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About

Gender forum is an online, peer reviewed academic journal dedicated to the discussion of gender issues. As an electronic journal, *gender forum* offers a free-of-charge platform for the discussion of gender-related topics in the fields of literary and cultural production, media and the arts as well as politics, the natural sciences, medicine, the law, religion and philosophy. Inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Beate Neumeier in 2002, the quarterly issues of the journal have focused on a multitude of questions from different theoretical perspectives of feminist criticism, queer theory, and masculinity studies. *gender forum* also includes reviews and occasionally interviews, fictional pieces and poetry with a gender studies angle.

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Editorial

1 The five articles assembled in **Working out Gender** explore the nexus between gender and work from a variety of different angles, focusing on areas and issues as diverse as the U.S. strip trade, the legal profession and discrimination against women lawyers in England and Wales, maquiladoras and femicide on the border between Mexico and the United States, contemporary British film, and male childcare workers in Germany.

2 The guiding questions in Curtis Fogel's "Presenting the Naked Self: The Accumulation of Performative Capital in the Female Strip Trade" are how and why female strippers prepare, present, and manage their gender, bodies, and emotions in their everyday work. Taking into consideration that the precarious and unstable working conditions of female strippers seem to be built upon the symbolic transaction of performative into economic capital, the article is framed by a dramaturgical approach. Combining autobiographical accounts of strippers with theories by Erving Goffman, Judith Butler, Pierre Bourdieu and Arlie R. Hochschild, Fogel's discussion points out the complex cultural demands of emotional and physical self management within this working area.

3 In "Discrimination against Women Lawyers in England and Wales: An Overview," Alexandrine Guyard-Nedelec sheds light on various forms of discrimination experienced by British women lawyers. Focusing on the existing pay gap, the glass ceiling, as well as issues relating to maternity leave, Guyard-Nedelec illustrates how women lawyers' career opportunities are hampered by a "culture of discrimination" still prevailing in many law firms.

4 Christina Marín's contribution, "Staging Femicide/Confronting Reality: Negotiating Gender and Representation in *Las Mujeres de Juárez*," takes issue with cases of femicide of the last fifteen years in the towns of Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua City, which both form part of the maquiladora-system, a "Third World 'industrial complex.'" Focusing on Rubén Amavizca's play *Las Mujeres de Juárez* and her own production of it as a theatre director, Marín explores the potential of theatre as a means of drawing attention to and inspiring dialogue about the social injustice arising in the context of the maquiladoras.

5 Presenting an in-depth discussion of *Brassed Off* (1996), *The Full Monty* (1997), and *Billy Elliot* (2000), Mark Schreiber's "Re-negotiating Concepts of Masculinity in Contemporary British Film" examines how these films depict their male protagonists' search for gender identity in the face of the demise of heavy industry in post-war Britain. Schreiber illustrates how these characters succeed at least partly in negotiating new roles for themselves, thereby deviating from traditional concepts of working-class masculinity.

6 Markus Tünte's "A Man's Work in a Female World? Gender Paradoxes of Male Childcare Workers" presents the results of a study on male care-workers in German pre-schools and childcare centres. The author investigates how male care-workers position themselves (and are positioned by others) in this highly gender-segregated occupational field, both in relation to female co-workers and in the overall context of childcare work, and demonstrates the extent to which they — as much as their female co-workers and the parents of the children they care for — continue to adhere to a hegemonic concept of masculinity.

7 **Working out Gender** is completed by reviews of *Where the Boys Are: Cinemas of Masculinity and Youth*, edited by Murray Pomerance and Frances Gateward, *Curiouser: On the Queerness of Children*, edited by Steven Bruhm and Natasha Hurley, as well as Jean Wyatt's *Risking Difference: Identification, Race, and Community*.

Presenting the Naked Self: The Accumulation of Performative Capital in the Female Strip Trade

By Curtis Fogel, University of Calgary, Canada

Abstract:

This paper explores the female strip trade in Canada and the United States from a dramaturgical approach by looking at how female strippers construct, present and manage their gender, bodies and emotions in their everyday work. The basic theoretical framework of the study is built on Erving Goffman's dramaturgical approach to sociology, including three specific theories that can be related to it: Judith Butler's performative theory of gender, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction, and Arlie Hochschild's theory of emotion work.

Introduction

1 Stripping can be defined in as many different ways as there are people to define it. Chris Bruckert suggests that stripping can be perceived as deviance from a criminologist's perspective, or as entertainment from the perspective of the strip club patron. In this paper, stripping will be defined through the perspective of female strippers themselves — as paid work that is embedded within the market economy. In her autobiography, Lily Burana suggests that female strippers enter the strip trade for a variety of reasons such as: paying for their education, supporting their family, taking a break from prostitution and saving for traveling expenses; the common denominator amongst these reasons is to earn an income- for the stripper, stripping is work. Liepe-Levinson writes: "the personal lives of and backgrounds of American strippers are as varied and incongruous as the shows they perform" and further, "are far too diverse and multi-faceted to draw clear-cut conclusions about their job choice en masse, other than the need to make a living" (8-9). Likewise, Heidi Mattson writes: "I'm here to make money. I enjoy the work too, but that is all it is — work" (10). In a basic sense, the work of the female stripper involves: dancing and removing one's clothing on a stage to earn tips, providing private lap dances to strip club patrons for a set fee and conversing with patrons to make further tips. Stripping, as work, will be further explored through the question: How and why do female strippers prepare, present, and manage their gender, bodies, and emotions in their everyday work?

The Contemporary Strip Trade (1970-2006)

2 While each female stripper may experience the contemporary strip trade differently, the industry is embedded within a larger structural framework of the market economy. In her study of gendered employment trends, Leah Vosko suggests that the current labor market in

Canada is characterized by a move towards increased part-time and temporary work. According to Bruckert, this growth of non-standard employment relationships has limited and conditioned the experiences that women have in the contemporary labor force in Canada and the United States. Bruckert suggests that many strippers in North America decide to become strippers in a labor climate that provides unappealing options for many women. This sentiment is supported by Burana's statement:

I have, however, had a number of tedious, ass-busting jobs, mostly when I was in high school: cleaning lady, supermarket cashier, department store clerk. So I know a bit about scraping people's crap off of toilets, wearing mildly humiliating smocklike uniforms, and shuffling and refolding product for an indifferent corporation. I also know about trading all that for a job where you can make in one night what you used to earn in a week, or a month. Or two months. (55)

Similarly, Diablo Cody worked through a temporary help agency in Minnesota before quitting to become a full-time stripper because she found that she enjoyed it more, and it met her financial needs more readily. These examples suggest that current labor trends that provide unappealing options for women influence some women's decisions to enter the strip trade.

3 Vosko describes the unappealing aspects of the temporary employment relationship, which has become the normative relationship of employment for women in North America, as follows: it is unstable work with no guarantee of permanency or full-time hours, which leaves the worker vulnerable to an unsteady income; it provides little to no benefits like health care or maternity leave; it generates an unclear relationship between employers and employees; it creates a uniquely individualistic and competitive work environment; and, it often places the worker in physically and emotionally demanding positions. While some strippers may enter the strip trade because of unappealing aspects of normative work standards for women in North America, and the potential to make much more money in the short term, it must be pointed out that these unappealing, precarious working conditions also characterize the contemporary strip trade.

4 The income of the strippers is unstable for a number of reasons: for the most part, they have a tip-based income that can change from day to day, and week to week (Lewin; Mattson; Burana; Bruckert; Liepe-Levinson; Bartlett; Eaves; Cody); their income is largely dependent on their appearance, so any gained weight, physical scarring or blemishing, injury, or signs of aging and strippers cannot work (Burana; Bruckert); clubs may shut down or change their venue leaving the stripper unemployed (Black); the club merely provides a legitimate stage for them to dance on for a fee, so they receive no benefits or maternity leave (Sundahl; Bruckert); and, the marginal nature of stripping in contemporary society makes it difficult for strippers to secure loans (Bruckert) or find further employment after years of stripping

(Black). One stripper interviewed by Bruckert describes the instability of her income as follows:

It's still kinda nice sometimes to have that steady income like a normal job. . . . Like instead of dancing, just a normal nine-to-five job. That way you can really do your budget. 'Cause I find, when you don't know what you're gonna make, or one day it's a hundred bucks, you go and you spend it 'cause you figure tomorrow I'll make it back, y'know, it's fine. But tomorrow you go and the next day you only make fifty. . . . It's never the same. (93)

The contemporary strip trade also appears to be characterized by an unclear relationship between employers and employees (Burana; Bruckert). For the most part, strippers are characterized as self-entrepreneurs in that they are paid in tips and it is their responsibility to gain access to strip clubs. The stripper generally makes her wages in tips, and provides either a set fee or a percentage of her tips to the club and other workers such as bartenders, waitresses and doormen in exchange for their services. The point where the employee/employer relationship becomes confusing is that the stripper must work within the rules of the club as stated by the owner and managers of the club or they can be fined or fired. Burana also suggests that strippers are often micromanaged by managers and employers in the clubs in terms of how they are to dress, act, and solicit customers. Furthermore, as Bruckert reveals, the club tells the stripper her hours of work to which she has little or no control. Sundahl suggests that if a stripper is late or misses a day of work she can be fined or even fired, forcing strippers to come to work even when they are not feeling well. It is through obfuscating the nature of this employer/employee relationship, and encouraging the idea that strippers work for themselves, that strip club managers and owners avoid paying benefits to strippers.

5 Vosko also suggests that precarious working conditions, such as those of the contemporary strip trade, can lead to a uniquely individualistic and competitive work environment. This type of environment is characteristic of the contemporary strip trade, as strippers must continuously compete with one another for jobs, the most profitable hours, and the attention of male patrons. Drawing on her previous experience as a stripper, Bruckert suggests that there has been a decline in the camaraderie amongst workers in the strip club in recent years. This is a sentiment supported by Burana who suggests that she has not developed meaningful relationships with her co-workers throughout her career as a stripper. This decline of stripper camaraderie appears to hinder what Bruckert describes as the "informal economy" of stripping. Teamwork and camaraderie in the strip trade appear to be important aspects of safety and wellbeing; however, there appears to be support for the view

that the precariousness of the contemporary strip trade is eroding these aspects of their work (Burana; Bruckert).

6 There are also a multitude of physical dangers, and circumvented health and safety policies, in the contemporary strip trade. Liepe-Levinson reveals that industry competitiveness and instability of income can lead strippers to engage in physically harmful work such as death-defying pole maneuvers. The everyday work of the stripper can also be very physically demanding such as: dancing in high heels for extended periods of time; standing in high heels while rarely sitting to take breaks; doing the splits and other aerobic dance moves; and, banging one's knees and other joints on the stage during dance moves. Even more problematic is that when strippers are injured, strip clubs are not required to provide compensation to the injured dancer (Bruckert). There are also certain dangers that go along with working in an environment where alcohol is being served, men are charged with sexual energy, and other dancers are protecting their territory. One dancer interviewed by Bruckert expressed her fears of physical injury from coworkers as follows: "I can't work with black eyes, I can't work with big scars across my face" (94). Beyond the physical dangers of working in the contemporary strip trade, are the psychological and emotional dangers that result from the constant preparation, presentation and management of self in the everyday work of strippers, which will be elaborated upon in a section later in this paper.

7 The picture that has been painted of the contemporary strip trade is one of precarious working conditions that provide: an unsteady income for strippers; an unclear employee/employer relationship; no benefits or compensation; an individualistic and competitive work environment; and physically and emotionally demanding work. According to Leah Vosko, these are similar characteristics of the temporary help industry, which has become the normative employment relationship for women in North America. This further reiterates that stripping is work that is embedded in the market economy, and it has a distinct resemblance to other forms of feminized work. The precarious or unsteady nature of the work, and feminized work in general, provides support for why it is so important for female strippers to effectively prepare, present and maintain the appropriate gender, bodies and emotions in their everyday work. The question then becomes: how do strippers prepare, present, and manage their gender, bodies and emotions in their everyday work?

An unobtrusive methodology

8 In exploring the research question, as previously stated, I have used an unobtrusive research methodology that has consisted of reading historical, autobiographical, and fieldwork

studies of the strip trade in Canada and the United States. As I read through the literature I collected on the strip trade I had already decided that I would be exploring the strip trade from a dramaturgical approach. This was a largely inductive approach, similar to Glaser and Strauss's "grounded theory" method, as I did not begin with a comprehensive theory but rather, a theory emerged during the study. Dramaturgical principles are what Blumer refers to as "sensitizing" concepts in that they provide a good starting point, but do not provide a theoretical framework that is comprehensive enough to fully explain complex research questions. During my readings of twenty books and journal articles that captured the voices of over fifty strippers, I began pulling out quotes that related to dramaturgical concepts and the presentation of self. Once I had a notebook filled with approximately sixty quotes I began to think of how I could group this qualitative data to be better organized and make more sense. I began clustering quotes of a similar nature together until I was able to form three performative categories that each quote could be grouped into. Through this process, it became apparent how important the three performative elements of gender, body and emotion were to the everyday work of female strippers.

A dramaturgical approach

9 From Goffman's dramaturgical approach, the social world is perceived as a stage where actors continuously engage an audience in theatrical performance. The self is perceived as a malleable construction that must be appropriately prepared, presented and managed to ensure a successful performance on the part of the social actor. Goffman's dramaturgical approach centers on his concepts of: the definition of the situation, impression management, social acts or performances, and the theater as everyday life. Goffman suggests that social actors come to a "working consensus" on the "definition of the situation" through the negotiated meanings of symbolic interaction (4, 9). In any given interaction, a social actor will attempt to present their desired self to an audience who will have an expectation of what that self should entail. Goffman suggests that in social interaction, there is a negotiation of meaning between the social actor and the audience on how the self of the social actor should be performed. When the social actor performs their desired self to an audience, and the audience responds, this symbolic negotiation of meaning leads to a working consensus on the definition of the situation.

10 To maintain this desired presentation of self throughout the duration of the performance, the social actor must engage in "impression management". Goffman suggests that impression management is particularly important for social actors to engage in after

making mistakes in their performances through their own errors or through external factors that threaten the identity of the performer. Goffman writes, "events may occur within the interaction which contradict, discredit, or otherwise throw doubt upon this projection. When these disruptive events occur, the interaction itself may come to a confused and embarrassed halt" (12).

11 The self, for Goffman, is of social origin and can be shaped and molded to present different identities in different social interactions. Keeping with his theatrical metaphor, Goffman's dramaturgical approach centers on his metaphor of the social world as theater. Goffman divides this theatrical social world into front and back regions. The stage of the front region can be considered to be one of the rare structural components to Goffman's dramaturgical approach. The stage provides the actor an area to perform on and a role to play; however, the stage can also constrain the individual as they must play the role that is expected of them — certain plays are performed in certain theaters, i.e. a doctor performs in a hospital, a professor performs in a classroom, while a stripper performs in a strip club.

12 Other dramaturgists, Mangham and Overington, further suggest that a successful social performance is one that appears natural. A natural performance is achieved when the audience does not consider the stage that social actor is performing on, as well as the other elements of the performance such as the preparation required, the backstage, props, or the director. The performance comes across to the audience as though it is not really a performance at all- the successful social performance appears natural or authentic.

Performances of Gender

13 Gender is of central importance to the everyday work of female strippers. An interesting theoretical framework to look at the performances of gender is through Judith Butler's performative theory of gender identity. Aspects of this theory can be tied to Goffman's dramaturgical approach via their similar conceptions of identity as performance. Butler's approach also brings in important ideas on how identity performances are conditioned through transactions of power. Furthermore, she does not regard the body and gender as separate entities but rather, regards both as being produced through discourse. These important sociological concepts of discourse and power are neglected in Goffman's work. The main premise behind Judith Butler's theory is that gender is not of natural origin but rather, of social origin. She writes:

Gender is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free floating attributes... gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. Hence, within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance,

gender proves to be performative [. . .] in this sense, gender is always a doing. (Butler 24-25)

Central to Butler's work is the idea that gender is crucial to the presentation of identity; social actors must prepare, present and manage appropriate gender identities in their everyday life and work. Butler further suggests that gender and sexuality are constructed within the terms of dominant discourse and power. Butler brings in the concept of power to reveal the constraints that social actors have in the gender roles that they play — social actors play gender roles based on the cultural scripts that reify and naturalize the binary gender model of male/female.

14 The preparation, presentation and management of an appropriate gender identity is particularly important to the everyday work of female strippers. Bruckert describes strip clubs as "male spaces" where men come to be masculine. The clubs that Bruckert describes are hyper-masculine; they have sporting events broadcasted on televisions, pool tables, dartboards, video games, beer, as well as overtly feminine strippers teasing and taming the sexual desires of men. Liepe-Levinson suggests that the appropriate display of femininity, as desired by male strip club patrons, is central to a stripper's ability to earn money. Heidi Mattison recounts the response of the male crowd to her performance as a police officer as being silent and unsure until her clothes began to come off revealing her feminine physique. Similarly, Cody suggests that women in the strip trade rarely have any traditionally masculine physical features but rather, are clearly distinguishable as feminine from every angle.

15 Judith Butler's point of departure from Goffman is her account of how the performances of social actors are scripted. Goffman does not really get at why people perform as they do; he does not look at how structures of power condition and shape the social actor's performance. Butler suggests that gender and sexuality are constructed, reified and naturalized through transactions of power. This theory raises some interesting questions about gender and sexuality in the contemporary strip trade: Who are the authors of the gender scripts that guide the performances of strippers? Is stripping an avenue for women to freely express their gender and sexuality? Does masculine hegemony and power in the contemporary strip trade oppress the gender and sexuality of female strippers?

16 These questions are at the center of a larger feminist debate on the liberating and oppressive aspects of sex trade work, including the strip trade. The two-sides of this debate, while not clear-cut opposites, are radical anti-pornography feminism and liberal sex-positive feminism. Most anti-pornography feminists (Morgan; Dworkin; MacKinnon) argue that female sex trade work is inherently oppressive to women, while many sex-positive feminists

(Willis; Rubin; McElroy) counter this argument suggesting that female sex trade work can be liberating for women. The central idea behind anti-pornography feminism is that all female sex trade work is oppressive and exploitative to women and that government policy should regulate and restrict such work. In contrast, sex-positive feminists believe that such policies and laws impinge upon the liberty of women by telling them what they can and cannot do with their bodies.

17 From the perspective of anti-pornography feminists, stripping is exploitative, oppressive and harmful to female strip trade workers. They would suggest that stripping is inherently exploitative to strippers because they are being objectified by men and forced to perform under patriarchal notions of sexiness in order to make their money (Segal). Anti-pornography feminists would also look at the conditions upon which strippers enter the strip trade; they would argue that this is not done out of rational free-choice but rather, that strippers have likely been abused throughout their lives by men, and that they entered the strip trade because they were coerced or thought that it was their only choice (MacKinnon). In more general terms, anti-pornography feminists suggest that the oppression and exploitation of women in the sex trade is both a cause and symptom of the oppression and exploitation of women in general. They suggest that women are oppressed in a patriarchal society and thus, the sex trade is perceived as an extension of patriarchal power and that women are inherently exploited and oppressed by men in these sex trade industries (MacKinnon). Radical anti-pornography feminist Robin Morgan writes, "pornography is the theory, rape is the practice" (139). The idea here is that sex trade work, such as stripping, eroticizes the oppression, domination and humiliation of women, which reinforces the cultural toleration of physical, verbal and sexual violence against women (Cole). Radical anti-pornography feminists do not perceive sex trade work as liberating because these women are working within the confines of the sexual preferences and demands of men — they are not perceived as the authors of their own gender and sexuality (MacKinnon).

18 Liberal sex-positive feminists would disagree that women in the sex trade, such as strippers, are inherently exploited and oppressed. Sex-positive feminism is rooted in the idea that the sexual freedom of women is essential to the overall freedom of women and thus, there should not be limitations such as social policy or societal stigma placing restrictions on sex trade workers (McElroy). The sex-positive feminists would suggest that strippers are able to liberate themselves from the heavy chains that patriarchal society has placed on their gender and sexuality; strippers are able to embrace their feelings of sexiness and use this to make money. Unlike the radical anti-pornography feminists who may suggest that strippers are

exploited in their work, the sex-positive feminist may question who in fact is being exploited. Furthermore, the sex-positive feminist believes that the stripper can make the rational choice to strip, and that she should be given the freedom to make this choice if she wants to; the stripping industry would become oppressive if the government placed strict rules on freedoms of sexual expression such as stripping (McElroy). Sex-positive feminists also suggest that free acts of female sexual expression are liberating for all women, as such acts challenge the traditionally repressive nature of female sexuality (Dragu & Harrison). In this regard, sex-positive feminists perceive strippers as active agents who are not only liberating themselves through their sexual expression, but are liberating all women by challenging the rigid norms surrounding feminine sexuality.

19 Butler's performative theory of gender provides insight into understanding the divide between the liberating and oppressive aspects of the contemporary strip trade. Butler suggests that while gender and sexuality are often reified and thus naturalized, they really do not exist above and beyond the control of social actors. However, she also suggests that social actors are not free to perform gender outside of established cultural scripts that guide appropriate performances of gender and sexuality. Basically, structure and agency exist in a dialectical relationship with one another — the performances of social actors shape gender, and gender shapes the performances of social actors. This dialectical relationship suggests that the contemporary strip trade can be both liberating and oppressive to strippers. This is the double-standard of stripping: strippers have the freedom to express their gender and sexuality, but they must do so within the confines of a socially marginalized institution that is fueled by the sexual desires of male patrons, and the financial desires of male strip club owners and managers.

20 Contrary to what radical anti-pornography feminists suggest, strippers can and do find their work liberating and empowering. Cheryl Bartlett describes the empowerment that she found in stripping as follows: "I know that I am a stronger, smarter, happier person for having walked a mile or two in sexy, dangerous shoes" (161). Burana describes the empowering aspect of stripping as follows: "I am not a reformed nerd from New Jersey walking around with no underpants on[. . .] I am a goddess clothed in my own power" and later, "we [strippers] are gender warriors, reestablishing the parameters of enlightened female behavior" (174, 205). Another dancer states:

The first time I saw my sisters dance I knew it would be fun. Dancing is part of my character. It's another side of me. When I'm working at the hospital I have to be focused and serious and make decisions. If I did this everyday it would be boring. When I'm at the club I can flirt and be sexual and have fun. It's an ego trip. (Futterman 19)

Similarly, after extensive research Dragu and Harrison challenge the radical anti-pornography view that strippers are "objects" or "victims", suggesting that they are more akin to artists and activists than victims. These experiences of women in the strip trade suggest that female strippers can and do find enjoyment in their work, as well as an avenue for self-expression.

21 However, the radical anti-pornography view that female sex workers can become female sex objects can be supported by the experiences of female strippers. While Burana reveals that stripping liberates her from conservative notions of gender and sexuality, she also suggests that her gender and sexuality are continuously objectified and commodified by male patrons. Through the commercial transactions of the strip trade, clothed men sit and watch women take off their clothes and dance naked. For strippers to make money, they must appeal to the sexual desires and fantasies of men placing them in a position of privilege — it is men who are clothed and women who are naked; there is both power and vulnerability in this transaction.

22 In their everyday work, strippers must give performances that break conventional patriarchal notions of female sexuality, while simultaneously reinforcing patriarchal norms. Dahlia Schweitzer writes: "she is both a sex goddess and a feminine coquette" (72). Similarly, Dragu and Harrison write:

More important than either looks or ability are the unexpected standards that strippers perform with ladylike decorum. This means a sense of modesty, and the observance of certain feminine traditions, such as cleanliness and hairlessness [. . .] The demand that strippers be ladylike exists as a kind of counterpoint to an ever present expectation that they are going to do something gross. It is common to hear a customer praising a particular stripper for being a lady. What he means is that she isn't as much of a whore as you would expect a stripper to be. (17)

The performances of female strippers involve a balance between traditional femininity and deviant sexual expression. The performance of gender in the female stripper's everyday work is not simply the display of a natural or socialized gender or sexuality — the cultural script of the contemporary strip trade places female strippers in a position where they must negotiate the impossible dichotomy of performing as both a madonna and a whore (Dragu and Harrison). They must uphold traditional patriarchal norms of femininity and female sexual expression in their everyday work, while simultaneously breaking these norms.

Performances of Body

23 Like Judith Butler's performative theory of gender, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction ("Cultural Reproduction") has many aspects that tie closely to Goffman's dramaturgical approach, particularly in their similar conceptions of the manipulation and

management of identity in symbolic interaction. Butler's main point of departure from Goffman's dramaturgical approach is her application of the concept of power to the everyday performances of identity of social actors. Pierre Bourdieu departs from Goffman most notably, in regard to this study, in his application of economic principles to social interaction ("Cultural Reproduction").

24 According to Bourdieu, "economics is one of the major reference points for sociology" (*Other Words* 46). He is not suggesting that sociologists should adopt the viewpoint of an economist to better understand social phenomenon but rather, that economics are central to social life and everyday interaction and thus, should not be ignored in social inquiry. According to Bourdieu, the social world cannot be divided into things that are economic and things that are not; economics flow through all of the fields of the social world (*Other Words*). This section will explore how the bodies of strippers are performed in their everyday work from a Bourdieuan approach, and will reveal how the bodies of strippers can become commodified.

25 Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction begins to take shape in his analysis of how social inequalities are reproduced or inherited by further generations through the education system ("Cultural Reproduction"). In basic terms, he suggests that parents with occupations of a higher status such as lawyers or doctors are able to accumulate greater amounts of cultural capital such as books, visits to museums, and trips to Europe than parents with occupations of a lower status such as farmers can accumulate. The children of parents holding upper class occupations can then accumulate greater amounts of cultural capital that is highly valued in the academic field, which brings them success in the education system. This higher attainment of education can be converted into other forms of capital, particularly economic capital. This, in a very basic sense, is how Bourdieu explained the reproduction of social structures and inequalities ("Cultural Reproduction").

26 To understand Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction more clearly, one must understand the three main components of his theory: field, habitus and capital. The first important concept to Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction is what he terms the "field." Bourdieu defines the field as:

A network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to specific profits that are at stake in the field. (*Invitation* 97)

Bourdieu suggests that the field is a set of organizing principles for groups, which identify,

structure and place values on their social practices (*Invitation*). This paper is a study of the specific field of the strip trade, which entails the exploration of how the strip trade is organized, and what forms of capital are most valued in the field of stripping. Bourdieu (*Invitation*) suggests that the field is an arena of competition, where social actors compete to accumulate capital and the power to define the values of the field. Bourdieu writes, "A capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field" (*Invitation* 101).

27 For Bourdieu, capital is synonymous with power ("Forms"). A person's capital is created through the degree of asymmetry or conflict between their habitus and a particular field. Bourdieu defines the habitus as: "the durable and transposable systems of schemata of perception, appreciation, and action that result from the institution of the social in the body" (*Invitation* 126-127). Each individual social actor has a habitus that is a composition of his or her social history; it is everything that the social actor has learned, experienced and accumulated throughout their life. A person's habitus shapes how they appear, what they know and how they act. If a person's habitus closely mirrors the values of a particular field, he or she will be successful in accumulating capital in that field. The more capital an individual accumulates within a particular field, the more power he or she has to define the values of that field. This constant competition for capital or power within fields is how Bourdieu, in basic terms, explains the formation and reproduction of social structure (*Cultural Reproduction*).

28 Chris Shilling (2003) suggests that Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction can be used to explore the commodification of bodies. In a basic sense, to commodify something is to turn it into an article of trade or commerce that is processed and sold. According to Bourdieu, economic principles flow through all of the fields of the social world (*Other Words*). From this perspective, the body becomes a form of capital; more specifically, it becomes a form of physical capital. The body is an unfinished entity that is developed, presented and managed to become a bearer of symbolic value. The manner in which a person's body has been developed, presented and managed through such things as movements, gestures, and expressions is rooted in an individual's habitus. The closer an individual's performance of body mirrors the value of a field, the more physical capital he or she will accumulate in that field.

29 According to Bourdieu there are different forms of capital that are interconvertible with each other form at a symbolic rate of exchange (*Cultural Reproduction*). This suggests that those who are able to accumulate physical capital through successful performances of body will be able to exchange this form of capital for other forms of capital. Bourdieu suggests that there are three main species of capital: economic, cultural and social capital

("Forms"). Shilling suggests that the two most important species of capital in relation to the field of stripping are: physical and economic capital. In the field of stripping, physical capital is accumulated through the appropriate performance of body, which can then be converted into economic capital. Lockford writes: "Bodies in the strip club are the currency by which status among the dancers is negotiated with the clientele" (90).

30 According to Bruckert, the most valued form of the female body in the field of stripping is to be: tall, slim, feminine, well endowed, blonde and beautiful. Dragu and Harrison write: "the conventionally sexy qualities of bloneness and a big bosom are highly prized in strippers" (16). This is not to say that other body types do not exist amongst strippers, but this body type appears to have what Bourdieu would consider the highest exchange rate in the field of stripping (*Theory of Practice*). This same body form may be of little symbolic value in other fields, such as in academia, but in the stripping industry it appears to have the highest symbolic exchange rate with economic capital. Mattson describes her feelings about using her body to make money in the strip trade:

Looks were a tool the way intellect was a tool. Until now I had felt that using appearance and one's sexuality to get ahead was unfair, but then, I reasoned, those same categories are often used by society to determine the merits of women. Why was I above tapping into the system? It was happening already without me. What if I turned the tables? (90)

Mattson later writes: "I was using the power of my body" (115). Both of these statements are very much in tune with the idea that the body of the stripper is a form of symbolic value. It is through the conversion of physical capital into economic capital that the bodies of strippers essentially become commodified — the closer the commodity is to what the purchaser or strip club patron wants, the greater the amount of money or economic capital the commodity will generate.

31 Likewise, if a stripper's body veers too far from the ideal body valued in the field of stripping, the amount of symbolic physical capital she will be able to accumulate will be minimal. This will make it difficult for her to accumulate other forms of capital, particularly economic capital, i.e. if she does not have the right appearance she will have minimal potential to make money. Diamond provides an example of how an unvalued appearance can reduce one's opportunities in the strip trade. She writes: "every now and then in the upscale clubs, the owners could clean house, meaning if they thought you had gained too much weight, you were warned to lose it or lose your job" (88). Similarly, Bruckert suggests that a stripper's potential to make money in the strip trade diminishes if her body is physically scarred or blemished. Strippers can and do deviate from the ideal body type that is valued in

the field of stripping, but such deviations limit their potential to make money.

32 The development of the ideal body of the stripper takes work. One stripper writes: "I try to work out and tan daily, and keep my weight down" (Futterman 60). Plastic surgery, particularly breast enlargements and augmentations, are also common amongst women in the strip trade to achieve the "well endowed" body form that is so highly valued. Heidi Mattson writes:

As absurd as they were, the breasts brought in more bucks. Breasts didn't have to be beautiful, just big. Among the Foxy Ladies, it was general knowledge that big equaled an automatic promotion, a giant step up the stripper status ladder. I had to think about it... breasts bring more money, shouldn't I stock up on the tools of the trade? A couple of thousand bucks for a couple hundred cc's of silicone or saline that'll bring me a hundred or more each night. (224)

Mattson also writes: "with tits you make so much more" (226). Katherine Frank writes: "For many dancers, silicone or saline implants have become the ultimate accessories, as real breasts are increasingly found to be lacking in aesthetic perfection by the customers" (179). Breast enlargement is so central to the occupation of strippers that they can deduct the cost of their surgery from their yearly income when doing their taxes (Mattson). The economics of this equation are simple: larger breasts equal greater income. It does not mean that women with small or average sized breasts cannot be strippers, but it suggests that they will have less potential for earning money in the field of stripping because large breasts appear to be an important value to the field.

33 But, having large breasts is not an instant guarantee that a stripper will be able to make a lot of money; not only must strippers possess bodies that have the appropriate form that is valued in their social field, but they must also present and manage their bodies in a manner that is valued in the field of stripping. According to Liepe-Levinson, the ideal presentation of the stripper is a performance of desire, availability, confidence, femininity and sexiness. Such a performance requires movements and gestures of the body that portray this persona. Diamond writes: "One thing that you can't do in this business is fake it. The guys can read the body language and they can see it in your eyes. Whether they know it or not, guys will pick up on your bad mood and they will avoid you like the plague" (28). Another dancer, Sathen Black writes: "Before long I went from an average producer to a top money-maker, and a true professional in what I did best: act" (53). Katherine Frank also provides a vivid description of the performance of body in her everyday work. She writes:

To stay in bodily control of one's responses was also to stay in financial control of the situation. At the same time, to feel, imagine, or perform a bodily response could lend the interaction authenticity and could feel exciting, liberating and transgressive. Finding the balance between these states was tricky, yet successful dancers could help

to do so through their self presentations and interactions — through their productions and expressions of their body, behaviors, identities and conversations. (Frank 153-154)

Similar to Goffman, Bourdieu suggests that social actors manipulate their identity in their presentation of self (*Other Words*); however, unlike Goffman, Bourdieu suggests that individuals manipulate their identity in a symbolic struggle for capital — the symbolic negotiation that takes place in interaction is a negotiation of power. For Bourdieu, the strip club could be considered an arena of symbolic transactions that are communicated through the language of the body (*Other Words*). For the stripper to have the highest possible earning potential, she must develop, present and manage her body appropriately, in a manner valued by the field of stripping, in her everyday work.

34 While it appears quite clear what the values of the strip trade are as they relate to the development and performance of the stripper's body, it is not clear how these came to be values of the strip trade. How did these values form? Who guides the values of the strip trade? Bourdieu (*Invitation*) suggests that the values of a particular field are determined through the power of definition, which entails a competitive struggle to attain and mobilize resources to guide the direction and values of that field. For Bourdieu, the individuals that guide a field are those that have the most sought after or valued resources in that field. Stripping as an occupational field of work centers on economic capital or money (*Invitation*); thus, it can be presupposed that individuals with the largest amount of economic capital have the greatest influence on defining the values of the field of stripping. Based on this induction, it appears that it is the patrons with the largest amount of economic resources at their disposal who are able to determine which forms of physical capital have the best exchange rate into economic capital and thus, have the greatest influence on the values of the field of stripping — they hold the power of definition. This is supported by Katherine Frank's claim that it is not the men buying beer but rather, the men buying bottle after bottle of champagne that have the most power in determining the values of the strip trade.

35 Bourdieu would also suggest that the values of a field can and do change through time. Thus, the symbolic value of the form and presentation of the bodies of strippers can also change through time. Bourdieu would attribute such a change to a complex struggle between individuals and groups within a particular field over the power to define the values of that field. Changes in the valued form of the bodies of strippers have occurred as the individuals with the ability to generate, mobilize and convert forms of capital, particularly economic capital, have changed their values of the ideal body type of strippers. Each individual has a habitus that forms these individual values through the accumulation of all of their experiences

in various social fields. In this way, individuals are shaped by social structures and also shape social structures — this is the essence of Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction.

Performances of Emotion

42 A third performative aspect of the everyday work of strippers is the preparation, presentation and management of emotion. In *The Managed Heart*, Arlie Hochschild details an interesting theory of emotion work that appears to be applicable to the work of strippers. Hochschild defines emotion work as labor that "requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others" (7). Building on Goffman's dramaturgical principles, Hochschild suggests that workers, particularly service workers, must continuously engage in a specific form of impression management — emotion management. For Hochschild, emotion is not merely a biological drive, but is something that social actors can manage and feign in their everyday work. Hochschild suggests that social actors must manage their emotions based on what she terms "feeling rules" (56). Feeling rules are the emotive expectations that the social audience holds towards the performer in given social contexts.

43 For Goffman, the performances and impression management of social actors are accomplished through outward appearances or surface acting. Hochschild describes surface acting as follows: "the action is in the body language, the put-on sneer, the controlled sigh" (35). Hochschild's theory of emotion work goes beyond the surface performances of social actors. She expands performances into two separate types: surface acting and deep acting. In surface acting, the body, not the deep inner feelings of the social actor, is the main tool of the trade; the emotions of the social actor only appear real. In deep acting, social actors attempt to convince themselves to actually feel the feelings that they are performing; the social actor not only pretends to the audience, but they also pretend to themselves.

44 Hochschild contends that the constant preparation, presentation and management of emotion in everyday work can lead social actors to become estranged from their own feelings. Hochschild derives this theory through the application of Marx's theory of alienation to emotion work. Marx suggests that the capitalist profit motive will lead to the alienation of physical labors. Hochschild suggests that the capitalist profit motive is now serving to estrange service workers from their true feelings through their emotion labor. She writes:

Those who perform emotional labor in the course of giving service are like those who perform physical labor in the course of making things: both are subject to the rules of mass production. But when the product — the thing to be engineered, mass-produced, and subjected to speed-up and slow down — is a smile, a mood, a feeling, or a relationship, it comes to belong more to the relationship and less to the self.

(Hochschild 198)

Hochschild suggests that the workers themselves may no longer be able to differentiate when they are actually feeling from when they are just acting; they become emotionally numb, estranged from their own feelings as a result of the capitalist profit motive.

45 Hochschild's theory of emotion work is particularly relevant to the performances of emotion of strippers in the contemporary strip trade. In their everyday work, strippers must engage in impression and emotion management by creating, managing and displaying appropriate emotions, and suppressing inappropriate ones. Bruckert writes: "sexuality is merely a superficial visual play that facilitates and legitimizes the emotional labour through which dancers make their money" (157). The main elements of the emotion labor of strippers are: presenting appropriate emotions, suppressing inappropriate emotions, and using their emotive performances to influence the demeanor of others. Just as Hochschild warns, the constant performances of emotion that strippers must engage in come at a cost — over time strippers appear to become estranged from their own true feelings and become emotionally numb.

46 The appropriate performance of emotion of female strippers is determined by the normative emotive standards or feeling rules of the contemporary strip trade. As Liepe-Levinson suggests, the appropriate performance of the female stripper should elicit: sexiness, desire, femininity and availability. Eaves writes: "Our job wasn't just to be naked, it was to look and behave as though the customers really turned us on. For a convincing performance, men were willing to pay" (85). This need for the stripper to manage her emotions is constant. Bruckert writes: "A woman working in a strip club as a stripper has, first and foremost, to act like a stripper; whether she is on stage or not she is always performing" (71). Strippers may not actually be feeling sexy or desirable while they are working, but they must continuously manage this impression. Lauri Lewin writes: "And even those dancers who seemed to love the rug with sexual abandon [. . .] felt no passion, did not get turned on, *only acted the part*" (74; emphasis added).

47 Much of the emotion management, adherence to feeling rules, and performances of emotion of female strippers appear to be done in terms of surface acting. The surface acting of the stripper entails such things as: the bump or grind in her dance routine, the extended gaze at the male patron, a blown kiss to another dancer, a white dress to appear innocent, a red satin gown to appear seductive, or even the physical alterations she has done to her body, i.e. enlarged breasts. Surface acting is done to convince the audience that the dancer is feeling something that she is not actually feeling. At the surface level, it is the performances of the

body that are key; the language of the body communicates the emotions of the stripper.

48 It also appears common for strippers to engage in what Hochschild termed "deep acting," whereby they actively attempt to alter their inner feelings so that they are not in tension with the feeling rules of their work. Hochschild suggests that deep acting is best achieved by drawing on emotional memories (35). One stripper, Lauri Lewin, does this by imagining herself playing out sexual fantasies with her lover while she is on stage to help feign her performances of sexual passion to the audience. An interesting inner dialogue she describes while on stage went as follows: "In his room we kissed tentatively. His lips were soft . . . I push him back on the bed . . . I began to release myself to an intensity of passion that far surpassed sensation" (80-81). A patron in the club then interrupted her inner dialogue. She continues: "Take off the bra! A man at the Nudie-Tease yelled . . . the voices at the Nudie-Tease brought me back" (80-81). Frank suggests that deep acting lends an aura of authenticity to the performances of strippers. Building on Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction, she suggests that authenticity is a form of symbolic capital in the field of stripping. Similarly, Diane Reay suggests a new Bourdieuan species of capital that she refers to as "emotional capital." The idea here is that a stripper can accumulate emotional capital through the appropriate performances of emotion in her everyday work. Keeping with Bourdieu's framework, this emotion capital can be converted into other forms of capital, particularly economic capital. It is for this reason that Heidi Mattson trenchantly describes stripping as, "a perilous mixture of emotion and economics" (179).

49 According to Hochschild, the appropriate performance of emotion also requires the suppression of inappropriate emotions. This appears to be a difficult aspect of the performative work of strippers. A stripper named Blondie writes: "It's hard sometimes because you have to keep up. You can't be sad or depressed. You have to show this public image" (Futterman 46). Burana details the difficulty she found in suppressing her feelings of nervousness while working as a stripper. She writes:

I lie back, press my feet on the stage and push up onto my toes as I wind my torso and work my thong down. I roll over onto my side and straighten my legs, sending my thong flying. The lights are hot on my skin. Here I am, bare-assed on the last frontier. I start to float away from myself a little because I am nervous. But I'm pretty much ok. I stand up and try to stay in character. (Burana 174)

Burana reveals how difficult it can be for strippers to suppress their inappropriate emotions and avoid giving the audience any hints that what is going on in their minds and bodies may have little to do with their sexy and passionate performances. Bruckert details the account of a stripper who was unable to suppress her inappropriate emotions while on stage. She writes:

I'll listen to music and I'll watch TV and I'll just dance. I've been doing it, you know when you do it so often you're looking straight at people's eyes but you're kind of looking over yonder, looking at the TV there. You're doing your little crawl and you're giggling inside 'cause there's some show on. I mean I've lost it completely because I was doing a show and I was trying to talk to someone and The Simpsons came on TV and I started pissing myself laughing . . . I walked off the stage. (Bruckert 71)

Hochschild, as well as Thoits, would label such an example "emotional deviance", as the stripper's performance of sexiness and desire broke down because her inappropriate inner feelings were visible on the surface through her laughter.

50 A common emotion that strippers must suppress is anger. In their daily work, strippers must continuously deal with intoxicated men, many of whom have little respect for women and strippers in particular. Bruckert suggests that strippers are able to manage their feelings of anger and resentment towards customers through "hidden transcripts" or inner dialogues where the stripper tries to create scenarios, draw on emotive memories, and put things in perspective all within her own thoughts. One method of doing this, that Bruckert suggests, is to perceive the male patron as a small child; flight attendants are taught to use a similar technique to deal with unruly customers (Hochschild). Similarly, both Black and Bruckert suggest that strippers will often convince themselves that the men in the audience are just "wallets," or anonymous individuals to profit from. Hochschild also suggests the importance of teamwork or "collective emotion labor" to help social actors suppress inappropriate emotions. This is where the back stage region of the strip trade becomes especially important to strippers, as it gives them a region to talk with other dancers, and calm their inappropriate feelings — providing these feelings are not towards other dancers. Bruckert suggests that this is becoming problematic in the contemporary strip trade as increased industry competitiveness and instability is causing a decrease in stripper camaraderie.

51 Hochschild further suggests that emotion labor also involves influencing and guiding the emotions of others. To provide a contrast of how this occurs, Hochschild compares the emotion labor of flight attendants with bill collectors. The emotion labor of flight attendants entails inflating the customers' status and making them feel important, while the bill collector's emotion labor entails deflating the customers status to wear them down into paying what they owe. Hochschild refers to this as the toe and the heel of the corporate world. Interestingly, the emotion labor of female strippers appears to encompass both aspects of emotion work. Strippers must make the customer feel important and special to make their money, but they must also keep the men under control and collect their money from patrons that often refuse to pay following lap dances. Frank writes: "many sex workers also frequently joke about really being "therapists" and understand that their job is to be about boosting a

man's ego by convincing him that he is desirable, masculine, and successful" (119). The idea here is to inflate the status of the customer, to make them feel special, so that they will be more inclined to spend money and return for further visits to the strip club. Strippers must also be able to deflate the status of men to keep the patrons under control and ensure that they respect the boundaries of the dancers and pay what they owe.

52 Hochschild's main concern is that emotion work, such as that of the stripper, will lead to the commercialization of human feeling, which might estrange workers from their own true emotions. This type of emotional numbness appears to be common in the contemporary strip trade. Lewin writes: "If I reached a point of emotional exhaustion, I hid out in the bathroom... sometimes I spent half the day in hiding" (118). She further states: "I asked myself why I felt numb... Lovemaking, in my mind, became like a floor show for two people, and act, the "sex act". I could no longer locate myself in my body. I watched myself and imagined being watched [. . .] still, I must pretend" (Lewin 169). She continues, "I still felt a pain in my gut, a solitary sensation in an overall state of numbness. Wishing I could cry, I curled up in a ball on my living-room rug" (Lewin 174). Lewin was also the stripper who would fantasize about her lover while performing to evoke a more authentic performance; the result of this form of deep acting is that she appears to no longer be able to feel her emotions when she is actually with her lover — she just feels emotionally numb. Another stripper named Carmen writes:

It's a constant emotional rollercoaster. Sometimes it's gotten so bad when I wasn't making good money, and some customer would say something that I would misunderstand, and I would start crying and run into the dressing room. I couldn't function for an hour or two after that. You can't make any money when you aren't functioning. It gets even more frustrating. You have to be like a soldier. (Futterman 26)

Burana describes the emotional numbness that strippers encounter as "stripper damage." She defines stripper damage as a "permanently shell-shocked look... that inability to de-dramatize" (Burana 221).

53 Hochschild's theory of emotion work provides insight into how and why strippers must prepare, present and manage their emotions in their everyday work. In order to make money, strippers must continuously perform acts that elicit sexiness, availability, femininity and desire regardless of what they may actually be feeling. To abide by these feeling rules of stripping, strippers may engage in surface acting through the language of their body, or they may engage in deep acting by attempting to alter their inner feelings. The emotion labor of strippers also requires them to both inflate and deflate the status of their customers; they must give performances that appear authentic to accumulate emotional capital, while also managing to get paid without tainting this authenticity. This constant emotion labor comes at cost to

strippers; they encounter what Burana terms "stripper damage," and may become estranged from their true emotions.

Performative capital and the estrangement of self

54 The everyday work of strippers requires the simultaneous and continuous performance of: gender, body and emotion. Each of these elements are interrelated and simultaneously performed by female strippers. For example, performances of emotion are part of the social construction of one's gender, just as the performances of one's gender are part of the social construction of one's emotions. Furthermore, the body serves to symbolically communicate these "engendered emotions" to others in social interaction (Petersen 2004). This simultaneous performance of gender, body and emotion can be taken as the stripper's performance of self.

55 For the female stripper, the amount of money or economic capital she can accumulate is in direct relation to how closely her performance of self mirrors that which is valued in the field of stripping. That is, a stripper's success is determined by how much "performative capital" she can accumulate to be later converted into economic capital at a symbolic rate of exchange. Accumulating performative capital in the female strip trade appears to include such things as: behaving in a traditionally feminine manner, while simultaneously breaking traditional patriarchal norms; constructing and presenting a body that is tall, slim, feminine and well-endowed; presenting emotions that elicit sexiness, desire, femininity and passion; and, suppressing inappropriate or unvalued emotions such as sadness or anger. Furthermore, the accumulation of performative capital would require the stripper to make all of this performing appear "natural" — as though it was not even a performance at all.

56 It is through this symbolic transaction of performative capital into economic capital that the stripper might become estranged from her self. Former stripper Lily Burana supports this theory of the estrangement of self when she writes: "some very tiny part of every dancer's soul spills out when she performs" (180). Similarly, Heidi Mattson writes: "Stripping was a mine field. Playing the dumb blonde, Binki giggled and blushed her way to a stuffed safe deposit box — and a terribly confused self-image. She didn't know who she was anymore." And finally, Dahlia Schweitzer writes: "The fake is the real thing, and the real thing is a shadow of its former self" (66).

Conclusion

57 This study has revealed that the contemporary female strip trade is characterized by

precarious or unstable working conditions. These conditions have led to an intense level of competitiveness amongst female strippers and require strippers to engage in hard, skillful work. For strippers to have success in earning money they must abide by the values of the stripping field. In this study, the concept of performative capital has been developed to explain how and why female strippers prepare, present, and manage their gender, bodies, and emotions in their everyday work. This concept was derived through a synthesis of dramaturgical elements that appear in the work of Goffman, Butler, Bourdieu, and Hochschild.

58 Other studies, such as those done by Bruckert and Liepe-Levinson, have explored performative aspects of stripping in some detail; however, the synthesized dramaturgical theory developed in this paper provides a broader and more useful approach to studying the everyday performances of self of female strippers. This theory has important sociological concepts of gender, structure, power, and economics interwoven into a dramaturgical framework. The everyday interactions of strippers are generally mediated by money and thus, it seems vital to explore the interrelationship of economics and symbolic interaction. Applying these concepts allows one to move beyond the limitations of Goffman's dramaturgical approach.

59 The basic idea behind the synthesized dramaturgical theory developed in this paper is that the success of a female stripper's performance is in direct correlation to the amount of performative capital she is able to accumulate. The successful performance of female strippers entails abiding by the values of the stripping field, as previously discussed. Likewise, deviation from these values would limit the stripper's potential to earn money — the contemporary female stripping industry is competitive enough that if one stripper is not able to accumulate performative capital, another stripper can readily take her place. As evidenced throughout this paper, the accumulation of performative capital through the successful performances of gender, body, and emotion is how strippers are able to make their money — they convert performative capital into economic capital. However, it is also through this symbolic transaction that the self of the stripper is commodified and might ultimately lead to the estrangement of the stripper's self.

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Discrimination Against Women Lawyers in England and Wales: An Overview

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Traditionally, the legal profession has been a white male profession; women's and ethnic minorities' entry is quite recent. Despite the opening up of the profession, white males still account for the vast majority of senior positions, even though women have been present long enough to be part of the selection pools when vacancies for senior positions arise. One may infer from this observation that discrimination does take place in the legal profession in spite of the anti-discrimination legislation which has been implemented since the 1970s. What is at stake is a cultural legacy that disregards women and creates a glass ceiling preventing them from reaching the upper rungs of the ladder. In order to give an overview of discrimination against women lawyers in England and Wales, the author first presents the legislative and historical background, then focuses on various manifestations of sex discrimination in the legal profession (the pay gap, the glass ceiling and maternity leave), and lastly illustrates these issues with a case study.

I want women to have their rights. In the courts women have no right, no voice; nobody speaks for them. I wish woman to have her voice there among the pettifoggers. If it is not a fit place for women, it is unfit for men to be there. (Sojourner Truth, 1867)

1 A lawyer once made this humorous remark about my research topic: "discrimination against women in the legal profession? — there is none: there are no women!" Such a witty remark could be an appropriate starting point to introduce the issue of discrimination against women lawyers in England and Wales. One would expect the institutions defending people's rights to be "naturally" willing to promote equality, fairness and justice, as it seems to be what lawyers and judges are supposed to fight for, all their career long. One can thus wonder why they would be reluctant to enforce anti-discrimination measures and laws. Unfortunately, the reality is a long way to this idealistic view of the justice system. Traditionally, the legal profession has been a white male profession, and women and ethnic minorities' entry is quite recent. Despite the opening up of the profession, white males still account for the vast majority of senior positions, even though women have been present long enough to be part of the selection pools when vacancies for senior positions arise. One may infer from this observation that discrimination does take place in the legal profession in spite of the legislation which has been implemented since the 1970s to fight against this attitude. Women make up half the population and should play a part in public life and in key sectors such as justice. Indeed, they can hardly trust a system that is predominantly male, and expect such a system to advise, treat and judge them fairly. Even at the early stages of my research, I understood from my readings and interviews that the discrimination women encounter is quite

subtle and subjective in the sense that the formal barriers have been abolished and that protective legislation has been enacted. What is at stake, and more difficult to tackle, is a cultural legacy, the permanence of a "philosophy" which disregards women and creates a glass ceiling preventing them from reaching the upper rungs of the ladder. In order to give an overview of discrimination against women lawyers in England and Wales, I first present the legislative and historical background, and then focus on various manifestations of sex discrimination in the legal profession, i.e., the pay gap, the glass ceiling and maternity leave. Lastly, I illustrate these issues with a case study.

Legislative and historical background

Legislation

2 Discrimination mainly started to be fought against in the United Kingdom in the 1970s, with the enforcement of two key acts: the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) and the Race Relations Act 1976 (RRA, amended in 2000), which had been preceded by the Equal Pay Act 1970. Anti-discrimination law only applies to education, employment, and the provision of services; therefore discrimination outside those specific areas is not outlawed by the statutes (Fredman 83). The expansion of the legislation was largely influenced by European developments, like the Treaty of Rome (Article 119), which in 1973 had introduced into UK law the concept of unfair sex discrimination. Indeed, since the introduction of the European Communities Act 1972, European legislation has prevailed over British legislation, and the impact has been significant in terms of labour law and Human Rights, all the more since the constitution of the UK is uncodified. The Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA), directly inspired by the European Convention on Human Rights, has provided a greater visibility to the issues of Human Rights and discrimination, and has contributed to the creation of a kind of "Human Rights culture". Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) on the prohibition of discrimination reads "the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status." However, the protection provided by this Article is not complete because discrimination does not necessarily involve breach of one (or more) of the rights protected by the convention. Even though the protection of the HRA is only vertical (it only applies to the relations between the State and the individuals, not to the relations between individuals), and therefore has a limited impact, the fact that judges have to

comply with the HRA widens the horizontal scope of the legislation and helps protecting Human Rights. The Equality Act 2006 further encouraged the "Human Rights culture" and the fight against discrimination as it involves the creation of an umbrella body, the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR). In terms of sex discrimination, Part 4 of the Equality Act goes further than the SDA and states, "it is unlawful for a public authority exercising a function to do any act which constitutes discrimination or harassment." This provision applies to judges, whose function is of a public nature, but not directly to lawyers, whose function is of a private nature. In the legal field, the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 played a major role in the fight against discrimination thanks to the introduction of an in-depth reform of the appointment process of judges in order to increase equality and diversity in the judiciary. Though it was not part of the legislation, a similar reform was proposed simultaneously for the appointment of Queen's Counsels (QCs, senior lawyers), in order to increase equality and diversity among lawyers.

3 Indeed, women lawyers can be the victims of either *direct* or *indirect* discrimination, which can translate into a variety of results, among them restricted access to chambers and law firms, sexual harassment, glass ceiling, pay gap, or confinement to certain areas of law. Direct discrimination is defined as "less favourable treatment on grounds of sex, race, religion, etc." Less favourable treatment is regarded as being on grounds of sex, race, etc., if but for that person's race or sex he or she would not have been subjected to the less favourable treatment (Equality and Diversity Code for the Bar 51). The problem is that the victim of discrimination has to find a comparator: "a *comparison* of the cases of different persons of different sex or marital status [. . .] must be such that the relevant circumstances in the one case are the same, or not materially different, in the other" (SDA, I, 5; emphasis added). This causes trouble both on a theoretical and a pragmatic level, since you have to compare yourself to the *norm*, while the norm, be it for sex or race discrimination, is the *white male*. Practically speaking, the problem arises from the difficulty of finding a comparator, since you need strictly equal circumstances, even though you can construct a hypothetical comparator, whose circumstances are the same but not materially different. Indirect discrimination differs from direct discrimination as it is defined as a neutral attitude in appearance, but which *in effect* disadvantages a certain group. This is a particularly important area as far as sex discrimination is concerned. The EC Directives 2000/43/EC ("the Race Directive") and 2002/73/EC ("the Revised Equal Treatment Directive") have initiated a more liberal approach to indirect discrimination and define it as follows: "where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of one sex at a particular disadvantage compared with

persons of the other sex, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim, and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary." In spite of the protection offered by the legislation and by codes of conduct which are established both by the Bar Council and the Law Society (the two main regulatory bodies of the legal profession), women lawyers often abandon starting a law suit, notably for fear of victimisation, which happens when the victim of discrimination is disadvantaged because he/she has brought a claim to defend his/her rights. The Equality Code of the Bar mentions that "it is unlawful to victimise persons by treating them less favourably because they have brought proceedings under the Race Relations, Sex Discrimination or Disability Discrimination Acts, have given evidence or information relating to proceedings or have alleged that discrimination has occurred," but it is still extremely difficult for a lawyer to bring a claim for discrimination.

Women's entry to the legal profession

4 Having described the legislation and the kinds of discrimination women lawyers frequently have to face, I now retrace their entry into the profession. The legal profession in England and Wales is divided into two branches. Barristers are specialist legal advisers and courtroom advocates, whereas solicitors provide a wide range of legal services, from general legal advice, through preparing cases for court, to appearing as advocates (DCA). Solicitors work in law firms or in companies as legal advisers, and barristers work in sets of chambers which are not partnerships operating like a law firm. A set of chambers consists of individual barristers in independent practice, which acts as a unit for certain purposes only, like recruitment (COMBAR 4). All solicitors can appear as advocates in the lower courts and, since 1993, they have been able to seek to appear in the higher courts as well. Advocates are the lawyers who appear in court to argue a case before a judge or tribunal; barrister advocates are divided into junior and QC. The status of QC corresponds to a senior position and is crucial both in terms of prestige and income. Until 1996, only barristers were eligible for appointment, but the right was then extended to solicitors with rights to appear in the higher courts, and the appointment process was finally deeply modified in 2005 in order to increase diversity.

5 The first application by a woman to be admitted as a solicitor in the UK was in 1876 (McGlynn 141): before this date there is no record of a woman attempting to enter the legal profession. Her application was rejected and women had to wait until 1912 for a bill to be introduced in Parliament, which unfortunately did not get any support. Around the same time,

Gwyneth Bebb's application to be registered as a solicitor was rejected by the Law Society and her appeal was rejected similarly on the grounds that she was not a "person" within the terms of the Solicitors Act 1843. For Lord Justice Swinfen Eady, the very fact that women had never been solicitors meant that the law was that women *could not* be solicitors (Bebb v Law Society 1914). The fight continued thanks to the Committee for the Admission of Women to the Solicitors Profession. By 1919, the passing of the Sex Discrimination (Removal) Act achieved success, stating that women were persons and that they could hold public office. However, the persistence and resistance of traditions and customs remained very strong and this act did not mean that women were accepted into the legal profession. The first woman solicitor, Madge Easton Anderson, was admitted in Scotland in 1920; England and Wales followed with three women admitted in December 1922. They were only allowed to practise in restricted areas such as family law, matrimonial and probate work. Even today, women are often still confined to restricted areas of law, like family law. The number of women solicitors then hardly increased until the 1960s and 1970s: the numbers only tripled in 1973 with 222 women being admitted, which corresponded to 13% of the profession, thanks to a combination of factors. In 2006, 104,543 solicitors held practising certificates, and 44,393 of these were women, which amounts to 42.5%. Whereas since 1996 the total number of solicitors holding practising certificates has grown by 53.7%, the number of women holding practising certificates has more than doubled, having increased by 107.9% (Law Society statistics).

6 The situation is very similar as far as the bar is concerned; the pressure for change began in the 1870s when ninety-two women signed a petition demanding permission to attend lectures in Lincoln's Inn. The petition was rejected, and things only began to change in 1902 when Bertha Cave was accepted in the Grave's Inn, who soon reversed their decision stating that "males, and males alone, were to be admitted to practise at the bar." Thus women had to wait until the enactment of the Sex Discrimination (Removal) Act in 1919 to be admitted to the bar. Twenty women were practising in 1921 (0.7%) and by 1951, 151 women barristers amounted to the total of 5% of the Bar (McGlynn 144). Since barristers are not employees and chambers are not partnerships, the provisions of the SDA did not apply directly. Besides, at a meeting of Heads of Chambers in 1975 whose agenda was the oversupply of barristers, one Head of Chambers said: "Our prime concern must be for those young men in our chambers with wives and mortgages." In 1990, the situation changed, or at least the legal frame, with the Courts and Legal Services Act, which states for instance that "It is unlawful for a barrister or barrister's clerk, in relation to any offer of a pupillage or tenancy, to

discriminate against a woman" (64-1). Provision 64 therefore made the SDA applicable to chambers and barristers. Yet in the 1990s, it was estimated that no more than forty-five women were actually practising. As a result of the antidiscrimination legislation and a change in mentalities, the number of women being called to the bar rose sharply, from 8% in 1970 to 51.6% in 2006. Women now amount to 33.4% of the practising bar with 4,973 practising women barristers out of 14,890 practising barristers (Bar Statistics, December 2006).

7 The newly adopted reform of the QCs is also playing a part in the opening up of the legal profession. The reform was designed jointly by the Bar Council and the Law Society, together with the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA — Ministry of justice, ex Lord Chancellor's Department). The aim of the new selection process is to "serve the public interest by offering a fair and transparent means of identifying excellence in advocacy in the higher courts," as can be read on the QC application website. Such a reform should help remove the glass ceiling and as a consequence help reduce the pay gap, as the results are already encouraging.

Report of the QC Selection Panel for England and Wales 2005-06		
	Women applicants	Women appointed QC
2005-06	68	33 (48.5%)
1999-2000 (previous high)	53	12 (27.2%)

Fig. 1.

Nevertheless, efforts are still needed since 443 applications were received, of which 175, or 39.5%, were successful, which means that women only amounted to 15.3% of applicants and to 18.8% of appointed QCs.

8 Women's entry into the legal profession was recent and slow; if they now amount to a larger proportion of solicitors and barristers, the fact that fewer of them are appointed QC draws the attention to prevailing patriarchal patterns and the persistence of sex discrimination. Three symptoms of this sex discrimination are most striking: the pay gap, the glass ceiling, and the difficulties related to maternity leave.

Pay gap

9 When talking of pay gap and segregation, solicitors are the most straightforward example to deal with since they are submitted to the labour market in a more similar way to other occupations than barristers. Despite the fact that the number of women in the profession has increased dramatically since the 1950s, an important pay gap remains. The Women and Work Commission revealed in March 2006 that women lawyers are paid 21% less than men,

which is more than the national pay gap of 13% (Rose). These official statistics back up earlier Law Society findings and prompted a call for compulsory gender pay audits for all organisations employing female solicitors. Recent sociological research showed that there is no link between female work-rates and the degree of occupational segregation or the pay gap, which means that rising female employment does not lead to a reduction in occupational segregation and a reduction in the pay gap (Hakim¹). This is noteworthy as far as the legal profession is concerned, where, thanks to legislation, there was a remarkable increase in the percentage of women: it rose from 4% in 1971 to 14% in 1981 and to 27% in 1990. Although they now amount to 50% of lawyers (all categories — judges, barristers, advocates and solicitors), there is still a differential in earnings, and female solicitors occasionally sue their employers in order to be paid as much as their male counterparts, or at least start a procedure, as illustrated by the sex discrimination case which took place within the Lewis Silkin City firm. The Employment Tribunal proceedings between Tarlo Lyons and Sarah Collins were settled in March 2004; although the full terms of settlement remained confidential, both parties confirmed that as part of this settlement Ms Collins unreservedly withdrew all her claims (notably a claim under the Equal Pay Act) before the Tribunal including her claims of sex discrimination against Tarlo Lyons, according to a press release of Lewis Silkin. Such claims will probably be more and more frequent since the level of awareness is slowly rising, unless firms actually observe the model policies designed by the Law Society and respect the Equal Pay Act 1970 (revised 1996).

10 The permanence of the pay gap in spite of the rising number of women in employment was precisely confirmed by the Commission for Women and Work, who said the gap was despite 'gender segregation' in the profession breaking down in the 1990s to a larger extent than in previous decades, meaning that nearly half the solicitors are now female. "A 2004 salary survey of 790 solicitors found that across private practice, men earned an average of £55,000, compared to £35,125 for women" (Rose). Even though the gap was far smaller for employed solicitors, it still existed. This pay gap is partially explained by the fact that female solicitors do more types of work, e.g., family work, which are less well paid. The very fact that they specialise in this type of work reveals that discrimination still occurs. To sum up, earnings' differentials might be affected by a number of intervening variables (Sommerlad and Sanderson 165) which can include the size or partnership structure of the employing firm, the specific area of law worked in, the number of billable hours credited, the extent of direct contact with the client base of a firm, or the region in which the firm is located. The notion of

¹ Referring to "Women's share of top jobs, 1971, 1981, 1990". Sources: 1971 and 1981 Census data and 1990 Spring Labour Force Survey data for Great Britain. Data for all persons in employment.

choice, though it is constrained by broad structural realities, is also to be taken into account. Women, on average, do not want to spend as much time in commuting as men do, often because of childcare. Therefore, they are confined to a smaller labour market, i.e., to local, smaller firms, who pay less. This is very true of women solicitors, who are more likely to work in 'High Street' firms than in City firms (Shiner 11-13). It is interesting to note that awareness of market conditions may have qualified many applicants' choices in that they might "only have applied to firms that they thought they had a realistic chance of getting a job with, rather than those they particularly wanted to work in" (Shiner 21). This issue of the relationship between knowledge and expectations of the market is also highly significant.

11 About 50% of the pay gap is attributable to feminine patterns and feminine history, which has a big impact on the fact that women tend to leave the labour market more often than men, for their maternity leave(s), in order to raise their children, etc. It is worth noticing that women are often better paid than men in their 20s, that there is a short gap in their 30s, which increases in their 40s, 50s and 60s (Hakim). This is mainly due to two factors, the first being that women tend to leave the labour market earlier than men, and the second that they are less often promoted to senior positions. This can be illustrated the disproportion between men and women partners among solicitors in private practice and holding a practising certificate (Law Society statistics, table below). Another factor to be taken into account for the pay gap is the fact that women are much less likely than men to ask for higher earnings, promotion, etc. (Babcock and Laschever Ch.1). Consequently, they do not get them as often as men.

Glass ceiling

12 The gender differential in earnings (pay gap) is paralleled by a differential in status. Though it is hard to speak of occupational segregation when only dealing with one kind of occupation, vertical segmentation or segregation, also referred to as the glass ceiling, is easily observed in the legal profession. The distribution of women between the vertical segments of the solicitors' profession is asymmetrical; for instance, when employed in City firms, women are more likely to work as assistant solicitors than as associates or partners, as illustrated by the table below.

Solicitors working in private practice – 2006 (Law Society statistics)		
	Partners	Assistants
Men	39.5%	23.8%
Women	17.6%	51.6%

Fig. 2.

Besides, in 2006, of those solicitors with 10-19 years' experience in private practice, 60% of men were partners or sole practitioners compared with only 40% of women. This demonstrates that of those apparently equally eligible for partnership, a man is more likely to succeed than a woman. Besides, a new mode of status has been created, that of the "support lawyer"; while this is being shown as an example of flexibility and capacity of response to women's domestic role, the consequences for women's career trajectory are obvious, and this status is reminiscent of the "salaried partner" status which was formerly in use to absorb ambitious women without integrating them into the ownership structure of firms (Sommerlad and Sanderson 173). A close look at several City firms' websites, notably at the Law Society's directory, allowed me to notice that in 2004, the proportion of women partners hardly ever went beyond 25%. Parity was far from being achieved, even more so when taking into account the fact that in most of those firms the proportion was between 5% and 15% only.²

13 Women barristers are also confronted to the glass ceiling, which is not restricted to solicitors. In this branch of the legal profession, there are two kinds of senior position; the first one is Queen's Counsel, and the second the judiciary, as in England and Wales the selection pool for judges consists of barristers. It lately opened to solicitors, who are nevertheless less inclined to regard becoming a judge as an interesting option because the work they do in law firms differs widely from the work done by judges in court. Until recently, the number of women awarded QC or entering the judiciary was very low, for several reasons, including the lack of role models and the secrecy of the selection process which largely depended on co-opting and being known in certain clubs. The 2005 reforms have transformed the selection process into a transparent one — introduction of clear criteria and guidelines, assessment centre, panel of selection and possibility of getting feedback -, thus the number of women coming up the ladder is expected to rise sharply.

14 A short parallel with the judiciary can be drawn: the vertical segmentation of solicitors and difficulty for women barristers to reach senior positions is mirrored by a glass ceiling *within* the judiciary, where the representation of women in senior positions is deeply discouraging. As Cherie Booth QC recalled in the opening address to the Conference on Women and the Criminal Justice System in 2004,

[t]he statistics reveal a clear picture of gross and widespread under-representation; an under-representation that comes alarmingly close to near exclusion in certain sectors. Consider the following. Until late 2003, no woman had *ever* been appointed to the

² Examples taken from the Law Society directory, May 2004. Lewis Silkin: 43 partners, amongst whom 11 women (2 have just been appointed, in March 2004), which amounts to 25.58%. Salans: 30 partners, amongst whom 4 women, which amounts to 13,33%. Druces & Attler Solicitors: 15 partners, amongst whom 1 woman, which amounts to 6.66%. Elborne Mitchell Solicitors: 14 partners, amongst whom 3 women, which amounts to 21.42%.

House of Lords; now, following the appointment of Dame Brenda Hale, of the 12 judges in our highest court, only 1 is a woman. (4)

Her speech is confirmed by the table below [please click image to enlarge], which further shows that in order to retain its legitimacy, the legal profession does have to work on equal opportunities and to fight against the glass ceiling to accelerate the opening up of the profession and recruit from a wider pool of talents:

Lords of Appeal in Ordinary	Women	1 (9.09%)
	Total	11
Heads of Division (Lord Chancellor, Lord Chief Justice, Master of the Rolls, President of Family Division, Vice-Chancellor)	Woman	0 (0%)
	Total	5
Lord Justices of Appeal	Women	3 (8.11%)
	Total	37
High Court Judges	Women	10 (9.26%)
	Total	108

Fig. 3.

In addition, the glass ceiling also reduces the number of role models, who are extremely important for the attractiveness of the legal profession. Indeed, fear of discrimination seems to be one factor limiting women's choices of career, and recent research led by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) has found that women prefer to work for employers where they see evidence that they will be welcome (EOC 40). The lack of role models, correlated to the glass ceiling and to the fear of isolation, prevents a number of female students from choosing the legal profession since the EOC study revealed that one quarter of white British boys and girls think there are certain jobs they cannot apply for because of their sex, compared with over half of Black Caribbean girls and nearly two-thirds of Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls who are ruling out jobs because of their sex, ethnicity or faith (EOC 40). Thus, removing the glass ceiling is not only important *per se* but also for attracting women, and in particular minority ethnic women, into the profession.

15 The "trickle-up" argument, i.e., the explanation of the small proportion of women and ethnic minorities at senior positions because of their gradual and much later admission into the legal profession, has often been often put forward to account for the small number of women in senior positions in the judiciary or awarded QC. Doubts about this hypothesis began to be voiced by the early 1990s, since the rate of change had been slower than anticipated (Malleon 180). The legal reform group JUSTICE noted in 1992 that the proportion of women and ethnic minority lawyers appointed to the first ranks of Assistant Recorder and Recorder was smaller than that of men, and similar claims were brought by the

Association of Women Barristers to the Home Affairs Select Committee in 1996. All the figures mentioned above, as well as the government's new awareness of the urgent need for a reform of the selection process, belie the reliability of this argument.

Maternity

16 The glass ceiling is often reinforced by maternity, since women tend to make career breaks more often than men do because of pregnancy and childcare. Maternity is quite a delicate point from a discrimination law perspective, mainly due to the question of the *male comparator*: pregnancy is the most important and obvious situation in which there is simply no comparator. In the 1980s, the result was to dismiss claims of sex discrimination on grounds of pregnancy. Then, pregnant women used to be compared to men off sick, which was undesirable since it meant that pregnancy was considered as a form of illness. At least, this comparison with the ill man gave pregnant women the possibility to claim protection from sex discrimination law, but it did so at some cost since pregnancy should not be stigmatised as unhealthy (Fredman 99). Moreover, this comparison assumes that the only dimension of pregnancy with which the legislation should be concerned is its effect on the employee's ability to work and thereby ignores the positive medical and social reasons for leave. Different jurisdictions have moved away from this inappropriate comparative approach and attempted to suggest another notion of equality. The influence of the European Court of Justice is paramount here, since the Court clearly stated that there is no need for a comparator of any sort since only women are pregnant: unequal treatment or any other form of discrimination when a woman is pregnant is then *automatically* sex discrimination. This move is sowing the seeds for a female rather than a male norm in regards to parental rights, and the approach promoted by the European Courts is based more on substantive equality than on formal equality. It is also possible to avoid the difficulties and technicalities of the SDA in interpreting its provisions according to the aim of the Act; in other words, the purposive approach seems to be much more desirable than the technical approach as regards maternity — and discrimination more broadly.

17 Pregnancy used to be a good opportunity for employers to dismiss women workers but is now automatically considered as unfair dismissal. More insidiously, pregnancy plays a major role in statistical discrimination: an employer will believe that a young woman, especially if she is married, will have children, go on maternity leave and afterwards be less involved in her job because of childcare. Undeniably,

the employer [who has no distaste for hiring and working alongside blacks and women and] who seeks to maximise expected profit will discriminate against blacks or women

if he believes them to be less qualified, *reliable*, *long-term*, etc. on the average than whites and males. (Phelps 659; emphasis added)

Statistical discrimination is all the more unfair since those assumptions are based on averages and prejudice, and do not take into account the fact that some women do not want to have children, and that their wish is made possible thanks to contraception. Consequently, women are discriminated against on the grounds of pregnancy even before being pregnant. Thirdly, and this is more specific to the legal profession, until recently, women barristers who were pregnant often had to pay their rent when on maternity leave whereas they did not generate any income during this period. It is also very difficult for them to keep their clients over this period of time (this is also true of solicitors), and when they come back from maternity leave they frequently feel marginalised:

[The] first 6 months to 1 year back are the most stressful time as (i) the financial constraints of having no accrued debtors or income are exacerbated by having to find the child minder's salary or nursery fees up front, before any receipts start coming in; (ii) the children are tiny and at their most vulnerable and the pull of home is very strong; (iii) the return to chambers can be lonely and isolating as because of the way chambers works as a collection of self-employed people with no hierarchy of management, many members of chambers don't notice the practitioner has returned; and (iv) if work does not flow in quickly, the anxieties are exacerbated because the practitioner has no work and therefore has time to worry about (i) to (iii) above. (COMBAR 21)

18 To help mothers with these concerns, the Bar Council first published guidance on maternity policies in May 1992; the trigger for that guidance was Section 35a of the SDA, enacted by Section 64 of the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990, which made it unlawful for a barrister or barristers clerk (those who distribute work in a set of chambers) to discriminate against women pupils and tenants on grounds of sex. Since that guidance, it has become usual for sets of chambers to adopt maternity policies, but some have come to the idea quite late, and under pressure. The Bar Council has adopted a policy of "Mainstreaming" Equal Opportunities, i.e., introducing consideration of Equal Opportunities issues at each stage in the decision making process. As a matter of fact, equality of opportunity is not achieved just by affording access to a system of working practices that have been built up to suit the background and lifestyle of a particular group who have a traditional preponderance in the profession without taking into account the diversity of our society. The policies drafted by the Bar Council are used for three main purposes, namely fairness, compliance with the existing legislation and commercial advantage. In May 2004, they adopted a new maternity, paternity and flexible working policy to help barristers balance family life with practice at the Bar. Under the new guidelines, chambers should have written policies permitting members of

chambers to take career breaks, work flexible hours, part time or partly from home to enable them to manage their family responsibilities and remain in practice. Indeed, dealing with matters on an ad hoc basis is no substitute for a proper equal opportunities policy and creates an atmosphere of doubt and confusion, even though ad hoc arrangements can prove very generous. The new policy provides for a barrister's tenant seat in chambers to remain open for a minimum of one year while on maternity leave, six months of which should be free of rent and chambers expenses, where it used to be three months. Moreover, in order to allow flexibility, some of the period may be taken before the birth and a constructive approach to work during maternity leave is encouraged to allow women to "keep their hand in" (i.e., drafting and preparing advisory work from home, as they may be unable or unwilling to appear in Court). Partners with the responsibility for or share of the care of a child should be offered a minimum of one month's leave free of chambers rent and expenses. Jane McNeill QC who presented the new policy on behalf of the Bar Council said: "The Bar continues to reflect the diverse society it serves. With 1,502 called to the Bar last year [2003] of whom 51% were women it is important more than ever that family life is accommodated. Retention of women at the Bar is vital for the future of the profession and we hope that these new proposals go some way to address this." COMBAR, the Commercial Bar Association, echoed this statement, reaffirming that "the arrangements made for maternity leave are crucial in retaining women in the profession" (8). As they have assessed that returning from maternity leave can be difficult, they have designed guidelines which set out the practical steps that should be taken in respect of any member returning to work following maternity leave, and it is intended that chambers will assist any member returning to work after maternity leave in a practical way to get instructions and to re-establish her practice.

A case study: Siân Heard & Fellows v Sinclair Roche & Temperley [2004]³

19 The issues related to sex discrimination in the legal profession discussed above — be it the pay gap, the glass ceiling or maternity leave, can be illustrated by a recent case (the originating applications date back to March 2002), Siân Heard & Fellows v Sinclair Roche & Temperley (a firm) and Others. The issues were agreed as being that each Respondent discriminated against each Applicant in the following ways: i) unlawful direct sex discrimination/discrimination on the grounds of marital/family status, ii) unlawful indirect sex discrimination, and iii) unlawful sex discrimination by way of victimisation (3). The Applicants' complaints fell under two main headings, namely their lack of progression within

³ All the quotes and figures in the case study come from the case (case numbers 2201499/02 & 2201637/02. London Central Employment Tribunal. 2004).

the firm, which confirms the existence of a glass ceiling, and adverse treatment by the Respondents when the firm started to experience financial difficulties in mid-2001 and afterwards. The background of this case is highly interesting as it highlights the existence of a "discriminatory 'culture'" as the Tribunal itself phrases it (8). In July 2001, the firm Sinclair Roche & Temperley (SRT) comprised 36 partners of whom 30 were male and 6 female (4). Although the firm was established in 1934, only one woman in its entire history (some 70 years) reached the status of full equity partner (reclassified after 1999 as "senior equity partner"). At the lower level of salaried partner (reclassified after 1999 as "junior equity partner"), SRT has remained a predominantly male preserve: between 1995 and 1997, Siân Fellows was the only woman partner in London (the firm's offices were located in the City, Hong-Kong, Shanghai and Romania); between 1997 and 2000, Ms Fellows and Ms Heard were the only women partners in SRT (5). They both worked in the litigation department in London. The situation in this law firm is the epitome of the statistics mentioned earlier on the percentage of women achieving partnership and further details expose the mechanisms which prevent them from doing so, among which the persistence of "patronage" and the requirement of working full-time.

20 In 1995, the Commercial Lawyer Publication surveyed women partners in the top 50 London firms, and SRT was identified as one of the firms with the lowest percentages of women partners: by late 1995, more than a third of the assistant solicitors employed by the firm were women, but as 1st May 2002, out of 36 partners in total, only 6 were female. Of these, 5 were junior equity partners and one was a contract partner. Of these, only the Applicants and the contract partner had children (6). Moreover, at all relevant times, though the structure changed, the management and strategic direction of the firm was vested in male Managing Partners, male Senior Partners, and in the exclusively male Management and Strategic Committees. The PRE Committee, which dealt with the division of partnership profits, was also an all-male committee; which confirms once more that women are most of the time unlikely to be appointed to managerial positions. When in 1995 SRT introduced an equal opportunities policy modelled on the Law Society's Model Policy, neither the partner charged with day-to-day responsibilities for its implementation, nor the Senior Partner had *any* training in equal opportunities, and there was no annual monitoring of the policy to judge its effectiveness. The partner in charge even declared in cross-examination: "When I am seeking to increase profits, in a business context, equal opportunities is secondary" (6). This shows how little impact these policies can have, though they are designed to help employers implement measures in order to conform to the legislation. The lack of training, monitoring

and follow-up is fully disclosed here, and hints at the idea that legislation and codes of conduct are but one small step towards equality.

21 Besides, in 1998, allegations of sexual harassment were made against an equity partner, who had sexually harassed four junior female employees at the Christmas party (7). The accuracy of the complaints was not contested and there was pressure within the partnership for this to be dealt with firmly, but the Tribunal found out that it had been "swept under the carpet," which adds another stratum to the discriminatory "culture" of the firm. This discriminatory "culture" is exemplified by several declarations made by the Respondents: when defining the general profile for the candidate to be appointed as litigator to the Shanghai office in May 1994, it was agreed that he should be "preferably married, no children, white male," because "to some partners [. . .] it is inconceivable that a man will take instructions from a woman" (8). As regards achieving full equity partnership, the Tribunal was satisfied that neither of the applicants was given the same opportunity as their comparators to achieve high billing figures (i.e., the most important criteria) as neither had the client base to generate such income (16); furthermore, no adjustment was made for lack of billing over maternity leave period or for non financial contributions such as Ms Fellows' time as Legal Staff Partner (whereas the Managing partner was awarded a bonus for his no fee-earning work) (27). The Tribunal found that the process whereby applicants were made to partnership, in particular high level, lacked transparency, and that there was no system for apportioning or monitoring work within the partnership. On the contrary, "patronage" (17) was the rule and led to abuse: there was a lack of support concerning both Applicants, who "could not get beyond the lower stages of partnership — the glass ceiling — because they were not given the work that would permit them to achieve the desired level of billings" (35). Hence the three issues mentioned above, that of maternity leave, that of the confinement to certain areas of work and that of vertical segregation, are exemplified.

22 Furthermore, when the firm experienced financial difficulties, the Applicants were designated as the two Junior Equity Partners who would be "reclassified" (18). They were excluded from consideration for promotion without their knowledge or consent. In Ms Heard's case, it was due to the fact that most of her work was self-generated and therefore there was always a possibility of commercial conflict with the Respondent's existing clients; there was not always consistency in the way that her conflicts of interests and the conflicts of other partners were dealt with (28). Ms Fellows's exclusion was due to her expression of interest in working part-time, which also made her colleagues (the Respondents) overlook her when marketing opportunities arose (20). This despite the fact that there was sufficient

evidence before the Tribunal to conclude that both Applicants worked long hours when necessary, frequently late into the evening and at week-ends, and travelled extensively abroad when required, contrary to some of the Respondents' assumptions that they were unwilling to travel or to take on what might on occasion be uncomfortable and difficult foreign work (23). These assumptions form a relevant indicator of the sexist and macho culture which is at stake and highlight the necessity of clear *written* policies for part-time working and flexible hours. As far as merger negotiations with Stephenson Harwood were concerned, the Applicants' cooperation or inclusion was, at best, envisaged as marginal (24). Indeed, there was evidence of a difference in sex and a difference of treatment before the Applicants raised explicit sex discrimination complaints; they even made attempts to resolve the situation without alleging unlawful conduct on the part of the Respondents. Eventually, the Tribunal found that each Respondent indirectly discriminated against Siân Fellows by imposing a requirement or condition (pre 12 October 2001) or provision, criterion or practice (after 12 October 2001) that she work full time. They considered that this measure was disadvantaging women since "it is not disputed that by and large women have the greater responsibility for childcare in our society and that as a consequence, a considerably larger proportion of women than men are unable to commit themselves to full time working" (34). Siân Heard's complaint of sex discrimination was dismissed, and both Applicants' complaints of victimisation were dismissed (1). The unanimous decision of the Employment Tribunal was that the First Respondent (the firm) was ordered to pay Ms Fellows a compensatory award of £352,569 plus interest on past losses £18.49, and an award to injury to feelings of £25,000 plus interest of £6,807.19; and to pay Ms Heard a compensatory award of £475,597 gross, plus interest on past losses of £220.78, an award for injury to feelings of £20,000 plus interest of £5,445.75, and an award for aggravated damages of £3,000 plus interest of £169.10 (Remedy Decision of the Employment Tribunal 1). The decision shows that the sums awarded to victims of sex discrimination can be quite significant, a fact which reveals that sex discrimination is not regarded as trivial by the courts, and may help persuade employers to implement equal pay and equal treatment measures.

23 This case study, as well as the statistical and historical data presented above, unmistakably show that discrimination does take place in the legal profession. Even though it was quite recently, Parliament has enacted a series of Acts, most of them being relevant for all fields of employment, and some of them being specifically oriented towards the legal profession, like the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 in order to promote equality and put an end to the previously described discriminatory practices — which are not endemic to the

legal profession but sadly enough much more broadly spread. Combined with the action led by the Law Society and the Bar Council, and the research undertaken by the Department for Constitutional Affairs, they should help put an end to the discriminatory culture of the legal profession.

Conclusion

24 It is expected that women will continue to make up just over half of new entrants to the profession within 20 or 25 years. The status and number of women within the profession will depend on the perceived levels of discrimination in the employment practices of solicitors' firms and sets of chambers, the opportunities for flexible working and eventually on women's view of the legal profession compared with other careers. Indeed, among forty recommendations to tackle the culture in schools and workplaces that create job segregation and leave women lagging behind men in the pay stakes, the Commission for Women and Work said the government should establish a UK-wide "quality part-time work change initiative" (Rose). This would support moves to achieve a culture change so that more senior jobs — particularly in the skilled occupations and the professions — are open to part-time and flexible working.

25 As legislation fighting discrimination has developed and is now truly comprehensive, and as the government has undertaken a reform of the judiciary deeply re-structuring the system, other means have to be found to combat sex discrimination. The development of techniques of enforcement and the adoption of a purposive approach to anti-discrimination legislation could be suggested as possibilities to help the promotion of equality and fairness. The measures taken to tackle equality and diversity, notably in the legal profession, seem to have identified the main hurdles, in particular thanks to the extensive consultation of organisations. However, the government's engagement in favour of a 'Human Rights culture' is not necessarily as strong as suggested by their rhetoric, as shown by the appointment of Ruth Kelly as Minister for Women and Equality in May 2006 while it is widely known that she is a member of the conservative Catholic sect *Opus Dei* and holds extremely traditional views, such as considering that homosexuality is a sin. Since 1997, when she became an MP, she has missed 12 votes on homosexuality, equal rights and related issues (Pierce). The situation of equality and diversity is therefore ambivalent, as the gap between speech and deeds seems to widen, but the efficiency of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 and of the Queen's Counsel reform for the opening up of the legal profession should soon be measurable,

and the interest and activity surrounding equal opportunities allows a relative optimism for women's future in the legal profession.

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Staging Femicide/Confronting Reality: Negotiating Gender and Representation in *Las Mujeres de Juárez*

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Abstract:

Focusing on the maquiladora system and the cases of femicide that continue to take place on the U.S.-Mexican border, this paper asks how theatre, in performance and as dramatic literature, can be employed in the form of "staged narrative" to explore human rights violations around the world. I will use Anzaldúa's transfronterista feminist lens, Saldaña's qualitative research framework for ethnodrama, and a feminist view of Brechtian performance theories, in an attempt to unpack some of the gender-based violence issues that seem to be causing the city of Ciudad Juárez to implode on itself. Using *Las Mujeres de Juárez* by Rubén Amavizca, I hope to reinforce Arriola's conclusion that "[i]n general, what can be said about the maquiladora system is that it is hardly a humane system of employment and hardly something the knowing United States citizen would want to support" (809).

Next to oil, *maquiladoras* are Mexico's second greatest source of U.S. dollars. Working eight to twelve hours a day to wire in backup lights of U.S. autos or solder miniscule wires in TV sets is not the Mexican way. While the women are in the *maquiladoras*, the children are left on their own. Many roam the street, become part of *cholo* gangs. The infusion of the values of the white culture, coupled with the exploitation by that culture, is changing the Mexican way of life. (Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* 32)

I came to Juárez to track down ghosts. And to listen to the mystery that surrounds them. (Lourdes Portillo, *Señorita Extraviada*)

Perpetual Impunity: A Way of Life

1 There will be no answers at the end of this paper. The answers are out there; someone knows who is killing women along the border between Mexico and the United States. Some say this is the resulting phenomenon inevitably plaguing global border cities, "where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds" (Anzaldúa 25). Examining the localized examples of Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, and Chihuahua City in Mexico, we find that for every young woman ferociously cut down in the flower of her youth, hundreds more seem to flock from around the country to take her place in the Third World "industrial complex," the *maquiladora*. I intentionally use the term *flock* to convey the brutal carnage to which these women, after almost fifteen years of an ongoing *femicide*,¹ come willingly, like lambs to the slaughter. In her 2001 documentary film, *Señorita Extraviada*, Chicana filmmaker Lourdes Portillo claims, "Juárez is the city of the future. As a model of globalization, Ciudad Juárez is spinning out of control."

¹ The slightly different terms femicide and feminicide are used in different resources to describe what is happening in these cities, as well as in other Third World countries, as a result of globalization.

2 It is nearly impossible to imagine, with the international exposure of this fatal trend, that women would still come, knowing what they must. The workers who come are described in many sources, spanning the fields of law, border studies, gender studies, and popular culture. One law professor explains, "they are often extremely poor, having left barren farmlands in Mexico's interior or impoverished regions that lack adequate health, education, and public services" (Arriola 735). And although one might argue that televisions and Internet access are scarce in the poorest communities scattered throughout the countryside, the news of more than 400 women brutally raped and murdered is ubiquitous in Mexico. But work is work; a salary, no matter how meager, is better than nothing.

3 Another problematic concern is the rampant misinformation formulated by the Mexican government regarding the murders in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua City. According to Pheona Donohoe, a writer and activist based in Melbourne, Australia, who has traveled to Ciudad Juárez, "[t]he identity of those responsible for the murders is unknown, although many believe that the government is covering up the truth. For now, at least, the women remain victims of widespread phallic terrorism" ("Women"). A description of the documentary film *Dual Injustice on the Witness: See It, Film It, Change It* website, claims that "[a]lthough Chihuahua's Attorney General has referred to the problem of women as a 'myth', a large pink cross filled with embedded nails and hanging nametags for each a [sic] victim sits in front of the Governor's office to remind authorities of the soaring numbers." It is a monument that attests to the fact that, "[i]n 2004, 31 women were brutally killed in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, which represents a 58% increase compared to 2003. In January to March 2005 alone, six bodies have been found so far. Meanwhile, those tortured to confess to the murders sit in jail" (*Witness*).

4 This last piece of information refers to the gender-blind impunity and unchecked injustice that permeates the legal system in which male family members are being arrested, tortured into confessing, tried, and convicted of raping and murdering female victims. One example of this miscarriage of justice is the case of David Meza:

Neyra Azucena Cervantes was last seen on her way home from school in Chihuahua City around 6pm on May 13th, 2003. When her family learned of her disappearance that evening, they contacted the police. However, as authorities were typically slow to investigate, Neyra's relatives created a task force of family and friends to search for her. Among the many called upon, David Meza, Neyra's cousin, traveled 1,500 miles from the southern state of Chiapas to join their search and demand police assistance. As negligent authorities took a month to put up missing signs of Neyra and reassigned new officers to her case every eight days, the family grew more critical of the police's efforts. As the days and weeks passed, the family increasingly pressured authorities to properly investigate Neyra's disappearance. During a heated discussion in their last meeting with the Attorney General, David directly challenged his competence, to

which he responded, "You want a culprit? You're going to have him very soon." One week later, David was in jail. (*Witness*)²

A report by Amnesty International, titled "Ending the Brutal Cycle of Violence Against Women in Ciudad Juárez and the City of Chihuahua," reinforces these claims:

Consistent allegations of torture made by suspects detained and interrogated by state judicial police have never been properly investigated, undermining the credibility of investigations and violating the fundamental rights of suspects and families of victims. Despite the risk of grave miscarriages of justice, there have been no advances in the investigation and punishment of torture or independent judicial review of gravely flawed criminal proceedings, which do not adhere to basic fair trial standards. (Amnesty)

5 In another strange twist of the cycle, the U.S. government managed, for over ten years, to turn a blind eye to the tragic misgivings of its neighbor to the South, while still benefiting financially from the enormous profit margin on the border. After all, the vast majority of *maquiladoras* are owned and operated by U.S. Fortune 500 companies. And to make matters worse, when we examine the border from a northern perspective, "the prevailing attitude [is] that whatever happens on the other side is of no concern to Americans, no matter how bad the problem" (Arriola 754). Leslie Sklair's 1992 article in the *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, "The Maquilas in Mexico: A Global Perspective," published prior to the discovery of the first victims in Ciudad Juárez, might be looked at as a harbinger of things that were to come. Sklair explains: "The maquila industry originated in the mid-1960s, when the Mexican government introduced a Border Industrialization Program which permitted Mexican and foreign-owned factories to operate along the border duty free on condition that they exported all their products" (91). Further elaborating on the state of affairs at that time (some fifteen years ago), Sklair reveals that "[t]hese factories, mainly US-owned, were also able to take advantage of tariff regulations covering the re-import of assembled unfinished goods using US-manufactured components. Mexico now has about 2000 maquilas, employing almost half a million workers" (91-92). Ironically, the Introduction to this article foreshadows the fact that "the transnational corporations operating through the maquila industry have created a transnational capitalist class in the border region and have reinforced a culture-ideology of consumerism, and this *has gradually begin to make a significant difference to the ways in which Mexico and the global capitalist system relate to each other*" (92; emphasis added). More prophetic is Sklair's Conclusion, which alleges that the "'maquilisation of Mexico' along

² For David's testimony regarding the torture he was subjected to see the Resource Center of the Americas.Org: Working for Human Rights in the Global Economy link at http://www.americas.org/item_27514#DAVID%20MEZA%20ARGUETA%20-%20Testimony%20of%20Torture.

the border" is a "new globalizing force [that] offers not only promises of economic change, but a hidden agenda of a new way of life" (104-105).

6 Who could have known that the "hidden agenda" and this "new way of life" would include the reality that, "[s]ince 1993, more than 400 women have been violently killed and there have been over 4,000 registered complaints of disappeared women in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua. This systemic problem has been called 'femicide' and has been known as the most embarrassing human rights scandal in Mexico's recent history" (*Witness*). How can a system like this be allowed to continue? Is it really that easy to turn a blind eye and ignore this situation?

Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua City: the "Maquilisation of Mexico"

7 My own introduction to the femicide taking place along the Mexico-US border happened in 2001 when I took a graduate level research course called "Borderland Survival Texts: Race, Gender, and Trauma in the Global Age," taught by Dr. Arturo Aldama, who at that time was teaching in the Chicana/o Studies Department at Arizona State University. The class explored multi-media texts and literature, both fiction and non-fiction works, which opened up the scar tissue on what Anzladúa referred to as "*una herida abierta* (an open wound)" (25).

8 In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzladúa vividly sets the stage for the development of a *transfronterista* feminist lens around this open wound explaining that "before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country — a border culture. Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*" (25). Describing both the physical and metaphorical signification of this geographic construction, she writes, "a border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition" (25). Her warning is clear: "Do not enter, trespassers will be raped, maimed, strangled, gassed, shot. The only 'legitimate' inhabitants are those in power, the whites and those who align themselves with whites. Tension grips the inhabitants of the borderlands like a virus. Ambivalence and unrest reside there and death is no stranger" (25-26).

9 As our class progressed, I began to wonder how it was possible that this tragedy had been going on for eight years already (now almost fifteen years) and yet I had never heard the story of these women. It was also in this class that I watched Portillo's chilling documentary, *Señorita Extraviada*, for the first time. I remember driving home from class the night of this

screening, haunted by the images of young women's faces that did not look all that different from my own. I wondered, if our photographs were all placed side by side, would anyone have been able to separate the *maquiladora* workers from the Ph.D. student? I almost wasn't able to separate the images myself.

10 While I make no excuses for my own ignorance up until that point, I have come to realize, through my research, that many people, even to this day, have no idea what is happening in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua City. In a report he wrote for *Harper's Magazine* in December 1996, Charles Bowden captures this sense of helplessness brought on by a veiled ignorance that was seemingly unavoidable, albeit unacceptable, in his description of his own introduction to these murders:

I am here because of a seventeen-year-old girl named Adriana Avila Gress. The whole thing started very simply. I was drinking black coffee and reading a Juárez newspaper, and there, tucked away in the back pages, where the small crimes of the city bleed for a few inches, I saw her face [. . .]. The story said she'd disappeared, all 1.6 meters of her. I turned to a friend I was having breakfast with and said, 'What's this about?' He replied matter-of-factly, 'Oh, they disappear all the time. Guys kidnap them, rape them, and kill them.' Them? Oh, he continued, you know, the young girls who work in the maquiladoras, the foreign-owned factories, the ones who have to leave for work when it is still dark. Of course, I knew that violence is normal weather in Juárez. As a local fruit vendor told an American daily, 'Even the devil is scared of living here.' (44)

I employ this narrative here to establish my conviction that only by telling the human stories related to this tragic border region can we begin to feel something that might even approach an ethical response to the human rights violations brought on by this gender-based calamity.

11 Although I find it troubling that in the 37 page printout of an article published in 2000 by the *DePaul Law Review*, titled "Voices From the Barbed Wires of Despair: Women in the Maquiladoras, Latina Critical Legal Theory, and Gender at the U.S.-Mexico Border," written by visiting law professor Elvia Arriola, there is no mention of the (up to that time) seven year pattern of vicious murders plaguing the region, I do concur with the author on several points. For example, in her report she does elucidate the fact that "[s]ince the 1960s, the American-owned maquiladoras have increasingly employed young women from destitute rural homes in the interior of Mexico to work for miserly wages in assembly plants bearing the icons of multi-national corporations ('MNCs') such as Sony Electronics, Mattel Toys, Casio Manufacturing or Honeywell" (758-759). She goes on to explain how "[t]he law and public policy that enliven the maquiladoras also sustain a widespread corporate practice of exploitative jobs and extreme low wages without providing protection from the unsafe or dangerous working conditions, against the sexual harassment, or the pregnancy discrimination" (759). She concludes, "[i]n this author's humble opinion, narratives are the

only way to get at the heart of the systemic abuses that have been justified in public policy or law [. . .] by both nations. A critical methodology based on narratives will help produce a social justice theory that is not just theory" (759).

12 While Arriola does mention that "[b]etween 1993 and 1996, according to the INS more than 1,000 people died trying to cross the border between Mexico and the United States" (741-742), and although she does point to the fact that "[t]he high number of deaths caused by border crossings, as well as a range of other practices engaged in by the INS, have begun to invite the criticism of international watches for human rights abuses in Mexico and around the world" (750), there is a silencing of voices in her article; the voices of the "[o]ver 370 women [who] have been gang-raped, found savagely mutilated with ritualistic markings, burnt and dumped in the Chihuahua desert" (Donohoe, "Women"). These women never had the chance to even make an attempt to cross the border; the border swallowed them alive. Even while she claims that "many feminist and Latina critical legal theorists have recognized the role of introducing women's 'voice' as a kind of praxis" (757), there seems to be a gag order on her "witnesses." The stories narrated recount the cruel and unjust conditions that exist in the *maquiladoras*, but nothing in this report comes close to the brutal reality:

Due to the nature of maquiladora shift work, many women are forced to travel long distances to and from work between dusk and dawn. Although the factories provide limited shuttle bus service, many women still travel between their homes and bus terminals involving unsafe and desolate routes. It is on such journeys that many of the women disappear. For those who have relocated to Juárez from other parts of Mexico there are no concerned friends to report them missing to authorities. Many murdered women therefore remain unidentified and unclaimed. Family members from remote towns, villages and farms may never learn about the loss of a female relative. This is perhaps the saddest and most frustrating element of the femicide. These unclaimed and anonymous bodies lose their human context and become mere statistics. (Donohoe, "Women")

13 Perhaps this paper is even more informed by Arriola's article because, in becoming hypersensitive to the absence of these women's stories, I am increasingly adamant that while certain disciplines may tread a safer line, I believe the theatrical stage is an arena where we must risk telling stories that people might not want to hear. I do agree, wholeheartedly, with Arriola that we must "reveal the human drama that underlies this historic economic conflict and inter-dependency between Mexico and the United States [. . .]" (760). We must tell the stories of "workers, of people entitled to the minimum human rights of food, shelter, clothing, education, and medical care" (761). Arriola asserts that "[a] human rights perspective based on women's narratives is able to capture graphically the tremendous social conflict and pain that is [sic] also a byproduct of the wildly 'successful' NAFTA along with the expansion of

the maquiladora program at the border" (761). I believe by combining a human rights perspective with performance theory we approach a critical perspective through which an examination of the difficult truths many people face on a daily basis might be possible.

14 In an essay titled "Instinct over Intellect (Politics): Femicide in Juárez," Donohoe laments the shower of media and pop-culture exploitation raining down on the survivors in the wake of the murders who are bombarded with the "[d]ozens of movies, TV shows, songs, theatre performances, artwork and books [. . .] in production with storylines inspired by the femicide in Juárez, many sensationalizing and glorifying the murders." While I agree that sensationalizing the femicide is unacceptable, there are examples of these representations that have been created for the purpose of educating the public, and some that benefit the families and various agencies that work on their behalf.³

15 From my own perspective — as both an artist and scholar — I believe theatre, in performance and as dramatic literature, can be employed in the form of "staged narrative" to explore human rights violations around the world. In this paper I will use Anzaldúa's *transfronterista* feminist lens, Saldaña's qualitative research framework for ethnodrama, and a feminist view of Brechtian performance theories, in an attempt to unpack some of the gender-based violence issues that seem to be causing this city to implode on itself. Using *Las Mujeres de Juárez* by Rubén Amavizca⁴, I hope to reinforce Arriola's conclusion that "[i]n general, what can be said about the maquiladora system is that it is hardly a humane system of employment and hardly something the knowing United States citizen would want to support" (809).

16 Rafael Loret de Mola opens his book *Ciudad Juárez* with the words, "Yes it's true: one has to live in Ciudad Juárez to understand it" (15; my translation). For the sake of the women in Juárez, and women around the world living the same nightmare, I believe we must turn the spotlight on this atrocity — whether or not we ever get the chance to visit, let alone live in Ciudad Juárez. I have seen how theatre has the potential to motivate a dialogue around issues of social justice beyond the stage. It is this potential that I hope to reveal through this paper.

³ During the production I write about in this article of Rubén Amavizca's *Las Mujeres de Juárez*, Casa Amiga, Amnesty International USA and the Red Cross of Mexico were among the entities that benefited from our performances both in the United States and Mexico. In addition, on May 10, 2005, the play was performed on an outdoor stage in front of the Arizona State Capitol after a day of rallies that were conducted for immigrants' rights. Several of the cast members traveled to Ciudad Juárez the night before to escort several of the mothers across the border so that they could be in the audience. This play is not intended to exploit the families, but to bring this subject to light.

⁴ At this time this play has not received formal publication, although it has been produced in several cities in both the United States and Mexico.

Staging Injustice/Staging Reality

17 In 1955, Bertolt Brecht asked: "Can the present-day world be reproduced by means of theatre?" (Willet 274). Excerpts from his own response to this query reveal his conviction that "[the] time has passed when a reproduction of the world by means of theatre need only be capable of being experienced. To be an experience it needs to be accurate" (Willet 274). In addition, according to Brecht, "the present-day world can only be described to present-day people if it is described as capable of transformation" (Willet 274). I hope to show how theatre addressing the femicide in Ciudad Juárez reveals a world that people want to change. As Diana Taylor described the "theatre of crisis" written by several major playwrights from Latin America in the late 1960s, this type of theatre "is far more complex and contradictory than any purely instrumental theatre. Rather than propose any clear directions or answers, this theatre explores the critical situation with all its ruptures and contradictions, with all its political dangers and ideological blind spots" (9). Like the playwrights in Taylor's critical text, who include José Triana of Cuba, Griselda Gambaro of Argentina, Emilio Carballido of Mexico, Enrique Buenaventura of Colombia, and Egon Wolff of Chile, I believe Amavizca joins the ranks of "dramatists who do believe in theatre as a vehicle for social change, albeit the slow and difficult-to-measure change of educating an audience" (18).

***Las Mujeres de Juárez* by Rubén Amavizca**

Various cast members: Twelve years, four hundred women murdered, and not one responsible party. Twelve years, four hundred women murdered, and mountains of lies. Twelve years, four hundred women murdered, and tons of impunity. Twelve years, four hundred women murdered, and walls of silence.

Madre: The only thing we ask for is justice. That the murders be solved and that the governments do something to stop it. We want to live and work in peace. Be able to walk in the street without the fear that one of us may not return someday. We ask you to join us and shout, Enough! Is that too much to ask?"
(Amavizca, Scenes 30 and 31; my translation)

18 After the actors onstage⁵ recite the names of almost two hundred women whose bodies have been identified in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico, this simple question is begged of the audience. "Is that too much to ask?" Los Angeles based playwright Rubén Amavizca continues to revise his ethnodrama *Las Mujeres de Juárez* against the backdrop of the real life

⁵ All references to the staging of this play contained in this essay refer to my work as the director of the 2005 production in Phoenix, Arizona, under the aegis of Teatro Bravo. This version was subsequently produced by the Latino Research Center at the University of Nevada, Reno; as a benefit for the Red Cross of Mexico in Puerto Peñasco, Mx; and finally, in 2006 during the Western Regional Conference of Amnesty International USA in Tucson, Arizona. All references to the text of the play are based on the script used for this production and may not reflect revisions made by the playwright. The version of the text used is on file with the author of this paper.

tragedy afflicting young women on the border between Juárez and El Paso, Texas. When I met with the playwright in Los Angeles during a symposium at the University of Southern California in March 2005, he explained that the latest revisions he had made to his play were the results of finding out that a majority of the fathers involved in these unsolved murders have mysteriously died within two to five years of their daughters' disappearances. Alcoholism, depression, and suicide have claimed the lives of men who feel helpless in a situation where there are no answers.

19 This gripping text has been ripped from the headlines of both North American and Mexican periodicals, official reports issued by Amnesty International, the Penal Code of the State of Chihuahua, and even the Prevention Campaign launched by the police force of Ciudad Juárez to promote the safety of the city's female inhabitants. Coupled with Brecht's question regarding the theatre of his time, I took the mother's question from the final scene of Amavizca's play and began asking my own questions regarding how theatre could be used to expose human rights violations and motivate social activism in its many forms. I believe it was serendipity that while I was directing this play, Johnny Saldaña's latest book, *Ethnodrama: An Anthology of Reality Theatre*, was published by Altamira Press.

20 I encountered the first answer to my questions in Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln's foreword to the series "Crossroads in Qualitative Research," in which Saldaña's book appears. They assert their "belief that the performance-based human disciplines can contribute to radical social change" (ix). After our opening night performance, one of the actors was approached by a gentleman in the lobby of the theatre. The audience member admitted, through tears, that he had read many articles, watched the news on countless occasions, and had been confronted with this material through the media's representation of young women who deserved what they got, and yet, for the first time, the humanity of the situation touched his heart. That night, through theatre, we reached into the audience and brought these atrocities to light.

21 According to Saldaña, the goal of ethnotheatre "is to investigate a particular facet of the human condition for the purposes of adapting those observations and insights into a performance medium" (1). Amavizca has not only crafted his play through technical research involving the history and official documentation of these cases, he has also explored the very human side of this tragedy. The first time I met Norma Andrade and her daughter, Maria Luisa Garcia Andrade — mother and sister to Ligia Alejandra Garcia Andrade, whose lifeless body was found wrapped in a blanket in a waste ground close to a factory in Ciudad Juárez on February 21, 2001 — they were traveling with Rubén. Amavizca's connection to the families

and their lives is real, it is genuine, and it speaks through his play, *Las Mujeres de Juárez*.

22 In making the claim that "all playwrights are ethnodramatists," Saldaña underscores the core of theatre as "both a forum and medium for expressing the sociopolitical climate of the times" (4). The sociopolitical climate of the times in Ciudad Juárez is dismal, with no end in sight to these heinous crimes. As I researched the seemingly never ending paper trail of news articles and circuitous links on the Internet, questions turned into more questions, while the answers seemed to linger just beyond the grasp of authorities. As a theatre artist committed to using the art form as a weapon against social injustice and oppression, I stand behind Saldaña's claim that,

With ethnographic performance [...] comes the responsibility to create an entertainingly informative experience for an audience, one that is aesthetically sound, intellectually rich, and emotionally evocative. Ethnotheatre reveals a living culture through its character-participants, and if successful, the audience learns about their world and what it's like to live in it. (14)

In this project, however, the challenge was to reveal to the audience the double edged reality of what it is like to die on the border between Mexico and the United States, and what families must do to survive in the aftermath of these tragic losses.

Difficult Moments

23 At this point I turn to the challenges I faced as a director confronting the most difficult moments captured in *Las Mujeres de Juárez*. My choices are a direct reflection of my attempt to echo Saldaña's assertion that "the 'reality-based' mounting of human life onstage is a risky enterprise" (32). Amavizca's play calls for the staged representation of the physical violence, rape, and murder enacted upon the vulnerable protagonist of the play, Maritza López Pérez.

24 In Scene 9 of Amavizca's text, a graphic depiction of two assailants is narrated through stage directions (18-21). The first time I read the play I was physically repulsed by the stark description of a young woman being physically brutalized by two men. The jolt caused by reading this scene in the play reminds me of Charles Bowden's account of seeing a certain photograph in Ciudad Juárez:

Jaime Bailleres has projected a beautiful black carved mask on the screen. The head is tilted and the face is smooth with craftsmanship. The hair is long and black. It takes a moment for me to get past this beauty and realize that the face is not a mask. She is a sixteen-year-old girl with a forgotten name. She was found in the park by a bridge linking Juárez to El Paso; the park on both sides of the Rio Grande is dedicated to friendship between the two nations. The girl's skin has blackened in the sun, and the face contracted as it mummified. She was kidnapped, raped, murdered [...]. The lips of the girl pull back, revealing her clean white teeth. Sounds pour from her mouth. She is screaming and screaming and screaming. (46)

Staging the violent scene depicted in Amavizca's script would entail giving voice to the scream described by Bowden. After the initial shock that came from reading the text, I forced myself, as a director, to visualize my own interpretation of this all too vivid scene.

25 As a woman I wondered how the portrayal would affect the actress playing Maritza. The repetition of a scene such as this, through a production schedule of several weeks, had the potential to cause irrevocable psychological damage to anyone. My mind shifted to the men, actors who would have to perform this barbarous act, over and over again. The images were disturbing, regardless of the fact that they would be choreographed and rehearsed. And then it came to me, a solution materializing in my mind as a projection on the silver screen.

26 Ultimately, my concern was to respectfully portray the victims in these circumstances, without sugar-coating their experiences. I knew that, in reality, I would never be able to even come close to capturing the horror of the last few moments of these women's lives, but I had to make an attempt to give them back their voices. I needed to reach audience members in an attempt to motivate change. I was also determined to show consideration for the continuing struggles of the families fighting for justice in Ciudad Juárez. An informational pamphlet distributed by the organization, "Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa" [May Our Daughters Return Home], describes their experience:

The situation of femicide in Ciudad Juárez has placed us in a vulnerable position, as we are poor families who are faced with serious difficulties in trying to confront our daily lives. Added to this, the tragedy of losing our daughters has changed our lives. Our physical and emotional health has been seriously damaged, as we have also lost other loved ones, like fathers, brothers, sisters, and children who have succumbed to their ill health fighting in an as of yet unfruitful struggle, caused by the pain of searching for a clarification of the crimes and a demand for justice, which has required of our part procedures and negotiations necessitating large emotional expenditures and a significant decrease in our physical health. (my translation)

This nightmare is all too real for many of the citizens of Ciudad Juárez who live in constant fear of losing another loved one. The formidable task before me was to do justice to a situation in which Justice played no part.

27 As a director I was faced with a question regarding the medium through which to present this scene. In a production directed by the playwright himself, performed by his company, Grupo de Teatro SINERGIA of Los Angeles, Amavizca chose to stage the rape scene in shadow, behind a scrim. My artistic interpretation of this scene relied on my own answer to the inquiry posed by Johnny Saldaña, who asks, "will the participant's story be credibly, vividly, and persuasively told for an audience through a traditional written report, video documentary, photographic portfolio, website, poetry, dance, music, visual art installation, or ethnodrama" (2)? In this production of *Las Mujeres de Juárez*, I chose to

marry the forms of film and theatre to create a multi-media performance incorporating video technology projected on a screen at the center of the stage.

28 My main concern with staging the rape live was the averted gaze of audience members who might not wish to witness such a graphic violation of human rights. I believe that we, as a society, have been conditioned to accept the graphic depiction of war, violence, sexually explicit acts, and death on film much more readily than we tolerate these same acts live and in person. There is an aesthetic distance provided by the screen that affords the public a sense of separation from the harsh reality being depicted. In her article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Laura Mulvey writes "[T]he extreme contrast between the darkness in the auditorium (which also isolates the spectators from one another) and the brilliance of the shifting patterns of light and shade on the screen helps to promote the illusion of voyeuristic separation" (186). Furthermore, "[a]lthough the film is really being shown, is there to be seen, conditions of screening and narrative conventions give the spectator an illusion of looking in on a private world" (Mulvey 186).

29 This method of depicting the act of violence through film, rather than live, derives its effectiveness from the technique *Verfremdungseffekt* described here by Elin Diamond with excerpts from Bertolt Brecht's writing:

The cornerstone of Brecht's theory is the *Verfremdungseffekt*, the technique of defamiliarizing a word, an idea, a gesture so as to enable the spectator to see or hear it afresh: 'a representation that alienates is one which allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar'; 'the A-effect consists of turning an object from something ordinary and immediately accessible into something peculiar, striking, and unexpected.' (79)

It is unfortunate that we live in times during which the portrayal of sexual violence and murder are so common, especially in Hollywood films where they approach being glamorized, that an audience would need to be manipulated into realizing that this stark interpretation of human aggression is based on real events. I needed to be sure the audience would be jarred by what they saw through the camera. Phoenix based Chicano filmmaker, Luke Dorsett, approached the filming of this piece from the perspective of the aggressors. Although the audience never sees the faces of the two rapists, the effect is one similar to Mulvey's description of Hitchcock's work in that the "liberal use of subjective camera from the point of view of the male protagonist draw[s] the spectators deeply into his position, making them share his uneasy gaze" (192).

30 During one of the performances in Phoenix, the filmed portion of this production caused one audience member to walk out into the lobby where, according to the Executive Producer of the company, he complained that the depiction was gross and unnecessary. A

representative from Amnesty International who was stationed in the lobby to distribute information regarding the situation in Ciudad Juárez questioned this audience member directly. He asked how this man could walk out of the theatre. Hundreds of young women, he explained, have lost their lives in incidents unimaginably worse than what was depicted on the screen, and yet, because it took this audience member out of his comfort zone he chose to walk out and avoid watching. Those young women never had the choice to walk away. As a result, the audience member reentered the theatre admitting that he would have to think about that. Planting these seeds of social consciousness is, for me, a crucial aspect of ethnotheatre.

The Absence of the Female Voice Speaks Louder than Words

31 Another problematic issue I faced in staging Amavizca's play was the fact that the playwright had written a series of narrator scenes, interspersed throughout the text, in which these characters commented on the situation and circumstances in Ciudad Juárez. These were often like sound bites from Public Service Announcements and Infomercials. In the script, Amavizca indicates that one of the narrators should be male and the other female.

32 After having engaged in weeks of research about the femicide in Ciudad Juárez, I was sure of one thing; the only certainty was a silencing of women's voices. It made no sense to me, as the director of the play, to act as if women were given "equal stage time" in the reality of this situation. My artistic choice was therefore to cast only males in the roles of the narrators. I also chose to give each of the narrators an iconic character to portray that would represent certain men in the patriarchal structure of this border culture. Although these specific designations do not appear in Amavizca's script, these narrators contributed to my director's concept for the staging of this play.

33 As Gloria Anzaldúa explains, in the socially constructed order of things, "[w]omen are at the bottom of the ladder, one rung above the deviants. The Chicano, *mexicano*, and some Indian cultures have no tolerance for deviance. Deviance is whatever is condemned by the community. Most societies try to get rid of their deviants" (40). In the situation created by the femicide in Mexico, women's status seems to drop a rung in this ladder and they are no longer above anyone. Through Anzaldúa's *transfronterista* lens, "[w]oman does not feel safe when her own culture, and white culture, are critical of her; when the males of all races hunt her as prey" (42).

34 In my interpretation of Amavizca's play, the narrators all frame the experiences of the women of Ciudad Juárez, while simultaneously repressing their very existence. Diamond elaborates on this notion of *difference* in "Brechtian Theory/Feminist Theory: Toward a

Gestic Feminist Criticism." A selection of this essay is reprinted in *Performance Analysis: An Introductory Coursebook*, in which she explains:

Each action must contain the trace of the action it represses, thus the meaning of each action contains difference. The audience is invited to look beyond representation — beyond what is authoritatively put in view — to the possibilities of as yet unarticulated actions or judgements [sic] [. . .].

The Brechtian 'not, but' is the theatrical and theoretical analog to the subversiveness of sexual difference, but it allows us to imagine the deconstruction of gender — and all other — representations. Such deconstructions dramatize, at least at the level of theory, the infinite play of difference that Derrida calls *écriture* — the superfluity of signification that places meaning beyond capture within the covers of the play or the hours of performance. This is not to deny Brecht's wish for an intrusive, analytical theatre; on the contrary, it invites the participatory play of the spectator, and the possibility for which Brecht most devoutly wished, that signification (the production of meaning) continue beyond the play's end, congealing into choice and action after the spectator leaves the theatre. (80-81)

This reading informed my casting choices as I selected the different iconic characters to narrate the story in Amavizca's play.

35 Among the roles I employed were a *cholo* gang member, a priest, a forensic doctor, and a police officer of Juárez. There were even two *maquiladora* guards who smoked a joint of marijuana out behind the factory, illustrating the absolute impunity in this situation. In a Brechtian breaking of the fourth wall, there are two narrators who comb their way through and around the audience with two sticks, much the same way men and women comb through the terrain of the desert, searching for the remains of their loved ones.

36 The first narrator, the *cholo*, addresses the audience directly and informs them that the women of Juárez are "asking for it" by the way they act and dress. The men looking for human remains in the desert speak of the increase in employment in Juárez, but add that the cost of this increase is the young women who work in the factories have to travel late at night and for great distances to get to their jobs.

37 The guards at the *maquiladora* (progressively getting more and more stoned through the scene off of the joint they are sharing) explain to each other that 70% of the multinational corporations on the Fortune 500 list use these component factories in Mexico. This number increases annually and the absurdity is that these companies don't pay a single peso in taxes. One adds, there are over 3000 factories that employ more than a million people around the world and they produce over \$40 billion worth of goods. The other clarifies: 98% of the production in Mexican *maquiladoras* is from the United States and 90% of the factories can

be found on the border between the U.S. and Mexico. One third of these, he cackles, are right here, in Ciudad Juárez! The laughter induced by the drugs creates an eerie discomfort juxtaposed with the information being narrated in the lines. The audience is left to wonder, if these are "the guards," who is protecting the women inside the factory?

38 The priest begs the audience to demand justice. He explains that we cannot allow society and the media to continue to refer to these victims as the "dead women of Juárez," because one dies from natural causes (scene 26). These women, he insists, were brutally assassinated, and that is not the same. We must give them the dignity they deserve and refer to them as the "murdered women of Juárez" (scene 26). Only then, he persists, will we be recognizing and admitting the atrocity of this situation.

39 By using this gendered staging device I intended to highlight the silencing of the women's voices through the representation of absence. Their stories are being told through the patriarchal voice that has oppressed them in the most violent of ways and left them silently screaming.

Opening a Forum for Dialogue: Is that too much to ask?

40 Bringing this issue to the public of Phoenix, Arizona (and subsequently to other cities in both the United States and Mexico) was, in my mind, a critical step in motivating a dialogue and educating the community about the intolerable injustices inflicted upon the population of Ciudad Juárez. In some cases, we need to be taken out of our comfort zone to confront issues that require the efforts of a global community to place pressure on authorities to carry out a more thorough investigation into barbaric acts in violation of human rights. I am reminded once again of Brecht's essay. Although he was referring to a different world, at a distinct time period, I believe his words ring true, even today:

It will hardly surprise you to hear me say that the question of describing the world is a social one. I have maintained this for many years, and now I live in a state where a vast effort is being made to transform society. You may not approve of the means used — I hope, by the way, that you are really acquainted with them, and not just from the papers; you may not accept this particular ideal of a new world — I hope you are acquainted with this too; but you can hardly doubt that in the state where I live the transformation of the world, of [people's] life together is being worked at. And you may perhaps agree with me that the present-day world can do with transforming. (Willet 275)

41 After a matinee performance of *Las Mujeres de Juárez*, I encountered the President of Phoenix College who had been in the audience that afternoon. When she asked me what else she could do to help in this situation, I assured her that, first and foremost, her willingness to invite a Latino production company to produce this play in the theatre on her campus and

offer it to the community was a significant gesture and an unprecedented act of good will in Phoenix, Arizona. Opening a forum in which these issues could be presented to a broader population was the first step in promoting awareness and inspiring action. I was comforted by the fact that audience members like her left the theatre that day with the question echoing in their minds and hearts, "Is that too much to ask?"

Hope for the Future?

42 A little over a year ago in an announcement in the "Good News" section of the Amnesty International Australia website reads:

Mexico/USA: Legislation condemns murders of women
5 May 2006

Amnesty International welcomes the congressional passage of legislation calling on the United States and Mexico to work together to find an end to the violence against women in the Mexican state of Chihuahua, where more than 400 women and girls have been murdered since 1993.

The United States Congress rarely passes free-standing resolutions expressing concern about human rights conditions in a friendly country such as Mexico. The situation in Juarez and Chihuahua is so bad, however, that the US Congress could no longer ignore it. Congress has now unanimously called on the Secretary of State and the US Ambassador to Mexico to take specific steps to ensure that addressing these horrendous murders becomes a part of the US - Mexico bilateral agenda.

This is an extraordinary and historic event. By pressing Mexican authorities to make every effort to stop the killings, the secretary of state and ambassador to Mexico can help to ensure justice in Chihuahua. (Amnesty Australia)

As I returned to the dramaturgical research I conducted over two years ago in preparation to direct Amavizca's play, a curious thing happened. I was rereading many of the articles I had accessed previously and noticed a date highlighted in several documents from the Internet searches I had completed. Both the Amnesty International and Witness websites make mention, as I have done earlier in this article, of Neyra Azucena Cervantes's disappearance on May 13, 2003. Today is May 13, 2007; are we any closer to justice? I met Neyra's mother, Patricia Cervantes at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico, during the J. Paul Taylor Social Justice Symposium: Justice for Women in March 2006. She was selling bags and other crafts to raise money. After talking to her for a while I bought a pink burlap bag that has the words "*solo por ser mujer*" (just for being a woman) sewn into the fabric with a simple black yarn. She explained to me that she was still trying to save up enough money for a headstone for her daughter's grave. These women, like all women of the world, deserve dignity and justice.

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Re-negotiating Concepts of Masculinity in Contemporary British Film

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Abstract:

Brassed Off (1996), *The Full Monty* (1997) and *Billy Elliot* (2000) reflect and problematise the consequences of economic change and political misfortune in post-industrial Britain. Moreover, they critically, albeit entertainingly comment on the changing social structures and the changing gender relations that were brought about by this economic decline. All three films problematise this loss of traditional masculinity but, at the same time, they also suggest potential solutions. Despite the fact that all three films make only tentative steps towards re-evaluating "stereotypical" concepts of masculinity, I would like to read them as examples of a successful deconstruction of gender stereotypes and as triggers for a cultural healing process of the trauma of social and cultural destabilisation caused by economic decline and a gradual realisation of what one might call "post-industrial masculinity."

1 A rapid decline of traditional industries in Britain during the latter half of the twentieth century, together with the harsh political climate of Thatcherism, partly continued under Major and Blair, helped to reduce the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution to a mere post-industrial scrap heap. The British north was especially hard hit, mainly because of its narrow industrial base and consequential inflexibility for economic change. *Brassed Off* (dir. Mark Herman, 1996), *The Full Monty* (dir. Peter Cattaneo, 1997) and *Billy Elliot* (dir. Stephen Daldry, 2000) all pay tribute to the people and communities of Britain's former industrial heartland. They reflect and problematise the consequences of economic change and political misfortune. Moreover, they critically, albeit entertainingly comment on the changing social structures and the changing gender relations that were brought about by this economic decline. Men, once proud workers in heavy industries like coalmining or steel, suddenly found themselves without a job¹, without hope and without a 'proper' role in society. The three films I am going to analyse in this paper² all problematise this loss of traditional masculinity but, at the same time, they also suggest potential solutions.³

¹ Since the 1984/85 Miners Strike, there have been over 140 pit closures in Britain with over 250,000 jobs being lost. Another cornerstone of the northern English economy, the steel industry, has also been suffering enormous losses. Sheffield has always been, and still is today, strongly associated with its industrial base — the metal industries, notably steelmaking and cutlery. Today, Sheffield produces more steel than ever before. The numbers of people employed in the steel industry, however, have declined from 45,100 (or 16% of the total workforce) in 1971 to 4,700 (or 2.2% of the total workforce) in 1993. Between 1981 and 1987 alone, roughly 19,000 steel jobs were lost. Between 1979 and 1986 a total of nearly 71,000 people were made redundant in Sheffield, with almost 70% of the redundancies occurring in metal manufacture, metal goods and engineering (Pollard and Taylor/Evans/Fraser).

² The order of analysis is not coincidental. I argue that, from *Brassed Off* via *The Full Monty* to *Billy Elliot*, one can discern a number of consecutive steps in the re-negotiation of concepts of masculinity in post-industrial Britain.

³ Of course, the three films have already received quite substantial academic attention. In their contributions to *British Cinema: Past and Present*, Claire Monk, Julia Hallam and John Hill, for example, discuss *Brassed Off* and *The Full Monty* in the wider context of contemporary British cinema, their relation to the social realism of

2 Despite the fact that all three films make only tentative steps towards re-evaluating "stereotypical" concepts of masculinity, I would like to read them as examples of a successful deconstruction of gender stereotypes and as triggers for a cultural healing process of the trauma of social and cultural destabilisation caused by economic decline and a gradual realisation of what one might call "post-industrial masculinity."⁴ The films confront their male protagonists with a radically changed environment (both with regard to their altered position in the labour market as well as with a variety of conflicts resulting from the loss of their role as breadwinners for their families) and thus set in motion a process of questioning their established identity as hard-working men.⁵ What these films accomplish, then, is to create an awareness of the problematic nature of what it might mean to be a man in a society moving away from an economy of heavy industries and manual labour.

3 I will focus my analysis on two issues that are equally strongly discernible in all three examples, namely the problematic positioning of female characters in three predominantly male casts and second on the representation of the relationships between fathers and sons. It will become apparent in the ensuing discussion that in all three films, 1) it is precisely the women who, in various ways, provoke the male protagonists to move on from being passive and helpless bystanders of their situation; 2) the intense conflicts between the three fathers and their sons, all of whom equally challenge their father's values and self-understanding, eventually cause the fathers to rethink and re-evaluate their views and core beliefs. Hence, both the women and the younger generation of males help their husbands and fathers to accept the necessity to redefine and reposition themselves in their changed environment, as husbands, fathers and, consequently, as men.

4 I will focus on issues of gender for a number of reasons. First of all, these films are all touching on the relationships between the workplace and personal identity, especially with the workplace as a traditional marker of identification for men as men. This issue becomes especially vital in an economic environment that for hundreds of years has provided employment in heavy industries like coal-mining or steel where in traditional family

1960s and 70s British filmmaking and their role in somewhat nostalgically re-imagining communities in the framework of Tony Blair's "New Britain" or "Cool Britannia."

⁴ This term is developed on the basis of R. W. Connell's (1995) procedural concept of masculinity. Connell does not aim at defining what is or might be considered masculine but rather focuses on the specific processes and relationships through which men (and women) conduct gendered lives. For Connell, masculinity is best viewed as "simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture" (71). Thus, post-industrial masculinity highlights the experience of male existence in the changing economic, social and cultural structure of traditional industrial nations at the end of the 20th century.

⁵ Here, it is important to keep in mind the various connotations of the phrase "hard-working" and its lexical elements "hard/being tough/manly" and "working/being useful."

configurations, it was mostly always the man that took the role of main breadwinner. Moreover, as Storry and Childs have argued:

The work ethic is very strong in the UK and for a majority of the British population their identity is shaped by the notion that they *work*. However, one of the main features of the working classes in 1980s and 1990s Britain is that the greater proportion of them than of either the middle or the upper classes is *not* working. Loss of work to a class which defines itself as *working* is traumatic [...]. (101)

Losing one's occupation has, and especially so for men, often also meant a loss or at least a threat to one's established identity.

5 What struck me as vital when watching these films for the first time, was the under-representation or even the complete lack of major female characters. All three films feature predominantly male casts. The female characters that appear are most often represented as "intruding" on the various groups of male characters and as posing a dangerous threat to the supposed stability of these groups. I am not suggesting that what we are dealing with here is a "war of the sexes" in an economically unfriendly environment where men are on the losing end, hopelessly clinging to a past long gone, and where women are the solely progressive force.⁶ Nevertheless, the projection of the economic and political threat to a traditional and stereotypical identity of man as hardworking manual labourer onto the women forms the point of departure of the narrative in all three films.

6 In *Brassed Off*, Gloria Mullins (Tara Fitzgerald), the young professional who, as it later turns out, works for the management of the coal pit and hopes, contrary to the beliefs of the miners, that her evaluation of the pit will help to secure the men's jobs, first appears intruding on the rehearsal of the coal pit's brass band. She is only accepted into the band because her father used to play in it himself and band leader Danny Ormondroid (Pete Postlethwaite) remembers him fondly. The other band members make fun of her (calling her "Gloria Stits," a clear indication of their sexual interest in her), and it is only when she plays her flugel horn that she earns their appreciation. However, as they find out what her real reason for coming back to Grimley is, namely to work for the management, they quickly dismiss her, although one of the characters, referring to Andy's (Ewan McGregor) relationship with Gloria, makes his point: "There's nothing wrong with shagging management. They've been shagging us long enough."

7 In *The Full Monty*, there is virtually no lead female character. If they play a role at all, women are mainly perceived as obstacles and/or dangerous and powerful threats, as they take over those spheres of social life that the men consider their own. The best illustration of this is

⁶ Heartfield has convincingly argued that especially the British case, rather than diagnosing a crisis of masculinity, should be more adequately viewed as a crisis of the working class.

certainly the scene when Gaz (Robert Carlyle) and his friends, peeping on some of the women in the men's toilets during a performance of the Chippendale strip group at their local working men's club, see how one of them urinates standing up (see: illustration 1) Later, in the local job office, they discuss the consequences of these developments:

Gaz: When women start pissing like us, that's it, we're finished! Extincto! [...] In a few years men won't exist, except in zoos! [...] Obsolete, dinosaurs, yesterday's news!

8 This scene is particularly telling since the "working men's club" in Britain traditionally constituted a place for recreation and after-work socialising for the "working men" where women were not allowed.⁷ In *The Full Monty*, our male protagonists are not only faced with the 'invasion' of one of their most sacred of places by a group of male strippers, a profession that in the beginning Gaz and his friends associate not with "real men" but with "poofs." What is more, in the working *men's* club, the group performs to a cheering crowd of women, and as if all this was not enough already, the women also appropriate what the film's male protagonists view as a 'traditionally male way of urinating' — that is, standing-up.



Fig. 1.

9 Although in *Billy Elliot* there is indeed a major female character in the person of Mrs. Wilkinson (Julie Walters), the ballet teacher, Billy's father (Gary Lewis) and his elder brother Tony (Jamie Draven) meet her with great suspicion when she tries to convince them that Billy's (Jamie Bell) talent for dancing should not be wasted but nurtured. Afraid of losing control over his son to Mrs. Wilkinson, Billy's father perceives her as a potentially disruptive

⁷ For a comprehensive discussion of the role of working men's clubs in Britain, see Beaven.

force in the virtually all-male Elliot household.⁸ When Billy finds fulfilment in dancing and starts skipping his boxing lessons, Billy's father soon blames her for luring his son into something that he clearly views as unnatural. Billy's father and his son are both fighting on the picket lines for the rights of the miners, and if Billy can have a future at all, so they believe, he should be boxing his way through the harshness of life, not dancing ballet:

Grandma: I used to go to ballet.

Billy: See?

Dad: All right for your Nana, for girls. No, not for lads, Billy. Lads do football...or boxing...or wrestling. Not friggin' ballet!

10 Thus, in all three films the female characters take a somewhat ambivalent position. On the one hand, they are being perceived as potential threats to the stability of the male groups (the miners and members of the brass band in *Brassed Off*, the group of unemployed steelworkers in *The Full Monty*, or the all-male Elliot household and the miners in their united fight for their pit in *Billy Elliot*). On the other hand, however, it is to a considerable extent due to women's efforts that the men in all three films are finally able to succeed in their various attempts to deal with the changed situation in their work lives.

11 When, in *Brassed Off* the band returns successful from the last qualifying concert for the national finals at the Royal Albert Hall in London, they find their pit closed. The home of Danny's son Phil is falling apart (his wife and kids are leaving and creditors are on the doorstep to collect the last of his belongings), Danny himself collapses and is hospitalised with miner's lung, and the members of the band are ready to give up as they cannot afford the 3,000 pounds it would cost to participate in the finals.



Fig. 2.

⁸ Billy's grandmother who, suffering from Alzheimer's disease, can hardly replace Billy's real dead mother.

12 They are only persuaded and helped by Gloria's offer to sponsor their trip from the "dirty money" she received as payment in the mine's management to compile an obviously useless viability study for the pit: "It's dirty money. I prefer it to be brass! [...] I'm just doing what I was always doing, meddling. Difference is, this time we haven't lost before we start!" The band goes to London, wins the finals and the film ends in a heart-breaking speech by Danny who had escaped from hospital to see his boys win in London:

This band behind me'll tell you that that trophy means more to me than owt else in the whole world. But they'd be wrong! Truth is, I THOUGHT it mattered. I thought that MUSIC mattered. But does it bollocks? Not compared to how people matter. Us winning this trophy won't mean bugger-all to most people. But us refusing it — like what we're going to do now — well, then it becomes news, doesn't it? [*flurry of press camera shutters*] You see what I mean. That way, I'll not just be talking to myself, will I? Because over the last ten years, this bloody government has systematically destroyed an entire industry. OUR industry. And not just our industry — our communities, our homes, our lives. All in the name of "progress." And for a few lousy bob. I'll tell you something else you might not know, as well. A fortnight ago, this band's pit were closed — another thousand men lost their jobs. And that's not all they lost. Most of them lost the will to win a while ago. A few of them even lost the will to fight. But when it comes to losing the will to live, to breathe, the point is — if this lot were seals or whales, you'd all be up in bloody arms. But their not, are they, no, no they're not. They're just ordinary common-or-garden honest, decent human beings. And not one of them with an ounce of bloody hope left. Oh aye, they can knock out a bloody good tune. But what the fuck does that matter? [*gasps emotionally, close to tears*] And now I'm going to take my boys out onto the town. Thank you.

By refusing the prize, the band is able to make a clear statement against the government's economic policy and its effects on communities like their own in Grimley. Additionally, and most importantly in the context of this paper, the women's cheering at the end of the speech makes clear that they have realised that they can still be proud of their husbands' achievements, even if they are no longer the "hard-working" men in the coal industry but musicians in a band.

13 In *The Full Monty*, once again, it is only through the hundreds of women who show up at the night of the strip group's performance that they finally succeed, so that Gaz can afford to pay the money to see his son more often. Furthermore, and more symbolically, the men have reclaimed their working men's club, albeit in a slightly modified function. The reservations of the group about "working" as strippers that dominate throughout the film are swept away by the apparent appreciation of their endeavour by the local women. Furthermore, even when they strip, the group deliberately distances itself from the Chippendale group of the beginning of the film by "doing the full monty," i.e. stripping all the way. This of course also hints to the idea that the group does not want to be viewed as just another strip act (a

profession that for the men carries the still uneasy notion of homosexuality⁹). By going all the way and calling themselves "Hot Metal," both a reference to the local industry of steel-making they previously worked in and a means to indicate that they are still "hot" (active, productive, and worth seeing), the group wants to reclaim some of their self-esteem and self-worth as men.

14 Still, neither in *The Full Monty* nor in *Brassed Off* fundamental changes have occurred. The jobs will not come back, the mines will remain closed, and thus the high note on which both films end is slightly dampened. Yet, I would like to suggest that at the end, both films, *The Full Monty* more convincingly than *Brassed Off*, at least offer the possibility that their male and female protagonists have arrived at an altered understanding of their position in a post-industrial society.

15 In the final scenes of *Brassed Off*, we see the men and women united as they take a bus ride through the town. Formerly, the bus and the band were a strictly male only affair (similar to the working men's club in *The Full Monty*). Moreover, all the women, even Phil's wife Sandra, have come down to London to support their men.



Fig. 3.

⁹ In the course of the film, we see Lomper, one of the members of the strip group, finally realising his homosexuality. During a police raid at a rehearsal, he and Guy, another member of the group, manage to escape before being arrested. Climbing into the window of Guy's apartment, we see the two as they are about to embrace each other. Later, after the funeral of Lomper's mother, they are holding hands and Dave comments: "Now aren't they as queer as folk?". The fact that Dave shyly laughs at this scene clearly shows that a certain uneasiness about the topic remains. However, it seems more likely that the friendship between Lomper and the rest of the group will not be hindered by his coming-out, and this again suggests that a process of "growing up" among the other men has taken place.

16 What is notable, however, is that to an even greater extent than the men's wives and female friends, it is the sons who allow their fathers to develop a new understanding of themselves. When Danny sees his son's family disintegrate, his hopes and dreams crumble to pieces, and when he finally meets his son at the hospital after his suicide attempt, this triggers a change in his perspective. He realises that much more than music it is "people that matter." Moreover, it is only through Phil's own son, who, after leaving the house with his mother and siblings, that his mother decides to at least go and see Phil perform with the band in London: "I don't like seein' Dad sad, Mum, but I'd sooner see him sad than not see him at all."

17 Nathan, in *The Full Monty*, too, is the driving force for his father's gradual acceptance of the changed situation in his work-life and his realisation of the need for action. First, he lends his father money from his own savings to allow the strip-show to take place. Furthermore, it is through him and his attachment to his father, regardless of the critical nature of his projects, that Gaz' wife finally realises his intentions and comes to cheer him at the working men's club. And after all, it is Nathan who has to forcefully persuade his father to overcome his fears and step out to "do his stuff." 20. In *Billy Elliot*, this development culminates, which also leads me to the second part of my analysis. Focussing on the three pairs of fathers and sons which, I suggest, are central to the micro-narrative of the films — Danny and Phil in *Brassed Off*, Gaz and Nathan in *The Full Monty* and Jackie and Billy in *Billy Elliot* — I argue that the developments of the relationships between father and son from *Brassed Off* via *The Full Monty* to *Billy Elliot* exemplify a gradual process of re-orientation and a new understanding of themselves as men for the respective fathers in their new and unaccustomed roles.

18 Since Danny's retirement from his job as miner, his life centres on his colliery brass band. With a tradition of more than 100 years, the band is finally in a position to make it all the way to the national finals in London. For Danny it is first and foremost "music that matters." Although he is aware of the critical situation of the pit, he insists that the band keep on playing. He is ignorant of the fact that many of his fellow band members have their doubts about the future of the band. What good is a colliery band without a colliery? Furthermore, it becomes harder and harder for many of them to afford the money for new instruments, trips to concerts, and so on. His son Phil is especially hard hit, as he is already heavily in debt and only manages barely by taking on a second job as a clown to entertain children at local kindergartens and orphanages. Phil tries hard to hide his problems from his father, as he is afraid of disappointing him.

Phil: I love the band — we all do — but there's other things in life, you know, that's more important.

Danny: Not in mine, there isn't.

19 Torn between the need to support his own family and to live up to the expectations of his father, Phil gradually loses out and as his family disintegrates, the mine eventually closes and his father falls ill, he cannot bear it anymore and tries to commit suicide by hanging himself after one of his appearances as "Mr. Chuckles" the clown. Dangling from a railing of the closed coal mine's crane, however, he suddenly realises that this is not the way out and he is found by two policemen as he is fighting for his life by grabbing onto the rope around his neck. He is taken to the same hospital where his father is being treated for his miner's lung. This is when Danny finally realises that it is not "music that matters" but "people" (as he later states in his speech at the Royal Albert Hall at the end of the film). Phil and Danny sit in the hospital hallway when a nurse comes by and asks Phil: "Is this man bothering you?" and Phil answers: "Course he is, he's me dad!" This statement (Phil smiles when he answers) clearly shows the difficult relationship that both men have with each other. The father spent his life as a hard-working miner and proud leader of the colliery band and he is totally unwilling to accept that the situation and role of his son could be in any way different. He deliberately clings to the band as the future of the mine becomes more and more uncertain. For a long time he argues (and possibly believes it himself) that the band has already survived many economic depressions and things have always gotten back to normal. In this way, Danny is very similar in character to Gerald in *The Full Monty* who tries to hide his unemployment from his wife and keeps pretending to go to work every morning in his suit and tie, usually spending the day on the park bench and in the Job Centre.

20 Phil, too, tries to hide his economic misfortune from his father (not wanting to disturb him in his hope that everything will be good again, as it always had been on previous occasions). The desire to care for his father's emotional well-being by keeping both his difficult financial situation as well as the consequential problems in his own family from him, however, is a hopeless endeavour. Once Danny sees the effect that the entire situation has had on his son (his unfinished attempt at suicide), he finally comes to realise that maybe his views and his hanging on to the past need revision after all. By coming to understand his own son, Danny also develops a clearer view of the entire situation regarding the band, the coal mine and the future of his fellow miners/musicians. This realisation then culminates in his speech at the Royal Albert Hall.

21 In *The Full Monty*, Gaz tries hard to see his young son Nathan, who lives with his divorced mother and her new partner, as much as he can. Having fallen behind with child support payments, Gaz is refused to see him anymore. In his desperation he seeks a plan to

come up with the missing money and sets up a strip group with some of his friends. As Tincknell and Chambers have argued:

Fathering becomes a site of struggle [...]. *The Full Monty's* account of the decline of male manual labour in the north of England conflates this economic process with the decline of fatherhood as a social role, since the main motivating force of the narrative is Gaz's desire to recover his role as breadwinner so that he can reclaim his son from his ex-wife. (n. pag.)

22 As they organise auditions and dance practice, Nathan is almost always with them. At first he is truly critical of his father's stripperly potentials but soon he supports him fully. As the night of their performance looms, Gaz has more and more doubts about the project and of himself being part of it. Up until the night of the performance, various members of the group doubt their abilities as strippers.¹⁰

23 At the end, everyone pulls together and it is Gaz himself who refuses to get on the stage at the night of their show and it takes little Nathan of all people to push his own father onto the stage to strip in front of the local female crowd: "They're cheering out there and you did this! Now get out there and do your stuff!"

24 In *Billy Elliot*, a similar process can be discerned. Billy's father at first reacts highly critical and outright violently when he finds out that his son has given up boxing lessons and takes more to ballet than to bloody noses. His elder brother, too, cannot understand how Billy can find joy in something both of them believe to be only for "poofs." They suspect Mrs. Wilkinson to be at the root of all this evil and prohibit Billy to have contact with her. Billy secretly continues to practice and it soon becomes clear that he has the talent to go all the way to a prestigious London ballet school. Billy's situation is further complicated when his friend Michael entrusts to him that he takes joy in wearing women's clothes and make-up. Interestingly enough, this lingering subplot never takes on full force. Billy himself seems to have no problems, neither with his ballet dancing being perceived as a potentially homosexual activity nor with his friend's cross-dressing. To himself, Billy's sexuality is never really in question. What Billy yearns for most is appreciation and understanding from his father. In order for that to come to fruition, however, the father would need to change his perspective on Billy's activities. For a long time in the film, this seems to be a hopeless wish. What comes as a real surprise, then, is that when Billy's father catches Billy and his friend Michael in the boxing ring, one of the potentially most homoerotic scenes in the entire film, he sees Billy

¹⁰ Gerald, who despite his unemployment still wants to uphold a standard, even lying to his own wife about his situation, is afraid to lose his reputation; Horse, who fears that the small size of his penis will make him the laughing stock at the performance; or Dave, who cannot believe that anyone would want to see a "fat bastard" like him on stage.

dancing and suddenly realises that this is what Billy wants to do and this is what he can succeed in.



Fig. 4.

25 He rushes off to Mrs. Wilkinson to arrange for the application for auditions in London, tries to cross the picket line to work in the mine to earn the money for the trip, but fails due to his own weakness: he is unable to turn into a strike-breaker. But an alternative solution is quickly found as he pawns his deceased wife's jewellery to afford the trip.¹¹ Furthermore, the father accompanies Billy to comfort him at the audition. Billy gets accepted and the father rushes off to tell all his mates, only finding out that the strike has been lost and that the miners return to work, defeated.

26 But the film does not end here. In the final scene, we encounter a grown up Billy about to perform in a production of Swan Lake in London. His father and brother are in the audience (coincidentally seated next to a grown up Michael). As Billy leaps onto the stage, we see the father crying. He is crying tears of joy and pride, proud of his son Billy and of himself. And rightly so, as he has come to accept, understand and support Billy's dream to become a dancer. The depth of the father's transformation is further strengthened by the fact that he can accept Michael sitting next to him and his son.

¹¹ This in itself is an interesting fact since (similarly to Gloria's monetary sacrifice to enable the band to go to London in *Brassed Off*) it is once again a woman who enables the man to move forward.

27 Hence, in all three films we can clearly identify a gradual development in the characters of the fathers, away from a concept of northern English working class masculinity based on tradition and stereotype towards a more open and flexible perception of themselves and their altered surroundings. The main mechanism by which this development is spurred is the changing relationship between themselves and their sons, who all make it possible for their fathers to undergo a process of change.

28 In the beginning of my paper I spoke of these films as steps of a cultural healing process of the scars and mutilations of masculinity brought about by economic and social change. In the course of my discussion, I hope it has become clear that although these films are by no means a sufficient therapy, they nevertheless — each to a varying degree — suggest potential solutions, especially on a micro-level of interpersonal, familial relationships, to the larger problems at hand.

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A Man's Work in a Female World? Gender Paradoxes of Male Childcare Workers

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Abstract:

The analytical focus of this article is on everyday occupational life of male teachers in German pre-schools and male care workers in childcare centers. In light of the minority status of men in this occupation, attention is paid particularly to tensions experienced by male care workers and how these tensions are dealt with in relation to identity formation. Are male childcare workers the prototypical "new men," with implications for de-gendering and professionalising care work? Or are male childcare workers faced with the same structural disadvantages of female occupations, in addition experiencing contradictions in relation to their masculinity? In order to address these questions, the actions and experiences of male childcare workers are examined in relation to work colleagues, parents and the children with whom they interact on a daily basis as part of their work practice.

Introduction¹

1 German pre-schools and childcare centers² are typically the subject of public discourse and political debates everytime the results of the international PISA studies are announced, or most recently, in light of the controversial discussions about expanding childcare centers and capacities for infants and children under the age of three years. The relevance of a gender perspective for understanding working life in childcare facilities has hardly been addressed either in the media or by research. From a critical perspective on the state of gender relations in society, the lack of attention to the gendering of childcare work is cause for concern, since, as Ursula Rabe-Kleberg argues, the pre-school is a social institution embedded in societal gender relations, characterised by segmentation and inequality (Rabe-Kleberg 10). This study focusses specifically on men and gendering in reference to masculinity in pre-schools and childcare centers in Germany. Although some authors (cautiously) contend that public interest is growing in the topic of men in child care and teaching occupations (Krabel/Stuve 7), the links between everyday working life in pre-schools and the reproduction of gender differences and traditional gender relations are neither addressed nor adequately examined. Thus for Jan Kasiske and his co-authors the question of whether mixed-gender work teams in childcare

¹ The author wishes to thank Prof. Karen A. Shire for assistance with the translation of this article from German into English.

² The reference is to what are called Kindergärten (translated as pre-schools) and Kindertagesstätten (childcare centers) in German. Children from the age of three years are secured a place in a pre-school in Germany. Pre-school and childcare center staff are expected to have completed a vocational school training to become a care worker (Erzieher/in) in Germany. Although Erzieher/in literally translates as educator, given the location of training in the schooling rather than the university system, it is more equivalent to what in English is called a childcare worker. An important difference is, however, the standardisation of training in specific vocational school streams.

facilities develop a gendered division of labor or not is raised as an open question (Kasiske et al. 23), and one which the research presented here attempts to answer.

2 There are in fact very few studies in the sociology of gender which examine everyday working life and relations between men and women in either childcare or teaching occupations.³ The absence of much prior research in this area of study is surprising in consideration of the gendering of childcare as an occupation. Childcare as an occupational field is extremely gender segregated, with the proportion of male childcare workers who have completed government training programs as licensed early childhood educators at only 1.7% (Kasiske et al. 22). This fact alone is enough to make the gendering of childcare occupations of interest to research in the sociology of gender, especially in light of the number of studies about women in men's occupations and men in women's occupations (e.g. Leidner; Hall; Heintz et al.; Williams, *Gender Differences*).

3 The analytical focus of this article is on everyday occupational life of male teachers in German pre-schools and male care workers in childcare centers.⁴ In light of the minority status of men in this occupation, attention is paid particularly to tensions experienced by male care workers and how these tensions are dealt with in relation to identity formation. Are male childcare workers, as Zulehner und Volz suggest, the prototypical "new men,"⁵ with implications for de-gendering and professionalising care work? Or are male childcare workers faced with the same structural disadvantages of female occupations, in addition experiencing contradictions in relation to their masculinity? In order to address these questions, the actions and experiences of male childcare workers are examined in relation to work colleagues, parents and the children with whom they interact on a daily basis as part of their work practice. The institutional dimensions of childcare occupations in Germany are also considered in analysing the experiences and tensions faced by male care workers in a female occupation.

4 The research presented here is based on work completed as part of a masters thesis at the University Duisburg-Essen. The empirical research involved a total of nine semi-

³ To my knowledge, Kaisa Kaupinnen-Toropainen/Johanna Laimi and Christine L. Williams were the first to do research on male childcare workers. While Williams' study focussed on care workers in an American kindergarten, the work of Kaupinnen-Toropainen/Laimi dealt with Scandinavian cases. Only recently has a qualitative study of male care workers in Germany been conducted; however, it focused mainly on the motivation of men to enter childcare occupations (Kasiske et al.).

⁴ The term "care workers" or "childcare workers" is used in this article to refer to both the staff of pre-schools and of childcare centers.

⁵ In a large-scale survey these authors find that 20% of German men view themselves as "new men." Among other things these "new men" can be characterized as "active fathers" who wish to participate more in the daily family life and the education of their children. The sole focus of the study on changes in men's attitudes has evoked critique, for example by Michael Meuser, who argues that shifts in attitudes should not be confused with changes in practice and behaviours (Meuser, "Ganze Kerle" 231).

structured interviews⁶ with male and female teachers in two pre-schools and two childcare centers located in Germany. Male and female teachers who work together in the same work groups were selected for interviews, and further interview partners were selected from different positions in the facility hierarchies, including group leaders and facility managers and directors. The interviews preceded a three-week observation of working life in the pre-schools and childcare facilities by the author, during which short interviews with the care workers observed were also conducted whenever possible or necessary. In addition to this qualitative research, the analysis also covered secondary analysis of quantitative data on childcare employees. The study only covered childcare services offered in facilities, and did not cover home-based childcare work, another important site of childcare in Germany.

The division of labor and gender-based cooperation among co-workers in childcare facilities

5 As other research on women and men in atypical (for their gender) occupations has demonstrated (Heintz et al.; Kaupinnen-Toropainen/Lammi; Williams, World), mixed-gender work groups in childcare facilities tend to develop a "gender-constitutive" division of labor (see Wetterer). A consequence is the emergence of "gender-connotated niches" within work practice, important for understanding how men in female-dominated occupations "do gender." As Christine L. Williams has also observed, "doing masculinity" permits men in female-dominated work situations "to maintain a sense of themselves as different from and better than women —thus contributing to the gender system that divides men from women in a way that privileges men" (Williams, World 123).

6 The observation of childcare work in several centers and interviews with care workers also revealed the existence of niches of work tasks which, while not exclusively so, were nonetheless primarily domains of work for male teachers. For example, in all of the pre-schools, work like small repairs and renovations was done by male care workers. Female staff as well as their male colleagues tended to justify this division of labor in relation to gender-based stereotypes (for example, differences in body composition and the physical strength of men). Similarly striking was the extent to which activities with the children involving physical exercise and sports became an explicit speciality of male care workers.⁷ The staffs tended to explain this division of labor by the fact that male colleagues were more involved in sport activities in their free-time. It should also be emphasized, however, that sports offers an

⁶ All interviews were conducted in German and translated into English by the author.

⁷ Similar findings are evident in another study of male care workers conducted by Jan Kasiske and colleagues (Kasiske et al.).

opportunity *par excellence* for men to "perform" gender. As Petra Gieß-Stüber et al. note, sports as an institutional "setting" is one of the most masculine of social institutions (73). For Robert W. Connell sports involves a continual display of male bodies in movement (74). Therefore, such niches of childcare work activity enable participation in the constitution of a gendered division of labor. The ordering of work activities among co-workers, legitimated with recourse to gender stereotypes, leads to the reproduction and highlighting of gender difference. Thus the division of labor functions as a resource for underlining gender difference, and differences are then again fed back into the division of labor (Wetterer). At the (micro-) level of everyday working life and occupational practice, these niches of male work serve to illustrate what Candace West und Don H. Zimmermann, using the terminology of "accountability" and "accomplishment" (135-137), conceptualize as the interactive construction of gender. These authors emphasize how mutually conditioned expectations are in play in everyday interactions, whereby actors "accomplish" a gender by performing and "showing" it, while at the same time depending on other actors' acknowledging their gender.

7 The gender-based ordering of tasks in the care work facilities studied was not demanded by the male teachers, or the result of open struggles and negotiation about work responsibilities which colleagues then had to accept. Instead, the acceptance and ordering of work tasks was a *cooperative action*; the male niches of work tasks were both assigned the men by their female colleagues, and eagerly taken on by the men themselves. At the same time however, it should be emphasized that the dividing lines between the various activities and work tasks were not always clearly drawn. In the following interview passage, a female teacher indicates that she also engages in one of the male domains:

I was also sawing and hammering, and [. . .] sanding down wood with the children. But then, naturally, at some point, when we wanted to build a platform, I let the men do it [...]. I might say "That is too short," "Saw this off," or "Screw these boards together," and "Do that" [. . .]. If I did not have a man around, I probably would have done it myself; [. . .]or I could say, "Could you maybe take that fabric up there down." Those, I guess, are the men's jobs [. . .]. [T]hose are the things that [. . .] I let the men do [...]. Because it is easy. I could probably also do it myself, that is not the point. It is just easy, because I think men are just more skilled in this kind of handy work. (Female care worker, childcare facility)

This passage illustrates how some work tasks are pushed to the male teachers in a way that makes the gendering of work almost a self-fulfilling-prophecy. On the other hand this sequence shows how such a small difference at the level of "doing gender while doing work" (Gottschall 63) can advance to an important criteria of difference. The female teacher cited above notes that she is also doing such handy work for the children. At the same time a specific task (building a platform), which does not really entail any further skills than what

she has already done, is declared as "men's work." This case illustrates a point made by Judith Lorber, referring to Gayle Rubin's idea of "sameness taboo" (178): "Women and men have to be distinguishable" (Lorber/Farell 1). In respect to the situative context, a divergent logic of inequality for the actors in other gender occupations seems to unfold exactly out of this "sameness taboo." While female "go-betweens"⁸ have to either downplay gender difference or enact a practiced form of "gender management"⁹ (Heintz/Nadai 84) in order to insure an "equal" acknowledgement of their occupational performance, the interviews show that "amplifying difference" (Wetterer 149; my translation) does not have negative consequences for male care workers, at least not in their work relations. Exactly the opposite is more likely the case: the female coworkers regard their male colleagues as an extremely important counterpart in their daily working life in the pre-school:

Maybe, it is simply having someone who can just tackle more, handle more, who plays more football, which the women don't necessarily do so much. We found it really positive for the group actually, found it to be something special. It is something special to have a man here as a care worker and I think it is also really a good thing for the kids too. (Female care worker, childcare facility)

In this interview passage the work of the male care workers is judged positively, not only on the basis of their distinct contribution to a (gender-constitutive) division of labor, but also because employing men in pre-schools can have an important influence on the work with children. As almost all the interview partners argued, mixed-gender groups are seen as important for the range of activities covered in childcare facilities. The teachers interviewed explained this with recourse to a bi-polar gender order, which makes the presence of male care workers important for the development of the distinct gender identities of boys.¹⁰ The reference of the care workers themselves is to what, from a gender sociological view, could be called a "masculine work habitus." All the interviewed teachers depicted male care workers as having a different way of dealing with the children. An example relating to physical activities is how male care workers were considered to be more courageous and embracing of risks:

I think a lot of people notice that I am handling the children differently than the female staff. It is just the way it is, as a man; I think as a man I just handle things differently. In physical activities, for example, I have a different strength than a woman. I play

⁸ Heintz et al. uses the term "go-betweens" to describe women and men who work in atypical (from a gender perspective) occupations.

⁹ "Gender management" is a term mainly used in reference to women in male-dominated professions who attempt to cope with the complexities of alternating between "undoing" and "doing gender."

¹⁰ The female director of one of the pre-schools in this study remarked that for this reason she preferred to have mixed-gender groups. Even a man with bad references would, she admitted, be hired over a female applicant. None of the men interviewed reported having any difficulties at all in finding jobs in pre-schools.

differently or I start up different sorts of things. Sometimes I take more risks or something. (Male care worker, public sector pre-school)

The male care workers also described themselves, in contrast to the female staff, as having more of a "buddy-like or boyish" way of dealing with the children, though for these male care workers, this goes beyond "doing masculinity" to form a specifically professional work style, undertaken in pursuit of pedagogical goals. Here lies a striking similarity to the findings of Bettina Heintz and her co-authors on male health care workers who performed their gender status by emphasizing what were assumed to be male connotated characteristics like "coolness" associated with a professionalized care-giving style establishing a "new model of professionalized care-giving" (Heintz/Nadai 85; my translation).

Male childcare workers and parents: the struggle for recognition

8 Parents can be seen as the customers of childcare facilities, in the sense that they expect a (social) service and that their expectations, requests, and ideas about how the service should be performed will be considered (see Becker-Textor). Although the childcare facilities in this study all encouraged the engagement of fathers as well as mothers, it was mainly mothers who were involved in discussions and issues concerning their children, a situation related to the fact that care work is traditionally the domain of women (see Scharfenroth). A male care worker depicted the situation as follows:

We have to assume that 95%, in fact I would even wager to say 98%, of all parents who initiate contact with us are, as a rule, mothers. It is the women who are responsible for the well-being of their children, so it is the women who turn up at the pre-school. (Male director, childcare facility)

In order to involve fathers more in parenting, some of the facilities in this study invited them specifically for "father-child actions" initiated for this purpose, such as campfires or certain arts and crafts projects. In the context of a heavily gender-segmented occupation, where the responsibility for childcare is delegated mothers, the minority or "token" status (Kanter 968) of male care workers becomes highly relevant in their first contact with the children's parents. While the first reactions of parents to male care workers are varied, some parents cannot imagine that the man they encounter is a member of the childcare staff. Some of the male teachers are assumed to be repair men, well-informed fathers or young men doing their civil service, while other parents make the assumption that they are meeting the facility director or manager. Exactly this last reaction of parents is illustrated in the following sequence from an interview with a male care worker:

And naturally, when new parents come who do not know our pre-school, I am often the director for them, though I am not the director. This assumption has nothing to do with me as a person, rather simply with the fact that I am a man. When a man is working in a pre-school, then he must be the director, since nothing else could be the case. (Male teacher, public sector pre-school)

As suggested by this passage, women, but not men are assumed to be care workers. The sentence "When a man is working in a pre-school, then he must be the director" indicates an unconscious reference to the hierarchical order of gender relations in the world of work, where men tend to occupy the higher positions in organizational hierarchies than women, and are more likely than women to climb the career ladder. The placement of men in managerial functions suggests that stereotypes of male competencies are playing an important role. This interview passage can also be interpreted as the differentiation of sets of competencies for men (in this case, managerial, professional, authoritative, rational) in contrast to women, and only through this association of maleness and managerial functions are the parents able to make sense of and legitimate the presence of a man in a childcare facility.

9 Generally, once the actual occupational status of the male care workers in the facilities is clarified, the reactions of parents in interactions with the male teachers are quite varied and potentially full of tension. On the one hand are parents who react positively to male teachers, seeing them as enriching the care provided by female staff. However, this view results from the fact that they see male care workers in line with gender-based stereotypes: "Now they finally have someone to play football with" (Female care worker, childcare facility, in reference to the reaction of some parents to her male colleague). Some of the male care workers seem to be very popular among the childrens' fathers, as one of the female care workers noted in reference to her male colleagues: "There are of course fathers who have a particular way of interacting with them like another man, as one of us in the pre-school, knocking shoulders and greeting each other in this male way" (Female teacher, public sector pre-school). At the other extreme are parents who reject the employment of men in pre-schools and childcare facilities. This attitude usually rests on a recourse to assumed differences in the gendered characters of men and women, seen as diametrically opposed to each other:

The other scenario we have encountered concerned parents who don't trust a man to do the job. "No, they are not sensitive enough for such things [. . .]." This is what the parents think about the men, that they cannot possibly be sensitive enough, that they are surely some kind of macho type or something [. . .]. They say, "No he cannot imagine what is best." (Male childcare worker, childcare facility)

The fact that male care workers chose a female-dominated profession had no effect on such parents' projections of stereotypical masculine behavior and characteristics onto the male staff members. Significantly, neither the parents who saw male teachers as making a positive contribution to childcare work nor parents who rejected men as childcare workers questioned the masculinity of the male staff. In the latter case however, the allocation of gender difference had a quite different connotation: the male teachers become a prototype of a kind of masculinity which can be depicted as "hypermasculinity" (Meuser, *Geschlecht* 118; my translation), and which represents the practice of "hegemonial masculinity" (Carrigan/Connell/Lee 590; see Connell) par excellence. This assumption clearly underlies the suggestion "that they cannot possibly be sensitive enough, that they are surely some kind of macho type or something."

10 The reactions male care workers receive from their circle of friends and acquaintances are also quite varied. Most of the men interviewed claimed to have experienced reactions to their occupation that either called their masculinity into question or ridiculed their choice of job. A pre-school director responded to the question about his friends' reactions to his occupation as follows: "Someone or other would reply with epithets like *pansy* or *sissy*, *being a girlie*, such jokes. One also hears remarks wondering whether men in childcare work are for real. Or maybe a bit homosexual" (Male director, childcare facility). There is a tendency in the reactions documented by these interview passages to symbolically feminize men who are in traditionally female occupations. A possible interpretation of this behaviour is that as commonly understood, the competencies needed for this occupation can only be imagined in relation to female characteristics. On the other hand, male childcare workers are viewed with a degree of suspicion, as being homosexual for example. This suspicion derives from the fact that from the perspective of hegemonial masculinity, being homosexual is made equivalent to being feminine (see Connell), and thus being lesser than the "normal" man. Thus male childcare workers are in a tense "double-bind-situation" (Kaupinnen-Toropainen/Lammi 108), where they are faced with contradictory expectations: for some parents they embody the prototype of a form of "hypermasculinity," while for others they are feminized.

11 The negative as well as (stereotyping) reactions to the presence of male childcare workers by parents can exert pressures encouraging the facilities to adopt a gender-based division of labor. This need not be *intended* by the childcare personnel themselves. At many of the pre-schools the contact with parents is not only through official parent-teacher or parent-child events, but also integrated into the normal rhythm of dropping off and picking up the children, and this more frequent contact is mainly with the mothers of the children. These

opportunities are not only used by the childcare workers to relay information to the parents, mainly mothers, but also used by the parents to inform the staff about their children or changes in familial circumstances. According to several of the male care workers interviewed, it is not uncommon for them *not* to receive such information, in contrast to their female colleagues:

When there are specific problems, then we strongly sense that the focus is more on the female staff. They are taken into confidence, considered as the ones who understand better what the man won't be able to get [. . .]. It is even more evident when the female staff member, because of illness, vacation or further training, is going to be absent, and the mother wants to tell us something, then you sometimes see how the mother indirectly and circuitously tries to communicate with the female staff [instead of a male staff member]. . . . Well, it surely is part of building (pause to think) relations, and in these cases women or female care workers have an advantage. (Male director, childcare center)

Since such ("specific") problems could contain important information relevant to understanding or effectively supporting the developmental process of the children, some of the male care workers use the weekly staff meetings in their facilities to get the information they need from their female colleagues. The fact that they can do so is an indication of how well male staff are in fact integrated into the work group.

Precarious masculinity in interactions with the children

12 Working with children is without a doubt the main activity of childcare work. The "token" status of male care workers is just as evident in relation to the children's views, as it was for female care workers and parents. All the men interviewed reported being received very positively by the children in their facilities. One male care worker reflected:

Well naturally we are very exotic in the childcare centers. You see, a man in a childcare center, that was before the position I now have, [. . .] that was really something great. You were something special in a sense. (Male careworker, childcare center)

The role of the male care workers, like that of their female colleagues, is not only to play with and socialize the children. The children expect and demand an emotional relationship and care, also in the sense of being physically close and cuddling with them. As the care workers reported, this is also encouraged when some of the children push them into the role of mother or father. As indicated by those interviewed, some of the children did not even realise that for the staff, being there is a job. And so it often happened that teachers were addressed as "mummy" or "daddy." The children's demands for affection, but also some tasks —such as changing diapers —necessarily involved physical contact with the children. Though contact is

clearly part of childcare work, dealing with such situations is not always so easy for the male childcare workers, as noted by one of the facility directors:

The role set is not so easy for a man. Because he is always sitting a bit on-stage and for that reason is now and then looked upon with suspicion [. . .]. It gets difficult in those situations, when, because in our line of work one of the issues is sexual abuse, so that those are things that get hairy. Because, there is the assumption, when one thinks about it, that you always would view the man in the role of abuser and that is a difficult association for the male colleagues in the center. So things like [. . .] for example, cuddling, or something, always requires a very careful approach. (Male director, childcare center)

The fact that the men are always "a bit on-stage" can result in difficulties, especially in those situations where there is physical contact with the children. This is mainly a result of the fact that "the exercise of physical violence [. . .] is generally attributed to men" (Döge, *Geschlechterdemokratie* 57; my translation), which in reference to the occupational context of childcare work means that men are taken to be the primary suspects in cases of child abuse. A female care worker also addressed this issue: "Men are always generally the ones accused. One seldom hears of women who have engaged in sexual abuse" (Female care worker, childcare center). As Peter Döge argues in relation to the concept of "male coercive power" ("MachtMann"), "men are not only the perpetrators of patriarchal violence, but also the victims, as a consequence of violence between men" (*Geschlechterverhältnisse* 47; my translation; see also Connell). While the men interviewed did not sense that their female colleagues viewed them suspiciously, the opposite seemed to be the case with some of the parents. Also the male staff themselves displayed a great deal of sensitivity about the issue, in light of a case of abuse in the mid-1990s in Germany, which made nationwide headlines:

Well six or seven years ago [. . .], there was a big case of sexual abuse; from the perspective of being accused, [. . .] I do think that a few of us or even oneself had this case somewhere a bit in the back of our heads. And when you are in this job, and when you cuddle with the children or get a little close, physically, well [. . .], you think about what if the parents come in and see, sometimes. It is silly, but you get a bad conscience for something which in fact is completely ok. It's because there is also this possibility out there of being accused. (Male care worker, public sector pre-school)

The reflection of this male care worker signifies how gendered assumptions about child abuse renders men uneasily into the role of childcare giver. Some of the male childcare personnel took measures to protect themselves in situations where they come in close physical contact with the children, for example, making sure a female colleague was also present in the room. These behavioral strategies show how the male childcare staff try to insure that "gender" in its negative connotation for men, is *not* thematized. Drawing on the work of Stefan Hirschauer,

this could be seen as an example of men "undoing gender" (679; my translation), since gender differences in this context are not emphasized, but rather actively downplayed.

The tension between men's career expectations and the structural reality of care work occupations

13 The previous sections have shown the tensions in the performance of gender in relationships with parents and children for creating quite different ideals, valuations and experiences of masculinity for men in female-dominated childcare work. In this section we turn to contradictions between work expectations of male care workers and the general lack of professional opportunities in care work. Here mismatches become evident between the men's expectations and career goals on the one hand, and the structural disadvantages of the occupational field on the other hand.

14 As Helga Krüger has shown, in contrast to most male-dominated occupations many female dominated occupations in Germany are not learned in the context of the dual-training system, but in vocational secondary schools, with fewer opportunities for further training. This type of qualification generally, and childcare work particularly, has a low occupational prestige, lower pay and few or no structures for career advancement (Krüger 524; Teubner; Wetterer). All these aspects of the occupational reality of childcare work were thematized by the workers interviewed. Many of the childcare staff found further training opportunities quite poor, not least of all due to budget cuts in the facilities. Nearly all staff also found one of the problems with their occupation to be the low social status of working with children. Many of the care workers reported being faced with degrading comments about their occupation, being likened to a "playmate" or "gossip" Staff interviewed were also often given the feeling of being seen as babysitters, or their activities were likened to a children's play group, quite in contrast to their own professional understanding of their work. Their own self understanding as educators placed their contributions in the realm of early childhood development, as socializing agents "making [the children] socially competent" (Male care worker, childcare center). In contrast to their occupational identity, especially the male care workers, as discussed above, experience a clear degradation of their work.

15 In addition to the more symbolic disadvantages of pre-school care work, employment in this field also carries serious material disadvantages. In comparison to most male-dominated professions with the same or lower levels of formal qualification and skills, pay and income was relatively poor. Information on pay provided to the author by a public sector childcare facility provides some proof of the gap experienced by male care workers in

reference to same-level male occupations. This particular facility was a public sector childcare center involved in special education. A locksmith was also employed by the facility, to take care of repairs and maintenance. The childcare workers in the German federal state where this study was conducted typically complete vocational schooling for the occupation, which included an internship, followed by three years of occupational training. The occupation of locksmith by contrast involved a three-year vocational training in the German dual-training system, which followed completion of the ninth year of mandatory schooling. In terms of qualification streams, care workers were required to complete more years of training than locksmiths. Care workers employed at the level of group leader, the second highest level of childcare center hierarchies, just below the center director, received a monthly gross income of 2,174 Euros, while a locksmith with a journeyman's license (just below the *Meister* level) earned 2,121 Euros.¹¹ This is not much difference, especially if we consider that in most special education facilities group leaders are required to have a supplementary qualification in special education, going beyond the normal vocational qualification sketched above. The lowest income category of care workers in this center earned a much lower monthly wage of just 1,895 Euros (gross pay). The main complaint of the male care workers was in fact their low income. For the men interviewed, the ideal of the "male breadwinner" continued to be a highly relevant expectation. Two of the men interviewed made the main income contribution to their families. Nonetheless, several of the male care workers indicated their willingness to take parental leave to contribute to the care of their own children. Yet the reflections of one such male care worker in the course of the interview proved quite contradictory:

A teacher once told me not to become a care worker, that I would not be able to support a family with this occupation. That made a big impression on me, really until today. That was the statement that made the biggest impression on me, and it follows me still. Because his wife was also a childcare worker and so he knows of course what a childcare worker earns, and what sort of advancement chances there are, and so he told me if I wanted to have my own family, then I should not do this. (Male care worker, childcare center)

One of the male care workers interviewed had taken a side-job in order to earn more money and fit better into the role of the "male breadwinner" in his family. Such a solution seemed

¹¹ The income levels presented here were based on the following assumptions: an employee age 30, single, with five years work experience. The income of the care worker corresponds to the German public sector rates, with the relevant geographical and job-based pay supplements. The income of a locksmith is based on the basic wage plus a job-based supplement typical to this occupation.

quite common, since even the female care workers reported other cases of male staff who tried to supplement their income in this way.

16 As also noted in this last interview passage, the advancement chances for care workers are relatively limited. Pre-schools have just three levels of hierarchy: sub-group leader, group leader, and director. The interviews showed that female care workers tended to aspire to advancement within this hierarchy less than their male colleagues, who clearly considered moving up into managing the centers. In fact most of the male care workers were employed at the first level of sub-group leader within the childcare facilities. This alone does *not* demonstrate, however, that male care workers have fewer chances of advancement than their female colleagues. Male care workers in fact tended to profit from their "go-between" gender status, as the following interview passage about recruitment practices the childcare field confirms:

I know. In my first job for the municipality I experienced a lot of recruitments. Because I was a recruitment coordinator for them, and I led a lot of job interviews with the applicants to all the municipal centers. And it was here and there the case that male applicants had an advantage because of being a man. If a woman got the job, then it was because she could offer a lot more than the man [. . .] and even if a personnel office or other instance tries to claim that such things don't happen, well I would still see it this way [. . .]. (Male director, childcare center)

As this male childcare center director illustrates, the minority status of men can be an advantage in situations where men and women are competing against each other for jobs. Despite the obvious potential for conflict, the interviews with female childcare workers did not reveal any suspicions or criticisms toward the career aspirations of male colleagues. Instead, many of the female staff seemed to accept and understand that men in childcare wanted to be the main earners in their partnerships and to move up in their careers, just like in other fields of work. Yet while all the male care workers interviewed had in fact been offered a further promotion, most of them had declined since, in contrast to their female colleagues, a great number of the men planned to leave the occupation for another soon. Only one man interviewed indicated that he would stay in the job on the condition that he would eventually be promoted into the role of group leader. Two other male care workers felt their age meant they were no longer physically able to remain in pre-school work, and another male interviewee left the occupation altogether shortly after this research was completed. Female care workers at first did not indicate any intention to leave the occupation. Several of the female interviewees could imagine taking a longer leave of absence should they have children themselves. But a complete exit from the occupation in the near future was not considered by

any of the women care workers in this study. At the same time however, almost none of the interviewees intended to stay in care work until retirement age.

17 The intended career courses of the care workers in this study are also illustrated in occupational trend data collected by the German Statistical Office. The data breaks down employment by age cohorts, an excerpt from which is presented in the following table¹²:

Table 1: Number of Employees in Childcare Occupations by Age Cohorts								
Age	<20	20-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45	45-50	50-55
Women	9,716	28,548	27,049	23,132	29,233	32,541	30,784	16,198
Men	565	808	471	450	409	332	174	96

Fig. 1.

These figures not only make clear the thorough gender segmentation of this occupation, but also how these differences are carried over into employment trends between age cohorts. These are cross-sectional and not longitudinal data, but in the context of the fact that the numbers of male childcare workers has remained very low since the 1990s (Kasiske et al 17), these data illustrate several important gender-based differences. While up until the age of 25 the numbers of men and women in childcare work increases, the drop in male employment thereafter is drastic, from 808 for 20-25 year olds, down to 471 for 25-30 years. This decline of 58% suggests that work in childcare for men seems to have a tentative character, or perhaps represents a transitional phase in their work biographies. There may also be an association between the decline in male childcare workers for the 25-30 age cohort and the reported lack of career and earnings potential or further training in this occupation. The importance of the cultural ideal of the "male breadwinner" for male care workers should not be underestimated, which, together with the other factors, may motivate many male care workers to leave the occupation.

18 Shifting attention to the employment of female care workers, a significant decline in employment levels is evident between the 20-25 age cohort (28,548) and the 30-35 group

¹² The occupations covered in these employment statistics are not just childcare workers in pre-schools, but also assistants in childcare centers, special education workers, etc. Only regular employees (including group leaders but not childcare center or pre-school supervisors or directors), are included in these statistics. (see Statistik der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe Teil III.1 [2002], Tabellenblatt 9, Tätige Personen in Tageseinrichtungen nach Geschlecht und Arbeitsbereich sowie Altersgruppen).

(23,132). Thereafter there is an increase again in employment, to 29,233 employees, suggesting that many women leave work when they reach childrearing age, but then re-enter employment later, for example in part-time employment. This may be an indication of an orientation on the part of working mothers towards balancing paid and unpaid labor in the context of the "part-time career model of the male breadwinner marriage" (*Vereinbarkeitsmodell der männlichen Vorsorgerehe*) (Pfau-Effinger, "Paths" 383; see also Pfau-Effinger, *Frauenerwerbstätigkeit*).

19 Both the numbers of male and female care workers noticeably declines among the older cohorts. While in the 40-45 age group female care workers number 32,541, there are only 16,198 in the 50-55 cohort. Male care workers in these cohorts number 332 in the 40-45 cohort, and just 96 men are childcare workers in the 50-55 cohort. Thus for both men and women, there is a tendency to leave childcare work as they progress in age.

Conclusion

20 While the movement of men into female-dominated occupations can be seen as an important form of "de-traditionalizing" patriarchal gender relations (see Meuser, "Geschlechterverhältnisse" 233), for most men in childcare facilities the occupation represents a transitory phase in their work biographies. In my estimation, this is due to the tensions which arise in relation to reproducing versus undoing masculinity in the context of work in the field of early childhood education. As a result, the depiction of men in care work oscillates between the extremes of symbolic feminisation and hypermasculinity with all the respective negative connotations. Such depictions do not originate in the collegial working relationship, but rather in the men's circle of friends and acquaintances or from parents of the children they care for. These findings confirm that in the interactive construction of gender "third parties," like customers and clients, play a role in "doing gender" and reproducing traditional gender relations (Wetterer 136; see Hochschild). This finding about the role of "third parties" in interactive work situations should inform further studies of the analysis of gendered work relations, for example in interactive service work occupations.

21 Not only the way men are depicted, but also their own actions and practices within the occupational field of childcare is ridden with contradictions. The question of whether male care workers are a case of "new men" cannot be answered clearly nor conclusively on the basis of the evidence presented here. Despite the fact that all the male "go-betweens" analyzed in this study made the decision to work in a traditionally female occupation quite consciously in relation to their work biographies, and although they were quite aware of having breached

the conventions governing male career choices, daily work practice was nonetheless characterized by "doing masculinity" and an emphasis on difference in relation to their female colleagues. Further, these differences were brought forth cooperatively between male and female colleagues in interaction with each other.

22 In relation to their work expectations, the ideal of the male breadwinner continued to be of great importance to the male care workers, despite the fact that structural disadvantages of care work jobs prevented them from fulfilling this ideal. The gendered expectations by parents and others on male care workers, as well as the construction of their own male identity and career expectations demonstrate clearly the normative orientation provided by a notion of "hegemonial masculinity" for work practice and relations of men in a traditional female professions. This study clearly shows that male care workers position themselves in relation to hegemonial masculinity (Connell/Messerschmidt 832; see Meuser, "Hegemoniale Männlichkeit" 162), but are also positioned there by the persons with whom they interact in their daily work practice.

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Murray Pomerance and Frances Gateward, eds: *Where the Boys Are: Cinemas of Masculinity and Youth*. Wayne State UP, 2005

By Kyle Frackman, University of Massachusetts, USA

1 In *Where the Boys Are: Cinemas of Masculinity and Youth* (2005), Murray Pomerance and Frances Gateward have collected articles that make an important contribution to inquiries into cinematic depictions of boys in the twentieth century. The volume's lucidly written introduction begins with the editors' wondering what exactly is connoted by the word "boy" beyond the definition of "males who have not yet reached adulthood" (1). Noting that publications in the field of gender studies have more often (reasonably) focused on girls and women, Pomerance and Gateward write that

a truly progressive agenda, which is implied in some way or made explicit in most studies of gender and cinema, surely requires attention to boys-not only in terms of the pathways by which they come into adult male agency, the transformations by which their vulnerabilities become empowerments, or the way gender role expectations restrict, reshape, and corrupt masculinities but also in terms of how boys' power affects girls. (1)

Maintaining that masculine power and its exercise often go unobserved and hence uninterrogated, the book's editors describe the need for critical examination of "screen images of boyhood for clues about the wider social world, its gendered social structure, and the process of building masculinity in the modern world" (2).

2 The editors expose lingering tropes of helplessness or hopelessness underlying an intricate façade of displayed "masculine prowess" within film's contemporary construction of male gender(s) (3). In late capitalism, they note, "adolescent boyhood is extended, in a kind of unending consumer dream state, with a vast population of physically mature males being denied the full responsibilities of adult citizenship in order that their activities might be made the more predictable, the more controllable, and the more exploitable" (3). Furthermore, "it becomes increasingly difficult to find the line where boyhood actually ends" (3). "Boys" and "boyish" characters like those in *WarGames* (1983), *The Lost Boys* (1987), *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991), *Toy Soldiers* (1991), *Spider-Man* (2002), *Dude, Where's My Car?* (2000), and the *Harry Potter* films are both located in development of cinematic male figures over the course of film history and examined as dynamic archetypes that have special relevance in today's culture. We live in a culture in which youth is revered. In particular, the "boy" has become an increasingly popular figure in film, though the editors also observe that the "cinematic boy" has long held the attention of film audiences.

3 In multiple cinematic references in the introduction, Pomerance and Gateward demonstrate the usefulness of the "boy" category to cinema studies. Over five pages, they list the appearances of relevant "boy" characters in films stretching from the silent era to 2003. The editors' goal is clear: one can see that filmgoers have been captivated by the "boy" and "boyish" characters since the beginning of film history. Given this longstanding pull toward such characters and thematic material, Pomerance and Gateward are right to add to the relatively small amount of scholarship on "boyhood" and "cinematic boyhood." Their contribution comes in the form of a volume that treats "the intersections of boys and class, boys and race, boys and gender identity, [and] boys and social power" (9).

4 Following the introduction, the book is divided into three parts: "Archetypes and Façades," "Bonds and Beatifications," and "Struggles and Redefinitions." The first and second sections contain seven essays each; the third and final section contains six essays. In "Archetypes and Façades," the contributions examine "well-recognized, historically central typifications of boyhood" in a culturally critical context (9). An example is the "southern boy," a character that evokes recollections of a particular American past, reminiscence, and coming of age. Mary B. O'Shea examines this archetype in her contribution, "Crazy from the Heat: Southern Boys and Coming of Age." O'Shea's article focuses on the "southern boy" and his status as a vehicle for or impetus to a reactionary nostalgia for an imagined past that is patriarchal and less than accurate. The "Huck Finn figure," as O'Shea labels him, moves about in the American landscape of memory as he both partly "innocent" like "our forefathers" and an antiauthoritarian "trickster" (83, 85).

5 The book's second section, "Bonds and Beatifications," is devoted to those very important interpersonal relationships that play key roles in boys' self-definition and identity construction and in the ways in which boys express themselves. This part contains John Troyer's and Chani Marchiselli's essay, "Slack, Slacker, Slackest: Homosocial Bonding Practices in Contemporary Dude Cinema," which, among the other contributions, makes evident the entire volume's relevance to contemporary culture. As the editors have done in their introduction, Troyer and Marchiselli scrutinize a genre of film that exemplifies many of masculinity's mystifying and coded elements, like homosocial and homoerotic bonding practices that are paradoxically contradictory, while making evident some of the characteristics of present-day, gendered culture, like "parental rejection, the formation of sexual identities, and the recuperation of lost memory" (264-265). Indeed, the authors argue that the "dude" stands allegorically for much of "America's adolescence," caught between

boyhood and adulthood and attempting to fill an absence with homosocial bonding and a reclamation of "masculinist, Western history and its projected futures" (264, 275, 276).

6 In "Struggles and Redefinitions," the book's third and final section, six essays analyze "boys who attempt to resist the constraining definitions of young manhood imposed by social structures" (15). One intriguing contribution from this section is Steven Jay Schneider's essay, "*Jerkus Interruptus: The Terrible Trials of Masturbating Boys in Recent Hollywood Cinema.*" Schneider investigates the cinematic trope of interrupted masturbation scenes in such films as *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982), *American Pie* (1999), and *Spider-Man* (2002). Described as "case studies in pop cinematic sadism," the masturbation scenes play on societal anxieties about self-pleasure (378, 382). The scenes that Schneider describes activate the cultural shaming of this activity through their humiliation of the masturbating subject, while simultaneously speaking to a need to demystify or make more public this ubiquitous behavior.

7 The book ends with a twenty-page combined index of film titles, persons (including actors, directors, and scholars), and concepts. The index seems to be sufficient, though it is surprising that "gender" and "masculinity" have only two page references each and that "gay" and "queer" do not appear at all. Each article including the introduction ends with a list of works cited. Though the anthology is intended mainly as a contribution to scholars' methodological knowledge within cinema studies, the volume's utility in courses could have been enhanced by either a combined bibliography at the back of the book or an additional section of recommended works.

8 *Where the Boys Are* is a well-edited volume that addresses a wide variety of topics and films within the area of the book's declared subject. The editors' introduction especially could be useful as an explanatory and introductory text in a course in which the students encounter and practice the critical handling of gender(s) in cultural productions, though several of the films listed here would be unfamiliar to present-day college-age students. Pomerance and Gateward explain their goals for the anthology as well as the need for such a volume. Reading through this collection, one confronts the following image at the beginning:

The boy we meet in cultural narrative is typically brash and dirty, covered with oil and grease or burrs or straw, freckled and wide-eyed, innocent in a way the most innocent girl can never be, physically agile, fond of the outdoors or at least comfortable there, a follower of snakes, snails, and puppy-dog tails. (2)

This image of the "boy" is demonstrated to be rather complicated over the course of the anthology's following twenty articles. *Where the Boys Are* makes a significant contribution to the scholarship on the development of male gender in cultural productions. As a companion to

the same editors' other volume, *Sugar, Spice, and Everything Nice: Cinemas of Girlhood* (Wayne State University Press, 2002), this book fills a gap with unique scholarship that is recommended for those who are interested in or who utilize cultural theory in their research and teaching.

Steven Bruhm and Natasha Hurley, eds: *Curiouser: On the Queerness of Children*. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 2004

By Damien W. Riggs, The University of Adelaide, South Australia

1 Having put my hand up to review this book at a time when I was beginning work on a paper focusing on representations of diversity in storybooks for children of queer parents (Riggs and Augoustinos)¹, it was unfortunate that I did not actually find the time to read the book until some months later. When I did eventually manage to read the book I was delighted to find many of the themes and concerns that arose from my own work directly reflected in the contents of *Curiouser*. All of the chapters work neatly together to provide a well-written critique of the functions served by a range of constructions of childhood within Western nations, both historically and in the present.

2 The chapters explore in various ways how the queerness of childhood and the experiences of queer childhoods are variously disavowed within contemporary cultures. In their introductory chapter, Bruhm and Hurley elaborate what they see as an excusatory stance on children in queer families. They suggest that in storybooks for children living in queer families

we find sanitized middle-class worlds where the children are evacuated of any desires but those of creature comforts [. . .]. [Whilst] these children do express some anxiety about their queer domestic configurations [. . .] these anxieties are quelled by the assurance that they are just like everyone else, that love makes a home, and that Uncle What-Is-It is not a drag queen but a Princeton letterman... Granted, the authors of these books are writing in a climate where panic about (at best) recruitment and (at worst) pedophilia in gay and lesbian culture is rampant. But their bland children throw into high relief the truism that sexuality is otherwise omnipresent in children's culture. These books write the child's desire out of existence, eradicating the sexual child in the process (xii-xiii).

3 In a related chapter, and one that goes under the insightful title of *How to Bring Your Kids up Gay* (I for one have often wondered why it is that straight parents are allowed to state that whilst they would still love their children if they were gay, "it would be a hard life," but as queer parents we cannot wish for our children to be queer, as for them to be otherwise may mean "a hard life for us"), Sedgwick suggests that texts on "homosexual development," "and the associated therapeutic strategies and institutions, are not about invasive violence. What they are about is a train of squalid lies. The overarching lie is the lie that they are predicated on anything but the therapists' disavowed desire for a nongay outcome" (144). The desire to

¹ Riggs, Damien W. and Martha Augoustinos. "Learning Difference: Representations of Diversity in Storybooks for Children of Lesbian and Gay Parents." *Journal of GLBT Family Studies* 3 (2007).

either present a sanitized depiction of queer childhoods (as Bruhm and Hurley suggest), or to attempt an erasure of queer identities (as Sedgwick suggests), may be read as symptoms of an ongoing cultural move to deny the legitimacy of queer identities and family formations, and to do so precisely by either normalizing or refuting the existence of queer cultures.

4 One of the ways in which queer cultures are routinely dismissed or demonized is through their juxtaposition with categories of "innocence." Mohr suggests that the reification of "innocence" serves to ward off all that is considered bad or threatening in the world. This is achieved through the construction of "childhood" as all that is innocent, yet he suggests this represents a paradox, in that the desire on the part of adults for this category to remain innocent serves only to pervert it and thus make it a troublesome object of desire. Ohi similarly takes up discourses of innocence in his chapter via an examination of Henry James' *What Maisie Knew*. Ohi suggests that fears over "childhood innocence" reflect less about children's needs, and more about adults' fears about their own relationship to themselves and their desires. Ohi also importantly focuses on how children are made to stand as "principles of exchange" when they are used to legitimate the relationship between two adults, or more precisely, when they are expected to legitimate heterosexual relationships through the construction of the two parent-child(ren) triad.

5 Savoy similarly focuses on the work of Henry James, this time through an examination of *Turn of the Screw*. Savoy provides a wonderful narrative that itself progressively turns its analytic screw ever tighter in order to turn the reader back upon themselves by recognizing the impossibility of adequately making a "move from seeing to knowing to articulating" (253). As Savoy suggests, what we believe we see is often precisely what we refuse to see: the operations of repression allow us to see only that which affirms what we choose to believe about ourselves. The specters that haunt the characters in the text are shown, in Savoy's analysis, as more precisely haunted by their own desires that are founded upon intersections of queerness, difference and deviance.

6 These intersections are further explored by Kelleher, in his examination of Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. As Kelleher suggests, psychoanalysis shows us how "one is not born, but rather, *becomes* normal" (154-155). Kelleher examines how the categories of 'child', 'pervert' and 'normal' are brought into metonymy through the reliance of the latter upon the former two, or more precisely, that any claims to 'normality' are thoroughly wrought through the construction of childhood 'deviance' and its supposed correction through the internalization of social norms. Kelleher shows us how categories of deviancy and innocence are mutually constituted through a nexus of relationships that are designed to shore

up the normative status of heterosexuality. Yet, as Berlant suggests in her chapter, the ongoing visibility of queer narratives of childhood evidence "the shadow of the fetish called normalcy" (58).

7 The normalizing function of heterosexual hegemony is again highlighted in the chapter by Stockton, in her examination of Western "culture's contradictions over childhood sexual orientation: the tendency to treat all children as straight while we culturally consider them asexual" (283). This assumption of heterosexuality is evidenced in the ways in which coming out narratives are implicitly constructed as death narratives - as she suggests, "the phrase 'gay child' is a gravestone marker for where and when a straight person died" (238). Such statements only make sense in a context where heterosexuality is deemed the normative developmental outcomes for all children.

8 Finally, binaries of good and evil, perversion/queerness and innocence/childhood, are examined in the chapter by Hanson, where he takes up the theme of the haunting specter in his analysis of *The Exorcist*. Hanson reminds us that children queer normative notions of safety and innocence by showing how fine the line is between good and evil - that any notion of a 'real good' is always undone by its relationship to its opposite. Hanson questions whether 'the voice of the devil', for example, actually portends the evil it is said to contain, or if it instead it is simply a counter-intuitive voice that challenges particular taken-for-granted norms.

9 Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed reading this edited collection. Bruhm and Hurley have done an excellent job bringing together such an exciting and stimulating collection of work on topics of queer childhoods, the queerness of children, and critiques of depictions of queerness in contemporary cultures. All of the chapters usefully extend contemporary thought on how we understand children and their cultures, and challenge us to reconceptualise the lines we draw and the crossings they attempt to foreclose. Discourses of childhood will always far exceed the actions and desires of children themselves, and recognizing this will contribute to a more complex understanding of the curious relations between normative and queer understandings of the worlds we inhabit.

Jean Wyatt: *Risking Difference: Identification, Race, and Community.*

Albany, NY: State U of New York Press, 2004

By Damien W. Riggs, The University of Adelaide, South Australia

1 Reading academic texts in order to review them is a task I often find both rewarding and stressful. Obviously one typically chooses to review books that relate to one's own areas of research, and thus one in many ways seeks to learn whilst reviewing. Yet, on the other hand, reviewing often feels like an adversarial task - one must, in order to review a book, simultaneously critique it. There will of course be books one reviews that one loves, and others that one reacts aversively to. And then there will be books that produce both emotions (amongst others) - ones that thoroughly excite the reader, and yet also elicit concern over particular theoretical formulations or knowledge claims. This is perhaps as it should be - a good book should challenge, educate and stimulate the reader, and certainly few books are likely to achieve consensus amongst readers. Where this is problematic, however, is in the writing of the review itself - how does one balance critique with praise, and importantly, how does one not undermine the importance of a book when critiquing it?

2 I raise these points as they are precisely the issues presented to me in reading and reviewing this book. As I will elaborate within this review, I began reading the book, and became quickly enamored of Wyatt's eloquent writing style, her accessible reading of psychoanalytic concepts, and her thoughtful elaborations of issues of envy, identification and ethical engagement. I was somewhat troubled, however, by later portions of the text, which seem in part to perpetuate the very problems the author seeks to challenge. Whilst, as I will reiterate later, I thoroughly enjoyed the text overall, and would recommend it to academics working in a wide range of fields, I feel it is nonetheless important to raise the points of contention I have with the text, and to connect these to the productive and exciting aspects of the text.

3 From the beginning of the text, Wyatt introduces the reader to an exciting journey through her early chapters on envy and identification. Her explication of a psychoanalytic understanding of envy is exciting not only for its applicability to a wide range of areas, but also for the neatness and clarity of the argument. Wyatt's choice of Atwood's *The Robber Bride* as a site for examining envy within feminist communities highlights her skill in bringing together literary analysis, social commentary and politically engaged theorizing. Similarly, Wyatt's work on identification across a number of novels, and in particular her analysis of Morrison's *Beloved*, demonstrates the central importance of psychoanalytic

accounts for understanding the complexities of subjectivity, and the ways in which legacies of violence continue to function across generations. Read together, her analysis of envy and her explication of the operations of identification provide much-needed tools for exploring the role that the psyche plays in managing our negotiations with the world around us.

4 Wyatt then moves in later chapters to an exploration of the complexities of racial identification, and the problems that exist within feminism for white women attempting to engage with the voices of non-white women. Where this line of thinking falls short, appears to be when Wyatt does not make adequate use of the growing body of literature on race and whiteness studies. Whilst Wyatt references Seshadri-Crooks' excellent text on whiteness and psychoanalysis, she does not appear to draw substantially upon other work that has engaged not only with race and psychoanalysis, but more importantly with work that examines the privileges held by white people and the implications of these for challenging white feminisms. As a result, whilst Wyatt provides important insights into the ways in which white women talk about their location within the academy, she largely fails to locate herself as a white woman who benefits from privilege. Thus in places she talks about white women as 'they', neglecting to include herself in the category 'white'. In places she does mark herself as 'Anglo', but the use of this descriptor has significantly different rhetorical effects to the marking of other women as 'white'. Wyatt's failure to adequately locate her own racial identity, particularly in chapter four, results in her reading of Morrison's *Tar Baby* coming across not only as highly defensive in places, but also as potentially perpetuating the negative representations of African American women that she attempts to challenge.

5 Wyatt does however provide an excellent bookend to the early, highly original, chapters, in her final chapter, where she begins the task of outlining what a cross-cultural ethical engagement could look like. Whilst here again she does not draw upon literature from within race and whiteness studies, she nonetheless deftly employs psychoanalysis once again to explore the relationships between self and other, and in particular how the location of those positioned as racialized others reminds dominant members of our fundamental lack, and the failure of white systems of knowledge to adequately encompass or incorporate non-white knowledges. Wyatt's focus on cross-cultural interactions recognises that the needs of differing groups may at times produce conflict, and that rather than trying to sidestep this with claims to 'respecting difference' or 'creating space', it may be more important to acknowledge incommensurabilities and to recognise the legitimacy of the voicing of dissent.

6 On the whole, Wyatt's text represents an exciting intervention into how we 'do' community, both within the academy and beyond. Wyatt skillfully utilizes psychoanalytic

theory in order to develop an understanding of racial identifications, and in so doing she highlights the shortfalls of existing accounts of collaboration and solidarity within feminist communities. Whilst, as I have elaborated, this is in places problematic in regards to the lack of engagement with her own race privilege, Wyatt has nonetheless produced a text that is both theoretically engaged and politically motivated. In this sense, the text stands out as an important contribution to understandings of difference and community, not despite its shortfalls, but because of them. That Wyatt willingly lays herself open to critique for her own investments in whiteness and feminism displays a commitment to a politics of engagement that is less about managing difference or legitimating privilege, and far more about working through the everyday struggles faced in the building of coalitions across racialized divides.

List of Contributors

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