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INSCRIPTIONS OF POWER: AN ARGUMENT AGAINST TRADITIONAL GENDER
ROLES IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

by

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Philosophy in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Philosophy

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

DECEMBER, 2013

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Upmost thanks to the Philosophy Department at the University of North Florida. Your guidance and inspiration is what made this possible.

This work is dedicated to my family, whom I love so much. Thank you for your continued support of all my endeavors.

To my mom, you have always embraced my creativity... no matter what form. Thank you for understanding me. You have given me such a wonderful example of what it means to be a strong woman.

To my love, Danielle. You are an inspiration of what it means to follow your own path through life and I am so grateful that you shared it with me. Your constant encouragement, with all things that I do, is more than I will ever be able to thank you for. I still do not know how I got so lucky. I love you, to infinity...

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Feminism is grounded on the belief that women are oppressed or disadvantaged by comparison with men, and that their oppression is in some way illegitimate or unjustified. Under the umbrella of this general characterization there are, however, many interpretations of women and their oppression, so that it is a mistake to think of feminism as a single philosophical doctrine, or as implying an agreed political program. (James 1998, 576)

Introduction

In the western culture, historically speaking, there are different ideas of what gives an individual authority or power. There is also historical evidence of an unequal balance between men and women and throughout this thesis I will argue that this is still the case in contemporary society. This unbalance is evident in the ways in which women make use of their bodies in acts such as dieting and pregnancy, how women take on the role of caregivers, and the view of women in leadership positions. I maintain that one of the biggest concerns and contributors to this problem is the subject/object relationship in which women find themselves. In this dichotomy, women find themselves to be a subject and autonomous person while at the same time cognizant of the way they are viewed by others as objects. Within this subject/object dynamic, women become non-subjects and lose their autonomy. A large part of this ongoing relationship is due to the ways in which women use and are *expected* to use their bodies as well as minds due to social norms that have been passed down through the culture. "In western culture, the mind and reason are coded as masculine, whereas

the body and emotion are coded as feminine.” (Meyers 2010) This can stem from the way women physically maneuver their bodies as well as how others perceive their bodies typically in an inferior or sexualized way. The duality for women as objects is illustrated not only in the way men view women but in how women view other women as well. Throughout this thesis, I aim to answer the following questions: Is it possible for women to change the view of their bodies? If so, is this something that is changed with culture first or within the woman? How do familial responsibilities play a role in these gendered problems? Does a woman’s appearance change her ability or perceived aptitude for leadership or authority? How are women in authoritative positions expected to act?

I explore these general questions to determine different barriers that force women into being both a subject and an object. I will take this one step further by looking at the specific case of the women within higher education. Is there a relationship with the subject/object dualism and the number of women in roles of authority within the university system? I will argue that many of the issues surrounding the subject/object dualism can be related back to the ways in which women, throughout their lives, use their bodies. I will illustrate how through the social education of women regarding how to utilize and experience their bodies, women often times lack both in physical ability as well as in leadership roles. I will illustrate how this takes place with young girls and how they maneuver their bodies in regards to

physical capabilities. I will then examine the pregnancy process and the ways in which the subject/object relationship manifests due to the female body being seen as a human incubator and a *thing* that needs medical attention. Finally, I will look at the workplace and the different leadership styles that women are assumed to take as well as the potential resistance that accompanies the challenges to these norms. The types of barriers that are constructed for women to traverse and how those affect the abilities of women to function in a position of power within a university illustrate issues of gender equality for all women. The context of the university setting is simply where I find particular interest.

Throughout the thesis, I will explore in detail some of the different barriers that have an impact on women. I argue that barriers have been constructed to hinder women and their perceived abilities within several contexts. My thesis takes a descriptive approach by identifying the barriers caused by the subject/object dualism that are experienced by women as well as a prescriptive approach by determining a response that can be helpful. I will be using predominantly feminist philosophies but will be including perspectives from other areas of philosophy regarding leadership and power. To begin my thesis, I will look at Michel Foucault and his philosophy of power, and how those forms of power translate into what we experience. How does Foucault's view translate to a feminist's view of power and what are some of the agreements and critiques of his argument? What are some of the ideas that we can take away to address

how men and women relate to their surroundings and themselves differently? Then, I will move into looking at the philosophies of Young and Haber to explore their view of a woman's body particularly focusing on how young girls view their bodies, and how pregnant women view their bodies. Next, I will look at the view of women as objects. Young and Haber complement each other in that they both find that women's bodies have been inscribed with normative cultural behavior which in turn prescribes that women utilize their bodies in specific ways. They also look at the ways in which gender has evolved to decipher a person's sex which then determines acceptable or unacceptable behavior. How does thinking of a woman as an object affect her view of herself? From there, I will move into the view of women as caregivers. How does this view of a woman's role affect herself and her surrounding? How does something like food preparation illustrate the subject/other dualism? I argue that the cultural demands of women as primary caregivers greatly influences how she feels about herself as well as how she behaves within the workplace. Finally, I will address women within the context of leadership roles and authority. I argue that the barriers of how women utilize their bodies and are responsible for being the primary caregivers cause hindrances which arise in the way women in particular lead within the workplace.

The goal of thesis is to explore the areas mentioned above to determine how these barriers come together to form overarching themes in contemporary culture. I argue that these obstacles all work simultaneously to not only impact the ways in which

women view themselves but are also viewed by society. These occurrences of women as both subject and object continue to have lasting effects on society by stifling the full embodiment of women. In order to overcome these barriers, I maintain that it will only be possible to change the perception of women by society through increased knowledge of these very situations. Only then, with the knowledge of these barriers, will the resistance to the contemporary power practices take place.

Feminist Views on Foucault

Within the context of power relationships it is impossible to have a thorough discussion without bringing in some of the ideas of Foucault. The link between feminist ideals and Foucaultian thought is well established. While Foucault does not speak directly to feminism or feminist thought he expresses his view of power in a holistic manner that allows for feminist interest. His views of the relationships between power practices, the body and sexuality have encouraged many feminist writers. I will be utilizing Foucault's theories concerning power to analyze the different kinds of constraints on women in the form of different power constraints. Specifically, I will be utilizing the works by Foucault as a tool for a descriptive analysis regarding how women's experiences are shaped in regards to the limitations and constraints of gender norms. His theories of power are helpful when trying to understand different power relationships and gives a base of normative values for feminist philosophy. Within his

writings, Foucault argues that the body and sexuality have been socially created rather than an organic occurrence, and while feminists have found his ideas thought provoking, they have also brought to light their limitations. The point of concern here is the production of power introduced by Foucault and the way in which women make use of their bodies. How does Foucault's view of power relate to how women make use of their bodies and how do feminist philosophers such as Butler and Haber react to and utilize Foucault's ideas?

In *The History of Sexuality* Foucault "describes the body as a surface upon which the rules, hierarchies, and metaphysical commitments of a culture are inscribed and reinforced." (Bordo 1992, 165) This would suggest that bodies are shaped by power. Although Foucault does not deny that power can function in a suppressive manner he maintains that it is primarily productive; or that, "power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth." (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* 1977, 194) Power that has been produced is all around us. Power production can be seen through media messages as well as social constructs, for example, which describe and illustrate what our culture sees as powerful. Power production, in regards to the way we experience it in contemporary culture, I argue, predominantly takes a gendered form. Imagine there are two political candidates that are speaking about the issues they are campaigning for. One of these politicians is a man, the other is a woman. They are standing on a stage with a podium in front of each

of them. It would not be a stretch to imagine the man in a conservative navy suit and tie as this is the traditional attire for a man in this position. Likewise, it would not be a stretch to imagine the woman in a skirt and suit jacket. Rarely, would you find a woman in these traditionally male dominated roles in slacks. I argue that the reason for this is because there is still a level of gendered traditions in these situations. For the woman, there is still a need and desire to appear strong yet still feminine. She must be able to communicate her points of view yet still be attractive. This is one example of how power relations can still have a gendered undercurrent attached to them. Through these culturally gendered traditions we find Foucault's ideas at work. There is power within society that has been produced and gendered power specifically that has been derived from the gendered domains we embody. I will be using this background to explore further power relationships as they apply to gender.

Foucault states that power no longer asserts itself as a "right of death" but rather as a "power over life" since the "primary interest of power now is in life and how to extend, secure, and expand it." (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* 1980, 135) It is this new "power over life" which Foucault calls biopower. Biopower is literally having power exercised through bodies so that there is "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations." (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* 1980, 140) Biopower can relate back to aspects of society which can

include life, death, procreation, construction, disease, and so on. He explains that biopower takes two forms. One is where the human body takes on a new form of production similar to that of a machine through the desire of being productive and economically beneficial. This form of biopower usually occurs in the military, throughout education or in the workplace. This can be seen in the context of gender by an action like dieting. There is the normal behavior of wanting to be thin so that one can fit within the normal ideal of what is socially acceptable and desired. The disciplining act of seeking thinness is manifested in contemporary culture through dieting. This is done by repeating actions such as avoiding foods that do not lead to thinness, self-criticism of the individual against what the acceptable norm is, obsessing over exercise, consuming diet products, recording and tracking the consumption of foods and exercise through mobile applications, and continual comparison of oneself against others. These are power producing activities in that the relationship of the individual to the desire to fall into a socially normative scope of thinness then perpetuates that power dynamic. I will argue throughout that in this process, of actions feeding back into culturally desirable norms, actually feeds into that relationship making the power relationship here stronger. I will continue to illustrate different examples of these relationships and will be linking the male gaze to these power producing relationships to solidify my point that only once these relationships have been broken down can we decipher the power practices to understand them.

The second form of biopower is the regulation of population which is done through a more statistical approach. This form “focuses on the reproductive capacity of the human body,” how the body reacts to illness as well as mortality, intelligence and crime. (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* 1980, 136) This also appears in ideas about demography, wealth analysis and ideology. This second form of biopower is attempting to control the population on an arithmetic analysis which converts people to units so that they can be measured against one another. The previous example of dieting can also be applied here. Within our current culture there is the emphasis on the obesity crisis. The population has become fixated on looking at obesity on an individual level as well as looking at overarching trends. While there is certainly an importance in ensuring that the obesity levels in society decrease, we can also look at it on a statistical level for this example. There is increased awareness of the rising costs of healthcare and concerns over healthcare policy at the government level. This translates to pressure at the individual level to be in line with normative behavior which in turn perpetuates the power relations. As we will continue to see, both forms of biopower have an impact on women in the use of their bodies.

Throughout *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault looks at the “emergence of some of the practices, concepts, forms of knowledge, and social institutions that have contributed to shaping modern European culture.” (Armstrong 2005) He uses a form of genealogy, which attempts a diagnosis of “the present time, and of what we are, in this

very moment” in order “to question... what is postulated as self-evident... to dissipate what is familiar and accepted.” (Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984* 1988, 265) As Armstrong further explains, “Foucault’s genealogy of modern power challenges the commonly held assumption that power is a negative, repressive force that operates through law, taboo, and censorship.”

(Armstrong 2005) In other words, he is arguing that power is not always negative or coming from an oppressive place.

Foucault defines his theory of power by explaining that power is all-embracing. In other words, everything and everyone is a source of power. For Foucault, power is realized in relationships rather than as a substance or a thing that can be had by a person. Since power exists in every action and even in cases where there is silence or subjection, there is not simply a lack of power but rather a different manifestation of power. He explains that “power must be understood... as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization.” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* 1980, 92)

This is important to my thesis because it gives a more thorough understanding of power relationships. This definition allows us to see that even in cases where the power being exercised is not obvious; there is still a form of power being exercised in these relationships that is more subtle. Throughout my thesis I will provide examples of these relationships.

Power practices and experiences of power *subject* individuals, in both senses of the term. “It simultaneously creates them as subjects *through* subjecting them to power.” (Haslanger, Tuana and O'Connor 2012) Through Foucault’s works, he makes clear that he believes that contemporary power practices come about because of almost every social action. This produces the collective body.

Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere... power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a *complex strategic situation* in a particular society. (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* 1980, 93, emphasis added)

To aid in this explanation, Foucault offers up five propositions of power. First, power is not something that one can have or not have; rather it is a force that is always being exercised from all points in any relation and in every social context. So in this sense, “power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared... (but instead) power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations.” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* 1980, 94)

This can be related back to the politician example by looking at the traditional gendered roles that men and women fall into. This can be in the types of clothing that is acceptable to the ways in which men and women tend to fall into certain patterns of leadership styles. Second, the power relationships of economics, knowledge, or sex do not experience the power externally; but rather it is within these relationships and determines how they are shaped. Therefore, the politicians are not necessarily

viscerally experiencing the power practices but rather experience them in a more subdued way. Third, power does not conform to a 'top down' model or in accordance to a ruler/ruled structure. For Foucault, power relationships identify themselves throughout the different levels of society independent of any other power practices that may be in place. There is no overarching ruler that demands that the politicians wear their specific clothing; instead, it is the cultural conditions and power practices that enforce this. Fourth, though it is possible to identify various approaches within power relationships, there are no specific individuals exercising this power. They are "imbued with calculation: there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives" yet at the same time, "this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject." (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* 1980, 94-95) In other words, the thought process of how power flows through society can be clear but for the most part the source of the power cannot be identified. This is because there is no inventor to identify. Finally, Foucault points out that resistance is part of the power practice and not a separate piece of it. Conversely, resistance is not illustrated as a constant stream, but rather pools of resistance appear and move about as the relationships of power change so that "where there is power, there is resistance and yet this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power." (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* 1980, 95)

Foucault explains there is not just one independent power relation in terms of sexuality. Likewise, he “does not want to identify a great power” but instead wants to look at the discourse on sex and sexuality from multiple power relations. (Haslanger, Tuana and O'Connor 2012) With this in mind, Foucault provides four rules for us to follow. First Foucault describes the rule of immanence where he states that we “must see knowledge and power as always connected.” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* 1980, 98) He believes that there is not a specific source or context of sexuality which we can use for deciphering. Instead, it would be helpful to begin with the “local centers of power-knowledge” so that what we can better understand sexuality. (Haslanger, Tuana and O'Connor 2012) In other words, Foucault finds importance in looking at the power relations in a holistic manner rather than trying to find a particular source of power. There is no source, but if we understand that power and knowledge are connected then it helps us also realize that power is exercised through knowledge and conversely knowledge is gained through relations of power. We can apply this “formula” to the example of the politician. Our knowledge of the traditional gendered clothing contributes to the power relationship at play. The clothing worn by the male politician holds power because it is traditionally what is viewed as assertive, confident and authoritative. When we examine the clothing of the female politician, we view her as trying to imitate the power that the man exudes. She is viewed as a “working woman,” and perhaps someone in a position of authority; but

she does not have the same understood or automatically given power as the man. It is the knowledge of what normative social culture understands as being powerful. The image of the man in the suit is understood as being powerful. It is this traditional thought of clothing that flows through society. We then, through this have the ability to take a closer look at power relationships like this one to see where else similar ideas occur. Is there a relationship to what we equate with powerful clothing to what a successful leader looks like?

The second guideline is the rule of continual variation. This means that power does not come about through constant applications. Foucault argues that we should not look to who has the power in the order of sexuality and conversely who is deprived of it, but rather to “the pattern of the modifications which the relationships of force imply by the very nature of their process.” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* 1980, 99) The third rule is double conditioning. Here all “local centers of power are parts of larger strategies and all larger strategies rely on local centers of power,” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* 1980, 99) however, one does not imitate the other. In fact, Foucault believes that

“No local center or pattern of transformation could function if it did not eventually enter into an overall strategy. Inversely, no strategy could achieve comprehensive effects if it did not gain support from precise and tenuous relations serving as its prop and anchor point.” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* 1980, 99)

This point can be illustrated by taking a closer look at the male gaze. If there was not already the relationship to view the female body as first having a sexual component then there would not be desire for the male gaze and the inclination of women to try and fit within what normative culture finds attractive. The wish for women to be desired stems from the male gaze and vice versa. If the cultural norm is to see women first as sexual then it also corresponds that the woman's desire of herself is to be seen as sexual. This also compounds the issue of the subject/object dualism in which women find themselves. They are the subject of the male gaze, yet at the same time objectified by it.

The fourth rule is that of tactical polyvalence of discourses. Discourse is the exchange between knowledge and power and similar to the notion of power, discourse applies itself in all types of different ways. Foucault wants to see discourse as "a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable." (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* 1980, 100-101) He does not imagine the exchange of discourse to be divided between forms of accepted discourse and excluded discourse, but instead as a "multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies." (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* 1980, 100) Foucault "believes that discourse can be an instrument and an effect of power," but at the same time it can be "a hindrance, point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy." (Haslanger, Tuana and

O'Connor 2012) Foucault wants to make it clear that silence does not always imply repression nor does it imply a lack of power.

When looking at sexuality in terms of power, Foucault wants us to understand that sexuality is not something that we will one day realize or master. He argues that “sexuality is a dense transfer point for relations of power and that sexuality is a social construct that channels a variety of different power relations.” (Armstrong 2005)

Foucault breaks this idea down into four parts. First, is the hysterization of women’s bodies. Here, he argues, that we are breaking down the thought process of women’s bodies to understand that we first think of the female body as sexual body and second as an object of medical knowledge. This is a point that I will illustrate throughout my thesis in looking at the female body in terms of seeking acceptance as well as the process of pregnancy, which begins as an extremely personal process, but as the pregnancy moves to the end becomes increasingly medical. If the female body is to be considered the center for reproduction, then it is also be considered a point of communal interest and control. I argue that during pregnancy, the woman experiences her body as her own but at the same time as the other. She becomes a vessel for the fetus in order to protect it and allow it to develop. She is forced to put her wants and desires aside so that she may care for this new part that is herself, but not herself at the same time. Within the section on pregnancy I will go into these ideas further. Second, through the pedagogy of children’s sexuality there is the detection of children to be

highly sexual beings and subsequently needing to be monitored and censored. Third, in line with the importance of procreation and reproduction it lends itself to understand sex as being central to public concern and finds that non-procreative sex is unnecessary and undesirable. If sex is for procreation, then there will also be an importance placed on discovering *who* is having sex. Only by monitoring the sexual happenings of the community, can one ensure that the *right* people are contributing to the best and healthiest population. Finally, by looking at the behavioral and cognitive processes of perverse behavior it follows that the process of studying sex is a medical and psychiatric occurrence. It highlights differences from *normal* sexual behavior and determines they are conditions of concern. Foucault wants to emphasize that these four centers do not suppress sexuality, but rather it is the ideas about sexuality that do not exist except within these contexts.

In some ways it is helpful to think of Foucault's view of power as we would the weather. Weather is ever-present and continually changing. There are various relationships between all types of weather that determine what we will experience. We can also consider the relationships between people and institutions in the same types of ways as we see changes of weather. If we take the view of power as similar to how we view the weather, it gives another layer of explanation to Foucault's propositions of power. First power, in the same ways as the weather is not something that people can have or not have. They are ever-present relationships between elements like air

pressure, clouds, rain, and air currents or in cultural terms, people and institutions.

While we can identify weather conditions such as rain or sunshine as indicators of there being weather present, weather itself is more abstract. In the same way, a woman's appearance might also cause different manifestations of power relationships. For example, a normatively thin woman might have a greater amount of perceived self-discipline given to her than an over-weight woman. She might be assumed to have a greater care about her body and her physical appearance. This could then lead to an increased feeling of power for the thin woman since she has been regarded with an increased amount of approval and respect by the culture. Second, power and weather are not external to the relationships that experience them. Weather as a whole is not external to occurrences of wind and rain. We do not think of weather in particular as causing the wind and rain, but rather the process which expresses itself as wind and rain. Third, power and weather do not come down from above from an all-knowing source, but instead it establishes itself on all levels. Weather does not simply come in the form of large fronts but rather has several different levels and dimensions. Fourth, power and weather do not have individuals guiding them. While we can see trends in the weather, there is no one thing that causes different changes of weather. Finally, power and weather both have degrees of resistance which can cause atmospheric changes in irregular ways. The appearance of sunshine is a form of an appearance of weather to the same degree as other conditions like rain. Sunshine appears and

disappears depending on the other weather factors; it does not stay in one particular place.

One of the problems with Foucault's account of power is in the challenge it poses to contemporary thoughts of power. "While there is a broad agreement that Foucault's redefinition of how we think about power contains important insights for feminism, there is still a divide over the implications for feminist theory and practice." (Armstrong 2005) When looking at the "traditional model of power as repression, much of feminist theory concerns patriarchal social structures which secure the power of men over women." (Armstrong 2005) If Foucault's idea of power is being understood as "exercised rather than possessed and as circulating throughout the social body rather than coming from the top down it might provide for a more detailed understanding of the role of power in women's lives." (Armstrong 2005) There is not just one form of power that women experience. It is on all different levels and is different for each woman depending on her experiences. Just like everyone does not experience the same weather at exactly the same time; likewise, all people do not experience the same forms of power at exactly the same times. If we are looking at power as having a more complex structure rather than a top-down, it allows for a broader understanding of power which can also play a role in other areas of our culture such as gender, race, class, and sexuality. Some of the feminists that I will call upon argue that this theory, that the body is the central location of power within modern society, is useful in their

analysis regarding the social control of women through their bodies and ultimately their sexuality.

Foucault's work has also been the subject of strong criticism by feminists. The most common objections focus on his "view of subjectivity as constructed by power and his failure to outline the norms which inform his critical enterprise." (Armstrong 2005) Nancy Fraser argues that the problem with Foucault's claim that forms of subjectivity are developed by relations of power is that it leaves no room for resistance to power. (Fraser 1989, 89) In other words, if we are just the results of the power practices and our bodies are merely transitioning to being shaped by power, then it becomes difficult to determine or to explain who are able to actually resist power or how that is even accomplished. But Foucault finds that there is resistance in the critiques of power relationships. Feminists have been able to use Foucault's ideas of power to explore the ways in which women and their experiences are shaped in and by the power practices they are seeking to transform. Through this thesis, the localized forms of gendered power relations will be exposed to explore types of social change. I will propose that while Fraser brings up an interesting argument, there is resistance to power in the knowledge of the particular power relationships and that it is through this knowledge that they will be able to be resisted. Fraser also argues that "only with the introduction of a normative notion could he begin to tell us what is wrong with the modern power/knowledge regime and why we ought to oppose it." (Fraser 1989, 29) She

continues to argue that without a better understanding of patriarchal power, it will be impossible to get to liberation from oppression. Throughout my thesis, I will outline some of the effects that I believe power has on the female body. I will return to the ideas of Foucault throughout my writing since he finds that by dissecting the power relationships we will be able to shift the ways in which different people experience power. In the conclusion, I will argue that I believe power can be influenced by knowledge. That with power and a more holistic view of power relationships through knowledge we will be able to combat some of the issues I will address throughout my thesis.

Since power operates in many different modes throughout society, for Foucault, it is best grasped in its everyday power practices. This idea along with the feminist view of analyzing the politics of personal relationships as well as gendered power practices has allowed for additional thought and debate on the personal politics which can include sexuality, medicine, and the workplace. Foucault's emphasis on the body was outlined in his analysis of biopower. "The problem of how to conceive the body without reducing its materiality to a fixed biological essence has been one of the key issues for feminist theory." (Armstrong 2005) I believe that Foucault's theory aids in the overall feminist debate over how power flows through our culture, and I will continue to provide examples of how this can take place.

“At a fundamental level, the body is central to the feminist analysis of oppression of women because biological differences between the sexes are the foundation that has served to ground and legitimize gender inequality.” (Armstrong 2005) This is done in two ways. First, women’s bodies are immediately placed in an inferior category with reference to the contemporary norms and ideals based on the capacities of men. This categorization can take place in looking at a woman’s physical abilities as well as in the workplace in terms of her leadership abilities. Second, biological functions have been collapsed into social characteristics. The current normative culture places men in the framework of being capable of surpassing their biological design so that they can utilize the full functionality of their bodies, it appears that women have been defined solely in terms of their physical abilities to utilize their bodies for reproduction and motherhood and conversely unable to utilize their bodies in effective ways. If gender is culturally constructed, is it possible to avoid the notion that gender is derived from the natural body? I argue that gender is not derived from the natural body, but that rather gender is culturally constructed and that due to the gendered power relationships it will remain this way. Since a woman’s biological makeup is her social component as well, then it is inscribing a culturally constructed gender role onto her sexed body. I find this to be problematic, since without knowledge of these inscriptions there cannot be any movement to change to them. According to Butler, an individual’s gender identity is merely “a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over

time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.” (Butler 1990, 33) So when we are speaking of gender we are referring to the cultural norms that individuals take part in that follow suite with the norms of the sexed bodies they encompass. This could be the norm for women to engage in the acts of shaving, applying make-up, and ornamenting their bodies as these are not the same norms for men. Therefore, it seems that these acts cause gendering of bodies. As I will illustrate throughout my thesis it is impossible to view a body without automatically applying gendered norms to it.

The Subject and Object Dualism

For some, feminism is synonymous with “women’s liberation” and the “second wave.” In general, feminism is the search for both “an intellectual commitment and a political movement that seeks justice for women and the end of sexism in all forms.” (Haslanger, Tuana and O'Connor 2012) While there is not only the desire for social justice, feminism also opens up for discussion of economic and political phenomena which can include: the workplace, social stigma, the body, reproduction, popular culture, and sexuality. I will examine many of these topics; however, the conversations, while simplified here, are very complex and will continue to be ongoing. Feminist critique finds that women are oftentimes viewed as both the subject and the object. Feminists argue that criticism causes women to never view herself as an

autonomous subject without also having the understanding that she is at the same time viewed as an object. I will argue that a woman's body and actions have been molded to conform to the ideals of contemporary society. Take for example, some of the general ideals about a woman. She is desired to be pure, gentle, and have a non-threatening air about her. Yet at the same time, she is also expected to be able to attract a man with her sensuality and sexuality and be available to him. These two ideals of what a woman should be like cause her to fall into a double bind since she is judged by both of these standards. In *The Politics of Reality*, Marilyn Frye gives an example of how the double bind for women takes place in a heterosexual relationship. If a woman is found to be involved in heterosexual activity, "she is open to censure and punishment for being loose, unprincipled or a whore." (Frye 1983, 175) On the other hand, if she does not engage in heterosexual activity, she is still ridiculed. She becomes accused of being a prude or frigid. She would receive punishment from men on both sides of the situation in the form of humiliating remarks, increased risk of rape, and the need to hide these choices from family and friends. To explain this in a more concise way, Frye offers up the metaphor of the birdcage. If one is just looking at the individual wires of a birdcage one by one, it would seem possible for the bird to fly away. However, when one steps back and views the cage as one larger piece with a system of wires intertwining, their relation to each other as a systematic barrier becomes clearer. In the case of the metaphor above, the bird would represent the woman, the birdcage would be the

overall double bind experience for the woman of being caught between embracing her sexuality or remaining pure and the wires would illustrate the opposing forces of sexuality for the woman. While the woman can look at some of the individual wires and not see the conflict; she is oftentimes missing the bigger picture of the wires being intertwined with one another. This view would also mimic that of her surrounding culture. It is not until she steps back, through as I argue, gaining knowledge about her situation that she will understand the picture of the cage in which she finds herself. This double bind is particularly troublesome in terms of the patriarchal context because the demands that not only men make on women are prevalent, but also the fact that women are then defined in terms of what men want them to be.

This double bind can then be translated over to psychological norms that have an impact on how women feel and the different actions or roles they might feel comfortable taking on. Frye states that these behaviors are more symbolic than actually containing practical meaning. She asserts that actions like door opening are observed for those who are in some form incapacitated, burdened, or unwell and therefore; the message being relayed when men hold the doors for women is that women are incapable since the majority of the time they are the ones who are having the door opened for them. The challenge here, is setting up a space where a woman can feel not only confident in her body as a model of power; but also in her leadership capacities all the while maintaining that she is biologically a woman. So far, it has been impossible

for women to be accepted as both assertive and feminine in the same manner in which it has been impossible for a woman to have a variety of sexual partners and still be respected. I have found that this is due to women wanting to embrace yet also pull away from the normative desires of society. Imagine you are on an aircraft awaiting the departure. You see a woman looking in the overhead bins for a place to stow her bag. There is a man behind her who asks if she would like help. Typically, a bystanders' first thought, at least in the South, is to affirm the man's etiquette of offering his assistance. While she smiles, the woman politely refuses his assistance and continues to search for a spot. After a few seconds pass, the man asks again if she is sure he cannot help and with a swift movement takes the woman's bag and stows it for her. Some might argue that the man acting on behalf of the woman was hardly a form of suppression and that he was merely trying to be of assistance; however, I argue that while the act was innocent, it still perpetuates the notion that women are in some need of assistance, most of the time, whether they ask for it or not. A situation like this then places women in a tough spot, the double bind. I propose that actions such as the one described then almost force women to see themselves as weaker and ultimately lack confidence in the abilities of their bodies. Later in my thesis, I will explore how lacking confidence in the abilities of one's body also translates to the confidence experienced in leadership roles. There are stereotypes of masculinity which include authority and assertiveness that are not traditionally desirable for women to assume. I find that these

stereotypes occur in not only how women use their bodies but in their leadership styles as well.

In this first section, I will explore the area of physical presence by determining how the use of the body for women is constructed by the view of male desire. How does a woman's view of herself match up with the way she views her body? Is she inclined to use her body differently based on the amount of power or authority she believes she has? I suggest that even when a woman believes she is in a place of power, the way she utilizes her body might still be based on the ways in which she believes she is meant to be seen. In other words, she might still tend to utilize some of the traits in contemporary culture that are typically feminine. This can include coming from an egalitarian point of view and appearing to be witty or even demure. It can also be seen in the way she dresses her body through adorning it with jewelry, wearing dresses or clothing that accents her shape, and applying makeup.

I propose that there is a word we can give to the link between sexual objectification and the way women view and feel about their bodies. This is called the male gaze. This is the vantage point from which men view women, where women view themselves, as well as where women view other women within the subject/object dualism in order to seek acceptance from the patriarchal construct of society. Laura Mulvey, a British feminist film theorist gives a nice explanation of the male gaze as it

relates to cinema. She explains that in film, “women are typically the objects, rather than the possessors, of gaze because the control of the camera (and thus the gaze) comes from factors such as the assumption of the heterosexual man as the default target audience.” (Mulvey 1975, 13) Even though Mulvey is relating this view to film, I believe that it is still applicable when looking at the broad context of society. Within traditional film, the man is the active and controlling subject, while the woman is the image or what is being looked at. Young notes that women act in conjunction with patriarchal power because it allows them the discourse in regard to the male gaze. She finds that women who participate in affirming the male gaze are developed by relations of looking. “Through active looking the subject acquires a sense of subject set off against objects.” (Young 2005, 65) She explains that the female body *is* sexuality which makes her the exotic object for the male spectator and that the aesthetic battle over cosmetic bodily adjustments only intensifies the argument for the male gaze and the signification over female bodies. With this in mind, Young argues that “if women are to achieve any subjectivity it can only be through adopting this position of the male subject who takes pleasure in the objectification of women.” (Young 2005, 65) The barriers that I will address lend themselves to this presumption of the heterosexual man being the audience for whom women perform.

In the essay by Iris Young, *Throwing like a Girl*, she illustrates that there are physical and psychological restraints that have been placed on women. She begins the

article by explaining some interesting points in an argument made by Erwin Straus, which depicts the different ways in which girls and boys use their bodies when throwing a ball. Straus explains that “when throwing a ball, girls will make minimal use of their bodies,” (Straus 1966, 157-160) staying very rigid and releasing the ball without intent for speed, accuracy or force. Straus states that boys, on the other hand, will make use of their lateral space. He will twist his body and move so that he can support the weight of his throw. The argument produced by Straus is what led Young to dive into the theory that one consequence of gender oppression lies in the inability for women to comfortably and confidently move their bodies. Young identifies that it is femininity itself, which is the oppressive force and that the normative bodily movements that are expected to be used by women are restrictive.

It is important to begin with some definitions to clarify Young’s ideas. First, she explains that her view on femininity is

To designate not a mysterious quality or essence that all women have by virtue of their being biologically female. It is, rather, a set of structures and conditions that delimit the typical *situation* of being a woman in a particular society, as well as the typical way in which this situation is lived by the women themselves. (Young 2005, 143-145)

With this definition, Young leaves room for the understanding that situations are not experienced by all women in the same ways. She also understands that even some men might be familiar with certain aspects of oppression based on their own personal experiences. It is important for Young to focus on the relationships that women have

with their bodies as a whole, which includes body movements and use of strength. She explains that oppression begins with the presumption that women are always in some need of assistance. This is then fueled by actions which have an underlying current of being inadequately carried out by women. Young provides a few examples of where women do not use the full power of their bodies. Take for example walking, men tend to have longer strides and carry their body more openly. Women on the other hand, have much shorter strides and typically have their arms resting in a way that is shielding their bodies. She also utilizes the example of lifting boxes. Traditionally, women are not expected to utilize their bodies to bend over and pick up heavy objects. For the most part, women do not learn the proper techniques for lifting in order to avoid injuring themselves. When attempting to lift something heavy without the proper use of the muscles in the legs it becomes difficult and the risk of injury increases. From an early age most boys learn these proper techniques so that they can effectively help women. Young girls on the other hand are most often encouraged to find a boy or man so that she does not hurt herself. Views like this radiate back to the overarching idea that women are ill-equipped in regards to being able to successfully utilize and use their bodies for physical movement.

Female participation in active sports is another category in which Young is interested and where she sees the effects of a woman not using her full bodily potential. She explains that women often focus so hard on what our bodies should be doing

“rather than paying attention to what we want to do *through* our bodies.” (Young 2005, 34) For Young, this is a central example of the oppression that occurs on women’s bodies. It is often decided before hand, frequently by mistake, that the task is beyond us, and therefore it is given less than a full effort. “At such a halfhearted level, of course, we cannot perform the tasks, become frustrated, and fulfill our own prophecy.” (Young 2005, 34) She continues to explain that women are often nervous to appear awkward and yet at the same time, do not want to appear to be tough. There is a double hesitation in regard to physical activity. On one hand, there is the lack of confidence in our own bodies to be successful in the action. This includes the lack of proper understanding on how to utilize the female body. On the other hand, there is the fear of getting hurt due to the culturally accepted notion of the fragility of the female body. This point can be linked back to Frye in regards to the birdcage and the double bind that women experience. There is the aspiration for a woman to take charge of her body by being strong and assertive with physical activity. Yet there is also the accepted view that the female body should be gentle and nonthreatening. This then creates two forces that women experience that are moving against each other and the double bind is then once again visible. The double bind that women experience regarding the use of their bodies constantly presents oppression by not allowing the female body to be both feminine and strong.

Young feels that women are physically handicapped in that they have learned to be a part of society in that they remain in line with the definition that contemporary culture has assigned to them. For Young, women have become positioned as both subjects and objects without a clear autonomy, confined by normative cultural ideals and objectified through double bind situations that arise every day. As explained, girls and women do not have the opportunity to explore their full bodily capacities in the same ways as men might. Likewise, girls are not encouraged to utilize their bodies in order to develop physical skills. Young gives the example of girls not being encouraged to play sports, but to rather stay clean and look pretty. While this idea has evolved, one could argue that in high social status families this could still be an acceptable view. In a similar tone, girls are not often encouraged to “tinker” with things or to perform physically demanding tasks even though this is asked of boys more and more as they get older. Contemporary society defines women as objects and mere bodies through the use of the male gaze. Unlike the male body, the female body is treated as a thing or an object to be looked at by others. This view has been so engrained in contemporary society women are even found to view themselves as subject and object. Present-day culture makes no subtlety in encouraging women to objectify themselves as well as other women. Mass media is filled with messages to women about fitting a mold that I argue is simply unattainable. Messages regarding dieting to clothing to homecare have only reiterated the oppressive cycle on women. All of these factors cause a woman to

view her body as both object and subject, and experiences her body as objectified and simply a mere thing. Young paints an accurate picture of a woman in relation to her body, stating “she gazes at it in the mirror, worries about how it looks to others, prunes it, shapes it, molds and decorates it.” (Young 2005, 155) For Young and myself, the objectification of women also leads to a lack of confidence in their cognitive or leadership abilities is due to some degree of original doubt in the female bodily capacities. The ideas expressed here aid in laying the groundwork for the discussions to come. In the next section, I will explore more in depth the ways in which women use their bodies. I will also come back to continue to explore the subject/object dualism with regard to the process of pregnancy and how in some ways, women have become objectified through this extremely personal process.

View of a Woman’s Body

Women are made and make themselves objects for the male gaze, or are limited and limit themselves to a prescribed range of possibilities (wife, mother, vamp, virgin, dyke), and learn their place through linguistic exclusions (“one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind”). Our desires are constructed and become our truth; they delimit our possibilities and our world. (Young 1990, 108)

When looking at contemporary feminist views, they are often broken down into normative and descriptive components. The normative component argues the ways in which women “ought or ought not to be viewed and treated; while the descriptive component investigates how women are, as a matter of fact, viewed and treated, and looking to see if they are not being treated in accordance with the standards of justice.”

(Haslanger, Tuana and O'Connor 2012) To include an account of the descriptive approach is to have a more holistic view of the rights in question. To view feminism in these two terms is important because it allows a myriad of different views and arguments. There can be disagreements within feminism to include what would count as justice or injustice for women as well as differing opinions how these situations are experienced. There are those who also define feminism in terms of a normative claim alone. This would indicate the feeling that there is an injustice and that women are part of those who are taken advantage of.

For the female, her body is traditionally meant to behave in a way which exemplifies its fragility and femininity. With gendered norms there are certain behaviors or actions that come along with them. Many instances of the analysis of this normative behavior have been called into question by feminists to discern the extent to which the behaviors are experienced by women. This could include dieting, shaving and body ornamentation. For all of these, there are certain stipulations that make the actions acceptable for one gender or the other. Stereotypically, power is not a quality that includes a feminine component. Power tends to relate to traits of masculinity, authority, and control. If power were to have a feminine component, it is typically illustrated by a woman that takes on masculine traits either in her mannerisms, clothing or leadership style. Feminist philosopher, Honi Fern Haber illustrates this point by arguing that the female body builder attempts to showcase her power while at the same

time maintaining her femininity. By illustrating this version of the powerful female she is attempting to answer the following question: if power has already been assigned, how is it possible to recreate its very definition based on the politics of a woman's body? Haber explains that women are first read as a body. This means that before a woman does any action or is involved in any type of discourse, she is first judged by her appearance and bodily characteristics. She is judged simply for being a woman and has the stereotypical characteristics of being a woman imprinted upon her before she ever has a chance to change them. It is because of this, that we must find new meaning in those bodies. I will pull from her perspective to illustrate that even women who possess a physical presence that is seen as authoritative or masculine still have the yearning for the male gaze and are still trying to adhere to some of the stereotypical ideals of what it means to be a woman. As previously discussed this can include the desire to appear feminine as well as elude sexuality.

I will also be looking at a phenomenological explanation of the body by using works by Iris Marion Young. She focuses on "the situatedness of the woman's actual bodily movement and orientation to its surroundings and its world." (Young 1990, 29) During the course of the piece, she explains her stance on oppression by illustrating that the ideals and actions of feminine behavior actually create the oppression. Since femininity is stereotypically restrictive in actions that women partake in, it is also culturally restrictive in that girls do not often have the same opportunities to utilize the

strengths of their body like boys too. This reoccurring trend tends to keep the oppression in a constant cycle. She expands her work to include the traditional bodily norms of feminine behavior which she finds to be restrictive. Young focuses on the relationships that women have with their bodies in mostly physical activities and in turn, how these actions establish oppressive behavior.

Finally, I will examine the female body as it relates to pregnancy by looking at the ways in which a process that is predominantly medical and also personal to the pregnant woman becomes a case where she is not only the subject of the process of pregnancy, but also an object of this process. From the discussion that Young puts forth there seems to be a split of her own body. "She experiences her body as herself and not herself." She is going to experience things that are part of her own body, but at the same time belong to a body that is not her own. I will look at what this means for the woman during this experience. The second key point I will look at involves the use of medical equipment and procedures throughout the pregnancy process. For Young and myself, the argument is that these medical institutions cause the woman to experience alienation which relates back to the subject/object dilemma since she is experiencing her body as her own and at the same time belonging to another.

In the piece by Honi Fern Haber, *Foucault Pumped: Body Politics and the Muscled Woman*, she attempts to determine how the relationship of power explained by Foucault

relates to the uses of power practices and the politics of a woman's body. Haber argues that by attempting to visually change the way women are read as bodies, that it might also be possible to shift the relationship of power practices that are in play. Haber's test in this is using the idea of the muscled woman to provide resistance to these power practices. In Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, Haber points out that he "describes the body as a surface upon which the rules, hierarchies, and metaphysical commitments of a culture are inscribed and reinforced." (Haber 1996, 138) This would suggest that bodies are shaped by power. As previously mentioned, Foucault finds that power is not a thing which can be distributed or reallocated, but rather, power is a relation. He maintains that there is no such thing as an autonomous subject behind the instruments of power. Therefore, there is no vantage point from which someone can stand and dissect a situation or context of power. For Foucault, "the subject is still that individual who is the effect, and vehicle, of power." (Haber 1996, 146) This tends to become troubling for feminists in that it becomes unclear on how to change the way power practices.

There are certain relationships that have a degree of power already assigned to them, such as the citizen and law enforcement; however, what happens when the power relations are not clearly defined? In Foucault's perspective, power can function repressively as well as oppressively. He maintains that it is primarily productive; or that, "power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of

truth.” (Foucault 1977, 194) With gendered norms there are certain behaviors or actions that come along with them. As previously mentioned, some of the most notable include dieting, shaving and body ornamentation. For all of these, there are certain stipulations that make the actions encouraged or even required for one gender or the other. Take shaving for example, it has become an action with a very clear line between the sexes. While men can still be viewed as socially acceptable by shaving only facial hair; women who do not shave and expose underarm or leg hair usually get the label of someone who does not care how they are perceived. This norm of shaving for women then creates an expectation that they always shave because there is the feeling of being obligated to complete the action as well as enjoying the feeling and coincidentally femininity that goes along with a hairless body. This power relationship links smooth bodies to femininity and hairiness to masculinity. In turn, this then leads women to engage in shaving practices and to understand themselves as normative women since they are taking on these activities. This is just one illustration of how a feminine subject becomes constructed.

If power is everywhere, including our subconscious, how can there be the possibility for it to be resisted? More importantly, who might be the ones to resist the normative power practices? Throughout, I will argue that it is only possible to find resistance with knowledge. Since these power practices are internalized, we find ourselves adopting the normative ideas which in turn can be restrictive. This then

makes us more obedient to social norms. I argue that through the knowledge of the ways in which these normative ideas have been founded within our culture as well as how they have become engrained in who we are as sexed beings, that through knowledge we will be able to find resistance to them. In the piece by Haber, she is attempting to test this idea in the muscled woman. Is it possible to present a new version of a woman (the muscled woman) and also be successful in resisting the current power differences between femininity and masculinity? As I will argue throughout, I believe that resistance is only possible in conjunction with knowledge of these norms and having the knowledge in place to overturn this normative behavior. For Haber, she argues that the problem with the normative ideas of femininity lies in the way in which the male and female physical representations are seen. She claims that there is the ability to change this. One example of this change is the female bodybuilder. Haber explains that this sort of image would “call to attention the fact that she is not just what society made her, while at the same time not creating a psychological, economic, and sexual ostracism within that very society.” (Haber 1996, 147) She determines that her solution must still work within the domain and confines of phallogentric desire. If the desire is lost, she claims that women might be rejected from society all together. In other words, for Haber’s theory to work, the woman while changing her physical appearance to one that is normatively more masculine, she must still find a way to hold the male gaze or to continue to keep parts of her physical appearance feminine. If there

is going to be a change in the way a woman's body is viewed in regards to power, it will still need to have a culturally aesthetic view. Haber argues the need for the aesthetic view is so important is because "when power is strong, it is strong because it also operates on an aesthetic level, on the level of pleasure and desire." (Haber 1996, 139) In other words, if one is going to change what is culturally seen as feminine, there still has to be an attraction to it in order for it to be successful.

In her argument for the female bodybuilder she explains that the muscle allows for a physical representation of the artificiality of the normal ideas of feminine and masculine characters. It also brings to light nicely the false ideal that one is *either* masculine or feminine. Haber advocates for changes in the way society is programmed to think about individuals in terms of their gender and the norms of their gender. She aims to do this by illustrating that the female bodybuilder does not necessarily fit into either the feminine or masculine molds. Rather, she takes on qualities of both. The image of the muscled woman is not passive, rather it is assertive. It does not embody the stereotypically feminine and soft traits, but it takes on some of the characteristics of the strong masculine and thus powerful. This is a woman who rather than having the qualities traditionally determined for the female of being quiet or fragile, takes on seemingly masculine traits as well. The female bodybuilder has the physical presence of muscle. She is physically strong, assertive, and no doubt disciplined due to the training and dedication required to reach that point of physical strength. Yet she also

possesses the feminine confidence of her body as one that is desired by the male gaze. This is an example for Haber of her previous point that if there is going to be a change in power, the new “version” of the woman must still be attractive to the man. Haber then asks if the female bodybuilder is the only image that illustrates a possible change in the power relationships for the woman. She cites that the anorexic also falls into this category; however, the anorexic fails as an example of a bodily transformation that alters the ideas of the female body for two reasons. First, her body is not empowering. She explains that if the anorexic does nothing, she will die. The female bodybuilder does not have the same consequences of molding her body in a specific way. Second, she wants to find a way in which the female body does not comply with patriarchal domination. The image of the female bodybuilder is not in agreement with a phallogocentric society, while the body of the anorexic is viewed as weak and in need of protection.

While the image of the female bodybuilder is appealing, there are some problems associated with it for Foucault. A primary concern is that there is not the ability for one to make decisions or even have thought from an unaffected standpoint. As mentioned before, he believes that the subject is still that individual who is the effect, and therefore the vehicle of power. Foucault would argue that it is not possible to view the power relationship shift from a standpoint of which one would not be affected. Secondly, the self who is doing the creating is in actuality already created. Therefore, this would

constitute an actualized self rather than one that is able to be made. So if the self is continually being shaped by power relationships then it makes sense that the cultural relationships will also shift. Again, this is where I will argue that with the addition of knowledge of the stereotypical power practices it might be possible to change the norms that women face. As I mentioned earlier, power is within the society and it has been produced; therefore, gendered power specifically has been derived from the gendered domains we embody. The female bodybuilder will have ideas about herself as well as having concerns about how others view her. Now that she has chosen the action of being a female bodybuilder, it is possible that she will encounter new stereotypes which will try to define her. The new stereotype could be one that questions or assumes her sexuality whereas before she might have been considered the norm for the heterosexual patriarchy.

Haber also points out that it could be irresponsible to deny the degree to which women depend on sexual objectification or the male gaze to validate their own self-worth. Often, this includes feelings of desire the woman seeks to gain from the man. For some female bodybuilders there is still the desire for the male gaze. For some, they have “allowed their potentially subversive bodies to become re-erotized, have themselves once again become submissive to the male gaze, and (in doing so) have also contributed to the formation of a new way of oppressing women through their bodies.” (Haber 1996, 149) This is often times done through the media messages that are

disseminated about the female bodybuilder. She is expected to be fit, yet feminine. On the cover of *Muscular Development*, a magazine that Haber points to, the female bodybuilder is posed in a way to demonstrate her muscular ability while fitting into her sexy, hot pink bikini. Her well-tanned body is perfectly manicured all the way down to her freshly polished nails. Within the magazine, the female bodybuilder explains how she keeps her body toned while at the same time, placing importance on the activities that keep her feminine. Haber does not shy away from the problem that is created here of a new binary division. If the muscular woman has become the new image for the male gaze, then it opens the understanding up to non-muscular women that in order to be one that can be desired by the heterosexual male then you also have to be muscular. In addition, the view that muscles equate to empowerment perpetuates the ideal that value is placed upon patriarchal ideology of strong equating to attractive or successful. If a woman believes that to be empowered is to have strength and muscle so that she is more like a man, then according to Haber, the aesthetic revolution is lost.

For Haber and Foucault, power is always lurking on the other side of resistance. The idea of the female bodybuilder bring together the binary of the masculine with muscles creating strength and ability to utilize bodily movements while the feminine is the appearance of the body in personal grooming and passivity. Haber argues that it is these two images that bring about subversive potential. The bodies are able to be read separately as masculine and feminine, but together, we are not sure what to make of

them because “the best catalysts of change are those that put together familiar images in unfamiliar ways.” (Haber 1996, 153) She concludes that all types of bodies are *inscribed* with different meanings. What images come to mind when thinking about bodies with wrinkles, bodies with tattoos, bodies that have been surgically altered, or bodies that are attracted to like bodies of the same sex? She argues that when bodies are recombined in unexpected ways, our culture is forced to learn to read them all over again. This forces us to learn to read them in a new way and choose original meanings for their combinations.

In another essay in *Throwing like a Girl*, “Pregnant Embodiment: Subjectivity and Alienation”, Young gives her perspective on the pregnant woman. Young explains that for a woman, her pregnant body does not belong to herself and that she can find herself lacking autonomy and authority and conversely becoming the object rather than remaining the subject. It is important to note that the use of object relates to something that is *of use* and being *used*. Therefore, a subject that is also an object, such as the pregnant woman, is being used in a way that separates the self from its own desires and conversely inscribes desires that are from another. This is closely related to the view of women as objects since during pregnancy there is the unspoken yet understood assumption that the woman is merely a container for the developing fetus. Pregnancy can also be an experience that is strictly feminine, yet medical professionals are required to review and analyze it under a scientific microscope. Here again adding to the

understanding that the woman's pregnant body belongs to medicine rather than herself. Likewise, a pregnant woman can objectify herself by understanding pregnancy as a condition where she must take care of herself in a more critical manner. Young states that "we should not be surprised to learn that discourse on pregnancy omits subjectivity, for the specific experience of women has been absent from most of our culture's discourse about human experience and history." (Young 1990, 46)

Throughout this essay, she is seeking to analyze some of the experiences of pregnancy from the pregnant subject's point of view.

In the first section, Young describes some of the unique experiences during pregnancy. She refers to the pregnant woman as a subject that is being split, decentered or doubled. In an article, *Women's Time*, Kristeva illustrates that "pregnancy seems to be experienced as the radical ordeal of the splitting of the subject: redoubling up of the body, separation and coexistence of the self and of another, of nature and consciousness, of physiology and speech." (Kristeva 1981, 5-35) Young also states that the pregnant woman experiences her own body as well as sensations that are not her own and belong to another. These inner movements belong both to her and another being that is not her. While contemporary culture defines feminine beauty as a slim silhouette, historically it used to be the case that the pregnant woman was understood to be the symbol of dignified sexual beauty. Therefore, even if the pregnant woman finds herself with a heightened sense of sexuality, the dominant view of the culture is

going to be to desexualize her. Ann Lewis describes this so vividly in her take on the pregnant woman:

This bulk slows my walking and makes my gestures and mind more stately. I suppose if I schooled myself to walk massively the rest of my life, I might always have massive thoughts. (Lewis 1950, 83)

Young explores the thought that perhaps due to the cultural desexualization of the pregnant woman's body there is a new opportunity for self-love to occur. The pregnant woman "can free herself from the sexually objectifying gaze that alienates and instrumentalizes her when in her non-pregnant state." (Young 1990, 54) I find this particularly interesting when comparing it to the previous example of the female bodybuilder. Both are understanding what it is to be objectified and instrumentalized; yet are at the same time challenging that conventional view of what a woman's body should look like.

In the second section, Young looks to describe the experience of the pregnant subject with medical procedures and institutions. She argues that women, for the most part, become alienated during pregnancy for several reasons. Since medicine is seen as the curing profession, the idea for women as well as those around her is to understand pregnancy solely a medical condition. In turn, this definition of pregnancy sets it apart from a woman's normal health. There is a form of control on the behalf of the physician because he utilizes instruments that "devalue the privileged relationship she has to the

fetus and her pregnant body.” (Young 1990, 55) The authority that the physician has over the patient is only amplified in the relationship of the pregnant woman and the obstetrician. There is a notion of an obstetrician typically being a man. While this has changed in contemporary culture with women becoming more involved in the field, the stigma can still be prevalent. When thinking about a male obstetrician, there tends to diminish the compassion of bodily empathy between the physician and pregnant patient. There is then the use of medical instruments and drugs during the birthing process often causes the woman to lack authority within this experience. All of these factors, both alone and combined, force the woman to be an object rather than the subject and ultimately alienated.

Feminist writers often speak of alienation when referencing female experience within a male dominated society and culture. For our purposes, alienation means the “objectification or appropriation by one subject of another subject’s body, action, or product of action, such that he or she does not recognize that objectification is having its origins in her or his experience.” (Young 1990, 55) This alienation is crucial to the ideas of this thesis because it is relatable to not only the woman’s experience of her body; but as I will illustrate, it is also a key component to the view of women as caregivers as well as in the leadership roles I will explore. Young continues to explain that alienation occurs when a subject’s experience is controlled by another subject of whose goals are not the same.

A woman's experience in pregnancy and birthing is often alienated because her condition tends to be defined as a disorder, because medical instruments objectify internal process in such a way as they devalue a woman's experience of those processes, and because the social relations and instrumentation of the medical setting reduce her control over the experience. (Young 1990, 55)

I agree with the critique of the pregnant woman's experience as outlined above.

The experience of pregnancy in itself also creates a problem. If a woman who becomes pregnant is considered as a container this returns us back to the problem of the subject/object dilemma. While she has autonomy, she also experiences a lack of it. Her bodily cues are now coming from a place that is within her; yet at the same time coming from a place that she cannot control. There is also the trend of the rise in surrogacy, especially in the West in places such as India. Surrogacy intensifies the notion of the woman as the container in regards to pregnancy since through the surrogacy process there is usually a monetary component. In places where poverty is oftentimes a factor to whether or not a woman will engage in surrogacy, there can also be the pressure from a woman's husband to earn money. As I will argue, reproductive autonomy is crucial to women's wellbeing because both childbearing and child rearing take place with the woman. Since the eighteenth century, society has been concerned with insuring the continued production of well-equipped society members. As I will outline in the next section, contemporary culture also places women in the role of primary caregiver which as I argue continues to place women in a troublesome double bind.

Caregivers and the Workplace

Within contemporary culture there is the understood domestic and familial obligations which women are expected to assume. Historically, men have been the ones to go out into the workplace while women remained in the household to care for the children and to maintain the home. While there has undoubtedly been an increase of women in the workplace, I argue that women still have an unspoken expectation to not only be successful at work, but to also maintain the home and to balance the responsibilities of the two without flaw. In this section, I will be exploring statistical data and additional philosophical arguments to examine the duality for women of their career and family. I propose that within the dualities already discussed, there is also a duality for a woman in terms of career/family.

Traditionally, women have been the keeper and guardian of the household. They are considered to be in charge of the household duties which include child rearing, cooking, and cleaning. Child rearing or mothering in particular is troublesome because by definition, it is an act that is able to be completed by a specific gender. Mothering is the act of caring for a child by a female. I bring up this role for the woman in particular, because it brings back the oppressive nature of the subject/object dualism. If one is constantly reassessing the needs, desires, and wants of another then they are not addressing their own needs. In this relationship they are objectified because in the

instance of the household they are the object from which caring comes. In this case, there is a different type of objectification that is taking place. Rather than just being objectified by being looked at as an object; women who are caregivers for the home are also objectified by the role in which they participate. They are reduced to a single function of caring which has been associated culturally with a very feminine act. It is possible here, for the woman to be objectified as both a thing and something that is used for another's purpose; as well as, something that is reduced to the role they fill. I argue that women, more so than men, are found to be the primary caregivers for the household and as such find themselves, once again, in the subject/object double bind. In one sense they are independent bodies capable of their own choices and goals. Yet in the other sense, they are seen by the other members in the household as well as contemporary society to be expected to be the caregiver for that unit. They are assumed to be the ones to handle the majority of the household duties.

Women are not only the subject but also the object that is within the household and coincidentally objectified by it. She is objectified in that there is an expectation that she is the one who will maintain the order of the household. She is seen as being fulfilled by overseeing the nourishment of others rather than the concern of nourishing herself. Take for example, the mental image that is associated with the preparation of food. For the most part, the traditional image would be that of a mother and daughter in the kitchen. She is found to be teaching her daughter family recipes that have been

passed down. Typically, there is not a man in the picture in regards to food preparation unless it involves either a special occasion where he is doing the non-routine act for someone else, or within the context of grilling since that is considered a masculine form of cooking because it can be thought of as being rugged. Susan Bordo successfully illustrates the idea of the subject/object dualism in regards to the home life by explaining her experience in “learning an old family recipe and the sadness that came along during the periods of her life when she was too busy to make it. Yet, despite the pleasure in cooking, during the relationships where it was expected of her she resented it deeply.” (Bordo 1992, 123)

It is not just the subject/object double bind that women find problematic in the case of the household. It is also important to note that the traditional model continues to be that of a heterosexual household and in such, there is also an oppressive nature that occurs in subordination. Traditionally, wives are expected to be subordinate to their husbands, but not necessarily the other way around. I believe this goes back, historically speaking, with men being not only the primary gender in the marketplace illustrating the assertive nature of bargaining; but also as the high ruler and judge, found to be stern yet fair. Through the understanding of the historical context, as well as the idea that rational planning and self-assertion, which are both masculine traits, comes the understanding that to take part in these activities is to be masculine and that by being masculine and participating in these roles is to have power. “Feminist

accounts of autonomy strike balance between recognizing the injury that subordination does to women's sense of self and agency and respecting the measure of autonomy women gain despite this subjection." (Meyers 2010) Yet these skill sets, in contemporary culture, are not bound by gender.

I assert that many women are found to be just as reasonable, intelligent, and independent as men. The problem lies in the way society does not give these attributes directly to women; yet are given without fail to men. I believe that in some ways this goes back to an inaccurate assumption that women "extend the range of application of their existing autonomy skills and foster the development of weak skills." (Meyers 2010) In other words, right off the bat, women are only expected to acquire and sharpen the simple social skills which have in turn been dubbed as the feminine skills. While men on the other hand, have the opportunities to expand from that knowledge base into other areas. These other areas are usually involved in the workplace setting.

Women tend to be expected to be both career woman and homemaker and do both simultaneously. This is another place where the oppression of the subject/object dualism comes into play. If the historical idea is that women are to maintain both the home and have a career, how is it possible to do both successfully? Gwen Moore expresses this concern and espouses that due to the patriarchal workforce, there is no place for the woman who holds an elite position to also be a mother. Moore argues that

women in formal positions of power still remain outsiders on the inside. She uses the term *elite* to describe “persons who have a high potential to influence national policy-making by virtue of their institutional positions” (Moore 1988) and finds that the majority of these positions are held by men. The study, which was originally produced in 1988, looks at the statistical information for men and women in the United States, West Germany and Australia who have employment in positions where there is a need for an elite group of leaders. This includes politics, civil service, business, unions, media, academics and voluntary associations. Moore explains that several previous studies of elite women have found them to have a higher education than that of their male counterparts, leading to speculation that there are additional credentials needed for a woman to be at the top. She explains that for women, having a higher than “average” education allows them to fit easier into elite groups, making their gender barrier less of a struggle.

In the study, eighty percent of the women are found in the sectors of politics and voluntary associations. For the U.S. group, the voluntary associations were comprised mainly of female advocacy groups, which is not surprising given that this is still the trend today. The political positions were mostly made of political party officials, who were not in appointed posts or members of Congress, but rather in executive and federal branches. The study also looked at in-network participation. Here, women are less likely to be included in network participation than men. There is the idea of the

“good old boy” network which seeks to perpetuate the comradeship of men. This is a predominantly southern term which is associated with the idea of a “boys club” of which women are prohibited and excluded purposefully. This creates an immediate duality of men and women where neither is involved in the other’s sphere. The women in the network tend to also be less able to reach other elites on their own and often find they need to disseminate the information through men first. “While formally women are insiders among top elites,” states Moore, “informally they remain at best on the periphery and perhaps even as outsiders.” (Moore 1988, 576)

She also brings to light the difference outside of the workplace. She exposes that due to the male dominated workforce, there is no place for the woman elite who is also a mother. There tends to be higher percentages of married men than married women and similarly, a greater propensity for men with children than women within the workplace. At the time of this study, approximately twenty percent of women were without children, compared to eight percent of men. It also found that women who have jobs in both the workplace and at home are less likely to reach an elite status. These statistics are not resigned to the corporate arena. The conclusion for Moore, is that women are greatly disadvantaged and underrepresented in leadership positions within a given workforce. Currently, there are fifteen, *Fortune 500* companies which are run by women. The top producers (in no particular order) include Sara Lee, PepsiCola, Kraft Foods, Rite Aid, BJ’s Wholesale and Avon Cosmetics. All of these companies are

related to either food or beauty industries which are predominately female-oriented sectors of the public sphere. This trend also seems to carry over into the governmental sphere, where currently, in the 112th Congress, there are three hundred and sixty-two men and seventy-six women. In an article by Pamela Eddy titled *Leading Gracefully: Gendered Leadership at Community Colleges*, she explains that women in presidential roles at all institution types are twenty-five percent more likely to alter their career path, usually moving into administrative ranks, compared to the two percent of men that are inclined to do so. She takes this one step further by documenting in addition that “women in heterosexual relationships still handle the majority of household chores as well as being the primary child care provider.” (Eddy 2009, 11) These different self-imposed responsibilities work separately and together to form an overarching impediment for women. This idea brings us full circle with the double bind where women are both asked to excel in the workplace as well as take care of the needs of the household. This double bind is particularly difficult because women are expected to be in both places (the home and the workplace) at the same time. This is not the same case for men, who are not expected to particularly be involved with cleaning, cooking, and childcare.

Another point of concern has to do with *how* women lead. For the most part, women who participate in leadership roles have an egalitarian method while men are found to participate in more of a hierarchical structure. This role of female leadership is

often associated with supporting other members' contributions and nurturing relationships within the group. From the outset, there are stereotypes that are inscribed onto both sexes. These stereotypes link men to having a more authoritative leadership style while women have a more inclusive style. In other words, society has gendered leadership styles that we expect a particular sex to demonstrate. Traits like rational planning and directness are traditionally coded as masculine; while characteristics of cohesion and organization being coded as feminine. Through these inscriptions of the ways genders are meant to lead, there often arises concerns regarding the different leadership styles of men and women. I believe there is a certain power that is automatically given to the male. When a woman uses a leadership style that is stereotypical for her gender, such as egalitarian, then she is abiding by the rules already set out for her by contemporary culture. She is behaving in the way a patriarchal context would expect her to behave by listening to all the members of a group, making decisions together and delegating to members. I believe when a woman is leading in this way, she is not regarded by her male peers with an abundant sense of authority even though she is conforming to the cultural norm.

On the other hand, if a woman uses a leadership style that is not akin to her gender she is most often viewed in a negative light. I believe that this creates one of the most harmful and relatively unnoticed instances of the subject and object dualism. If the general idea behind what the culture finds as powerful is then taken on by a

woman, why is this so troublesome? I believe this has to do with the leadership styles of particular genders. It is acceptable for men to be assertive and commanding within the workplace. Women are expected to be inclusive and thoughtful. It becomes troublesome when women attempt to move into the masculine space of leadership. So much, that there can be a kickback for women who act within those masculine parameters. These kickbacks can include exclusion and ridicule. As I have argued, the subject/object dichotomy and the aspiration for heterosexual desire through the male gaze, causes women to be in a perpetual cycle of objectification. This is even the case in the ways women assume leadership roles. In positions of leadership and power, women are rarely found to lead and perform in a way that does not go back to the patriarchal constructs of how women are anticipated to act.

I propose that the standard of successful leadership should be inclusive of both sexes therefore creating a leadership style that is no longer gendered. A non-gendered leadership style would include both egalitarian and authoritative styles and would be cognizant of the situation. There is also the concern of what a successful leader looks like. I have already explained the importance of women to be confident in their bodies and in using their bodies for movement. This also relates to the inner confidence of a woman's body. For a woman to be considered a successful leader does she have to wear makeup, curve-accentuating attire and stilettos? Through the understanding of women being read first and foremost as a body, it is possible to then to manipulate the

male gaze to the woman's benefit. In this scenario, the woman would be giving her understanding of the male gaze through what is understood as assertive attire for a woman. Culturally, the problem with female leadership is that to be accepted as being assertive, she *must* exude a feminine appearance to abide by what is stereotypically attractive. Take Sarah Palin for example, she physically embraces the stereotypical assertive femininity in her appearance while being successful in governmental policy. While she is successful in this bridge right now, will she continue as she ages? I would argue that as she ages, her success will decrease as she will be less desirable to the male gaze. While there is nothing wrong with a woman using the male gaze to her benefit, I do find it to be a dangerous path when the understanding of *why* one is accepting the masculine view is not clearly understood. I find there to be a similar struggle in young girls creating tutorials on how to apply makeup. In one sense there is an association of power that comes with being able to be an expert in a field. Yet there must also be the understanding that this power the young girl has is because she is reinforcing the power of the male gaze. With the added knowledge of gender norms and roles, I believe that women can have a more clear understanding of the options regarding the ways in which they utilize their bodies in all aspects of life.

The New York Times ran an article recently that addressed the recent political campaign for New York City mayor. Christine Quinn was seeking to be the Big Apple's first female mayor. In a city that has a tradition of not giving in to tradition, it seemed

like the time might have been right. However, as the article chronicled, she did not win the election and the mayoral race was won by her opponent, a man. The interesting part of the article was the emphasis that was placed on gender throughout the election. Ms. Quinn explained that when she first began seeking office, she was warned by the then current mayor that “a woman seeking power always faces perils and that the very qualities that had brought her this far – drive, ambition, toughness – could make her unlikeable to many.” (Kantor and Taylor 2013) Throughout the race, voters expressed that they found Ms. Quinn to be ambitious, petty, and combative; giving both unfavorable typical feminine words along with masculine words. Attacks were made not only on her leadership style, but her voice as well as her clothing. It seems like a typical trend to not only examine the character of an individual’s leadership style, but also parts of their personal characteristics such as wardrobe. Throughout the campaign, Ms. Quinn rarely brought her gender into her political message. When she did, her constituents found it to be a desperate ploy. There is often the misguided idea that women will support other women and that is simply not the case. Perhaps at a later time, I will spend some time with this idea, but unfortunately I will not be able to do that here.

As mentioned earlier, these trends are not just in the corporate sector. The area of higher education also has a deficit in the amount of women in powerful positions within academia. According to a report in 2009 from the American Council on

Education, twenty-three percent of college presidents were women. Granted, that is an improvement over a ten percent margin from the 1980's, yet it still begs the question of why the rates are so low for an industry that is predominantly occupied by women? The area of education tends to be associated with women due to the ethics of care that is often involved within academia. Molly Broad, the president of ACE, explains that the lack of women in these positions comes down to the hiring process. In a similar argument to that of Moore, Broad argues that this is to the higher education elite insiders. "It wasn't called the 'old boys network' for nothing," states Broad, "it applies to academia, not just Wall Street." A university president is appointed by the institution's board of trustees, where women are virtually absent. She argues that news about job openings and advice on navigating the interview process tends to remain with the insiders, in this case, men. This data links up with the study examined by Brown in that women take up a less abled area within the workforce and that men are appointed to a place of authority, making them the gatekeepers of passage.

When looking at the relationship of the sexes compared to leadership abilities, there are divergences in the way males and females are expected to lead. In *Dynamics and Dilemmas of Women Leading Women*, conducted by Bartunek, Walsh, and Lacey, the premise is that women who take on a role of leadership assert a different style of leadership than do their male counterparts. For the most part, women who participate in leadership roles have an egalitarian structure while men are found to participate in

more of a hierarchical structure. This role of female leadership is often associated with “supporting other members’ contributions and nurturing relationships within the group.” The view is that a “women’s work group designed to empower its members, especially group based on feminist principles that espouse an egalitarian ideology, offers a natural site for empirical investigation of this relationship.” (Bartunek, Walsh and Lacey 2000, 590)

The study goes on to explain that people view the leadership styles of men and women differently often associating more initiative behavior to that of male leaders, while women are linked to having a greater concern for others. This immediately sets the stage for differences in leadership abilities to be read into the different sexes. These ideas can also be applied to group life within a workplace. In *The Paradoxes of Group Life*, Smith and Berg suggest that “authority is one of the most paradoxical and contradictory aspects of group life.” (Smith and Berg 1987) A group with a leader in a place of authority implies that there is a hierarchical structure in place. This is in stark contrast to groups with a more egalitarian leadership style, where everyone is considered to have an equal voice. This presents a problem in that authority and empowerment are deliberately linked. In this paradox, empowering others actually creates more power. Some also suggest that “members become reluctant to take power because it implies ‘taking it away’ from others. But avoiding assuming power and exercising authority can make the individual, and ultimately the group, feel powerless

and, perhaps, *be* powerless at critical moments.” (Bartunek, Walsh and Lacey 2000, 590)

They contend that a group of individuals who lead in a hierarchical, or as I argue, in a patriarchal fashion, will find themselves feeling as though they are in a place without power. Here, only the leader is able to make decisions and advise the group of direction. On the other hand, individuals who lead in an egalitarian approach will have created an open space for expressing ideas and find themselves without power as well due to the sense of wanting all the members to be heard. It seems clear that a dominating and imposing relationship to leadership is more in line with a masculine form of leadership than a democratic ideal where the essence of leadership is softer or more feminine.

Women within leadership roles, statistically have more of an inclusionary practice. There is the assumption here that a group which shares power and has a participatory orientation is often more successful. Traditional male leaders rely on a reward and punishment system, compared to that of female leaders using more power sharing and objective based modes. Eddy argues that women often find themselves in a double bind situation of trying to meet the male “norms” of being direct, assertive and in charge while still struggling to be true to their assigned gender roles of females who are expected to be more agreeing and non-confrontational. She goes on to argue that women in this position cannot win and that this model of leadership, “positions women

as constantly judged against the male norm, facing the choice of attempting to meet these expectations by rejecting a sense of self.” (Eddy 2009, 12)

Conclusion

I have focused my studies on questions illustrated by feminist readings as well as the way in which power within a society is used and constructed. I have illustrated the direct correlation between women being viewed, viewing themselves, and viewing other women within the subject/object dualism and the effects this has in terms of the female body and movement, caregiving, and leadership trends. I began this thesis because of my interest in types of societal and cultural factors that influence the way in which we think about gender. I believe that with the combination of the areas I have to pull from as well as my personal experiences of being a staff member within different universities I have provided a unique background for this project. All of these different barriers are constructed on the premise that the woman views herself as both subject and object due to contemporary culture.

Throughout this thesis, I have looked at the ways in which women in contemporary culture experience barriers in their everyday life. I have found that within all of the examples reviewed, the subject/object dualism plays a crucial role. This experience causes women to view themselves not only as an individual subject, but also as an object. This has to do primarily with women being viewed as mere bodies. “Since

at present, woman is first and foremost read as a body, it is with her body that she must fight." (Haber 1996, 152) As I have argued throughout, I believe that the only way to reconstruct this problem of the subject/object dualism is to do so through knowledge. This includes knowledge of how these power relationships originate as well as the ways in which society and cultural norms perpetuate the power relations. As Foucault stated, "it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, and gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals." (Foucault 1977, 98) In other words, the power relationships that are culturally adhered to are the very one that shape individuals. Yet, at the same time, Foucault still leaves room for change to occur. There is the idea that the individual has the option of whether to fall in line with the contemporary power constraints or to branch out and behave in a new way. The importance of reexamining how leadership has become gendered has also been examined. Since women in contemporary culture have been placed in the position of second, the same goes for the workplace. Women have been placed in a position below men simply based on gender. Once again, I believe this goes back to the subject/object dualism. It is the overarching trend of women not viewing herself as an autonomous subject without also having the understanding that she is at the same time viewed as an object that has led me to this decision. Since a woman's confidence is oriented around the ways in which her body is perceived as an object, she has an incomplete view of herself. If women do not develop the same level of bodily

capacities as men, there will continue to be a breakdown in the ways in which women are viewed and view themselves. Only through the knowledge of these power practices in contemporary society will there be the option for the individual to be a vehicle of change.

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Curriculum Vitae

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EDUCATION

B.S., Communication, Emphasis in Mass Media and Public Relations, December 2004,
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RECOGNITIONS

Enrollment Services Achieve Award, University of North Florida, 2012.

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Florida State College at Jacksonville, Senior Financial Aid Analyst, April 2013 – Present.

Provide financial aid information to students regarding programs, application procedures, availability of funds, and disbursement of funds. Assist in reviewing financial aid applications and determine eligibility based on federal and state regulations. Review financial aid related appeals. Oversee daily operations of the financial aid office.

University of North Florida, Enrollment Services Counselor, May 2010 – April 2013.

Provide one-on-one assistance to the public regarding admissions, registration, financial aid, and Veteran's Affairs. Explained financial aid regulations at the state and national level. Served as liaison between university administrators, students, parents, faculty, and staff regarding Enrollment Services activities.

Georgia State University, Public Relations Coordinator, August 2008 – April 2010.

Determined overall plan for design materials and advertisements. Conducted strategic planning meetings. Created a campus wide marketing plan with new ideas within a budget. Managed and assisted volunteers in implementation of materials.

The Montello Agency, Media/Marketing Coordinator, March 2007 – August 2008.

Coordinated advertising deadlines and placement. Maintained client approved budgets. Supervised line of communication between clients and graphic design team. Executed press releases and written composition of websites and brochures. Facilitated realtor events to enhance property exposure.

TriBridge Residential, Assistant Property Manager, October 2005 – February 2007.

Created and executed property wide events. Developed networking opportunities for community businesses. Generated new marketing ideas. Established and maintained property wide budget. Facilitated alternative dispute resolution.

Kennesaw State University, Student Assistant, September 2000 – September 2005.

Assisted University President in preparation for meetings and speaking engagements. Liaison of communication between President, Deans, and student population. Maintained Presidential Resource Library.