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Christine Zabala

Abstract

By analyzing *fin-de-siècle* literature, this essay will focus on a critical examination of *The Awakening*, "The Yellow Wallpaper," "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street," and *Passing*. The emphasis will be on the impact of women's suffrage on women's voices, and the way these voices are perceived by a male-dominated democratic system. The early writings demonstrated the expectation that women's suffrage would translate the ability to vote into a meaningful voice in this system. However, later texts revealed this expectation to be a false promise. This essay uses Virginia Woolf's, *A Room of One's Own*, as one critical lens through which to read these works.

Keywords

fin-de-siècle, women's suffrage, women's voice, male-dominated democratic system, equality, vote

Introduction

At the turn of the 20th century, women's inability to vote was one of the major issues confronting women's rights advocates. After intensive campaigning from various suffrage movements, women in the United States and Great Britain were finally granted the same voting rights as men. While this advancement was incredibly important for women's rights, Virginia Woolf's essay, *A Room of One's Own*, questioned whether this was actually the advance that women most needed. In the essay, published after English women had attained the same voting rights as men, Woolf (1929) related the following story:

My Aunt ... died by a fall from her horse when she was riding out to take the air in Bombay. The news of my legacy reached me one night about the same time that the

act was passed that gave votes to women. A solicitor's letter fell into the post-box and when I opened it I found that she had left me five hundred pounds a year for ever. Of the two—the vote and the money—the money, I own, seemed infinitely the more important. (p. 37)

Considering that the essay formed the basis of her lecture about women and fiction writing, it is surprising that Woolf was so dismissive of such a seemingly groundbreaking event in British and American democratic practices. How could someone, that has had an interest in advancing the cause of women's rights, name money as more important than a basic civic right that men had enjoyed for centuries?

Although in theory, voting rights reform was a great victory for the women's rights movement. In her essay, Woolf responded to the reality of the situation and not the

ideology. She began *A Room of One's Own* with the bold statement that “a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction; and that, as you will see, leaves the great problem of the true nature of women and the true nature of fiction unresolved” (p. 4). While suffrage was undoubtedly an impressive milestone for women's rights both in England and in the United States, it did not address the practical problems that women were confronted with at the time—problems that continue to plague women today. Woolf asserted that voting rights for women are far less important than other concerns that oppress them under the economic system. Although women had been “liberated” in this one political aspect, they were still oppressed in numerous other political and domestic ways. When looking at *fin-de-siècle* literature written in England and America, it is clear that the promise of democracy is not fulfilled; gaining the ability to vote did not make women equal partners with men, and more specifically, it did not alleviate the struggles to which women writers of the time responded, namely the fact that men were still the authority on women's health and domestic decisions.

Women may have gained the right to vote, but politically and socially they were still subordinate to their male counterparts, as the literature of the period reflected. Before gaining the right to vote, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's, “The Yellow Wallpaper,” and Kate Chopin's, *The Awakening*, addressed the powerlessness of women struggling under a patriarchal system that takes control of their lives away from them. Virginia Woolf's, “Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street,” continued this theme of powerlessness even during the process of attaining the vote and directly after. Finally, Nella Larsen's, *Passing*, highlighted the glaring oversight in the suffrage movement, namely that this voting legisla-

tion did not address discrimination against people of color. As a result, achieving the right to vote ultimately failed to satisfy its promise of equality for all. This reality is not limited to the turn of the century; at present, women continue to strive for the equality they deserve despite the supposed power of the vote. While this analysis focuses on *fin-de-siècle* literature, many of the same themes and struggles can be seen reflected in the current economic and political atmosphere in which women live.

Historical Framework

Because this analysis investigates literary trends surrounding the events of women's suffrage, both in the United States and in Great Britain, it is important to begin with a brief understanding of the major events in the suffrage movement, as well as their dates. I do not intend to give a full history of the women's suffrage movement in either case, but instead to contextualize the discussion that follows. In Great Britain, two acts essentially gave women the right to vote alongside men. The first, the Representation of the People Act of 1918, gave women over the age of thirty the right to vote, provided they met minimum property qualifications. While this was a major step, women still did not have equal rights with men, because male citizens who met the minimum property qualifications could vote beginning at age twenty-one. According to British Parliament's website (2015), the heightened age requirement “was to ensure women did not become the majority of the electorate. If women had been enfranchised based upon the same requirements as men, they would have been in the majority, due to the loss of men in the war.” For the next ten years, women struggled to ensure equal voting rights, and finally succeeded with the Equal Fran-

chise Act of 1928. This act enabled women over the age of twenty-one to vote, which finally gave them the same voting rights as men. Incidentally, with the expanded number of women who were able to partake in the election process, women became the voting majority in Great Britain. In 1920, the suffrage movement in the United States celebrated a major victory between these two pieces of British legislation when Congress passed and ratified the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. The 19th Amendment gave all women the legal backing to support their constitutional right to representation.

Women's Voices Before Suffrage

Turning to the literature of the period, Chopin's, *The Awakening* (1899), and Gilman's, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892), highlighted several trends that if democracy's promise held true would be solved once women achieved voting equality. Instead, the ability to vote failed to extend to equality in other areas of life. *The Awakening*, tells the story of Edna Pontellier who marries into a wealthy Creole family in New Orleans. Edna finds great pleasure in painting, but only dabbles in it because she is expected to be more engaged with her family. She has two children with her husband, but she does not feel the same protective affection for them as the other women in her social circle. She begins to rebel against the oppressive wishes of her husband and falls in love with her single friend Robert. When she finds that she cannot be with him and that she will constantly be a possession of her husband and children, she drowns herself. "The Yellow Wallpaper" tells of a similarly oppressive marriage. The narrator, (who some critics assert is named Jane), her husband John, and their child have retired to the countryside in response to Jane's depres-

sion. She repeatedly tells her husband that she would feel better if she could engage in her writing and visit her cousins, but as a physician he insists upon the rest cure which requires Jane to engage in as little physical and mental activity as possible. Eventually, she begins to see a woman moving behind the yellow wallpaper in her bedroom, peels the paper off the walls, and descends into madness by embodying the wallpaper woman, and creeping in circles around the room. Primarily, these two stories reveal that women were expected to defer to the wishes of their husbands, both in their home life and also their health. Also, both texts highlight that not all women flourish in the role of mother and doting wife that society expects of them. Instead, these women would rather engage in artistic pursuits, but are discouraged in their efforts. The two protagonists of these stories are ultimately destroyed by society's inability to accept them as they are.

Both Edna and Jane attempt to assert control over their lives, but they are ultimately under the control of their husbands. In "The Yellow Wallpaper," Jane is aware that the rest cure is not making her any better and attempts to convince her husband of this fact. She laments that John "does not believe I am sick! And what can one do? If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression—a slight hysterical tendency—what is one to do" (p. 2345)? She insists throughout the text that she is not getting better, but her husband dismisses her feelings as trivial. She begs her husband to leave, but their lodging is his decision as well. Although Jane knows that the rest cure and the house is not benefitting her mental health, she is not mentally or physically strong enough to resist him. She is part

of a society that believes because her husband is a physician, he knows what is best for her and her body.

Edna has a similar relationship with her husband, although she is more active in resisting him. Although at the beginning of the text, Edna mainly follows her husband's wishes; she begins to disregard him openly when his desires conflict with her own. Early in the story, Edna subordinates her own wellbeing, "not with any sense of submission or obedience to his compelling wishes, but unthinkingly, as we walk, move, sit, stand, go through the daily treadmill of the life which has been portioned out to us" (p. 41-42). Later, after she realizes that she is not suited for his ideal lifestyle, she begins to associate with men outside of her husband's company, as well as, withdraw more and more from her children. One could argue that Edna's friendship with Robert, and other young men, allows her a certain amount of freedom, but Lawrence Thornton (1980) rightly dismissed this idea as "a veneer covering a solidly conventional society that titillated itself with flourishes of libertinism" (p. 51). This conventionality manifests itself in the attitudes of the other women towards Edna. While Edna is allowed to associate with Robert, the other women in the community treat their potential relationship as something of a joke, and are themselves completely absorbed by their own families. Additionally, while Mr. Pontellier does not initially object to Edna's relationship with Robert, he is the ultimate decision maker in their lives and regards Edna as "a valuable piece of personal property" (p.3). He does not view his wife as a person with needs and desires, but rather as support for the life that he has constructed for himself.

Another feature that the two women share is that both would rather be engaged in artistic pursuits than involved with the

businesses of parenting. Edna enjoys sketching and she describes the feeling as "satisfaction of a kind which no other employment afforded her" (p. 15). She also emphasizes that she had never felt the protective mothering urges as the other Creole women in her social circle. She believes that motherhood is a responsibility "for which Fate had not fitted her" (p. 25), and she declares that "I would give up the unessential; I would give my money, I would give my life for my children; but I wouldn't give myself" (p. 64). In an interesting departure into Mr. Pontellier's mind, it is revealed that he also believes Edna does not have strong maternal instincts: "It would have been a difficult matter for Mr. Pontellier to define to his own satisfaction or anyone else's wherein his wife failed in her duty toward their children. It was something which he felt rather than perceived" (p. 10). Edna's inability to fully commit to her children cannot be quantified, but instead is only something that both husband and wife can feel to be true. In the tangible sense, Edna's care for her children is satisfactory; however, both Edna and her husband know that her emotions are not fully invested in the endeavor. Despite his understanding that she is not suited for motherhood, Mr. Pontellier still expects Edna to fulfill the role.

In "The Yellow Wallpaper," it is clear that Jane is similarly disinterested in her child. She only mentions her child once in the text, and the baby is always in the care of servants. Carole Stone (1986) commented specifically on *The Awakening*, but her observation can be applied to both texts. She asserted that the entire text "questions the assumptions that childbirth and child care are a woman's principle vocation, and that motherhood gives pleasure to all women" (p. 23). Much like Edna, Jane exhibits the outward signs of caring for her child, but there are clearly oth-

er pursuits in which she would rather be engaged. Throughout the narrative, the reader can see that Jane's true passion is writing; the short story is even framed as the journal that she must hide because John "hates to have me write a word" (p. 2346). This oppression perfectly exemplifies Woolf's comment about women's voting rights in *A Room of One's Own*. The inability to vote is not the most pressing concern Edna faces. Instead, she lacks the ability to support herself and so must depend on her husband; she is part of a society that gives her husband complete control over her health and her body, and ignores her own feelings in regards to her health, a problem that still manifests itself in the reproductive rights debate in today's politics; and she is forced to hide her writing from her husband, lest she be reprimanded for her creativity. As Woolf addresses in her essay more than thirty years later, the inability to participate in the political process is not the largest obstacle women face.

For both Jane and Edna, this oppressive existence has tragic consequences. When Edna realizes that she will not be able to live how she desires, she drowns herself. Similarly, Jane plunges deeper and deeper into her depression until she totally loses her sanity. This madness not only shows that the rest cure is incredibly detrimental, but also that this diagnosis is a symptom of patriarchal power in medicine. Denise D. Knight (1992) noted that Jane's "regression to an infantile state at the end of the story not only suggests the effects of sensory deprivation on intelligent women, but the crawling on one's hands and knees is emblematic of the crudest form of servility" (p. 290). Jane's confinement ensures that she loses not only her mind but also her autonomy. However, these forms of discrimination, much more pressing than unequal voting practices, were not solved by women's suffrage. Arguably,

the domestic injustices would be solved by the empowerment of women in politics. However, oppression practiced on women in the private sphere contributes to the systemic oppression of women, and therefore becomes public and political. In her essay, "The Personal Is Political," Carol Hanisch (1969) wrote that "personal problems are political problems. There are no personal solutions at this time. There is only collective action for a collective solution." Although Hanisch was writing about the "political" in very broad terms, not limited to elections and voting practices, the "personal as political" was a central concept of Second Wave Feminism. Indeed, the "personal as political" highlights the inextricable link between individual issues of persecution, and the politicized struggle that continues today.

'Mrs. Dalloway' and the Internalized Misogyny of Politics

After women were granted suffrage, the ideals of democracy tell us that "we the people" will be able to enact change. However, even though political options were now open to the majority of women, they were still repressed in their private lives by similar barriers to those highlighted by Chopin and Gilman, as well as marginalized in public politics. Woolf's short story, "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street," was published in 1922, after the Representation of the People Act, which gave British women over thirty the right to vote, but before they gained voting rights equal to men. The story, (which would later evolve into Woolf's novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*), chronicles an afternoon in the life of the upper middle class society woman, Clarissa Dalloway, as she goes to Bond Street to buy gloves for a party that evening. Woolf's, stream of consciousness, narration allows the reader access to Clarissa's mind as

she thinks of her husband Dick, as well as the people she passes on the street. Through Clarissa's musing, the reader can see how the society in which she is entrenched has shaped her worldview to the point where she cannot actually take advantage of the supposed political freedom suffragettes have achieved. She is wary of politically active women, (or women who have agency in any way), her husband makes her decisions for her, and she only expresses authority in her home life.

As Clarissa walks through London, the reader begins to see that Clarissa is made uncomfortable by women who have exercised their newfound right to participate in politics. She encounters Lady Bexborough in her travel, and is conflicted by the lifestyle the other woman leads. Upon first seeing her, Clarissa thinks of Bexborough as "an astonishing friend; no one can pick a hole in her after all these years" (p. 2548). Clarissa also admits to herself that she envies the other woman's assertiveness, and wishes to embody those same traits: "Clarissa would have given anything to be like that, the mistress of Clarefield, talking politics, like a man" (p. 2548). The reader is given only a brief paragraph in which Woolf described Lady Bexborough, and one of the key attributes that comes through is her involvement in politics. Bringing the specific attribute of political activity to the forefront of the discussion highlights how rarely women are actively involved in politics in Clarissa's social circle. Initially, Clarissa responds positively to this aspect of Lady Bexborough's personality; however, this admiration is quickly followed by scorn. The passage concludes, "she never goes anywhere ... she had nothing to live for and the old man is failing and they say she is sick of it all, thought Clarissa and the tears actually rose to her eyes as she entered the shop" (p. 2548). Although Clarissa's first response was to admire Bexborough

for her independence and political acumen, ultimately, Clarissa focuses on the negative aspects of the other woman's life. The quick succession of political activism and unhappiness links the two qualities in Clarissa's mind; Bexborough talks politics "like a man," but as a result she has "nothing to live for." Clarissa, perhaps unable to accept that she cannot be like Lady Bexborough, cries when interpreting the value of the other woman's life. As an older woman, Clarissa has the right to vote, but this interaction shows the reader that the practice is still not considered socially acceptable.

Clarissa also directly addresses the idea of women moving beyond social activism to actually participating in Parliament, and she is critical of this notion as well. When she encounters Hugh Whitbread on the street, she reinforces the inferiority of women in her mind by taking his wife, Milly, as proof. Hugh implies in their conversation that Milly is suffering from health issues related to menopause, and Clarissa continues to muse on this idea long after she leaves Hugh. Clarissa wonders, "How then could women sit in Parliament? How could they do things with men? For there is this extra-ordinarily deep instinct, something inside one; you can't get over it; it's no use trying" (p. 2546). Menopause and menstruation, in Clarissa's mind, confirm that her sex should avoid politics. According to Judith P. Saunders (1978), this idea becomes central to Clarissa's understanding of women's inferiority to men. Saunders (1978) argued that, for Clarissa, her "monthly period is far more than an embarrassing interruption: it is the source and sign of women's inferiority ... one preventing rational, adult activity and placing women on a plane of aspiration distinctly below that of men" (p. 141). Clarissa's concept that menstruation acts as "an effectual barrier between her and any kind of higher striving"

(p. 142) leads her to the conclusion that women are fundamentally inferior to men. Woolf, who argued in her political writings that women are systemically oppressed by the patriarchal system, presented a character who is oblivious to this oppression, and ultimately, upholds the rhetoric that allows that oppression to continue. Clarissa then becomes a representation of the kind of attitude that makes suffrage, ultimately, a hollow victory for the women's rights movement. Women like Clarissa do not take advantage of the vote, and continue to uphold the society that restricts their own mobility and freedom.

In addition, Clarissa has internalized the attitudes of her husband, who she thinks about while inside the glove shop. Clarissa notices that the shop girl is tired and harried, and contemplates sending her on a holiday. However, she decides against this action, thinking, "then she remembered how on their honeymoon Dick had shown her the folly of giving impulsively. It was much more important, he said, to get trade with China. Of course he was right" (p. 2549). This incident serves two purposes. First, it highlights that she has adopted her husband's opinions, and that she acts on them even when he is not present. She suppresses her instinct because she knows that Dick will not approve of her idea. Also importantly, the added "of course" signals that her husband is always viewed as correct in these situations. The second point that this incident illustrates is that Dick's logic is, at least in this case, fallacious. Dick never makes an appearance in the story; so, Clarissa's understanding of him is all we have to judge his character. The reader knows relatively little about Dick, and what we do know for certain is that he links the unrelated concepts of charity towards the poor and trading with China, resulting in a conclusion that makes little sense. Clarissa's

charity, whether towards the shop girl or any other individual, has no bearing on whether or not the government of England will trade with China.

Apart from showing Dick's faulty reasoning skills, his argument also serves to effectively remove his wife from the conversation and suppress her voice in their discussions. By turning the question of charity into a political matter, Dick signals to Clarissa that he is now speaking on a subject about which he deems her unfit to converse. With this scene, Woolf questions whether or not Dick is actually more innately capable of participating in politics, as Clarissa believes.

In the interest of being fair to the character of Clarissa, she does exert agency in her own home and in the domestic sphere. In contrast to the figure from "The Yellow Wallpaper," who is consumed by the domestic to which she is confined, Clarissa shows control over her environment. The story opens with the assertive phrase, "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the gloves herself" (p. 2545). She takes complete control of her domestic affairs, and she takes pleasure in them. She also notes that "[t]o ride; to dance; she had adored all that. Or going on long walks in the country, talking, about books" (p. 2547). However, by the end of the story the reader learns that Clarissa is totally insulated inside this domestic atmosphere and lives in a small, inconsequential world. Saunders (1978) remarks of the story, "[s]uperficial attempts at brisk cheerfulness notwithstanding, the predominant mood of 'Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street' is one of futility and resignation" (p. 144). The ending of the texts affirms this reading. While in the shop, struggling to remember the name of a fellow patron, a bomb drops outside. Clarissa does not react at all: "There was a violent explosion in the street outside. The shop-women cowered behind the counters.

But Clarissa, sitting very upright, smiled at the other lady. 'Miss Anstruther!' she exclaimed" (p. 2550). Clarissa is so caught up in the task of engaging with fellow members of her social circle that she is oblivious to the effects of World War I happening just outside.

'Equal' Suffrage: African-American Literature and the Vote

As evidenced by Woolf's writing, women of the period have not benefitted immensely from the ability to vote. They are still confined by societal conventions, they are still subservient to their husbands, and they are still trapped in the private sphere. Critics of this view might argue that, at the very least, women are equal in the eyes of the law, and can participate in the political process if they are able to break free of convention. However, there is a flaw in this ideological stronghold: when women first received the right to vote, women of color were almost totally excluded from the suffrage movement. Although African-American men were technically given the right to vote in the United States, in 1870, as a result of the 15th Amendment to the Constitution, discriminatory voting practices were rampant. With the use of literacy tests and similar tactics, people of color were effectively unable to vote until the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. So, at the time women were given the right to vote in 1920, this equality under the law was only extended to white women. Oppressive exclusion is the central focus of Nella Larsen's *Passing*. *Passing* tells the story of Irene Redfield and Clare Bellew who are both women of color capable of "passing" as white. Although Irene chooses to stay in the black community, she often ends up "passing" without acknowledging this to herself; Clare marries a wealthy white

man and "passes" in the general public, as white, on a daily basis. When Clare tries to re-associate with the African American community of Harlem, she finds that she does not belong with either group. The novel concludes with Clare falling from a building—whether she throws herself from the window or is pushed by a jealous Irene is unclear.

Mainly, the text highlights the oppressive burden of race, and the constant fear of being "found out" if individuals attempt to "pass." As Irene sits in an upscale restaurant for tea, she becomes aware of a woman watching her. Irene becomes nervous, thinking that "the idea of being ejected from any place, even in the polite and tactful way in which the Drayton would probably do it, ... disturbed her" (p. 121). Even though Irene lives in black Harlem, there are still instances when she passes as white. However, she does not admit to herself that she is trying to pass, and the reader sees the immense stress that this causes her. In the text, people of every race constantly try to discover the identity of individuals around them. A wealthy white man tells Irene, "what I'm trying to figure out is the name, status, and race of the blonde beauty out of the fairy tale" (p. 166). Clare, the object of his gaze, has been passing as white for years, but when seen in a setting with other African Americans, it becomes imperative for those around her to understand to what race she belongs.

While men of color are subject to this racial interrogation, women of color have the unique experience of sexist oppression as well. The oppression highlighted in the previous texts are relevant in *Passing* as well. For example, Irene and her husband Brian disagree about their children's schooling, but it is clear that Brian will get his way. After Brian disagrees with her, Irene notes that "many arguments in the past had taught her

the futility of attempting to combat Brian on ground where he was more nearly at home than she" (p. 151). Additionally, when she originally approaches the topic with Brian, she does so in an obsequious, (and manipulative), tone: "you know more about these things than I do. You're better able to judge" (p. 153). Irene herself does not believe this, but she knows that an argument with her husband will not end in her favor. Similar to the political situation in the previously discussed texts, Irene knows that she cannot win an argument with her husband because he is, ultimately, the person in the household who makes decisions. However, unlike some of the previous texts, Irene is certain in her decisions, and she "always had complete confidence in her own good judgment and tact" (p. 155). Irene's interactions with her husband highlight that suffrage has not given her freedom in any meaningful sense. In addition to the ever present oppression imposed on Irene, by society, for her skin color, and as a woman she also must defer to her husband even though she believes so strongly in her own opinions.

The oppression of race, singular to people of color, combined with the oppression of gender, universal to women of all races, creates an environment from which no one can escape unharmed. Highlighting this relationship between sexual and racial oppression, Lori Harrison-Kahan (2002) draws a parallel between the male gaze on female objects, and the white gaze on black objects. She explains that the dominant gaze, (the white/male gaze), often reacts violently when the minority gaze, (the black/female gaze) becomes more than the subject. Using this comparison, Harrison-Kahan (2002) argues that Irene and Clare struggle, especially, because they function as the "the black female spectator who dares to look back at the white gaze" (p. 122). Irene herself is aware of

this distinction when she laments that "she suffered and rebelled because she was unable to disregard the burden of race. It was, she cried silently, enough to suffer as a woman, an individual, on one's own account" (p. 182). The dual burden of race and gender, along with the combined suffering it causes, is unbearable, and ultimately ends in the death of the other main character Clare—whether she herself feels this suffering and ends her life, or whether Irene cannot compete with her ability to "pass" and murders her is unclear. However, even passing as white does not alleviate these complications as Irene notes, "I'm beginning to believe ... that no one is ever completely happy, or free, or safe" (p. 160). This is definitely true of the characters in the text. Even when they are not actively objectified as women of color, they live in fear of the white male gaze seeking them out despite their attempts to pass within the white population.

Something notable in *Passing*, and indeed what is notable in many of the texts studied, is the fierce loyalty of the characters to the political and national system that oppresses them. In Irene's case, she overtly states her patriotism: "She belonged in this land of rising towers. She was an American. She grew from this soil, and she would not be uprooted" (p. 189). Even though she is constantly derided as the target of racial slurs throughout the text, she still shows a fierce loyalty to her country. The novel was written just after World War I, so it is surprising that Irene would have this attitude, especially considering that African American regiments fought and died in the war, yet were still unable to drink from the same fountain as white citizens upon their return.

Conclusion

While *Passing* illustrates a very specific

moment in time for African American women, this racist, sexist oppression continues to subjugate women of color into the present day; equal voting rights have been unable to give women of color the equality that they have been striving for since Larsen's time and far before. Echoing Woolf's sentiments in *A Room of One's Own*, Audre Lorde (1984) argued that relying on the tools of the established patriarchy—tools like voting rights—will never bring equality for women of color and other marginalized groups. Lorde wrote, "those of us who stand outside the circle of this society's definition of acceptable women ... those of us who are poor, who are lesbians, who are Black, who are older—know that survival is not an academic skill" (p. 112). She identifies this as a major problem of modern day feminism because the movement does not include these marginalized groups. She continues, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change" (p. 112). Applying this idea to women's voting rights, using a tool of capitalism, (voting), to reform a system of oppression that it created and continues to uphold, cannot yield a positive result. Although this essay was published nearly thirty years ago, Lorde highlighted a problem that continues to plague the feminist movement today.

While society has undoubtedly made some progress in regard to these problems of control over women's independence and healthcare rights, women today still struggle with these same issues. Gilman attempted to highlight the harm of the "rest cure" and allowing husbands to make decisions about their wives' health without their approval;

we can see today this struggle for control continuing in the debate over women's reproductive rights and the fight for Planned Parenthood. Woolf's, *Clarissa Dalloway*, showed her readers how easily women can internalize restricting rhetoric when they are surrounded by a society that discourages them from participating in politics; today, women still struggle to gain basic rights, like equal pay, even though the number of women participating in the electoral process has exceeded the number of men since 1980¹. *Passing* drew attention to the plight of women of color following World War I; today's feminist movement struggles to incorporate marginalized groups, not only women of color, but also lesbian and transgender women.

Towards the conclusion of her essay, Woolf (1929) wrote that a "very interesting and obscure masculine complex" encourages men to belittle women because of "that deep-seated desire, not so much that SHE shall be inferior as that HE shall be superior, which plants him wherever one looks, not only in front of the arts, but barring the way to politics too" (p. 55). Woolf goes on to say that "it is the masculine values that prevail" (p. 73-74). While the position of women may have improved following the vote, Woolf showed with this observation that women's entrance into politics and fiction continues to be met with harsh resistance. Sally Alexander (2000) pointed out that "A Room [sic] had been written at a moment when British feminists knew what they wanted and believed that the vote, an independent income and birth control might eventually deliver it" (p. 280). The keyword in this statement is *eventually*; women of the period did not achieve the results that they hoped for immediately, and we do not see

¹According to recent Rutgers data, 63% of eligible women (71.4 million) reported voting in the 2012 presidential election as opposed to 59.8% of eligible men (61.6 million). Center for American women and politics. (2015). Gender differences in voter turnout. New Brunswick: Rutgers. Retrieved from <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/resources/genderdiff.pdf>

them in completion today. Woolf concluded her essay with the hope that with “another hundred years ... a room of her own and five hundred a year ... [the female, fiction writer] will write a better book one of these days” (p. 94). At the end of her essay, Woolf seemed optimistic that the progress promised by equal voting rights might continue. However, with the close of Woolf’s time frame fast approaching, it seems unlikely that society will fulfill her expectations. ■

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Building strength: Strength training attitudes and behaviors of all-women's and coed gym exercisers

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Abstract

Research suggests varied reasons why women may avoid engaging in a regular strength training routine at the gym in favor of performing cardiovascular exercise (e.g., Harne & Bixby, 2005). However, there has been little research focused on the potential role of the gym environment itself, specifically in terms of the presence of men. The current study compared women members of all-women's and coed fitness facilities on their attitudes toward different exercise activities as well as their exercise choices within the gym. A community sample of women from the Northeast US, who attended either an all-women's or coed gym (N = 635), filled out a series of online questionnaires. We hypothesized that all-women gym members would report more positive attitudes towards strength training and would report attitudes towards strength training and cardio that were more similar in favorability compared with coed gym members. In addition, we expected all-women exercisers to engage in strength training activities (e.g., weight machine or free weights) more frequently than coed exercisers, especially if they also reported higher body dissatisfaction. Results were mixed and hypotheses received only partial support. Although all-women members rated strength training more positively and more similarly in magnitude to cardio compared with coed members, little differences were found between groups on strength training behaviors. Null findings are discussed in light of existing socio-cultural beauty and exercise norms that may deter women from engaging in strength training irrespective of male presence within the gym environment. More research is needed to explore the potential positive and negative consequences of same-sex and mixed-sex fitness settings for women's physical and mental health.

Keywords

women, exercise, strength training, weight lifting, fitness, gender norms

Introduction

Strength training offers health benefits beyond cardiovascular training alone (e.g., Pereira et al., 2013) and is related to decreased risk of various diseases and mental health issues such as: hypertension, diabe-

tes, and depression (Ciccolo, Carr, Krupel, & Longval, 2010). Importantly, strength training also provides specific health advantages to women as they age. Women can begin to lose muscle mass and bone density as early as their thirties, placing them at higher risk of developing Osteoporosis (Bemben,

Fetters, Bembien, Nabavi, & Koh, 2000; Evans, 1995; Lindle et al., 1997). Health experts have recommended that adults initiate a strength training routine early in life in order to achieve peak bone mass before age-related decline begins (e.g., Petranick & Berg, 1997). There are also benefits to introducing strength training activities during pre and postmenopausal years. Increased muscle mass and bone density can support the ability to carry out activities of daily living and reduce the likelihood of falls associated with muscle imbalances (Bassuk & Manson, 2014; de Kam, Smulders, Weerdesteyn, & Smits-Engelsman, 2009).

The US 2008 federal physical activity guidelines suggest that adults engage in a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity per week; as well as, strength train all major muscle groups on two or more days per week at a moderate or high-intensity level (US Department of Health & Human Services, 2008). According to data collected in 2013, only 20.4% of US adults met the recommended guidelines for both aerobic (i.e., cardiovascular activity) and muscle-strength training activities (National Center for Health Statistics, 2015). Men strength train in greater numbers than women, and a much higher percentage of women meet standards set for cardiovascular activity, (hereafter referred to as cardio), compared with strength training (50% vs. 24%).

Women represent a substantial and important segment of gym users (Maguire, 2008). Gym facilities, thus, provide a seemingly optimal setting for many adult women to work on increasing and promoting muscle health and development. Unfortunately, however, data suggest that in addition to the fact that the majority of women do not reach recommended levels of strength train-

ing (National Center for Health Statistics, 2015), they also may be actively avoiding weights and weight machines in gym environments (e.g., Dworkin, 2001). Given the documented health benefits of strength training specific to women, greater attention must be devoted to exploring the factors that encourage or impede muscle-building activities in gym settings. We designed the current study to examine differences in the exercise behaviors and attitudes of women attending all-women and coed gyms.

Studies provide a number of reasons why many women tend to avoid strength training exercises in the gym, despite often being aware of the health benefits (e.g., Harne & Bixby, 2005). Time management, competing family and social obligations, sore muscles, inexperience with proper form and lifting techniques, fear of bulking up, and lack of social support have all been identified as common barriers (Dworkin, 2001; Harne & Bixby, 2005; O'Dougherty et al., 2008; Terre, 2010). Some of these barriers could be addressed with relatively simple and cost-effective strategies, such as educating women about the myth of bulking up, offering support to encourage the use of free weights and weight machines, and/or teaching proper form and technique. Indeed, many fitness facilities offer complimentary instructional sessions on how to use weight equipment as well as group exercise classes dedicated to weight training (Terre, 2010). However, these strategies do not necessarily address the broader social and cultural forces that have shaped gender norms within the gym environment, including the contemporary cultural pressure in Western society to achieve a slender female form.

The gendered nature of gym settings is visibly reflected in the physical areas that men and women tend to occupy. Men often dominate weight or strength training areas

whereas women gravitate towards cardio equipment and aerobics classes (Dworkin, 2001; Simpson et al., 2003). Given the historical roots of weightlifting as a male activity, it is perhaps not surprising that women report discomfort with using weights and associate weight-related activities with masculinity (Collins, 2002; Dworkin, 2001; Salvatore & Marecek, 2010; Stern, 2008). Salvatore and Maracek (2010) showed that women were more likely to view using weight lifting equipment (i.e., bench press) as a male activity and using cardio equipment (i.e., Stairmaster) as a female activity. These women also reported using the Stairmaster more often than the bench press, and predicted they would experience greater negative evaluation from others while using a bench press compared with a Stairmaster. This is consistent with the societal pressure placed on women to strive for thinness (Tiggemann, 2011). Unlike cardiovascular exercise, building muscle through strength training is not typically seen as compatible with female beauty norms that prescribe thinness and femininity (see Dworkin, 2001). Women associate cardiovascular activity with burning fat which presumably brings them closer to reaching the slender body ideal promoted by US culture (Dworkin, 2001; Salvatore & Marecek, 2010). Some research suggests that when women do undertake a regular weight training routine, they are careful to avoid lifting too heavy or too often in order to maintain femininity (Dworkin, 2001).

In addition to the fact that women may be reluctant to engage in activities associated with masculinity, appearance, and body image concerns may also discourage women from entering male-dominated gym spaces. Yin (2001) showed that women who reported higher social physique anxiety (i.e., perceived anxiety over others' evaluation of

one's physique), higher body size dissatisfaction, and higher body mass index were more likely to work out exclusively in women-only areas of a coed gym and felt more positively about designated workout areas for women than their more body satisfied counterparts. Furthermore, Kruisselbrink, Dodge, Swanburg, and MacLeod (2004), found that the intended duration of a typical workout decreased when women participants imagined themselves working out among all men compared with a setting comprised of mixed-sex or all-female exercisers. The all-male exercise scenario also led to the highest level of social physique anxiety while the all-female scenario led to the lowest level of social physique anxiety. Although neither study specifically addressed the impact of male presence on the strength-related exercise choices of women, the findings suggest that women would be less likely to seek out male-dominated weight training areas of coed gyms, especially when they possess higher levels of body dissatisfaction.

Although, Yin (2001) and Kruisselbrink et al.'s (2004) research alludes to potential benefits of all-women's exercise facilities for strength training, very few researchers have directly considered how coed and all-women's gym environments may differentially relate to women's exercise attitudes and behaviors, particularly with respect to strength training. It may be that for some women, an all-women's setting is important for overcoming psychological and social barriers to exercise in general and perhaps to strength training in particular; however, this hypothesis has not been tested empirically.

The Present Study

In sum, the previous works of Kruisselbrink et al. (2004), Salvatore & Marecek (2010), and Yin (2001) all suggest that ap-

pearance concerns and body dissatisfaction issues) might act as deterrents to strength training in coed gym settings. A coed exercise environment may also lead to heightened awareness of violating perceived gender norms when engaging in strength training activities (Salvatore & Marecek, 2010). The primary goal of the current study was to compare exercise attitudes and behaviors of all-women and coed gym members. Specifically, we examined differences in strength training and cardio attitudes, strength training and cardio time per week, and the frequency of free weight and weight machine use per week. We hypothesized the following:

1. Women-only gym members would report more positive attitudes towards strength training and more total time strength training per week than coed gym members.
2. Women-only gym members would report using free weights and weight machines on more days per week than coed gym members.
3. Due to cultural beauty norms which encourage a thin body ideal in women (Strahan, Wilson, Cressman, & Buote, 2006), women attending both gym types would report more positive attitudes toward cardio than strength training; however, we expected the magnitude of the difference between cardio and strength attitudes for women-only members to be smaller than for coed members.
4. Yin (2001) and Kruisselbrink et al.'s (2004) works, suggested that exercise activities in a coed setting might be particularly challenging for women with negative body image, so, we also explored whether the relation between gym setting (all-women vs. coed) and strength training outcomes was stronger for women with greater body weight discrepancy. We expected coed gym

exercisers with greater body weight discrepancy to feel less positively about strength training, and to strength train less often than all-women gym exercisers with greater body weight discrepancy.

Method

Participants

Female participants over the age of 18 ($N = 635$) were recruited from all-women ($n = 308$) and coed gym facilities ($n = 327$) and invited to take part in a study about exercise habits and health. Ages ranged from 18 to 71, with a mean age of 32 ($SD = 10.58$). The majority of participants were Caucasian (535, 85%). Other ethnic groups included East/South/Southeast Asian (7%), Hispanic (3%), Mixed (3%), and Other (2%). The mean BMI of the sample fell at the upper end of what is considered a healthy weight ($M = 23.91$, $SD = 4.29$). Of those who provided information on household income, approximately 5% ($n = 30$) of the sample reported making less than \$20,000, while 9.9% ($n = 59$) earned between \$20,000 and \$34,999, 17.8% ($n = 106$) earned between \$35,000 and \$49,999, 22.4% ($n = 133$) earned between \$50,000 and \$74,999, 15% ($n = 88$) earned between \$75,000 and \$99,999, 14.8% ($n = 89$) earned between \$100,000 and \$149,999, and 15.1% ($n = 90$) earned \$150,000 or more.

Measures

Gym type and gym membership length.

Participants reported the name and location of their gym. We used information posted on gym websites to determine whether a facility served only women or coed patrons; then, we classified participants accordingly into one of the two gym types, all-women or coed. This served as our primary inde-

pendent variable. At the end of the survey, we asked participants to report whether they currently attended both, a coed gym and women-only gym, so that we could identify and exclude individuals who were working out in both settings simultaneously. In addition, participants provided the number of months and years of gym membership for their current gym. This question was used to calculate the total months that each individual belonged to their gym.

Gym frequency and exercise habits.

We assessed the frequency of gym workouts by asking participants how many days per week they worked out at their gym. Participants then answered a series of questions designed to assess their weekly gym habits for both cardio and strength training. In order to facilitate comparisons between cardio and strength training activities, we asked similar questions for each category, in terms of both time per gym session and days per week. To assess cardio activity, we asked the following questions: “How many days per week do you spend doing cardio at the gym running on a treadmill, riding a stationary bike, or taking cardio classes designed to raise your heart rate?”; “During a typical gym session, how much time (in minutes) do you generally spend doing cardio [such as] running on a treadmill, riding a stationary bike, [or] taking cardio classes designed to raise your heart rate?” We estimated a total cardio time per week variable that represented the total minutes participants typically spent doing cardio each week. This was calculated by multiplying the number of days spent doing cardio each week by the minutes of a typical cardio session.

To assess strength-related activity we asked the following questions: “How many days per week do you typically strength train at the gym [using] free weights, weight machines, or take an exercise class primarily fo-

cused on building muscle”; “During a typical gym session, how much time (in minutes) do you generally spend strength training [using] free weights, weight machines, [or] take an exercise class primarily focused on building muscle?”; “How many days per week do you typically use free weights?” We repeated this last question substituting *free weights* with *weight machines*. We estimated a total strength time per week variable that represented the total minutes participants typically spent doing strength-related activities each week. This was calculated by multiplying the number of strength training days each week by the minutes of a typical strength workout.

Strength training attitudes and cardio attitudes. Participants rated their level of agreement with a series of cognitive and affective statements about strength training and cardio, respectively. We created the measure for the purposes of the current study and developed the items through examination and interpretation of previous literature addressing psychological barriers to strength training and cardio from the collective works of Dworkin (2001), Harne & Bixby (2002), Salvatore & Marecek (2010), and Yin (2001). The statements read as follows:

- I feel comfortable when strength training.
- I feel anxious when strength training.
- I feel competent when strength training.
- I feel intimidated when strength training.
- I feel self-conscious when strength training.
- I feel that others are judging me when strength training.

Participants rated each item on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). We calculated a mean score by summing across items and dividing by six. Items were scored

such that a higher mean represented more positive strength training attitudes. Cardio attitudes were assessed using the same statements and response scale described for strength training. The word *cardio* was substituted in place of the words *strength training* (e.g., I feel comfortable while doing cardio). Items were scored such that a higher mean represented more positive cardio attitudes. The alpha coefficients for strength training and cardio attitudes were .89 and .82, respectively.

Body weight discrepancy. Body weight discrepancy was calculated by subtracting participants' ideal weight from their current weight. A positive score indicated the desire to lose weight.

Background information. Participants provided demographic information such as age, marital status, ethnicity, and income level. Income was assessed by asking participants to check off the category that best reflected their total household income (less than \$20,000, between \$20,000 and \$34,999, between \$35,000 and \$49,999, between \$50,000 and \$74,999, \$75,000 and \$99,999, \$100,000 and \$149,999, and \$150,000 or more).

Procedure & Design

We recruited a convenience sample of women from various gyms in and around an urban area of the Northeastern United States to take part in a study about exercise behavior and women's health. Recruitment efforts took place during the spring of 2012, and our research team contacted approximately 25 gyms. Participating gyms ($N = 15$) varied in physical size, available amenities, and membership fees. The most expensive gym membership cost approximately \$120 per month while the least expensive cost \$20 per month. Some of the facilities had multiple

locations. We verified that all of the gyms had basic weight training equipment such as: multiple sets of free weights, body bars, and weight machines, as well as, a designated weight training area.

We requested that each facility email a short, prepared description of the study purpose and link to their members, post our link on their Facebook page, and/or allow us to post flyers in strategic locations and high traffic areas. Approximately 60% of gyms either emailed the study link or posted the study link on Facebook. Research assistants visited all gyms in person to post flyers. In addition, we attempted to recruit participants using Facebook ads. However, the Facebook ads accounted for only 11 participants in the total sample. To incentivize participation, we offered the chance to win one of four \$25 gift-cards to Starbucks.

English-speaking adult women, over the age of 18, who belonged to a gym facility were invited to participate. We utilized surveymonkey.com, an online data collection website, to record participant responses. The first page of the survey was an information sheet where participants read about the purpose of the study. Participants had to indicate that they met the eligibility criteria before progressing to the first set of questions; although, there was no way to verify if participants were being truthful.

We first asked for the name and location of participants' current gym(s), and next presented the questionnaires. Participants were only allowed to move forward through the survey, and all participants saw the questionnaires in the same sequence, as we were unable to randomize the order using our data collection tools. Questions assessing exercise habits and attitudes appeared first; the questions that followed requested height, current weight, and ideal weight. Demographic information was collected at the end. A final

survey page contained additional study details and contact information in the event participants had questions or concerns. All study procedures and recruitment materials received Institutional Review Board approval and followed ethical guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association.

Data analytic strategy. In order to facilitate analyses relevant to our primary study goals, we restricted the sample in a number of ways. We removed participants that reported working out at both gym types ($n = 3$), as well as, those who did not provide a gym name that we could use to determine gym type ($n = 17$). We also excluded participants that belonged only to a specialized fitness facility like Curves, or a sport-specific gym (e.g., boxing) ($n = 86$), as these settings are not comparable to typical gym environments. We further restricted the sample by eliminating participants that skipped the question about gym frequency ($n = 241$), or that indicated their gym frequency was zero days per week ($n = 7$). The rationale behind this decision was to ensure a focus on women who reported working out in coed or all-women's gym environments. For those with missing data on this question, it was impossible to determine the extent to which they exposed themselves to the gym environments that we were interested in studying. In sum, we chose to concentrate on women who self-reported going to a more traditional gym (all-women or coed, but not both) at least 1 day per week ($N = 635$).

Results

We first examined whether coed and all-women gym members differed on any demographic variables. Coed members ($M = 30$, $SD = 9.31$) were significantly younger than all-women members ($M = 34$, $SD = 11.29$), $t(571) = 5.06$, $p < .001$, $d = .38$,

and were more likely to fall into a lower income bracket, $\chi^2(6, N = 635) = 15.23$, $p < .05$, Cramer's $V = .16$, $p < .05$. In addition, all-women members reported an average gym membership length that was approximately 11 months longer than coed members, $M = 36.14$ ($SD = 40.51$) vs. $M = 25.11$ ($SD = 51.96$), $t(633) = 2.89$, $p < .01$, $d = .23$. A small but statistically significant difference between groups emerged for gym visits per week, with coed members reporting a slightly higher mean number of days than all-women members, $M = 3.88$ ($SD = 1.34$) vs. $M = 3.63$ ($SD = 1.28$), $t(633) = -2.37$, $p < .01$, $d = .19$.

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics for the entire sample, and separately by gym type, for cardio and strength training attitudes, cardio and strength training time per week, free weight use, weight machine use, and weight discrepancy.

Table 2 provides correlations among all continuous main study variables. Key study variables were then correlated with gym membership length, gym visits per week, BMI, SES, and age to assess the need to add control variables into the main analyses. The majority of these correlations were either nonsignificant or very weakly correlated (i.e., most r 's ranging in absolute value from .08 to .16). However, there were a number of small to moderately significant correlations between some of the dependent variables (i.e., strength training time, cardio time, strength training attitudes, and free weight use) and background information (i.e., age, gym visits per week, and gym membership length). Total strength training time per week was positively correlated with gym membership length, $r(633) = .16$, $p < .001$, and gym visits per week, $r(633) = .39$, $p < .01$. Total cardio time per week was also positively associated with gym visits per week, $r(633) = .57$, $p < .01$. Strength training attitudes was positive-

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Exercise Attitudes and Gym Behaviors for the Entire Sample and Separately by Gym Type

Variables	Gym Type					
	All Participants (N = 635)		All-women (n = 308)		Coed (n = 327)	
	M(SD)	Range	M(SD)	Range	M(SD)	Range
Cardio Attitudes	4.26(.68)	1-5	4.26(.71)	1.17-5	4.27(.65)	1.67-5
Cardio Time (min./week)	130(77.9)	0-840	121(98)	0-840	138(95)	0-840
Strength training Attitudes	3.76(.95)	1-5	3.90(.87)	1-5	3.62(.99)	1-5
Strength Time (min./week)	78.71(68.7)	0-540	81.49(58)	0-300	76.09(76)	0-540
Free weight Use (days/week)	1.55(1.3)	0-6	1.51(1.2)	0-5	1.59(1.48)	0-6
Weight Machine Use (days/week)	1.17(1.3)	0-6	.92(1.15)	0-6	1.41(1.43)	0-6
Weight Discrepancy	13.4(17.1)	-13-200	13.66(17)	-13-160	13.21(17)	-5.97-200

Table 2

Intercorrelations among Exercise Attitudes, Exercise Behaviors, and Weight Discrepancy (N=635)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Cardio Attitudes	--						
2. Cardio Time (min./week)	.21**	--					
3. Strength Training Attitudes	.44**	.03	--				
4. Strength Time (min./week)	.06	.07	.41**	--			
5. Free Weight Use (days/week)	.14**	.11**	.30**	.53**	--		
6. Weight Machine Use (days/week)	.04	.12**	.10*	.27**	.33**	--	
7. Weight Discrepancy	-.15**	-.05	-.17**	-.14**	-.16**	-.03	--

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

ly correlated with age, $r(633) = .26, p < .01$ and with gym membership length, $r(633) = .26, p < .01$. Free weight use (days/week) was positively related to gym visits per week, $r(633) = .29, p < .01$. In our main analyses, we controlled for any background variables that were correlated with our dependent variables.

To test Hypothesis 1, we conducted two separate regressions, one with strength training attitudes as the outcome and the other with total strength training time (min/week) as the outcome. Controlling for age and gym membership length, gym type was significantly related to strength training attitudes such that all-women members reported more positive attitudes than coed members (see *Table 3*). However, controlling for gym visits and gym membership length, there was no significant relationship between gym type and strength training time.

The dependent variables specified in Hypothesis 2 (i.e., number of days per week using free weights and number of days per week using weight machines) are considered discrete variables. Models with discrete outcomes generally require the use of either Poisson regression or negative binomial regression (Gardener, Mulvey, & Shaw, 1995). We chose negative binomial regression due to the detection of slight over dispersion in each model. Controlling for gym visits per week, gym type was not related to the number of days per week participants used free weights (see *Table 3*). However, gym type was related to the number of days participants used weight machines per week, Wald Chi Square = 18.23, $p < .001$. Coed members used weight machines more frequently than all-women members. Specifically, the mean number of days that women-only members used weight machines was only 60% of the mean number of days that coed members used weight machines (see *Table 3*).

Consistent with our third hypothesis, the results of two paired sample t-tests showed that members of both gym types reported more positive attitudes toward cardio than strength training. All-women members reported a mean attitude score of 4.26 for cardio and 3.90 for strength, $t(307) = 7.14, p < .000, 95\% \text{ CI } [.26, .45], d = .41$. Coed members reported a mean attitudes score of 4.27 for cardio and 3.63 for strength training, $t(326) = 12.87, p < .000, 95\% \text{ CI } [.54, .74], d = .71$. In order to test whether the magnitude of the difference between cardio and strength attitudes was smaller for all-women members, we first calculated a difference score by subtracting strength attitudes from cardio attitudes. Then we conducted an independent samples t-test with the difference score as the dependent variable and gym type as the independent variable. All women members ($M = .35, SD = .87$) had a significantly smaller mean difference in attitudes relative to coed members ($M = .64, SD = .89$), $t(633) = -4.11, p < .000, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.47, -.76], d = -.32$.

Finally, we conducted a series of regressions using either ordinary least squares or maximum likelihood estimation depending on the nature of the dependent variable (i.e., continuous or discrete, respectively) in order to test Hypothesis 4. Gym type, weight discrepancy, and the interaction between the two variables served as our independent variables. Strength training attitudes, total strength training time per week, free weight use (days per week), and weight machine use (days per week) were each tested separately as dependent variables. For each model, we controlled for any background variables that were correlated with our dependent variables. The interaction term in each of the four models was nonsignificant, providing no support for our last hypothesis (see *Table 4*).

Table 3

Results of Regression Modeling for Strength Training Outcomes

<i>Results of Regression Modeling for Strength Training Outcomes</i>				
Variable		Strength Training Attitudes		
	B	SE	β	95% CI
Gym Type	0.18	0.07	-.09*	[-.32, -.029]
Age	0.01	0.004	.15**	[.006, .021]
Gym Membership Length	0.003	0.001	.17**	[.002, .005]
R^2			.10***	
F			22.18	
Variable		Strength Training Time Per Week		
	B	SE	β	95% CI
Gym Type	-8.14	5.03	-0.06	[-18.037, 1.755]
Gym Visits (days/week)	19.95	1.89	.39***	[16.224, 23.673]
Gym Membership Length	0.194	0.054	.132**	[.088, .299]
R^2			.16***	
F			43.24	
Free Weight Use (days/week)				
	Wald Chi Square	Exp(B)	95% Wald CI	95% Wald CI for Exp(B)
Gym Type	0.01	1.01	[-.20, .23]	[.82, 1.25]
Gym Visits (days/week)	25.47***	1.24	[.13, .29]	[1.14, 1.34]
LR Chi Square			26.37***	
Variable		Weight Machine Use (days/week)		
	Wald Chi Square	Exp(B)	95% Wald CI	95% Wald CI for Exp(B)
Gym Type	18.23***	0.6	[-.74, -.28]	[.48, .76]
LR Chi Square			18.36***	

Note. *** $p < .001$.

Table 4

Regression Results Testing the Interaction between Gym Type and Weight Discrepancy on Strength Outcomes

Variable		Strength Training Attitudes		
	B	SE	β	95% CI
Gym Type	-0.16	0.09	-0.08	[-.34, .02]
Weight Discrepancy	-0.004	0.007	-0.08	[-.02, .009]
Gym Type X Weight Discrepancy	-0.003	0.004	-0.09	[-.01, .02]
Age	0.02	0.004	.16***	[.006, .02]
Gym Membership Length	0.003	0.001	.16***	[.001, .005]
R^2		0.12		
F		17.38***		
Variable		Strength Training Time Per Week		
	B	SE	β	95% CI
Gym Type	-8.37	6.34	-0.06	[-20.82, 4.07]
Weight Discrepancy	-0.38	0.47	-0.1	[-1.32, .52]
Gym Type X Weight Discrepancy	0.02	0.29	0.002	[-.57, .58]
Gym Visits (days/week)	19.61	1.89	.38***	[15.80, 23.25]
Gym Membership Length	0.2	0.05	.13***	[.09, .30]
R^2		0.19		
F		27.92***		
Variable		Free Weight Use (days/week)		
	Wald Chi Square	Exp(B)	95% Wald CI	95% Wald CI for Exp(B)
Gym Type	0.01	1.01	[-.20, .23]	[.82, 1.25]
Gym Visits (days/week)	25.47***	1.24	[.13, .29]	[1.14, 1.34]
LR Chi Square		26.37***		
Variable		Weight Machine Use (days/week)		
	Wald Chi Square	Exp(B)	95% Wald CI	95% Wald CI for Exp(B)
Gym Type	18.23***	0.6	[-.74, -.28]	[.48, .76]
LR Chi Square		18.30***		

Note. *** $p < .001$. CI = Confidence interval.

Discussion

We explored differences in exercise attitudes and behavior between members of women-only and coed gym facilities in a community sample of women exercisers. Consistent with our prediction, all-women gym exercisers reported more positive attitudes toward strength training than their mixed-sex counterparts. In addition, participants across the two gym types reported more favorable views towards cardio than strength training, which is consistent with stereotypic notions of cardio as more appropriate exercise for women, and the perception of its importance for achieving a thin body ideal (Dworkin, 2001; Salvatore & Marecek, 2010; Strahan, Wilson, Cressman, & Buote, 2006). However, as we suspected, the magnitude of the difference between cardio and strength attitudes was smaller for the all-women's group. The all-women's group reported strength attitudes that were significantly more similar to cardio attitudes in favorability than the coed group. One possible interpretation of this finding is that an all-women's environment may reduce the negative thoughts and feelings that some women have about strength training which results in more comparable cardio and strength attitudes. However, other explanations are also possible such as: women with more positive attitudes toward strength training are drawn to all-women's gym environments. More work is needed to better understand this result.

Unfortunately, more positive attitudes towards strength training did not seem to translate into greater strength training behavior for all-women gym members. Based on Yin (2001) and Kruisselbrink et al.'s (2004) research, we speculated that an all-women's gym facility might provide a more comfort-

able setting for women to engage in strength training, particularly for women who are further from their ideal shape and size, and who might want to avoid situations where they could be scrutinized by members of the opposite sex. However, inconsistent with our hypotheses, no group differences emerged in total strength training time or free weight use. We did find differences in weight machine use between groups, but it was not in the expected direction; coed members reported using weight machines on slightly more days per week than all-women members.

Highly ingrained exercise and appearance norms may help account for the non-significant differences between groups on strength training activities. Although previous work does suggest that the presence of men may deter some women from strength training (Salvatore & Marecek, 2010). Dworkin (2001) and Salvatore & Marecek's (2010) research efforts also suggest that women perceive strength training as less compatible with achieving the slender body type prescribed by Western beauty ideals, while cardio is associated with calorie burning and weight loss. Moreover, Prichard & Tiggemann's (2008) research supports the idea that fitness environments are objectifying in nature, which may also promote an increased focus on appearance and weight. Consequently, the absence of men in all-women's gyms may not necessarily compel female exercisers to spend more time strength training. The pressure to lose weight and the perception that weight loss is best achieved primarily through cardio and not strength exercises might lead women to focus less on strength training, irrespective of the gym setting (Dworkin 2001; Terre, 2010). The fact that many women associate cardio, and not strength training, with weight loss is interesting to note, because

in this sample, participants who strength trained more perceived themselves closer to their ideal body weight, while cardio time had no such relationship. These data do not support the notion held by some women that doing more cardio and limiting strength training is optimal for weight goals. Ciccolo et al (2010), Winett & Carpinelli's (2001) past studies have demonstrated the benefit of strength training for both overall health and weight management, but misperceptions and misinformation about the effects of cardio versus strength training on body weight and muscle development may contribute to women's tendencies to limit or avoid strength training in favor of cardio.

There are a number of methodological limitations of the study that deserve consideration, and that suggest caution in drawing any strong conclusions based on these data. The study design was cross-sectional and conducted on women exercisers attending a relatively small number of gyms ($N = 15$) in an urban area in the Northeast US. Participants also self-selected into our study and were mostly Caucasian, younger adults who fell within a healthy weight range. Thus, in addition to being unable to assess causal links or directionality among variables, the generalizability of the findings to women attending these gyms, but who chose not to participate, to women attending other types of gyms, as well as, to women falling into other demographic groups is unclear. It would be important to examine if the patterns we found in this study emerge in older women, in women of color, and in women from different socioeconomic levels. It is entirely possible that women with different demographic profiles have very different psychological experiences when working out. This could translate into exercise patterns and attitudes that are distinct from the results seen here. The self-reported nature

of the data is also a serious concern due to possible recall bias and tendencies towards socially desirable responses. Observational research designs would be a useful approach to assessing actual exercise behavior of women in gym settings, without the concern of social desirability.

Other problems concerned the measurement of some of the key variables of interest. According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2008), strength training recommendations for American adults is defined as training all major muscle groups on two or more days per week at a moderate or high intensity level. Unfortunately, we did not consider the intensity level or measure the extent to which exercisers were training all major muscle groups. Finally, we also did not assess women's exercise activities outside of the gym. It is possible that women who belonged to both gym types were engaging in additional forms of cardio and strength training (e.g. running outside or taking yoga classes). More precise measurement of these behaviors would provide a more complete picture of the totality of women's exercise activities, and allow for more accurate assessment of their engagement in cardio and strength training activities. Addressing these measurement issues will benefit future examinations of women's exercise behaviors.

In a number of our regression models, gym visits per week and gym membership length were positively related to strength training attitudes and strength training behavior. This may suggest that the total time spent in the gym environment, as opposed to who is in the gym environment, might be more important in the types of exercise choices that women make in these settings. Nevertheless, additional research, examining how same-sex and mixed-sex gym environments affect women's exercise attitudes and habits is needed, especially longitudinal and

experimental designs which would afford clearer interpretations of the data. Moreover, researchers should further explore whether all-women's gyms might provide other kinds of health benefits for women that a coed gym might not be able to provide (e.g., enhanced social support or decreased exercise-related anxiety). Constructing an environment which encourages female exercisers to both value and engage in strength training may require effort beyond simply offering the option of an all-women's exercise facility. Given that exercise appears to be a particularly gendered activity, these additional efforts will likely involve redefining and broadening traditional constructions of femininity and beauty so that more women develop the mental flexibility to engage in exercises that are currently considered more masculine. Greater attention must also be given to understanding the factors that allow some women to embrace more traditionally masculine forms of exercise like weight training or boxing ■

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"Trans broken arm": Health care stories from transgender people in rural areas

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Abstract

According to scholars, transgender and gender diverse individuals suffer disproportionately from health-related concerns such as: depression, anxiety, psychological distress, and HIV infection. Scholars have also found that transgender people experience high rates of homelessness, harassment, violence, and unemployment. These challenges may ultimately affect the physical and emotional health of transgender individuals. Recently, calls for health-related research among LGBT individuals have intensified and scholars and practitioners have begun to focus more heavily on provision of health care to transgender and gender diverse individuals. These efforts have been directed in part by general guidelines produced by national professional organizations. However, little is known about the health-related experiences of transgender people in rural and remote areas of the United States, where individuals may face unique issues and barriers. Thus, the present study was designed to provide rich qualitative data illustrating encounters between rural transgender people and health professionals, as well as, how the rural or remote location of participants plays a role into their health care experiences and access. We used semi-structured interviews to assess the health care related experiences of 10 transgender and gender diverse individuals in rural and remote areas of the U.S. Our analysis resulted in 4 main categories with 12 domains. We present these results and include quotes and vignettes to further illustrate the experiences of our participants. We also present recommendations from participants for providers including suggestions about outreach and training for providers. In the discussion, we highlight ways this study relates to guidelines offered elsewhere.

Keywords

Transgender, rural, health, qualitative

Introduction

In 2016, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) designated the LGBT community a health disparities population (Pérez-Stable, 2016). In its Strategic Plan to Advance Research on the Health and Well-being of Sexual and Gender Minorities (NIH, 2015), the NIH acknowledged important gaps in the literature especially in

regard to LGBT subpopulations (e.g., racial and ethnic groups, small or easy-to-miss demographics). One population of concern may be transgender people in rural and remote areas of the United States. Here, we use the term *transgender* as an umbrella term to encompass a variety of gender diverse people who may or may not *transition* from their gender assigned at birth to their true gender (WPATH, 2011). In general, society is un-

derstood to impose a *gender binary* or a categorization system that forces one to identify as either male or female (WPATH, 2011). Transgender people may or may not pursue *transition(s)* or may take steps to outwardly or socially present their gender identity (WPATH, 2011). Individuals who endorse a gender identity that is the same as the gender they were assigned at birth are referred to as *cisgender* or *cis* (APA, 2015). One indicator of a person's gender identity is the pronouns they prefer to use (e.g., he, she, or they) (WPATH, 2011).

Scholars in a variety of disciplines (e.g., public health, psychology, the medical field) have offered insight into barriers to health care experienced by transgender people (Kitts, 2010; Koch & Knutson, 2016; Lombardi, 2001). Studies of challenges that impede access to health care among transgender people are both expository (Lombardi, 2001) and research-based (Kitts, 2010) and they highlight issues from the absence of adequate resources to the medical knowledge deficits among providers (Snelgrove, Jasudavicius, Rowe, Head, & Bauer, 2012).

Despite the existence of these largely urban-based studies, researchers have highlighted the dearth of information regarding provision of health care to transgender individuals in rural and remote areas (Horvath et al., 2014; Koch & Knutson, 2016). As explained by the NIH, LGBT individuals in rural areas may be difficult to reach because they may lack resources through which they may be identified (NIH, 2016). Scholars have offered preliminary recommendations to health care providers based on case study

data and on localized studies of health care provider attitudes (Knutson & Koch, 2016; Willging, Salvador & Kano, 2006). These scholars call for greater attention to quality service provision and offer best practices with transgender individuals (Koch & Knutson, 2016; Willging et al., 2006).

It is likely that the NIH move to reclassify LGBT groups as a health disparities

There's this thing called 'trans broken arm,' right? You know, where someone might come into the doctor with a broken arm and if you're cis or not presenting in a way that's confusing for people, it's a broken arm, but if you're presenting as trans, there's this whole other layer of, 'Okay, so did you get the broken arm because you're trans?' I know that's kind of a ridiculous statement, but there are layers that go on top of that [identity] that...you have to navigate. (Bailey)

population will lead to an additional increase in literature and research addressing the health-related needs of LGBT people since the amount of research has already increased over the past several years (Coulter, Kenst, Bowen, & Scout, 2014). Professional organizations such as the American Psychological Association (2015), the American Counseling Association

(2010), and the National Association of Social Workers (2015) have provided recommendations and competencies to guide general work with transgender clients that include direction not to pathologize gender diversity and to affirm diverse gender identities. These guidelines are helpful, but they primarily govern work in the mental health fields and do not address specific needs and challenges that may impact health care access among transgender individuals in rural and remote areas.

Likewise, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (2011) publishes Standards of Care (SOC) for medical treatment of transgender individuals, but little is known about how frequently these guidelines are followed, and so far, the guidelines are recommendations and not enforce-

able. Furthermore, these broad guidelines may not address the nuanced challenges experienced by transgender people in rural areas. In other words, the Standards of Care may not buffer or alter anti-transgender bias held by health care professionals in remote areas of the U.S. (Eliason & Hughes, 2004).

What we know about transgender health so far does not provide an adequate picture of health care provision for rural transgender people. Furthermore, it is unknown what effect, if any, rural location has for transgender individuals. So far, research has been limited in its geographical scope regarding transgender populations (NIH, 2015). The little we do know from studies that have included LGBT individuals in rural areas, is that transgender people in rural areas may receive treatment that is of a lower quality than the care received by cisgender people (Willging et al., 2006). Given the disproportionate health issues experienced by transgender relative to the general U.S. population, this possible trend of inadequate health care provision is troubling.

Researchers have demonstrated that members of the transgender community suffer disproportionately from elevated rates of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation relative to the general U.S. population (Clements-Nolle, Marx, Guzman, & Katz, 2001; Clements-Nolle, Marx, & Katz, 2006; Hughes & Eliason, 2002; NIH, 2016). Scholars have indicated that these challenges to transgender health may stem from gender-based discrimination and minority stress (Clements-Nolle, Marx, & Katz, 2006; Meyer, 2003). Meanwhile, nationwide surveys have also pointed to high rates of homelessness, psychological distress, and HIV infection among transgender individuals relative to the general population (James, Herma, Rankin, Keisling, Mottet, & Anafi, 2016).

Given the high need for quality health care among transgender people and the potential that health care provision in rural areas may be subpar, we reached out to members of the transgender community to assess their experiences accessing health care. This qualitative, exploratory study represents an exploration of the health care related experiences of transgender people in rural areas through rich description of their stories. We interviewed participants using a semi-structured interview protocol that focused on health care access in rural locations. The research questions that informed the study were: “What are the experiences of transgender people living in a rural area in regard to accessing health care?”, “What are examples of specific encounters with health care professionals from the perspectives of transgender people?”, and “What are recommendations or insights that may be offered by transgender people to health care providers?”

Methods

We asked participants to self-identify their gender and sexual/affectional orientation. Participants were 10 transgender and gender diverse identified individuals above the age of 18 who lived in rural and remote areas of the United States. As is common in qualitative research, we utilized homogenous sampling to obtain “*information-rich* cases for study in depth” (Gleisne, 2006, p. 34). As recommended by Patton (2002) we used purposeful selection criteria to guide our recruitment of participants who identified as transgender or gender diverse, were older than 18 years old, and lived in rural or remote areas. Given the homogenous composition of our sample in regard to gender identity and location, our sample size of 10 participants is considered adequate for the

phenomenological qualitative analysis we used (Glesne, 2006; Hill, 2012).

Participants represented a broad range of sexual/affectional orientations. Their ages ranged from 23 – 59 years old ($M = 36.2$ years). Participants identified as White (7), Multi-Racial (2), and American Indian or Alaskan Native (1). For additional demographic information see *Table 1*. Considering the qualitative nature of our study, we allowed participants to self-identify as residents of rural and/or remote areas of the U.S. We included questions about participant location in our demographic form and we automatically excluded prospective participants who reported living within the city limits of large urban centers. We also included a question about participant rurality in our semi-structured interview script and we found that participants described their locations based on a variety of markers. For example, two participants stated that their town featured only one or two stoplights while two other participants talked about their proximity to other residents using undeveloped roads. A primary characteristic shared among participants was their perception of being distant from urban centers or nested in a remote area of the U.S.

Throughout the conduct of this study, we were guided by broader phenomenological research methods outlined in Glesne (2006) and more specifically organized by Hill (2012) in her Consensual Qualitative Research approach. Central to Hill's (2012) methodology is an inductive approach through which participant responses give rise to the results, open-ended interview questions, and small sample sizes, among other components. We indicate adherence to phenomenological methodological approaches with in-text citations throughout the following text.

Participants were recruited nationally

through LGBT organizations, professional list-servs, and Facebook groups. IRB approved recruitment materials included a list-serv email and a flyer which were distributed both physically and electronically. Interested participants who contacted the primary investigator were emailed a link to a Qualtrics-based survey with three parts: an informed consent form, a basic demographic questionnaire, and a scheduling matrix that allowed participants to indicate their availability for the approximately one-and-a-half-hour interview. After participants completed the Qualtrics survey, the primary investigator contacted them via email to confirm an interview date and time.

We conducted interviews using a 15 item, semi-structured interview protocol created using CQR guidelines and general phenomenological interviewing techniques (Glesne, 2006; Hill, 2012). We drafted interview questions based on our knowledge of the literature. The interview protocol was designed to begin with general questions and build to more specific and personal questions in order to facilitate rapport and openness (Glesne, 2006). The interview included questions about transition, their location, and healthcare experiences.

As interviews were conducted, they were transcribed either by the PI or by a third-party transcriber. Audio files were transcribed verbatim and were cross-checked for accuracy by research team members (Hill, 2012). Transcripts were thoroughly de-identified.

The research team included five members, all of whom identified as White and cisgender: a gay, male doctoral student; a pansexual, female doctoral student; a heterosexual, male doctoral student; a queer, female doctoral student (the auditor); and a queer, female faculty member. The research team first met to discuss biases and expectations as recommended in Consensual Qual-

itative Research (CQR) (Hill, 2012). By highlighting and recording their biases and expectations for the study, the team sought to hold each other accountable during the coding process. Also, team members read articles on structured phenomenological qualitative approaches in preparation for the study (Hill, Knox, Thompson, Williams, Hess, & Landany, 2005; Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). Several of the research team members conducted CQR and other qualitative studies before, and were familiar with coding, auditing, and research team procedures.

Research team members shared a pre-existing bias that rural areas are averse places for transgender people to live, and that transgender people in rural areas have fewer resources. We also held in common a desire to advocate for better treatment for gender diverse individuals. A few research team members who identified as sexual minorities shared their own stories of being misdiagnosed and/or mistreated by medical professionals. As a group, we expected that participants would share stories about harassment and rejection by health care professionals. Throughout data collection and analysis, we held each other accountable for these pre-existing biases and expectations and used our external auditor to check any potential assumptions about participant experiences that were showing up in our coding scheme.

Data Analysis

As recommended by Glesne (2006), the researchers utilized multiple files in order to organize and analyze the interview data. These included a domain table, separate files for each interview, quote documents, and frequency tables. These files were created and updated throughout the process of data analysis. For the first transcript, the core research

team met and dialogued about possible codes that could be used to organize the “fat data” of the text into more manageable units for analysis (Glesne, 2006, p 151). These codes were then applied to subsequent transcripts, renegotiated, and refined. Beginning with transcript two, researchers coded the documents separately and then met to work to consensus in groups of three (Hill, 2012). After the sixth transcript, the research team submitted all data and the most recent domain table to the outside auditor for review. This auditor had not been in attendance at consensus-building coding meetings and was, therefore, able to provide a more unbiased critique of coding decisions and code definitions (Hill, 2012). Audit results were processed by the research team and were resolved through dialogue with the auditor before the established domain list was applied to the remaining four transcripts.

After we coded all transcripts and reconciled differences of opinion through consensus, we calculated the frequency of participant statements for each code (*Table 2*) (Glesne, 2006). Significant quotes were also highlighted and collected into separate documents by research team members. Through a process of negotiation and inductive analyses of the transcripts, the researchers created broad categories to capture overarching components of the participants’ experiences. These categories were further deconstructed into sub-codes called domains (Hill, 2012). Some domains were even further dissected into qualifiers as to whether the domain was experienced by the participant positively, negatively, or as neutral (*Table 2*).

Results

The four large categories that took shape as the research team analyzed the data were:

Transitions, Providers, Social, and Recommendations. *Transitions* contains information about participants' gender identities and their experiences with visibility and/or different transitions (physical, social, etc.) within their rural locations. The *providers* category includes content regarding the experiences and interactions of participants with providers and their staff. *Social* encompasses information about ways that participants have pushed for better health care in their rural locations and the *recommendations* category includes direct suggestions from participants to providers about ways that service provision may be improved.

We break each of these categories down further into major domains below and offer definitions, sample quotes, and anecdotes for each category. We provide a narrative description of results without sub-domains in order to increase accessibility of the narrative. These sub-domains were, however, retained for the frequency counts presented in *Table 2*. Stories and quotes have been extensively de-identified and some verbal fillers (e.g., um, uh, like) were removed to increase readability of the quotes. Because of the small number of participants, we will use gender-neutral "they/them/their" pronouns and pseudonyms for all participants to facilitate de-identification.

Transitions

The first category, *transitions*, arose from participant stories and reflections on factors directly related to their rural location and their gender identity and/or process of transition. This category contained three subdomains, the *process*, *experiences*, and *resources*, which we discuss in further detail below.

The process. Participants discussed a variety of dimensions pertaining to their identities as transgender individuals in ru-

ral and remote areas. Much of the content in this domain was descriptive and related to thoughts, reflections, and other variables involved in transitions. For example, consistent with other participants, Sam highlighted the role of the internet in their identity development:

"...I knew that I was different since I was younger. I've always kind of known this. I just kind of blew it off because I didn't know what to do between family and everything. So, we didn't have the internet until I was like seventeen or eighteen and that's when I started searching, 'Why I feel like a girl?' The kind of phrases I would look up and stuff."

This internet theme resurfaced when we asked participants how they found health resources in their area later in the interview. As rural areas offer few encounters with other transgender people, the internet plays an important role.

Experiences. Similar to statements included in *the process*, participants offered direct information about their physical, emotional, and behavioral reactions to health care experiences. This domain differed from *the process* because content related more to participants' specific medical needs involved in transition.

Participants described a wide range of emotions resulting from health care encounters. Arguably, the most noteworthy among these were statements about feeling dehumanized or isolated by negative treatment from health care providers. For example, Sage stated:

"I get the feeling that the medical professionals in my town do not consider me a priority. They don't ... they don't understand and they don't want to understand. And it makes me feel very isolated. And it makes me feel ... abnormal."

Later, they said:

"I think that the cis-people in my area can expect to have medical care that includes a basic understanding of their physiology and

what type of care they require. Being trans has given me the feeling that I'm a medical oddity and that I do not belong here."

As indicated by Sage's story above, negative emotions and encounters with providers were connected with behaviors such as avoidance of medical care and postponement of treatment. Bobbie shared, "Well, actually up until this past few months I've ... kind of put several things related to my health on the back burner. Things like ... seeing an eye doctor, dealing with a sleep disorder ..." In the context of rural areas where transgender people may feel unwelcome, feelings of being a "medical oddity" or of being out of place in the health care system may add to concerns about accessing vital services such as mental health support.

Resources. The final domain in the *transition* category is *resources*. *Resources* refers to access to or use of assets such as time, money, transportation, medical specialists, insurance, and other items or commodities, particularly related to the rural or remote location.

Participants talked about the dearth of resources and providers in their immediate rural area. Bryn stated:

"I think that ... a lack of access to health education and lack of access to health services is a hardship of the area that I live in. I participate in a PFLAG group and we do educational meetings...and one of the things that we wanted to educate our group on was HIV awareness. And it was almost impossible to find someone in this area who knew anything about HIV awareness. And so that's the kind of thing, you know? People in a rural area ought to have just as much access to that kind of education and care as people in an urban area. But we couldn't find someone to come in and talk about HIV education because of where we live. We finally asked someone to drive in from [a large city] to do it for us."

Ash shared a disappointing challenge that resulted when competent providers

were not available:

"... without the support of somebody local who is at least, you know, 'Look, maybe we need to look into this, because there is a significant amount of symptoms that indicate that this is a problem.' And there is some very possibly life-threatening issues here that need to be addressed. And, without somebody that's local even acknowledging any of this, I can't possibly justify going and ruining what little bit of a life that we have chasing down what could well be just another dead end."

Reflecting on the distance some of them are forced to drive in order to access services in urban areas, participants listed a variety of demands that their rural location places on their resources. These included: time, money, transportation issues, scheduling, time off from work, and other issues. Casey framed the issues well when they said:

"If I've got to drive to my endocrinologist, it's a whole day thing. I can't work that day because it takes an hour and a half to two hours to get there, I'm usually there for two hours and then it takes another two hours to get back. It's not just a run down the street. It takes a whole day of planning to go to this endocrinologist."

Providers

The next major category included experiences related specifically to interactions with and behaviors of health care providers. This category included the four domains: *provider behaviors*, *perception of providers*, *relationship with providers*, and *provider training*.

Provider Behaviors. Participants talked about specific provider behaviors that ranged from extreme forms of mistreatment to supportive acts of advocacy. This domain captured both specific actions performed by providers and when providers refused to take action.

Negative provider behaviors included reports of misrepresented test results, malprac-

tice, neglect, withholding of information or treatment, tendency to conflate gender identity with unrelated presenting concerns, and mistreatment from supporting staff such as receptionists. For example, Ash reported being told at a medical center, “Get out of here. We’re not going to help you. We can’t help you. You need help, but not from us.” Ash went on to say, “And I’ve heard that time and time, again. ‘There’s something wrong with you, but we can’t help you.’” It was not uncommon for participants to be told that they could not be helped or for them to be asked to leave a facility. When searching for medical services, Jesse said they would call to check about whether or not a given doctor would see them. Jesse stated:

“And I would say, ‘OK, do you think the doctor would want to see me or would you check to see?’ And some of them would say, ‘I’ll check.’ And then some of them would say, ‘I know he won’t. Don’t come here. You’ll get thrown out.’”

Likewise, Bobbie reported being “turned away” by 15 doctors before they found one who was willing to provide hormone treatment. Kennedy told a story about a therapist who “took one of my hands and compared it with his own hands to see if my index finger was longer than my ring finger to determine if I was gay.”

Both Ash and Jesse spoke about times that their medical records had been lost or misplaced. Jesse said:

“And I’ve had this issue at [hospital omitted] on several occasions. I had it when I was going to see a rheumatologist about my arthritis. I had a whole-body X-ray that was ordered and I go and I get the test done and...it took six weeks to find those X-rays. They misfiled 20 X-rays? They’re digital f--ing X-rays! How do you misfile them? It’s not like somebody says, ‘Hey Ethel, let’s go out for coffee’ and you drop them in the wrong drawer. So, I have to question if those X-rays were lost because somebody just really wanted to say, f-- it. I really be-

lieve a lot of this is intentional prejudice.”

Participants indicated that some of the doctors who would see them charged more for their services or demanded that they pay in cash. Bryn shared:

“The fact that these doctors are aware of how unique they are, they often charge more. So that’s a part of the burden also. Some of them don’t file insurance on your behalf, because they’re aware of how unique they are and they know they can get away with that. And so they’ll charge you full price and then you have to file your insurance on your own afterwards. So, yeah, there are definitely some financial impacts, because, I mean you know, there are two or three doctors in a 150-mile radius, and they know they’re the only ones who do this. And so they ... they kind of take advantage of it.”

Participants also shared examples of altruism on the part of medical professionals. Participants spoke about counselors who empowered them and about doctors who provided referrals for life-saving treatments. As mentioned earlier, Bryn worked through a list of 15 doctors before they “finally found one and she referred me to my doctor [in a large urban area].” Likewise, sometimes providers made a large impact on participants simply by using a participant’s correct name and pronouns. Bryn casually stated, “...then they were nice when the appointment happened, because like I said, they scratched out and put my name on the [intake] paper.” For participants, the fact that many of these doctors were in rural areas added to the impact of their kindness.

Perception of providers. Some participants described an overall feeling or perspective on rural providers that was not tied to a specific behavior or incident. For example, some participants described feeling as if certain rural providers were generally unhelpful, wrong, or incompetent when it came to transgender issues. Others perceived their

providers to be incorrect about health care decisions. Some participants tended not to trust doctors in rural areas. For example, Bobbie said, "For transgender [health care], I would recommend going to a bigger city, personally. I wouldn't recommend a rural doctor period." Sage shared similar sentiments when they said, "I get the feeling that the medical professionals in my town do not consider me a priority. They don't ... they don't understand and they don't want to understand."

These perspectives and experiences caused participants to set low expectations for rural health care. When asked to give recommendations for providers to improve services, Sage expressed difficulty believing medical sensitivity to transgender individuals could increase. They stated:

"One thing that has made me feel not being able to find easy access to transgender health in my area, it's ... sort of conditioned me to accept the bare minimum from medical professionals. And I can't even imagine a medical professional going above and beyond for someone ... for a transgender person around here."

Campbell shared a negative view about the attitudes of rural doctors when they said:

"So the first doctor that I went to see about my transition, I was referred to them by the therapist that I was seeing...and some other transgender people. So they have been used to trans patients, but frankly they weren't very good. Um, they weren't very friendly. They were just like, 'Ugh, another one.' Like they were willing to do it, but they didn't really give a lot of care and consideration to their patients."

However, when rural medical providers were perceived to be competent and caring, participants were energetic in their praise of the services they received. Campbell shared:

"So she [a psychiatrist] can take care of the physical health and the mental health aspects, which has been really great. Because for me, a lot of my symptoms physically

have actually been related to the stress and everything else everything I've been going through psychologically. And so it's been really great to have somebody that's knowledge in both areas."

Relationship with providers. Participants spoke about interpersonal dynamics between themselves and their rural providers. These dynamics were marked by either trust and warmth or mistrust and discomfort.

Some participants reported difficulty communicating with rural providers due to mistrust and a lack of comfort or ease around the provider due to the participants' gender identity. Other participants felt completely misunderstood. For example, Bailey shared:

"I mean that was one of the things when I was in the hospital. You talk to a lot of therapists...who may not have any experience with trans people that they know of and so you get people who...say, 'Just thinking in terms of your marriage' because I was married for [number of years omitted], 'sex isn't everything and you know you need to be able to move on.' And it's like, 'I don't think you understand. This really has nothing to do with my sexuality. This is an identity thing, but you're conflating them.'"

Casey shared, "I mean, I just try to deal with the doctors as little as I can." Sage shared having "the feeling that I can't really, truly rely on medical professionals in a complete way."

Concerns among participants about how they would be treated by rural health care professionals impacted the way that participants prepared for their medical visits. Ash shared a fear of showing up at the doctor's office "all scatterbrained" although they stated that, for all of their preparation, "we don't ever get anywhere." Participants also shared how difficult it can be to establish a relationship with a new provider. Bryn said:

"Especially if it's somebody new that I'm seeing. If I get referred to somebody and I've never met them before or if I know that

I'm going to have to explain, 'Well, I've had this surgery and this surgery and I have this part and not this part and that's because I'm trans.'"

Some participants described the process of coming to terms with the necessity of coming out to doctors and medical professionals. They also indicated, based on their experiences with providers that attitudes toward transgender people may be improving. Sage shared, "It's gotten a lot better over the past few years. Now, I'm not so nervous about having to say that I'm transgender [at the hospital]." Sam stated that correct pronoun use indicates to them that the provider is "trying" and that this effort produces positive emotions and validation.

Provider Training. Participants discussed the level of knowledge and information that rural providers seemed to have about transgender issues. This category included reports of misinformation or a need for education among rural providers.

Participants regularly talked about the need to educate rural providers. Jesse shared, "Then I had to go through teaching a doctor about cross-gender hormones and what tests did they need to do with me and what drugs they needed to prescribe for me and provide them with all of the stuff." Bryn described this dynamic in terms of a hardship:

"There's the hardship then of me having to do the education in the health care setting. And I felt that way when I started my transition. There were several providers that I went to and I had to teach them what transgender was. And that's a hardship. It shouldn't be my responsibility to educate my healthcare provider."

Jesse said, "You know, I've had people that have no f--ing idea what that [transgender] was. I had to explain it."

Sage further elaborated on the lack of training and on a perceived lack of motivation among rural doctors to self-educate.

"It honestly feels as if medical professionals have made a point to not educate themselves about trans health, even though they are aware that transgender people exist. I understand that transgender people are rare in my area, but I'm also aware that even rarer medical issues are covered in basic healthcare training at least cursory level. If someone were to come in with a rare type of cancer, to their primary care physician in this area, I imagine... the doctor would at least know where to refer the patient to so they can receive care. Or if they don't know, they make a point to find out. For care related to trans issues, it's been the exact opposite to me. Doctors don't know and don't care to know."

Social Dimensions

Some participants shared experiences of *social* or interpersonal experiences in their interviews. While these stories were powerful and we included them in our coding, most did not directly relate to health care provision. Still, our participants shared important examples of ways they became involved in advocating for better rural health care.

Self-advocacy. The data provided narratives of steps that participants had taken to care for themselves and to increase the quality of rural services for others. Casey seemed to put it best when they said:

"Um, I would tell them [other transgender people] that it's going to be some of the most difficult situations in your life that you're going to be in that you could lose friends or things over this but you have to you know, you have to take care of yourself."

A number of participants told us that they were participating in this study as a form of advocacy for themselves and for their communities. An example of this self-advocacy was offered by Jesse who said, "...whenever I see a [intake] form like that, I will talk to the staff, get a blank form, and write in edits on it and suggestions to change it..."

Two of our participants had been in-

volved in creating lists of competent, transgender affirmative providers in their local rural areas. Another of our participants had the resources to be seen outside of their local area for health care, but they chose to be seen by local doctors so that those doctors would have experience with a transgender person that they could use to treat others with fewer resources who could not seek care outside of their community. Yet another participant in a remote area hosted gatherings and pool parties where attendees could enjoy a harassment free environment.

Recommendations for Providers

The final theme included *recommendations* offered by our participants. In general, participants highlighted the demand that their rural location places on resources such as time, money, and transportation. They also highlighted a need for rural providers to educate themselves about transgender issues and for urban providers to be more sensitive to the needs of rural consumers.

Advertising, resources, and transportation. Participants highlighted the need for providers to have referral lists and awareness of resources. Bryn said, “There need to be resources available in doctor’s offices. I would like to see pamphlets put out in doctors’ offices that provide this information.” Kennedy also encouraged providers to have “more awareness of what services are out there...” Participants highlighted the need for case managers who can help with transportation, networking, and information about navigating insurance issues. As noted by participants, transportation is a significant issue for transgender people in rural areas.

Outreach and remote services. Participants highlighted that transgender people would benefit from the extension of urban services into rural areas. Bobbie suggested

that urban providers offer satellite support groups in rural areas. Bryn highlighted the importance of free testing services. Casey also suggested that medical professionals attend a support group or meeting for a transgender organization. Jesse asked providers to “...do outreach...look for transgender support groups and then call them and say, ‘Hey, I’m Dr. so and so. I provide this service. Would you put me on your list?’”

Additional education. Participants expressed frustration that rural medical providers were not taking more initiative to educate themselves about transgender issues. As Casey stated, “Google should be your best friend, I mean, it takes just a second. If you haven’t heard of something, just look it up.” Campbell said, “You need to know about us before we get to you.”

Bryn noted, “The health care system ought to be doing this for us, but here we are doing it for them.” Bryn went on to say:

“I get calls from hospitals, from nursing staffs at doctors’ clinics asking me to come teach them about transgender people. I think that’s great that they want to learn, but why aren’t they getting that as part of their preparation to be doctors and nurses?”

Jesse went a step further by asking providers to “join WPATH.”

Participants noted that they are often diagnosed based on their gender identity. P1 stated, “They [medical providers] need to quit making up their minds about people before they even listen to what they have to say.” Bryn added, “...that’s something that I think that more medical providers need to get is that you don’t have to have all the answers, but you do have to have a measure of respect for people.” Participants highlighted this necessity for rural providers who may be more susceptible to stereotypes and assumptions since they may have less experience with transgender individuals.

Facility design. A few participants not-

ed that even urban facilities that are more transgender affirmative, may come across as cold and anxiety provoking. When waiting rooms are small, transgender individuals may be forced to sit close to cisgender patients who are visibly uncomfortable. Campbell suggested, “My biggest thing would be to make it as calm and comfortable as possible: comfortable chairs, calming colors, some nice photos.” Participants stated that rural offices may be more inviting and cozy whereas urban offices maybe daunting for rural residents if they present a more clinical, sterilized feel.

Support staff. Jesse said, “I have found more discrimination coming from non-health care personnel in a medical environment than I have from nurses and doctors.” Jesse went on to note:

“You don’t get to talk to the doctor. You get to talk with the office staff. The doctor doesn’t call you with your test results, the office staff does. The doctor doesn’t schedule your follow-ups; the office staff does. So educating that office staff is as important as a doctor knowing what the hell to do once you get back there on the table.”

Bryn recommended:

“Just make sure that there is some kind of policy or procedure in your office when someone calls and says ‘I’m trans or non-binary and I want to get health services at your office’ so that the front office staff doesn’t stutter and flutter and wonder what to do with this person. Make sure that they know exactly how to handle it, how to gender them correctly, how to handle their name if they have a name they use that’s different from the name that’s going to be on their insurance card – a procedure in place automatically.”

Pronouns. Sage offered, “A pronoun is basically the foundation of all of it.” Sage went on to encourage medical providers to rethink their medical forms. They asked providers to “have a box for you [the patient] to fill in what pronouns you want. That

would probably be a good, tangible way for them to try to figure out what pronouns a person wants instead of assuming them.” Sam shared how important pronoun use was to them when they were transitioning and hinted at the negative impact of being misgendered by health care professionals. Kennedy also mentioned the importance of correct pronoun use.

Discussion

The aim of this project was to provide insight into the experiences of transgender people in rural areas as they engage with the health care system through a qualitative exploration of their stories. Our qualitative analysis resulted in four major categories with twelve domains. In addition to vignettes and stories, our participants offered recommendations for providers who wish to provide more competent services to transgender people in rural areas.

As has been indicated in prior studies, we found that our participants face a myriad of challenges and that some of the negative emotions reported by transgender people, such as depression and anxiety (Clements-Nolle et al., 2006; NIH, 2016), were tied to health care experiences for our participants. Health care related negative emotions and personal struggles were captured in our *transitions* category. As a result of their interactions with health care providers, our participants reported negative emotions, misdiagnoses, and interactions with professionals that exacerbated, rather than reduced, the difficulties faced by these participants. When our participants did report finding resources, they generally indicated that they found sources of care through social networks, the internet, and through their own efforts rather than through their health care providers.

These findings are congruent with indications that the overall quality of rural care may be of diminished quality (Willging et al., 2006). Our *providers* category contains a variety of stories about negative or even negligent behavior on the part of health care professionals. Our participants directly linked their experiences to their rural location and clearly expressed feelings that providers in urban areas have more experience with treating transgender people. Participants repeatedly called on providers to seek continuing education in the area of transgender health.

In addition to providing more insight into health care access in rural areas, our findings add to the existing indications from scholars that transgender people in rural areas face additional barriers to treatment such as limited resources, transportation issues, and exposure to providers who may possess deficits in knowledge regarding transgender health concerns (Snelgrove et al., 2012). Our *resources* domain highlights issues with transportation, access, financial resources and employment reported by our participants. These resource and access issues certainly reflect nationwide trends (James et al., 2016). However, there is little quantitative data with large samples to indicate whether the issues faced by our participants outpace national statistics.

Given these deficits, it is worth noting that our participants offered recommendations that align with the many of the guidelines that have been offered by scholars and professional organizations (ACA, 2010; APA, 2015; Koch & Knutson, 2016; Lombardi, 2001, WPATH, 2011). In other words, our participants advised providers to use appropriate pronouns, more accurately assess gender identity on intake paperwork, and obtain continuing education on transgender health. These best practices are already encouraged by professional organiza-

tions and scholars (ACA, 2010; APA, 2015; Koch & Knutson, 2016; Lombardi, 2001, WPATH, 2011). Our findings may offer preliminary indications that these guidelines are not being followed in rural areas, despite their wide circulation and increasing visibility. This may be due to the fact that current guidelines are aspirational and generally unenforceable. One major place this lack of adherence to best practices may show up is in relationships with providers (Kitts, 2010; Snelgrove et al., 2012) as captured in our *providers* category.

In addition to bolstering existing guidelines and recommendations, our participants emphasized two additional dimensions of rural experience: the role of support staff and the importance of pronouns. Participants noted that support staff are often the first point of contact for a consumer, and that the staff's behavior can significantly impact one's experience regardless of the attitude or training of the providers themselves. Additionally, participants reinforced the need for medical forms to take into account gender variance and to demonstrate sensitivity to the identity of gender diverse individuals.

We also wish to highlight a major finding of this study regarding the resilience and self-advocacy of our participants that was captured in our *social dimensions* category. Our participants told powerful stories about creating resource lists, staying in their rural locations to obtain health care in an effort to educate their physicians, and of creating social support networks through which resources and information were shared. For all of the negative implications of this study, we wish to highlight and invite more study of the strengths and positive potential within the transgender community.

Finally, we believe that our findings offer important awareness and opportunities for the health care community. Based on our

results, we strongly encourage medical providers and educators to further incorporate information about transgender health care into training and educational curricula. We are aware that wonderful guidelines exist, but these best practices are only beneficial when they are implemented. Additionally, our findings further support calls for research into the unique struggles faced by transgender people in rural areas. Broader studies with larger sample sizes are needed in order to further highlight disparities that may exist between transgender individuals in different areas of the U.S. and elsewhere.

Limitations

As a qualitative study, this project was subject to the limitations of qualitative data. Recruitment of transgender people who were in rural or remote locations was very challenging and the majority of participants were recruited through Facebook groups. This means that people without internet access and/or who are not involved in social media may have been excluded. Access to email was imperative since all communication with participants was conducted via email. Additionally, interviews were conducted by phone or via skype. Individuals without consistent access to phone and/or internet were excluded from participation in this study. Furthermore, due to challenges obtaining participants, we conducted interviews over a 15-month period beginning in September, 2015 and ending in November, 2016.

Prospective participants may have been dissuaded from participation by the fact that the study was being conducted by mental health professionals and scholars through a university. The scholarly perspective of the research team may have impacted results as well. All research team members had con-

ducted studies and had engaged in therapeutic work with LGBT individuals. In addition to the strong sense of advocacy expressed by research team members at the beginning of the study, prior knowledge may have impacted the way that transcripts were coded. The research team worked hard to reduce the impact of biases on the project: we discussed biases at the beginning of the project, we consulted with an auditor, and we coded transcripts through consensus with attention to possible preconceptions.

Conclusions

Our participants reported a variety of experiences accessing health care as residents of the U.S. in rural and remote areas. These issues may guide and inform practitioners as they expand their services to include support for transgender individuals. Our work may also form the basis for future studies in this area. Additional research is needed with larger samples to assess the quality of health care experiences and to provide additional guidance as to how services may be improved ■

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Table 1

Demographics

Variable					
Mean Age		36.2			
Gender Identity		Sexual Orientation		Race	
Female	5	Pansexual	4	White	7
Male	1	Bisexual	2	Multi-Racial	2
Trans Man	2	Heterosexual	1	American Indian/	1
Trans Female	1	Polysexual	1	Alaskan Native	
Nonbinary	1	Intersex	1		
		Not Sure	1		

Table 2
Coding Frequencies

[illegible]

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He or She: Does gender affect various modes of instructional visual design?

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Abstract

Learning with onscreen visual instruction environments (multimedia learning, interactive learning, etc.) is a growing phenomenon and its effectiveness has been supported by previous research. Although previous research emphasized gender as an important factor influencing information processing, possible factors related to gender and multimedia learning have not been given sufficient attention. From this perspective, this article addresses gender comparisons when the static versus animated modes of presentation are used. To investigate possible gender interactions with different modes of visual presentations, researchers developed two different types of instructional modules (static and animated). A total of 120 students (60 males and 60 females) participated in the study after being matched on relevant criteria. A MANOVA revealed a significant interaction effect between gender and mode of presentation. Females, compared to males, scored higher in the static visual presentation, but males in the animated presentation performed better than females in each of three post-tests that assessed identification, terminology, and comprehension domains. The main effect of gender was insignificant. Possible implications of these results are explained.

Keywords

gender, multimedia instruction, cognitive load, instructional visualization

Introduction

In the present scenario, it is unimpeachable that technology has been prevailing in every aspect of our lives, and conjointly, advancement of technology leverages our way of teaching, learning, and instruction. Nowadays, most often we see that in a classroom environment, students learn from computer screens with the self-learning condition, indicating a technological revolution amidst teaching and learning. However, learning with an onscreen, visual-instruction environment, such as multimedia learning and interactive learning, is a growing phenomenon, and its effectiveness has been established by previous researchers

(Halder, Saha & Das, 2014). Likewise, a theoretical advantage of multimedia instruction has been found in various aspects such as: affecting student motivation, development of collaborative spirit, and critical thinking (Dong & Li, 2011). Though effectiveness of multimedia technology is conspicuous, unfortunately, design of the multimedia presentation is still lacking intuition. However, recent theories have emphasized the cognitive architecture of human memory and have intended to develop scientific aspects of multimedia design. One well-established cognitive science of multimedia design principles was oriented by Mayer (2001) in his Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning

(CTML). The theoretical architecture of CTML mainly emphasizes the design of verbal and pictorial representation on multimedia based visuals, such as dual channel assumption. Likewise, Baddeley (1992) empirically established that in the memory system one can acquire and process limited amount of information, or limited capacity assumption. Researchers also emphasized sense making and deeper cognitive processing for meaningful learning, or active processing assumption.

The above mentioned assumptions have been given as guidelines for an instructional designer to use for the development of instructional material. But astonishingly as yet, gender difference in multimedia learning has not been taken seriously, even though research establishes gender as an important factor influencing information processing in interactive visual instruction (Halder, Saha and Das, 2015). From this orientation a major question arises in this article- “Does gender effect different modes of presentation (static vs. animation)?” This article dexterously takes instructional multimedia into consideration in order to explore the effect of gender.

Review of Literature

Multimedia Instruction and Cognitive Load

A well-defined multimedia learning instruction is “learning from words and pictures... The words can be printed (on-screen text) or spoken (narration). The pictures can be static (illustration, graphs, charts, photos, or maps), or dynamic (animation, video, or interactive illustration)” (Mayer and Moreno, 2003). In his book, *Multimedia Learning*, Mayer (2001) describes a model. “How the Mind Works” shows how pictures and words are processed in our working mem-

ory. Mayer (2001) also argued that in multimedia learning active processing requires five cognitive processes: selecting words, selecting images, organizing words, organizing images, and integrating those processes that place demands on the cognitive capacity of the information processing system.

Mayer (2001) terms these as “cognitive load” which is a major challenge for instructors and instructional designers. Referencing the terms germane load, extraneous load and intrinsic load as defined by Sweller, Van Merriënboer, and Paas (1998), Mayer (2001) describes three kinds of cognitive load which occur when processing information from verbal and picture code: essential processing, incidental processing and representational holding. Mayer (2001) proposed essential processing in this cognitive process for stressing the need to make sense of the presented material as linked to germane load. Incidental processing refers to cognitive processes where design of the learning task may affect cognitive load, corresponding to the term extraneous load. Representational holding refers to: “cognitive processes aimed at holding a mental representation in working memory over a period of time” which is equivalent to the term, intrinsic load. Like Sweller and Chandler (1994), Mayer (2001) also proposed different guidelines to overcome cognitive overload. Hence, the underlying generalization, of the above theoretical discussion, shows that cognitive overload is a major challenge to processing information effectively (Grimley, 2007).

Gender Differentiation and Mode of Presentation (Static vs. Animation)

Research on visual instruction has reported that different modes of presentation of instructional material have a significant effect in learning outcomes (Lin, 2011). It

has been found that animated visuals expedite learning outcomes and comprehension levels of students more than the static visual level (Lin, 2011). Conjointly, it is also found that an animated visual can increase self-motivation, and helps improve students' learning performance (Lin & Dwyer, 2009). However, emphasizing on mode of presentation and characteristics of instructional material, Parette Jr., Hourcade and Blum, (2011) discussed two major contributions of animated visuals, as compared with static visualization. "Animation elicit the attention of the learner to important features of the lesson, and prompt the learner as appropriate to ensure correct responding" (p. 60). These findings may conclude that presentation features of an animated visual such as: color, sound, video, animation, etc. may influence learner attention. Nevertheless, plenty of researchers in the field of visual instruction have explored the effectiveness of animation as compared to a static one. In their research, Taylor, Pountney, and Malabar (2007), found that animation is more useful and effective than static versions. Though previous research has found a positive effect of an animated visual over a static image the effect of gender differentiation has been seriously ignored. The pivotal factor of the present study is an attempt to diminish this gender gap.

Gender Differences and Information Processing

An important theoretical assumption can be put forward by the selectivity model of Meyers-Levy (1989) which stated that people process information in various ways from the environment. Additionally, this theory emphasized that gender differentiation in information processing is a pivotal factor influencing learning and academic achievement. The selectivity model propos-

es that males and females select various cues from the environment when processing information (Meyers-Levy, 1989). However, the selectivity model proposed that males are highly selective in the way they process information and use various heuristic devices that serve as surrogates for more comprehensive processing of information (Meyers-Levy, 1989). It is also stated that males typically lead to a reliance on subsets of available cues, rather than a comprehensive processing of all available cues. However, males are focused on highly available cues, often singular cues that eclipse detailed and/or inconsistent cues (Meyers-Levy, 1989). Females process information more comprehensively because they consider more subtle cues, along with those that are more focal. According to this model, females attempt to assimilate all available cues by engaging in "effortful, comprehensive, itemized analysis of all available information" (Darley & Smith, 1995, p.43). Comprehensive processing of all available cues may not be possible due to restrictions imposed by the context of the task or limitations of basic human processing (Halder, et al., 2015). Hence, it is maintained that the goal of the female information processor is comprehensive analysis of all available information rather than the use of heuristic devices.

A number of research studies support the premise that women more comprehensively process information than do men in the same task context (Bonomo, 2010). Barber, Dodd and Kolyesnikova (2009) found a significant relationship between gender and the ways in which males and females accessed and utilized information. The findings of this study lend support to the gender differences in information processing, as proposed by Meyers-Levy (1989).

All these theoretical and empirical evidences are of great significance for teach-

ing-learning in a classroom situation. It is important for teachers, educators, psychologists, and instructional designers to keep in mind these basic facts, and accordingly, frame the course and employ suitable teaching methods and strategies to diminish or narrow down the gender specific differences in achievement and learning as much as possible.

Objectives of the Study

- To find out the interaction effect of visual instruction between gender and various modes of presentation (static vs. animation).
- To investigate the impact of gender in various knowledge domains (factual, conceptual, rules and principle knowledge).

Methodology of the Study

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The present study was conducted on the 120 students (60 males and 60 females, mean age 14.26 years and SD= 2.75) from different higher secondary schools in Kolkata. The majority of them belonged to lower middle class families, and their age ranged

from 13-15 (mean age 14.26 years and SD= 1.75). Purposive random sampling was followed.

Inclusion Criteria for Participant Selection

- Sufficient fluency in English for reading text comprehension according to their school record.
- Scored 10, (median standard score based on pilot study), or greater in computer proficiency tests developed by the researcher.

Design of the Study

This study employed a post-test only, 2x3 factorial-experimental design. The two independent variables were types of instructional visualizations (static and animated), and gender (male and female). The dependent variables were three criterions post-tests, (identification, terminology, and comprehension), and measuring different learning objectives of the students, (factual knowledge, conceptual knowledge, and rules and principle knowledge).

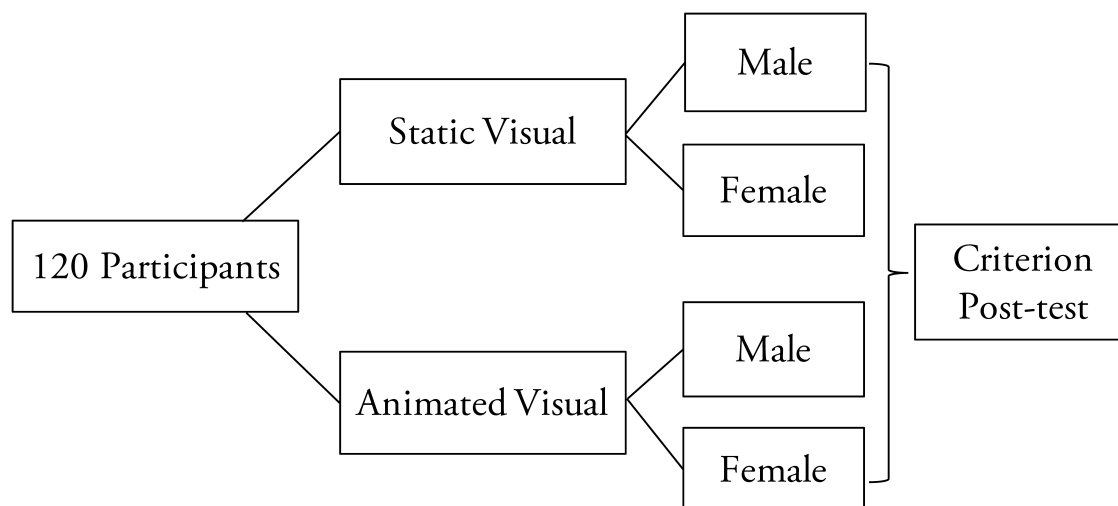


Figure 1. Graphical representation of design of research

Measurement Instrument

1. General Information Schedule:

Comprised of student demographic information and socioeconomic status (parental education, income and occupation).

2. Computer Proficiency Test: Developed by the researchers to match experimental and control groups. The main objective of this test was to measure how efficiently participants were able to use different functions of the computer, especially mouse, keyboard, and computer screen. Reliability of this test was measured at .874.

3. Prior Knowledge Test (pre-test as covariate): Originally developed by Dwyer (1978), consisted of 36 multiple choice questions on human physiology. For the purpose of the study, this test was re-standardized and validated by Kuder-Richardson's estimation and by content validation. The objective of this test was to measure students' previous knowledge regarding human physiology. Reliability of the prior knowledge test was .89.

4. Criterion Measures Test (post-tests): The three criterion tests used in this study were developed by Dwyer (1978). Each test consisted of twenty multiple choice questions worth 1 point each.

5. Identification Test: The main objective of the identification test was to measure students' factual knowledge about content material used for the present study. Here, factual knowledge refers to specific disciplines such as: learning of the essential facts, terminology, details, and elements that students must know or be familiar with in order to understand the topic (the human heart) taught in this research. Reliability of the identification test was .86.

Example of an item: Arrow number five points to the _____.

6. Terminology Test: The main objective of the terminology test was to measure

the students' conceptual knowledge of the human heart. Here, conceptual knowledge refers the interrelationships among the basic elements within a larger structure that enable students to function together. Learning the classifications, categories, principles, and generalizations that students must know, or be familiar with in order to understand the topic taught (human heart). Reliability of the terminology test was .81.

Example of an item: _____ is (are) the thickest walled chamber(s) of the heart.

7. Comprehension Test: The main objective of the comprehension test was to measure students' rules and principles knowledge about the human heart. The rules and principles knowledge learning of students on the given module, refers to those cause and effect, or correlational relationships that are used to interpret events or circumstances. The learner is required to correctly identify and match those relationships. Reliability of the comprehension test was .80.

Example of an item: Which valve is most like the tricuspid in function?

Learning Material Used in the Study

Instructional Content Material

Instructional content material of this study was adapted from a color-coded, paper-based booklet developed by the researchers on the topic 'human heart' containing five units: 1) the heart's structure; 2) the veins and arteries; 3) the valves of the heart; 4) the blood flow through the heart; and 5) the phases of the heart cycle (Dwyer, 1978). This content was chosen as it allows the evaluation of different levels of learning objectives and was selected after a discussion with a subject expert.

Development of the Instructional Module in Different Modes

For the purpose of the study, two separate instructional modules were developed by the researchers:

Static mode of presentation. Under this condition, the above mentioned instructional content was framed in 20 different slides. Each frame introduced the structure and function of the human heart. The extreme left sides of each frame have text, and the right sides have a corresponding static graphical representation elaborating the text. Students need to read the text and compare it with the graphical image. In each frame, the user can hear audio that corresponds to the text (Figure 2).

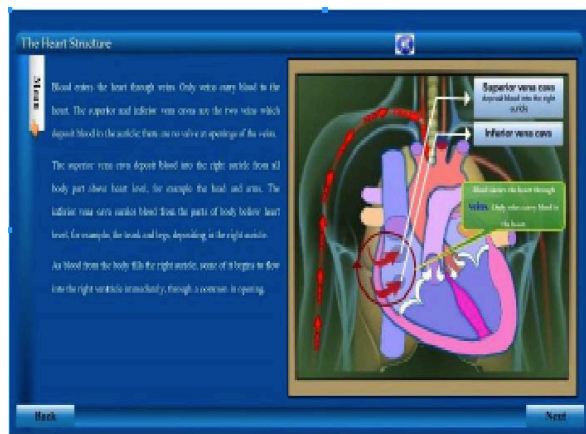


Figure 2. Static mode of presentation.

Animated mode of presentation. Akin to the static mode of presentation, in animation mode there was instructional content framing 20 different slides. Each frame introduced the learner to the structures and

functions of the human heart presented in an animated video along with some particular buttons, (play, pause, and stop) (Figure 3).

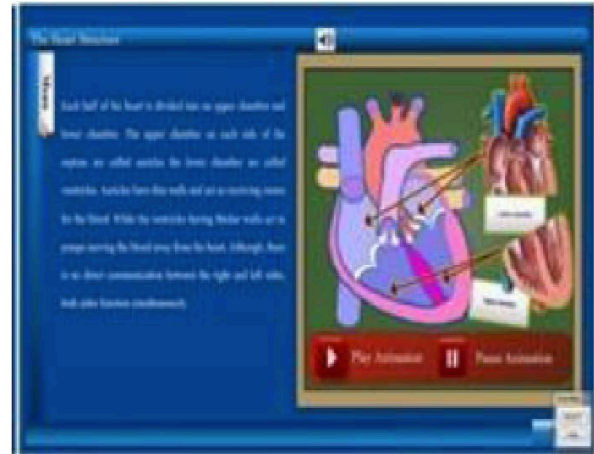


Figure 3. Animated mode of presentation.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Preliminary Analysis: Prior Knowledge Test on Physiology

A variance of analysis (ANOVA) was conducted on the physiology test scores to determine if there was a significant difference among the treatment of groups on the prior knowledge test.

The result of the ANOVA analysis indicated that there were no significant differences among the treatment groups on the test, (Table 1) score $F = 2.33$, $p = .13$. The result indicated that the participants were approximately equal in their prior knowledge on the content material used in the study, therefore, any results of treatment effects would not be attributed to the differ-

Table 1

ANOVA result for tests of between-subjects' effects (prior knowledge test and three criterion tests)

Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Identification Terminology Comprehension	82.30	3	6.33	2.33	0.13

ence in participants' prior knowledge.

Main Analysis

Results of MANOVA

As more than one dependent variable was used in conjunction with the independent variable, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to analyze the main effect of gender and interaction effect between gender and different modes of visual instruction on students' learning of educational objectives (overall effect, factual, conceptual, and knowledge of rules and principles) through computer based instruction modes. SPSS for Windows was used for the analyses, and the criterion alpha level (0.05) was used for verifying statistical significance. The effect size may be interpreted according to the following guidelines provided by Cohen: (1988): $\eta^2 = 0.01$ is small, $\eta^2 = 0.05$ is medium, and $\eta^2 = 0.13$ is large. For MANOVA, the effect size was reported as η^2 partial eta squared (η^2), and is used as an estimate of variance in the dependent variables.

In *Table 2*, the multivariate analysis for

the main effect of gender found no significant difference with Wilks' Λ value 0.99, $F = 0.31$, $\text{sig } 0.81 > 0.5$. However, an interesting result interaction between various visual instructions (static and animation) and gender was found to be significant with Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.15$, $F = 6.69$, $p < 0.05$.

The overall interaction between the mode of presentation and gender MANOVA Wilks' Λ value was statistically significant at the 0.05 alpha level, so Huck's recommendation regarding significant, subsequent exploratory analysis was conducted to further examine where the differences were located (Huck, 2004). The results of the exploratory follow-up analysis using MANOVA are presented in *Table 3*.

Subsequent univariate tests, or exploratory follow-up analysis using MANOVA, (*Table 3*), indicated that different modes of presentation had a significant effect on three criterion tests (Identification test $F = 5.21$, $p = .02 < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.04$, Terminology test $F = 6.00$, $p = 0.001 < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.04$, Comprehension test $F = 12.19$, and $p = 0.00 < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.09$). To further identify

Table 2

Represents analysis with all criterion tests (identification, terminology, and comprehension test) MANCOVA results using Pallai's Trace and Wilks' Lambda

Effect	Tests	Value	F	Sig.
Gender	Wilks	0.99	0.31	0.81
IV+ Gender	Wilks	0.15	6.69	0.00*
IV= Instructional Visualization (Static vs. Animation) *Mean difference significant at 0.05 level				

Table 3

Represents tests of between-subjects' effects

Effect	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	η^2
IV+ Gender	Identification	5.21	0.02*	0.04
	Terminology	6.00	0.01*	0.04
	Comprehension	12.19	0.00*	0.09
*Mean difference significant at 0.05 level				

Table 4

Adjusted means and standard errors for methods of instruction

Dependent Variable	Mode of Presentation	Gender	Mean	Std. Error
Identification	Static	Female	8.094	0.46
		Male	6.821	0.492
	Animation	Female	8.467	0.475
		Male	9.367	0.475
Terminology	Static	Female	7.313	0.483
		Male	6.464	0.517
	Animation	Female	8.4	0.499
		Male	10	0.499
Comprehension	Static	Female	8.813	0.478
		Male	7.429	0.511
	Animation	Female	9	0.494
		Male	11.067	0.494

Profile plot for interaction effect of various mode of presentation (Static vs. Animation) and gender on three criterion tests (Identification, Terminology, and Comprehension).

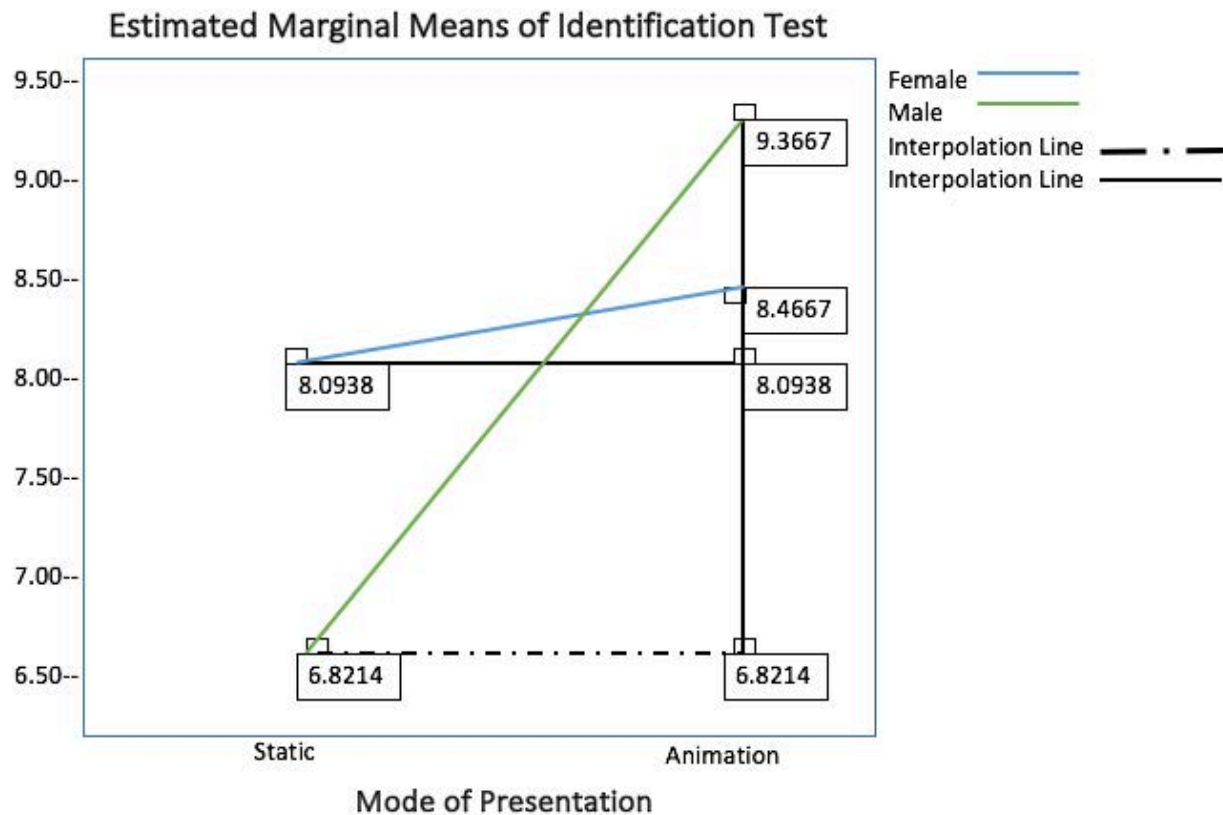


Figure 4. Interaction between various modes of presentation and gender in identification test

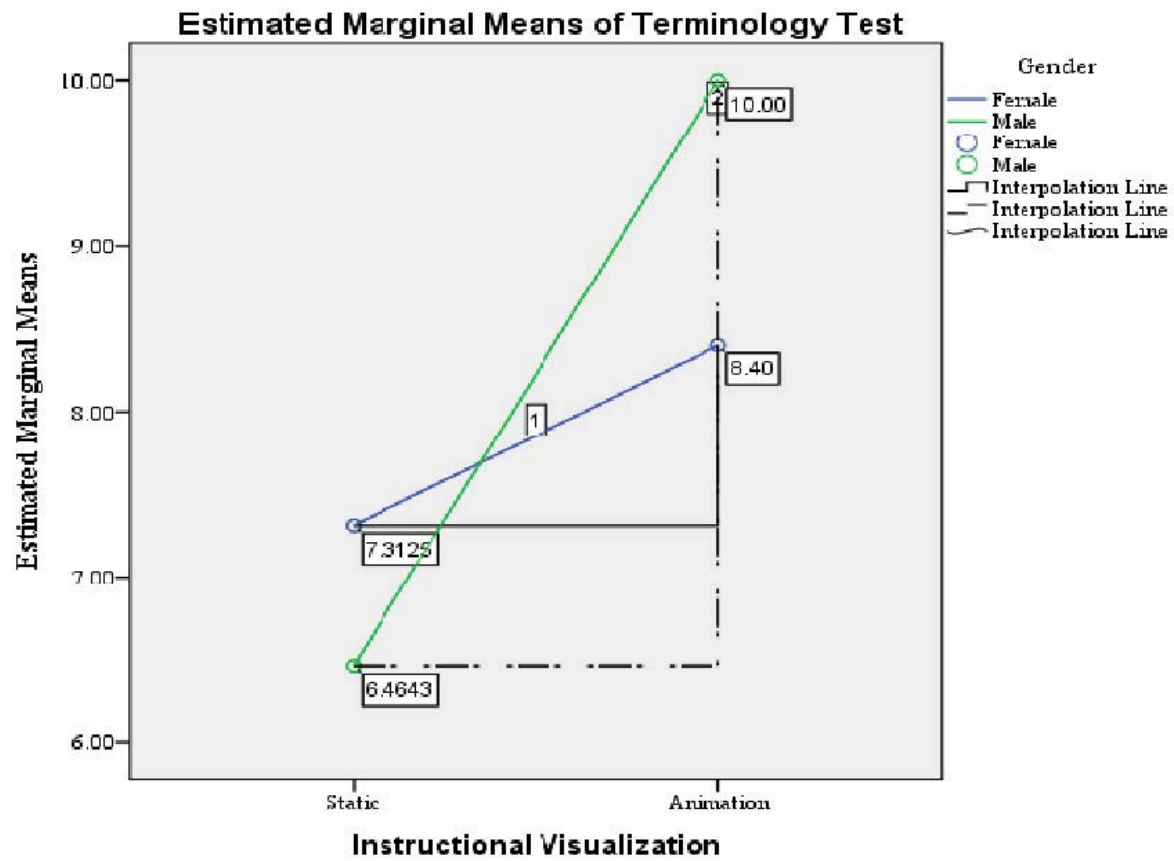


Figure 5: Interaction between various modes of presentation and gender in the terminology test

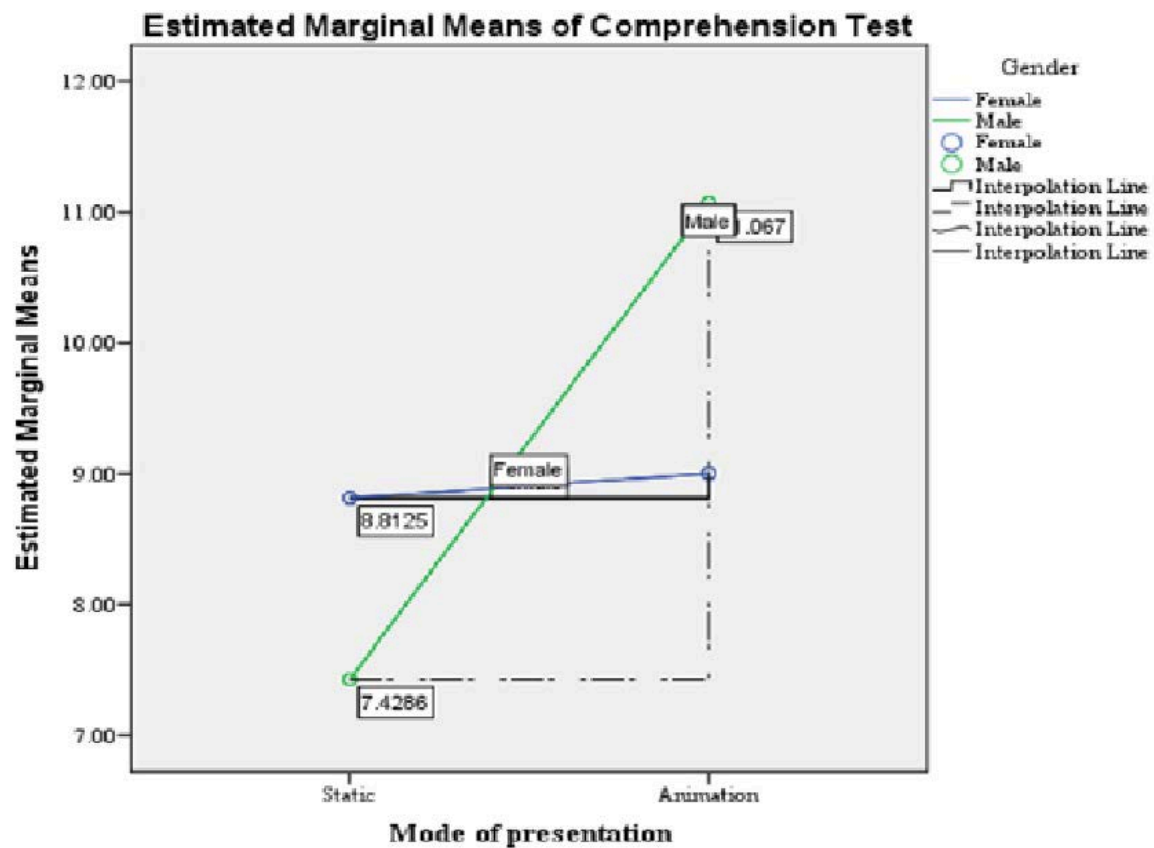


Figure 6: Interaction between various modes of presentation and gender in comprehension test

where the differences were, follow-up pairwise comparisons were examined.

Table 4 presents the adjusted means and standard errors for different modes of presentation and gender. From *Table 4*, we found that female student performance was superior (with a higher mean than male) in static visual instruction on three criterion tests, and male students performed better than females in the animation mode of instruction on three criterion tests.

Discussion

The results of the study unveiled that various modes of presentation, static and animated visual, effect gender differentiation. Alternatively, this empirical research result establishes the fact that main effect of gender in various knowledge domains, (factual, conceptual, and rules and principle), is not significant. The theoretical justification of multimedia instruction explains that animation put more demand on cognitive load than static image. Conjointly, this research result depicts superiority in performance of female participants over males in static visual strengthening; previous research found that females process static and verbal information more effectively than males (Halpern, 2004). Additionally, this result can also explain that a female participant needs less mental effort to process verbal information for freeing up cognitive resources for processing spatial information (Coward, Crooks, Flores & Dao, 2012). Nevertheless, the superiority of male participants in animated visual modes can explain the theoretical basis of Baddeley's (1992) working memory model that explains that male participants process more cognitive resources to understand visuospatial information (dynamic visual).

Significance and Practical Implication of the Study

In the present situation, it is a growing phenomenon to use various visual instructions as a mode of teaching-learning, but it is very important to know whether it really facilitates our various knowledge domains. If it does, which level(s) of knowledge does it facilitate, and how does it affect gender? The present study can be useful for the future designer to design learning material with gender in mind.

Furthermore, it is also important for instructional designers and educators to know the combined effectiveness of static and animated visualization when using both separately for males and females.

The results of this study shed light on the idea that visualization not only affects rote memorization, but also affects our factual and conceptual knowledge domain, which provides information to instructional designers and educators in the decision-making process of using visual instruction in Computer Based Instruction (CBI) environments.

Gender differentiation affects our national socio-cultural development which may be one of the major factors to account for the imbalance in social development. Researchers, teachers, instructional designers, and practitioners need to put more efforts into exploring the various aspects of the gender gap.

Teachers may use the results of this study for implementing new strategies. Also, it puts forth a further caution that generalization of multimedia learning principles, for all individuals, is not appropriate, and that factors leading to gender differentiation should be taken into consideration. A teacher trainer can also use these research findings for training new teachers. Instructional designers will get an overall picture of how var-

ious modes of presentations may affect gender differentiation. Most importantly, the Ministry of Human Resource Development can use these results for decision making in education.

Limitations of the Study

The results of the study definitely warrant a cautious interpretation due to a number of limitations.

a) The research is restricted only to standards IX and X of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

b) The research is restricted to the students from English medium schools with computer facilities.

c) Only 120 students studying by the IX and X standards in CBSE comprised the final sample of this study.

d) The results are limited within the age-range and socio economic status considered in the study. ■

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Representations of *Lean In* and *The Feminine Mystique* in Social Media: A Look at Pinterest Pins

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Mia Moody-Ramirez and Liz Fassih

Abstract

This analysis of representations of the *Feminine Mystique* and *Lean In* on Pinterest investigates how Pinterest serves as a means to disseminate social commentary on feminism. Specifically, it investigates hyperlinks to books, blog entries, and websites to assess how representations of both books on social media platforms provide historical context and characterizations of feminism. As visual bookmarking sites continue to grow in significance, scholars need a solid understanding of the various definitions and techniques affiliated with the platform.

Keywords

Lean In, *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan, Sheryl Sandberg, gender inequality, Pinterest, social media, feminism, marriage, homemakers, housewife

Introduction

In *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan described the widespread unhappiness of homemakers in the late 1950s and early 1960s. She asserted that educated women had been duped into believing they could best fulfill themselves by “living up to what she called the ‘mystique’ of the happy housewife” (Loughlin, 1983, p. 138). Decades later, Sheryl Sandberg examined gender inequality in the workforce in *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. The popularity of *Lean In* and the 50th anniversary of *The Feminine Mystique* in 2014 offered the opportunity to examine how Pinterest serves as a means to disseminate social commentary on feminism. Specifically, it investigates hyperlinks to books, blog entries, and websites to assess how representations of both books on social media platforms provide historical context and characterizations of feminism.

As visual bookmarking sites continue to grow in significance, scholars need a solid understanding of the various definitions and techniques affiliated with the platform.

This analysis examines the historical context of these two pivotal books and their representations on the social media platform—Pinterest. Written 50 years apart, both books intrigued readers, topped *The New York Times* bestselling nonfiction list, and helped shape how society perceives women. As visual book-marking sites continue to grow in importance, communication scholars must develop a solid understanding of the various definitions and techniques affiliated with each platform. Pinterest is of interest for this study because of its target audience—women. According to Pew (2013), Pinterest follows Facebook in popularity, and 80% of its users are women (Moore, 2014). This large base of women as an audience indicates the platform offers a method of targeting certain

audiences. Friz and Gehl (2016) assert:

Pinterest becomes a surrogate for generational knowledge that used to be passed on via inculcation into a specific, narrow gender role. No longer do mothers train daughters in the ways of sewing, cooking, cleaning, and childrearing, but this knowledge is now available, custom-made, through Pinterest. The kind of femininity cultivated on Pinterest is then, conveniently, made available for purchase from handy sponsors. (p. 701)

Phillips, Miller and McQuarrie's (2014) analysis of 20 pinboards with 2,291 images indicates continued gender-related studies of this platform are important as women often use Pinterest to contemplate future purchases and identities. This study is particularly relevant as awareness of individuals use the new medium to share messages on feminism may offer scholars a deeper understanding of trends.

Review of the Literature

The Feminine Mystique

Friedan is often credited with inspiring the second-wave feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States that advocated the idea that women need meaningful work, education and careers. Friedan's research on women began in 1957, when she conducted a survey of her former Smith College classmates for their 15th class reunion. Survey results indicated many of her classmates were unhappy with their lives as homemakers, which prompted her to begin interviewing other suburban housewives and researching psychology, media and advertising. According to Friedan's analysis of then *Ladies' Home Journal*, *McCall's*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Women's Home Companion*, the majority of heroines in the four major women's magazines in 1939 were career women. Within 20 years, however, the transforma-

tion from career-woman to housewife was such that by 1958, Friedan was unable to find a single career-woman heroine (Loughlin, 1983).

The author published the survey results in the 1963 bestseller, *The Feminine Mystique*, which examined the role of women's magazines, Freudian psychology, and educational institutions in keeping women in a subservient position (Loughlin, 1983). The book questioned the idea that middle-class women were happy and fulfilled as housewives. Several events that occurred during the period of civil turbulence contributed to the book's context and impact (Taylor, 2013):

- In 1954, Edith Green and Martha Wright Griffiths won seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- In 1955, Green proposed the Equal Pay Act; it became law in 1963. Green soon added Bernice Sandler to her Congressional staff and they began work on Title IX legislation. Griffiths worked to eliminate other forms of sex discrimination; she is now credited as the person most responsible for sex being included in the 1964 Civil Rights Act.
- In 1962, Gloria Steinem published an article describing how women are forced to choose between career and marriage in *Esquire*. (p. 71)

By 2000, *The Feminine Mystique* had sold more than three million copies and was translated into several languages. Today, it is widely regarded as one of the most influential nonfiction books of the 20th century. As asserted by Dow (2005), feminist texts of 1960s and 1970s have not received adequate attention in communication studies. The few studies on the text conclude that while strides have been made, there is room for growth in the feminist movement. In her essay on *The Feminine Mystique*, Turner (2013), discusses the 50th anniversary of the book and its contribution to the growth of

feminism. However, Turner adds that feminists still have much work to do in order to achieve their goals.

Cady (2009) explored a series of broad connections between women's employment and feminism in her investigation of *The Feminine Mystique*. The author adds that *The Feminine Mystique* envisions women finding fulfillment not in corporate careers, but instead in civic-minded pursuits, and more importantly, through developing "thoughtful liberal subjectivity." She concluded that recent mainstream news outlets have framed the book as *feminism's origin, a call to work*, and used these connections to condemn all feminism as conformist careerism, hence narrowing the range of issues addressed by the book and by women's liberation (Cady, 2009). Cady adds:

Although sections of *The Feminine Mystique* encouraged middle-class women's career aspirations, the book did not simply argue that women should enter the professions. Friedan critically assessed working within corporate capitalism, and she concluded by advocating not that women merely pursue professional work, but instead that they seek self-actualization through "the kind of lifelong personal purpose that was once called a 'career'" (Friedan, 1963, 2001, p. 342). (p. 366)

One of the biggest criticisms of the book is the idea that it contains elements of racism and classism. In 1984, black feminist theorist bell hooks introduced, *Feminist theory: from margin to center*, which includes a critique of *The Feminine Mystique* and mainstream feminism, in general. hooks maintains that mainstream feminism's reliance on white, middle-class, and professional spokeswomen obscures the involvement, leadership, and centrality of women of color and poor women in the movement for women's liberation.

Lean In

Fifty years after *The Feminine Mystique* debuted, Sheryl Sandberg, the Chief Operating Officer of Facebook, details her own struggle to achieve advancement and equality in a historically male-dominated workplace environment in *Lean In*. In *Lean In*, Sandberg advocates for women to be agents of their own success; rather than sitting on the fringes of a meeting, women should take their place at the table and "lean in" to their career. Addressing one of the leading dilemmas women face, Sandberg offers strategies for women to pursue career advancement without sacrificing a family life. She argues that it is no longer necessary for women to choose between having children or a career. *Lean In* has sold more than 2.25 million copies worldwide (Sandberg, 2013). Another measure of *Lean In's* influence is its network of *Lean In* Circles, or small in-person and online peer group meetings that are worldwide.

Sandberg details her struggle to achieve equality in a historically male-dominated workplace environment, advocates for women to be agents of their own success, rather than sitting on the fringes of meetings, and offers strategies for women to pursue career advancement without sacrificing a family life.

Fine and Fermaglich (2013) note that both Friedan and Sandberg share similar backgrounds. They grew up in comfortable Jewish families where education was valued and both women went to elite schools and excelled in their chosen disciplines. Both women were married with children and worked outside the home when they wrote their books. Fine and Fermaglich (2013) add that while Friedan and Sandberg are similar in their backgrounds, their books are different. Friedan primarily focuses on

the unhappiness felt by housewives who believed something was missing from their lives, while Sandberg focuses on how women are overlooked in leadership positions in corporate America. While Friedan's book is based on interviews, Sandberg is the subject of her book. She discusses her family, education, jobs, mentors, husbands and moments of struggle in corporate America (Fine & Kirsten, 2013). In sum, Sandberg's realization echoes a similar silence that Friedan portrayed over 50 years earlier - extending that internal question to the modern woman, "How can she have it all?" (Murphy, 2016).

Much like *The Feminine Mystique*, *Lean In*'s reviews are mixed with critics praising it for its insightful advice on how to balance both career and family, and panning it for a seemingly elitist perspective. Today, the movement's concerns shift constantly as activists personally encounter pay gaps, rising childcare costs, and pregnancy discrimination (Cochrane, 2013). With the magnitude of pressing issues, feminists fight on several fronts. The campaigns of the past few years were started by individuals, or small groups, that have responded to issues about which they feel strongly (Cochrane, 2013).

Many commentators argue that the internet has enabled a shift from 'third-wave' to 'fourth-wave' feminism. Phillips & Cree (2014) state: "We are currently witnessing a resurgence of interest in feminism across the world, with a claim that we are experiencing a 'fourth wave' in the global North that has its birthplace primarily on the internet" (p. 2). The two add that the internet has created culture, in which sexism or misogyny can be called out and challenged. Fourth wave feminism often combines finances, politics, mental well-being and stability in an overarching vision of change (Diamond, 2009).

Lean In is relatively new and scholars

have yet to fully explore the many dimensions of how audiences view and enjoy the book. Shonk (2013) recounts the major arguments within *Lean In*, and examines their overall effect on the workplace and society. Shonk (2013) finds that *Lean In*'s influence has yielded positive results for women by creating what she calls the "Sandberg Effect." Women have become confident enough to ask for the compensation they feel their work truly deserves by following Sandberg's advice for successfully negotiating a job interview or appealing for pay increases, rather than what is allocated to them. Shonk (2013) highlights a specific case in which the "Sandberg Effect" is evident by citing the editor of BuzzFeed, a popular social media company:

[Editor] Ben Smith writes that numerous women had mentioned Sandberg's name in salary negotiations with him and other editors just weeks after the book's publication. After negotiating a new role with Smith, one senior editor stood up to leave, then stopped herself and said, 'Sheryl Sandberg would be disappointed in me if I didn't ask you for a raise'. (p. 9)

Moreover, Shonk (2013) argues that *Lean In* also carries weight in creating a more communal workplace environment in which women can comfortably "position themselves as showing concern for all women, not just themselves" during negotiation (p. 106). The author explains that by simply having an authority figure, such as Sandberg that makes a public call for equality, women are able to reference a known authority as well as bolster their arguments.

User Generated Content (UGC)

Scholars have long asserted that traditional media outlets function as the primary gatekeeper in disseminating news to the public (Snider, 1967; White, 1950). However, with the rise of social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, a varied

group of gatekeepers have emerged as numerous as those that use the medium (Curnutt, 2012). Pinterest is one of the newer social networking sites that launched in beta mode in March 2010. In 2015, Pinterest had more than 100 million monthly active users (MAUs), according to *The New York Times* (Isaac, 2015). The site started out as an invite-only visual bookmarking platform, but changed in 2012. It is now open for anyone to join. Though it is still considered only the third most popular social media, behind Facebook and Twitter, Pinterest is rapidly becoming a powerful tool for advertisers, purchasers and communicators (Vega, 2012). Building on this review of the literature, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How are *Lean In* and *The Feminine Mystique* characterized in scholarly research and popular culture?

RQ2: What content is usually linked to Pinterest pins containing the two books in the title?

Methods

There is no single feminist method of study, but feminist communication researchers have incorporated and transformed different methodologies (Krolokke & Sorensen, 2006). However, feminist-informed methods commonly put gender and gender-related concerns at the center of analysis, and highlight notions of power in different ways. This content analysis of 200 Pinterest pins was identified by choosing applicable pins for analysis. The researchers used the keywords: *Betty Friedan*, *The Feminine Mystique*, *Sheryl Sandberg* and *Lean In* during October of 2013. This time frame was selected in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Friedan's monumental text. It was also the year that Sandberg's book, *Lean In*, debuted. Each pin was selected by scrolling down the page with search results, and

the pin was copied and pasted into a Word document, as well as any links to connected websites noted; each book reached 100 pins, with a total of 200 pins in the sample.

The analysis included the reading and identification of the key themes emphasized in the selected sample. The researchers read the pins multiple times and highlighted themes. Cycling through data, the researchers were able to see similarities and differences in pins and keep track of thematic elements. We developed a coding protocol to place the pins into categories related to the most prominent themes: dispelling myths, consumerism, art and fashion. We also noted if the pins linked to other platforms such as: blogs, websites, and other types of social media. After compiling the themes, an emergent pattern was created, which provided the evidence for an argument about the nature of Pinterest's representation of *The Feminine Mystique* and *Lean In*.

Findings and Discussion

The Feminine Mystique Pins

Pinterest pins in our sample primarily linked pins to blog entries and online articles about the 50th anniversary of the book (see Diagram 1). One of the most popular pins linked to an article about *The New York Times* columnist, Gail Collins, who helped kick off the 50th anniversary of *The Feminine Mystique* with a spot titled, "Room for Debate." The half-hour debate included panelists who discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the book.

Similarly, a NPR blog entry discusses the 50th anniversary of *The Feminine Mystique*. The piece titled, "At 50, Does 'Feminine Mystique' Still Roar?" includes an interview with Hanna Rosin, author of *The End of Men*, who was in her 20s when she first read the book (Neary, 2013). Rosin argues

Table 1
Operational Definitions

Pins	A visual bookmark stored on a user's Pinterest account that links to outside content
Boards	A method of categorizing pins into similar groups
Followers	People who subscribe to other users or particular boards to view the content on their own homepage
Online media platforms	An alternative to traditional media, not confined by one channel of communication
Social networking sites	An online media platform that allows users to interact and generate new content by using the website
Visual bookmarking sites	Sites that primarily collect and share images and others that share links to all kinds of material found online in a visual way

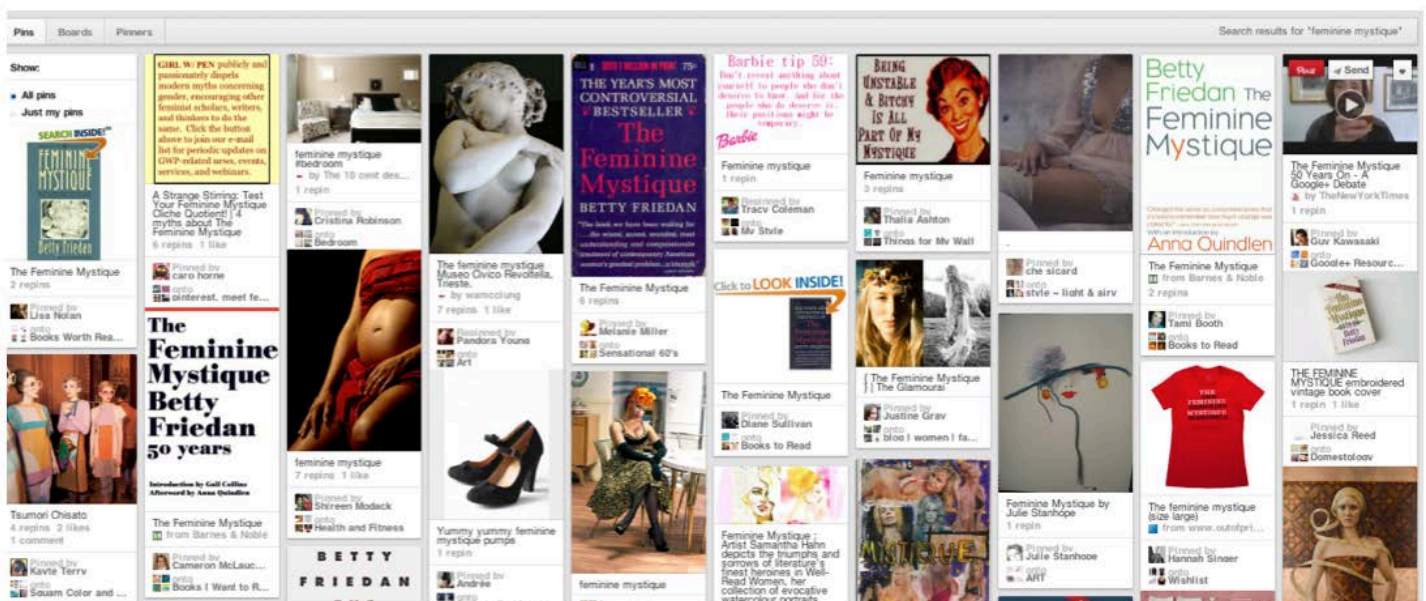


Table 2
The Feminine Mystique categories

Pins linked to other social media	Pins that linked to websites including blogs, news articles, or interviews. Each linked website discussed a distinctive view of <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> .
Dispelling myths	Pins that linked to websites which focused on correcting the misconceptions most commonly held about <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> , most notably the idea that Friedan hated men and domestic life.
Consumerism	Pins that linked to websites selling clothing, accessories, or books related to <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> .
Art and fashion	Pins that linked to artwork inspired by <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> .

that she was surprised by Friedan's anger as she systematically laid out the case against a male-dominated society that was determined to keep women in their place. Rosin adds that *The Feminine Mystique* is still relevant, especially when it comes to our "understanding of women and domesticity." The pin includes a photo of well-known feminists of the 1960s.

In the blog posting, Jessica Valenti, 34, states that women her age and younger are actively engaged with feminism, but not necessarily in traditional forums such as magazines and organizations. Instead, they are on the web and social media striving to "move the discussion forward." Neary (2013) states:

I see a lot of people who are discouraged that we are still having the same conversation. We've seen all these policy changes, we've seen incredible laws, we've seen Roe [v. Wade], we've seen the Violence Against Women Act, but we're still kind of fighting for implementation and we're still really battling the cultural battle and looking for cultural shifts. (para. 13)

Another pin links to a historical analysis of *The Feminine Mystique* 50 Years Later. Published on February 17, 2013, the author, Peter Dreier (2013), stated that *The Feminine Mystique* "catalyzed the modern feminist movement, helped forever change Americans' attitudes about women's role in society and catapulted its author into becoming an influential and controversial public figure" (para. 1). The author adds that *The Feminine Mystique* was not only a best-selling book, but also a manifesto for change. "Most Americans now accept as normal the once-radical ideas that Friedan and others espoused" (para. 3). He compares 1963 when there were few college courses, women's studies programs or books on women's history to today when "most Americans, including men, believe that women should

earn the same pay as men if they do the same job" (para. 3). Dreier (2013) states:

Corporations, law firms, the media, universities, advertising, the military, sports and other core institutions can no longer exercise blatant sex discrimination without facing scrutiny and the risk of protest and lawsuits. The Obama administration just lifted the ban on women in combat. Women are now running corporations, newspapers and TV stations, universities and major labor unions. In 1960, only about six percent of medical students were women. Today women comprise about half of all medical students and have a stronger foothold in other formerly all-male professions and occupations. (para. 3)

Dreier (2013) lists the right to have an abortion as the one grey spot in feminism; legalized in the US Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade ruling in 1973, the case is still under attack, but remains the law. Conversely, Siegel (2011), uses Pinterest as a platform to help dispel myths about Friedan. The post highlights Stephanie Coontz's 2011 book: *A Strange Stirring: The Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s*, which is a monograph of *The Feminine Mystique*. Among the myths and clichés about *The Feminine Mystique* and the movement of feminism is the idea that Betty Friedan was a man-hater, and *The Feminine Mystique* was anti-marriage, according to Coontz (2011). In reality, Friedan hated housework, but she loved men. She even suggested that her tombstone should read: "She helped make women feel better about being women and therefore better able to freely and fully love men" (para. 3).

Another myth busted by Coontz is the idea that Friedan encouraged women to put their personal gratification and career ambitions ahead of family or community concerns, leading directly to "sex-in-the-city" individualism. In reality, Coontz stated that Friedan told women it was a mistake to

think that better sex or a new man would meet their need to grow. Coontz (2011):

She argued that only an un-liberated woman would believe that more money or a bigger house would fill the hole inside her. She also said it was better to do volunteer work, if possible, than to take a job just for the money, insisting that women, like men, could find themselves only by developing their individual capacities in the framework of socially useful work, whether paid or unpaid. She would have hated “Sex in the City.” (para. 2)

Demonstrating the diversity of the posts, another blog entry posted by *The Atlantic* magazine, focuses its attention on “4 Big Problems with *The Feminine Mystique*.” Author Ashley Fetters explores what she calls several “grains of salt” that deserve consideration in any discussion of the 50-year-old book’s legacy (2013). The article analyzes *The Feminine Mystique* through the lens of critical race theory. It highlights the views of black feminist theorists such as bell hooks, who assert that *The Feminist Mystique* ignored the black and lower-class women of the 20th century (see *Diagram 2*). The blog entry also discusses the positive achievements that women have made in the years since the book appeared.

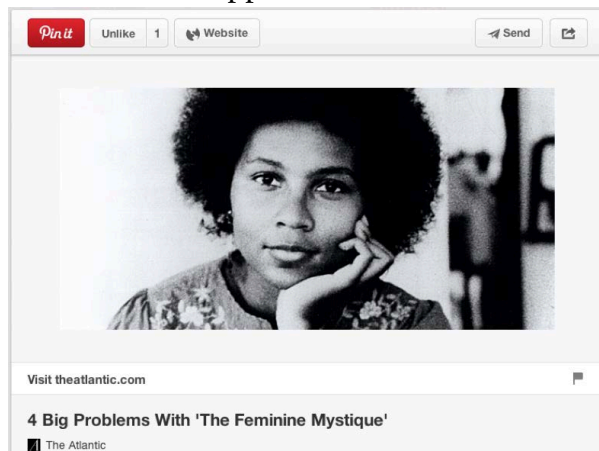


Diagram 2

Link to blog posting on *The Atlantic*.

<http://www.pinterest.com/pin/154389093448061578/>

Many of the Pinterest pins in our sample link to products and services such as art, fashion, the actual book and T-shirts commemorating *The Feminist Mystique* (see *Diagram 3*). The book is displayed with many different colors including one with embroidered letters. Posters of these pins include individuals who like the book and online booksellers such as Barnes and Noble and Amazon. One artist uses Pinterest to post pins featuring her paintings that depict the triumphs and sorrows of literature’s finest heroines in an exhibit titled, “Well-Read Women.” In her collection of evocative watercolor portraits, the artist shares paintings of Daisy Buchanan, Ophelia, and five more fictional characters.

Lean In Pins

The phrase *Lean In* also retrieved a wide array of user-generated pins, with content belonging to a broad variety of categories (*Diagram 4*). The majority of the images present an inspirational quote from *Lean In*, or from a lecture or interview given by Sandberg. As with *The Feminine Mystique*, the overwhelming majority of pins link to blog posts, including topics such as career advice, motherhood, and self-improvement (see *Table 3*).



Diagram 3

T-shirt emblazoned with a *Feminine Mystique* emblem.

<http://www.pinterest.com/pin/115123334197793007/>

Though a number of blogs offer supportive statements about *Lean In*, many critical posts also exist. A number of pins unrelated to Sandberg also surface, due to phrases such as “become lean in six weeks,” and advertise

exercise routines, diet plans, and health advice.

Support for *Lean In*

The popularity of *Lean In* has raised a

Table 3
Lean In categories

Career advice	Pins that link to websites offering quotes and direct career advice from Sheryl Sandberg, or a form of advice derived from the content of <i>Lean In</i> .
Support for <i>Lean In</i>	Pins that link to blogs and websites detailing personal stories from women who have applied Sandberg’s advice to their own workplace, and experienced a positive outcome.
Criticism and negative feedback	Pins that link to blogs and websites in women recount negative instances of using strategies from <i>Lean In</i> in their workplace or personal life.

great deal of controversy. While many women are grateful for and profit from the book’s impact, various others believe that Sandberg is not truly representing the working woman and mother, and as a result, unfavorably distorts the majority of women. This criticism, however, makes pins in support of *Lean In* stand out all the more. A pin linking to an online *Forbes* article titled, “It’s Sheryl Sandberg’s Courage to Raise Her Voice That’s Hot News, Not Leaning In,” presents a staunch defense of the book. Writer, Anne Doyle, is an author of a feminist book titled *Powering Up!*, and is subsequently in a better position to understand Sandberg’s motivations when creating *Lean In*.

Doyle (2013) acknowledges that *Lean In* does not offer new or groundbreaking advice, but argues that it is the reiteration of these ideas by a powerful female figure that matters most. She posits that the goal of *Lean In* is to encourage female participation in the workplace, regardless of how dissimilar Sandberg may be compared to other women. Doyle applauds Sandberg for her

willingness “to raise her voice, put her personal reputation in the game, and talk openly about the gigantic elephant in the room.”

Another positive article from *Time* magazine, “Confidence Woman,” by Belinda Luscombe (2013), defends *Lean In* from critics, and goes as far as to state that the book launches “the most ambitious mission to reboot feminism and reframe discussions of gender since the launch of Ms. magazine in 1971” (para. 4). Luscombe (2013) reinforces her support of *Lean In* by referencing influential feminists, such as Gloria Steinem, that have also supported the book. She catalogs Sandberg’s personal successes as well as gains in workplace equality, and concludes by expressing hope for Sandberg’s future as a feminist icon: “After the women get the power, well, then she can really let loose” (Luscombe, 2013, para. 9).

Another notable blog linked from Pinterest titled, “Moms Rising,” contains an article written by Stephanie Coontz (2013), previously mentioned for her commentary on *The Feminine Mystique*. Coontz rebuts

criticism, separating Sandberg from middle-class women, stating: “Sandberg does not discount the external barriers facing women. Nor is she unconcerned with the well-being of less affluent women” (para. 4). Coontz claims that Sandberg’s main argument attacks the intellectual barriers women continue to hold. *Lean In*’s appeal is that it breaks down these mental obstructions, and gives women the confidence to push farther than they previously believed possible. Even when expressing doubt over Sandberg’s hopefulness, Coontz (2013) nevertheless supports *Lean In*. She advises women that it is “better to focus one’s fire on the politicians and employers...than to attack a corporate leader who concedes that the playing field is still not equal and has some interesting ideas about how to help other women succeed” (para. 16).

burnout – both at work and home. Brooks (2014) argues that women are still seen and expected to behave as the primary caregiver at home; they still work a “second shift” regardless of career status. Upon her initial reading of *Lean In*, Brooks was inspired to emulate Sandberg’s drive, and transformed what was once leisure time into time spent reaching out and leaning in. Brooks (2014) describes her efforts and conclusion:

I leaned in some more. I ate protein bars and made important telephone calls during my morning commute. I stopped reading novels so I could write more articles and memos and make more handicrafts to contribute to the school auction. I put in extra hours at work. When I came home, I did radio interviews over Skype from my living room while supervising the children’s math homework. And I realized that I hated Sheryl Sandberg. Because, of course, I was miserable. (para. 20)

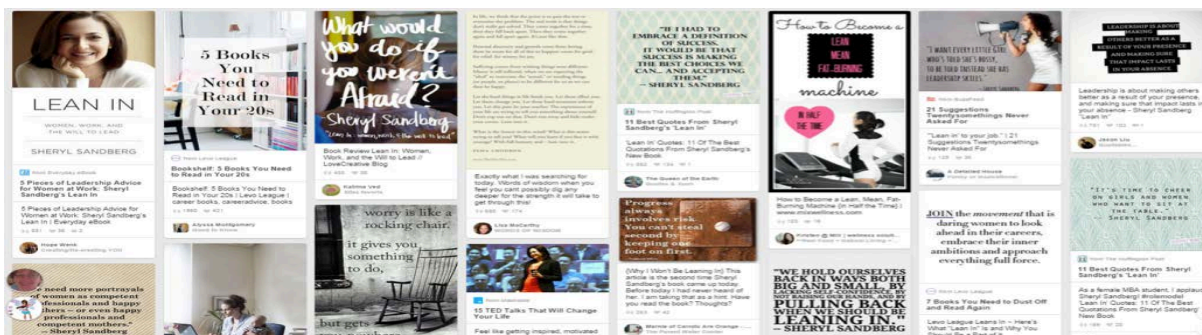


Diagram 4

Pinterest pins containing the words “Lean In” in their title.

Criticism and Negative Feedback

The array of criticism on Pinterest pushes back against positive views of *Lean In*. Some of the pins link to blog entries or newspaper opinion pieces citing the faults within Sandberg’s work. One of the strongest pieces of criticism stems from a pin linked to a 2014 *Washington Post* article titled: “Recline, Don’t Lean In: Why I Hate Sheryl Sandberg.” The author, Rosa Brooks, faults Sandberg for pushing women to the point of

Though she achieved success through her attempts to lean in, Brooks argues that Sandberg’s definition of “leaning in” is simply not sustainable. She believes Sandberg has contributed to a culture in which women are viewed as failing in career devotion unless they are at the office “every night until nine,” or “checking email 24/7” (Brooks, 2014). To the author, Sandberg is perpetuating gender inequality by convincing women to overwork themselves to the same degree

that men do. Brooks concludes by cautioning women against the *Lean In* mentality, and instead advocates hard-working women to use free time to recline, stating: “If we truly want gender equality, we need to challenge the assumption that more is always better” (2014).

Additional criticism is found in a pin linking to the *New Yorker* article: “Lean Out: The Dangers for Women Who Negotiate.” Author Maria Konnikova (2014), argues against Sandberg advising women to ask for what they want when negotiating, and instead recommends women to proceed slowly and with great caution in their career pursuits. Konnikova (2014) tells a story of a woman who, after being hired on as a university professor, sent her employer a polite email asking if it would be possible to discuss some of her requests, including a slight pay raise, eventual paid maternity leave, and a pre-tenure sabbatical. The employer promptly responded, only to inform her that she no longer seemed like a good fit for the position, and she would no longer be receiving the job.

Konnikova employs this cautionary tale to remind women that, though there should not be any harm in simply asking, the workplace remains kinder to assertive men than women. She quotes studies finding that requests are looked upon more favorably when coming from a male employee, while women are more likely to be seen as overreaching. Konnikova (2014) agrees with Sandberg in that women should be paid as much as men, but she maintains her view that today’s society is still a dangerous place for women to seek advancement quickly. Her ending advice for women is to disregard Sandberg’s strident attitude towards career advancement, while wisely remaining aware that “any negotiation in which gender is involved remains a careful, precarious balancing act”

(Konnikova, 2014, para. 19).

Comparison of the Two Books

Pinterest features a wide array of user-generated pins that link to the books with other content representing a broad variety of categories. Pinterest pins containing the term “Feminine Mystique” and “Lean In” link to YouTube videos, blogs, and websites with products ranging from art to high fashion to websites that offer the books for purchase. Though a number of pins offer supportive statements about the two books, these are offset by an equal number of critical posts or those that link to unrelated items such as websites that sell diet products, fashion and other random items.

Lean In garnered online discussion almost immediately after release. Though both support for and criticism of Sandberg’s work maintain wide bases, the fact that *Lean In* has raised a significant discussion is valuable in and of itself. By publicly declaring herself a feminist, Sandberg has consequently created new dialogue regarding feminism and company structure.

One key difference in the representations of the two books on Pinterest is *Lean In* pins are more likely to link to career-related topics. Keeping in line with the overall theme of *Lean In*, numerous pins link to websites offering career advice in the form of reading lists, negotiating tips, inspirational quotes for female entrepreneurs, and advice for working mothers. For instance, one popular pin links to a reading list directed toward young women, titled, “5 Books You Need to Read in Your 20s.” The collection, headed by *Lean In*, contains books centered on the theme of self-improvement and early-career guidance (see *Diagram 5*).

One blog rehashes Sandberg’s career advice in its post “5 Pieces of Leadership for

Women at Work.” Author, Rachel Jacobs, praises Sandberg for starting “a long overdue conversation about gender biases and lack of female leadership in the workplace,” and provides what she believes to be the five most important takeaways from *Lean In* (2013). She encourages women to put Sandberg’s advice to use in their career, and further the Lean In movement.

There are also quite a few pins linking to the website created specifically for Sandberg’s book, *leanin.org* (Diagram 5). On this website, users can create or join “lean in circles” in order to share support with individuals in or near their community. The site offers advice for entrepreneurs, recent graduates, and career-oriented individuals.

Study findings illustrate the influence *The Feminine Mystique* has had on society in general. Pins discuss and analyze feminism, and commemorate the five decades following the publishing of *The Feminine Mystique*. Such activities keep alive valuable discussion on important women’s issues. The text’s migration to new forms of media such as Pin-

terest is a testimony to its importance as it continues to shape the lives of women in the 21st century.

Conclusions

One of the greatest challenges for women today is finding the right balance between personal and professional life. Predictively, Betty Friedan compared the feminist revolution to evolution, when she said: “The feminist revolution had to be fought because women quite simply were stopped at a state of evolution far short of their human capacity” (p. 88). Friedan, who died in 2006, was a trailblazer and groundbreaker for the feminist movement in the United States, serving as a founding member of the National Organization for Women (NOW), the National Abortion Rights Action and the National Women’s Political Caucus (Betty Friedan Biography, 2012).

Pinterest offers a method of targeting certain audiences—specifically women, which means scholarly inquiry in this area might offer insight into feminist viewpoints and trends. The findings illustrate the reality that there are groups outspokenly against feminism, and have a skewed view of what feminism entails. On the social media platform Tumblr, a popular account titled “Women Against Feminism” consistently posts about the evils of feminism. *The Daily Beast*, studying the effects of misrepresentation, writes: “one woman posted ‘I don’t need ‘feminism’ because I believe that men and women are EQUAL, not that women should belittle men’ (Shire, 2014, n.p.). Studies such as this one that highlight not only feminist texts, but also the citizen reaction to these works, are needed to illuminate the common perceptions and misconstructions of feminism overall.

Although both of these texts are clear-

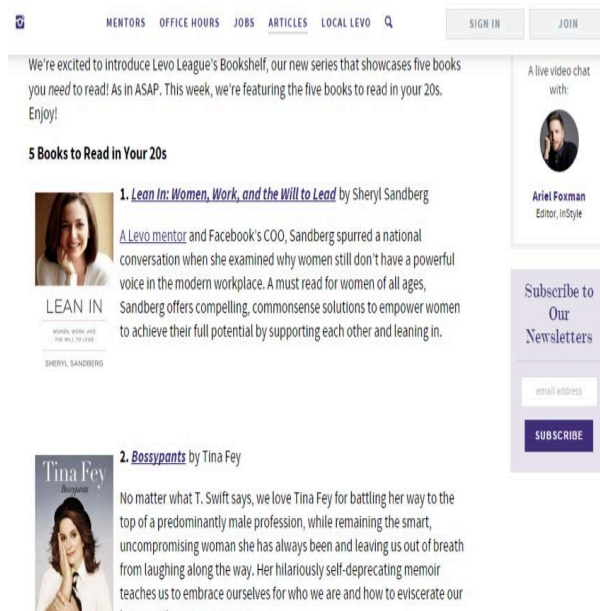


Diagram 5

Pin of motivational reading list. <http://www.levo.com/articles/lifestyle/5-books-to-read-in-your-20s>

ly being discussed on popular social media platforms, there is an observable lack of knowledge about their contents in society at large. Just one in four Americans – and one in three women – call themselves feminists today. However, that is often before they read a dictionary definition of feminism. Even then, 40% of Americans in the latest Economist/YouGov Poll – including half of all men – say they do not think of themselves as a feminist, defined as “someone who believes in the social, political and economic equality of women” (Frankovic, 2014, n.p.). These results were equally inconsistent in the United States: a 2013 poll “found just 16 percent of men and 23 percent of women in America identify as feminists [...] however, that same poll found 82 percent of all Americans agree with the statement ‘men and women should be social, political, and economic equals’” (Swanson, 2013, n.p.). This inconsistency indicates although many people are aware that texts such as *The Feminine Mystique* and *Lean In* are widely circulating, they may not understand the overall concept of feminism.

As with any study, there were limitations associated with this analysis. One primary weakness is it solely examines Pinterest to determine reactions to and discussion of *Lean In* and *The Feminine Mystique*. By focusing on one social media platform, the findings cannot be generalized to other social media platforms. Worth noting is we chose Pinterest for its appeal to women. This study will serve as a springboard to future studies that examine reactions to and discussion of *Lean In* and *The Feminine Mystique* on other social media platforms. Also of interest would be a survey or focus group study that examines the uses and gratifications of users on this platform might also enhance the findings. In addition, this study is mainly concerned with the 50th anniversary of *The Feminine*

Mystique; therefore, it looks at a relatively small timeframe of social media posts. Future studies might utilize a longitudinal approach, and determine if this online public opinion changes greatly over time.

Fifty years after *The Feminine Mystique*, Coontz writes, “I don’t think *Lean In* is the new *Feminine Mystique*. But I do see it as following up with the next stage of consciousness-raising for the modern counterparts of Friedan’s suburban housewives” (2013, n.p.). Only time will tell. However, Pinterest indicates Americans have spotted both value and faults in the two books, and they are using social media to impart their thoughts to the world. This trend is sure to continue as social media and user-generated content continue to consistently grow in popularity■

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Sacred violence, sacred bodies: A Girardian analysis of violence among women of color

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Abstract

René Girard (1972), in his seminal work, *Violence and the Sacred*, provides one of the most comprehensive discussions on the nature of violence in contemporary literature. He also offers a solution to the destructive nature of violence, inherent to human nature, through his understanding of Christology; however, Girard does not explicitly discuss this theme in relation to women of color. Thus, a theological perspective situated amongst the varied experiences of women of color can aid in a descriptive move toward creating a more inclusive anthropology of violence, while simultaneously making a proscriptive move to enhance Girard's notion of Christology. This article explains Girard's philosophies of sacrifice and scapegoat mechanisms as the cause of violence, and then explains how marginalized women of color, as victims of domestic violence, fit these concepts. He describes a Christology where Christ breaks the system of violence and scapegoating. The final move of this article is to use theologies, from the lens of women of color, to expand Girard's Christology so that it is more inclusive of all women.

Keywords

Christology, Girard, women of color, violence, sacrifice, scapegoat, religion

Introduction

Domestic Violence is an issue that transcends race, class, and continental boundaries; however, an overwhelming number of victims of domestic violence are women. According to the World Health Organization, approximately 35 percent of women globally have been victims of domestic abuse. The link between race, class, and gender is often overlooked when considering domestic violence, and contrary to popular belief, the notion of universal risk by all women is simply not true. Poor women of color are among the groups that are at the highest risk because of their social position, and for society not

to recognize the effects domestic violence has on poor women of color jeopardizes the validity of any peace or justice movement towards global harmony. This holds true for religious communities such as Christianity. If Christian practices and social teachings are to remain relevant in a contemporary context, they must address the multi-faceted concerns of their community, including the issue of gender violence towards women of color.

René Girard (1972), in his seminal work *Violence and the Sacred*, provides one of the most comprehensive discussions of the nature of violence in contemporary literature. He also offers a solution to the destructive nature of violence, inherent to human na-

ture, through his understanding of Christology. However, he does not explicitly discuss this theme in relation to women of color. Thus, a theological perspective situated amongst the varied experiences of women of color can aid in a descriptive move towards creating a more inclusive anthropology of violence, while simultaneously making a proscriptive move to enhance Girard's notion of Christology. This paper explains Girard's notions of sacrifice and scapegoat mechanisms as the cause of violence, and then explains how marginalized women of color as victims of domestic violence fit these concepts. He describes a Christology where Christ breaks the system of violence and scapegoating. The final move of this paper is to use theologies from the lens of women of color to expand Girard's Christology so that it is more inclusive.

The Meaning of Sacrifice and the Scapegoat

Many poor women of color have been used as sacrifices to allow the continued perpetuation of structural violence to maintain order socially, politically, and judicially. Natalie J. Sokoloff and Ida Dupont (2005), discuss the oppressive and interlocking forms that these women experience in their article, "Domestic Violence at the Intersection of Race, Class and Gender: Challenges and Contributions to Understanding Violence Against Marginalized Women in Diverse Communities." Namely, the categories of race, class, and gender add dimensions to the forms of violence that women experience. This truth is apparent when examining the connection between domestic violence, tripartite experiences, and power. Margaret Anderson and Patricia H. Collins (2001), make some helpful observations about the connection between race, class, and gender,

in *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*, arguing:

"Analyzing race, class, and gender as they shape different groups experiences also involves the issues of power, privilege, and equity. This means more than just knowing the cultures of an array of human groups. It means recognizing and analyzing the hierarchies and systems of domination that permeate society and that systematically exploit and control people."

Anderson and Collin's (2001) statement has implications for views of domestic violence with respect to the experiences of marginalized women of color. Many definitions of domestic violence do not include the concerns of women with different cultural backgrounds. The term domestic violence does not have to be relativized so it only has meaning in a particular framework; however, it should imply that gender violence cannot be categorized by one cultural experience. Mieko Yoshihama (1999), suggests in his article, "Domestic Violence Against Women of Japanese descent in Los Angeles: Two Methods of Estimating Prevalence," that any description of domestic violence should be informed by the multifarious gender experiences globally. In Michele Bograd's (1999) article, "Strengthening Domestic Violence Theories: Intersection of Race, Class, Sexual Orientation, and Gender," she explains that these descriptions are shaped by points of intersection such as: race, class, and gender, which have a distinct impact on how domestic violence is experienced by the individual and community. Power relationships are deeply connected with these points of intersection. It is no secret that patriarchal, social, and political structures have dominated most societies. If social order is to be maintained through patriarchy then violence towards women, both directly and indirectly, is necessary. Violence towards women serves to reinforce male domination as well as fe-

male subordination. It allows patriarchy to reign socially, politically, and economically through coercive forces, and should not be limited to violence through physical force and intimidation (Bograd 1999). Marginalized women of color experience domestic violence through their lack of access to various benefits such as: social service programs, public housing, medical insurance, other resources related to adequate health care, and occupational hazards as a result of working in male dominated industries. These all constitute structural forms of violence by which these women are sacrificed to continue dominant socio-cultural paradigms involving the privileging of paternalistic structures globally.

Sophia Chirongoma (2006), explains, in *Women, Religion and Health: Essays in Honour of Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Oduyoye*, the way domestic violence has affected poor Zimbabwean women through the lack of access to important medical resources. She describes the plight of women from the Masvingo province. In this province, although women are responsible for most of the processing and production of food crops, men control virtually every aspect of this production. As Sarojini Nadar and Isabel A. Phiri (2005) explain, in *African Women, Religion, and Health*, the men of these communities control the land, cattle, reproduction, as well as, the means of production. This has resulted in the lack of financial security, and inability to pay for health care for the affected women. They are forced to work grueling fifteen hour days, while their male counterparts, by comparison, work eight to nine hour days. The work they perform forces them to live in rural areas, away from access to cherished resources such as: transportation, hospitals, stores, and other valued businesses. The urban habitations that the women live in are dominated by men that have

better living conditions, transport systems, and sanitation. All of the health and medical facilities are concentrated in areas that these women have limited or no access to. There are approximately 500,000 women that live on the rural lands, and none have adequate access to healthcare (Nadar & Phiri, 2006). Consequently, these poor women of color that bare many of the burdens of their communities, are separated from the resources that they need the most. Institutional structures have been put in place that allow women to be used as sacrifices to empower the patriarchal socio-cultural structures.

Chirongoma (2006) goes on to explain the specific ways in which women's health has been one of the most destructive forms of domestic violence that the Masvingo community has ever faced. Initially, in the 1980's, great progress was made to address some of the concerns of women's health. The government invested heavily in education and health, and healthcare expanded to fit the rural and urban poor areas. Health infrastructure was constructed which allowed more access to healthcare facilities. However, all of this changed after HIV/AIDS and the World Bank/ IMF imposed structural adjustments. They made major cuts in the budget in both healthcare and welfare services. This combined with decreased household income allowed the Zimbabwean community to revert back to its structure prior to the reforms of the 1980s. At the peak of the reform, the Ministry of Health was providing over 70 percent of health expenditures, however, by 1994, they were only able to finance around 29 percent of the related expenditures.

These changes have caused a dramatic effect on the lives of women living in the communities of the Masvingo province. The healthcare systems transformed so that those who do not have sufficient resources simply

do not survive. These women are then placed at a distinct disadvantage because of their lack of access to valuable resources. In one gruesome example, Chirongoma (2006), explains how mothers have been held hostage by maternity wards if they are not able to pay to be released from hospitals. Through her analysis, she describes the consequences of having a lack of budgetary resources by the Zimbabwean government. As the budget shrinks, women and girls starve themselves so that they can afford to feed the males in their families; these women sacrifice their health and wellbeing for the nourishment of the males. Even for those women that are lucky enough to marry into a family with health insurance, the males get first priority. It is clear from this that the value of these women's lives is not a concern for most of their households. As a result, many women are denied medical resources that they desperately need; unless, they somehow manage to make enough income to pay for medical expenses themselves (Phiri 2003). According to Chirongoma (2006), women sacrifice themselves in the fields taking on the most dangerous jobs, all the while enduring illness without seeking medication until they are deathly ill. They are again forced to sacrifice their own health to maintain the dominant metanarrative that reinforces supremacy of male bodies in patriarchal societal structures.

Similar to notions of sacrifice, Girardian scapegoats can also be used to describe the plight of marginalized women of color. Scapegoat mechanisms describe the process of violence from the viewpoint of human interactions and its resulting effects on communities. Many African scholars provide ways to analyze the various methods in which marginalized women of color have been used as scapegoats. Bernard Debre (1997), in *Lillusion Humanitaire*, notes that in many African countries the birth of

a female child is considered bad luck. This theme still exists because of the enduring notions of sexism that pervade many African cultures. African women long since have been the most marginalized group many African societies. They fit the mold for the Girardian scapegoat because of their varying vulnerabilities. These women are singled out because of distinctive features that separate them from their male counterparts. These features then serve as the basis for their continued ostracism.

When examining the marginalization of African women, it is impossible not to be drawn to the impact of the HIV/AIDS virus on the continent, and more specifically on the female population. These women have been used as scapegoats for this increasingly destructive epidemic. In fact, scholars have argued that perhaps the most damaging effect of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is the way that it has stigmatized poor women of color. In *Stigma: Notes on the Management of a Spoiled Identity*, Erving Goffman (1963) defines stigma as: "an attribute that significantly discredits a person and that, in the eyes of society reduces the dignity of the person who possess it." Furthermore, he explains that this person lives a life with an "undesirable difference" that is often understood as deviance (Goffman 1963). For African women, this notion of stigma can be nuanced in several ways. First, stigma, in the context of HIV/AIDS, is not a fixed idea, rather it is deeply embedded in the system of power differentials in many African communities. Stigma is passed down from those in power to those without power. Peter Aggleton and Richard Parker (2002), in *HIV and AIDS-related Stigma and Discrimination: A Conceptual Framework and Implications for Actions*, explain that HIV/AIDS related stigmas are strongly associated with class, gender, race, and sexual orientation divisions.

This is especially true for the African women of color, in which gender and social inequality are pivotal in the ways that they are stigmatized. Stigmas do not arise in a social vacuum; they are profoundly shaped by the context from which they are formed.

When marginalized, African, women of color become stigmatized by the HIV/AIDS virus they are believed to have received the virus because of their moral faults. Then, they are characterized by these faults, and shunned by other members of their community. Their moral depravity, much like the Girardian scapegoat, is viewed as the primary cause of chaos and disorder, and rather than being considered the victim of an illness, they are viewed as the necessary sacrifice to restore order. Most African women are infected with the HIV/AIDS virus by their male partners, who have control over the female body because of the patriarchal structures that permeate through their communities (Aggleton & Parker, 2002). Although the African men are most often the cause of the spread of HIV/AIDS to the women, they do not suffer the same stigmatization. Rather than attributing the spread of HIV/AIDS to males, the women are blamed for their presumed sexual promiscuity. Girard's notion of scapegoat fits well here because the scapegoat is often viewed as sexually deviant. The presumed sexual promiscuity of the poor African women of color serves to justify their use as scapegoats for HIV/AIDS. In much the same way that scapegoats are ostracized from society because of their differences, so too are the women infected with the HIV/AIDS virus (Aggleton & Parker, 2002). The women that are infected are forced out of many occupations, and often into reclusion. The women usually cannot afford the medical treatment that they so desperately desire, furthermore; those who have the power to make medical treatment

economically feasible, simply choose not to, because the women are believed to be the main cause for their own suffering. Finally, the death of both the scapegoat and the poor African women of color allow the restoration of moral order back into society. Peace is obtained once the scapegoat has been sacrificed on behalf of the community. Similarly, the sacrifice of the poor women of color, in certain African countries, restores order to those societies. When these women are not allowed to have access to necessary medical provisions that could save their lives in favor of continuing patriarchal systemic order; in effect, they are being sacrificed like scapegoats. Although Africa has been used as the example to analyze Girardian violence in relation to lives of poor women of color, this phenomenon is not limited to the African continent. Women across the globe are harmed by violent socio-political structures that favor patriarchy. Indeed, this system of sacrificial violence leaves much room for despair, however; Girard does provide a solution to this conundrum. He believes religious communities, particularly Christianity, can provide an adequate response to this system of sacrificial violence. For Girard, the example of Christ as the ultimate scapegoat provides the necessary response to the inescapable system of sacrifice.

Girardian Christology

René Girard has well-diagnosed the problem among humans as violence. According to his mimetic theory, Christ serves as the cure to the system of perpetual violence. Christ is able to defeat the system of scapegoat mechanisms because he was able to reveal profound insights into humanity that could not be found anywhere else. Per Bjornar Grande (2010), in *Mimesis and Desire*, states that through Christ's willingness to be

the sacrifice, he was able to reveal the innocence of the scapegoat. Every other written narrative perpetuates the system of violence by allowing from either the silence or alluding to the complicity of the scapegoat in the never-ending system of sacrificial violence. However, the narrative of Christ explains the innocence of the one who suffers, and furthermore, tells of the ultimate triumph of the scapegoat. Also, a part of this narrative is that Christ is able to recognize the most vulnerable member of society, and overturn the system of violence through both his actions, during his life and his culminating death on the cross. Girard's description of the ways that Jesus defeats scapegoat mechanisms is deeply connected to his notion of Christology.

Girard's career as a literary critic is evident through the way he articulates Christology. For him, Christology is fundamentally a hermeneutical task meant to connect Jesus, from literary history, with present day conceptualizations of Christ. Hence, any perception of Jesus must be reconciled with patterns of history discovered through literary texts. This revelation is presented through the gospel narratives. It is important for Girard's theological framework to emphasize the humanness of Christ. Accordingly, it is only through Christ's humanness that Christ can develop a close and intimate bond with humanity to serve as the ultimate sacrifice. It is through this capacity that Christ is capable of defeating scapegoat mechanisms (Grande 2010). Christ's deep connection with humanity allows him to clearly understand human history. The first instance of the violent nature of scapegoating is with the story of Cain and Abel -specifically, Girard describes this as the first instance of mimetic rivalry

which also helps to perpetuate the violence inherent in scapegoat mechanisms. This particular incident sets up the very foundation for the rest of Biblical history. Christ shows his recognition of the violent scapegoat mechanism not only through his words, but also through his actions.

Through becoming a victim of violence and exposing himself to the murderous tendencies of his own culture, Jesus is able to provide a universal revelation for all of humankind. This revelation dispels the entire system of sacrificial violence, which is predicated on not recognizing the victim as innocent. Although Christ is condemned to be crucified, it was by no means a unanimous decision. Jesus had opened the eyes of some to the innocence of the victim¹. When Christ is sent to be crucified, it appears that Christ has succumbed to the system of retributive violence and scapegoat mechanisms. However, through Christ's resurrection, the attempt to use Christ as the scapegoat has failed. Therefore, Christ in the resurrection narrative emerges victorious over scapegoat's mechanisms.

One of the essential aspects of Girard's Christological framework is that it condemns all traditional notions of sacrificial Christology. Christ does not fit within any of the previous interpretations of a sacrifice. Traditional interpretations believe that Christ's sacrifice served as both a regulating mechanism, and to convince people that it was willed by God. Girard does not dispute the claim that the murder of Jesus was an example of sacrificial violence; rather, he argues that the presentation of Jesus as the sacrifice in the Gospels is depicted in a non-sacrificial way. Girard concludes that Christ's death on the cross was not the will of God. With this

¹See Matthews 27: 11-23 In this story Jesus is sent before Pontius Pilate leaves it up to the Jewish crowd to decide who will be saved and the crowd chooses Barabbas. However, Pontius Pilate does something that had never been done in history up to that point. He recognized the innocence of Jesus as the scapegoat. As a result he reluctantly delivers Jesus over to be dealt with by the Jews and confesses his belief in Jesus' righteousness and innocence.

theological claim, he attempted to deconstruct an entire history of theology founded on the principle of sacrifice. He contends that sacrificial systems are in opposition to God's kingdom. He rereads the resurrection narrative not as a story about God sacrificing God's only son, but about God's only son that is sacrificed because he attempted to represent the Kingdom of God. In doing so, he revealed the violent nature of sacrificial systems that are present within all societies. Jesus replaced a system predicated on violence with a system of non-violence and everlasting love.

Although Christ's humanity is a point of great emphasis, Girard still believes in Christ's divinity as well. Christ is divine, in that he represents the non-violent and loving nature of God. It is through Christ's divinity that he is set apart from, and pivotal in, the disruption of the seemingly endless cycle of sacrificial violence. Christ also serves as the mediation from violent imitations of humanity, towards a non-violent God. Per Bjornar Grande states of Christ's divinity: "Christ represented God; He gives people the possibility of peering into a realm of non-violent and life-giving existence and, finally, a way to build a human culture where violence is not the dominant force" (Grande 2010). For Grande, Christ is able to give humanity a glimpse of a society free from violence, and to provide a new paradigm on which to base all human interactions. Although Girard's Christology is insightful towards remedying the problem of violence, it has decidedly androcentric undertones. Girard does not give special attention to the various groups that are most affected by the system of sacrificial violence. He does provide helpful ways to reimagine the system of sacrifice that can be beneficial, but I contend that his perspective can be enhanced through including key attributes from the theological perspective of

women of color.

Christologies from Women of Color

Given the current issues related to domestic violence that many marginalized women of color face, it is difficult for these women to accept any notion of Jesus with patriarchal overtones. Consequentially, it becomes theologically imperative for these women to re-imagine a Christological figure that they can identify with. With this assumption in mind, there are two distinct aspects that I believe women of color can add to Girardian Christology so that it better fits the contexts of the many women across the globe that are victims of domestic violence. First, they critically examine Girard's low Christology; and secondly, they create a more inclusive vision of the Kingdom of God.

Girard uses a low Christology to explain Christ's deep connection to humanity. For him, it is only through the deep insights that he gains from the connection to humanity that Christ is able to defeat the system of violence that has been so prevalent throughout human history. However, through emphasizing Christ's humanness, he has intentionally or unintentionally emphasized Jesus' maleness. All too often, women have been subjugated by the male Christ figure. Thus, for many women of color a Christology that emphasizes Christ's humanity is irredeemable. For them, Christ must transcend hegemonic patriarchal narratives that are created from this theology. Kwok Pui-Lan (2005), offers an alternative to a Christology that emphasizes Christ's humanity in *Post-colonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*, she suggests several different views of Christ, including the use of a hybrid conceptualization of Jesus/Christ.

According to Rita N. Brock's (1997) article, "Interstitial Integrity: Reflections

towards an Asian American Woman's Theology," hybridity can be described as a Christological framework that destabilizes the points of reference as binary opposites. It serves to critique rigid boundaries while simultaneously challenging the construction of the center and periphery. This means that hybridity has the ability to challenge the stringent boundaries between Christ's humanity and his divinity. Pui-Lan (2005) describes the space between Jesus, the human figure, and Christ, the divine figure, as fluid. She insists that it resists easy categorization and closure. She believes there is an invitation in the space of liminality between human and divine for Christian communities to explore the possibilities of meaning-making for each unique context. She calls this space the "contact zone" or "borderland" (2005). The vibrancy of the Christian community is jeopardized whenever the distinction between Christ and Jesus are static. Furthermore, Christology conceived in this way is not only more vital for communities of women of color; it is also more vital to the biblical portrait of Christ. In *The Jesus of Faith: A Christological Contribution to an Ecumenical Third World*, the biblical scholar, George Soares-Prabhu (1994), notes:

"New Testament Christology is inclusive and pluriform. Every community evolves its own understanding of Jesus responding to its own cry for life. And because life changes christologies change too. The New Testament preserves all these christologies, without opting exclusively for any one among them, because it does not wish to offer us (as dogmatic theology pretends to do) a finished product to be accepted unquestionably by all. Rather its pluralism indicates a Christological open-endedness, inviting us to discover our own particular Christology."

Allowing a more fluid understanding of the relationship between Christ and Jesus is more vital for women of color across the globe. These women who live in diverse

cultural contexts are able to have a vision of Christ that fits the realities of their lived experiences. They are not limited by constraints of high or low Christology. They have the ability to conceive of Christ's divinity and humanity in a way that is meaningful for them.

Girard also argues that Christ is the representation of the Kingdom of God. The sacrificial system is contrary to God's vision of a kingdom where peace and equality are the dominant paradigms. The Kingdom of God is the replacement of sacrifices and prohibitions by love. While his emphasis on Christ's ability to be the mediator of peace on Earth, his linguistic use of the term kingdom is fundamentally androcentric. According to Namsoon Kang (2013), in *Cosmopolitan Theology: Reconstituting Planetary Hospitality, Neighbor-Love, and Solidarity in an Uneven World*, the term kingdom is both inherently patriarchal as well as hierarchical. It presupposes a hierarchy between a king and his subordinates. This naturalizes the male-King as the center of power (Kang 2013). A recent challenge to this notion has come from various scholars, including women of color. They opt to use the word kindom of God as opposed to the traditional phrase of kingdom of God.

Robert Yaw Owusu (2006), provides a helpful description on how to conceive of the term kindom in the article, "Kwame Nkrumah's Liberation Thought: A Paradigm for Religious Advocacy in Contemporary Ghanaian Society." It is used to describe the relationship between humans, their relationship to one another, and their relationship to the rest of creation. He specifies that the rest of creation includes all things created on Earth. It describes the cosmos, or realm of human beings, as brothers and sisters in relation to their spiritual and physical environment (2006). Aware of the similar connota-

tions that kin have, in relation to maleness, Owusu (2006), provides a unique description of how to articulate the term, kin. It is alternately interpreted as “fellow-feeling.” Kindom living is anti-classism, anti-domination, anti-exploitation, and it is egalitarian. The Kindom of God is not tribal, although it does recognize racial and cultural differences. The Kindom of God affirms homogeneity as interdependent creatures, while also supporting diversity and multiplicity. It is open to everyone and addresses the many social concerns faced by contemporary society such as; racism, classism, colonialism, heteronormativity, and most explicitly, the domination of patriarchy.

Women of color have used the concept of Jesus, who brings the Kindom of God to Earth, as an imperative so that all of creation is included in the divine earthly deliverance. Namsoon Kang (2013), analyzes this imperative. She writes that through tracing the history of specific movements such as the women’s movement, civil rights movement, anti-apartheid movements, or any other form of liberative movement; they have all worked towards the goal of creating a “world-to-come.” In aiming toward this imagined world, it is essential to stimulate and motivate people into solidarity with one another. For women of color to bring about the “world-to-come” is to bring about the Kindom of God. Kang explains the Christological figure as the “Cosmic Christ.” The “Cosmic Christ” is free from all monolithic interpretations, it creates an ethic of mutual responsibility for all of humanity. Furthermore, it encourages us to begin a great work to live in and to build the Kindom of God. (Kang 2013 p.182-5). When this happens, theology, and more specifically Christology, is no longer limited to the realm of academia. It enters the wider realm of socio-political contexts of existing communities. It

is able to transform the daily lives of all of God’s people. Thus, the struggle for justice and equality find new meaning from this view. It is able to address major socio-political issues such as: power differentials, class/race/gender inequality, and heteronormativity. Put differently, this view of Christology embraces Jesus’ ability to both restore hope to the hopeless, and to be the remedy for broken systems.

Conclusion

In *Violence and the Sacred*, René Girard (1972), details a provocative description of violence as a sacred ritualized event that has transcended all cultural and historical contexts. Although his writing does not explicitly address the difficulties that women face through domestic violence, it can be nuanced to be applicable to their lives. Women of color can find particular meaning to apply to their own lives. His work forcefully attacks the typical myths of domestic violence. Violence is not limited to physical violence or to an individual; it permeates all institutional, social, and political structures. Furthermore, violence is intimately connected with issues of power and economic relationships. More compelling than Girard’s analysis of violence, however, is his solution to a violent world. It is this solution that Christian religious communities can find most helpful when deriving a theological response to violent structures. Girard’s Christological framework provides a helpful conception of the role of Jesus in dismantling violent structures. Jesus represents the ultimate cure from an ailing world. Through destabilizing boundaries, Jesus mends a broken system predicated on violence. This view of Jesus can be expanded to the pluralistic contexts of women of color. For them, Jesus provides the necessary imperative to dismantle hierarchical, patri-

archal, and heteronormative violent systems for poor women of color. The end result of this effort is to bring to Earth the Kindom of God. This endeavor also results in a way for women to reclaim their bodies from the proverbial sacrifice to scapegoat mechanism. Women of color, by reclaiming their bodies as a part of the Kindom of God, desacralize them as well. Just as Girard imagines Jesus as the figure that can restore broken systems, marginalized women of color can imagine Jesus as the One restores broken bodies. ■

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Assertiveness and 'Somebodyness': Theatre strategies and resources to enhance achievement of African American girls, K-12

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Abstract

Theatre across the curriculum, is one of the innovations with a potential for positive achievement results for African American girls and our entire diverse population of students. In our drama and theatre work, a pluralistic perspective is one of the bridges to self-affirming visibility for all students. Since the pioneering efforts of Winifred Ward in the 1930s and 1940s, scholars have utilized drama in the classroom with young people at all grade levels to enhance knowledge and skills while promoting confidence and interpersonal skills (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995; McCaslin, 2006; Ward, 1952; Way, 1967). Sharon Grady in *Drama and Diversity* (2000) poses apropos questions: "What informs the choices we make as we construct drama work? How do our choices open up areas of learning or close down areas of inquiry? What is the impact of our choices on our students?" (p. xiii) After reviewing the achievement dilemma of African American girls K-12, this discussion 1) highlights the literature documenting the effectiveness of using theatre across the curriculum to engage and push forward all students, 2) describes three theatre strategies for enhancing academic skills and self-esteem (creative drama, role-playing, readers theatre), and finally, 3) presents a representative sampling of resources for developing a cultural knowledge base related to African American females and African American culture. Theatre can provide the spark that will enrich content across the curriculum for all students. It is especially needed for children of color who are at risk for lower test scores and high dropout rates, and can make a positive difference for African American females in K-12 grades.

Keywords

creative drama, role-playing, readers theatre

African American Girls Educational Dilemma

Innovative educators and community leaders have been exploring and implementing strategies to close the achievement gap. African American girls, despite their improved graduation rates and entrance into post-secondary education, re-

main challenged in grades K-12, testing at grade level or below and challenged by the intersection of race, class, and gender (Evans-Winter, 2011; Larke, 2013; Morris, 2013, Ross, T., 2012; The National Institute of Mental Health, 2009; The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2014; Collins, P.H., 2000, Collins, C.F., 2015), Wiltz, 2015).

Achievement studies document the need to push African American girls forward at all levels, beyond the basic and below average levels, to proficient and advanced. Despite the success of African American girls in outnumbering African American males as high school and college graduates and their entrance into a variety of professional fields and thus increased earning power as a group, too many continue to be left behind for a variety of reasons including early school drop outs, teen pregnancy, and criminal activity. Many of their challenges stem from a cycle of poverty and low self-esteem, though the issues are varied and complex and include unfortunately low expectations and cultural insensitivity (Collins, P.H., 2000; Hale, 2001; Hrabowski, Maton, Greene, & Greif, 2002).

Theatre across the curriculum is one of the innovations with a potential for positive achievement results for African American girls when faculty members learn the strategies and apply a cultural knowledge base to the work. Since the pioneering efforts of Winifred Ward in the 1930s and 1940s, scholars have utilized creative drama with young people at all grade levels to enhance knowledge and skills while promoting confidence and interpersonal skills (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995; McCaslin, 2006; Ward, 1952; Way, 1967). Theatre activities have the potential to elevate the self-esteem and academic skills of all children and, with a focus on issues of significance in the lives

of African American girls, can be especially effective with this cohort. This chapter presents a literature review of the theatre theory, practice, and resources that informs and promotes assertiveness and sense of self/somebodyness for greater achievement by 1) surveying the literature documenting the effectiveness of using theatre across the curriculum to engage and push forward all students, 2) describing the theatre practice/educational strategies for enhancing academic skills, and 3) presenting a sampling of resources to enhance the cultural knowledge base to promote higher academic achievement for African American females and a diverse population of students.

Literature Review: Rationale for Theatre in the Curriculum

African American girls need to develop in ways all children need to develop. They need experiences that will teach them greater understanding and appreciation of themselves and their culture, greater understanding of others and other cultures, and greater understanding, and appreciation of the notion of history, science, and mathematics. African American girls, like all students, need experiences that will engage them, enhance critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, and creative thinking (Gay, 2010; Banks, 2004; Howe, 2013). As D. H. Pink (2005) notes in *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*, the future of our nation depends on the ability of our citizens to create and to be creative. In the coming decades, our most important national resources will be human resources. If our nation is to continue to meet the challenges of the future, today's schools need to develop creative leaders.

Theatre activities are an important

means of engaging students and stimulating creativity. Improvisational and interactive drama activities give students the opportunity to “try on” life, to see and feel experiences from different perspectives, to experiment with different choices and solutions. Young people have the potential to develop tolerance and empathy through theatre. The activities are an avenue for exploration of emotions, thoughts, and dreams in a structured environment that encourages an examination of feelings, thoughts, and choices in a safe environment (Ward, 1957; Spolin, 1986; Courtney, 1980; Heathcote, 1994; McCaslin, 2006).

Effective communication is a basic skill that can be enhanced through theatre games. Students work in the theatre activities environment to communicate who they are, what is happening, and what they are feeling verbally and nonverbally. The activities allow a certain freedom of expression, but they are also structured enough to encourage discipline and self-control. Communication in theatre activities builds confidence, and because the play frequently is cooperative and collaborative it strengthens team-building skills (Heathcote, 1994; Heinig, 1992).

Theatre is a liberal art; its content may involve dramatization of historical and current events, literature, and even science and math concepts. S. Levey (2005) notes that the use of drama can greatly enhance and reinforce learning in environmental education.

... Drama can . . . consolidate and extend students' direct experience of the natural world and foster the empathy that is essential if students are to appreciate and ultimately protect it. (pp. 15-19).

Concepts played in theatre activities have the potential to enhance overall speaking and writing skills. Active engagement with the material enhances these skills. Improvisation and interactive theatre promote

active learning; thus, they have the potential to yield greater depths of knowing and understanding (Buchanan, n.d.).

Contemporary research on the learning styles of African American children supports the need for creative curricular activity to stimulate love of learning. W. Boykin (1978) suggests that the average African American home environment provides an abundance of stimulation, intensity, and variation. The stimulating home environment, Boykin maintains, produces a high degree of psychological and behavioral “verve” in African American children. He notes the need for an educational environment with a high level of behavioral vibrancy, stimulus change, and intensity. African American children participate in a culture that is highly dynamic; thus, a setting that uses multimedia and multimodal teaching strategies is ideal for enhancing their learning. “They favor instruction that is energetic, vigorous, and captivating (Boykin, pp. 343-354).”

Janice Hale (1986) identifies scholars whose research documents West African influences that shape African American culture (e.g., Asante, 1988; Perry and Delpit, 1988; Hilliard 1995, 1997). These studies reveal the interrelated dimensions of African culture with African American culture and inform our understanding of the uniqueness of this cultural foundation. Hale sums up the significant dimensions for African American cultural affirmation, thus learning, as follows:

The Afro-cultural themes are movement (which relates to the premium placed on the interwoven mosaic of expressiveness, dance, percussiveness, and rhythm), verve (a receptiveness toward relatively high levels of physical or sensate stimulation), and communalism (a sensitivity to the fundamental interdependence of people). (p. 119)

J.S. Catterall and a study from the National Endowment for the Arts (2012) en-

titled “Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies” is among the research documenting the effectiveness of theatre in the curriculum. Positive results include:

1. Socially and economically disadvantaged children and teenagers who have high levels of arts engagement or arts learning show more positive outcomes in a variety of areas than their low-arts engaged peers; and
2. At-risk teenagers or young adults with a history of intensive arts experience show achievement levels closer to, and in some cases exceeding the levels shown by the general population studied.

In addition, L. McFadden’s 2012 study, “Integrating Theatre Arts Techniques into your Curriculum” shares the positive impact of including theatre in the language arts and social studies curricula in grades four and five on the cognitive development of special population students. McFadden’s documents that students of the lowest socioeconomic status with theatre arts activities not only showed improved attitudes about learning but also out performed those who did not, and showed fewer declines in their grades.

M. Pappas Varelas et al. (2010) in “Drama activities as ideational resources for primary-grade children in urban science classrooms” explored drama activities in two integrated science-literacy units developed and implemented in six urban primary school classrooms (grades one through three). In this work, the dramatic enactment of scientific phenomena and concepts successfully mediated children’s learning of scientific meanings along material, social, and representative dimensions. Also, E. Walker and G. Weltsek (2011) detailed their study of drama integration and achievement in “When Achievement Data Meet Drama and Arts Integration.” The Walker and Weltsek

(2011) study explored to what extent the learning gains, from a theatre-integrated classroom curriculum, sustains when students return to usual language arts instruction. Their data analysis confirmed positive student learning outcomes in both language arts and mathematics performance from arts instruction. S. Levey (2005) is among the researchers documenting the benefits by noting drama techniques that enhanced student learning in environmental education. The strategies included were guided imagery, in-role drama, literature based writing and performing of play, creation of skits and raps, and research of a person or animal than playing the role.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)

In Texas, Fine Arts instruction is an essential part of the curriculum with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) defining Fine Arts guidelines that are monitored and updated by the Texas Educational Agency of the Texas Department of Education. The TEKS describe what every student should know and be able to do at each grade level. The Fine Arts TEKS provide instructional objectives for art, dance, music, and theatre. School districts must ensure that sufficient time is provided for teachers to teach and for students to learn Fine Arts. A more detailed look at the benefits described in the TEKS indicates the variety of skills that Fine Arts instruction aims to engender in the students and, more significantly, how this defined plan to develop knowledge and skills aligns with the goals and objectives promoted by creative drama scholars. Expected outcomes for Texas Public Schools, 19 TAC Chapter 117, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for the Fine Arts, were updated in 2012, approved in 2013,

and implemented in 2015-2016 school year. Four clearly delineated basic strands for theatre are identified in Texas for elementary, middle, and high school students. The goals are consistent across grade levels, but vary in implementation for each grade level. The statement below for the middle school level is representative of the goals at all grade school levels.

117.211. Theater, Middle School 1:

(a) General Requirements. When Theatre Middle School 1 is part of a departmentalized middle school; students may select the following theater course: Theater Middle School

(b) Introduction

(1) The fine arts incorporate the study of dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts to offer unique experiences and empower students to explore realities, relationships, and ideas. These disciplines engage and motivate all students through active learning, critical thinking, and innovative problem solving. The fine arts develop cognitive functioning and increase student academic achievement, high-order thinking, communication, and collaboration skills, making the fine arts applicable to college readiness, career opportunities, workplace environments, social skills, and everyday life. Students develop aesthetic and cultural awareness through exploration leading to creative expression. Creativity, encouraged through the study of fine arts, is essential to nurture and develop the whole child.

(2) Four basic strands—foundation: inquiry an understanding, creative expression, historical and cultural relevance; and critical evaluation and response—provide broad, unifying structures for organizing knowledge and skills students are expected to acquire. Through the foundations: inquiry and understanding strand, students develop a perception of self, human relationships

and the world using elements of drama and conventions of theater. Through the creative expression strand, students communicate in a dramatic form, engage in artistic thinking, build positive self-concepts, relate interpersonally and integrate knowledge with other content areas in a relevant manner. 3. Historical and cultural relevance strand: Through the historical and cultural relevance strand, students increase their understanding of heritage and traditions in theater and the diversity of world cultures as expressed in theater. Through the critical evaluation and response strand: Through the critical evaluation and response strand, students engage in inquiry and dialogue, accept constructive criticism, revise personal views to promote creative and critical thinking, and develop the ability to appreciate and evaluate live theatre. (2013)

Thus, in Texas, educators have all the authority they need to implement theatre strategies that will engage a diverse population of students to enhance overall learning.

From Theory to Practice: Representative Theatre Strategies

The most prominent and effective theatre tools available to educators to help empower young African American females include 1) creative drama, 2) role-playing, and 3) readers theatre.

Creative Drama

Creative Drama is an approach to interactive process dramatic activity pioneered by Winifred Ward (1930), a former professor of Northwestern University (*Creative Dramatics*). Ward created a holistic approach to teaching and learning for young children with theatre activities at the center. Ward's strategies focus on movement, pantomime, and improvisation with the addition of di-

ologue as young people develop and present characters in their own language. Story dramatization is a hallmark of the work. It is an activity in which students dramatize literature, popular culture, poems, and fairy tales. The aim is teaching life lessons in a nonthreatening environment, not for formal presentation but the development of the learner. With leader guidance, students reflect on human experiences through imaginative enactments.

Dramatic play, another strategy, refers to the earliest form of unscripted free play in which participants explore the world around them and in their books, in addition to exploring their own lives. Hartley, Lawrence and Goldenson (1964) in *Understanding Children's Play* observes that "play allows the participants opportunities to imitate adults, play out real-life roles, dramatize relationships and experiences, express their own pressing needs, release unacceptable impulses, reverse the roles usually taken to try to solve problems, and experiment with solutions" (p. 19). The terms "creative drama" and "playmaking" both refer to drama created informally by the participants. However, playmaking goes beyond the informal play to suggest improvised development of stories with a beginning, middle, and end with participants playing well known or invented stories in their own words; frequently called story dramatization or literature based dramatic play. Creative drama activities also take the form of pantomime (acting without words); this activity progresses from simple movement exercises. It is play that is not intended for an audience, but for the development of the participants.

McCaslin (1990) states, "Creative Drama, whether in the classroom or in the camp or community program, may be regarded as learning, a means of self-expression, a therapeutic technique, a social activity, or an art

form" (p. 19). The imaginative play may be stimulated by visuals, music, literature, and a variety of curricula content areas.

A few techniques include:

- Side coaching: teacher offers suggestions from the sidelines to keep the improvisation going,
- Teaching-in-role: teacher takes an active part in the activity to help participants enhance the experience and deepen understanding of the established situation or scenario,
- Parallel work: participants work at the same time, working with the same activity in different groups (individual, pairs, two or more in a group).

Techniques for African American girls can be part of a variety of activities for a diverse population. The educator ensures that the African American females, as well as other groups, see themselves in the culture specific examples. Thus, the educator offers stimuli for play from a variety of experiences, but especially inclusive of the cultural history and context of those served. Let students help identify music for movement exercises. Encourage them to play characters from their neighborhood and families. Introduce them to literature with characters from their world and historical narratives with heroes from their culture. Encourage participants to talk about experiences, play them, then discuss their play, and even give them opportunities when they are upper elementary or older to write about what they have played—ideas and feelings in poems or narratives.

With an African American population of elementary level students or a diverse group of learners, chanting statements of pride (e.g., I am Somebody; I am Proud; I am Strong) is an effective culturally specific warm-up activity. The students are encouraged to move as they chant. Play culturally

specific music with a “move, freeze, and then express.” They move freely to the music, then freeze on cue. Then one by one based on who is in the down center position, they express a thought that makes them happy or proud. The statement is chosen to get them thinking proudly about their identities. A question often works as a good prompt (e.g., “Who am I? I am . . .”) They fill in the blank with a positive word or expression about themselves. In homogenous African American groups the statement could begin with “What is Black? Black is. . .” They fill in the blank. With a younger group the activities move forward to miming of certain objects and things (usually animals). Then, having fun playing working—as teachers, cross road guards, weather reporters, nurses, doctors—this is based on an experience list the instructor helps them to generate and helps them see themselves in positive community role models. From mime, the activities move to story dramatization. Picture books with African and African American characters to stimulate discussion, and then facilitated playing of the story in the student’s own words. E. J. Keat’s *Goggles* (1970) is a favorite of K-3rd graders because of its Black images and uplifting story. African folktales are rich sources for story dramatization and teaching life’s lessons. Walker’s folktale (1968), “The Dancing Palm Tree,” inspires movement, mime, and storytelling, especially with the addition of African music. The story teaches a valuable life lesson about cooperation and collaboration.

Role-Playing

Role-playing is a term often used in creative drama as participants “try on” characters. It is effective as therapy, though special training and preparation are necessary, especially when related to intense sensitive issues.

As participants try on characters from their lives they may naturally move into sensitive areas in role-playing that need discussion and problem solving development strategies. Most scholars recommend avoiding this kind of playing without the help of psychologist or sociologist or your own careful preparation. Done well, this kind of play can promote social and emotional learning (Blatner & Weiner, 2007). Improvised role-playing has the potential to promote developing skills, not only problem solving but also communication and self-awareness (Blatner, 1995). According to Blatner & Weiner, role-playing can be especially effective when participants step back from the situation and reflect on the play (105). This reflection, with feedback from others, helps the participant consider other ways of effectively responding and set up opportunities to try out these new responses—the goal may be to respond in the most uplifting fashion. Spontaneity is a key factor in promoting creativity, in addition to a safe environment. Role-playing is an effective strategy with high school and college level participants as it is another support for teaching social and emotional skills to promote interpersonal competence and personal maturation that is needed to deal with increased media and peer pressures for the use of alcohol, drugs, sex, problems with bullying, prejudice, as well as coping with other problems of adolescence. Businesses use role-playing as a strategy for enhancing the interpersonal skills of their employees (Shaw, Corsini, Blake, & Mouton, 1980).

Role-playing scenarios may include:

1. A female figure from literature or history who must make a choice, students try out different options
2. A young woman not invited to a birthday gathering
3. An underage female encouraged to drink, take drugs, or smoke

4. A young woman who must face bullying about her size, color, or hair
5. A young woman faces the issue of how to continue her education after giving birth as a teen
6. A mixed race female student grapples with race identification for the census

Role-playing activities have the potential to support a variety of curricular goals. When students are given the opportunities to discuss and play issues through role-playing the activities have the potential to promote critical thinking that is empowering—for African American girls and a diverse group of students.

Role-playing activities for African American girls should emphasize positive role models, giving them opportunities to become aware of positive mentors. They should experience roles from the environment close to home with the option to make choices about values and actions. Especially for girls, have them “try on” a variety of roles African American women and all women play in our society and around the world remembering they will be affirmed by homemaking roles as well as astronaut roles; the key is to promote productive activities in which women are engaged. Playing figures from history and literature, as well as their own environment, also has the potential to build understanding and empathy. See section on knowledge base for ideas for role models. The pioneering creative work of J. L. Moreno (1994) in role theory, improvisational theatre, social psychology, and psychodrama informs this area of the work (Blatner, p. 175).

Readers Theatre

Finally, Readers Theatre is a drama technique used effectively to teach across the curriculum, and especially in literature in grades 6-12. In Readers Theatre, just as the

title indicates, the play or scene is read. The participants use vocal expressions, facial expressions, and sometimes small gestures to project meaning. Readers Theatre is also known as Chamber Theatre or Interpretive Theatre. Readers Theatre has no apostrophe in the name because it is not a theatre owned by readers, rather it is an interpretive art form by readers. Participants are traditionally organized in a straight line or semi-circle with script in hand—no costumes, sets, or intricate blocking. Most curriculum content areas may be adapted to a Readers Theatre format. R. Flynn (2011), *Dramatizing the Content with Curriculum-Based Readers Theatre, Grade 6-12*, demonstrates techniques for educators to develop content based scripts and shares a diverse collection of disciplines that have had success with the strategy (p. 8). Also, Jones et al. (n.d.) in “Acting out: Reader’s theatre across the curriculum” documents the success of using Readers Theatre to teach a variety of content areas (p. 175). Readers Theatre has the potential to increase student’s reading fluency, comprehension, and retention of information in any content area (Flynn, 2011; Coger and White, 1993).

Readers Theatre selections for African American girls in a diverse student population should come from a diverse selection of literature for, about, and by African Americans. Sanders and Sanders (2008) offer productive ideas in their book, *Readers Theatre for African American History*. One example of an inspirational piece for upper level high school and college students for Readers Theatre and choral reading activities is Grant’s (1971) “They Keep Coming” from the musical *Don’t Bother Me I Can’t Cope*. It is a chant that cites African Americans. The poetic frame can be a template for inserting favorite or local achievements with an emphasis on African American females. The selection begins: “See that back/See that hand/

You think I can tote a barge/Well I can/And sing Verdi and Puccini/And write books and plays/And become heavyweight champion of the world.”

Culturally Specific Implementation: Knowledge Base and Resources

Cultural competence of our educators is a salient key to success with diverse populations and girls, including African American girls. J. Moule (2011) describes cultural competence as a “set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (*Cultural Competence*, p.10). G. Gay (2010) calls it “culturally responsive” in *Culturally Responsive Teaching*. To effectively use theatre to create a dynamic learning environment, educators need to learn the theatre strategies outlined above, but most importantly learn to see the opportunities for using the strategies in their teaching/learning environment. W. Howe and P. L. Lisi (2012) agree that the work involves developing awareness, gaining skills, and taking action--starting with culturally specific resources.

Picture Books for the Young

Children’s picture books offer a rich source of material for young people, especially those with positive images of African American females and stories that build character. Onondaga County Public Library offers a rich collection entitled “Black Female Authors of Children’s Books,” organized by juvenile books and picture books. Sandra Pinkney’s (2006) *Read and Rise* is an inspirational picture book in the collection with sparks for improvisational drama activ-

ities for African American children is. The book includes an inspirational poem by Angelou, beautiful illustrations, minimal text, and snippets that describe adventures that young readers can embark upon.

Arrowhead Library System in Janesville, Wisconsin has also compiled a list of books to inspire positive and productive theatre activities for African American girls. Their collection entitled, *African American Voices in Children's Fiction*, is divided into picture books, middle readers, and older readers. Examples include:

- Hoffman, M. (1991). *Amazing Grace*. Dial. (Grace proves she can be the best Peter Pan despite classmates telling her she can't because she's female and Black.)
- Howard, E. F. (1991). *Aunt Flossie's Hats (and Crab Cakes Later)*. Clarion: (Susan and Sarah visit their great-great Aunt Flossie to try on her wonderful hats, eat crab cakes for dinner, and hear stories of her life.)
- Ringgold, F. (1992). *Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky*. Crown. (A fantasy about a girl who meets Harriet Tubman and a mysterious train in the sky.)

Websites

History websites and books chronicling the achievements of Black women, past and present are another rich source for theatre activities for African American girls. The National Women’s History Month Project web site has many options. Each year the organization honors a diverse group of women and feature their stories on their site. Their collection of books on women’s accomplishments is useful. They also have an intriguing resource entitled, *African American Knowledge Cards*. The cards introduce forty-eight amazing African American women from the poet Phillis Wheatley (born c.1753 in West Africa; brought to America enslaved) to the

phenomenal athlete Jackie Joyner-Kersey (born in 1962 in Illinois, a multiple Olympic gold medalist).

Some websites can be especially useful in creating pageants that survey the contributions of black women over the years or focus on a historical moment with a female achiever at the center. For an example of the pageant possibilities, see Francis Gunner's pageant "The Light of the Women" in W. Richardson's *Plays and Pageants from the Life of the Negro* (1930). Among the representative sites for historical overview are:

- African American History Timeline: <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/bhmtimeline.htm>

- African American History for Kids: <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/bhm/historyforkids.htm>

Websites also document unique achievements as in Black female accomplishments in math and science:

- *Black Women in Mathematics and the Sciences*:

<http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/wohist.html>

- Black Women Scientists Making History:

<https://advanceatbrown.wordpress.com/2011/02/07/black-women-scientists-making-history/>

The biographical information on these achievers offers content for improvisational play, role-playing, and even reader's theatre.

Folktales and other stories

African American folktales and other stories for children and youth that inspire pride and joy Virginia Hamilton's *Her Stories: African American Folktales, Fairy Tales, and True Tales* (1995) and *The People Could Fly* (twenty-four Black American folk tales in a diverse variety for K-12 with animal

tales, supernatural tales, fanciful and cautionary tales, and slave tales of freedom). The Smithsonian Young Readers Resource online shares a collection of stories for Black children and youth entitled:

- "Down through the Years:" http://www.si.edu/Encyclopedia_SI/nmah/youngerdr.htm

Examples for ages three to ten include:

- Bryan, Ashley. (1992). *Sing to the Sun*. New York: HarperTrophy. (It features poems and paintings celebrating the ups and downs of life)

- Flournoy, Valerie. (1985). *The Patchwork Quilt*. Illus. by Jerry Pinkney. New York: Dial. (Using scraps cut from the family's old clothing, the central character helps her grandmother make a beautiful quilt that tells the story of her family's life.)

- Greenfield, Eloise. (1977). *Africa Dream*. Illus. by Carole Byard. New York: HarperTrophy. (A Black child's dreams are filled with the images of the people and places of Africa.)

- Nikola-Lisa, W. (1994). *Bein' with You This Way*. illustrated by Michael Bryant. New York: Lee & Low. (As the children play in the park they discover that despite their physical differences-straight hair/curly hair; brown eyes/blue eyes; light skin/dark skin--they are all really the same.)

- William Loren Katz's (1995) *Black Women of the Old West* and Mary E. Lyons' (1998) *Painting Dreams: Minnie Evans, Visionary Artist* are also exemplary pieces for inspirational dramatic play.

Poetry

In addition to stories, poetry can serve as a window into the world and a source of inspiration for playmaking and movement activities. An offering that has excellent images to spark acting and moving and overcoming

life's challenges is:

- *Life Doesn't Frighten Me: Maya Angelou's Courageous Children's Verses* (2013)

<http://www.brainpickings.org/index.php/2013/05/03/life-doesnt-frighten-me-maya-angelou-basquiat/>

The collection is astutely promoted as a priceless primer on contemporary art for little ones with a timeless reminder of the power of courage in all of us.

Nikki Giovanni (1987) weaves magic that will inspire African American girls in her collection *Spin a Soft Black Song: Poems for Children* for ages 8-12, grade level 2-7. A few additional titles from Giovanni's inspirational collection include: *Ego-Tripping and Other Poems for Young People* (1973) and *The Girls in the Circle (Just for You!)* (2004).

Plays

Although plays for children to perform for an audience are not recommended in the lower grades, they make inspirational sources for improvisation and story dramatization, and can be useful Readers Theatre projects for older youth. Among them is:

- "Positive African American Plays for Children"

<http://www.africanamericanchildrenplays.com/>

This a resource by Britt Ekland Miller and Jeffery Bradley (n.d.), both veteran children's book authors, includes three collections of plays with supporting documents.

Among the resources available for a diverse group of students in middle and high school is the multicultural collections edited by R. Ellis, *Multicultural Theatre: Scenes and Monologs from New Hispanic, Asian, and African American Plays* (1996) and *Multicultural Theatre II: Scenes and Monologs from New Hispanic, Asian, and African-American Plays* (1998). A similar resource, Slaight and

Sharrar's *Multicultural Monologues for Young Actors*, provides culturally relevant opportunities for readers theatre or other performance projects for older students. In addition, the Pioneer Drama Service offers plays to inform and promote cultural learning—a few examples include *Anansi the Spider and Middle Passage*, *Peanutman: A Visit from George Washington Carver*, and *A Land Beyond the River*.

Conclusion

Theatre can provide the spark that will enrich content across the curriculum for all students and spark higher levels of achievement for African American females in K-12 grade levels. Needed is a pluralistic approach (in content and strategies) empowering all students who are at risk for lower test scores and high dropout rates. With attention to developing a database of cultural specific and diverse resource, and utilization of proven techniques for engagement that builds confidence, greater success is possible. Theatre activities (creative drama, role-playing, and readers theatre) can promote outcomes for black girls to compete and succeed academically with enhanced assertiveness and "somebodyness." ■

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Appendix

Sample Lesson Plan: Creative Drama Grades: 3-6

Subject Areas: history, literature, astronomy, botany, geography

Objectives/Outcomes:

Develop skill with creative movement

and mime

Experience feelings of fear, determination, courage, and happiness Gain knowledge of edible plant life

Gain knowledge of southern states, routes to the North /geography

Preparation:

Read children's picture book about Harriet Tubman (literature) Explain the meaning of the Underground Railroad (history) Discuss highlights of Harriet Tubman's life (history/biography)

Show map of US pointing out states that Harriet had to cross to reach the North (geography) Show pictures of edible plants that may have provided food on the way (botany)

Show students how to find the North Star in the sky (astronomy)

Activity:

Review the details of the scenario (storyline). Children then take turns leading a group of slaves north via the underground railroad, stopping to determine location (by the stars and land marks), to eat, and to hide in barns of friendly Quakers, and finally reaching North with signs up relief and thankfulness. They are given the option to express moments of the action verbally if they feel comfortable doing so.

Follow-up:

After discussion and replaying the scenario, each student is asked to express in writing or in an art work their experience with the activity: a poem, a few sentences of thought or a visual picture.

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