sixfold increased risk of death -- four times the death risk from major depression" (DeNoon). The regulation and restriction of fat bodies is so strong that some women die as a result of the control that society imposes on them and their bodies. Women are taught that they should want thinness no matter the cost, even if it requires extreme measures such as starving themselves or throwing up after meals.

Not only are the bodies of fat people, specifically women, over analyzed by others, but their clothing choices are as well. People constantly feel like they have the right to comment on what a woman is eating or how her clothes accentuate the fat on her body. Fat women's clothing choices are strictly regulated by others. Recently, a Slippery Rock University student tweeted about people who should not wear crop tops if their stomachs hung over their waist band. This kind of fat-hating discourse occurs regularly on social media, normalizing the message that fat women should not wear tight clothing or any clothing that remotely shows off their bodies. Lots of clothing choices are forbidden to fat women. Bikinis are strictly off limits and fat women can forget about wearing skirts or dresses that show off their thighs. They are restricted to large and baggy clothing and are not able to dress in ways that make them feel good about themselves.

The actions of fat women are also strictly regulated and commented on by other people. If a fat woman is at the gym, it must be because she wants to lose weight. If she does not exercise, then she must be lazy and a slob who does not care that her health is at risk. Fat women cannot complete daily activities without the activity somehow being related to her fatness. Fat women are constantly subjected to the opinions of other people who pretend to be concerned about their "health" when in reality, they just want to control and create docile bodies. The same is not true for fat men, "Because women's fat is measured against a hegemonic ideal of beauty so



powerful that any variation from it is considered a personal deficiency or aggressive act” (Mosher 167). The expectation of obedience to a standard of beauty is much higher for women than it is for men, which allows men to more easily “get away with” being fat. The bodies of fat men are still regulated to a certain extent, but it is seen as much more deviant to be a fat woman because of what society has defined as what it means to be a woman. A so-called beer belly on men might even be considered “sexy,” and large men are still often seen as more masculine. A man is supposed to take up space and be loud as well as prominent. Being fat can aid a man in these expectations, whereas it only harms a woman.

Much of the stigma and ridicule of the embodiment of fat women is a result of the medicalization of fat bodies. Fatness is stigmatized and assumed to be a direct cause of certain health problems. The negative effects of being fat are often over exaggerated and health is often associated with weight, despite variation within medical findings. Even doctors seem to stigmatize fatness. April Herndon discusses her experience with doctors in her article, “Disparate But Disabled: Fat Embodiment and Disability.” Her vital signs and numbers, including cholesterol and blood sugar, things typically associated with fatness, are at healthy rates, but she nonetheless receives advice from her doctor that she should lose weight in order to make sure she does not develop heart disease or diabetes. Even when a fat person is healthy, they face stigmatized treatment and advice from their

doctors because it has become so ingrained within people that fatness inherently is unhealthy. Doctors often use weight as an indicator of a problem, even though weight is not always a reliable measure. Someone can lose weight and it does not necessarily mean they are healthy, while at the same time someone can gain weight and it does not necessarily mean they are unhealthy. There is debate within the medical community about this topic and some doctors have begun to realize how medicalization has affected the lives of fat people, women specifically, in a negative way (Herndon 125).

Treating fatness as a disease is an interesting concept because it seems to be the only “medical” condition that non-medical professionals think they have the right to give their opinion about. As previously mentioned, the actions of fat people, specifically women, are often over analyzed and connected back to their weight, even when the situation has nothing to do with weight at all. People are convinced by the common myth that health and weight are synonymous even though this is not necessarily the case. Fat is the most common condition that others, who are not medical professionals, try to control and regulate. They think they have the right to tell others what they can do with their bodies, from what they eat to what they wear. People do not tell other people how to manage their cancer. They do not tell people diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis how to dress; they do not tell people with chronic back pain that if they just had more

control, their pain would disappear. So why is it acceptable to impose such judgments on women's fat bodies? Because if one is fat, then they deserve to be oppressed and managed because their fatness is seen as a choice.

The moralization of fat bodies often results from the perception that it is a choice to be fat and that this "choice" invites and is deserving of mistreatment. If someone does not have a choice in a decision or outcome then they cannot be held accountable, but people often hold fat women accountable for their bodies and deem the "right" decision as losing weight. Both men and women are subjected to the idea that fatness is a moral decision. Society has created the idea that fatness is a choice, and "While the link of fatness and health problems is still contentious for some, the connection of fatness and immorality goes largely unchallenged in a society that values discipline and self-care. While fat bodies may have real, physical limitations, the idea that they present a threat to the larger society is overwhelmingly a social construction" (Hermiston 367). Because society views fatness as a choice and furthermore a choice that subjects someone to a diseased body that negatively affects the lives of others by increasing the cost of healthcare, fatness is considered morally impermissible and the correct moral decision is to do whatever possible to prohibit oneself from becoming or remaining a fat body.

The medicalization and moralization of fat bodies distinctly reduces the humanity of the people. Herndon comments on the medicalization

specifically: “The medicalization presents fatness as a disease epidemic and strips away humanity, focusing solely on a medical condition, and ignoring the people involved” (125). Moralization strips humanity in a similar way, instead focusing on the “act” of being fat rather than the fat person themselves. In these models, fat people are treated as fat before people. Because fatness is a visible disability (and in this instance, I am suggesting that fat is disabling because disability is socially produced and stigmatized), this is the first and often only quality and characteristic that others notice about them. The stereotypes that accompany fatness are not positive and seem to discredit any possible positive characteristics of a fat person. Fat women cannot be seen for who they are because of the shame associated with “becoming a fat woman.” If one becomes a fat woman, they are no longer a woman worthy of the male gaze and they have to regulate themselves in order to be worthy again. This strips them of their humanity because their worth derives from how men will perceive them. They cannot be considered truly a woman in a heteronormative culture unless men approve of their bodies. Their humanity is related to their womanness and their bodies and if they cannot conform to the standard, then they are not fully human.

The medical model of fatness creates many examples of fat women being publicly stripped of their humanity and humiliated. In her essay “Disparate But Disabled: Fat Embodiment and Disability Studies,” Herndon

also discusses her experience at an academic conference with a man who speaks to her with disrespect and uses an example regarding the statistics of the sizes of women's hips compared to men. She says that in this moment she felt that her capacity to define herself and her identity was taken away from her. Not only did this negate her agency by not allowing her to speak for herself and define her own identity, but his speech also produced her as an object rather than a human. The man's comment focused on both her identities as woman and fat in what seemed to be an attempt to shame her. This instance seems to say that if a man does not desire a woman, then all other traits are negated and they do not deserve the same respect as a male colleague would.

Herdon's experience is not an isolated one. Fat women often endure this kind of treatment that attempts to produce them as less than human and things who do not deserve respect. Many face harassment on a regular basis and stares from strangers who know nothing else about them besides their fatness. Their fatness is isolated and stigmatized, and many fat women have negative assumptions imposed on them based simply on the way that they look, for instance that they are lazy and cannot take care of themselves because they "let themselves" become fat. "Becoming" fat is one of the worst things a woman can be in the eyes of society. It violates what a woman is typically expected to be: small and docile.

These stereotypes are evident and often exaggerated through the ways in which fat people are portrayed within the media. Fat women normally become the comic relief of the show. Like other disabilities, their fatness becomes the focus of their personality and most fat women are one dimensional characters. They are portrayed stereotypically, often used to provide laughs rather than progress the plot. Many actresses are subjected to playing the same types of role regardless of what television show or movie they have been cast in. Some examples include Melissa McCarthy and Rebel Wilson. Obviously, some actresses have certain genres they excel in, but it does not seem to be a coincidence that fat women continue to be cast in comedic roles rather than dramatic or romantic roles.

Magazines also contribute to a negative portrayal of fat women. Fat women are both hyper visible and invisible within the media. As Kent notes, "Literal erasure and extreme fragmentation characterize the few representations of fat people in the magazine" (133). There is almost no representation of fat women within popular magazines, and where there is it is usually stigmatized and focuses on the worst aspects of fatness. Fat women are portrayed with excessive amounts of food or the fat on their body is accentuated in a way that makes it the main focus of the shot. Fat bodies are used as the example for the most extreme form of lack of self control and prominently displayed as a warning against subjecting oneself to a disease ridden body.

The stigmatization and shame that accompanies the fat body ultimately leads to the abjection of a fat body. Le'a Kent's piece, "Fighting Abjection," discusses Kristeva's idea of the abject body and applies it to fatness. She writes, "In short, in the public sphere, fat bodies, and fat women's bodies in particular, are represented as a kind of abject: that which must be expelled to make all other bodily representations and functions, even life itself, possible" (Kent 135). Fat bodies are abject in the sense that they represent what is perceived to be the worst thing a body can be: excess, loss of control, erasure of boundaries. Kent argues that the acts of dieting and eating disorders are obvious examples of the abjection of fat bodies and the abjection is a direct result of the medicalization of fatness (136). Because fat bodies are related with unhealthiness, it is simple why women do not recognize fatness as part of themselves. This relates to Descartes theory of mind body dualism.

Descartes argues for the disembodiment of the mind and body, arguing that the mind should be privileged over the body. The body does not constitute self, but the mind does. Disembodiment completely disregards the experience of fat women. Fatness should be considered part of the self because it shapes and defines the experience of fat women and experience cannot be separated from the self. One may argue that disembodiment can be a positive thing for fat women because they can remove themselves from their fatness and can be recognized for more than

their fatness. However, I disagree with this because it is ultimately impossible to separate oneself from their body when their body controls their existence in the world in relation to others. It restricts the humanity of fat women by dehumanizing them as a result of their fatness.

I have found myself in a position in which I am sure other women often find themselves: I am not really fat, but just fat for now. This fatness is not me, but when I am skinny again then I will truly be myself. These feelings of abjection lead to existential angst and cause me to question who I really am. I am always considering what I will be like when I lose weight and when I become my “real” size instead of accepting my body as it is now. My embodiment shapes my experience and I cannot separate it from myself. I cannot keep saying, “when I am skinny I will be x, y, z,” because I am fat now and it is inherently part of my self. It dictates how I perceive myself in the world as well as how others perceive me. The two cannot be separated nor should it be encouraged that they should be.

Fat bodies share much in common with disabled bodies. The inclusion of fatness within Disability Studies has been a positive one because of the similarities. The field of Disability Studies aims to move away from the medicalized models of impairments and focus more on the struggles created on a social level (Herndon 122). An interesting question to be raised from this focus would be, to what extent is disability socially constructed? A distinction should be made between impairment and



disability. Impairments are physical conditions while disability is the social repercussions for having the impairment. The constructions of the world inherently disable fat people in numerous ways. From not being able to shop in regular stores for clothing to being under and misrepresented within the media to having every move overanalyzed and stigmatized, fat people, specifically fat women, are disabled in a cultural, social, and political context.

Fatness is stigmatized and unaccepted within society so much that women die in order to regulate themselves enough to be considered and recognized as truly women. Restriction of fat bodies occurs in numerous forms including dieting and eating disorders. The bodies of fat women are misrepresented within the media and ultimately the stigmatization of fat bodies result from the medicalization and moralization of fatness. Because of these things, the fat body becomes an abject one that is not considered to be part of the self, which in turn continues to dehumanize the existence of fat women. Fat bodies deserve a space in Disability Studies because of the social stigma against them that relates to the stigmas of disabled bodies, and fat women deserve space in a fat-phobic culture that negates their selfhood, their agency, and their power.

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## Human Trafficking: The Effects and Policies in Place

Vica Combs

In the last decade, the global problem of human trafficking has come to the forefront of public attention. There has been an increasing number of victims over the past seven years (Department of State, 2019), and though published statistics are not wholly accurate due to the underground secrecy of the business, we know that millions are victimized annually. Human trafficking, also known as trafficking in persons, can range from sexual exploitation and forced labor to child soldiers and workers. With a broad range of trafficking, getting exact information poses problems, especially concerning children. Human trafficking also crosses national boundaries, and each country has its own policies and implementations to combat

human trafficking. The United States is the forefront of the operations to combat human trafficking and can pull or refuse funds from countries that do not take measures in trying to lower numbers in human trafficking, but the problem remains vast in our own backyards.

The Human Rights Commission (2015) states three of the most common types of human trafficking within the United States include forced labor, sex trafficking, and debt bondage. Though anyone can become a victim, the reality is that particular groups are more vulnerable than others to being trafficked, and women are disproportionately the victims (Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2020). There are three main elements of human trafficking; the act, which refers to what is being done (recruitment, transportation, transfer, etc.); the means, how the act is being done (coercion, abduction, threat, etc.); and the purpose, why it is being done. Human trafficking is a transnational phenomenon with estimates of profits at \$32 billion annually (Okech, Morreau, & Benson, 2011). Its global nature means that it is organized, with many people involved and a systematic way of acquiring victims and buyers; thus, even if victims are found, the offenders can relocate and blend in and acquire more people. It is a hidden business, one which survives off of people staying quiet about it. According to Hill and Walker-Rodriguez (2011), the majority of trafficking victims in the U.S. are runaway or thrown-away children who have come from broken homes, and in many of these cases, children turn to prostitution or are

vulnerable to trafficking for financial reasons. Along with that, children who have suffered physical or sexual abuse, have disrupted development, are in foster care, LGBTQ+, and/or have substance abuse issues are also at a higher risk of becoming victims of being trafficked (United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking [UN.GIFT], 2016). Human trafficking recruiters take advantage of these children or vulnerable adults and offer them a better way to live and promises of a better life in which they are provided with food, care, and shelter. These children and adults are convinced that traffickers are there to help and are lured into this life; most of the time, once they realize what is happening to them, they are no longer free to leave. Assessing factors involving the various forms of human trafficking and policies in place to protect the victim as well as punish the offenders can assist in figuring out what is working to combat human trafficking.

### **Human Sex Trafficking**

Human sex trafficking, as defined by the Department of Justice (2020), is “a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age” (para. 1). This applies to all children under the age of 18, even those who believe themselves to be consenting individuals engaging in prostitution. Human sex trafficking is becoming the most common form of modern-day slavery (Walker-Rodriguez & Hill, 2011). Researchers have

reported that 79% of human trafficking is sexual exploitation while 18% is comprised of forced labor (UNODC, 2020).

The top recruitment tactics are through an intimate partner, marriage proposition, or family transactions (Polaris Project, 2020). Sex trafficking does not have to begin with force and violence but can also increase based on risk factors in the victim's home life. Poverty, instability, and culture can impact this. For many children, living in poverty may lead them to be trafficked or to search for a way to live and the traffickers offer them a home in exchange for their aid. Some countries also allow for child marriages with the approval of parents and the courts, which puts young children at greater risk. Girls who are sent off to marry earlier in life have less access to education and medical care and are also at greater risk of being victims of abuse and sex trafficking while their bodies are still maturing. According to Dill (2011), more than 66 million girls in the United States are ignorant about sex and human trafficking due to an absence of educational access, evidence that Human Trafficking is a camouflaged domestic business. With the rise in the Internet, sex trafficking has moved to multimedia platforms. Social media and online chat rooms can be an offender's hide out to scope for young targets. These offenders can pose as whomever they need to, from a same age friend or partner to an understanding parental figure. Traffickers use manipulation and fraud in order to obtain some victims.

Nineteenth-century narratives of sexual slavery or sex trafficking were used to reinforce racist ideologies: where white women were represented as “slaves” forced into this and in need to be saved, monitories or people of color were represented as deviants and willing prostitutes, even though minorities were more likely to be trafficked (Bromfield, 2015). Many activist groups were opposed to sex workers and wanted to regulate their bodies, including forced sterilization of women (Bromfield, 2015), which also had a racist component. During this era, many non-white women who were forced into sex work were blamed and shunned, while white women, though still potentially stigmatized, were more regularly presented as victims. In focusing on only a small portion of those who may have been sex trafficked, it left a wide opening for the offenders to continue their illegal actives with minorities.

Today, racism continues to be reinforced in swaths of the sex industry, which relies on supply and demand. Traffickers track trends on sites like PornHub (2020), and recent spikes in consumers wanting to see different races from “Arab and Brazilian to Czech and Japanese” or categories for “teen, old/young, and amateur,” tell traffickers what is wanted. Though there is no hard data connecting porn consumption and sex trafficking, certain correlations are consistent. .

The highest profit from human trafficking comes from sexual exploitation (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2014). The most

common way to lure victims and gain buyers is through the Internet, and in the U.S., this has relied heavily on the use of Backpage advertisements (Currier & Feehs, 2019). In many respects, porn is training consumers to see violent and crude pornography as acceptable, creating a large clientele for sex traffickers. Information on what viewers watch is readily available on porn sites, and traffickers can make a profit off that as well as finding their next buyer. According to Fight the New Drug (2020), children as young as 11 are now watching or being exposed to sexually violent scenes in online porn, and according to social learning theory which argues that children imitate what they see, they are thus learning that violent sexual acts are normal and acceptable. Children who are brought up watching violence in the home or through media platforms are at a higher risk to be desensitized than those who do not. Once sexual violence becomes a normalized behavior for children, then the concept of forced sex and sex trafficking has less of a negative social connotation.

In terms of offenders, the most typical method of obtaining a victim is through coercion, specifically withholding pay; the second biggest method used was physical force (Currier & Feehs, 2019). Being in cages or locked rooms was used far less often than popular media depicts, but coercion does include the threat of physical force, manipulation, verbal abuse, and emotional abuse. In most of the cases in the U.S. in 2018, offenders ran their operations out of small-chain or non-chain hotels, but



sex trafficking also disguises itself through fake massage businesses, cleaning businesses, and other small businesses (Currier & Feehs, 2019; National Human Trafficking Hotline, 2020).

### **Human Labor Trafficking**

Human labor trafficking which includes agriculture, manufacturing, fishing, mining, and domestic service, often gets pushed to the side compared to sex trafficking due to labor trafficking being a smaller percentage of all human trafficking cases; labor also includes debt bondage, which is commonly defined as a type of coercion or threat if there is no reimbursement (Weitzer, 2014). Labor traffickers use the same methods of offenders of sex trafficking, which can include withholding pay, being offered a new job that pays too much to lure the victims in, preventing the victim from being able to physically leave, beatings, and sexual abuse. According to ILO (2014), withholding pay, physical abuse, and isolation were the top three methods of trapping a victim.

Labor trafficking uses children and adults to produce goods at very low to no pay. This helps big businesses get richer while not having to pay their workers much. According to Okech, Morreau, and Benson (2011), “trafficking is often exacerbated by socio-economic problems, conflicts, or natural disasters that force people to seek work far from home or migrate for survival” (p. 489). People who are in these conditions are at higher risk

to be victimized by traffickers. The Bureau of International Labor Affairs (2018) provides a full report on countries that use child labor and forced labor; Cambodia uses child labor primarily for alcohol, India for bidis, and Afghanistan for coal. Not all work children do is considered illegal and child labor, if it does not harm their education/schooling, mental health, or physical health, is not considered child labor. Child labor would include working in coal and gold mines, long hours in agricultural fields, and working around illegal products for children such as alcohol and cigarettes. Children working in those conditions are exposed to numerous risks to their health and safety and given few if any breaks. Children exposed to coal or gold mines are at higher risks of cancer, delayed development, mercury poison, and damage to one's organs. According to the ILO (2010), the primary issue of labor trafficking is agriculture, which includes farming, fishing, forestry, etc.

Child miners, commonly exploited because of their small size and vulnerability, are forced to work longer hours and be exposed to repeated blasting and ash every day. Especially concerning is exposure to mercury in gold mines, where it can cause long term disabilities and development problems. Children in mining conditions are usually forced to work there for the majority of their life. If the children start having developmental delays and disabilities, then they will not be suited for a better job and life. All they will know how to do is dangerous manual work and die doing so. A

substantial amount, estimated around 70% of child laborers, are working in the agriculture business where they are exposed to long hours planting and harvesting crops, handling pesticides, and caring for live animals (Hurst, 2007). Being exposed to these hazardous conditions can have negative physical and mental health impacts. Malnutrition is common and leads to developmental delays and chronic health conditions. According to Hurst (2007), there are no clear boundaries between working and living conditions, which play a major role in being exposed to pesticides. Clean water and adequate washrooms make it difficult to maintain good hygiene and lead to detrimental health factors. Ingesting pesticides can block the absorption of nutrients, affect the reproductive, endocrine, immune, and respiratory systems, as well as negatively affecting neurodevelopment (Liu & Schelar., 2012).

### **Human Trafficking Protocols, Policies, and Efforts**

There are different types of protocol when it comes to trafficking in persons. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2020a), there are three specified protocols. The first is suppression, prevention, and punishing trafficking in persons. This was done to enable an agreed-upon definition of trafficking in persons as well as establish domestic offenses throughout different countries involved with the General Assembly; this also provided resources for victims. According to the Department of State (2019), countries that are not involved with this

protocol include Bangladesh, Iran, North Korea, Somalia, and Uganda (p. 46). The second protocol is against smuggling migrants via land, sea, and air, and the last protocol targets illicit manufacturing of trafficking in firearms. This protocol strengthened cooperation in eradicating the manufacturing of firearms and all the components in the States. The states established criminal offenses against the illicit manufacturing of firearms and creating licenses for legitimate manufacturing and trafficking (UNODC, 2020a). This global initiative is a joint effort with other United Nation agencies including, but not limited to, International Labour Organization, United Nations Development Fund for Women, and United Nations Children's Fund (UNODC, 2020b).

There is a history of policies to criminalize the transfer victims from one state to another. The Mann Act of 1910 prohibited transporting across state lines of “...any woman or girl for the purpose of prostitution or debauchery, or for any other immoral purpose...” (FindLaw, 2020, para. 3). This act in its original form had a very wide interpretative range and was primarily used in cases of white women or girls in relationships with Black men as well as to prosecute men having sexual relationships with underaged girls. Women who were consenting individuals could be persecuted as an accessory to the crime. The updated version of this act, 18 U.S.C. § 2421 widens the offense to any person who knowingly takes an individual across the state or nationally for prostitution or any other sexual activity; that

person can be charged with a criminal offense for no more than 10 years (FindLaw, 2020). This change in the law encompasses all genders and helps to define the scope of punishment. While this law exists to protect victims of sex trafficking, it can also hinder those who are consenting sex workers. Most countries have anti-prostitution laws, and the 18 U.S.C. § 2421 sanction does not distinguish between sex workers and sex traffickers.

Sting operations and reverse sting operations are being used to catch offenders and save victims. Sting operations have four basic elements: an opportunity to commit a crime, created by the police; targeting an offender for a particular crime; undercover or hidden police officers using deception; and a climax where the operations end in arrests (Newman & Socia, 2007). The creation of an opportunity to commit a crime such as human trafficking would include acting as clientele for the offenders, arranging to meet up, and finding the hideout that will end in arrests of the traffickers. Typically, these operations will be video or audio recorded to later bring to courts, which shows the offender “caught in the act.” Different techniques can be employed in the form of disguises, where a police officer may pose as a buyer or potential victim, and the Internet can be used to create false businesses and accounts used to set up purchases from the offenders (Newman & Socia, 2007). Stings are used to try to reduce crimes and shut down major crime organizations. Police officers going undercover can be there from a day to years, though trafficking can

require a longer operation than others due to a need for enough evidence to do a takedown.

Also, reverse prostitution sting operations are being used more commonly in the United States to try and control prostitution (Dodge, Starr-Gimeno, & Williams, 2005). This operation focuses more on the purchasing offender than on the women or the pimps selling their bodies. This differs from a regular sting operation because it is selling the illegal goods to buyers, instead of being the buyer itself. With regard to sex trafficking, both sting and reverse sting operations can be used. Sting operations can aid in finding the hideout and where victims are being sold and used, whereas reverse sting operations allow police officers to act like young children and see who takes the bait. Sting operations can be useful in finding those in forced labor and domestic services to act as a customer for these people.

Victim identification is another method used to fight trafficking by allowing police officers and other governmental agencies to determine if someone is being trafficked or smuggled. Smuggling is defined as an illegal consensual act whereas trafficking has a victim. Training is the first step to being able to identify these victims, and multiple countries have specially trained people who cover “intelligence gathering, victim identification, planning and executing victim rescue and suspect-arrest operations, and the

securing and preservation of trafficking-related evidence” (Gallagher & Holmes, 2008, p. 327).

A key piece of legislation in fighting trafficking is the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), which established three main key points on fighting against human trafficking: protection, prevention, and prosecution (U.S. Department of Justice [DOJ], 2017). Protection includes aiding foreign victims with health, housing, and other services, as well as removal from trafficking and allowing resident status. These T-Visas are for those in severe trafficking situations, and those who receive them are allowed to stay in the United States for four years and provide extra benefits like those some refugees receive (Okech et al., 2011). Prosecution entails adding criminal provisions against human trafficking, criminalizing attempted human trafficking, mandatory restitution to victims, and increasing penalties for existing crimes concerning trafficking.

Lastly, prevention refers to trying to improve economic opportunities for potential victims, publishing annual reports, and establishing an Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Human Trafficking (U.S. DOJ, 2017). TVPA has been updated every few years, and currently, the updated Act of 2015 added “patronizes,” “solicits,” and “advertises” to new sanctions un the 18 U.S.C., as well as adding clarifications and mandatory assessments for convictions of certain offenses (U.S. DOJ, 2017). The TVPA has a focus on using the victims as witnesses, a revision meant to help with

prosecutions, but a down side of it is that due to this provision, fewer victims come forward due to fear, shame, and lack of knowledge ( U.S. DOJ, 2017). The TVPA also includes a tier placement list. According to the Department of State (2019), Tier 1 represent the highest rank, which means that this country's government has made efforts to address human trafficking: enacting laws, criminal penalties for trafficking offenses, proactive victim identification, funding to provide victim aid and protection, and efforts to reduce the demand (p. 56). Some countries on this list include Australia, Finland, Japan, and Spain. A country ranking in tier 1 does not mean there is no human trafficking, it simply states that these countries meet the minimum requirements of the Act. Tier 2 is for countries that do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum requirements but are making efforts to meet them (countries such as Egypt, Mexico, Peru, and Zambia are included in this list); tier 2 watch list includes countries who do not meet the standards but claim that they are trying to, even when there may be increases in the number of victims of severe trafficking situations are/or a failure to prove efforts to combat this effort (a few countries in this list are Belize, Hungary, and Sri Lanka); lastly, tier three is for countries who don't meet the TVPA requirements and are not making efforts to do so (Department of State, 2019). Countries such as Cuba, Russia, Syria, and Iran are in tier three. Being on the third watch list means that they will receive limited aid from the United States. The president can withhold educational



and culture funds and loans to these countries. Countries not confined to a watch list can move up and down each year depending on the efforts or lack of efforts being made by the governments.

The Child Soldiers Prevention Act was enacted in 2008, and it aimed to “hold governments accountable for involving children in armed conflict activities, whether as combatants, servants, or sex slaves” (115th Congress, 2018). This was to help prevent other countries that rely on the United States assistance from trafficking children for forced labor. This Act also notes different governmental agencies that still allow for children to be trafficked for war, labor, and sex. Doing so is to hold these countries accountable and not allow them to be shielded from the public eye. The U.S. Department of Labor (2020) has a requirement when it comes to child labor. The Fair Labor Standards Act sets wages, hours, and safety requirements for minors; they also set 14 as a minimum age to get a job as well as limiting the amount of worked hours for those under 16 years of age. Safety requirements take out the jobs that require mining/digging, driving, and using power tools and equipment, however, there are exemptions to the rules if a child is working for their parents.

### **Kant and Deontology**

Immanuel Kant is a prominent figure in philosophy and lays the major groundwork in ethics and criminology. Born in a religious family,

from 1724-1804, Kant went to a Pietist school for his younger years, which he disliked, then eventually went to university where he studied philosophy and drew inspiration from Wolff and Locke (Rohlf, 2018). Kant went on to teach and publish multiple writing about metaphysics and other topics, which seemed to be intertwined with religion. It was not until his categorical imperative that started playing a role in the criminal justice system ideology. Kant was concerned with what someone was doing and the intentions behind the action. Goodwill is only good because of its intentions for others, a situation does not have to be entirely good, but the reasoning behind it must (Kant, 1997). This type of ethic, for example, would be seen in criminology as saving a violent offender's life because it is morally the right thing to do, however, this offender could continue hurting people later. Though Kant did believe in retribution, that would be served by the state. It was the states' authority to punish. In the former example, saving the offenders' life is the moral thing to do because you treat people as ends, not means. Kant would not look at the situation and allow the offender to die because of what may occur later due to the offender being alive. This would also fall under a deontological approach. Deontological theories are based on morals, and "some choices cannot be justified by their effects—that no matter how morally good their consequences, some choices are morally forbidden" (Alexander & Moore, 2016, para. 13). The right thing to do is held higher than the good thing to do in this perspective.

Also, Kant distinguishes between a hypothetical imperative, which applies to a singular person and a specific desire and means to achieve, whereas a categorical imperative applies to everyone unconditionally, which relies more on moral law (Rohlf, 2018). The categorical imperative is what people should act on according to Kant's ethics. People have desires, and the aim is not to reject what you desire but to think about whether your means of obtaining them are considered moral and if everyone should act the same way in the scenario. Kant's ideology aims for complete virtue and happiness which he calls the highest good; this is achieved through moral laws and belief in the existence of God (Rohlf, 2018). Deontological ethics and Kant's ethics are seen primarily in policies and laws regarding human rights, such as human trafficking laws and acts.

This deontological approach applies to different aspects of the criminal justice system. Typically, deontology can be seen in laws and policies set into place. Within the human trafficking policies previously discussed, The Child Soldiers Prevention Act would fall under Kant's ethics. The outlawing of child labor in terms of sex, soldiers, and servants are outlawed due to the moral wrongness of allowing children into these conditions. The intention is to create a better life for the children and avoid harm within those fields, regardless of their home circumstances. Children may be trafficked or voluntarily work in these conditions because of socioeconomic reasons; however, this Act does not allow for them to

continue working to bring home what little money they acquire. Also, the Fair Labor Standards Act would be under Kant's domain as well, because it sets a minimum age, hours, and safety requirements. Under Kant's categorical imperative, this would be seen as universal law because policies in place to create a safe environment is what the common person would morally agree upon, therefore it became law.

### **Mill and Utilitarianism**

John Stuart Mill was a philosopher in the nineteenth century, who had utilitarian ideals. Mill was born in London and was well educated and by the age of fifteen, he started his major works concerning philosophy, psychology, and the government (Macleod, 2018). Due to early pressures in life, he found he was not equipped for life. This led him on his discovery to become a speaker for the importance of culture and the need for social reform, he picked up utilitarian ideas along this journey that ultimately led him to become a prominent figure in criminological ethics (Macleod, 2018).

The ideas of utilitarianism are the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Good is a relative term that can differ across cultures. Mill saw this concept in terms of bringing the most happiness to people. Acts are to be praised and condemned based on the cultural norms if the law cannot be applied then people should also seek to condemn behaviors and words (Macleod, 2018). An example of a utilitarian act is lying to put a

known criminal behind bars. This can be lying on the stand and faking probable cause to arrest or saying you read the offender their rights when you did not. In these scenarios, lying is seen as a good thing because it is producing the greatest good or happiness for the people. One person, the offender, is being hurt by this whereas the entire community is now safer for the lie that was told.

Many criminal justice aspects are utilitarian, which differs from Kant's deontology because using people as means is accepted to achieve the greatest outcome. Plea bargains are another utilitarian aspect because of the greatest happiness for the victim since the offender getting some type of sanction, the courts not having to deal with every case, the police having one less person to deal with, and the offender getting off on a lesser sentence. Another utilitarian aspect can be seen with snitches. Sometimes low-level drug dealers are offered protections or lesser sentences if they will give up a higher-level dealer. This works the same way as a plea bargain in the sense that the greatest good would be to put the 'worse' offender behind bars rather than the low-level drug dealer trying to make some quick money. In terms of human trafficking, utilitarianism is seen throughout the different ways of catching an offender. Sting operations and reverse sting operations are based on this principle. Law enforcement posing as easy targets or possible customers to catch offenders uses deception to achieve the greatest good. By being able to catch those involved takes offenders off

the streets and can lead to major trafficking busts that can save hundreds of lives.

## Conclusion

Human trafficking encompasses a wide range of actions from forced sex to agricultural child labor. Human trafficking is highly coveted, and statistics are highly inaccurate since the industry thrives off of others' silence.

According to the Department of State (2019), the number of prosecutions, convictions, and victims has overall been increasing since 2012 to 2019, and with this rise, there has been a decline in the new or amended legislation.

This can be attributed to the vast amounts of amendments created between 2012 and 2016 that have tried to crack down on human trafficking (p. 46).

Human trafficking uses both deontological and utilitarian concepts to combat this crime. Deontological aspects are primarily seen within the different legislation and acts put into place that holds every individual accountable and focuses on transparency between nations. Whereas utilitarianism is seen in the methods of catching and arresting those who are involved.

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## Don't Think About It

Rachel Peterson



# The New Negro Woman: Powerful and Effective

Luke Franchuk

The New Negro movement is defined by its promotion of racial uplift and race & nation building. The movement was born out of the consolidation of the Jim Crow south, the peak of lynching in the United States, and during the highpoint of the Great Migration of southern Blacks into the industrial cities of the urban north. The central theme of the New Negro was to establish a base of racial identity for Blacks that was not embedded in subservience to white authority and to campaign for racial pride and embrace African culture and heritage. Simultaneously, the New Negro Woman was gaining traction from female members who insisted their voices be heard. Prominent in the crusade for the New Negro, women were visible and adamant that their opinions were considered, going so far as to write in articles that the success of the race was dependent of the success of the women's movement.<sup>24</sup> These women were able to encourage support from street corners to build rapport with their constituents and offer their homes as meeting places to further the female cause with leading male authority figures. Amy Ashwood and Grace Campbell were New Negro Women essential to the success of the movement. With their skills

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<sup>24</sup> Erik S. McDuffie, "Chapter 1-Black Communist Women Pioneers, 1919-1930" in *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 27.

and appeal, the New Negro movement resounded with ordinary citizens and formed a foundation of support. An essential characteristic to the success of the New Negro Woman was a charming and captivating appeal to earn support and spread their messages among the elite and the ordinary alike in non-traditional locations.

Amy Ashwood, UNIA president and Marcus Garvey's first wife, had an ability to earn support for the New Negro movement from both the UNIA elite and neighborhood passersby. The UNIA was a strong proponent of racial pride, separatism, and heritage, financial self-sufficiency, and Black political nationalism. Believing in herself and her race from an early age, Ashwood epitomized Beatrice Morrow Cannady's opinion that "the Negro woman must first learn to believe in herself and her race, ridding herself always of any false notion of racial or sex inferiority."<sup>25</sup> Ashwood was acutely aware of her heritage, and due to the efforts of her great-grandmother, she was conscious of her race and proud of her ancestry. The dedication of her great-grandmother's lessons led to her own firm position of Black nationalism and Pan-Africanism that coincided with the principles of the UNIA. Ashwood first met Garvey at a weekly debate at the East Queen Street Baptist Church in Kingston, Jamaica. She opined that

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<sup>25</sup> Beatrice Morrow Cannady, "Beatrice Morrow Cannady Speaks to the NAACP" (speech, 19<sup>th</sup> annual conference, Los Angeles, CA, June 28, 1928), <https://www.Blackpast.org/african-american-history/1928-beatrice-morrow-cannady-speaks-naacp/>.

“morality does not increase with the march of civilization.”<sup>26</sup> Garvey was immediately interested in Ashwood’s conclusions and the two founded what would become a dynamic political alliance. While her formal role in the establishment of the UNIA is debatable, her involvement was fundamental to securing social networks of support and organizing meetings and conferences. Many of the UNIA’s meetings during its developmental years were held in her parents’ home.<sup>27</sup> Garvey was able to obtain important financial, social, and political aid through these associations for the UNIA. With her direct involvement in the UNIA and her relationship with its president, Ashwood was able to build support for organization from the inside out providing commentary and promoting discourse in the local neighborhoods of Harlem.

Ashwood was enabled to continue to spread her message with the backing of the UNIA among community members from crowded Harlem street corners, lecturing that “The Negro question is no longer a local one, but of the Negroes of the world, joining hands and fighting for one common cause.”<sup>28</sup> Appealing to the citizens of Harlem, Ashwood transformed the local issues of racism and repression into a global problem to be addressed by the collective voice of all those with African heritage. Middle class citizens, especially women, encouraged by organizers like

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<sup>26</sup> Keisha N. Blain, “Chapter 1- Women Pioneers in the Garvey Movement” in *Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 15.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 16.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 18.

Ashwood, enlarged their attention to include national problems with local issues.<sup>29</sup> The traditional forms of resistance that were used in the south during slavery, and in the north after the Great Migration, were no longer effective to achieve goals. Racial issues were structural, far more widespread than isolated incidents against individuals on plantations or laborers in factories. A group effort to address these structural issues and promote racial equality would yield greater success. Ashwood's presence on street corners popularized the movement when reciting the poem, "We Wear the Mask," revealing anti-discriminatory efforts of oppressed minorities that Harlemites could relate to.<sup>30</sup> This tactic made the world much more connected. Citizens of Harlem quickly realized that they had more in common with other workers around the world than they initially may have imagined. Ashwood, while complimented by the political alliance with Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, helped introduce a national and international perspective that began to surmount potentially insulated life within African-American communities and, to an extent, white communities.

Like Ashwood, Grace Campbell was able to spread her message of New Negroism to both the impoverished and the established male figures in her associated organizations. Campbell had a vivid career throughout her life with occupations as a social worker, civil servant, parole officer, jail

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<sup>29</sup> Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 2019), 161.

<sup>30</sup> Blain, 18.

attendant, and an organizational chairperson for a charity shelter.<sup>31</sup> Through these jobs, Campbell quickly understood the plight of those who were economically disadvantaged. In 1915, Campbell established the Empire Friendly Shelter for Friendless Girls, providing a safe place to reside and sleep for single Black mothers. This endeavor made her “one of the best known colored women in New York.”<sup>32</sup> She became well known among those living in poverty for the assistance and the generosity that she provided. Becoming convinced that capitalism only benefited the wealthy, she preached that socialism would benefit all women. She became widely recognizable in Harlem for speaking at street corners against women’s oppression under capitalism.<sup>33</sup> Campbell was dedicated to the ideals of socialism and communism yielding a better opportunity for women who were economically depressed. Her ability to build relationships with the economically disadvantaged made their stories more real and more relatable as she became an increasingly prominent figure in social uplifting organizations.

Campbell remained an important advocate for gender and racial equality among Black male-led institutions. Campbell retained a seat on the African Blood Brotherhood’s Supreme Council.<sup>34</sup> While female membership in the ABB was high, Campbell was the only woman who

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<sup>31</sup> McDuffie, 30-1.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 37.

served on the board. Though it is unknown how well men reacted to her opinions of gender equality, it should be acknowledged that her presence was an integral step for gender equality during the male dominated era of New Negroism. The most accessible way for Campbell to share her opinions with the Supreme Council was to hold the meetings at her own apartment, which served as the headquarters of Brigg's Crusader News Service and a hub for political activism.<sup>35</sup> As the center for these activities, Campbell developed a managerial skill that "stressed the need to fight for equality and justice with the characteristics associated with being good mothers."<sup>36</sup> Campbell used this skill to politically influence other women as well as openly question the agenda of Black male leaders, and to pressure male-dominated societies that continued to believe in the superiority of men in administrative circles.

This "motherist frame"<sup>37</sup> was a central theme in Beatrice Morrow Cannady's speech to the NAACP: "It is in the home that Negro women can do their finest piece of work for race and nation."<sup>38</sup> Though these women worked publicly and politically to challenge both racism and sexism, they accepted this notion of matronly charm as necessary for the success of the Negro Woman's movement. While Campbell was often relegated to working behind the scenes or tasked with menial assignments, she framed

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Cannady.



her work as grounded in maternal instincts to skillfully further the female cause and influence men on their organizational decisions. This skill was used to appeal to supporters as well as impress male cohorts. It was especially useful towards individuals who were convinced that male authority needed to be respected. Campbell's matriarchal talent could diffuse situations in which men felt disrespected or degraded. Through these abilities, and using her home as a central location for meetings, Campbell was able to appeal to men in authority positions and ordinary citizens alike. Despite often being relegated to nominal tasks during Council meetings, the presence of the Council at her home is a significant step towards the equality of women during the New Negro movement.

Amy Ashwood and Grace Campbell both served as instrumental figures in the New Negro Woman movement. By appearing on street corners to promote the belief that all races and genders should be treated equally, they both gained followers and earned supporters for their respective organizations. Through their work as influential members of organizational boards, they were able to push that agenda further through the consideration of male counterparts. They were both able to use their homes to maneuver influence in authoritative committees. In Ashwood's case, she was able to promote her opinions directly to the ear of Marcus Garvey, while Campbell was able to deploy and employ a nurturing attitude to advocate policies with an eye towards specific achievements. Ashwood

was acutely aware of her ancestry and looked to promote her racial heritage in the success of the wider movement. Both women were mindful that their places in their organizations were delimited by sexism, but instead of letting this frustrate them and their work, they simultaneously used and destabilized gender norms to their advantage. Though often left out of important decisions or relegated to menial tasks, they were still influential, their opinions respected and their actions driven by constituent demands.

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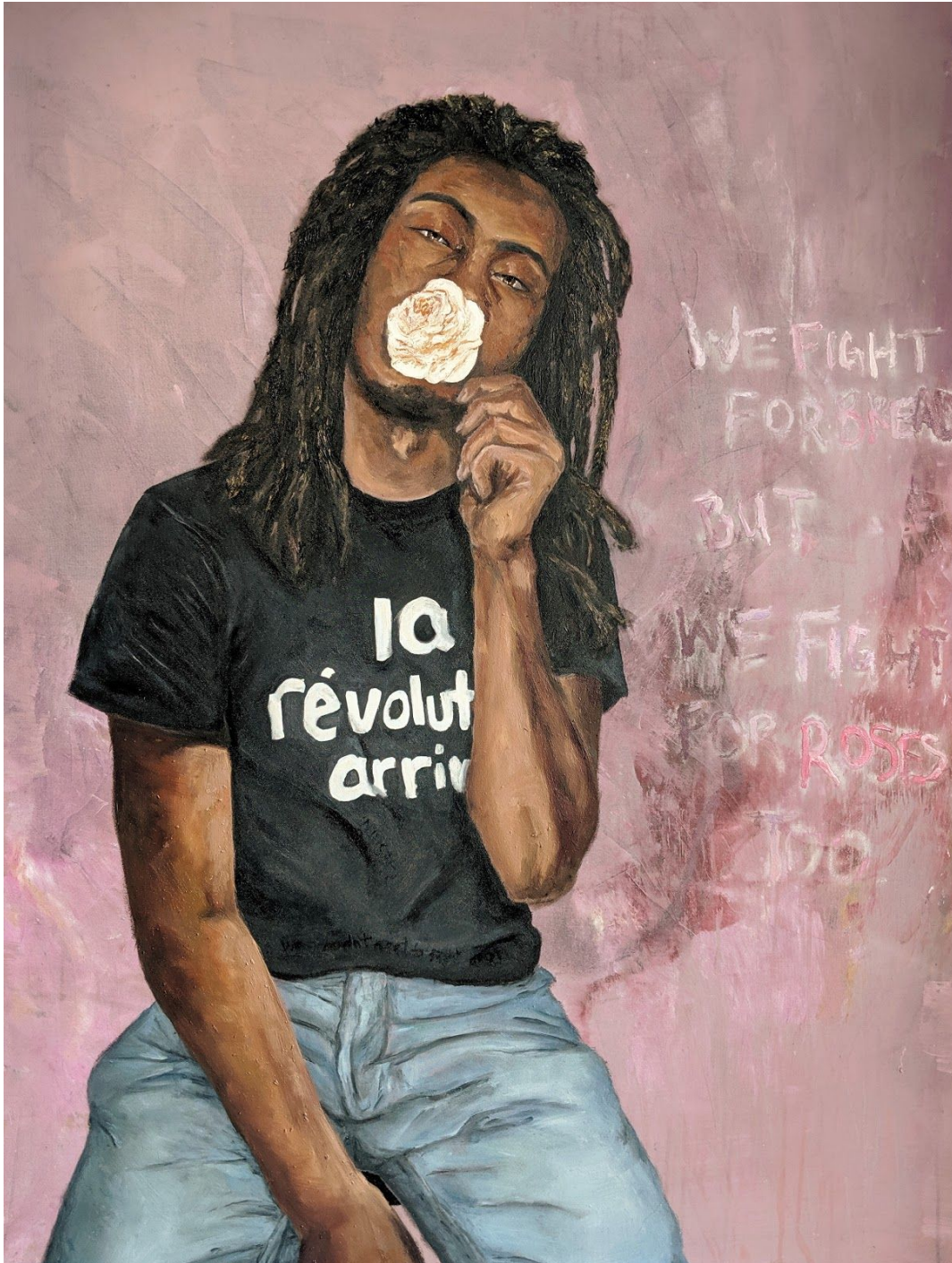
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# Roses

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