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AWE

To our readers

AWE: A Woman's Experience, is a student-created journal dedicated to the expression of women's intellect and creativity and to the conviction that critical and artistic approaches to knowledge are as complementary as seeking learning by study and faith. This periodical strives to explore women's contributions to all fields of learning. Thus, contributions from all fields of study are invited. AWE intends to publish articles that openly address issues of relevance to women that conform to scholarly standards. AWE also invites poetry, personal essays, art and photography dealing with subjects relevant to women. Short studies, notes, and letters to the editor are also welcomed.

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Una Guerra Contra La Mujer: Chicana Feminism and Vietnam War Protest

Arica Roberts

On February 25, 1970, Gloria Arellanes sent a letter to the Minister of Education of the Brown Berets explaining that as the minister of correspondence and finance for the East Los Angeles chapter of the Chicano nationalist youth group, the Brown Berets, and that she was officially resigning from all her duties in the organization. The letter also stated, "ALL Brown Beret women have also resigned from further duties in the organization." They argued that they had been treated as "nothings, and not as Revolutionary Sisters." Their unity was a revolutionary act, and the sisterhood agreed, "that the Brown Beret men have oppressed us more than the pig system has… [T]herefore, we have agreed and found it necessary to resign and probably do our own thing." The women signed the letter "Con Che!" and declared themselves as "ex-members of the Brown Beret female segment."[1]

This letter of resignation marked the beginning of Chicana feminism and its roots in cultural nationalism. As the Brown Berets were working with the Chicano Moratorium Committee to protest the Vietnam War, women also wanted to actively participate in leadership positions for the cause of La Raza towards equal rights for latinos. Chicana women were also affected by the war, even if they were exempt from the draft. Aside from the domestic socioeconomic inequalities that affected women, their families were being torn apart as their brothers were dying in Vietnam. Their claim of resignation from the Brown Berets was not a signal to the end of their activism. These same women who resigned created a new women's organization, *Las Adelitas de Aztlan*, named after *las soldaderas* of the Mexican Revolution. *Las Adelitas* worked exclusively with the

1. Series I: Box 1: Folder 1: Brown Beret Movement, 1969-1971. Kennedy Memorial Library, California State University, Los Angeles, California (Hereafter cited as BBM).

Chicano Moratorium Committee,[2] but also had the independent goals to promote sisterhood, encourage education, and challenge Chicana women to take part in society outside of their family roles. Through their organization's newspaper, *Las Hijas de Cuahtemoc,* they aimed to have a continual commitment to the causes of La Raza, and to show the counter-revolutionary hypocrisy from men in the Chicano Movement because of the exclusion of women from leadership positions.

In the study of Vietnam antiwar efforts, the Chicano movement is often overlooked, as is the Chicana Movement that was born out of it. Scholars such as Lorena Oropeza study Chicano protest during the Vietnam in "Raza Si! Guerra No!: Chicano Protest and Patriotism During the Vietnam War Era"; however, this does not mention Chicana women's efforts. The scholarship on women's Vietnam antiwar efforts has focused on white women and mainstream feminist goals which were to challenge the men in the New Left organization. Some scholars, such as Benita Roth in her book *Separate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in America's Second Wave,* frame the Chicana Movement within the context of other social movement at the time, such as the Black Power and Women's Liberation struggles, but there is not an exclusive focus on former Brown Beret women's antiwar efforts and development of Chicana feminism within cultural nationalism. The scholarship by Jaime Pelayo delineates the role of the Brown Berets within the National Chicano Moratorium Committee and acknowledges the role of women, particularly the female Brown Berets in the National Chicano Moratorium Committee, but does so in a short paragraph without any attention or focus on the goals of women in the movement. "Revolutionary Sisters" looks at the gender structures in place that contributed to the militant nature of the Brown Berets, the gender consciousness of the women who resigned from the Brown Berets, and the separate organization for Chicana women, especially in the *Adelitas*, but it does not focus on the cultural nationalism of Chicana feminism and the larger goal to overthrow the Anglo even without the support of men in the movement. Chicana feminism has always been as much about extinguishing racial supremacy and promoting the causes of La Raza as much as it has been about extinguishing patriarchy, and is ultimately a movement within a movement.[3]

This paper is based on sources from the Gloria Arellanes Papers, which includes the letter of resignation from all the women of the Brown Berets, various letters from the Brown Berets, and notes from the Chicano Moratorium Committee which outlined the ideas of what could be done to end the draft for the Vietnam War. This paper also draws on a collection of poems, articles, and essays from the

2. Pelayo, Jaime, Cano interview, Gloria Arellanes interview, 5 July 1996, "The Chicano Movement and the Vietnam War", pg. 31.

3. This term is used by Latin American feminist scholars to characterize a particular Latin American brand of patriarchy. Its characteristics are culturally associated with the masculine, particularly aggression and violence, and a denigration of characteristics associated with the feminine.

newspaper *Las Hijas de Cuahtemoc* which call for sisterhood, focus on the specific goals for the Chicana, and condemn the war and its distraction from domestic issues affecting La Raza. Included are posters, photographs, and ephemera which promote antiwar demonstration by the Chicano Moratorium Committee. In addition, Mirta Vidal's publication in 1971, "Chicanas Speak Out, Women: Voice of La Raza" brings recognition to *Las Adelitas* and seeks to unify various Chicana groups with a unique nation-wide Chicana feminist ideology.[4]

The title of this paper is reflective of the feminism-in-nationalism of Chicanas. The first part of the title, "*Una Guerra Contra La Mujer*", translates to "A war against the woman." It emphasizes the way in which the Vietnam War also affected women, even though exempt from the draft. The use of Spanish was one way in which Chicana women united La Raza and differentiated from white feminism. "*Chicana Feminism and Vietnam War Protest*" links cultural nationalism with Chicana women's antiwar efforts.

Chicana feminism and Vietnam War protest begins with the Brown Berets. As a Chicano youth cultural nationalist group, the Brown Berets were active in Vietnam antiwar demonstrations, and were the same group from which all the women resigned because of the sexism within it. The Berets became active in antiwar efforts in 1969 when David Sanchez, Prime Minister of the Brown Berets, joined efforts with Rosalio Muñoz who initiated the national Chicano antiwar movement when he publicly refused induction into the United States military. The formation of the National Chicano Moratorium Committee made Vietnam War protest a top priority due to the alarmingly high casualty rates of Chicanos. Historian Jaime Pelayo determined, "[A]lthough Spanish surnamed individuals made up 11.8% of the Southwest's population; they were dying abroad at a rate of 19%." [5]As Muñoz visited high schools in Mexican American communities, he met many young men "who felt that the military remained a more viable option after high school than college." However, his white middle class friends were open about how they had legally avoided the draft. With the realization that the main reason for a high Chicano casualty rate was the poor socioeconomic conditions of these youth, Muñoz related the Vietnam War to "institutional racism" and wrote, "I accuse the government of the United States of America of genocide against the Mexican people."[6] With the goal to end the draft, the Brown Berets distributed leaflets dramatizing the deaths of Chicanos, also calling it "genocide," and pressured

4. The phrase Chicano/a is an identity promoted at this time to refer to Mexican-Americans. La Raza is a term which means "race" or "ethnicity" that Chicanos used to promote a unique cultural and even racial identity.

5. Pelayo, Jaime. "The Chicano Movement and the Vietnam War", pg. 8, 1997. On the Mexican American death rate, see Ralph Guzman's widely published work, in *La Raza* (Magazine), 1, no. 1

6. Pelayo, Jaime , Muñoz interview, 27 June 1996; Los Angeles Times, 17 September 1969; for a copy of Muñoz's statement, see La Raza (newspaper), December 1969, from "The Chicano Movement and the Vietnam War", pg. 14.

"Lawyers [to] coordinate pressure on politicians regarding Chicano genocide."[7] Their intent was to gain mainstream support for their cause to end the draft for the sake of Chicanos, and was a grassroots effort from bottom to top.

Muñoz organized the antiwar effort on September 16, the same day as the anniversary of Mexican Independence, with the dual intention to "challenge not only the policies of the US government" and also "emphasize a more militant Mexican revolutionary tradition as expressed through the cross-class phenomenon of Chicano cultural nationalism."[8] In the first Chicano Youth Liberation Conference, young Mexican American males (females were not mentioned) were encouraged to apply their courage and machismo to the Chicano Movement instead of joining military service. In note of women, Muñoz declared, "If Nixon wants war, let him send his daughters to fight it."[9] Antiwar efforts focused on men because its goals were centered on how to avoid the draft. However, the exclusion of women from the dialogue is not an accurate indication of women's involvement in the efforts.

Following the first Chicano Youth Liberation Conference, Sanchez asked for progress reports during the movement's inception and "one female Brown Beret, Hilda Reyes, responded attentively with a summary of her work so far." Women were not only present in meetings, but in demonstrations as well. On December 20 1969, the first Chicano Moratorium protest occurred in which demonstrators shouted, "Chicano power!" or "Raza si, Vietnam no!" At the demonstration, Alicia Escalante related Chicanos' domestic social conditions to the war. She warned, "If Nixon doesn't stop this war in Vietnam, he may have a war at home. I'd rather have my sons die for La Raza and La Causa than in Vietnam."[10] Leaders of the committee realized through the words of women like Escalante that it was the socioeconomic conditions and not the draft that caused a large number of Chicanos to volunteer for the armed forces. They refocused the antiwar efforts around a unified concept of the story of the Chicano Moratorium which they were told "began with the Europeans' arrival on the American continent and that the subsequent mixture between them and the indigenous people" is what had led to the present status of Mexicans in the United States.[11]

7. Series I: Box 1: Folder 1: BBM, "Ideas of What Can Be Done", 1969-1971.
8. Pelayo, Jaime. "The Chicano Movement and the Vietnam War", pg. 5, 8, 14, First Edition, Copyright 1997.
9. Pelayo, Jaime, Muñoz interview, 27 June 1996; Los Angeles Times, 19 November 1969; for a copy of Muñoz's statement, see El Grito Del Norte, from "The Chicano Movement and the Vietnam War", pg. 19.
10. Pelayo, Jaime , Sanchez interview; Los Angeles Times, 19 November 1969, from The Chicano Movement and the Vietnam War", pg. 24.
11. Pelayo, Jaime, Noriega interview, 3 July 1996, from "The Chicano Movement and the Vietnam War", pg. 29.

The cultural nationalism of Chicano antiwar efforts appealed to many other Chicana women, such as Gloria Arellanes who had acquired the permit for the march that took place on December 20, but did not speak at the demonstration. As Gilberto Cano, leader in the NCMC recalled, "The men did all the talking and the women did all the work." Arellanes became more involved with the Brown Berets after high school where she had experienced race riots in which police officers arrested the Chicanos, but not the whites. Her interest in cultural nationalism and social justice grew and she became a vital component to the administrative and diplomatic operations of the Brown Berets. She not only published the Brown Beret newspaper La Causa, but was also the head administrator for the East LA Free Clinic and was the only female Minister in the Brown Berets. As Arellanes worked more with Muñoz on national antiwar efforts, she clashed more with the Brown Berets' sexist and exclusionary leadership. When she left the Brown Berets, all the women, including Hilda Reyes, followed. They formed a new group, Las Adelitas de Aztlan, which worked exclusively with the Chicano Moratorium Committee.[12]

As members of the National Chicano Moratorium Committee and as participants in a new women's organization, Las Adelitas prepared for a moratorium march on February 28, just three days after their collective resignation. They strategized about how they could communicate the urgency of the struggle against the war in Vietnam, and decided as a group to dress themselves as revolutionary women in mourning, wearing black and carrying crosses, which they made available to other March participants as well. The crosses bore the names of *carnales*—male cousins, brothers, and friends who had fallen in Vietnam. On that day, as they marched under the banner of Las Adelitas de Aztlan, they symbolically invited the community to mourn with them. Drawing upon cultural archetypes in a political context, their group demonstration was an effective and triumphant display of Chicana collective opposition to the war. It was in recognition of this bond that a flyer inviting women to join Las Adelitas invoked the phrase "porque somos una familia de hermanas" (because we are a family of sisters.) This phrase gathered several resonant cultural concepts and mobilized them for a women's organization. As Chicanas reclaimed historical figures such as La Adelita, they praised the bravery and unity of women and men to fight for the rights and liberation of their people. The tribute to *las soldaderas* not only made a clear distinction between themselves and white mainstream feminism, but also unified men and women in the Chicano Movement, for the women were willing to protest the war alongside men in a joint effort for the liberation of La Raza, just as *las soldaderas* had fought alongside the men in the Mexican Revolution.[13]

12. Pelayo, Jaime, Cano interview, Gloria Arellanes interview, 5 July 1996, pg. 31.

13. Cantu, Norma, "Women, Then and Now: An Analysis of the Adelita Image versus the Chicana as Political Writer and Philosopher." In *Chicana Voices: Intersections of Class, Race and Gender*, ed. Teresa Cordova, Norma Cantu, Gilberto Cardenas, Juan Garcia, and Christine M. Sierra, 8-10. N.P.: Nation-

An article in *Las Adelitas* newspaper, *Las Hijas de Cuahtemoc*, by Marta Lopez titled "La Mexicana" spoke of the women who fought in the Mexican Revolution. She gave reasons for women's lack of involvement in Mexican politics prior to the revolution and their reasons for joining the cause as female soldiers. Lopez notes that women were kept out of the affairs of the State for so long because Mexican tradition expected women to have "two loyalties to which she dedicates her existence, the family and the [Catholic] Church," and that there was little opportunity for women to receive an education, which would help them be more politically engaged. However, during the Mexican Revolution, women had no choice but to be more involved when the men left to fight. Women filled the positions and "after the Revolution these women remained in these positions." For the *soldaderas*, their bravery was praised and several were promoted to higher positions in the Revolution. Lopez argues that these women saw equality and aspired for it. She says, "The women removed from their traditional role were able to view all of Mexico and her different people. She learned to appreciate her Raza and the land she was fighting for. She and her man were able to meet at an equal level; as mates and partners in the Revolution." This too was the goal of *Las Adelitas de Aztlan* during the Chicano Movement. Lopez pays tribute to Hijas de Cuatemoc, from which the newspaper's name derived, as a political organization that participated steadily with political demands and civic problems, for this organization worked for full emancipation for women and was actively involved in the Revolution and commitment to the nation of Mexico. Lopez ends the article with hope and a call to action, "Chicanas have much to be proud of. Today there's much work ahead of her and she must continue in the tradition of commitment to the betterment of La Raza." *Las Adelitas* sought empowerment from revolutionary Mexican women from the past and saw parallels between the *soladeras* and themselves.[14]

Another article, "Mexican American Woman" written by Enriqueta Longauex y Vasquez in *Las Hijas* noted, "Out of the Mexican revolution came the revolutionary personage "Adelita" who wore her *rebozo* crossed at the bosom as a symbol of the revolutionary women in Mexico." She argued that these women who fought bravely with their people should serve as examples to the Chicana fighting against *machismo*. In her plea for unity of La Raza, she wrote, "The Mexican-American movement demands are such that, with the liberation of La Raza, we must have total liberation. The woman must help liberate the man and the man must look upon this liberation with the woman at his side, not behind him, following, but alongside of him, leading." She also distinguished Chicana

al Association of Chicano Studies, 1990.

14. Series III: Box 2: Folder 4, *Hijas de Cuauhtemoc,* Lopez, Marta,"La Mexicana," 1969. Kennedy Memorial Library, California State University, Los Angeles, California (Hereafter cited as *Hijas*).

women from white women's feminism because "Not only does she suffer the oppression that the Anglo woman suffers as a woman in the market of humanity, but she must also suffer the oppression of being a minority person with a different set of values."[15] The collective cultural identity had never vanished, for even when the Beret women had resigned, the letter was signed, "Con Che!" to capture the revolutionary spirit of cultural nationalism, for Chicanos and Chicanas were unified in this non-resistance models and used their images to promote La Causa.

As shown on the cover *Las Hijas de Cuauhtemoc*, there is a Chicana woman who is tied down by a net, struggling to free herself with the use of weapon at hand. Her face is covered as she serves as a symbol of the sisterhood, not of herself. Above her, an eagle is in a powerful position with its wings upright and its beak open to represent liberty and equality for La Raza. The bold print above, "HIJAS DE CUAHTEMOC" empowered Chicana women and makes additional parallels between themselves and Las Adelitas of the Mexican Revolution. The poem, in Spanish, was written by Leticia Hernandez, one of Las Adelitas and reads in translation:

> "Daughters of Cuauhtemoc,
> Are the values of our nation,
> They gave birth to our Aztec people
> Were sacrificed to God Huizilopochtil
> Were raped by the Spanish
> And gave birth our mestizo people.
> Daughters of Cuahtemoc
> Las Adelitas of the Revolution,
> Fighters for Liberty.
> We thank you, our mothers,
> Who have given us the sacred privilege
> To also be Daughters of Cuauhtemoc
> Fighters for liberty not only
> For our race, but freedom for us, the daughters of Cuautemoc
> For we are the queens and mothers of our nation."[16]

This poem captures the essence of the goals for "*La Hermanidad*" (The Sisterhood) outlined in the newspaper in which it stated, "The goal of 'Hijas' is to involve La Chicana with the struggle of her people by identifying and dealing with the problems of La Chicana." As the poem states, "Fighters for liberty not only For our race, but freedom for us," Las Hijas took on the shared responsibility to fight for the liberty of all Chicanos, just as Las Adelitas fought in the Mexican

15. Series III: Box 2: Folder 4, *Hijas*, Longauex y Vasquez, Enriqueta, "Mexican American Woman," 1969.
16. Series III: Box 2, Folder 4: Hijas, *La Causa*, 1969. Translation by author.

Revolution, as well as fight for the specific liberties of La Chicana, "the daughters of Cuautemoc." In order to fight for the liberty of La Chicana, Las Hijas focused on education and declared, "A political educational program should be established for Chicanas by Chicanas to educate her people and to the specific problems of La Chicana." Chicanas understood the power in education with recognition "that knowledge is a source of power and control. Therefore, we must constantly be transferring our knowledge to others. At the same time, we must always be seeking knowledge." However, the language never strayed from keeping unity as it also stated, "We believe that the struggle is not with the male but with the existing system of oppression. But the Chicano must also be educated to the problems and oppression of La Chicana so that he may not be used as a tool to divide by keeping man against woman." *Las Adelitas* argued that anyone, man or woman, "who condones or accepts the oppression of the Chicana and transfers this value to the children, works only to destroy the revolution. For is we condone oppression among our own people, we are no better than our oppressor."[17]

Las Adelitas drew criticism within the movement and were accused of creating a division, but they argued back that, "Chicanas were to remain oppressed while the movement would lead the other half of the population to liberation!" In a letter titled "T*he Adelitas Role en El Movimiento,*" *Las Adelitas* asked if "[T]he girls in the Brown Beret movement have been given the opportunity of working for their Raza instead of just working for the Beret guys." They argue that these sexist attitudes are "deep-macho hang-ups" which perpetuates disbelief "that women have the intelligence to do community work, to organize Chicano organizations, just as good as, if not better, than men." However, this is contradictory of what Brown Beret Prime Minister, David Sanchez, had stated in "The Chicano-Gringo War," Question #13, "The women can support the Brown Berets in every way possible. The woman can fight just as good as a man, if she wishes." They boldly differentiate from white feminism in the statement, "[W]e're not talking about women liberation....that's a white thing—we're talking about our Raza's liberation and in order to get our Raza liberated we all have to work together within our Raza" The letter is signed with, "VIVA LA REVOLUCION!"[18]

We're not talking about women's liberation.... we're talking about our Raza's liberation

Anna Nieto-Gomez, one of the prominent founders of Las Hijas reinforced the continual declaration of unity of La Raza. On "Chicana Identity" Gomez writes, "Being compared with the Anglo women has been the greatest injustice and the strongest device to keep Chicanas quiet. Nobody likes to be called a traitor in a

17. Series III: Box 2, Folder 4: Hijas, "On Hermanidad," 1970.
18. *Hijas,* "The Adelitas Role en El Movimiento," 1970.

cause she feels she would die for." She continues her plea for unity in a poem titled, "*Empieza La Revolucion Verdadera*" (Begin the True Revolution):

> "The struggle is longer
> The struggle demands more
> But seek the knowledge of all women
> And seek the knowledge of all men
> Now bring them together
> Make them a union
> Then we shall see the strength of La Raza
> Then we shall see the success of El Movemiento."

She declared, "First, Humanity and Freedom between men and women. Only then Empieza la revolucion verdadera." (Gomez, Anna Nieto, *Hijas*)[19] The poem shows that Gomez, as a prominent member of Las Hijas, was committed to unity and equality between the sexes in the endeavor for Chicano rights. She says, "Now bring them together/Make them a union" and through this unity, "Then we shall see the strength of La Raza/Then we shall see the success of El Movemiento." Her belief is that there must be unity for there to be strength and that the true revolution is destined to begin with the knowledge of all women and men as she states, "But seek the knowledge of all women/And seek the knowledge of all men" which demonstrates the need for all voices of La Raza for there to be true equality.

Gomez's focus on seeking knowledge from all men and women of La Raza was supported by a primary goal of education outlined by Las Adelitas, and was a continuation of the goals set forth by the Brown Berets' Ten Point Program which demanded "the right to bi-lingual education as guaranteed under the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo" and "that the true history of Mexican-Americans be taught in all schools in the five Southwest States."[20]

The cultural nationalism in the movement identified the oppressors as Anglos in a letter titled "Written For and Understood by Chicanos ONLY" which contained anti-white supremacist language and sought to unify a cause against the "Anglo." It read, "We invited the anglo into our house, and he took it. Our land taken away and the constant destroying of our people." The militant nature of the Brown Berets was seen as the last option for Chicanos when considering Mexican and Anglo relations. The letter went on to say, "We have tried every peaceful channel in asking for our rights. And the greedy Anglo laughs at us. We have demanded and have demonstrated, and the anglo still laughs at us." In order to unify the cause of La Raza, Chicanos needed to teach their history. The letter for Chicanos

19. Hijas, Gomez, Anna Nieto. "*Empieza La Revolucion Verdadera,*" 1970. Also see Ruiz, Vicki. *Latinas in the United States: a historical encyclopedia*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pg. 326, 2006.
20. *Series I: Box 1: Folder 1: BBM, "Brown Beret Ten Point Program," 1969*.

specifically stated, "We must esculate the attack on all white citizens who do not recognize the southwest as our land…We must teach our young the history of the greedy anglo and how he is killing our people." The importance of education for all Chicanos was pushed as part of the movement's agenda to diminish the socioeconomic inequalities of Chicanos and create other options for young men other than the draft for Vietnam.

The long history of conflict continued, according to the Chicano, "[A]fter the Anglo had taken the country…in the [18]50's there was a rash of anti-Mexican campaigns. All Anglos agreed that Mexico was the sick man of America…and 'Americanization' was the only solution." The Brown Berets were vehemently opposed to 'Americanization' of the Chicano. They promoted rebellion as a reaction to the injustice and refused to assimilate. The letter by the Brown Berets continued, "We must teach our young to rebel, for it is better to have a rebellious people with spirit, than to have frightened *putos* who have given up to become white."[21] In the refusal to assimilate, Chicanos and Chicanas were unified, but only the male half of La Raza was encouraged to pursue education. This was a violation of the Brown Berets Question #13 which also stated, "The women and children can educate the not yet educated people as to the critical need for the defense of La Raza."[22] Just as *Las Adelitas* had reclaimed the female Mexican revolutionary figure, they also reclaimed the historical Mexican nun, Sor Juana de la Cruz, as a model of empowerment. In an article by Sara Estrella, titled "Una Mujer que se llama Juana", the brief history is given of Sor Juana's activism in education. Estrella points to when Sor Juana challenged a sermon and wrote of "her concern for women's rights." She argues that, "She believed in education for women, administered by women. She understood that her only stagnating factor was that she was a woman." She reclaimed Sor Juana for Chicanas, "Sor Juana still lives!; the woman is still struggling for human liberation and freedom." Examples of Mexican women who had challenged the system brought forth a continuing legacy of empowerment to the Chicana.[23]

The newspaper featured articles for Chicanas who sought education. Cindy Honesto wrote, "In order for the Chicana to even begin to control her destiny she must have a high educational level" or "she will still continue to be at the mercy of the Anglo system of injustice." *Las Adelitas* challenged Chicana women to be active in the movement through education. Honesto said, "It is time *todas las mujeres* [all of the women] stop playing a subservient role and reset their goals and priorities to meet the needs of her people." It then listed "Student Services Available" which included "Educational Opportunities Program," "Financial

21. Series I: Box 1: Folder 1: BBM , "Written For and Understood by Chicanos ONLY," 1969.
22. Series III: Box 2: Folder 4: *Hijas* letter "The Adelitas Role en El Movimiento," 1970.
23. Series III: Box 2: Folder 4: *Hijas,* "Una Mujer que se lama Juana," 1970.

Aid," "Bilingual Special Services," and a "Woman's Clinic." There was a need for the Chicana to "study and define the role of the revolutionary woman." In response to the leaders in the movement that believed Las Adelitas created more division, they argued, "the continuation of education only half the people can do nothing but further the division it has already created."[24]

Las Hijas de Cuahtemoc advertised the gathering of a nation-wide Chicana conference, "La Conferencia Nacional de Chicana, Mexican American and Spanish-Speaking women will be held May 28-30, 1971 in Houston, Tejas" with the goal to "unify to develop strength for La Raza and ourselves." The conference included workshops such as "*Machismo", "What Are We Up Against?" "What is the Chicana's Role in the Movimiento?"* and *"Women In Politics-La Raza Unida Party. The Feminist Movement-Do We Belong in It"* and finally "*Education Suppression and Exploitation of Women: The Chicana Perspective.*" The anticipation of this nation-wide conference was much-needed since "there has been little or no contact between Chicanas from California…now that she is establishing a new identity." The new identity, a Chicana feminism dedicated to the cause of La Raza, was supported by many Chicanas. In an interview with Minerva Castillo, a Chicana community activist was asked what her priority was in La Causa in which she answered,

> "Organizing women, because I see a need for the Chicana to have an awareness of the movimiento…we have always been taught to obey our husband and protect our family [with] the time we could spend in helping liberate our people. At this time there are so few of us, that it is wrong to think the man can liberate los Chicanos alone. That's why we need the Chicana working side by side with the man."[25]

Mirta Vidal, the national director of the Chicano and Latino work of the Young Socialist Alliance, wrote an article "Chicanas Speak Out Women: New Voice of La Raza", as she aimed to organize the ideas of the Chicana identity and specific Chicana issues in order to unify Chicana feminism throughout the nation. She said, "The effort of Chicana/Mexican women in the Chicano Movement is generally obscured because women are not accepted as community leaders either by the Chicano movement or by the Anglo establishment." Her statement does reflect the efforts of the women who were a part of the Brown Berets and excluded from leadership positions who then resigned as a result. She goes on to say,

> "[I]n the struggle for Chicano liberation and the emergence of the feminist movement, Chicanas are beginning to challenge every social institution which contributes to and is

24. Series III: Box 2: Folder 4: *Hijas*, Honesto, Cindy, "Chicana on Campus" and "On Chicana Studies," 1970.
25. Series III: Box 2: Folder 4: *Hijas*, "*Interview with La Señora Minerva Castillo,*" 1970.

> responsible for their oppression…they are questioning "machismo," discrimination in education…the role of the Catholic Church, and all the backward ideology designed to keep women subjugated."

Chicana feminists promoted education and challenged traditions, including the Catholic Church which kept them in institutionalized oppression. Vidal took her argument a step further--not only criticizing *machismo* culture and the patriarchy of the Catholic Church--but also blamed European colonizers for the oppressed position of Chicanas. She argued, "[B]efore the Europeans came to this part of the world women enjoyed a position of equality with men. The submission of women, along with institutions such as the church and the patriarchy, was imported by European colonizers, and remains to this day part of Anglo society." As she was critical of European and Anglo chauvinism, she aimed to make a separation between Chicanas and white mainstream feminists. She said, "[Women] are told to stay away from the women's liberation movement because it is an "Anglo thing."", but she argued that "Machismo in English, "male chauvinism" should be labeled an "Anglo thing."" Her distinction between the Chicana and the white feminist creates a unity of La Raza instead of a separation. She pointed out the hypocrisy of the men in the Chicano movement, for they "are denying one half of La Raza this basic right" and "are doing just what the white male rulers of this country have done." Vidal used this argument to invalidate the logic of the arguments of those who oppose Chicana liberation. She said, "The same problem arose when the masses of people in this country began to move in opposition to the war in Vietnam…the media went on a campaign to convince us that...the antiwar movement was a "white thing."" This fight for liberation of La Raza included antiwar efforts, even on a nation-wide level. Vidal wrote, "While billions of dollars are spent yearly by this government on war, no money can be found to alleviate the plight of millions of women who, in addition to being forced to work, have families to care for." Chicanas, especially those who had been Brown Berets, were unified in their fight for La Raza, including antiwar efforts, and wanted to be included. Their plea for women's liberation was for the benefit of La Raza, not a traitorous act.

[Chicanas]...are questioning...all the backward ideology designed to keep women subjugated

Vidal's goal was to spread awareness of the Chicana goals within the Chicano Movement. She writes of women's liberation in such a way that Chicanos understand that the women are still committed to La Raza. She makes reference to *Las Hijas de Cuahtemoc* and says, "[The] newspaper [is] named after the feminist organization of Mexican women who fought for emancipation." The article then

ends with the promise, "In the spirit of Las Adelitas, Las Hijas de Cuahtemoc, and all the unrecognized Mexican women who fought valiantly for their rights, who formed their own feminist organizations, and who fought and died in the Mexican revolution, Chicanas in this country will take the center stage in the advances of La Raza." In her article, the Chicana recognizes the need to create a women's organization focused on the specific goals of Chicanas, to challenge and question the culture of machismo, the Catholic Church, and any other institutions of oppression, to distinguish from mainstream white feminism, and stay unified in the cause of La Raza.[26]

In the effort for both men and women's liberation, The National Chicano Moratorium Committee organized a demonstration in East Los Angeles for August 29, 1970. The poster advertised through flyers which stated the purposes for protest "to express their disgust at this country's great number of youth [Chicanos] that die 10,000 miles away from their homeland." The NCMC experienced internal problems as the Brown Berets dropped out of the moratorium right before the march. Approximately 25,000 people, most of them young Mexican Americans, marched the three-and-a-half mile route from Belvedere Park through Whittier Boulevard to Laguna Park. Las Adelitas had already helped plan and participated in two other marches prior to August 29. Muñoz recalled, "The Berets were not very active in the day to day work of the moratorium to build August 29." He adds, "It was the women ex-Berets, *Las Adelitas*, who did all the work."[27] Yet not even *Las Adelitas* would anticipate the following events. Once the crowd settled down in the park after the march and the rally began, a small scuffle broke out between an unknown person and a police officer at a nearby liquor store. This soon erupted into a violent confrontation between the police and some protesters. Ruben Salazar, a columnist for the Los Angeles Times and new director for the Spanish language television station KMEX , was covering the events with his crew, but was killed by tear gas fired by a police officer. The events of August 29 were the climax of the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles and the police brutality attacks caused disunity for the movement, and it soon died out.[28]

Although *Las Adelitas* were short-lived, Chicana feminism continued on. Anna Nieto-Gomez, a founder and writer for the *Las Hijas* went on to found *Encuentro Femenil* in 1973, the first Chicana scholarly journal. The case of Chicana Brown Berets is only one of the many documented self-determining acts by women that began to resound throughout Aztlan in the 1960s and 1970s. Chicanas

26. Vidal, Mirta, *Chicanas Speak Out, Women: New Voice of La Raza.* NY: Pathfinder Press, 1971. (first published: *International Socialist Review,* October 1971, courtesy of Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.)
27. Pelayo, Jaime, Muñoz interview.
28. Series I: Box 1: Folder 1: BBM, "Moratorium 29 August 1970," 1970.

in MEChA (*Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan*) and La Raza Unida Party also found within these organizations an inability to imagine women as equal partners in the struggle for liberation. Many Chicanas formed autonomous women's organizations, while others chose to develop women's caucuses that would function to keep organizations accountable to Chicana interests. However they chose to respond, a Chicana feminist movement, capable of encompassing various levels of consciousness while incisively critical of women's subordination, carried women forward in organizations such as *Comision Femenil Mexicana, Hijas de Cuauhtemoc, Mujeres por la Raza Unida*, and *Las Chicanas*.[29]

The Chicana is unique because she is at intersection of multiple allegiances and systems, so their interests and self-concept were often tied up in a doubling, or even tripling or quadrupling, process. As *Las Hijas* states, "As a minority she feels the oppression of the system. As a woman she feels the oppression of sexual politics within the dominant society and as a minority within a minority."[30] Chicana Brown Berets might be understood as "feminism-in-nationalism," but such an articulation is contextualized as women remain, perhaps strategically, within the terms offered to them. Deniz Kandiyoti observed that nationalist movements "reaffirm the boundaries of culturally acceptable feminine conduct and exert pressure on women to articulate their gender interests within the terms of reference set by nationalist discourse." As a result, Kandiyoti continued, "Feminism is not autonomous, but bound to the signifying context which produces it."[31] The critique of the cultural nationalism in Chicana feminism shifted the debate to go beyond the nationalist rhetoric of the Chicano Movement in the 1960s and 1970s, for many saw the failings of revolution and the inability to have a voice under the shadow of white middle- class feminism.

The case of Chicana Brown Berets is only one of the many documented self-determining acts by women

Over thirty years later, Chicana feminist Cherri Moraga wrote, "We have no organized movement to respond to our losses. For me, the movement has never been a thing of the past, it has retreated into subterranean uncontaminated soils awaiting resurrection in a 'queerer' more feminist generation." Moraga dared to

29. Love, Barbara J. (2006). *Feminists Who Changed America,* 1963-1975. Champaign: University of Illinois Press. p. 337.

30. *Hijas,* "On Chicana Studies," 1970.

31. Kandiyoti, Deniz. 1994. "Identity and Its Discontents: Women and the Nation." In *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, 376-91. New York: Columbia University Press.

imagine the mythic nation *Queer Atzlán* in her writings of prose and poetry, The Last Generation, and within it brought forth a more inclusive, intersectionalist view of gender, sexuality, race, nationalism, and the politics of liberation for the Chicana. She recognized that the Chicano Movement did suffer losses, but that meant that the work was not over. The need for all voices to be included was the goal of Chicana feminism in the 1960's, and is still the goal today. Moraga learned from her Chicana foremothers to fight for unity, equality, and liberation and said, "The nationalism I seek is one that decolonizes the brown and female body as it decolonizes the brown and female earth." The powerful idea is that gender roles, like the land itself, have historically been regarded as territories to be conquered, but are also territories to be liberated. She wrote, "But it is historically evident that the female body, like the Chicano people, has been colonized. And any movement to decolonize them must be sexually and culturally specific." She maintains that nationalism and sexual oppression are connected as subjects of political resistance. Chicana women, especially those in the East Los Angeles chapter, began this autonomous feminist consciousness to challenge sexual oppression within cultural nationalism as they resigned from the Brown Berets, created their own organization, Las Adelitas, continued antiwar efforts with the National Chicano Moratorium Committee and fought for the social, economic, and political liberation and equality of the whole Raza.[32]

33. Moraga, Cherrie. "The Last Generation: Prose and Poetry," South End Press, July 1, 1999.

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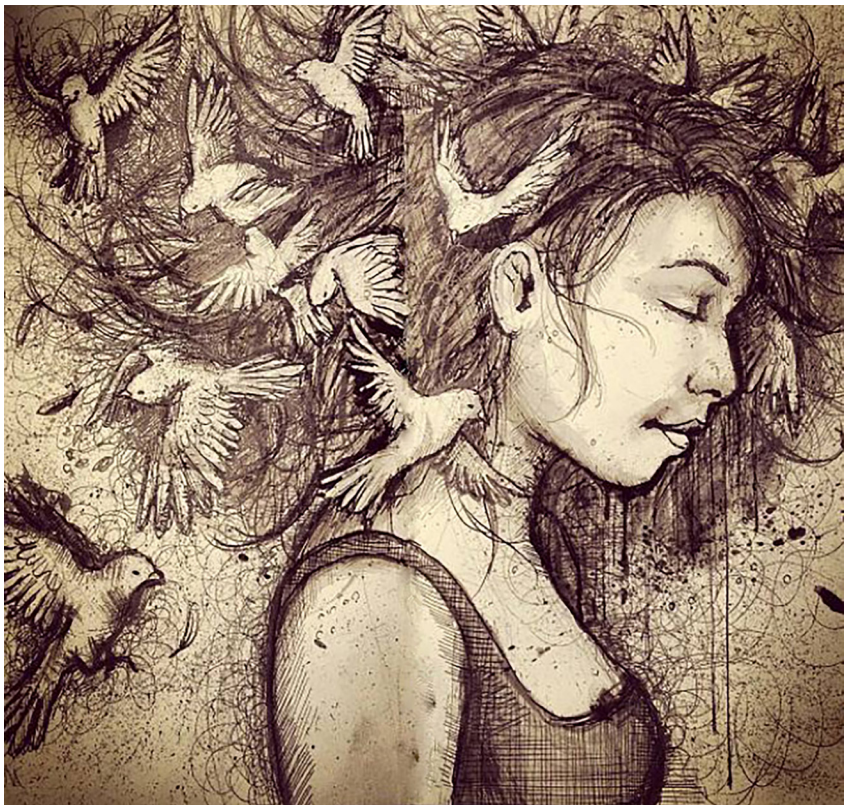

WOMAN WITH BIRDS
by *Vanessa Palmer*

German Women in the Wild West: Contradiction in Post-WWII Gender Roles

Romy Franks

The period following the Second World War was a time of intense identity reconstruction for Germany. Amidst the political tensions of the ensuing Cold War, one of the principle outlets for redefining German identity was cultural: the genre of film. An uptake in the sales of Western pulp fiction—cowboys and Indians—led to the emergence of the highly successful Karl May blockbuster hits, based on a series of dime novels written by a nineteenth-century Saxon author of the same name. The German public's reaction to the series, which was produced and released primarily within West Germany, was overwhelmingly positive. The success of these films, coupled with their exploration of social and moral values, caused many to ascribe a newly developing concept of "Germanness" to the series. One key aspect of German identity portrayed on screen was the gender roles of men and women in German society. The attempts to define femininity[1] within the context of the Karl May films became a vehicle for discussing an emerging crisis of post-war masculinity in German society.

Scholars have since discussed post-war German masculinity in May's books and films. However, both the academic and popular culture conversations overlook the full picture of women's roles after the war. In light of this oversight, a small collection of post-war newspaper articles—some written by women—adds important insight about the characters, actresses, and women viewers of the films. By analyzing these articles, a tangible contraction over women's roles materializes: while the Karl May films emphasize the Wild West as a purely masculine territory

1. Rather than contemporary views of what it means to be "feminine," femininity should be taken in this paper to mean "womanliness" and, in particular, the constructed societal conception of woman and her roles. The term is meant as a female equivalent to masculinity as referenced within the paper.

devoid of women, the newspaper articles depict women as supportive wives and resilient "Pioniersfrauen" (pioneer women).

A Shock to Masculinity: Confronting Post-War Changes

As women's societal importance in Germany increased in the 1940s and 1950s, the decades directly after the war, the pre-existing concept of masculinity decreased. As if losing the war was not difficult enough, the men who survived quickly discovered that family roles as they had known them no longer existed. Of this shock to German gender roles, Franziska Meyer writes, "A large number of these men were neither physically nor psychologically in a position to resume their pre-war role as head of the family. In no other phase of post-war German history would male identity be so badly shaken."[2] Men were not needed as they were prior to the war because women, having handled family affairs for years without support, had learned to manage and move on.

By necessity, desperation, or just pure grit, German women emerged from the war as resilient inside and outside of the home. As the new heads of household or out in the streets, women were largely credited for putting the pieces of Germany back together. In fact, many German women earned the nickname "Trümmerfrau" (rubble woman) for their work in cleaning up what remained of the bombed out cities.[3] With the involvement of women in the public sphere during the decades following the war, traditional German society faced "the specter of overly strong women and weak men."[4] Dealing with this fear proved more difficult than expected for both men and women.

German women emerged from the war as resilient inside and outside of the home.

Despite the vast experience they gained from WWII, German women were expected by society to slip back into supporting roles as wives and mothers at its conclusion. Addressing these changes was a delicate task because reverting to older gender norms meant reclaiming the past. This approach was unwelcome, as it allowed the influence of Nazism to linger in German society. Weedon notes that

> during the immediate post-war decades, social life in West Germany and Austria was marked by traditional ideas about the nature and primary domestic role of women. The Nazi

2. Franziska Meyer, "Women's Writing in Occupied Germany," *Postwar Women's Writing in German (1997)* 30.
3. Meyer 30.
4. Uta G. Poiger, "A New, 'Western' Hero? Reconstructing German Masculinity in the 1950s," *Signs* 24.1 (1998) 148.

> legacy, together with long-established traditional thinking about women, was compounded by moves, found throughout the Western world, to encourage women to abandon their new-found roles and highly skilled jobs in the wartime production industries. With the return of men from the front, women were expected [to] return to the home.[5]

The idea of revisiting pre-war concepts of femininity was challenged by post-war efforts to stave off Nazism. Thus, in order to advocate for traditional roles for women while also avoiding this stigma, society had to develop a new angle through which to view these traditions. This alternative came by way of a cultural response.

The Appeal of the Films: Leaving the War Behind

Mary S. Hartman notes, by the latter half of the twentieth century, men had long since "responded to the compromising of boundaries between the sexes by periodically redefining the ingredients of manhood and womanhood, all the while quietly surrendering."[6] By the time Karl May's novels were released as films in the 1960s, German men had developed a solution to reclaiming tradition while still reflecting the changes that had taken place during the war. Rather than giving up more ground, the Karl May films appeased men's concerns by promoting strong masculinity and a different view of femininity. These new "boundaries," in Hartman's words, helped men overcome widely spread anxiety and move forward.

The Wild West portrayed in the films allowed German society to distance itself from the immediate German past. With idealized plains and wide-open frontiers, the films invited German men to escape to a world populated by heroic male characters—a simplistic, "morally polarized universe"[7] where good always triumphed over evil. Tassilo Schneider argues that the "German western offered a 'new home' that was neat and clean, a home uncomplicated by personal and social positions and relations, a home unspoiled by sexual and economic threats, a home that, above all, had no past but was all present comfort and future promise."[8] The illusion of a wide-open, innocent prairie ensured that the films' concept of home was unthreatened and untainted by the immediate past. This concept—a prairie practically devoid of women—supported the pre-war viewpoint that women were to take the back-saddle to men.

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5. Chris Weedon, "Introduction," *Postwar Women's Writing in German* (1997), pp. 4.
6. Mary S. Hartman, *The Household and the Making of History. A Subversive View of the Western Past (2004)* 278.
7. Tassilo Schneider, "Finding a New Heimat in the Wild West: Karl May and the German Western of the 1960s," *Journal of Film and Video* 47. 1-3 (1995) 57.
8. Schneider 63.

The Purpose of the Films: Overemphasizing Masculinity

To the Germans, the Wild West was a man's world. The film *Der Schatz im Silbersee* (The Treasure of Silver Lake) was no exception to this ideal. The film follows two male leads—Old Shatterhand, the strong, blonde, stereotypical German "Westmann," and his blood-brother, Winnetou, a noble Apache Indian Chief. The two seek to safeguard a fortune hidden in a cave overlooking Silver Lake from a group of money-hungry bandits. Schneider suggests that while the films glorify the many virtues of the main pair, "it is as if the May films strive to protect their male protagonists from the threat of sexuality and to keep them within the confines of a mythically pure, 'innocent' (i.e., pre-/asexual) boyhood universe."[9]

Removing the gender question from the equation was a natural response for a society recovering from war because it generated a simplified moral universe. Schneider adds that "May's utopia is based on the radical suppression of the social and 'psychological' forces that threaten to throw it into turmoil—specifically, the problems posed by sex, economics, and national history."[10] Such a "suppression" meant there was "no place for women in this utopia."[11] But this potential solution to the German society's struggles with morality was problematic. May's stories suggested that having a "clean" and "unspoiled" home meant leaving out women almost entirely, an impossible task given their increased societal importance and presence following WWII. Filmmakers quickly realized that they had to portray women and romance in the films if they were to reach their audiences successfully.

The Film Adaptations: Redefining Femininity

Claims about May's underscoring of masculinity undoubtedly prove true when looking at May's writings themselves. However, newspaper articles from the post-war era point out that the film adaptations diverge from the literature. Although women as a group were mostly withheld from May's original writings, the films of the 1960s consciously added them back in. Yet by attempting to add more substance to the female character, the Karl May crew had more liberty in deciding how to portray women as they saw fit.

Filmmakers' attempts to embellish Karl May's original portrayal of women reflect the conflicted view of femininity during the post-war era by presenting a paradoxical view of a strong woman. On her portrayal of the cowgirl Ellen Patterson in *Der Schatz im Silbersee*, actress Karin Dor said[12] that in "'all of his books, Karl May conceded only minor roles to women. But, if only for dramatic reasons, the screenwriter was gallant enough to build up the character of Ellen

9. Schneider 57–58.
10. Schneider 58–59.
11. Schneider 59.
12. Translations of these newspaper articles as they appear in this paper were done by Franks.

Patterson.'"[13] Even still, Patterson remains a supporting character in the cast. Actress Dor expresses, "Above all [building up Patterson] means this time to prove oneself in the saddle and with a shooting iron."[14] Although the films showed women in larger roles than the novels originally did, this was not necessarily a breakthrough for women. Filmmakers' portrayal of the women suggested they were secondary to their male counterparts.

The Newspapers' Commentary: Recognizing a Paradox in Women's Roles

As is apparent in newspaper commentary about the films, Dor's efforts to create a stronger female character of Patterson were not enough to redefine women's roles. One newspaper article explained, "With Karl May, Ellen Patterson is a 15-year-old chick. In order to let a little love bloom in the hard world of men, the screenwriters have made Ellen into a 3-years older girl in a leather vest, who the cowboy Fred Engel, played by Heinrich George's son, Götz, falls in love with."[15] Ultimately, the West is still a man's world where the character Ellen Patterson—whether as a romantic interest or merely as a romanticized ideal of a cowgirl—may have only been given more lines to satisfy her role as the lover.

Furthermore, Dor's comments about "prov[ing] oneself in the saddle and with a shooting iron" might suggest a favorable step forward for post-war women. But there exist more reasons to doubt. Just after Dor talks about her active role in the film, she adds that it ends with her capture by the bandits. The newspaper article concludes, "Karin Dor says that laughing. Surely she knows that she makes a great character and that she has forfeited nothing of her charm as a Westwoman in a suede leather skirt."[16] This statement highlights the irony between a woman who interprets her character as a strong, gun-shooting, saddle-suited woman but who is reduced by her audience to a smile and a leather skirt.

The Newspapers' Praise: Emulating Women in Supporting Roles

In light of this overemphasis on Dor's womanly charm, other newspaper articles suggest an additional purpose for female characters in the films. The women of the Karl May films were meant to play a supporting role to men, providing an ideal archetype for the German women who came to watch them. For example, Mrs. Butler's character was portrayed positively by one newspaper as "one of the women that supports her husband when her destiny requires it from her."[17] That

13. C. Cirsten, "Teufelsweib und Mädchen im Wilden Westen: Marianne Hoppe und Karin Dor in dem Karl-May- Film 'Der Schatz im Silbersee,'" 2. Unpublished report, held in collection of the Hochschulbibliothek der HFF "Konrad Wolf", Potsdam, Germany.
14. Cirsten 2.
15. "Moral und Marterpfahl." Unpublished report, held in collection of the Hochschulbibliothek der HFF "Konrad Wolf", Potsdam, Germany.
16. Cirsten 2.
17. Cirsten 2.

same article noted:

> Perhaps it will go down in film history as a curiosity, that in the first German Western . . . both female lead actresses Marianne Hoppe (Mrs. Butler) and Karin Dor (Ellen Paterson) do not strut along in silk and satins, but in every day clothing at the sides of their men, simply as women like you and I are. [18]

German women were expected to support men on and off-screen.

Just as actresses were at the sides of their men onscreen, German women were expected to support men off-screen. Even in less serious circumstances, the films built a congruency between the actress and the female viewer. For instance, one article notes that audience members should expect to become googly-eyed over the male actors in the film, simply because the female cast members did:

> The romantic charm with which [Pierre] Brice plays the noble chief of the Apaches excited the female actresses of the film, Marianne Hoppe (farmer's wife, Mrs. Butler) and Karin Dor (Ellen Patterson), so much already during shooting in Yugoslavia, that the delight of female theater-goers over this Winnetou is to be expected.[19]

As these newspaper articles suggest, the films offered an example of the ideal post-war German woman that the general, theater-going female populace could aspire to be.

The Films and Newspapers Together: Defining the Ideal Post-War Woman

Providing an illustration of the ideal post-war German woman was perhaps the greatest accomplishment the Karl May films could contribute to the cultural discussion of German identity. But amidst such blatant contradiction regarding women's roles, what exactly might this archetype entail? Ultimately, the films suggest that a good German woman was not only well mannered; she was the moral impetus for a fallen country. She brought an aspect of peace to a worn, war-torn society. In one article, Karin Dor's character is described as "the quasi-girl element that [is] willing, to bring a little civilized behavior into the entity existing as the man's world of fighting."[20] Another article argues that the Karl

18. Henckel, Liselotte. "Wo Frauen zu Helden werden: Die Prärie liebt keine Puppen/ 'Der Schatz im Silbersee' – mit den Augen einer Frau gesehen." Unpublished report, held in collection of the Hochschulbibliothek der HFF "Konrad Wolf", Potsdam, Germany.

19. Lore Götz, "A Women Named Winnetou: Women Also Swoon for Karl-May Heroes/ About the Color Film 'Der Schatz im Silbersee'." Unpublished report, held in collection of the Hochschulbibliothek der HFF "Konrad Wolf", Potsdam, Germany.

20. Cirsten 2.

May films did not esteem the German woman for her appearance, though the actresses were quite pretty. Rather, the very title of Liselotte Henckel's newspaper article "The West Doesn't Love Dolls" suggests that more was expected of these German women. Women in the prairie were not "men devouring, sexually radiant beauties," but "painted from the hard, every day exertions," so they were "unkempt and quickly withered."[21] Henkel noted, "What Mrs. Butler experienced, in a hard, relentless world of men, millions of contemporary women in the last war and post-war days have also experienced and suffered." [22] Unlike Hollywood's done-up women, this supposed "grungier" look of a pioneer woman was glorified, because it was an honest and true portrayal of women, particularly one with which the post-war female movie-goer could relate.

Although these characteristics of the ideal German woman were primarily good, she remained a walking, talking, (and occasionally horseback-riding) embodiment of contradiction. At the same time that women were portrayed as gritty and strong from their lived experiences, West German newspapers simultaneously "applauded the images of strong masculinity and obedient femininity in many westerns,"[23] seen most acutely from their position as supportive to men. Ultimately, these newspaper articles reiterated the contradictory roles proffered to women in German society. Rather than speaking up against the genre's masculine dominance—"to be at odds with male-dominated culture and society"[24] —the novels, the films, and the press continued to reinforce widely held opinions and norms by encouraging women to be content with the ideal female character offered them.

As reflected in a review of current scholarship and a selection of contemporary newspaper articles, the Karl May films showcase German society's attempt to reestablish German masculinity by redefining German femininity. Rather than simply critiquing a genre where women were second in the saddle, these newspaper articles demonstrated the contradictory views of West German gender roles held in the post-WWII period—that German women were to be both admired for their gritty femininity and yet applauded for their supporting roles to their husbands. These conclusions reflect the tension felt by a nation exploring the prairies of post-war women's roles in society.

21. Henckel.
22. Henckel.
23. Poiger 157.
24. Karen Offen, "Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach," *Signs* 14.1 (1988) 152.

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Brave

Erin Kaseda

"I love being a woman."

Why do those words roll like marbles
Feel so round and right
Spilling over my lips
Ricocheting off the floors and shattering ceilings

Why is it so radical to identify with my identity?

To love being a woman
You must love being vulnerable.

To love being a human being, period, you have to love being vulnerable

But I think that women, especially, have to relearn every day
How to define vulnerable
How to be naked without despising nakedness

And it's not just removing pieces of armor
Meant to protect your heart and stomach and brain
It's harder than that
Because women don't learn to put on armor one piece at a time.

I was fourteen years old when I learned
A boy could say he wanted to rape me
And call it a joke.

And there isn't time to slide on your wrist guards
Or buckle on a shield
You just buckle
Knees give out

And the fetal position protects the most important things,
You think,
And your arms cover your head
And you have made yourself so small
And you get tough fast.

"I love being a feminist."

What a notorious identity.

How can those five words start a forest fire
Are they the smoldering cigarette?
Or a lifetime of dried out weeds?

And yeah, I'm fiery
"Passionately angry and deeply felt"
Because there is something to be angry about
When iron-jawed angels fought to die to survive
And you won't open your mouth and say that you see that there's something wrong here.

I was sixteen years old when I learned
A boy can use "you should be grateful I'm not asking for more"
When you say no.

I was sixteen years old when I learned
Girls can be shot
For wanting other girls to learn to read.

I am not overreacting.

"I love being a daughter of God."

And now suddenly there are too many ways
To be politically incorrect
I can't have all three, you say:
Woman, feminist, Christian

If you take away one third of my identity
I'm a two dimensional line.

And the toxicity is suffocating
When you keep denying that there is something wrong here.

I was eighteen years old when I learned
That in Rwanda, civilian Tutsi women were raped
And intentionally infected with HIV
Mutilated or left with sick bodies housing sick babies
As a tactic and weapon of war.

I was eighteen years old when I learned
A male bank teller got the number of my underage friend from her account
And tried to ask her out.

I was eighteen years old when I learned
That thousands of women in the country where my sister wants to live
Remain in abusive relationships
Because you can't get job promotions if you're divorced.

I was eighteen years old when I learned
That I love being a Christian feminist woman
And that is terrifying
And that is brave.

So do not tell me that I cannot love that there are women who are strong enough
To tell their stories and say
There is something wrong here.

Because there is something wrong here.

Language Lessons: Gender-Based Material Signifiers of Social Intent in *Better Off Dead*

Elizabeth Brady

Claude Lévi-Strauss's theories on structural anthropology are designed to inform us of practices in our cultures at play in our daily life that we are unaware of. Often these theories dramatically reshape our understanding of our cultural practices, adding a new element that can sometimes be considered a bit startling. Take for example his briefly mentioned theory on the fact that men use women as communication. Lévi-Strauss asserts that our culture is structured to revolve around male needs, and women are exchanged among men in order to communicate particular messages to other males (*The Elementary Structures of Kinship* 116). For instance, women are "given" in marriage by their fathers in order to establish and solidify a relationship with the father-in-law. Alliances are formed between the men—and the woman is merely a physical embodiment of that male bond. In essence, males establish relationships between each other—alliances, hierarchies, rivalries, etc.—by the use of women as their form of communication (115). Women are the very words exchanged between men, tools to achieve a given social goal (*Structural Anthropology* 61). Lévi-Strauss's theory of women as material signifiers of male intent is abundantly present in the 80's film *Better Off Dead.*

The first indication of Lévi-Strauss's model at play is in Beth's opening scene. In a reversal of the dominant gender that communicates through the other, a female is plainly utilizing males to her benefit. Sitting on her bed, talking on the phone to a girlfriend, Beth's use of men as signifiers of social intent is clear: "If [Roy Stalin] asks me out, of course I'm going to go out with him. I mean he skis the K-12. He's so boss. Lane? I don't know. I'll tell him after tryouts because you know

how he gets when he gets upset." Her removal of Lane's picture from its frame in order to replace it with Stalin's signifies her unaffected calculations. We know this is a completely self-promoting move, not only as indicated by her words, but because we have already seen Lane's complete obsession with her demonstrated in his opening scene—his bedroom walls plastered with photographs of Beth, hangers in his closet equipped with her face, a framed picture of her carried into the bathroom. We know Beth's dismissal of Lane is a self-promoting, calculated move because we see Lane's utter devotion; this will cripple him, and Beth casually tosses his love away. Her intent is further solidified as she coolly severs her social tie with Lane: "We've been seeing a lot of each other lately and I think it's in my best interest if I go out with someone more popular. Better looking. Drives a nicer car." Beth fully understands that Lane cannot fulfill her need for social power and is therefore useless—detrimental, even—to her. Stalin, on the other hand, embodies all of the prosaic characteristics that will allow Beth to climb the social ladder—riding on Stalin's coattails. Levi-Strauss's concession that "the rules of the game would remain unchanged should it be decided to consider the men as being exchanged by women's groups" is seemingly demonstrated ("The Family" 284).

However, one important element is missing: where are the other women Beth is communicating her power to? Sure, we assume she is chatting to a girlfriend. But what is the benefit for Beth to communicate to that particular female that she is dumping a "spastic nerve bag" for a jock? The girlfriend is never expressly featured in the film; she has very little importance. So even though Beth's ploy to use males as material signifiers of her intent for social standing is clear, it is a moot point; her social status is determined by the status of the males she associates with, resulting only in her being haphazardly dragged around the social ladder throughout the movie, calculating and obtaining, climbing and falling, clawing upward and flung downward. It is clear that *Better Off Dead* was never intended to indicate female communication of intent by way of males. If it were, Beth would see lasting success from her efforts because the males she used for social gain would indicate to the women her social position—she would have gained the pinnacle of the female social hierarchy.

Her social status is determined by the status of the male she associates with.

Conversely, when Lane is thrown out of the kitchen of Pig Burger and onto the restaurant floor in front of Beth and Stalin, while Stalin oinks at Lane, Beth sinks lower in her seat—embarrassed of and minimizing her previous social tie to Lane. Were Beth communicating her status to females, she would not be ashamed of her tie to Lane as his demise and current fallen social state would indicate her

complete power over men and therefore offer herself as a dominant female worth allying with. So even though this is her aim, her efforts are anchorless: in order for this to have had total effect, the women would have had to be the dominant social structure in the first place. Like Adrienne Rich's extensive list of the ways males have historically dominated women, this cannot be replicated in the opposite manner (women's list of their oppression of men) in any way even close to being comparable, so too is it evident here that even though women can use similar mechanisms to dominate men, the female equivalent will never be fully effective (Rich 18–19). So even though Beth uses men doggedly, she still must play the men's game within the male-dominated social structure and will therefore never gain the significance and dominance she desires.

She still must play the men's game within the male-dominated social structure.

The men of the movie, on the other hand, effectively communicate poignant messages to each other by way of women. The film is fraught with instances of males using Beth as means of communication to Lane. However, while Lévi-Strauss's (and Marcel Mauss's) model indicates that male communication to each other revolves around forming alliances by the bestowal of women as gifts, the males in *Better Off Dead* are instead communicating their power, establishing relationships of competition, hierarchy, and rivalry.

> Mauss proposed that the significance of gift giving is that it expresses, affirms, or creates a social link between the partners of an exchange. Gift giving confers upon its participants a special relationship of trust, solidarity, and mutual aid… Lévi-Strauss adds to the theory of primitive reciprocity the idea that marriages are the most basic form of gift exchange, in which it is women who are the most precious of gifts (Rubin 172-173).

If allied relationships were the aim of the men in *Better Off Dead*, Beth would be regarded in much higher esteem, viewed as a "precious gift." Since males are instead establishing relationships of rivalry, Beth is instead used as a signal of social domination.

Over and over again, males ask Lane if they can go out with Beth. First, the geometry teacher: "Lane, this is a bit awkward. I've heard a few things and . . . I was wondering if you wouldn't mind if I took out Beth?" Next, the incompetent mailman, and finally Barney Flinstone through the television. With each subsequent male more absurd than the last, they are not necessarily asking with the intent to ask her out (only the geometry teacher's request ever comes to fruition), but with the intent to communicate to Lane that they can go out with her—absurd and so-

cially unacceptable suitors as they are—and Lane cannot. They have no interest in Beth, only in thwarting Lane's social aspirations, communicating to him his lowly social status and incompetence.

Stalin's use of Beth is equally intended as discouraging communication to Lane. Everything Stalin does to or for Beth is designed to one-up Lane: Stalin's Christmas gift of "a giant teddy bear, bigger than [Beth]" in comparison to Lane's pocket-size teddy bear; Stalin's initial acquisition of Beth through his status as not only the captain of the ski team, but "a hero—the only one in this town who can ski the K-12" versus Lane's inability to make the ski team and debilitating fear of the K-12 mountain and subsequent loss of Beth; Stalin's display of his guitar and vocal skills for Beth in the lunchroom contrasted with Lane's lunchroom outburst to a picture of Beth he drew; Stalin's PDA with Beth at the New Year's dance versus Lane's only company being the embarrassing Charles de Mar; Stalin's repeated humiliations of Lane while Beth clings to his arm compared to Lane's frequent social faux pas; and ultimately Stalin's status as the male for which Beth (very readily) left Lane. Every instance of Stalin's interactions with Lane is an expression of Stalin's vaulted social status, with having Beth at his disposal being the dominant method of communication, cementing Lane's inferior social status.

Lane receives these messages in their intended way: he recognizes that Beth communicated to other males his social standing and he is therefore now completely socially inept. Acting upon these messages, his first impulse is suicide so he immediately goes to the garage and fits himself with a noose. However, after his attempt fails, he tries another tactic: to go against the messages and obtain a different female. First, he aims real high. He tells himself (and cartoon Beth), "Any girl in this school would be overwhelmed with sweat just to go out with me," and his self-affirmations persuade him to approach Kris Kremens, a cheerleader notorious for dating "the entire basketball team." Ultimately, Kris rejects Lane's advances, then he accidentally pulls off her cheer uniform in front of the school and the basketball team beats him up, further reinforcing the male social messages of his unfitness for any female.

Lane cannot have the cheerleader, but he doesn't stop there—he lowers his standards and tries again, this time bolstered with an alternate source of male messages about the use of females as communicants. Lane's dad sits him down and tells him, "You are going to date other girls. Starting with tonight. Tonight at six o'clock you're picking up Joanne Greenwald." Lane recognizes the implicit message—"Your law partner's daughter?"—that his father is attempting to establish kinship with an important male by way of their children's romance (the best model of Lévi-Strauss's theory in the film), but accepts the role, anticipating any date will reestablish his social status. And we do mean any date; he is settling

for Joanne Greenwald, "the one with the big antenna on her face." Anticipating his upcoming social victory, he imagines to himself, "Alright, Joanne Greenwald, you horrible thing. Here's your one chance to go out with a real stud. One night with me and she'll probably go blind with ecstasy, poor creature. Gee, I hope she doesn't grab onto my leg and start crying when the date's over. Oh God, what will I do?" He admits his previously high social status (as attached to Beth) wouldn't have provided headgear-ridden Joanne with the opportunity to go out with someone as far up as he was, and therefore anticipates her utter elation at her opportunity to use him to climb the social ladder herself. After all, that's what dating is for, right?

But he is soon faced with a stark reality that either not everyone is a ladder-climber, or he really wasn't that socially desirable: Joanne immediately rejects him. Worse than that, even when he attempts to overcome her initial rejection and continues to tell himself—and her—that she actually does want to go out with him, he can only keep up that act for so long. When she pulls out her printing calculator and demands half of the anticipated price of the date, he is forced to concede that perhaps the messages all along have been right. If not even Joanne Greenwald will go out with him, what social worth does he have? He takes the other males' messages to him as representations of the accuracy of the notion that his failure to be with Beth (and now every other female) implies his uselessness and responds accordingly—with suicide attempts.

However, Lane's game changes when he meets Monique, a female who goes against all standard material signifiers. First, by her reversal of typical gender roles: Monique is a competent mechanic (she initially starts fixing Lane's Camaro); she encourages gender equality (persuades Lane that they work together to complete the Camaro); she is better at skiing than Lane and successfully tackles the K-12 ("Watch; it's no sweat!"); then turns into his coach ("Go that way really fast. If something gets in your way, turn!"); she is fascinated with and more competent than Lane at baseball (Monique pitches apples and hits the road sign repeatedly; Lane's throw breaks a window, dogs bark, and he slinks away); she stands up to Lane's bully (sprays Stalin with soda in the cafeteria); and she faces Lane's fears of the Asians for him (slams his foot into the gas pedal). Monique's disregard for traditional gender roles cuts against the Lévi-Strauss model, leaning closer toward Rubin's ideal: "The elimination of obligatory sexualities and sex roles . . . an androgynous and genderless . . . society, in which one's sexual anatomy is irrelevant to who one is [and] what one does" (204). Monique's disregard for gender roles proves her

Monique's disregard for traditional gender roles proves her unfit to be used as a female signifier of male intent.

unfit to be used as a female signifier of male intent. She is then free to disrupt the system: Monique communicates for Lane that he can competently communicate with other males. She is not using Lane to further her own social power in a matriarchy, but her encouragement instead enables him to act strongly in the dominant social structure—without making herself his currency, only an ally.

Monique further proves herself as the antithesis of a female to be used as a social signifier by her refusal to speak English. According to Lévi-Strauss, the difference between males using women to communicate or words to communicate is that words have become purely signs, whereas women can speak for themselves. "The process by which phonemes and words have lost . . . their character of value, to become reduced to pure signs, will never lead to the same results in matters concerning women. For words do not speak, while women do; as producers of signs, women can never be reduced to the status of symbols or tokens" (Structural Anthropology 61). Women's ability to speak for themselves is their defense against being completely exploited by males. However, Monique chooses to speak unintelligible French when she could speak English—preferring to not communicate her value when she could. Her refusal of the female mode of defense solidifies her position as one outside the effects of the system.

It is when Monique reveals her English ability to Lane that he recognizes her true value, and simultaneously reveals his budding inclinations to leave the system behind as well. Lane never encourages her to share her value to others and therefore goes against the social intent model. If he were to continue along the paths of social intent indoctrination, he would have encouraged Monique to speak English once he knew she had the ability; her ability to speak would increase her value in others' sight. Instead, Lane is content to associate with an abnormal female who does not even attempt to display her attractiveness as a social commodity. Because Monique does not speak English to others, she cannot be a material signifier of social power for Lane—which he accepts.

Other characters in the movie are not as gracious and are more fully attached to the system, intending to exploit Monique due to her inability to utilize the women's defense of speech. Both Mrs. Smith and Ricky intend to capitalize on Monique's vulnerability. Mrs. Smith declares, "As we're discovering around our household, you don't need words to speak the international language. You know—love. The language of love. I think Monique and our little Ricky have a regular cross-continental romance." Monique verifies Ricky's intent herself: "Ricky. He thinks because I stay here I am his love goddess." The Smiths try to fill in the gaps left by Monique's defenseless French with her supposed love for Ricky—a very socially benefitting tool for the hefty nasal spray addict. Stalin also fills Monique's silence with his own intentions. When Lane and Monique are sitting together in the

lunchroom, he puts his hand on Monique's shoulder, signaling to Lane that he has power even over Monique—that he can physically claim her and she has no words to dissuade him. Stalin verbally insults Lane, all the while massaging Monique's shoulders. Even though Monique could choose to effectively communicate with Stalin in his own language, she does not acquiesce and is not tempted to forfeit her unique power to the social intent model. Stalin therefore fills her silence with his messages to Lane through his use of Monique.

Just as Lane needs Monique to aid his escape of the social intent model, Monique is likewise assisted by Lane. Caught in the web of the Smiths' manufactured love shack, Monique is trapped by Ricky's total use of her as a signifier of his intent. Ricky repeatedly enacts the system upon Monique: physically scoots her closer to his chair at lunch, asserting his ownership; takes food from her hand and eats it himself, asserting his dominance; and uses Monique as a rag doll during the New Year's dance, then once a crowd gathers and cheers, pushes her away so he can domineer the complete spotlight, asserting his ability to use and discard her at will. Monique has no need for the system. Not only has it (Ricky) abused her, but she has no incentive to use the model for her own gains. By knowing and caring about no one in Greendale, she has no one to communicate her social intent to and therefore Lane cannot be useful to her as means of a message regarding her social intent. Monique and Lane are using each other as means of escaping the system. As the instigator of their escape, Monique's continuance of her anti-social-intent characteristics both before and after meeting and interacting with Lane indicate that she is not merely using Lane for her own purposes. Instead, their mutual gain is a reciprocal relationship that fully goes against the theory of social intent. Lévi-Strauss declares, "The total relationship of exchange which constitutes marriage is not established between a man and a woman, where each owes and receives something, but between two groups of men, and the woman figures only as one of the objects in the exchange, not as one of the partners between whom the exchange takes place" (The Elementary Structures of Kinship 115). Contrarily, Monique does benefit from the relationship with Lane, receiving freedom from Ricky (after Lane duels him in the snow), while also offering Lane something he will benefit from: freedom from the system which likewise has not served him well.

Once Lane and Monique establish this reciprocal relationship, the true test arises. First, Monique and Lane conquer the K-12 mountain together, almost resulting in a determining bond and preference for Monique's way of life outside the system: a kiss. Charles interrupts, however, and it is time to face Stalin. Monique verbally invites Lane to remember the prospect of their reciprocal relationship, "Please hurry; we have unfinished business. Do not forget: the international language." With this send-off, Lane then miraculously defeats Stalin at his own game by

winning the race down the K-12—on one ski. Lane quickly establishes an enviable social status, and the crowds notice. He becomes "the hottest thing since sunburn" and he not only wins the affection of the masses, but of a significant female signifier as well: Beth. Upon his victory, and amidst the crowd's acknowledgement of his status and celebration, Beth tells him, "Lane, you really are the best!" and seals her offering of herself with a kiss.

Lane is left with a choice: Beth or Monique? Use a female to communicate his social value or deconstruct his reliance on the system and leave it behind? "From the standpoint of the system, the preferred female sexuality would be one which responded to the desire of others, rather than one which actively desired and sought a response" (Rubin 182). It is clear that Monique does not embody the preferred female. Not only does she not respond to the desire of others (i.e., Ricky), but also she actively seeks a response (from Lane). She first saw Lane through her bedroom window; she initiated their meeting at the New Year's dance; she clearly solicited his assistance when Ricky attempted to retrieve her at the dance. Beth, on the other hand, is the perfect embodiment of what the system desires of females. She took Lane when he desired her; took Stalin when he desired her; even went out with the geometry teacher. Overall, her role is clear: Beth is a material signifier for any male that wishes to use her as communication to other males.

So it is no wonder that for a moment Lane falters, tempted by the cultural structure he has long been accustomed to. Ultimately Lane refuses to take a woman that would serve as a material signifier of his social intent, and breaks free of the system that bound him, attributing "language lessons" to his social advance—language lessons, we know to be taught under Monique's instruction. Language lessons not only of love, but also of freedom. Language lessons that teach Lane that women aren't the words with which he must construct his communication, lessons that teach Lane that he does not need the system and neither does Monique. He turns away from Beth, and discovers Monique's imminent reabsorption into the system as well: the Smiths dragging her home. Lane fights for Monique, displaying the newly-acquired skills honed at Monique's encouragement, and ultimately succeeds in not only breaking himself away from the system, but also rescuing Monique from it as well.

While there is significant evidence of Lévi-Strauss's model of women as material signifiers of male intent present in *Better Off Dead*, two characters undercut the absoluteness of this theory. Monique freely dwelled outside of the realm of the system, indicating that there are alternate models. Lane's willingness to and success in denying the system and departing from it indicates that even those within the system are not inevitably bound to the tenets of the theory. While some aspects of structural anthropology may seem startling to a feminist audience, there

is also hope for an alternative. The existence of successful outliers serves as the basis for further exploration: we are not bound.

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What My Mother Told her Daughter, Me

Kristin Perkins

What my mother told her daughter, me
small enough to form a cradle with two strong forearms
you were never small enough to know completely
-a past and present and future, you reached out with tiny hands
to grip at all three
and somehow the fact that I couldn't know who you would be
seemed to stop me from knowing the child I held
at least for longer than the next meal
the next nap time

CITY
by *Lexi Johnson*

the next unintentional toy (a screwdriver, cardboard box, pen)
the next fear, hope, laugh
as I prayed that my little girl would not hurt like I had hurt
missing the mistakes I had made
wanting "woman" to mean something more
more than the amalgam or what everyone else thought
(pouty-lips on a long-skirted doll, glowing with the ache of pregnancy
good cook, cleaner, kisser, good at fixing, twisting her own hair, her own body
always not too much and just enough, balanced on a thread, pygmalion)
wanting "woman" to be, for you, a thing unique and strong
and knowing you were going to have to figure it out
sometimes alone

(What I could tell my mother: I have had a good example)

Yale Joel, Tina Leser, and Factory Fashions: Rethinking Women's Roles in the 1950s

Emaline Maxfield

Mentioning the 1950s generally conjures up an image of a smiling housewife in a dress and heels, pulling a turkey out of the oven to feed her waiting husband and children. Popular opinion of this era is dominated by the image of a happy housewife. But this image completely ignores another side of women's lives during this decade, the one that existed outside of the home. A group of photos printed in the April 13th 1953 edition of *LIFE Magazine* offer an alternative look at women's lives during this decade.[1] These photographs by Yale Joel feature clothing designed by Tina Leser, and these fashions catered directly to women working in factories [Fig. 1-5].[2] These photos published in such a popular magazine demand a closer look and reconsideration at the realities versus the ideologies that existed in the 1950s. Indeed, several scholars have examined the cultural and social atmosphere of the United States of America in the 1950s and come across a more inclusive view of the decade, indicating that women made great strides in the workplace prior to the feminist movement of the 1960s.[3] Joel's photographs and Leser's factory fashions, largely ignored by historians, attest to

1. The title of the feature was "Overhauled Overalls" (*LIFE Magazine* (April 13, 1953), 110, 113-114). Figures 2-5 were included in the original *LIFE* feature. Figure 1 is part of the Getty collection of LIFE images, done as part of Joel's Factory Fashions shoot but not included in the 1953 magazine.

2. Madelyn Shaw, "Tina Leser," in *Contemporary Fashion*, ed. Taryn Benbow-Pfalzgrad, 2nd edition (Detroit: St. James Press, 2002), 423.

3. Several articles that discuss the reconstruction of the 1950s are included in the bibliography. Among these works are *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994) which is a collection of articles by various scholars who challenge the dominance of domestic ideology of postwar America; *Mothers and More* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984) which discusses the notion that women played different roles at different times in their lives; and *To Have and to Hold: Marriage, the Baby Boom, and Social Change* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000) which discusses the changing roles between spouses and marriage ideology in the 1950s.

the shift occurring in the 1950s. A closer look at the 1950s shows it to be a time of questioning, transitioning, and negotiating women's place in society, and Joel's photographs illustrate and perpetuate a new reconfiguration of women's identity.

As stated above, the ideology of the 1950s, which included the celebration of domesticity and traditional roles for women, tends to dominate the perception of this era.[4] In an attempt to keep women home, domesticity was glamorized; images of angelic and content housewives abounded [Fig. 5-6].[5] During the highly publicized Cold War, the push for women to stay in the home was a strategic part of the Kitchen Debate between Russian leader Nikita Khrushchev and American president Richard Nixon.[6] This was the era of McCarthyism, and a general fear of Communism pervaded the American public. Historian Elaine Tyler May argues that:

> The insecurity and anxiety generated by the presumed Soviet threat put a premium on family stability and linked women's traditional domestic roles to the nation's security. National leaders as well as popular culture proclaimed that women's role in the international crisis was to strengthen the family and raise new citizens emotionally and mentally fit to win the Cold War.[7]

Therefore, good mothers in the home served as emblems of the United States' superior moral, and thereby political, values.[8] McCarthyism also generated a fear of difference, and as a result the men and women of postwar America appeared to be under immense pressure to conform.[9] Living a life in accordance with the status quo and projected image of normalcy[10] thereby seemed to guarantee a level of safety and freedom. Popular television shows such as *I Love Lucy* seemed to further emphasize the "norm" of everyday life: a middle-class wife stayed at home while her husband, who did not permit his wife to work, supported their family.[11] These publicized ideologies dominate a general perception of the 1950s.

The negative impacts of the supposedly lived ideology during the 1950s is cemented in Betty Friedan's 1963 work *The Feminine Mystique*. According to Friedan, seemingly happy wives actually felt trapped in their prison-like homes

4. Susan Hartmann, "Women's Employment and the Domestic ideal in the Early Cold War Years," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 85.
5. Eugenia Kaledin, *Mothers and More* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984), 77.
6. Hartmann, "Women's Employment," 86
7. Ibid., 85.
8. Ibid., 86.
9. Ibid., 85.
10. Kaledin, *Mothers and More,* 12.
11. Ibid., 27.

and were filled with deep discontent.[12] Their growth was stunted by their forced presence in the domestic sphere, denying women their "basic human need to grow."[13] While Friedan's Mystique presented valid findings and attitudes, her research presented a skewed perspective; she was selective regarding the articles she examined, catering to her agenda.[14] Friedan oversimplified the issues of the 1950s by ignoring the diversity of gender roles present; she also failed to mention that domestic discontent was already a prevalent theme that was often addressed in ladies' magazines at the time.[15] Many women in the Fifties already recognized the falsities associated with domestic ideology, finding a life of home-making unfulfilling; as a result, a large portion of women sought to do something about it rather than silently suffer.[16] Women's magazines prescribed part-time and sometimes full-time work for women not satisfied by full-time homemaking.[17] This was the way in which these women were able to combat the frequent loneliness of their domestic lives.[18] It is important to note that Friedan's work did have a huge impact in that she triggered public protest against the "housewife trap"; her influence in this regard is undeniable.[19] However, many of her conclusions were not as ground-breaking as they seem.[20] The actual behavior of women did, to an extent, reject this ideology that Friedan painted as a standard of postwar America. Instead of suffering quietly at home, many chose to seek work as a solution to domestic discontent.

Influenced by the nature of the Second World War, need, or economic pressures, women's entry into the workplace is a defining attribute of postwar America. According to William Chafe, "the most striking feature of the 1950s...is the degree to which women continued to enter the job market and expand their sphere."[21] The percentage of women in the workplace increased 8% from 1940-1960, with 5% of that increase occurring between 1950-1960 *alone*.[22] The Second World War set an important precedence for women's further advancement into the public sphere, crucial for the loosening of social barriers to women's entrance into the

12. Jessica Weiss, *To Have and to Hold: Marriage, the Baby Boom, and Social Change* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 17.
13. Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Post-War America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 229.
14. Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique," 251.
15. Weiss, *To Have and to Hold*, 52. I should note
16. Ibid., 65.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., 70.
19. Ibid., 252.
20. Ibid., 230.
21. Kaledin, *Mothers and More,* 62.
22. Ibid. This statistic was taken from the National ManPower Committee's publication *Work in the Lives of Married Women* of 1958.

workforce.[23] Consumerism was a big push for both spouses to work in the 1950s; whether they worked to afford a new down payment or a middle-class lifestyle[24], these working women saw themselves as contributing to raising their families' standard of living.[25] Historian Eugenia Kaledin further debunks the "myth that most women who worked during the war were glad to return to domestic life," illustrating that many ladies stayed in the workforce or if they did quit, returned shortly thereafter.[26] Many women remained in the workforce out of sheer necessity as single earners; widowhood was a stark reality post-World War II.[27] In fact, certain industries and shops retained their wartime female majorities, and women comprised anywhere between 25 to 75 percent of the workforce in any given shop.[28] Indeed, by the mid-1950s, the percentages of women's employment matched the levels achieved during World War II.[29]

Research done by historian Joanne Mayerowitz exposed the tensions between ideals of nondomestic achievement and domestic duty.[30] Meyerowitz examined popular magazines, and she came across several articles that praised careers while others admonished women to be mothers instead of seeking a career.[31] A similar trend is seen in the actions of leaders and popular figures of the time. While many championed the housewife, other leaders recognized and approved of women's growing employment while also seeking "to adjust public opinion and public policy to accommodate women's greater participation in the public sphere."[32] Writers such as Benjamin Spock and Robert Coughlan, however, urged mothers to forsake economic well-being and place the nurturing of their children as their top priority.[33] Despite popular voices such as Spock and Coughlan, traditional views began to crack as families enjoyed the niceties made available by the mother's employment.[34] The National Man Power Commission, a committee set up in 1951 to take a closer look at America's workforce, concluded that young women needed to be informed that paid employment would play an integral part of their adult lives.[35] The 1950s were therefore a time of debate and evolution; it appears that no single opinion truly dominated the era, but rather the public was

23. Weiss, *To Have and to Hold*, 51.
24. Ibid, 28, 45.
25. Ibid., 64.
26. Kaledin, *Mothers and More*, 61.
27. Weiss, *To Have and to Hold*, 72.
28. Sue Dorothy Cobble, "Recapturing Working-Class Feminism," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Post-War America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 59.
29. Hartmann, "Women's Employment," 86.
30. Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique," 239.
31. Ibid.
32. Hartmann, "Women's Employment," 86.
33. Ibid., 56-57.
34. Ibid., 75.
35. Cobble, "Recapturing Working-Class Feminism," 92.

divided on the issue and images of woman as both worker and housewife were represented.[36]

Yale Joel's photographs for *LIFE Magazine* are themselves a part of popular culture and participate in this ongoing discourse. One study reveals that in any thirteen week period during the 1950s "about half of all Americans… had seen one or more copies" of the magazine, suggesting its wide circulation and readership throughout the United States.[37] They appeared in a popular magazine at a crucial time when women were negotiating a new identity for themselves, literally and ideologically. These women of popular culture are a part of a projected image that includes the workforce, not the domestic ideal. As working women viewed themselves and their places in society differently, they subtly contradicted the messages they had been raised to believe.[38] Their clothing enabled them to outwardly manifest their new identity as a figure in the public realm, contributing to the ongoing discourse regarding women's place in American society.

[These images] subtly contradicted the messages [women] had been raised to believe.

The glamorization of working that is seen in these photos directly counters the decade's ideological attempts to glamorize domesticity, exemplifying the pull between these two theories that Meyerowitz claimed was characteristic of this decade. Furthermore, the article that accompanied the publication of these photographs mentions that "few factory workers who wear [Leser's designs] will look as sleek and unstained as the models in this picture."[39] By drawing attention to the pampered and pristine appearance of the models, the article acknowledges the reality of working women's actual experiences that often included intensive labor. These real life women may not expect to look as clean as these models, but they could certainly be as stylish and confident. The images make a bold statement, creating a visual break with women's traditional roles as housewife as they are projected as happy workers instead of angels in the home.

As more and more women replaced their aprons with stylish new work uniforms, in these photos and in real life, they asserted a different sort of feminine presence than what was traditionally considered feminine. Ideology of the 1950s not only

36. Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique," 248.
37. James L. Baughman, "Who Read Life? The Circulation of America's Favorite Magazine," in *Looking at LIFE Magazine*, ed. Erika Doss (Washington, D.C. and London: Smithsonian Institute Press, 2001), 42.
38. Weiss, *To Have and to Hold*, 70.
39. "Overhauled Overalls," 110.

determined where a woman should be but also how she should act and look.[40] Women were encouraged to look attractive for their husbands.[41] Indeed at this time domesticity was conflated with femininity.[42] To be feminine meant to be beautiful, interested in the home and homemaking, and style.[43] The way a woman demonstrated and visually manifested her femininity was through her style; Leser's work clothing allowed women to balance their roles of woman and worker. In the late 1940s and into the early 1950s, women were focused on "expanding and upgrading the female sphere."[44] Working women could now outwardly pronounce their presence and refashion their identity, creating a niche for themselves in a sector usually dominated by men.

More and more women replaced their aprons with stylish new work uniforms.

Despite the fusion of femininity and domesticity, these clothing offered working women a more nuanced and modern definition of femininity, one that was not restricted to the domestic sphere but rather reflected the reality of women's lives and decisions. Here femininity is entering the public realm, making a bold yet chic statement. Instead of conflating domesticity with femininity, working women could now combine their femininity with the public sphere. At the same time that they were out contributing to their families' income, Leser made it possible for working women to retain a part of a traditional notion of femininity through their style; an element of the old, traditional associations of style with femininity is combined with the new, women's greater participation in the workforce. Two elements of women's lives that many at this time were trying to negotiate are blended together in these photos as the boundaries of femininity are being stretched. These women needed clothing better suited to the demands of their lives, and Leser responded in a uniquely feminine and innovative way.

Leser's designs exemplify many of the aims associated with fashion in the 1950s. Postwar America was a time of increasing casualness and appropriateness; the average American woman sought after the most realistic and affordable clothes.[45] The American public also sought for versatility, meaning clothing that would be acceptable for night and daytime wear as well as elegant apparel, all at a reasonable price.[46] Leser's designs are noted for catering to the "needs and budgets of many

40. Kaledin, *Mothers and More*, 39.
41. Ibid., 75.
42. Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique," 233.
43. Ibid., 234.
44. Cobble, "Recapturing Working-Class Feminism," 68.
45. Caroline Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion: The Evolution of American Style* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1989), 170-171.
46. Ibid., 172.

postwar American women."[47] She aimed to create an inventive and innovative fashion that was accessible to a larger audience.[48] In the fashion industry, her clothing sold for a twentieth, thirtieth, or even sometimes a fortieth of couture prices.[49] Leser is a figure aware of the realities and expectations concerning women in the 1950s, and she seeks to accommodate women's shifting roles.

Leser's legacy as a designer for the everyday woman is reflected in her factory fashions. Her new design for overalls, a popular article of clothing worn in factories, was fitted, feminine, and more attractive; they came in a variety of looks and materials, from plaid denim to tan twill, and were touted as affordable to the working-class woman.[50] Her "Pushed-Up Pants" could also be worn for gardening and sailing, illustrating their overall practicality for a variety of pursuits.[51] Leser's "Vanished Pants" could be hidden underneath the skirt for a more elegant and traditional look.[52] These pants could also be reversed to match the striped ticking jacket, illustrating their versatility. Lastly, her Orlon Coveralls were acid-proof to protect workers, and they were also useful for cosmetic workers (such as the one pictured) since it prevented clothes lint from falling into cold-cream vats.[53] Leser's designs were fairly priced, and they served a variety of functions. The versatility of the clothing echoed and catered to the versatility of over 4.5 million working-class and middle-class women.[54]

Yale Joel's photographs acknowledge and express shifts in attitude as well as a renegotiation of social boundaries.[55] Changes in styles tend to indicate shifts in discourse and social relations between different groups.[56] These women negotiated, through their lives, decisions, and their clothing, their changing place in society and how they viewed themselves. Ultimately they saw themselves, by donning such stylish and flattering work attire, as women in the workforce, feminizing a traditionally male sphere. They do not simply mimic men's clothing, but instead Leser has created something unique that allows the working woman to set herself apart and proclaim her presence.

47. Shaw, "Tina Leser," 423.
48. Ibid.
49. Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 14.
50. "Overhauled Overalls," 110.
51. Ibid., 113.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., 115.
54. Ibid., 110.
55. Diana Crane, *Fashion and its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing* (Chicago and London: University Press, 2000), 1. I credit Crane here with the notion that fashion expresses shifts in attitudes and social boundaries. The application to Tina Leser's factory designs, however, is my own.
56. Annette Lynch and Mitchell D. Strauss, *Changing Fashion: A Critical Introduction to Trend Analysis and Meaning* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 118.

These women attest to the changing definition of femininity that was such an integral part of gendered discourses in postwar America. Judith Butler argues that gender is constituted through a "series of acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time."[57] The transformation of gender takes place as individuals change their actions, altering the norm by ignoring or purposefully deviating from established rules or notions of gender identity.[58] These models represented the millions of women who were a part of a larger group seeking to subvert ideology and assert a new definition of womanhood, one that included the workplace and not only the home. As thousands of women chose to go to work and make society increasingly more aware of their presence, they are declaring a new role of the female: that of worker and supporter. As they wear these clothes and assert their identity in the workforce, they actively participate in the changing discussion of what it means to be a woman, laying the foundation for future change. This ongoing debate reached the American public through Joel's camera lens, creating a greater awareness and acceptance of working women.

These photographs reflect and further perpetuate the debate regarding women's roles in postwar American society. Juxtaposed against a backdrop of domestic ideology, encouraged by the Cold War's desire to demonstrate their moral superiority over Soviet Russia, was the reality of women's actual lives. Whether pushed by need or desire to earn, women were an integral part of the workforce at this time. Although few if any concessions were made to improve women's standing in the workforce, to overlook the experiences of women in the workforce is to irresponsibly ignore the realities of women's lives in postwar America. Women challenged tradition by continuing a trend started in the Second World War, asserting their presence in the workforce both physically and visually with the advent of Tina Leser's designs. Leser's designs reached the everyday woman, and Joel's photographs reached the average American, bringing greater awareness to the ongoing question as to women's role in society. Both Yale Joel's photographs and Tina Leser's designs take part in the changing definition of femininity. Yale Joel's photographs for *LIFE Magazine* illustrate how women were encouraged to negotiate a more modern yet also traditional identity, demonstrating the nuances of this complex decade with regards to women's lives in postwar America.

57. Ibid., 118.
58. Ibid., 119. For reference 57 and 58 I use Lynch and Strauss's summary of Butler's argument.

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Images:

Fig. 1. Overall designs by Tina Leser, photograph by Yale Joel. Fig. 1-5 courtesy of Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images.

Fig. 2. Tina Leser's "Vanished Pants," by Yale Joel.

Fig. 3. Tina Leser's "Pushed-Up Pants," by Yale Joel.

Fig. 4. Tina Leser's "Orlon Coveralls," by Yale Joel.

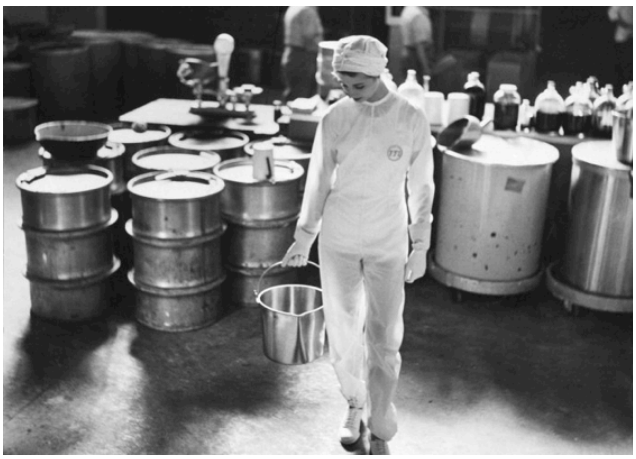

Fig. 5. Tina Leser's overalls, by Yale Joel.

Fig. 5. Pep Vitamin ad from 1950s.

Fig. 6. Magazine Illustration, 1954. Image courtesy of the Bridgeman Art Library.

(W)hole

Anonymous

My ears burned as we entered the waiting area of the family counseling center. The room was thick with the tang of a floral plug-in air freshener, and was too small for us to avoid eye contact with the other patients. After roaming the beige carpet and paneled walls, my eyes landed on a stiff couple and the space between them on the loveseat. I pegged them "marital discord."

When an office door opened and a woman invited us in through a smile, I swaggered in with a hard face, but Mom jerked and fidgeted like a marionette. We went through introductions, and then the counselor asked us to tell her about our "situation." Once Mom got through her description of my cold stubbornness and elaborate illustrations of our alternating silent treatments and screaming matches, her voice fizzled out. The counselor thanked her for sharing her perspective. Neither had included me in the conversation.

"Now, would you mind having a seat out in the foyer? I'd like to talk to Elizabeth alone." It only took Mom three steps to cross the claustrophobic office. She closed the door behind her. I looked down at the heavy Oriental rug covering the entire floor of the office. I searched for the edge with the toe of my Vans, but the bloated armchairs pinned down the rug with finality. The counselor looked at me from behind the echauguette of her desk.

"Have you ever been sexually abused?"

My shoe stopped short on the rug. Before my mind could process the reality of the attack, my body responded: blood retracted from my limbs and bolts of adrenaline charged my brain. "Why are you asking me that?"

"It's okay to tell me. It can help to talk about it."

I felt heat sear my crown, then race down my scalp and behind my ears. I flexed my jaw and made my eyes slits. "No. I don't know. Where do you get off?"

"You're displaying many of the signs of sexual abuse," she started. "Your fights with your mom show your aggression. Your promiscuity. Your denial. The clothes you're wearing—how many shirts do you have on—four?"

"It's a cold day! I always wear layers." The room held my words in the air between us. I folded my arms tighter against my chest as I realized my mistake. Her eyes seemed to flash with mild pleasure at my unintentional admission, but her voice remained distant and unaffected.

"Being a victim of sexual abuse is a difficult thing to cope with. How about you think about it, then come and see me next week?" She was already reaching for an appointment card. I didn't wait for her to hand it to me, but immediately pushed away from the deep armchair and cut across the office. I pulled open the door. I could feel my mother's leeching eyes on me from the couch in the waiting area but I kept going. I pulled open the front door. And kept going. I pulled open the Camry door and climbed inside. My chest expanded and deflated inside the sheath of my four shirts. I snatched my coat from the backseat and wrapped it around the front of me, pulling it up to my chin. I felt completely naked. My teeth started to chatter.

***

In calculus, a function is *continuous* if it can be drawn without lifting pen from paper. When graphing values, the plotted points are often connected with an uninterrupted curve to show what the function's values most likely would have been at the points that weren't expressly measured. The continuous curve represents all of the potential points of that function. By connecting those points, it is assumed that the function in question is a continuous function, or one whose outputs vary continuously with the inputs: what you give is what you get. The curve is predictable, reliable. Conventional.

***

I had been Matt's girlfriend for almost a year. We were seventeen and wouldn't admit that love could exist with anyone other than each other. I clung to him, needing him, despite knowing it would never work, not wanting it to work, but choosing to be ignorant in order to pretend we loved and were loved. Our relationship vacillated between desperation and disgust; a convoluted case of needing what hurts. He was my ally, my propaganda, my reason in the war against my parents.

The way I saw it, I didn't have any options: now that this dark secret I had buried for almost a decade had been uncovered by the counselor with such ease, I thought it would hit the fan and fly like shrapnel. Her confrontation made me believe others could see right through me, and that the point in my life had come when I was to root up my past in order to be rid of it. And I wanted to be rid of it.

Matt and I weren't allowed to see each other; my parents' assault on our relationship was through siege. He wasn't allowed in the house, so I called him. I remember pacing as I told him over the phone about what had happened with the counselor and a sweeping history of the events in question. I stopped pacing at his response.

"You're *used*. I know I shouldn't think of you that way, but I can't help it. I feel like I've gotten second-hand merchandise."

I was staring out the window overlooking our half-acre pasture. Two horses leaned against each other, heavy and motionless, facing opposite directions, only touching at the neck. Their eyes were fixed on the dirt they stood in. Gray clouds were charging the sky; a storm was coming. My very being seemed to retract into some deep recess inside of me. I could feel my arm holding the phone to my ear, but it was like someone else's arm, someone else's ear, someone else's body. I was far away, sucked into the center of this shell that I mentally understood was my body, but was no longer emotionally attached to. One word filled the rest of the newly hollowed caverns in my body, my soul: *used*. It was everywhere around me, repeating and increasing in resonance. Used.

One word filled the rest of the newly hollowed caverns in my body, my soul: used.

***

My logic told me that if I were to uproot this issue and finally discuss it openly with a counselor, family loyalty should have first dibs. I thought my parents should know what happened in their family before I talked about it with a woman who only knew my first name by checking her notes.

"Mom, is it okay if Matt comes over? We need to talk to you and Dad about something." Surprising me, my mom allowed Matt back into our house for the first time in months. Two days later I was to appear before the counselor again, so I needed to get this off my chest quickly in order to feel free to make progress in the next counseling session.

Matt came over that evening, and we went into the library. I had been trying to remember how old I was when it all happened, using my photo album to help me remember. Matt sat on the carpet next to me and my mind wandered over old memories as my fingers turned each plastic page.

A picture of me at three, in a yellow church dress and too-short bangs held back by a lace barrette with a tiny pink rosebud. I remember the portrait studio, the photographer guiding me to lean in just a little closer to the decorative column until my cheek rested lightly against the smooth white plaster. My smile is small and shy, my eyes full under the soft lashes of a toddler.

I'm about five, and my cousins are visiting. I can tell someone told us to "say cheese" because I'm reaching out to put my arm around Sarah, even though we aren't close enough to make it look natural. My neck betrays the stretched muscles of a forced smile, and my freckled nose is wrinkled up to bare my teeth. I'm not even looking at the camera.

There. A picture of me at eight years old, standing on the blacktop in front of the house wearing a faded purple swimsuit. I am smiling in the foreground, my brother a few feet behind me, holding a black kitten to his cheek. I remember this day and many like it. I feel the fire on the soles of my feet from the blacktop. I feel the soft, thin fur of the kitten and its needle-sized ribs beneath. I feel my eyes squint as I smile for the camera.

I remember that this day, in the shed on the far side of the pasture, we hadn't been wearing our swimsuits.

My stomach heaved into my throat. The muscles drained from the arm I was propped up on and my elbow swayed, then buckled. Matt asked me what was wrong, and all I could do was point to the picture, "That day."

My parents opened the door of the library and sat down on the opposite side of the room from where I was huddled on the carpet. Mom's lips whitened and her crow's feet deepened as she looked from Matt to me. Dad had run his coarse hand through his hair. The white tuft by his left temple was a fluffy, uneven clump.

They are silent.

I shrink, hit by a wave of not wanting to be here. I realize that it is not so much telling them that their daughter was sexually abused, but that their son did the sexual abusing. This will hurt them. I can't say a word.

Finally my mother cannot wait on my silence any longer. "Well?"

In the end, it was Matt who said the words "Elizabeth was sexually abused multiple times when she was eight years old." He told them it was my brother and pushed the picture album still showing the summertime photo toward my parents with three fingers. His voice was oddly calm, high-pitched, too smooth—the delivery of a sales pitch. He thought he was my hero. I remember thinking I shouldn't have let him come; I felt an odd sense he had stolen something from me by speaking for me, but torn, glad at the same time to have a hiding place behind his words.

"We always thought there was something wrong with you."

I only cried.

My parents' faces didn't change. They asked one question.

"Is this true, Elizabeth?"

I nodded and wouldn't meet their eyes. My heart screamed *I'm sorry. I'm so sorry,* but they didn't hear.

"We always thought there was something wrong with you."

They stood up and left the room.

***

In calculus, the purpose of a limit is to discover what a function will do in relation to a certain value, a point that is of particular interest in relation to the function. Calculus provides the unique opportunity to illustrate what functions will do when that certain value doesn't exist; finding the limits of a function allows for a precise definition of which values can be inputted in order for the function to exist. In order to find the limits of a function, the value must be approached from both sides. Limits determine exactly where there are points that make the function hold true. Limits also expose holes.

***

Thursday afternoon, precisely a week after I met the counselor for the first time, I was back in her office. Alone.

"Elizabeth. It's so good to see you again. I'm glad you came back. How are things going with your mother?" The expression on my face showed her just how stupid I thought her question was. I clenched the paper in my hand a little tighter.

She nodded to the sheet in my hand. "What's that? Did I assign you some homework last time?" I pushed a single sheet of notebook paper across her desk. The blue ink didn't quite fill a whole page.

"You didn't; I did. First of all, I don't even know if it counts as sexual abuse. I thought you'd eventually want me to tell you all the things that happened, so I wrote them down so I could get it over with." I slouched back in the leather chair and waited for her to respond.

She reached across the desk and delicately lifted the paper. As her eyes scanned my words, she pinched the paper with her thumb and forefinger, the rest of her fingers curling away from the page. A fly butted against the window behind her, bouncing a trail around the perimeter of the pane.

"Well, yes, from a legal standpoint, the experiences you've described here constitute sexual abuse, so have no fear of that." My eyebrows gathered, lowering over my eyes.

"I'm not asking if I can press charges, I'm asking if it even matters." I beckoned to the paper still caught between her two fingers. "I can't even remember everything."

At last she freed the evidence from her grasp, set it lightly on the glossed wood top of her desk, then pushed it to its final resting place at her elbow. She leaned toward me over her desk, the shoulder pads in her powder gray suit jacket slumping forward. "From what you wrote, it sounds like you've harbored this burden for quite some time. How do you feel about your experiences now?"

"I don't think about it."

"Victims are often unaware of the extent of the lasting effects past sexual abuse can have on their lives. Now that we've established the reality of your abuse, some things in your life since then make a little more sense, don't you think?"

"No, I don't think. I don't think this comes up at all in my daily decisions. I don't think it explains away me and my mom, I don't think it's the reason for me and Matt, and don't even try and tell me it influences what I wear every day."

She leaned back, pushing her palms against the edge of the desk to roll her chair across the plastic floor mat. "I think I have something that will help you." She stood up and walked to a wall of books, tugged a paperback from its place, and brought it to me. I looked down at the cover. There was a bald man in a suit, grinning helpfully. *Self Matters.*

***

"What do you mean you're not going?"

"I am not going back. How can she call herself a counselor when her idea of counseling is making me read a self-help book?"

"Well, did you read it?"

"I started to. I couldn't stomach all the gushy warm-fuzzies about how the first step to improving yourself is believing you have worth."

My mother sighed, put her hands on her hips. "How are you going to work through your little problem if you won't go talk with the counselor?"

"She doesn't want to talk with me and she doesn't want to help me work through it. All I want is to be through this. I want to deal with this and be done. And she's taking her sweet time." I turned toward the stairs leading to my bedroom, but Mom trailed a few steps behind me.

"I guess you don't have to go back if you don't want to. But she suggested I make an appointment to get you a prescription for antidepressants. Your appointment is tomorrow."

***

Calculus was developed in order to study the motion of objects, their speed and direction. Finding the velocity of a moving object requires the concept of a limit. Limits must be used to understand the potential changes of a function. If there is a hole, the function and its responses to various conditions are no longer comfortably formulaic. Approaching the hole from both sides to determine its limits aims to define the bounds of the hole, to identify precisely where the function ceases to be identical to an otherwise continuous function. Comparison reveals outliers.

***

I left the doctor's office with a few sample boxes of Lexapro in a brown paper bag. They felt like a shameful secret, stiff-armed at my side. As soon as Mom unlocked the car I dropped the bag to the floor. My mother settled into the driver's seat.

"I don't know why you had to be so rude to Dr. Williams, Elizabeth. He was just trying to help."

"I'm sick of people trying to help. They treat me like a mutant. And then throw medications at me like all I need is a pill, and then I'll be normal. Taking a pill to make me happy is a fake—it's not me. It means everybody wants me to be somebody I'm not."

As soon as we reached home, I went straight to the bathroom. I pulled each sample box of pills from the brown paper bag. I opened each box, my fingernails perforating a half-moon into the thin aluminum foil encasing each pill. I laid each pill in a growing pile by the sink, then gathered them up, a mass of white in my cupped hands.

I separated my hands and let the pills pepper the surface of the water in the bowl of the toilet.

***

A hole is simply a discontinuity in a function, or a place where the function is not defined. Some holes are removable—it just requires finding the definition. They are identified in a function by comparison to an associated rational function, or one that is clearly continuous. The associated rational function provides the map to define the function's limits. Once these holes are identified, they can be removed by simply cancelling all common factors. With the removal of the holes in the function, the function becomes whole, a rational function itself.

But other holes are infinite. All of the common factors from an associated rational function have been cancelled, but a zero remains in the denominator, signaling the need to divide by zero, which can never produce a real number. The graph of a function with an infinite discontinuity shows an area that will never reach an identifiable point. It is like the graph is trying to become a vertical line at a certain point, but of course it can't. From afar, the graph appears straight, but the closer the scrutiny, the more obvious the gap.

Infinite discontinuities cannot be inclusively graphed. Instead of a set script, they are only a guide to the function's behavior in the foggy area of the infinite discontinuity. With infinite discontinuities, the only way to graph the function is to indicate this taboo space with the semi-transparency of a dashed line. A blemish on a graph.

***

My brother had joined the Navy when he was eighteen. I hadn't seen him in nearly two years. But not long after exhuming these old memories, the Navy held Family Day, an event when all of the families of the sailors were invited to visit San Diego and tour the submarines. And this year, my parents decided our family would go.

I made excuses. I pouted. I yelled. I even tried simply asking if I could stay home. But my parents wanted a nice family trip. And I didn't have an option.

While touring the submarine, it was easy enough to keep my distance, keep quiet, and keep calm. I didn't know how I was supposed to feel, or act, or think. So I tried not to do any of those at all.

That afternoon, we went to Sea World. The California sun burned into the backs of our timid Idaho necks, a high-pitched female drone blared Shamu show times over the intercom, and the greasy smell of funnel cakes thickened the air.

Our parents herded us from attraction to attraction—Penguin Encounter, Turtle Reef, a choreographed dolphin show. I managed to hover on the outskirts, lingering a little longer when the rest of my family started moving to the next attraction. They gravitated to the exits, and I read informational posters, pretended to be absorbed in getting a closer look at the animals, or discovered a sudden need to tie my shoe.

I didn't realize my brother wasn't up ahead with the rest of the family when we climbed the ramp out of the coolness of the shark tunnel. My sister, Jody, was talking at me about the tiger shark, impressed with its speed. I squinted against the bright white of the sun and offered an "mmhmm." I heard Mom call for us to hurry up, and squinted harder to scan the crowd of beer-bellied dads and fanny-packed moms to so I could tow Jody toward the rest of the family. Without warning, my brother appeared between me and Jody, draping an arm around each of our shoulders.

"Almost makes me want to get a shark for my fish tank!" His arm became heavier on my shoulder as he turned to face me. "Don't you think so, Elizabeth?"

My stomach seized, punched down like rising dough. I dropped my shoulder and twisted away from him. I turned and lurched toward the shark tunnel, but slammed into a twelve-year-old skater punk who was running right past me. He stumbled backward and clipped the elbow of a dad holding a video recorder.

"Hey—easy!"

"Not my fault—that girl just ran into me!" The kid pointed at me. My heart was a racehorse serrating my chest, but I was frozen, and people were staring. I mumbled something, and the kid walked away. Suddenly Mom was at my elbow, hissing in my ear.

"What is the *matter* with you? You're causing a scene!"

"I'm causing a scene? Get away from me."

I could see my mother's eyes flit over the crowd, racking up a tally of each set of eyes on us, stopped in the middle of a sidewalk pulsing with tourists on the way to Shamu.

"Can't you stop thinking about yourself and your problems for one minute? For *one minute*, Elizabeth! We're here as a family. And you want to ruin it for everyone because you can't stop being so damn selfish."

***

We don't talk about it anymore. I pushed the past aside, hoping for a day when people would see me, put pen to paper, and graph my function. They wouldn't lift the pen, wouldn't find the hole. The day when my mother, my counselor, my doctor, my boyfriend wouldn't be coming at me from all sides, reaching by limits to the edges of where I cease to be continuous. No one would study my function, repeatedly inputting values and expecting to get the same answer they would get with a standard function. On that day, I wouldn't be given a pill to fill the hole, the gap, the void, the difference.

I pushed the past aside, hoping for a day when people would see me, put pen to paper, and graph my function.

The shape of a function in a graph is determined by its properties, a visual product of a process of manipulating numbers. The shape of a function in a graph offers efficient categorization, judgment, labeling: linear, quadratic, rational, continuous, or housing an indefinite discontinuity. But the graph of the function merely represents the function—it is not the function itself. A shape is merely a facet of a concept. And an experience is merely one number in an elaborate equation that becomes *me*.

Good Girl

Erin Kaseda

To the girl who is fifteen and feels that abuse fits her
Molded like some spandex-lace hybrid dappling skin
In bruise colors shaped like flowers
This is for you, girl-child, woman,
me-of-ages-past, daughter of twenty-years-down-the-road.

And to the girl who is sixteen and rolls affection on her lips
As delicately as childhood purple lipstick
And the girl of eighteen who wears kisses instead
And the girl of nineteen with your Burt's Bee's chapstick
Because it's more practical and doesn't stick in your hair
Skeleton-and-skin woman cycling language through your lungs
This is for you:

You were never built to be second-class
Second-hand
Handed down through depraved fingers and palms bigger than your own
Own and owed: you are not writing renter's fee checks
Paying the universe back cell for cell
You are not a temporary inhabitant or a migratory bird
Your bones are made of stronger stuff
You are firecrackers lit with sparklers
Firework on firework
Dynamite woman
Your fingertips are powerful.

So when he calls you "good girl" when you apologize for taking up space
Teaching you to hold yourself up by your toes so your thighs spread out less
When he warms his cold suspension-of-belief in your guts
When he takes away your phone so your powerhouse fingertips can't type SOS
When he says he'll never do it again
When he says if you're good he won't do it again
When he says if not him someone else will do it again
When he says you deserve for it to happen again

I am asking you to remember this:
You are sweat-stained steel and atomic energy and a tangle of roots and ten hundred trees
You are millions of firing neurons and musty book pages and woman in your marrow
You are not a "good girl."

Dignity-and-thunderstorm woman,
Today is a good day to start saying no.

REAL
by *Vanessa Palmer*

Prime of my Life

Roxanne Harmon

Prime: *Mathematics* (Of a number) evenly divisible only by itself and one[1]

2

The earliest nightmare I can remember was at age two. That was just the first of many. One nightmare involved aliens resembling E.T who were kidnapping my mother. In the dream they had already abducted mom, while dad and my toddler self were not sure how to escape or how to save her. Prone to night terrors at this age, I could often be found at the base of the stairs screaming in my sleep. Night terrors are different than nightmares and occur at a different time during the REM cycle. The sleeper will appear to be awake and is often inconsolable. Screaming is not unusual, and sleepwalking is tied to this behavior.[2]

3

At age three I was asked what I wanted to be when I grew up. I answered with "a red wagon." I lived in my own dimension, blending the forests of New England with the talking wolves of my mind. This included three imaginary friends. They told me their names were Sir Johnston, Pepper, and Gika. Relating to Sir Johnston proved difficult given the social difference between a grown medieval knight ghost and a three-year-old with lofty scarlet-painted aspirations. Pepper and Gika lived in the city and their names can be attributed to Paprika, the child of Blue's Clues characters Mr. Salt and Mrs. Pepper. Real-life friends were harder to come by, and my only real friend, Stephanie, moved three towns over from me at this age. I spent many weekends with her, but the weekdays were only tolerable in my head where most of my friends lived.

1. Prime. Oxford Dictionaries. Oxford University Press, n.d. Web. 30 January 2015. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/prime>.
2. Mayoclinic.org,. 'Sleep Terrors (Night Terrors) Definition - Diseases And Conditions - Mayo Clinic'. N.p., 2015. Web. 31 Jan. 2015.

5

When I was five, my brother was born. Excited, I hoped this addition to the family would lessen my loneliness. To commemorate his birth, my parents gave me a baby boy doll that I named Goober. Goober was anatomically correct, complete with a plastic penis underneath his Velcro diaper. One time I lent Goober to a friend, which my parents thought was inappropriate because of said penis. I, on the other hand, grew up to work in a sexual health field using plastic penises as a learning tool. The excitement created by my doll was more interesting than the real baby in the house, and I anxiously waited for the day that I could actually talk to my newborn friend.

7

Approximately seven percent of adults have Generalized Anxiety Disorder. Oftentimes GAD strikes during childhood or adolescence, and it affects more women than men. Those who suffer from GAD cannot relax, concentrate, or stop worrying. Every moment of the day can feel like the seconds before a starting gun signals a race. They don't handle uncertainty well and struggle to enjoy quiet time. They are prone to avoiding situations that make them anxious, and putting things off when overwhelmed. They can also suffer from insomnia, muscle aches, or frequent urination.[3]

Those who suffer from GAD cannot relax, concentrate, or stop worrying.

11

My parents had attended Brigham Young University, and at age eleven I decided I was going there too. We had visited campus, and I thought the only way I could get accepted was through my extracurricular activities. I played piano and cello. I took tap dance classes and played lacrosse. I had fewer than seven years to prove myself, so I decided I needed to play a sport, play an instrument, know a type of dance, and be well versed in the arts. I knew this future contained the happiness I craved. I was obsessed.

13

At 13 I focused my extracurricular attention on theatre. I began singing and dancing in plays every other month. My devotion to theater, paired with my perfectionism, led to an extreme discomfort in a field that judges based on looks. I was not alone in this feeling. Other advanced adolescent thespians and myself had been cast in the beloved though ridiculous musical, *Cats*. All that mattered about this show was that the cat costumes were full-body unitards. Being naked on stage would have been more forgiving of my figure. I was the largest "cat"

3. Nimh.nih.gov,. 'NIMH · Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)'. N.p., 2015. Web. 31 Jan. 2015.

in the play, and yet even the thin lead dancers stopped eating to prepare for the foreboding costumes. This was a time in my life when I was already struggling with self-image, and being so immersed in the theater world's beauty standards led to a destructive need to control my weight. When I would go to the mall with my friends, none of the stores they shopped in carried my size. I could not be dressed in the preppy logo shirts that were intentionally sized smaller than normal. I watched my thin friends with their braces and spotty faces try on hundreds of outfits. I had a great complexion and straight teeth, yet I was the "ugly friend," at least in my mind. During these mall expeditions we would treat ourselves at the food court. Eating treats was not going to help me find clothes that would fit, so I would make sure to grab a straw, which I would later use to retch my frustrations into the cold, non-judgmental toilet bowl. I was soothed by the false sense of control such rituals gave me.

Eating treats was not going to help me find clothes that would fit.

17

By age 17 I had an amazing group of friends. I had places to be and a car to take me there. Mix CDs blasted out of my Volvo window as I drove my friends from Dunkin Donuts to the pool.

19

When I was 19, I was halfway through my freshman year at BYU. I had reached my happy future, but none of my fantastic friends had followed me to college. I figured that I would make new friends, but my only close friend was my long distance boyfriend. Instead of the happy social and academic life I had in high school, I could barely get out of bed to go to class. The cinderblock walls and monotony of dorm life contributed to the sense that I was a hamster in a shoebox. I spent most weekends alone in my room, since all my attempts to find friends were in vain. The few friendships I almost had fizzled out when one became a heroin addict. Messaging my high school friends was my only social outlet.

23

Each of my parents contributed 23 chromosomes at my conception. I inherited my green eyes and curly hair from my mother, along with some less attractive features. At age 23 I was diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder and Generalized Anxiety Disorder. Although the label is new, the illness has always been present. It is not behind me, but with the help of some selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors, friends, and counseling, I have reached the prime of my life. A time

[The illness] is not behind me, but with help...I have reached the prime of my life

where I can do anything I want. I still have days were being in a crowded grocery store causes apocalyptic panic and I have to collect myself in an empty Goya isle. There are many mornings when the tasks I need to complete form ropes around my body and I am left paralyzed on my mattress. The internal monologue of fear and worry still interrupts my daydreams. That voice is always there, but I've learned to recognize when the worry does not make sense, and I know how to lower the volume. I turn up Prince, enjoy the sunshine and breathe.

Contributors

Artists:

Vanessa Palmer is a BFA student in the Illustration department at BYU. She's from Canada and will be going into concept and animation design. She finds art is a universal language; an outlet for visually sharing stories with others.

"Tree of Souls," the cover work, is a visual story concept regarding the passing on of a loved one: the passage of moving on in your life while still holding on to them within your heart. The "Woman with Birds" is pen on moleskine, showing how certain emotions can become trapped or released though our lives. "Real" is an acrylic and India ink painting showing an individual who finds fascination in the everyday and ordinary, noticing beauty in the world while others ignore it for earbuds and iphones.

Lexi Johnson is a Studio Art major who spends her time thinking about ghosts, twins and magic realism. She is currently beginning a career at the SLC Public Library and at the Salt Lake City Film Society, but while working at these two establishments, she retains that she is, by title, an artist.

Poets:

Erin Kaseda is currently a BYU sophomore majoring in neuroscience with a double minor in psychology and theatre. She loves discovering new connections between these three areas and using her passion for both science and art to engage deeply with the world.

Kristin Perkins (an editor as well as a contributing poet) is a Theatre Arts student with a minor in Women's Studies. She's had poems published in Peculiar and Degenerates: Voices of Courage. She is currently writing her thesis on "Matilda the Musical" which involves listening to a lot of show tunes.

Essay Writers:

Emaline R. Maxfield graduated from Brigham Young University with bachelor degrees in Art History & Curatorial Studies and German. She loves all things to do with visual culture, particularly film photography and works from the Dutch Golden Age. Special thanks to professors Martha Peacock and James Swensen for their constant guidance and support for this paper

Arica Roberts graduated from BYU with a BA in History and minors in Philosophy and Women's Studies. She is now pursuing her Master's degree in History from the University of Utah and hopes to continue her education in History afterwards. She loves the way history encompasses many disciplines and hopes to continue to challenge mainstream narratives while offering context and deeper analysis in the study of gender and sexuality.

Romy Franks is a senior at BYU with a double major in European Studies and German. She is a self-proclaimed "multi-disciplinarian" (a nerdy word for someone who enjoys studying, analyzing and comparing anything and everything). Currently, she is serving an LDS mission in Tokyo, Japan. After completing her undergraduate studies in the spring of 2017, Franks plans on pursuing a graduate degree.

Roxanne Akina Harmon graduated from BYU with a degree in Health Promotion. She now resides in New Hampshire where she is a sexual health educator. When not working to reduce teen pregnancy and STI transmission, she finds peace of mind hiking the lush New England forests.

Elizabeth Brady recently graduated from BYU's MFA program in creative nonfiction, emphasizing in the personal essay. Her writing has appeared or is forthcoming in Santa Clara Review, Brevity, and BYU Studies Quarterly. She currently teaches creative writing, composition, and yoga at BYU.

Editors:

Kristen Cardon earned a BA and MA in English from BYU and is now studying for her PhD at UCLA. Her research interests include twentieth-century British literature, queer theory, environmental humanism, and disability studies. She is an enthusiastic supporter of BYU Women's Studies and proud to be a Mormon feminist.

Shannon Soper received an MA in English with an emphasis in Rhetoric & Composition from BYU in December 2015. She served as the co-managing editor for the second edition of the Women's Studies Journal, and managed the transition to a new editing team for the third edition. She couldn't be more proud of how well the journal is doing. A true love of language will follow Shannon throughout her life, as each night, she still falls asleep while reading a book.

Estée Crenshaw received her Creative Writing MFA from Brigham Young University. Next up she's headed to Japan to teach English, eat ramen, and continue learning Japanese.

Michaela Black is studying Graphic Design at BYU with a minor in Computer Science. She enjoys understanding both the artistic and nerdy sides of life, and loves creating in any medium.

Kennerly Roper's service to the AWE journal was interrupted by an unexpected alien abduction. We hope that she is continuing her editing skills on Planet X.

Editorial Assistants:

Rachel Finlayson hails from the East Coast and is a Sophomore studying Sociology at BYU. Her interests lie in public radio, Chinese language and culture, and the water. She loves feminist dialogue and observing its impact on culture in the United States and abroad.

Hannah Murdock is a sophomore at BYU studying English with an editing minor. She enjoys reading and writing poetry in her spare time and is a Jane Austen enthusiast. After graduation she plans on pursuing a career in publishing.

Kristen Blair is studying Philosophy and English at BYU. She loves learning about the human experience and using the language of literature to explore the infinite mysteries of the universe.