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ECOLOGIES OF (DOMESTIC) TRAUMA, ECOLOGIES OF (DOMESTIC) VIOLENCE:
A RHETORICAL PROCESSION TOWARD MOURNING

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Rhetorics, Communication, and Information Design

by
Charlotte Lucke
May 2022

Accepted by:
Dr. Cynthia Haynes, Committee Chair
Dr. Kyle Jensen
Dr. Walt Hunter
Dr. Heidi Zinzow

Abstract

In this dissertation, I posit that intimate partner violence is entrenched in an often-overlooked historical and rhetorical legacy of patriarchal cultural, structural, and direct violences. Many scholars in and outside of rhetorical studies have analyzed and critiqued public representations of trauma and violence, including intimate partner violence. Joining this conversation, I focus on the limitations in the ways influential rhetorical domains both represent and respond to people who abuse their intimate partners. Often, mass media represents people who abuse their intimate partners as individuals void of contexts. Similarly, the criminal justice system holds individuals responsible through law enforcement and incarceration. My dissertation complicates this individualist perspective by focusing on the ecologies that move people to intimate partner violence. More so, I use a rhetorical and interdisciplinary approach to posit that patriarchy and trauma move people to intimate partner violence. To prevent intimate partner violence, individuals must realize and bear witness to their trauma histories and patriarchal enculturation.

While law enforcement, criminal justice, and intervention groups are the primary means to prevent intimate partner violence, I elaborate the efficacy and promises of restorative justice. While I consider restorative justice in context of tertiary prevention, I also consider restorative justice in context of primary and secondary prevention, which seeks to prevent intimate partner violence from happening in the first place. To prevent intimate partner violence, research, response, and influential rhetorical domains must bear witness to and mourn histories of patriarchal and domestic violences, including the cultures and institutions that maintains the conditions for intimate partner violence. Examining not only what moves people to abuse their partners but also how we represent and respond to violence is a scholarly obligation if we wish to move toward preventing the startling rates of intimate partner violence.

To my mother, father, everyone
hurt by domestic violence in all its forms,
and those who have the courage to
speak against these violences

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Table of Contents

| | Page |
|--|------|
| Title Page | 1 |
| Abstract | 2 |
| Dedication | 3 |
| Acknowledgments | 4 |
| Chapters | |
| I. Introduction: A Rhetoric of Domestic Violence Motives | 7 |
| II. Rhetorical Failures, Rhetorical Opportunities: Intimate Partner Violence and Mass Media | 20 |
| III. Traumatic and Rhetorical Origins of Panhistorical Patriarchal and Domestic Violence | 52 |
| IV. Intimate Partner Violence, Disciplinary Divides, and Rhetorical Listening An Ecological Approach | 83 |
| V. Intimate Partner Violence in Law and Order: The Violence Against Women Acts, STOP Grants, and Narrative Fetishization..... | 113 |
| VI. Mourning and Restoring Justice: Patriarchal and Intimate Partner Violence | 155 |
| References..... | 181 |

Chapter One

Introduction: A Rhetoric of Domestic Violence Motives

Although the Center for Disease Control recommends the term “intimate partner violence” to describe physical, sexual, and psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner, the word excises it from its many previous public inscriptions: battered women, wife abuse, domestic violence, husband cruelty. Each of these terms relate to public speak outs about intimate partner violence, including the Battered Women’s Movement in the 1970s, which publicly protested, advocated, and galvanized support for women who were abused by their intimate partners. Although the Battered Women’s Movement emerged in the 1970s, it was in 1962 that Dr. Henry Kempe et al. published “The Battered Child-Syndrome,” which coined the term based on the “particularly common problem” of abused children in hospitals. While intimate partner violence describes violence by intimate partners, in my understanding, it is one many domestic violence by those who belong to a history of violence in households, including child abuse, homicide, familicide, murder-suicide. While I focus on people who abuse their intimate partners, these categories are not always neat; people who abuse their partners often abuse children; people who abuse their partners were often abused children; all belong to ecologies of domestic violence.

In context of violence, domestic is a telling word. From the Latin root *domus*, domestic means “having the character or position of a house,” “of or belonging to the home, house, or household,” “household, home, ‘family.’” While it means “of or belonging to the home, house, or household,” it also means “of or relating to one’s own country or nation.” Domestic violence, then, refers to violence of those who belong to the homeland and its homes. In the rhetorical culture that is the roots of this nation, the structure of the homeland and the structure of its homes mirrored one another. When European colonists landed in what is now the United States, they introduced patriarchal rhetorics to

American soil. These cultural rhetorics mandated men as the heads of governing institutions and households, women as submissive and respectful, to remain quiet and dutifully receive instruction. Rhetorical artifacts across time and space attest to sanctioned wife and child abuse and subordination. Rhetorician Cathy A. Colton explains such texts as implicative rhetorics that, like Genesis' Eden story, are pervasive in Western culture (122-123). Throughout my dissertation, their pervasiveness is apparent in the ways abusive people justify and explain their violence through patriarchal tropes that mirror those of the past. As these rhetorics haunt this nation, they maintain the conditions for domestic and intimate partner violence.

Colonialism did more than introduce a gender hierarchy to American soil. Rather, it introduced a racial, ethnic, and class hierarchy of what Karen Artichoker and Marlin Mosseau of the Sacred Circle Women's Resource Center call unnatural power and control. In *Violence against Native Women Is Not Traditional*, Karen Artichoker and Marlin Mosseau of the Sacred Circle claim that "Violence against Native women is a result of colonization" (17). Prior to colonialism they had relational modes of being which rarely manifested intimate partner violence. Artichoker and Mosseau explain that Native people learned domestic violence in boarding schools and reservations, and then passed these violences to their children, creating generational legacies of domestic violence in the forms of wife and child abuse. While politicians and preachers, domestic manuals and teachers idealized the homeland and its homes, domestic violences in the forms of reservations, boarding schools, plantation labor camps, and prisons shadowed the ideal. Part of the tragedy of domestic violence is in its paradox in which the domestic ideal contributes to the misrecognition of domestic violences. Part of the purpose of this dissertation is to surface the relationship between violences of the homeland and violences of the home, which in many ways have been rendered invisible.

In its most extreme form, intimate partner violence is a process in which a person enacts obsessive and ritual control over their intimate partners. It takes the forms of physical and emotional

abuse and instills fear and terror. It is cumulative and cyclical; people who coercively control their intimate partners often ebb and flow in their abuse, shifting from devoted lover to abusive tormentor. Since the 50s and 60s, sociologists and psychiatrists have described this form of intimate abuse. Researchers including Judith Herman, Evan Stark, Michael P. Johnson, Lenore Walker, and Donald Dutton have elaborated this abuse. From a rhetorical perspective, this violence is its own form of rhetorical expression. In *Permanence and Change*, Burke writes, “all life has been likened to the writing of a poem, though some people write their poems on paper, and others carve theirs out of jugular veins” (102). People compose poetry with pens and movements. The acts of cutting and the act of writing, along with the written poem and the written cuts, are rhetorical expressions.

While there are many paths to walk in intimate partner violence research, I analyze the ways mass media, investigative journalism, academic research, activists, and the state represent that which moves people to intimate partner violence. More specifically, I analyze the ways various rhetorical domains describe the motives of people who are violent toward their intimate partners. My understanding of motive derives from its etymological roots in the fourteenth-century French word, *motif*, which, especially in medical use, means “that which causes movement.” The study of motive is foundational to some branches of modern and contemporary rhetorical theory. In *A Grammar of Motives* (1945), Kenneth Burke developed a heuristic that offers insight into the values of a specific discourse by analyzing a discourse according to the terms: agent, act, agency, purpose, and scene. In the drama of the courtroom and the media, for example, individual abusers take center stage in what James Gilligan calls a “morality play” of good and evil that overlooks the tragedy that is violence. In comparison, Artichoker and Mosseau identify the patriarchal colonial scene that moves people to intimate partner violence. Understanding representation is important because it often informs response.

My dissertation looks at and beyond surface re-presentations and like Artichoker and Mosseau, bears witness to the historical colonial tragedy that is domestic violence. My focus on abusive people is infused with the belief that to prevent intimate partner violence, research and representation needs to better understand violent people. In their research about the ways mass media tend to describe people who are violent toward their intimate partners, rhetoricians Suzanne Marie Enck-Wanzers and Propen and Schuster find that mass media tend to stereotype abusive people in misleading ways. Enck-Wanzers finds that media, legal, and popular cultures trope intimate partner violence through the metaphors of disease, war, and crime, framing perpetrators as “a monstrous enemy — who can be slain,” and emphasizing “individual liability and responsibility,” all of which remove men from “structures of masculine nationalism,” and ignore “the systemic nature of gendered violence” (45). Using Sara Ahmed’s (2010) theory of “stranger danger,” Propen and Schuster argue that the mass media Others sex offenders, who are subordinated and marginalized in society (97). These tropes reify the criminalization of intimate partner violence, paternally postures to protect victims, and overlook and reify various forms of patriarchal and domestic violences. While Wanzers, Propen, and Schuster make these arguments, they do not elaborate this rhetorical culture or those who embody them.

Along with examining the ways various discourses construct intimate partner violence and people who abuse their partners, this dissertation seeks to understand what moves people to intimate partner violence. With the publication of *A Rhetoric of Motives* in 1950, Burke shifts from analyzing motives to theorizing motives, an inquiry dating to his 1935 publication of *Permanence and Change*. In *A Rhetoric of Motives*, he focuses on the relationship between symbolic orders, and more specifically the national landscape—and its rhetorics—that mold and shape human identity and “orientations” toward others and the world. The purpose, then, is to understand the way different discourses frame *that* which causes intimate partner violence as well as to position the relationship between patriarchy and trauma as central and often overlooked contributor to intimate partner violence. Sociologist Avery F. Gordon

(2008) uses the figures of ghosts to describe what she calls “abusive systems of power” which “make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life especially when they are supposedly over and done with (slavery, for instance)” (xvi). Part of the work of this dissertation is to conjure these ghosts and those they haunt.

Ecological Approaches to Intimate Partner Violence: Rhetorics and Cultures, Institutions and Homes

To guide my study of that which moves people to intimate partner violence, I parse together insights from social-ecological approaches to domestic violence, nested theories of violence, and theories of rhetorical ecologies. Social-ecological approaches to intimate partner violence often use the model to describe traits and contexts that make one likely to abuse their intimate partners. In my adaptation of the model, I use the ecological model as a nested model of violence by bridging the work of social-psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner and peace scholar John Galtung. As an organizing framework throughout this dissertation, I describe my adaptation of ecological models and then move into a chapter overview.

Although the ecological model has been adapted in many ways, Urie Bronfenrenner (1977) developed the model to elaborate the ways a “macrosystem” reaches into what he calls the exosystems and microsystems. The first way I adapt the ecological model is by replacing and adapting its technical terms for the purposes of clarity. The nested environments of macrosystem, exosystem, microsystem roughly describe cultures, institutions, and immediate environments. In my conceptualization of the ecological, rhetoric and culture interchangeably replace the term macrosystem, and the dominant rhetorical culture of patriarchy is situated within influential institution at the outermost level. These influential institutions have historically been the church, government, and press. Through these institutions, arbiters of culture write laws, circulate texts, teach morals, and enact norms. For John Galtung, these cultural domains enact cultural violence through symbols, texts, habits, and customs that perpetuate and naturalize structural and direct violences toward people. These rhetorical cultures reach

into local environments such as churches, schools, and homes, and as individuals encounter these cultural rhetorics, they internalize, identify with, and perform them as identity.

While media and politics often situate their focus on individuals void of ecological environments, feminist and rhetorical research has focused mainly on the patriarchal cultural rhetorics that sanction intimate partner violence in the form of male power and control over women. In the 1970s, feminist research argued that patriarchy is *that* which moves people to intimate partner violence and rhetorical theory followed suit. In this framework, patriarchy is an ideology—or cultural belief—that grants men power and control over women in both society and households. Further, patriarchy sanctions the discipline of obedient or defiant women, especially in the household. In “Dominance and Entitlement: The Rhetoric Men Use to Discuss Their Violence Towards Women” (1995), Peter J. Adams, Alison Towns, and Nicola Gavey rhetorically analyze perpetrator interviews, determining abusive people minimize, justify, and rationalize their acts using patriarchal tropes that assert masculine dominance and blame the people they abuse. One man, for example, states he is

Um, the breadwinner, y’know the provider, that’s my authority. Like okay we’re not physically married, as in we’ve signed a piece of paper, but we’re living as we are physically married. And y’know, I’m the [laughing] breadearner ... um, I’m the protector of this household. Um, when it comes down to it so what I say goes.” (389).

In presenting transcripts such as this one, Adams et al. elaborate the ways these interviewees enact patriarchal entitlement and express their sense of inherent positions of power. While these interviews certainly express patriarchal tropes, there is much more to abusive people than their assumptions of power and control over their partners. Further, intimate partner violence in queer relationships and enacted by women complicates the simple attribution of patriarchal manhood to intimate partner violence.

While my dissertation maintains feminist historical analyses of intimate partner violence, it expands the concept of patriarchy in many ways. One way I do this is by considering patriarchy in context of its colonial rhetorical culture that includes not only intimate partner violence but also child abuse. Further, I consider patriarchy as a cultural, racial, ethnic hierarchy that justifies structural violences in the forms of labor exploitation and oppression. In this hierarchical model, people use direct violence to maintain power and control over others. Megan Eatman writes that like biological ecosystems, rhetorical ecologies “allow some groups to flourish, others to die, and many struggle in a liminal space” (9). In *Gender Trouble* Judith Butler argues that gender norms, including “proper and improper masculinity and femininity ... many of which are underwritten by racial codes of purity” establish “what will and will not be intelligibly human” (30). Ulester Douglas, Sulaiman Nurridon, and Phyllis Alesia Perry see “patriarchy and colonialism as root causes of male violence against women” (126). As I discuss throughout this dissertation, patriarchy is also an emotional order that suppresses the traumas that it causes, perpetuating cycles of violence and trauma.

Throughout my dissertation, I consider patriarchy’s ecological reach into the lives of abusive people. In doing so, I consider people who abuse their intimate partners beyond their status as “others” and instead as people with what sociologists Avery F. Gordon and Janice Radway call “complex personhood.” They write that complex personhood “means that people suffer graciously and selfishly too, get stuck in the symptoms of their troubles ... Complex personhood means that even those called “Other” are never never that ... Complex personhood means that even those who haunt our dominant institutions and their systems of value are haunted too by things they sometimes have names for and sometimes do not” (5). Attending to the complex personhood of people who are violent toward their intimate partners allows for opportunities to better understand and prevent intimate partner violence.

Rhetorical approaches to ecology can also guide research about the ways hegemonic institutions represent and construct intimate partner and domestic violence. Rhetoricians working at the

intersection of rhetoric and ecology consider the ways symbols, gestures, rituals, discourses, language, tropes—emerge from their surroundings, their environments, the bodies they inhabit. According to rhetorician Jenny Edbauer, texts are composed across dimensions including the “physical, social, psychological, spatial, and temporal dimensions” (12-13). To think ecologically is to think about the ways that relationships between humans and texts, environments and communities, relationships and symbols influence rhetorical expressions, including the verbal and the nonverbal. Patriarchy also affects the way we talk about intimate partner violence. Often, influential domestic abuse discourses characterize abusers as evil beings who must be locked away.

Rhetorical ecological scholarship also offers the opportunity to track recurring rhetorical expressions, known as tropes or what Richard Lanham (1994) calls “the turning of a word.” Rhetoricians think about ecologies as interconnections of social norms and people, texts and interactions that influence rhetorical expressions; they are affective viral, producing recurring patterns and ideas, such as the patriarchal tropes that persist across my dissertation. Bridging the social-psychological with the rhetorical ecological affords the opportunities to consider the ways patriarchal ecologies move institutions and people to rhetorical expressions, including language, and symbols, gestures and motions. As I consider the hypervisible tropes and recurring figures, I also consider that which persists beneath the surface. While my dissertation examines the ways nationalist texts represent and respond to intimate partner violence, the heart of my dissertation turns not to nationalist or media texts but to the texts where abusers’ voices and experiences break through.

Chapter Overview

The stories we tell about intimate partner violence shape institutional response to domestic violence, and often, stories hold individual abusers accountable or narrowly define patriarchy and its role in abuse. Turning to research about and the narratives of abusive people, however, can help to better understand that which moves people to violence. While focusing on abusive people may seem

counter to the goals of feminist inquiry, the purpose of listening and understanding is to shift from tertiary to secondary and primary response; or, in other words, to prevent people from being abusive or abused. In trauma theorist Cathy Caruth's interview with researchers and facilitators of the *Nia Project*, an Atlanta-based center for research and intervention for Black women who have experienced domestic violence, clinician and trauma researcher Christina K. Wilson states, "it is really important to me as a therapist to listen to the language of the trauma and to maintain the space to try to understand what the monster is in both, both in the experience of the perpetrator and in the terror and emotions of the victim" (260). Research and advocacy centers like the Nia Project have facilitated a space in which women can realize and express their trauma, and in doing so have realized the ways both language and community facilitates healing for the women.

In her nine-year ethnographic study, rhetorician Carol L. Winkelman (2004) also analyzes the language of women residing in a battered women's shelter, where she worked and facilitated weekly story-telling sessions. In the women's language, she finds religious and shelter language hybridization that underlies three stages of healing. Winkelman's realization that women reappropriate words from their own ideological situation and create their own language to describe their experiences bears *The Nia Project*, where the facilitators also describe the significant role of language in healing. Centering these women's language aligns with the stance of rhetorician Jay Dolmage, who in citing Gloria Anzaldua, argues that words must arise from the human body, from flesh and bone, to have transformative power, echoing sentiments of feminists who similarly argue the need to write the body and emotional experiences. These discourses and stances tend to center women's experiences and oppressions but surfacing abuser stories can also have valuable transformative power. Often, perpetrators are constructed as monsters. But in focusing on monsters, we fail to see the ghosts. To conjure these ghosts, this dissertation analyzes and rewrites predominant stories about intimate partner violence and the people who enact it.

In **Chapter Two** of this dissertation, I analyze domestic violence motives in mass and popular media. Media plays an important role as it informs people about cases of domestic violence, yet it can be soundbites in an ever-persistent, complex landscape of intimate partner violence, influencing public perceptions and misunderstandings of violent people. Research on intimate partner violence in the media has focused on the way the media misconstrues, racializes, and sensationalizes domestic violence. Building on this research, I first analyze the contemporary media landscape and its representation of intimate partner violence. I then analyze selected media texts as avenues to better understand people who are violent toward their intimate partners.

From the chapters, traumas and misogyny emerge. The selected media give insight into domestic abusers their motives, including violent, romantic entanglements with intimate partners. Overwhelmingly, the selected texts demonstrate that abusive intimate partners grew up in abusive and patriarchal households. They not only internalize patriarchal roles and the symbolic language of violence, but also learn patriarchal masculine norms that teach male-female gender roles including masculine power and control and female subordination. However, research in this chapter shows that patriarchy is more than power and control but also is the use of power and control to overcome vulnerability, shame, and anxious attachments to intimate partners.

Chapter Three examines historical domestic abuse motives. Since the explosion of domestic violence research in the 1970s, feminist researchers have uncovered histories of patriarchal and domestic violence, attributing current manifestations of domestic violence to this history. Often, this research unearths this history without questioning *why* patriarchy and *why* domestic violence. Rather than seeing patriarchy as a tautological beginning and end, I question why patriarchy – and why domestic violence? Inquiries into the patriarchal motives often turn to transhistorical psychoanalytic theories, which is evident in the research of rhetoricians such as Victor Vitanza and Michelle Ballif.

Rather than assuming the transhistorical origins of patriarchal violence, I turn to theories of historical trauma which consider the human fight for survival in the face of predators and the elements.

Historical trauma theory suggests that the human encounter with predators, elements, and death, led to death trauma that motivates the ritual use of others to deflect and death. To build this argument, Worsham uses psychiatrist Robert Lifton's concept of false witnessing, which describes a rhetorical act through which "we reassert our own vitality and symbolic immortality by denying them their right to live and by identifying them with the death taint" (13). For Worsham, predation trauma led to the use of animals to reassert symbolic vitality and immortality through killing, ritually sacrificing, and marking animals with death and inferiority.

As Worsham links historical trauma to the scapegoat and sacrifice of animals, I connect historical trauma to the scapegoat and sacrifice of women and ethnic others. Through analysis and discussion of ancient depictions of women, I find that ancient texts depict female figures as vehicles of life and death, suggesting fearful reverence of women, not unlike ancient depictions of animals. Yet, like animal-gods turned into inferior animals, patriarchal societies and ideologies turned powerful goddesses into inferior, sexed females. Eventually, sexed females no longer had a place as gods or goddesses, and instead were placed into the role of wives and mothers—meant to be submissive, meek, and servants to their husbands. Women who did not abide to these roles were troped as adulterers and whores. As patriarchy inaugurated societal and domestic gender roles, it also inaugurated a hierarchy in which people had servants and viewed pagans and others as lewd sinners. This early manifestation of patriarchy reflects the patriarchy developed in this introduction: an institutional and ideological system marked by sexed gender roles and false witnessing, or a symbolic discourse that deflects weakness, vulnerability, fear, and anxiety by exerting strength and powers over others.

In **Chapter Four**, I analyze domestic violence motives in the disciplines of psychology, sociology, social-psychology, and the reach of feminism and anti-feminism into both. While theoretical debates

persist between feminist sociological and psychological approaches to domestic violence motives, my analysis demonstrates the ways these conflicting methods can complement one another. With permission granted by rhetorical theory to roam, this chapter synthesizes feminist, psychological, and sociological research with a focus on abusive people through three movements: in context of child abuse, patriarchal enculturation, and as adults situated within cultural and structural violences. Through this synthesis, a fuller portrait of patriarchy's ecological reach into the lives of abusive people. To conclude this chapter, I use trauma theory to offer a rereading of feminist analyses of interviews with people who abuse their intimate partners.

In the last two chapters of this dissertation, I turn from theories of motives to the ways the state and advocacy groups respond to domestic violence. **Chapter Five** analyzes the political moral-legal response through a close reading of the Violence Against Women Act from 1994-2021. I analyze the law both holistically and through close readings of the STOP grants and STOP grant reports, which are a grant distributed by the Violence Against Women Act from 1994-2021. In my close reading, I suggest that the state—the homeland—narratively fetishizes its national response to domestic abuse. While the state promises to provide “safe streets and homes” for women and to “combat” domestic abuse, in doing so, it assumes the role of hero, falsely witnessing its own history of state domestic violence. In doing so the national rhetorical discourse fetishizes its response to domestic abuse as it fails to consider the historical trajectory of patriarchal cultural, structural, and direct violences.

The last chapter, **Chapter Six**, bridges the concepts of mourning and restorative justice in context of domestic and intimate partner violence. After working through restorative justice and its applications to intimate partner violence, I turn to intervention groups that practice restorative justice. By closely reading poetry written by incarcerated people, I demonstrate the ways their texts bear witness to a concoction of patriarchal and traumatic upbringings, including experiences of abuse, witnessing abuse, and of experiencing poverty and other forms of marginalization. Like the victim

programs described in the beginning of this section, restorative justice circles provide abusers with the tools to bear witness to their trauma histories and internalizations of destructive gender roles.

Restorative justice is, in a way, starting with an abusive person in the center of an ecology, and then working their way out into realization and community.

In this chapter, I also consider restorative justice in a larger context than the domestic abuse intervention programs. While men in the groups bear witness to their individual experiences, they had to experience trauma and enact violence to gain access to this version of restorative justice. From here, I ask: what would primary preventative restorative justice practices look like? What would it mean to be bear witness to colonial patriarchal and domestic violence? Following a brief reading of the CDC's approach to intimate partner violence prevention, I turn to the Restorative Justice Oakland Youth Program, which is a restorative justice program with various applications, including community coalitions for policy change and the dismantling and reconstruction of public education. I also turn to "Violence against Women is Not Traditional Handbook," originally written by Sacred Circle National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women" which explicitly addresses the history of patriarchal colonialism and its effect on Native American modes of kinship and relation.

Stitching together these texts, weaving in and out and through them, reveals violence and trauma in the home and homeland, in a past that is ever present. This dissertation posits that patriarchal culture occludes the opportunity to bear witness to its violences and traumas. It is a rhetorical expression that falsely witness its own violences, and in doing so, compulsively repeats its violences. Through this dissertation, I engage in a process of bearing witness to histories of patriarchal and domestic violence, including violences of the homeland and its homes.

Chapter Two

Rhetorical Failures, Rhetorical Opportunities:

Intimate Partner Violence and (Mass) Media

Intimate partner violence is no public secret; rather, its reach into the public is quite loud. From mundane reporting to highly publicized scandals, media outlets such as mainstream news networks, social media, documentaries, and true crime podcasts circulate instances of and information about intimate partner violence. Although intimate partner violence is hypervisible in contemporary media, it was not widely covered until the late 1970s when the Battered Women's Movement galvanized public attention through awareness campaigns. Media scholar Kathleen Tierney (1982) describes this sudden media attention as "an asset to the movement" as authorities finally began to recognize and respond to the violence as a social problem (214). While the media attention was an asset for the funding of victim services, it created a deficit in its depictions of abusive and abused people.

Despite the benefits of the media publicity, mainstream media often construe violence according to cultural conventions and biases. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall writes that although broadcast media have autonomy, "ultimately they operate within the mode of reality of the state, and their program content is, in the last instance, governed by the dominant ideological perspective of the state" (277). Thus, one can expect mass media to filter intimate partner violence according to predominant relationship norms as well as gender, race, ethnic, and sexual biases and their intersections. Further, the mode of reality of the state is the heteronormative relationship which itself is a violence toward people who love in a way that does not fit patriarchal and nationalist narratives. Sociologists Catherine Donovan and Rebecca Barnes (2020), describe the consequences of dominant public narratives that construct intimate partner violence as a "problem of heterosexual, and we would say, cisgender men for HC women; a problem of predominantly of physical violence ... this public story acts as a barrier to

recognizing DVA, both for LGB and/or T+ people themselves and for help providers” (11). Donovan and Barnes both attend to the hegemonic public narrative, which not only constructs intimate abuse as a hetero and gender normative violence but also constructs intimate abuse as merely physical, rather than as a process that includes various forms of abuse, including emotional abuse.

Along with constructing IPV as a hetero and gender normative violence, mainstream media construct intimate abuse according to patriarchal racial tropes. In their analysis of newspapers that reported the 2002 Laci Peterson case, for example, sociologists and criminologists Michelle L. Meloy and Susan L. Miller find that newspapers idealized Peterson as a “blameless victim” who “epitomized traditional notions about what women should do with their lives” (38). In comparison, newspapers depicted Evelyn Hernandez according to her single motherhood and sexual deviancy. The differences demonstrate the values attached to the women’s social identities—one white, married, and cast as a “blameless” victim, the other, Hispanic, unwed, and relegated as an “illegitimate” victim (42). The framing of victims as illegitimate is itself a cultural violence. Legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw also exposes the mainstream media’s cultural violence through CBS’s 48 hours news program by comparing the portrayal of six white and abused women to the only nonwhite women. While the six white battered women were sentimentally humanized alongside their families and friends, the seventh and only nonwhite woman, Crenshaw writes, “never came into focus” and was “literally unrecognizable throughout the segment.” Further, the program exploited her suffering by airing a videotaped hearing as she was forced to testify and sobbed as state agents assaulted her with pictures of her beaten face, handcuffed boyfriend, bloodied scene (1261). In this footage, CBS humanizes the white women with their sentimental stories and dehumanize the only nonwhite woman with her exploited suffering. Further, the footage reifies the racist criminalized depictions of nonwhite as it contextualizes both the woman and her boyfriend in the criminal “justice” spheres, the woman in the courtroom, her boyfriend handcuffed by police. This 48-hour news program was aired amidst political galvanizing of the 1991

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which sought to “protect” victims and arrest abusive people—contributing and bolstering violent cultural, institutional, and direct cycles of violence.

As contemporary nationalist media and politicians’ posture to create Safe Homes (VAWA 1994), Reduce (VAWA 2000) and Combat (VAWA 2006) violence against women, the structures and cultures that contribute to intimate partner violence haunt the homeland and its homes, providing clemency to some abusive people, criminalizing others according to race and class, and leaving abused people vulnerable to their abusers. About the sentimental politics of sweatshop workers, cultural theorist Lauren Berlant (1992) writes that “the media of the political public regularly registers new scandals of the proliferating sweatshop networks ... because it produces *feeling* and with it something at least akin to *consciousness* that can lead to *action*” (106). As mainstream media sentimentalizes exploited people, it also reifies its role as the paternal state. The same could be said about the media scandals of intimate partner violence, which create the create awareness and a sense of redress. Rhetorician Lynn Worsham similarly writes that the focus on trauma in media has become “a ‘radical form of terror management’” (171). In what she calls a post-traumatic age—an age marked by “imperialism, racism, sexism, poverty, and crime”—narratives both sentimentalize victims and criminalize abusive people. In doing so, the state and mainstream media deflect from a problem that is historical, rhetorical, cultural, and deeply institutional. Meanwhile, the structures that reproduce violence intact. Gordon and Radway write that in “a culture seemingly ruled by technologies of hypervisibility, we are led to believe not only that everything can be seen” (16). Yet that which is not seen—that cultural, institutional, and direct violence buried deep in American soil—haunts American households and families.

As mainstream media filter intimate partner violence through patriarchal conventions, intimate abuse is often oversimplified, sensationalized, and inscribed into pithy narratives to be consumed by readers or viewers. Abusive people are metonymically reduced to their violence; they are their violence; their identities are “not born of suffering, mental, physical, or economic” (Berlant 106). As noted by

rhetoricians such as Enck-Wanzers and Proppen and Schuster, in mainstream media abusive people are othered, vilified, marked as enemies and criminals. It is easy to call abusive and violent people evil and criminal; the complex work comes in laying down arms and listening, seeking to understand, seeking to put language to that which is absent, and in doing so, to prevent future violence. The heart of this chapters begins the process of bearing witness to the lives of people who abuse their intimate partners by turning to media that in some ways subverts public narratives of intimate abuse. But first, I demonstrate the historical precedence of mainstream media's symbolic rendering of intimate partner abuse by turning to nineteenth-century newspapers.

In nineteenth-century newspapers, crime blotters report intimate partner violence among other crimes. These reports both demonstrate the historical precedence of reporting that packages violence into short narratives that focus on abusive husbands void of their social and cultural contexts. On page three of the "Multiple News Items" section of the July 11, 1823, *Raleigh Register*, for example, news writer Hills Bec reports:

An atrocious outrage was committed in the lower part of this county, on Friday night last. Westley Rhodes, who for some time past has indulged himself in habits of intemperance and abuse to his wife, on that evening gave loose to his passions, and beat her in a most cruel manner. She escaped from him, and fled to her father's house which was but a short distance from her own.

This short blurb reports an "atrocious outrage" in which a husband cruelly beat his wife. The article first uses the euphemism that he "gave loose to his passions" and then shifts to the overt statement that he beat his wife in a "most cruel manner." The report explains that this man is known to have habits of intemperance, and as such, it frames him as a bad man who cruelly beats his wife. The beating was bad enough that his wife fled from their home, which evokes the figures of women who flee from their homes and to the safety of shelters.

Another account of a husband's abuse of his wife is in the "Police Intelligence" section of the *New York Spectator* on August 29, 1825. Among its cases is "Matrimonial Difficulties," which stages dialogue between a man, magistrate, and an officer at the police station. The article takes a somewhat humorous tone as it recounts Allen as a "decent looking man" who approached the magistrate to pay bail for a girl only to be served a warrant for his arrest. The magistrate informs Allen that he is being served a warrant for "abusing your wife, and allowing your mistress to beat her." After describing the abuse, the article moves into dialogue between an officer, magistrate, and accused. There is not a moment to consider the violence of a woman beat by her husband and his mistress. The writer concludes with the statement that the abusive husband was released, "we presume to peddle his gridirons as long as he can get them, and abuse his wife whenever he can find her," which demonstrates the casualness of the abuse. The section concludes, "This was the eighth case, in two days, of complaints by wives against the cruelty of husbands." The contexts and conditions of this cruelty are absent, and the systemic cruelty is lost beneath the surface of the brief report.

In the "General Intelligence" section of the Dec. 24, 1825, *New Hampshire Statesman* reports a case of "Drunkenness" and domestic violence. It states,

We have learnt with pleasure that the Selectmen of this town have at length thought themselves compelled, by a sense of duty, to take some measures to suppress the vice of intemperance. It has been matter of astonishment that this thing has been so long neglected, when it was fully understood that several individuals, not only rendered themselves useless and worse than useless to society and their families, but were frequently annoying the neighbourhood by their abuse of their wives and children.

This 1825 account stages a confrontation between the town selectmen, or government men, and "intemperate men." More than the other news stories, this newspaper frames the men as outcasts who are useless to their families, society, and annoying the neighborhood by their abuse. This report centers

the narrative as “Selectmen” versus the men who were useless to their families, neighborhood, and society. The report focuses more on their uselessness and annoyance, and less on the violence toward the wives and children—the men aimed not respond to the abuse but to the “intemperance.” Thus, the offense against the neighborhood and society eclipses the abuse of women and children. In doing so, the report reveals a culture in which such abuse is normalized.

While the newspapers report instances in which husbands beat their wives, a particularly harrowing domestic homicide is evident in the July 5, 1823, issue of the *Illinois Gazette*. The segment from the “Multiple News Items” section informs its audience of “a scene from which humanity with indignation recoils.” The reporter sets the scene in which “the shrieks of a helpless female broke upon our hearing, supplicating relief. Aroused we hastened to the spot and beheld a once lovely form, now lying as it were, ‘a lifeless trunk without a head.’” Here is an account of spectacularly violent murder and dismemberment, listed merely as one of several “News items” in the daily *Gazette*. The violence is shocking and horrifying. Yet, like the others, it is merely listed as a news item and without context or meditation upon this horror.

Such news reporting is evident still today. On January 5, 2022, for example, an article from *People* reports about a man who plead guilty to killing his wife with antifreeze and opiates in 2015. Although her death was first ruled a suicide, an investigation indicated that the man’s allegations about his wife’s suicide were untrue. After he was arrested in 2017, he was free on bail “while his case worked its way through the court system.” Despite pleading guilty, the homicidal husband maintains his innocence. The article reports that the prosecutor states that the potential 10-year sentence is a “reasonable outcome” in a “complex case that involved circumstantial evidence.” Again, the reporting is mundane, focusing more on the offender than the atrocity of the violence. The punishment is described as “reasonable,” which fits the rationalized means of responding to crime through thoughtfully inscribed

laws that maintain the social order. One can find endless articles that report intimate partner violence and homicide according to these conventions.

The media has a prominent role shaping public understandings of reality, as revealed by four decades of research in cultivation theory. Introduced in 1967 by George Gerber and his research team, cultivation theory studied the mass media and its effects on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of the public. According to Gerber (1969), the mass media and its messages form “a common culture through which communities cultivate shared and public notions about facts, values, and contingencies of human existence” (Potter 1016). As mass media circulate intimate abuse reports and narratives, the media cultivates “facts” and “truths” about intimate abuse. These facts and truths are superficial as they reduce violence to single events void of the patriarchal conditions that contribute to these violences.

Rhetoric and communication research have identified the problematic ways media communicate truths and values about intimate partner violence, abusers, and abused people. The remainder of this chapter first reviews this research and then analyzes four media texts: *Power and Control: Domestic Violence in America*, investigative photojournalism *Living with the Enemy* by Donna Ferrato, *No Visible Bruises*, a 2019 *New York Times* bestseller by investigative journalist Rachel Louise Snyder, and “Til Death Do Us Part” a seven-part special report by *Post and Courier*. While research that analyzes intimate partner violence media is overwhelmingly polemical, investigative, theoretically informed, and researched media texts can offer insight into intimate partner violence. More so, these texts reach beyond convention by engaging the lives, experiences, and contexts of intimately abusive people through testimony and interviews. Synthesizing the texts’ theoretical frameworks and testimonies offer avenues to better understand that which moves people to intimately abuse their partners.

From Crime Reports to Celebrity and Viral Cultures, a Repetition with a Difference

While some news and social media transmit single or episodic narratives of intimate partner abuse, such as the reports that began this chapter, others take a more critical or thematic approach. Kelly E. Carlyle, Michael D. Slater, and Jennifer L. Chakroff (2008) find that newspapers tend to report single cases of intimate partner violence, not unlike the nineteenth-century crime reports. However, in “Changing Media Coverage of Violence Against Women,” Jenny Morgan and Margaret Simons (2018) argue that “there are some signs that mainstream media might be moving away from merely reporting the events of VAW [violence against women] and engaging in more critical and thematic reporting” (1166). Yet both thematic and individual cases tend to reify the same tropes about people who are violent toward their intimate partners. Beyond thinking through the way media reports individually and thematically, the question is of the patterns that persist across media. In *Representing Death in the News: Journalism, Media, and Mortality*, sociologist F. Hanusch writes that “the way in which death is portrayed in the media gives us clues as to how society views and experiences death” (14). The same can be said about how society views and experiences intimate partner violence.

In the fields of rhetoric and communication, researchers have critiqued the ways the mass media depicts abusive people, abused people, and intimate abuse more generally. Collectively, this research attends to the ways the mass media filters stories through patriarchal values, hold individuals accountable, and stereotype people according to racial, ethnic, and gender tropes. Among this body of research, rhetoricians attend to the ways media specifically frame intimately abusive people. In her rhetorical analysis of domestic violence in popular news accounts, legislative debates, and Hollywood movies, communications scholar Marie Suzanne Enck-Wanzers argues that popular media frames intimate abusers as individually liable, erasing systemic contributors to domestic violence, including masculine norms.

The ways the media others intimately abusive people are amplified in context of race, as the media has historically criminalized Black and Brown men in the most heinous of ways. Dixon et. al also

found that “African Americans are much more likely to be absent from network news, and when they do appear, they are more likely to be portrayed as perpetrators of a crime” (517). The publicized O.J. Simpson 1994-1995 trial for the murder of Nicole Simpson is an especially significant case as media both portrayed O.J. Simpson according to racial tropes and sought to deny the racial dynamics of the case, which was embedded in historic structural and direct police violence toward Black communities, including the direct violence nationally exposed in the 1991, when a viral video exposed four LAPD police officers brutally assaulting Rodney King and then acquitted the officers in 1994.

In context of historical police violence toward Black communities and the Los Angeles Police Department’s violence toward Black people and communities, the trial exceeded its status as an intimate partner homicide trial. Still, mainstream media depicted O.J. Simpson according to conventions of both Black men and intimately abusive people. Toni Morrison describes the spectacle of the “official story” which associated him with “sexual prowess, drugs, alcohol, infidelity, and violence— characteristics associated with black male misbehavior” and simultaneously excised him from his black family to enforce the “racelessness of the case” (xix-xx). Along with circulating the trope of O.J. Simpson as a Black man, the trial also reified tropes of Black men assaulting the “ideal victims” that were white women. Despite the historical precedence of racialized depictions and police brutality toward Black men and communities, mainstream viewers denied the racial complexities of the case. Legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw writes, “[m]ainstream commentators, perhaps in a preemptive response to possible concerns about whether Simpson could receive a fair trial, were quick to comment that Simpson was not thought of (by whites) as an African American, but simply as a ‘race-neutral’ celebrity” (100). In the very act of denying race, mainstream media reified race. As media depicted Black men as criminals, it legitimized State and vigilante and State justice—violence—toward these people.

As the media publicly fetishized the prosecution of O.J. Simpson, it failed to recognize the ways that the murder of Nicole Brown Simpson symbolized the historical and ongoing problem of systemic

intimate partner violence. As media buried the intimate partner violence beneath the spectacle of support for and opposition against Simpson, Tammy Bruce, president of the LA chapter of National Organization for Women, publicly claimed that “[t]his case was not about race. It was about domestic violence” (143). Crenshaw critiques this claim as it signifies a larger problem of white liberal feminists’ tendency to essentialize “women” and failure to recognize the case as indicative of both race *and* gender. In her reading of the Simpson trial, Crenshaw states that domestic violence came in unconvincingly and “essentially as an afterthought, the prosecution led with the history of abuse, organized around the metaphor of a long fuse the eventually exploded” (148). As mainstream media “[e]xcised from the official story ... Mr. Simpson’s life among and within his black family” (Morrison xix), it also excised his complex personhood that fits the profile of a person who abuses their intimate partner. Psychiatrist Donald Dutton, who served as an expert witness for Simpson’s prosecution, describes his obsessive and explosive jealousy and the way symbolism of loss fueled his violence, which was not limited to the homicide but was a process that fits the profile of a cyclical or coercive abuser, which includes cyclical physical and psychological abuse. Dutton also describes Simpson’s early “wound” as he was taunted by neighborhoods boys for wearing rickets and braces. Although Dutton does not describe racism, he describes the way Simpson “slowly reinvented himself, erasing his ‘black’ speech patterns” (89). While what O.J. Simpson did was horrifying, beneath the surface of “evil” and “criminal” or “hero” is a person affected by structural, cultural, and direct violences—a complex personhood. Tragically, the case lost focus of the many signs that could have contextualized the case within its larger context of intimate abuse.

Another significant viral case was in 2014, when mass and social media circulated video footage of NFL player Ray Rice punching his fiancée, Janay Palmer, in the jaw and knocking her to the floor. Interestingly, the media swarm did not condemn but rather forgave Ray Rice through redemption narratives. Communications scholar Chris B. Geyerman (2016) argues that the media irresponsibly

framed both Ray Rice's intimate abuse by attributing responsibility to the victims and deflecting from the role of masculinity, which he identifies as physical force and control, occupational achievement, family patriarchy, frontiersmanship, and heterosexuality. Rather than critiquing or identifying the way these patriarchal norms contribute to domestic violence, the media reinforces and naturalizes them by sympathizing with Rice and calling for his second chance. In this context, media did not vilify but celebrated Rice for his ability to overcome his violence. Both vilification and the redemption narrative deflect from the nationalist cultures and structures that contribute to this violence.

In 2015 and in response to the publicity of intimately abusive players, the National Football League partnered with NO MORE domestic violence project and aired a public service during the Super Bowl. In this advertisement, the NFL asserted its stance against domestic violence to nearly 115 million people. As the commercial begins, a camera pans across a family home and shows a fire mantle, a dish full of sinks, an unmade bed, a hole in a wall, and a staircase framed by a wall of family photographs. As the scene unfolds, a telephone rings, and a 911 operator answers the phone. The audience hears a woman's voice as she gives the operator her home address and says she would like to order a pizza. When the operator asks the woman to state her emergency, the woman is unable to name the emergency, assumably because the intimate abuser is in the same room. The telephone line then cuts off. As the commercial comes to an end, the commercial states, "When it's hard to talk it's up to us to listen." The commercial then ends with another statement: "Help End Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence: Pledge to Say NOMORE.org."

In the NO MORE public service announcement, the intimate abuser is absent; the victim is present only through her voice. The announcement enacts what media scholar Ann Kaplan calls empty empathy, which "is empathy elicited by images of suffering provided without any context or background knowledge" (93). Through the presence of the voice as the scene pans across a family home, the PSA universalizes intimate partner violence as a male-female problem of the nuclear family, which is another

tendency of mass mediated narratives of intimate partner violence. In *Queering Narratives of Domestic Violence and Abuse* (2020), sociologists Catherine Donovan and Rebecca Barnes argue that public intimate partner abuse narratives construct intimate partner violence as a heterosexual, male-female problem. These public narratives can prevent service providers from recognizing or accepting queer people as well as queer people from recognizing their own experiences as intimate partner violence (11).

Along with reifying intimate partner violence as a heterosexual and gender normative problem, the PSA depicts the abusive site as the home of a middle-class, White family. Although there are some dishes in the sink, an unmade bed, and a hole in the wall, the house signifies a middle-class homestead with its stylized fireplace and pastoral art that sits on its mantle, photographs of a white family that line the staircase, couch covers on an oversized sofa chair, an ornate rug, and brass candlestick holders. In doing so, the PSA evokes another tendency of mass mediated depictions of intimate partner violence. Sommers (2016) reports that “White women are overrepresented” in news coverage of missing persons cases. Further, the “Missing & Murdered Indigenous People” Wyoming Statewide Report found that news articles were more likely to frame Indigenous homicide victims through negative character framing, violent language, general incident location, and essentialism. In comparison, White victims were more likely to have positive character framing, individualized articles, and the exact location of the incident (19). The NO MORE ad addresses the fact that victims are not listened to and asserts that the public must listen to them. Yet how can publics listen if, as rhetoric and communication scholars have demonstrated, the reality circulated by media is partial, sensationalized, empty?

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, thematic articles about domestic violence surges went viral. One article, *The Washington Post’s* “For women and children, a double plague: Coronavirus and domestic violence,” characterizes intimate violence as a disease. In the article, Anthony Failora reports about the increased cases of domestic violence with the coronavirus pandemic and lock-

ins across the world. The article begins by introducing Zoila, a 24-year-old shut into her house with an unnamed “day laborer,” described as an “inescapable menace.” The article describes graphic violence: “he grabbed her by the throat, slammed her, and attempted to rape her.” The article’s language frames perpetrators through the discourse of stranger danger, othering and vilifying him and sensationalizing graphic, violent scenes. This is not to reduce the violence experienced by Zoila or dismiss the violence of her partner. Rather, this observation is meant to problematize the way the media exploits the violence Zoila experienced, and to problematize the representations of intimately abusive people to intervene and prevent these violences. The articles pathologizes the perpetrator, suggesting that domestic violence is a plague—like Covid-19—or a naturalistic force that spawns without human intervention. In doing so, the article displaces the patriarchal norms that contributes to intimate violence.

It is apparent the mainstream media often glosses over the complexities that contribute to intimate partner violence by superficially troping people who abuse their partners. The researchers cited evidently seek better media depictions—ones that report thematically, attend to the diverse and intersectional experiences of intimate partner violence, and that do not sensationalize domestic violence and other perpetrators. Rather than further contributing to criticism about the mediascape and its failures, the remainder of this chapter synthesizes four media texts according to tropes that emerged from the collective texts. In what follows, I synthesize the texts through three movements: first, in the texts’ descriptions of violence and use of data to illustrate exigencies, second, in the texts’ use of theoretical frameworks to explain the nature of intimate partner violence, and finally, through intimate abuser, victim, and family testimonies. In doing so, I begin the process of bearing witness to the lives of intimately abusive people.

The Women as Victims of Intimate Partner Violence

Each text bears witness to individual women who have borne the brunt of domestic violence and in many cases have lost their lives. While the violence inflicted onto these women is graphic and

including it here risks sensationalism, it is important to understand the reality of the physically brutal violence while keeping in mind that violence exceeds the physical. I want to position those who have been harmed before turning to those who have done the harming. Although it is not possible to tell each of their stories or even access them in their entirety, I include some here to honor their lives and experiences.

Michelle Mosure and her two children were killed by husband and father, Rocky Mosure. Michelle's family were unaware of the abuse that was so extreme that she feared for her life. She obtained a restraining order against Rocky, and in her affidavit, she wrote of his abuse: "[h]e beat me in front of my kids. One of the times was Tuesday night on the back porch in front of my son—Kyle. He made death threats in front of my children, sisters, and his parents. The death threats were that he would kill me, himself and my kids if I ever leave him" (Snyder 51). The affidavit is the only time we get her words. After he was charged with a misdemeanor and released from jail, she recanted her affidavit in fear for her life.

Sierra Landry, a sixteen-year-old high school student, was shot and killed by her ex-boyfriend in Lancaster, South Carolina. Her stepmother, Jessica Landry, informed reporters that her boyfriend, Crolley, physically abused her and controlled her by limiting her access to family and convincing her to drop out of school. She was unable to get an order of protection against her ex-boyfriend due to South Carolina state law which does not permit people in dating relationships to obtain the protection.

Kia Von Miller was shot to death by her husband, who also killed himself and their two children. The couple married shortly after meeting quickly and got pregnant. Kia's sister, Destiny Mabry, witnessed Kia's husband scorn Kia for purchasing a set of forks and knives from Walmart. After returning home with the silverware, he was upset and told Kia, "the next time you think about making a purchase like that you make sure you consult me first." When Destiny confronted her sister about her brother-in-

law's controlling behavior, Kia responded, "I'm just doing what I have to do as a wife, he's never hit me"
(Til Death Do Us Part)

Mariann Eileen O'Shields, who checked herself and her daughter into a domestic violence shelter in Spartanburg, was shot by her husband after walking her daughter to a bus stop only two hundred yards away from the women's shelter. She died in an operating room with three bullet wounds
(Til Death Do Us Part)

Susan Wilkes was stabbed and beat to death. Her husband and son are charged with her murder
(Til Death Do Us Part).

Jane describes her then boyfriend's attack: "He became irrationally jealous. His whole body went into beating me; he used all of it that night. I went to the floor about three times, and each time I got up, he would continue to beat me over and over" (Ferrato 21). To repair her nose and cheekbones, Jane had to have surgery. She described her boyfriend as treating her "like a goddess," stating that she wants "everyone to know what he did so the next women won't be fooled by his Mr. Nice Guy act"
(Ferrato 21).

Pam's husband slammed spiked shoes against her head, ground burning cigarettes into her skin, and stabbed her in the hand as her two daughters helplessly watched (Ferrato 21).

Karen, 20, who lives in a shelter in St. Paul, Minnesota, testifies to the violence: "My nose was swollen but not broken . . . He took a coffee table and broke that over me. He slammed me against the wall and that's how my head got cut open. My nose bled several times. But he mostly slammed me, hitting me in the face. He's six-foot-six, a huge man. He was holding his punches, because I'm sure he could have put me away" (Ferrato 16).

News media tend toward graphic and sensational bodily violence, and these texts follow suit. While the violence inflicted onto these women is graphic and including it here risks reifying sensationalism, it is important to understand the reality of the physically brutal violence. It is also

important to resist the universalism of abused people. Beyond simply reporting and exploiting the atrocities endured by these women, the texts expose the violence as systemic, explain it in its complexity, and incorporate research that seeks to explain that which moves people to these violences.

Intimate Partner Violence in Numbers

To illustrate the exigency of domestic violence, each text gravely states the number of women killed by domestic abusers in different ways. *Til Death Do Us Part*, with its examination of domestic homicide in South Carolina, states that “More than three times as many women have died here at the hands of current or former lovers than the number of Palmetto State soldiers killed in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined” (Part One). Similarly, *No Visible Bruises* compares the 2000 to 2006 amount of domestic violence homicides, 10,600, to the number of American soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan combined, 3,200. Snyder also claims that the domestic violence rates are underestimated because the data is gathered from local police departments who volunteer the information (6). Through this comparison, Snyder and the *Post and Courier* cultivate the severity of domestic violence by comparing the number of women killed by their partners to the number of soldiers killed in war. In doing so, they try to bring attention to the severity of the problem. While soldiers are fighting and dying abroad, a war is happening at home, where enemies kill intimate partners.

The texts also illustrate the problem of domestic violence by stating how often intimate partner violence occurs with the passing of seconds, minutes, days, and years. *Living with the Enemy* states that a man beats his intimate partner every fifteen seconds (16). *No Visible Bruises* states that twenty people are assaulted every minute by their partners (6). *Til Death do us Part* claims that women in South Carolina die at a rate of one every 12 days (Part One). *Til Death do us Part* claims that “nationwide, an average of three women are killed by a current or former lover everyday” (part one). *Living with the Enemy* asserts that “between two and four million will be severely assaulted by a partner this year” (16). *No Visible Bruises* focuses not on yearly assaults but yearly murders, stating that “twelve hundred

abused women are killed every year, which does not count children, or murder suicides or same sex relationships . . . or the other family members often killed, or innocent bystanders . . . jurisdictions who don't report homicides" (59). By revealing the staggering number of women hurt and murdered every second, minute, and year, the texts create urgency as they encourage readers to think about the amount of violence happening as time passes by.

The texts frame domestic homicide as one of the leading causes of deaths for women in the United States. In *No Visible Bruises*, Snyder states that "Jacquelyn Campbell's presentation reveals that domestic homicide is the "second leading cause of death for African American women, third leading cause of death for native women, seventh leading cause of death for Caucasian women" (59). *Living with the Enemy* states that "Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women in the United States, accounting for more injuries than the next three leading causes—auto accidents, rapes, and muggings—combined" (16). Comparing domestic violence as a cause of death to other causes of death and injury, such as illness, age, and car accidents, is another means through which the texts illustrate the harrowing problem of domestic violence. *No Visible Bruises* also cites the relationship between domestic violence and mass shootings, which are major events that receive mass media attention yet rarely are publicly connected to their relationship with domestic violence. The texts work to illustrate the problem, begging their readers to realize the reality of the problem.

As I describe in the third chapter of this dissertation, with the emergence of feminist critiques of intimate partner violence, researchers began to argue that women intimately abuse their partners as much as men. In response to this debate, the texts use data to dispel the idea of gender symmetric intimate partner violence. *Living with the Enemy* asserts "the fact is that men commit at least 95% of all assaults on partners, according to national crime survey data" (16). Similarly, *No Visible Bruises* writes that "men remain the overwhelming majority of perpetrators, and women the overwhelming majority of victims by nearly every measure" (16). It also states that men can be victims but 85% are women and

girls (6). By comparing the number of abusive women to abusive men, the texts work to support their claims that patriarchal gender roles contribute to intimate partner violence.

While it is important to understand these numbers, the numbers focus on the people harmed instead of the people harming. Yet, they also seek to explain the people who do harm and the harm that they do, including the ways intimate partner violence exceeds physical and singular acts of violence. Moving forward, I detail the way these texts explain intimate partner violence, situate it within society, and bear witness to the complex personhood of those who abuse their intimate partners.

Intimate Partner Violence Reconsidered: Patriarchy, Psychology, and Social-Psychology

Each of the texts cite frameworks that explicate the ways that intimate partner abuse exceeds the physical and instead involves a complex process through which abusive people enact power and control over their partners. *Power and Control* explains the Duluth Model, which an intervention group in Duluth, Minnesota developed in the 1980s as a conceptual model that explains the various ways people exert power and control over their partners. These tactics include coercion, threats, intimidation, isolation, emotional and economic abuse, and male privilege. Abusive people also minimize, deny, and blame their partners for their violence. Snyder, in *No Visible Bruises*, cites sociologist Evan Stark's concept of coercive control, which similarly describes intimate partner abuse as a process through which a person exerts control over their partners through physical and psychological abuse. Stark's conceptualization differs from the Duluth model however by using the metaphor as a partner being held "captivate" or "hostage." For Stark, coercive control describes the emotional and physical abuse means to psychological and physically imprison their partners as hostages.

In comparison, Donna Ferrato defines intimate partner violence through the men's group, Abusive Men Exploring New Directions (AMEND), which focuses on types of violence. AMEND defines partner violence as physical, verbal, emotional, and sexual and thus focuses on different types of violence. While physical violence entails bodily harm such as slapping and shaking, yelling, name-calling

and threats constitute verbal violence. Emotional violence includes berating and withholding feelings from a partner. Sexual violence includes rape and physical violence before, during, and after intercourse. Together, these texts demonstrate that intimate abuse is much more than physical violence. It often entails manipulative tactics that coerce partners into their control. Abusive people do not only physically but also emotionally abuse their partners. They control their finances, restrict their movement outside of their houses, and control their outfits, relationships, autonomy. While these descriptions of violence are appalling, the texts work beyond the violence as they seek to understand *why* men abuse women, partners abuse partners. In doing so, they seek to understand the motives fueling domestic violence. While they seek to understand these motives, they trope intimate abuse as a male-female heterosexual problem and often generalize “male” and “female” as universal categories instead of thinking through the way they intersect with race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender.

In *Living with the Enemy*, Ferrato asks, “Why do men beat women?” and unlike mainstream media, each text works to answer this question. In their quest to understand and educate their audiences about intimate partner violence, each of the texts contextualize intimate partner violence within patriarchal gender roles. In response to her own question, for example, Ferrato turns to feminist researcher Susan Schechter, who, in *Women and Male Violence*, claims that “men use battering as a way to maintain or establish control . . . Men also abuse when they simply wish to display power for its own sake . . . Battering is a way of organizing a relationship so that men continue to feel superior to women (Schechter qtd by Ferrato 17). For Ferrato, men feel entitled to certain rights and act accordingly, and the violence sprawled across the pages of her book reflect patriarchal entitlement. Like *Living with the Enemy*, *Power and Control* contextualizes intimate partner violence through patriarchy. A speaker in *Power and Control* states, “it is not individual men ... it’s the outgrowth of living in a patriarchal society still extremely male dominated to this day” (19:39). The speaker also argues that within patriarchal

norms, women cannot simply walk out of abusive relationships, as shown by the number of women killed by abusers when they try to leave.

Both *Living with the Enemy* and “Til Death do us Part” also contextualize patriarchy through religion. *Living with the Enemy*, for example, states that “Traditionally, Christianity authorized a husband’s chastisement of his wife: Saint Paul’s teaching that ‘the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man’ (1 Corinthians 11:3) is only one biblical text used as justification for this violence. In the fifteenth century, Friar Cherubino’s *Rules of Marriage* advised a man how to treat his wife: “Scold her sharply, bully and terrify her. And if this still doesn’t work, take up a stick and beat her soundly. Not in rage but out of charity and concern for her soul, so that the beating will resound your merit” (17). By turning to these texts, Ferrato links domestic violence with religious ideas about what it means to be a husband and a wife.

Similarly, “Til Death do us Part” attributes part of the intimate partner violence “problem” to “the culture of South Carolina, where men have long dominated the halls of power, setting an agenda that clings to tradition and conservative Christian tenets about the subservient role of women” (Part Three). While the report describes the way Christians contribute to beliefs about male dominance, it also describes the ways these beliefs affect women, as described by Jenna Henson Black, who works at the Safe Harbor shelter for abused women and children. After she describes her belief about male-female gender roles in the household, the report states, “[I]ike many in the Bible Belt, she considered divorce a sin and a source of shame, despite the beatings she endured” (Part Three). In doing so, “Til Death do us Part” describes the ways that patriarchy can bind women to their abusers. Together, each of the texts describe the role of patriarchal and masculine culture. In doing so, they contextualize abusive people within this culture rather than simply constructing them as evil men.

In its incorporation of psychological perspectives, *Power and Control* reveals contention between those who view intimate partner violence as a psychological problem and those who see it as a

patriarchal problem. The documentary incorporates the voices of psychologists Donald Dutton and Richard Gelles, who argue the need to move beyond Duluth model through a focus on psychological processes. Dutton vehemently critiques the Duluth Model as an “ideological and political finger wagging model akin to Chinese Thought Reform.” Richard Gelles, who runs a psychological program, claims that the Duluth Model does not work on emotions that underlie the attitudes which is “why it will always fail.” To oppose this view, the documentary includes a feminist and Duluth Model advocate who argues that the psychological approach puts smoke screens over the role of patriarchy (00:48). The feminist versus psychologist debate that is staged in this documentary reflects a widespread debate in academic intimate partner violence debate, which I describe in the third chapter of this dissertation. As these academic approaches oppose one another, they fail to realize the ways patriarchy is not only societal but also psychological, or social-psychological. More than providing men with power and control, patriarchy *insists* that men have power and control in a world in which they are often powerless.

Rather than simply opposing patriarchy and psychology to one another, *Til Death do us Part* connects the two theoretical frameworks. To connect these frameworks, these reports cite research by psychologist Richard E. Nisbett which revealed a Southern “culture of honor” that relates to Southern men’s aggression. The article states that “[m]en who perceive their women have insulted them—by not keeping up the house, by talking back or flirting with someone else—launch into attack mode to preserve their power.” For Nisbett, a woman’s faithfulness, or perceived faithfulness, is behind men hitting women. While the article attributes patriarchy to domestic abuse, it also links patriarchal beliefs with psychological functions. In doing so, the report suggests that “attack mode” is a psychological process, muddying the perspective that perpetrators make explicit choices to be abusive.

Like *Til Death Do us Part*, *No Visible Bruises* describes intimately abusive people through social-psychological theories. Snyder does this by incorporating interviews with and research about two men who developed batterer intervention programs: David Adams and Hamish Sinclair. David Adams the co-

founder and director of Emerge, “the first counseling program in the nation for men who abuse women,” diagnoses intimate abusive people as clinical narcissists who have internalized a selfish, narcissistic father. Adams and co-director Susan Cayouette emphasize that as narcissists, abusive men choose to act violently and then minimize, rationalize, and deny their acts of violence. These intimately abusive people are obsessed with self-image, and in extreme cases of narcissism, a man’s inability to appear weak or imperfect leads to familicide. Adam’s group encourages abusive men to take responsibility for their actions and focuses less on gender roles and more on psychology.

In her interview with Hamish Sinclair, the founder of the ManAlive curriculum, Snyder contextualizes people who abuse their partners within a patriarchal society. Sinclair studied and worked closely with “father of radical psychiatry” Claude Steiner, who spearheaded the 1970s radical psychiatry movement that critiqued mainstream psychiatry’s focus on individual pathologies void of social context. Sinclair argues that societal norms shape men to believe that they are to be respected and obeyed by their intimate partners. Further, societal norms socialize them into anger and away from intimate or vulnerable communication. In context of emotions, they are taught not to cry and that only anger is acceptable. In his 52-week program, Websdale educates abusive men about their abuse, asks them to attune to their bodies, their voices, and their responses during a violent incident. According to Snyder, both Sinclair and Adams believe that men choose to be violent toward their partners (156).

Finally, Snyder cites criminologist Neil Websdale, who argues that abusive intimate partners have an “inchoate sense of shame about their masculinity that they don’t understand” (166). In explaining Websdale’s focus on this masculine shame, Snyder turns to “vulnerability researcher” Brene Brown’s argument that cultural norms that equate masculinity with power, emotional control, status, and violence leaves men who feel otherwise with a deep sense of shamed. Culturally, men mask shame and emotional dependencies on their partners through performances of power, strength, security, and control. Controversially, Websdale claims that “he believes abusers are as stuck as victims” (85). While

the “victimization” experienced by abused people and abusive people must not be conflated, Websdale’s statement makes a claim that many are unwilling or refuse to accept. David Adams for example, rejects Websdale’s description of intimately abusive people and asserts his argument that intimately abusive people choose to be violent toward their partners.

As the texts describe theoretical frameworks about that which moves people to intimate partner violence, they situate these frameworks within direct encounters with intimately abusive people. Although *Living with the Enemy* constructs abusive people as “enemies” in its title, it, like the others, gives people who abuse their partners and their families the opportunity to speak—or to make an address. Turning to these testimonies offers the opportunity to consider the theory in context of these complex personhoods.

Theory, Testimony, and Intimate Partner Violence: A Closer Look

While the texts collectively illuminate various theoretical understandings of intimate partner perpetration, together, the texts archive intimate partner violence by including the testimonies of intimate abusers and their partners, families, and friends. Together, the texts provide a glimpse into perpetrators experiences and psyches or souls. From the testimonies, several themes emerge, which I explicate in section headers followed by compilations of the testimonies.

The men reveal patterns of violent parents, unstable homes, and ruptured relationships with parents and guardians:

I’ve been through foster homes shelters, living with my grandparents, basically when no one else would take us. We were wards, my brother, and sister and I, were wards of the state in California. My grandparents took us in, we moved here, and then got split up again. My brother, my sister got adopted, my brother went back to my mom. And I stayed there for another year, and then I got adopted and then I moved up north and then we, for four years, and then we moved down to Southern Minnesota for another four years, then I joined the Army... There’s a

lot of stuff that went on and there's abuse from my natural father, my biological father, boyfriends, we called them stepdads, but he abused her and us (Josh *Power and Control*).

My father died when I was 14 years old, of alcoholism. My mom lives in Duluth right now, she's addicted to crack cocaine. It's kind of a losing battle for her, but I still give her credit, you know, being my mom. My whole life's been around violence. Everybody I know is either in prison or dead. I've been in and out of foster homes my whole life, since I was seven years old. I can remember that I've probably been in about 30, or 40 group homes, foster homes. It's been a rough road, long road, no one's really taught me anything but myself. (Jesse *Power and Control*).

Bob had watched his father beat his mother ... Not long after Bob and Faith married, Bob hit Faith, just as he'd seen his father do" (Ferrato 104).

Bill cried as he admitted to the group that beating his wife reminded him of his father, a violent man who sometimes turned his attacks on Bill. He grew up in fear of his father's unpredictable rages. Once his father threw him across the living room into a wall, leaving Bill deaf in one ear. Now, in front of his therapy group, Bill wept because he recognized there was little difference the man he had become and the man he dreaded as a young boy (Ferrato 90).

At twelve years old [Rocky] was drinking excessively, engaging in petty thievery. He stole cassette tapes of bands he liked ... They sent him to Pine Hills, the home for troubled boys. They sent him to counseling. Everyone zeroed in on the divorce ... In a family counseling session once, the therapist asked Rocky if he was sad his mother had left, and he said, 'No. It was better'" In

Ferrato's interview with Rocky's father, Gordon, he states, "I have a master's in avoidance (Snyder 31).

Patrick O'Hanlon's father drank, yelled, and terrified his family with outbursts. He also pulled a knife on his family (Snyder 162).

Together, the testimonies reveal the men's exposure to childhood abuse, neglect, and adversity. Both Josh and Jesse moved from foster home to foster home. Jesse's father died when he was 14. Patrick's father terrorized his family. Both Bill and Bob witnessed their fathers abuse their mothers. Rocky's parents constantly fought, his mother abandoned him, and his father was detached and distant. These men did not simply inherit masculine behaviors such as violence and emotional withdrawal. They underwent physical abuse, neglect, and abandonment. Combined with masculine orientations and embodiments, they buried this adversity. As Bill and Josh tearfully connect their experiences of abuse with their own enactments of abuse, their emotions are palpable. It's hard not to wonder about those feelings and how long they were sitting inside of them.

Along with these abuse testimonies, the texts show cases in which adults do not tend to their children's emotional needs. In *No Visible Bruises*, Rocky's stepmother, Sarah, tells Snyder that the adults never discussed the divorce and their mother's abandonment with Rocky and his siblings. She states, "I think when Linda did leave, they didn't really all talk about it" (31). She then switches gears and takes responsibility: "When we all left, why didn't [we] all talk about it?" (32). When the family tried to send Rocky to a counselor, the counselor told Gordon that "Whatever [Rocky's] holding inside, he's not giving up" (31). Finally, in *Living with the Enemy*, Ferrato captures a photograph of an adult who shames a boy for crying. Together, these texts corroborate the argument that patriarchy teaches men to withhold emotions other than fear. More so, they reveal the way the male belief system collides with the suppression of young and growing children's own experiences of direct violence, abandonment, and

adversity. This is especially pertinent in the case of Rocky's counselor, who couldn't extract Rocky's inner world.

While some of the adult abusers express their childhood abuse through tears and sadness, others describe their abusive childhoods with cool, emotional detachment. More so, they characterize their father's abuse of their mothers as their mother's fault and are angry with their mothers instead of their fathers:

As a child Bob had watched his father beat his mother, but the experience left him angry at his mother, not his father. 'My mother did try to leave him three times. In those days a woman wasn't supposed to do that. Her own mother told her to go back to him. She went and talked to the priest. He told her to go back and make the best of it. I know it was hard for her to leave him, but I'm angry with her anyway for not telling him, "I'm going to leave you if the abuse doesn't stop" (Ferrato 104).

O'Hanlon states "I wouldn't characterize my father as abusive, but loving." O'Hanlon also said his "mother was no angel . . . If she had been less provocative, more respectful of his position as a husband . . ." (Snyder 162).

Although Bob witnessed his father beat his mother as a child, Bob expresses anger not toward his father but his mother. He does not blame his father for beating his mother; instead, he blames his mother for not telling him to stop. In Comparison, O'Hanlon explicitly describes his father as loving, and his mother as "no angel" and provocative. Patrick's description of his mother and father symbolizes a cultural pattern in which people blame abused people and normalize the abusive behavior, which is apparent by the way that Bob's grandmother and the priest told his mother to return to her abusive husband.

Blaming women for not adhering to their gender role is further evident in several of the testimonies:

She started what I called rebelling. You know when she got sick of me telling her what to do and trying to stop her from doing things. In my eyes you just don't disrespect your husband like that, you don't talk him down, you don't talk back to him or you're going to get cracked. You know I mean, that's what I've seen growing up" (Robert *Power and Control*).

The police responded to Mary's call for help and listened to her because dinner wasn't ready when she got home from work ... He denied everything, and she said that she was afraid to press charges against him. The police left without making an arrest (Ferrato 39).

A lot of them want to still argue, that, "oh well this is a man's world. You know women are supposed to live to this order, and that order, they cook, they clean, they do the dishes and all that" (Robert, *Power and Control*).

They talk about a man box, and it's kind of how men are, and I never seen myself like that until they mentioned it. It's basically I'm superior. I do what I want" (Jesse, *Power and Control*).

Robert attributes his abuse to his partner's disrespect and rebelliousness—which included not heeding his commands and talking back and down to him. Although he states in "his eyes you just don't respect your husband like that," his eyes are not his merely own; rather, they are filtered by patriarchal expectations of women. Robert and Mary's husband describe their and others abuse in context of men's expectation of women's domestic duties, including cooking, cleaning, doing the dishes, and making dinner. These testimonies further indicate the patriarchal role in intimate partner abuse. The abuse is justified not as abuse but punishment. Along with expectations about domestic duties and roles in the household, the men do not trust women and accuse their partners of cheating:

When Rita (right) returned home from her night shift in a Philadelphia hospital where she worked as a nurse, her husband, Julio, was waiting for her. It was early morning and her children still had to be dressed for school. Julio accused her of cheating on him instead of working (Ferrato 26).

Sarah tells me Rocky didn't have a lot of trust for women (Snyder 31).

Ferrato recalls Jenny's abuse and words: "Cal broke Jenny's nose—'He accused me of doing something with another man,' she says. He broke one of her fingers with a hockey stick—'I came home late.' He punched her mouth and knocked a tooth out—'He said I made his car malfunction' He cut her ear with a pair of scissors—'He wasn't sexually satisfied.' He dominated her completely, forbidding her to see any friends, telling her when she could eat, sleep, watch TV, go to the bathroom, and leave the house" (Ferrato 118).

Both Rita and Sarah describe the way men abuse their partners because they do not trust them. Jenny's description of Cal shows accusations of infidelity and more. Cal routinely physically abused Jenny and seems to always have a reason for his abuse, which include coming home late, cheating, breaking his car, and not satisfying his sexual needs. More so, Cal completely controlled Jenny's life, not unlike the way Rocky controlled Michelle's every move. The beliefs expressed by these men represent the most reprehensible and deplorable aspects of patriarchy. They are difficult to forgive. Yet, beneath the hypermasculine surface is deep fragility and unexpressed insecurities.

In *Living with the Enemy*, Ferrato shows a men's group activity in which women lead their blindfolded partners through trails. About the activity, the AMEND director claims that "'Everyone thinks these men are strong and powerful, but they're some of the weakest, most fragile human beings . . . They have tremendous fears. They don't trust. They try to control everything because they're terrified'"

(107). Although the men control and abuse their partners, several testimonies demonstrate their entanglement with the women they love:

“She got a restraining order against me. I went to her house on New Year’s Eve and found her in bed with another man. I was more than upset. I’m still in shock. But I walked away. Two years ago, before these classes, I would have killed both of them” (Ferrato 89).

Wendy left with their three sons and moved to her sister’s house in another state. Neil was shaken by her departure and turned to his local Mormon Church for help. He was desperate by the time he enrolled in the AMEND program” (Ferrato 94).

At the scene of his murder-suicide, investigators found a collection of family videotapes in the garage along with the words “I am not a cheater. I love Michelle with all my heart. Til death do us part” inscribed on his arm (Snyder 76).

Websdale suggests that beneath their masculine surface is an accumulation of emotion, including men’s emotional dependency on their partners and shame. As the testimonies reveal, childhood abuse and neglect also simmer beneath the masculine façade. For Websdale, the paradox of domestic violence is that while research and advocacy insist that domestic violence is about patriarchal power and control, “abusers are simultaneously powerful and powerless. Both in control and out of control” (85). In *Power and Control*, Josh expresses this exact sentiment:

“I grew up angry, there was sexual abuse, there was physical abuse, there was all of it” there is just all around everywhere we went I had not control of everything else around my life so there was something that I had control over at home” (Josh, *Power and Control*).

Josh reveals that someone sexually and physically abused him as a child and connects his uncontrol as a child to his control over everything at home. Tragically, abusive homes tragically reproduce abusive

homes. Weaving each text's theoretical frameworks and the testimonies reveals more than the theories and testimonies can express independent of one another. While none of the texts engage theories about the relationship between childhood abuse and future intimate partner violence, the testimonies indicate its presence in the childhoods of abusive intimates. Many of these intimately abusive people were not only abused or neglected as children but also inherited and modeled gender norms. Men can *only* be angry, violent, and angry. They hold power and authority in the household. Women are supposed to tend to domestic duties and rules. Yet, as Sinclair, Websdale, and the AMEND director indicate, these men are fragile, weak, scared, and anxious. In their bind to patriarchal scripts, they use their partners as a conduit through which they can channel and assert masculinity, punish those who neglected them. Sexist tropes about women that construct women as promiscuous, whorish rebellious, and disrespectful can fuel violent enactments of power and control.

Familicide is perhaps the ultimate form of intimate partner abuse, as intimates kill their partners and children to obtain and secure sacred masculinity. Along with having an abusive father, as an adult, Patrick O'Hanlon embodied shame about his failure to fulfill his masculine ideals. Snyder writes that he was "ashamed that he didn't get promoted, ashamed that he'd been transferred to a job he felt ill-equipped to handle, ashamed that he couldn't shake himself out of his despair" (168). Snyder describes the pressures that increased his shame: "There was his daughter's rebellion, his family crammed into a tiny living space, he no longer had professional status; the condo the owned was underwater with the recession" (172). There were also problems with the builder on his new house, who pulled out of the deal, leaving the family in debt to the point that his wife, Dawn, had to return their new furniture (172). When his daughter tried to cheer him up, he felt worse as "He should have been strong enough; he was the man of the house" (172). In Websdale's words, Patrick O'Hanlon had an inchoate shame about his masculinity (166). In what can be read as his last and final attempt to achieve masculinity, Patrick O'Hanlon sacrificed his wife and daughter, Dawn and April.

Toward a History of Intimate Partner Violence

Although mass media often frame intimate partner violence individual and contemporary, this violence transcends local to global contexts as part of larger historical patterns. Snyder transcends the contemporary context by comparing Patrick O’Hanlon’s familicide to Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac. While Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son to prove his devotion to God, Patrick sacrificed his family to uphold his manhood. In the face of economic devastation, shameful living spaces, utter despair, O’Hanlon killed his wife and daughter, protecting them from his failure as a man and sending them to God for protection. In doing so, he justified his violence through his failure fulfill his role as a man, husband, and father. While this sacrifice served the symbolic function of protecting him and his family, there are cases in which lovers are not sacrificed but killed—the “unclean” and licentious who are unworthy as sacrifices. Instead, they are killed and sent to hell (Vitanza 64). Such acts are not innate; rather, patriarchy cultures people into expectations about themselves and their intimate partners. Tragically, beneath the surface of their patriarchal façade, fearful, neglected, abused children occupy souls of fearful, neglected adults.

Collectively, these texts contextualize intimate partner violence within a constellation of childhood trauma adversity, and patriarchal enculturation. In the ManAlive curriculum developed by Hamish Sinclair, facilitators teach intimately abusive people to shed their masculine masks and listen to their bodies. In addition to educating participants about masculinity, the ManAlive curriculum teaches them the cues that arise when someone threatens their masculinity. These bodily cues, named “fatal peril,” include “deadly fear of image dying, false alarm, body signs including tenseness, tightness, contraction, head tapes and stories, and their feelings all of which signal image dying of which they have deadly fear.” By informing intimately abusive people about these beliefs and cues, the ManAlive curriculum works to socialize intimately abusive people away from their violence. In questioning *why* men so strongly enact violent masculinity, Snyder turns to Sinclair, who is “willing to believe that at some point,

far back in human history, men had some kind of predisposition toward violence in order to feed their families” (112). Presumably, this need developed into a culture of patriarchal and domestic violence.

The focus on the evolutionary need to kill animals to feed families, however, accounts neither for violence *toward* these families nor the development of the patriarchal household. If there is a history of patriarchy, however, there is presumably a history of patriarchal psychology. It is to this history that I now turn.

Chapter Three

Traumatic and Rhetorical Origins of Panhistorical

Patriarchal and Domestic Violence

While domestic and intimate partner violence is apparent throughout early American history, a peculiar genre of the early nineteenth-century provides glimpses into the lives of the men who killed their families in 1806 and 1835. Written by laymen and ministers who visited the men as they awaited execution, these pamphlets detail the biographies of Abel Clemmens and John Cowan. In what follows, I recount the stories to demonstrate their uncanny similarities with the men's testimonies in the previous chapter.¹ Together, the texts demonstrate patriarchy's cultural and structural reach from the early nineteenth-century to the present moment, including its role in intimate partner homicide.

Recounting their childhood, Both Abel and John describe unstable homes and ruptured relationships with parents and their abusive apprentice "masters." At twelve-years old, Abel's parent sent him to work for a blacksmith, but Abel returned home in fear of his "master's ferocity." Abel also fled his next master, a merchant, only to be sent back to the "human monster" by his mother. While he was away, his father died by suicide. John's parents separated when he was young, and he shuttled between schools and parents. He describes his childhood as "forlorn" and "heart-broken," with "destitution and cruelty" (738). Like Abel, John describes an apprenticeship with an abusive master, a cabinet maker who whipped John.

In the account of his life leading to the murders, Abel expresses sudden anxiety and horrific thoughts after his plans to move his family to Ohio and away from his mother's property failed. He recalls that he was "struck with unaccountable horror" at signing a deal to farm his mother's land and

¹ I tell these stories using the work of historian Daniel A. Cohen, who used the narratives, newspapers, and court records to confirm and elaborate these historical events in the early nineteenth-century

sudden “thoughts of being torn from my family, and considered my property inadequate to their support, ... I saw my children already (in prospect) torn from the fond embraces of their mother, and scattered over the country (734). Abel expresses anxieties about his role as a husband and father, including his ability to own property and provide for his family. About the murders he explains that “I thought it would be much better if my dear family were in the hands of their God” (734).

John Cowan recalls a tumultuous and quarrelsome relationship with Mary Susannah Sinclair, his “giddy wife” who neglected her “household duties.” More grimly, he describes their “domestic hearth “as an “earthly hell” (738). After cycles of separation and reunion—abandonment and reunion—Cowan and Mary moved to Cincinnati, and he “became obsessively jealous of a man with whom he believed his wife was having an affair” (739). Like Abel, Cowan expresses anxiety about his family role as he states that by killing his daughters, he saved them from his “infamy” and being “left to be knocked and cuffed about by the world” (739).

Along with expressing patriarchal gender tropes, these men evoke powerlessness and anxieties about their status as husbands and fathers. Abel is unable to move from his mother’s home—the same mother who cast him out to an abusive apprentice master. He struggles to fulfill his role as a provider for his family, and he bears the mark of an abusive and lonely childhood. Cowan also struggles as an adult as he moves and goes through cycles of separation and reunions with his wife, who he believes is cheating on him with another man. Their childhoods were traumatic; their adulthoods are traumatic. An event is traumatic, Worsham writes, “by virtue of its perceived power to threaten real or symbolic annihilation” (60). The men deflect their anxieties and vulnerabilities by blaming the women in their lives. John accuses his “giddy” wife of neglecting her household duties and adultery and named his mother “faulty.” Abel blames his wife and mother for obstructing his plans to move to Ohio. Abel’s childhood narrative also features his mother, who cast him from their home. Both men express anxieties about their abilities to care for and hold onto their families as husbands and fathers.

In what can be read as a last attempt to escape their wounds and those who render them vulnerable, the men deflect their “difficult reality of bodily life” by killing their families (Worsham 58). Killing those who render them vulnerable gives both Abel and John a sense of peace. Awaiting execution, John Cowan reflects: “[c]old and gloomy as are these walls that now surround me, I have found more happiness with them than I ever found without” (730). As ministers and laymen visited him, Abel Clemmens found peace with the Lord, a figure of paternal authority (736). Like Patrick O’Hanlon, both Abel and John these men believed they saved their families and found a higher purpose in their deed. Again, these acts exceed the local and conjure Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son, Isaac, to God—to deflect his own immortality. While Abraham was offered the ram, these men were not. There was no angel to stop them.

Patriarchy occupies their childhood homes and apprenticeships in the forms of child abuse. It is apparent in their marriages, including expectations about their roles as providers, and it is apparent in the way they blame the women in their lives and kill their families. Presumably, patriarchal roles and trauma prevented them from expressing this and other anxieties, including their adverse childhood experiences. In his social-historical and psychological analysis of these and other early cases of familicide, literary critic and historian Daniel A. Cohen addresses the social scene as marked by economic instability, religious liberty, and radical conditions of freedom. He both diagnoses the men with schizophrenia, depression, and delusional jealousy but also argues that “family-killers were profoundly traumatized experienced by common Americans in the early republic” (726). While he identifies these economic, religious, and political conditions and their effect on the men’s psyches, he rejects patriarchal readings of these familicides, which is indicative of a larger trend that rejects patriarchal readings of intimate partner and domestic violence.

Early American historians and literary critics, like Cohen, contextualize domestic violence without acknowledging the context as patriarchal. In her reading of domestic violence in the Michigan

frontier between 1837-1839 through *A New Home, Who'll Follow? Or, Glimpses of Western Life*, Jennifer Banks identifies “social factors” that sociologists have identified as “catalysts for spousal abuse, including relatively undeveloped legal structures and a resultant reliance on patriarchal governance; physical and social isolation from family, friends, or protective institutions; alcohol abuse; declining social and economic status; and the temporary weakening of some aspects of gender identification” (137). In her description of these factors alongside the nineteenth century “Family Ideal,” Kirkland describes patriarchy as a form of governance and not as the culture that moves them to ideals amidst the declining social and economic conditions, the isolation on the frontier, and the radical conditions of freedom. More so, both Cohen and Kirkland overlook the patriarchal tropes that suppresses vulnerability and condones violence toward wives achieve adulthood.

Contextualizing intimate partner violence within patriarchy is useful not only because it can inform the way these conditions move people to domestic abuse but also because it has a history that connects intimate partner violence of the past to intimate partner violence of the present. And in this history is the persistence of patriarchal tropes: justification of violence, misogyny, abuse. Many feminist researchers, like Cohen and Banks, “attend to long view history” (Olson and Hawhee 93) to connect historical patriarchal terms, practices, and texts that condone domestic violence to contemporary domestic violence. For example, historian Vivian C. Fox (2002) finds patriarchal language in the Hebrew and Judeo-Christian Bible, where Eve emerges from Adam’s rib and is punished by God for her defiant act. More specifically, Fox analyzes the ways 17th-century marriage handbooks explain husband and wife roles. These pamphlets remind men discipline, guide, and direct the “crazy sex,” the “weaker vessel,” the “imbecile natured” (20). Patriarchal language is also apparent in the 1619 *A Bride Bush or, Directions for Married Persons* as it educates its readers about proper and improper wife beating. The handbook declares that if a wife is foolish, childlike, “I see not why the rod, or staffe, or wande, should not be for the fools back in this case” (160). These texts express misogyny and justify violence as an act to

discipline them. These patriarchal tropes persist in the accounts of Abel, John, and the men featured in the previous chapter.

While Fox locates domestic violence in Judeo-Christian beliefs and their form in 17th century marriage handbooks, sociologists Emerson Dobash and Russell Dobash (1979) locate domestic violence in early Roman political, religious, and historical texts. Patriarchal domestic violence is apparent, for example, in historian Valerius Maximus's 30 AD anecdote about a husband and wife:

C. Suspicus Gallus . . . repudiated his wife because she been seen out of doors with her face uncovered. The sentence was harsh but based on reason . . . 'The Law,' he could have said to her, 'bids you seek to please no one but me . . . I am to be the sum of your charms . . . *Any other glance which you attract to yourself, even innocently, can only render you suspect of entertaining some criminal design* (36).

In this text, Maximus records and justifies Gallus's decision to repudiate his wife for leaving the house unveiled. To justify the repudiation, he turns to "The Law," which can be considered as both the governmental and religious institutions. More than a simple recording, the excerpt shows The Law's ideological presumption about marriage: women must please only their husband and are forbidden from attracting glances. If they attract glances, the law permits the husband to divorce his wife. In this context, women are held accountable for attracting glances, rather than those who glance at the women, demonstrating a trope in which men blame and punish women for their presupposed misdeeds.

Although they name their methods as neither panhistoriographic nor rhetorical, Fox and the Dobashes historical research enact what is called a panhistory. Rhetoricians Debra Hawhee and Christa J. Olson explain panhistoriography as a practice of writing histories that "leap across geographic space, tracking important activities, terms, movements, or practices as they travel with trade, with global expansion, or with religious zealotry" (90). Olson, for example, tracks images of indigenous people from 1857-1947 that were painted by artists and circulated by Ecuadorians. Along with tracking these images,

Olson examines recurring themes that are used to “invoke the nation even in distinctly changed contexts” (95). These themes, as rhetorical *topoi*, reveal their force as rhetorics of national identity. As a method, panhistoriography exposes the ways “rhetoric’s tendrils wended their ways into cultural beliefs and practices” (94). A panhistorical perspective, then, can be used to examine the ways that patriarchal and domestic violence—in the forms of acts, tropes, texts, habits—persists across geographic time and space. A panhistorical perspective sets the foundation for this chapter.

From a rhetorical perspective, Linda Day writes a panhistory that compares Yahweh’s rhetorical orientation toward “Jerusalem as an adulterous wife” to psychiatrist Lenore Walker’s 1979 profile of a cyclical domestic abuser. The passage is possessive and abusive as he selects her, as an infant, to be his wife. He wipes her of blood, courts her, and then enters covenant with her (208-209). Day describes him as a voyeur, watching her every move (211). As he watches her, he grows angry and accuses her of adultery as he “describes how Jerusalem builds platforms and high places, spreading wide her legs to all pedestrians, and prostitutes herself to Egyptians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans (210). He threatens to strip and expose her publicly, to gather up all her partners and have them rob her, stone her, slice her up with swords, and destroy her property” (211). He says she is worse than other women, including Samaria and Sodom, and her sisters and all her daughters (211). The text ends with Yahweh establishing his covenant with Jerusalem and stating, “Thus you will remember and you will be ashamed and you will no longer open your mouth in the face of your ignominy, when I pardon you for all you have done” (207). In doing so, Day exposes intimate partner violence as a process that includes psychological and emotional abuse, stalking, and name calling according to persistent patriarchal tropes. This is not a text that simply condones wife abuse; it is a text that mirrors the form of twentieth-century intimate partner violence. This text shows a relationship with women that takes possessiveness of a partner—and ethnic others—to extremities.

Histories of domestic violence importantly expose the panhistorical trajectory of patriarchal domestic and intimate partner violence but often construe it as a tautological beginning and end. In the field of domestic and intimate partner violence research, Terry Davidson (1978) stands out as she attributes the origins of patriarchal and domestic violence to men's jealousy of women's ability to create life. Davidson's approach to origins is situated within a transhistorical framework meaning that it attributes universal, untethered psychological conditions to the origins of domestic violence. While domestic violence research does not theorize the origins of the patriarchy they expose, psychoanalytic feminist research theorizes the origins of patriarchy more generally. More specifically, these feminists identify patriarchy in context of Western classical, Christian, and Enlightenment traditions that associate men with the mind and females with the body. Along with associating women with the body, Western cultures cast ethnic and racialized others as similarly inferior and corporeal, albeit in different ways.

Research that seeks to understand the motives of patriarchal violence tends to teeter between transhistorical psychoanalytic and philosophical approaches and historical materialist approaches. Researchers that seek to understand the origins of systemic violence more generally tend to rely on philosophical or transhistorical forms. Following a discussion of this research, this chapter combines materialist, psychoanalytic, and rhetorical methods to develop a theory about the historically traumatic origins of patriarchal and domestic violence in the transition from the Paleolithic and Neolithic eras to the rise of agricultural communities and city-states in the ancient Near East.² While transhistorical approaches to the etiology of violence suggest that a transhistorical unconscious moves individuals and cultures to violence, I suggest that a traumatic historical ecology moved ancient people to patriarchal violence, including its relationship with domestic and intimate partner violence.

² Throughout this chapter I use the terms Mesopotamia and ancient Near East interchangeably based on the work of Zainab Bahrani, who both critiques Western constructions of Mesopotamia and analyzes visual imagery in Mesopotamian ancient texts. See "Conjuring Mesopotamia: Imaginative Geography and a World Past" (1998) and *Women of Babylon and Gender Representation in Mesopotamia* (2001)

While I turn to Mesopotamia as a historical site that precipitated patriarchal violence, I move beyond this site to consider the way patriarchy developed to its extremities in “Western” culture, which Sylvia Federici argues was constructed as a political designation in the sixteenth century and in response to crises of the Protestant Reformation and expansion of Ottoman Empire (65). The construction of “Western civilization” created a binary between the “civilized” West and the “savage” or “primitive” East, and in doing so the West justified its colonial violences and asserted its superiority over others. Edward Said in *Orientalism* also exposes this totalitarian project in which Christian authors viewed Islam as terrifying, barbaric, and dangerous (59). Judith Butler describes the repetition compulsion of this “Western” violence in context of the 2001 U.S. military actions toward Afghanistan: “[t]he United States was supposed to be the place that could not be attacked, where life was safe from violence initiated from abroad ... We now see the violence is more permeable than we thought. Our general response is anxiety, rage; a radical discourse for security, a shoring up of the borders against what is perceived as alien” (39) As Butler describes sudden exposure, she describes a sudden closure against that symbolizes exposure. From sixteenth century to the twenty-first, threats of others trigger resurgences of cultural, structural, and direct violences toward those who threaten domestic identities. No time to mourn, no time to recognize the other or even the self. Just violence, rage, and war. While Eurocentric Orientalism enacted cultural violence in its constructions and obsessive studies and constructions of the “East,” this chapter locates the origins of such violences in the historically traumatic encounter with death and corporeal vulnerability. Said writes that “[f]or Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma” (59). Such traumas are repetitions of a historically traumatic encounter with ecological exposure, including those who symbolize death or threatens a cultural sense of vitality, life, integrity.

Many researchers identify transhistorical conditions as that which moves people or groups of people to enact violence toward others. René Girard’s theory of the scapegoat, for example, identifies persecution not only of women but of stereotyped and persecuted groups of people more generally.

Persecutions take place in times of crisis, he writes, such as floods, famines, or epidemics. Through persecution, groups blame others for these crises, such as the “the stereotypes of accusation [that] were made against the Jews and other scapegoats during the plague” in France between 1349 and 1350 (16). In developing his theory of the scapegoat, Girard evokes it as a transhistorical form found across time and places. As such it ontologizes this structure as a given condition of being. Girard’s analysis of persecution texts through stereotypes of persecuted people aligns with the work of this chapter as I track tropes in context of the stereotypes of accusation that blame women and others for a separation from Paradise. Rather than considering a transhistorical form, however, I consider the historical.

Psychoanalytic feminism often identifies the transhistorical nuclear family unit as the original site of patriarchal trauma and violence. These approaches are transhistorical because they attribute this trauma to a determining condition of human beings existing outside of historical contingency, including theories about birth trauma and castration anxiety. For example, Julia Kristeva (1991) suggests that the shock of his mother’s missing penis generates anxiety in the child, moving him to eliminate his mother and identify with his father. Kristeva’s description and theory of the anxious child who scapegoats his mother is a theory about origins of patriarchy, where men scapegoat anxiety-inducing women. This approach however assumes the ontology of the nuclear family.

Unlike domestic violence research, psychoanalytic feminism often focuses on the ways that patriarchy both tropes female bodies and represses masculine embodiment. For example, Elizabeth Grosz, in her description of misogynist construction of female bodies as “frail, imperfect, unruly, and unreliable” are “subject to various intrusions which are not under conscious controls” (13). Socially, sexuality and reproduction are defining characteristics of women’s gender role, which “render women vulnerable, in need of protection or special treatment, as variously prescribed by patriarchy” (14). The association between females and reproduction also creates the conditions to discipline them into these roles. In her analysis of the origins of patriarchal depictions of the body, Grosz relies on psychoanalytic

and philosophical frameworks that transhistoricize the body. She cites Freud, writing, “the Oedipus complex and the castration threat can be read as an analysis and explanation of the social construction of women’s bodies as a lack and the correlative (and dependent) constitution of the body as phallic” (58). She also cites psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan to describe the origins of patriarchal significations and inscriptions of male and female bodies. Lauren Berlant (2012), and Jessica Benjamin (1988) similarly turn to the psychoanalytic family unit to theorize the traumatic origins of patriarchal violence toward women.

From a rhetorical perspective, Michelle Ballif (2001) applies the psychoanalytic theory to the origins of patriarchal violence as apparent in classical Greek texts. In these texts, “the body becomes associated with the evil, the impure, the dirty, the shrouded, and again, not incidentally, with woman” (52). Feminist psychoanalytic theory to argue that men’s violence toward women is associated with their fear of the body, women, and the sensual. While she identifies the erasure and suppression of the body, she attributes the erasure of the body to transhistorical psychoanalytic and philosophical theories (15-16). For Ballif, “woman” threatens the boy’s body through castration anxiety; the body trembles with great fear in response to the female body. The child then marks the women’s body as other, fearful, evil, impure. In marking or stereotyping “woman” as evil and impure and dirty, “man” associates himself with superior rationality, above the body and its corporeality. This definition of patriarchy differs from the ways intimate partner and domestic violence research describes patriarchy, as it shows the psychology of rational patriarchy, which denies its embodiment and vulnerability by declaring its superiority over women. The category of “woman” allows “man” to deflect corporeal reality, including vulnerable exposure. Although Ballif describes the origins of patriarchy in context of the transhistorical family unit, her description of rationalism attunes to trauma beyond castration. She writes, “The birth of rationalism seems to have sprung full-grown from the mind. It was a clean birth—no blood, no bodily fluids—in fact,

it would have nothing do with the flesh” (53). Here, Ballif focuses on the bloody, fluid of the human body and its suppression through the development of rationalist philosophies and doctrines.

Psychoanalytic feminism brings attention to the dynamic of patriarchy that eradicates the body and projects it onto women and the discipline and violence that belongs to that construction of the female body. It locates the bodily side of deflection that exists beyond the pattern of denial and blame that we see in the testimonies of abusive people. While they locate this in “Western” traditions, patriarchy emerged not in classical Greece or the nuclear family unit, but in the transition from Neolithic hunting/gathering societies to agricultural societies and city states. It is in this historical time and place that patriarchy emerges as a culture and institutional structure that both symbolizes and subordinates women and ethnic others.

Historian Gerda Lerner considers the origins of male domination in homelands and households in context of the transition from the Paleolithic to the Neolithic and agricultural-cities and states. In context of reproduction, she describes the value as women in the role of survival of the species. She writes of tribes stealing women from other tribes as well as the offering of women to other tribes to ensure peace. In her understanding of the origins of patriarchy, ancient humans had different roles, but both were productive as they hunted, gathered, stored, and developed tools. Both Gerda Lerner and Rosemary Ruether describe the origins of patriarchy in relation to agriculture, as tools and technologies gave men leisure to write while women were limited to their same roles. As a noun, culture refers to “[t]he cultivation of land; the action or practice of cultivating the soil; tillage.” Here also began hierarchy as people who had more fertile lands had power over those with lands that were not productive. While she develops this historical materialist approach to violence, she overlooks the focus that the psychoanalytic feminists have—materiality, corporeality, and even disgust with the female and animalized bodies. For Lerner, patriarchy is a cultural social and economic system. But this overlooks the psychology patriarchy and its rhetorical deflection of vulnerability.

Before ancient humans cultivated soil, they huddled in grottos, scavenged food, clustered around fires, and encountered predator beasts. In her observation about patriarchal deflection, rhetorician Lynn Worsham locates the source of this act—and systemic violence toward animals and animalized others—in ancient hominid trauma. Both Worsham and Barbara Ehrenreich situate historical trauma and systemic violence and oppression in Paleolithic and Neolithic eras. The terror of being human and exposed to carnivorous beasts, ancient humans developed tools to overcome and then deny their weaknesses and vulnerabilities. For Ehrenreich, ancient humans turned grief into rage toward animals and others who symbolized death. For Worsham, ancient humans used language to overcome their traumatic corporeality. Worsham describes deflection as false witnessing, which is psychiatrist Robert Lifton’s concept that describes a psychosocial process in which “we transfer or displace or *deflect* onto a victim or victim-group our own death anxiety” (61). Ancient humans not only falsely witnessed trauma but developed a symbol system—cultural rhetorics—that deflect this trauma. Lerner writes that “[i]t took courage to leave the shelter of cave or hut to confront wild animals with primitive weapons, to roam far from home and risk encounters with potentially hostile neighboring tribes” (42). That courage came out of trauma—a trauma that is fossilized in “Western” patriarchal rhetorics.

While Worsham and Ehrenreich describe predator trauma and violence toward animals—and then others as symbol of those animals—trauma can also be considered in context of the female body that cyclically bleeds and births children. As Ballif writes, rationalism was a *clean birth*—no blood, no bodily fluids—in fact, it would have nothing do with the flesh” (53; emphasis added). By historicizing rather than tranhistoricizing the origins of this “clean birth,” we can attend to the way the female body symbolized both death *and* life. Beyond its capacity to grow, birth, and feed children, short life spans, infant mortality, and the need for people to hunt and protect one another made sexed female reproduction was necessary for group survival. In a moment of clarity, Lerner writes, “[t]he ego formation of the individual male, which must have taken place within a context of fear, awe, and

possibly dread of the female, must have led men to create social institutions to bolster their egos ... and validate their sense of worth" (45). More than institutions, patriarchy is a conceptual discourse that deflects death through violence toward others. More than conscious action to bolster the issue, the origin of patriarchy may have been an accident—a trauma response coupled with a need to ensure group survival. Paradoxically, ancient sexed women represented both death and life.³

While a patriarchy emerged in Mesopotamia, sexed women were symbolized and worshipped as powerful goddesses. Inanna, who I discuss later in this chapter, reigned for over two millennium, and emerged as a bestower of the city-state Uruk. Inanna had many traits, including gender fluidity, power over gods, self-assertion, and warrior strength and capacities. Sumerian high priestess Eheduanna's poetry about Inanna illustrates her with a spectrum of emotions; at one point she is weeping, at another she has "Holy Woman's rage" (119). One particular trait is the repeated association between Inanna and animals—lioness Inanna, wild bull Queen—which connects to a larger tendency in the ways that ancient people depicted women, as noted by Barbara Ehrenreich, and as I also discuss later in this chapter. The association between women and animals—as well as the powers of goddesses—depicts their function as sacred beings. Along with Inanna were many animal-gods and goddesses, but they were later replaced with a dominant male god.

³ While constructivist approaches to gender argue that both gender and sex are constructed, others have sought to consider the role of biological motherhood. For example, in *Visible Identities*, Linda Alcoff, working through poststructuralist and continental feminism, argues that "[s]eparating sex from gender produced a kind of idealist trend in feminist theory, or a neglect of female embodiment" (163). Examining the construction of sexed female gender is not to say that necessitates its relation to the biological or that gender fluidity cannot exist. Inanna was both gender fluid and sexed according to her genitals. Rather, it is to consider the ways that the sexed female biological body—its capacity for death and life paradoxically—contributed to the ancient use of it for group and then symbolic survival

Psychoanalytic feminism often develops Freud's transhistorical theories of trauma in context of the transhistorical family unit to theorize the origins of patriarchy. Largely overlooked in this discourse are Freud's texts that theorize the traumatic origins of civilizations out the nuclear family unit: *Totem and Taboo*, *Moses and Monotheism*, and *The Future of an Illusion*. While *Totem and Taboo* and *Moses and Monotheism* focus on the primal horde that kills the patriarchal father, *The Future of an Illusion* attributes the origins of what he calls "our present-day white Christian civilization" to a traumatic encounter with nature, which includes elements, disease, earth, storms, and "the riddle of death." In his description of nature as a cruel, majestic, explorable force, he writes, "she brings to our mind once more our weakness and helplessness, which we thought to escape through the work of civilization" (19). Although he does not explicitly identify women as part of nature, he compares her to nature. For Freud, humans raised themselves above animals and controlled the forces of nature—who he tropes as a *she* (16). In doing so, they enacted rituals, religion, institutions, and rules for the purpose of the "conquest of nature" (7). This too can be connected to the development of patriarchy as a culture that deflects embodiment and vulnerability through rhetorical cultural and physical violence toward women and ethnic others.

Worsham, Freud, and Ehrenreich construct their theories of trauma and violence using anthropological, archaeological, historical, evolutionary, and theoretical research. In what follows, I weave them together, constructing a narrative of the historically traumatic origins of patriarchal and domestic violence. To connect this narrative to the development of patriarchal and domestic violence more specifically, I rely on the materialist histories of Gerda Lerner, historians of Mesopotamia, and archaeological texts. While I discuss the development of patriarchal political and civil society, I also consider the shift from Mesopotamian goddesses to Yahweh as symbolizing the deflection of vulnerability through cultural, structural, and direct violence women, animals, and ethnic others. More specifically, I focus domestic violence in context of the culture and structure of homelands and

households. While “culture” means tilling the soil and the land, it developed to mean “[t]o refine, improve, or develop (a person, the mind, etc.) by education or training.” As patriarchal culture developed from the Hebrew Bible to Judeo-Christianity and Classical Greece, its patriarchal and domestic violence took different forms, as apparent in the work of both the domestic violence historians and feminist psychoanalysts. To conclude this chapter, I leap into colonial America, where Puritans and Protestants introduce patriarchal and domestic violence to American soil.

To write this panhistory, I use both feminist and sophisticated historiographic methods alongside the panhistoriographic. Susan Jarratt (1990) argues that writing feminist histories of rhetoric is “a social practice that contributes to a radical critique of dominant discourses on gender” (190). Radical means “[o]f or relating to a root or to roots”; “belonging to, or from a root or roots; fundamental to the natural processes of life.” It also means “going to the root or origin; touching upon or affecting what is essential”; “far-reaching.” Writing this history, then, is a social practice that critiques dominant gender conversations by going to the root—the origins—of where patriarchal hierarchies emerged as social, cultural, and direct practices. While Ballif does this work, she moves beyond dominant gender discourses by also theorizing the motives behind the male-authored texts. I pick up where Ballif left off, placing the motives of the male-authored texts and domestic violence in a historical rather than transhistorical setting.

Sophistic or subversive historiographical methods inform the narrative and analyses that follow this section. While I am not an archaeologist, classicist, student of antiquity, or an anthropologist, and what I write what might be counter strict disciplinary conventions, I am not trying to make an objective nor provable argument. These truths we hold with great defense and offense are what I am trying to work through and past, into a restorative mode with which this dissertation ends. Truth-seekers have always been wary of rhetoric, as evident in Plato’s attempt to catch the *Sophist*, and in Ballif’s comparison of violence toward women to violence toward rhetoricians. Our field grants me permission

to roam and write sophisticatedly. Ballif (1992) describes subversive histories of rhetorics as marked by alternative idioms, paralogics, paratactics, and “illegitimate discourse” (96). Victor Vitanza (1987) explains that subversive historiography favors “‘allegories of hysterias,’ ‘sophistic parodies’ ... a hybrid based on dissimilar, if not competing, anti-styles” (85).

Outside of rhetoric, sociologist Avery F. Gordon writes that sociological methods have failed to address systemic violence and calls for an alternative method of knowledge production. Too often, she argues, radical scholars maintain a fine line between “subject and object of knowledge, between fact and fiction, between presence and absence, between present and future, between knowing and not-knowing” (xvii). Gordon attempts to “find a method of knowledge production and a way of writing that could represent the damage and the haunting of the historical alternatives and thus richly conjure, describe, narrate, and explain the lies, the costs, the forfeits, and the losses of modern systems of abusive power in their immediacy and worldly significance” (xvii). Feminist psychoanalysts have used myth to write about the transhistorical origins of patriarchy; this chapter blends the mythic with the panhistorical to consider the traumatic origins of patriarchal and domestic violence, including intimate partner violence.

Toward a Panhistory of Patriarchal and Domestic Violence

Before there were homes, there were trees, jungles, caves. In the Neolithic age, hominids lived in bands stretched across ancient, wild lands inhabited by predators, rivals, disease, storms, drought. Ehrenreich describes this time as a “long, nightmarish struggle against creatures far stronger, swifter, and better armed than themselves, when the terror of being ripped apart and devoured was never farther away than the darkness beyond the campfire’s warmth” (47). Worsham envisions this time as marked by “the terror of being caught unaware and suddenly felled; of being hunted, stalked, and chased; the terror and humiliation of being captured and quickly killed or ripped apart alive—that is, the humiliation (indeed mortification) of being *taken to be mere meat*” (64). Freud also conjures ancient

terrors and fears; he describes “the elements, which seem to mock at all human control ... there are diseases ... and finally there is the riddle of death” (12). These theorists ask their audience to imagine ancient humans’ corporeal exposure to disease, animals, storms, and death.

These conditions were nothing short of traumatic. Trauma signifies a human’s embodied response to a sudden and frightful, horrifying encounter that overwhelms the mind’s ability to comprehend and integrate it into memory. Rather, the trauma is never past; it intrudes into the present and haunts the mind-bodies of people, binds to the past with nightmares, flashbacks, panic, fear, and terror. Haunted by loss, possessed by fear, ancient humans struggled to survive, marked by the nightmares of fallen mates, starvation and illness, predators taking their companions as a meal. As trauma is gestural and imagistic, it is linguistic. Jean-François Lyotard and Claire Nouvet discuss the relationship between trauma and language, calling the language of trauma phonemes, which are made up of both phrase-affects and gestures. By considering the role of phrase-affects and gestures, we can imagine ancient human’s initial cries and moans, their utterances and phrase-affects that developed into sacrificial rituals, devastating means to protect themselves from death.

For Ehrenreich, sacrifices were first accidental, devastating, maybe even strategic attempts to appease and then befriend the beast. This could have been an accidental realization as one of their own fell to beasts’ fangs. By offering food—or sacrifices—to predators, ancient people could dissuade the beast for a while. And maybe by making offerings, the beast would not only leave them be but also stay around and kill around, leaving carcasses to be scavenged, devoured. Perhaps if they offered the predator with food back, it would become merciful. As a being that both takes and gives life, the predator was a paradoxical and powerful symbol of hope and fear. Literal sacrifices developed into sacrificial rituals to animal-gods that served a psychological function. The sacrifices “apotropaic,” meaning their purpose was to ward away enemies, disease, benevolent spirits, and literal beasts (Ehrenreich 58-59). With the development of deities, ancient human symbolically sought to overcome

their deathly experiences through offerings to animal-gods. Freud describes sacrifices to nature gods, and he suggests that ancient humans humanized the gods in the hope they would be more persuadable, sympathetic. While he focuses on the eventual development of the Father god, he overlooks the significant roles of female goddesses.

Ancient goddesses persisted throughout ancient civilizations. These beings were not only powerful and in command, with powers over life and death, but also often associated with animals. While Western scholars construct ancient goddesses as Mother goddesses, Ehrenreich says she is “far more likely to hold a snake in her clenched fist than a child in her arms. Only rarely a mother and seldom a wife, she reigned in the company of her lion, leopard, or leopard familiars” (97). Although Ehrenreich does not connect this symbolism to literal patriarchal and domestic violence, Ehrenreich cites many texts which, together, archive relationships between ancient goddesses and animals. Cybele, for example, is an Anatolian predator goddess who commands lions. Durga, or Kali, is an ancient Indian goddess who rides a tiger and is associated with a lion infested region. Astarte, a Canaanite, rides a lion’s back. In Mycenae, she runs with lions, and in Çatal Hüyük, leopards sat with her. In these texts, women are akin to animals; animals akin to her. The association of goddesses with animals suggests that like animals, sexed female evoked fear, awe, and terror. Much more than mothers and wives restricted to their homes and suckling infants, ancient people symbolized sexed goddesses as powerful arbiters of life and death.

While Freud, Ehrenreich, and Worsham focus on ancient people’s traumatic relationship with animals and “Nature,” none focus on women, who like animals and nature, signified both life and death. Sexed women were likely horrifying and spectacular. At a young age and for a significant portion of their lives, sexed women cyclically bleed, often in unison and in thirty-day cycles akin to the moon. Their wombs swelled and vaginas birthed infant babies. When sexed females give birth, newborns bloodily emerge from their mothers’ birth canals, covered in vernix caseosa, a biofilm that coats a newborns

skin. Further, maternal mortalities frequently occurred (Lerner 49). Historian Jonathon Valk estimates the rate of infant mortality to be in 20-30% range in the land between the Tigris and Euphrates 3000-500 BCE (697). If sexed women survived childbirth, then there was the struggle to keep it alive. Women's bleeding bodies and childbirth, like carnivorous predators, echoed the horrors of corporeal vulnerability and exposure, death, and loss.

Sexed women symbolized death through blood and childbirth; they also paradoxically symbolized life through their productive and reproductive capacities. Not simply confined to their homes nursing and rearing infants, sexed females in nomadic hunter/gatherer tribes foraged edible plants, scavenged animal remains, developed tools, including contraptions for carrying their children, developed means to store and preserve food, and as plant gatherers, likely learned to scatter seeds (Ruether 25-26). Nomadic tribes were marked by complex kinship patterns, some matrilineal and others patrilineal. In hunter/gatherer kinship tribes and high rates of maternal childbirth fatalities, tribes stole women from one another, leading to constant warfare and the development of a warrior culture; Lerner suggests that tribes offered women and children as gifts to other tribes for the purposes of intertribal peace (Lerner 49). In other words, tribes sacrificed and used them as shields against attacks from warring tribes.

As humans transitioned from Neolithic villages to agricultural communities, patriarchy slowly emerged as a hierarchical order marked by the procurement of women and children for labor. As tribes settled and tilled the soil, they began to claim plots of land and to attain women who performed productive and reproductive labor such as that which is identified by Sylvia Federici and Marxist in capitalist societies. The use of women and children to till the land and labor ignited the transition to men seeing women, children, and people as commodities. As men developed plows and realized their ability to use cattle and others to develop surplus goods, women were confined to the same productive and reproductive roles in textile production and food processing, leaving successful men with leisure

time unavailable to ancient women (Ruether 43-44). Fathers contracted marriages for their children, paid for brides or sold their daughter to other clans. The father bought their sons wives so they could reproduce and work the land, produce goods, and contribute to the family wealth. These communities were formed around small temples.

In the fourth millennium, communities developed into urban cities formed around large temples, where sacrifices made to the gods and goddesses were made in ongoing exchange for life and good fortune. With the development of cuneiform, first expressed in Sumerian language, writing became specialized and taught only to elite people (Ruether 46). In Sumer, temple elite redistributed food and had power over farmers and herders, dug canals to channel rivers and irrigate the land, all of which required cooperation by communities. Ruether describes the Sumerian myth that symbolizes gods who had to work, labor, and grow canals and then complained to the god Enki, who then directed Nammu and her deities to form humans that would take over the deities' labor (47). Through this myth, ruling elite claimed to represent the gods and thus, as a ruling elite, used religious mythology to justify subjugated labors. This myth also symbolizes men's use of women to reproduce labors that would work for gods. Military actions brought in prisoners of war as a slave workforce, and extensive agriculture was made possible by channeling the rivers into a network of irrigation ditches. Along with acquiring slaves by military actions, ancient societies acquired women and children through military action, which led to a class born into slavery. In kingship cities, some women had privileges as part of the court, while others were slaves that served wealthier women and harems that served kings.

One of the first ancient texts sanctioning the discipline of women is apparent in Babylonian King Urukagina's edicts, which declared that women found guilty of second marriages were to be stoned with stones inscribed with her evil. Another edict ordered that "if a woman speaks . . . disrespect – fully ... to a man, that woman's mouth is crushed with a fired brick" (63). A woman's mouth has power as a symbol that threatens male power. As Day reveals, Yahweh also focuses on his "wife's" mouth as he states, "you

will no longer open your mouth in the face of your ignominy.” The mouth symbolizes defiance, disobedience, and threatens patriarchal identity. This punishment is not simply for not doing labor; it is for speaking back to a man—and crushing her mouth with a brick. The symbolism suggests more than discipline; it evokes the power men conjured and their use of violence directly toward the source of that which threatened that power. The symbolic trajectory of crushing of a woman’s mouth is apparent as it reaches from King Urukagina’s edicts to the Hebrew Bible to Robert’s interview in the documentary *Power and Control*. In this interview, he states “in my eyes you just don’t disrespect your husband like that, you don’t talk him down, you don’t talk back to him or you’re going to get cracked.” As I soon discuss, Adam’s first helpmeet, Lilith, was also punished for speaking against Adam and God. Both Inanna and Lilith, however, were overwritten by Eve who was punished defying God’s commands and never talked back.

Although women were formally subjugated to the roles of wives and daughters in a class-based system, goddesses reigned powerful in Mesopotamian literature. Inanna, one such goddess, ruins cities, shakes with “Womanly” rage, and haunts *houses*. The first etchings of Inanna date to 4000 BCE, on cuneiform tablets found in Uruk where a temple to Inanna stood (Ruether 12). Tablets indicate four parts to Inanna, as well as offerings to each part of Inanna: grains, sheep, silver, food, flour, wool. According to the logic of the sacrifice, her followers offered goods to appease her wrath and coax her protection. In Ur, around 2,300 BCE, the high priestess, Enheduanna, elevated Inanna to the supreme position in the pantheon. In Ur, the heads of the “great houses” had a male assembly and king chosen by male elders. Although the kingship and assembly as ruled by men, Ehduanna was a high priestess and formally elevated Enheduanna elevated Inanna over the male gods: An, Enlil, Enki. In her poetry, Enheduanna depicts Inanna as a powerful, fearful woman who both gives and take life (De Shong Meador 34-40). For example, in her invocation to Inanna in “Lady of the Largest Heart,” Enheduanna writes,

she speaks

cities tumble

fall into ruined mounds

their houses haunted

their shrines barren

she shakes with rage

demons throw rope snares

bodies burn in blistering flare

the one who disobeys

she does chase, twist

afflict with jumbled eyes (De Shong Meador 118)

These lines show Inanna's destructive powers. While destructive, she also has constructive features. This paradox is shown is evident in the end of Enheduanna's invocation:

fierce Lady Wildcat

sovereign of the Annuna

Inanna

you draw men into unending strife

or crown with fame a favored person's life

Here, Inanna is not simply associated with animals; she *is* animal. Although Inanna is a fierce warrior and conqueror, drawing men into strife, she brings joy to her followers: "*She is Inanna / Bearer of Happiness / whose strapping command / hip-dagger in hand / spreads radiance over the land*" (122). In the poem's second section, her role in happiness and radiance is portrayed through a description of the ecstasy-inducing rituals of her followers. The poem also shows her powers toward men who do not worship her. In the ritual is

a man
one who spurned her
she calls by name
makes him join
woman
breaks his mace
gives to him the broach
which pins a woman's robe (De Shong Meador 124)

In these lines Inanna shows a powerful gesture of effeminizing a man with a woman's broach as she *makes him join woman*. In addition to having these powers, Inanna relates to the goddesses described by Ehrenreich: Inanna is associated with a breadth of animals—she is the lioness Inanna, wild bull Queen, mountain wildcat, Mistress Eagle, Mistress Falcon, even Lady Brush Fire (De Shong Meador 119-120). Although she is destructive and fierce, she is constructive and tender. Inanna is a goddess of love and kings claim her in marriage rituals (19). She is never inferior to her husband, however, and she maintains agency, even defies her father.

While Inanna was powerful, women in civil society were vulnerable to patriarchal violence, including subjugation into the roles of wives and mothers, stigma toward lower class women, and state sanctioned punishment of women. Jana Matuszak, in "'She is not fit for womanhood': The Ideal Housewife According to Sumerian Literary Texts" describes thematic priorities of the ideal women from a variety of Sumerian literary texts from the Old Babylonian period around 1200-1600 BC. Old Babylonian Edubba'a – Old Babylonian period from about 2000-1600 BC. One text is the "Emesal ES" dialogue between two women known as *Two Women B* or *Dialogue 5*. In the texts, two women banter about the shortcoming and crimes a woman could be responsible for (229). As they describe the ideal housewife, they describe her opposite: women who are incompetent in household matters and have no

shame. They also invoke disdain toward servants. This texts early stereotypes about women that persist still today.

With the emergence of Israelite tribes in their trials and tribulations against the idolizing Canaanites and cruel Egyptians around 1300 BC, patriarchy as a religious, political, economic, ethnic, and emotional order took root. As patriarchy reached into the domestic lives of women in ancient societies, it reached into texts about female goddesses. According to Ruether, “later myths had a tendency to marginalize the goddesses as wives. They became shadowy auxiliaries to dominant gods rather than distinct personalities in their own right. The metaphor of the political assembly marginalized goddesses even more” (50). The shift toward marginalized goddesses is evident (devastatingly) in Enheduanna’s poem, “Inanna and Ebih,” where Inanna defeats the mountain, Ebih. Although she powerfully achieves this feat, she is still framed as a daughter, and goes to her father, An, to share her intentions to conquer the mountain. An paternally calls her “*Little One / my Little One*” and states, “*I will not set my head with yours.*” Inanna leaves with rage to battle the mountain, asserting her own agency and power. In “Lady of the Largest Heart,” Inanna is similarly shown conquering a man. Yet, his opposition to her, like her father’s opposition, is there. In “Lady of the Largest Heart,” during the ritual, Inanna weeps as Enheduanna attempts to console her and remind her of her powers (125).

Although Eve is often depicted as Adam’s helpmeet, scholars have surfaced suppressed the story of Lilith from collections and fragments of ancient Hebrew legends (Graves and Patai 50) (Colonna 326). In Hebrew mythology, God first created Lilith as Adam’s helpmeet. Hebrew scholars Robert Graves and Raphael Patai reconstruct fragments of creation stories to provide an account of Hebrew myths that have been suppressed or lost from the Hebrew Bible. Unlike Adam and Eve, “Adam and Lilith never found peace together; for when he wished to lie with her, she took offence at the recumbent posture he demanded. ‘Why must I lie beneath you? She asked. “I also was made from dust, and am therefore your equal”” (Graves and Patai 50). Upon Adam’s attempt to force Lilith into obedience, she “rose into the air

and left him.” When Lilith refused God’s demand to “live like an honest housewife,” He punishes Lilith by killing one hundred of her demon children daily. Lilith protests her sexual and productive position as a “housewife” and asserts herself as equal to Adam. In response, God punishes Lilith for her demand to be equal.

The transition to Yahweh as the Hebrew God marks a shift in which ancient humans overcome both women and animals, as well as a God that is intolerant and abusive toward ethnic and religious others. Like Lilith, God punishes Eve for disobeying his command. To the woman he said, “Many are your sorrow” (Gen 3:15-16). Unlike Lilith, Eve does not refuse God’s demands; she has no voice at all. In its figurative depiction of Jerusalem as an adulterous wife, Ezekial 16 not only exhibits the traits of a contemporary intimate abuser but also depicts the way Yaweh cleans and purifies Jerusalem as a wife. He says, “I will spread / my wings over thee, and I will cover thy nakedness ... and I will wash thine own blood from off thee, and I will anoint thee with oil” (Ezekial 16:8-9). Even after purifying her, however, she strays, and he accuses her of “abominations” and “whoredoms” (Ezekial 16:22). He also threatens her with violence: “I will deliver you into their hand, and they will destroy your back, and your deceit will be broke, and you will be stripped of your clothes” (Ezekial 16:39). This figure depicts the paradox of woman and wife as she both symbolizes life and death. Yaweh needs her as a symbol of reproduction and life. To keep her, he punishes her and strips her, publicly shames her, and reestablishes the covenant as she is purified.

With the erasure of Lilith and emergence of Eve is the emergence of a deity that erases the traumatic struggle to survive. Genesis casts away goddesses and animal. It casts away the flood and drought, hunger, and disease. The Garden of Eden had no droughts, floods, disease, famine, no fatality. After the Fall, Yahweh’s people do not face carnivorous predators or treacherous nature. Noah emerges heroically from the flood with women and animals by his side. Noah builds an altar to God; pleased with his meal, Yahweh promises to never curse man’s ground again. Yahweh parts the Red Sea for Moses. He

promises his followers that he will “give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and there shall be no fear; And ye pursued your enemies, and fell down before you with the sword.” Men do not violently attack and overcome predators through war tactics. Rather, Yahweh removes beasts from the land and promises immortality through sacrifice and devotion. While Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac is often the penultimate story of paternal Biblical sacrifice, in Genesis 19:1, Lot of Sodom offers his two virgin daughters to Sodomites who are angered by his hospitality toward two strangers. Lerner argues that the story simply demonstrates the social position of women. Yet it does more. It demonstrates the way that men sacrifice women to save themselves, falsely witnessing their own death encounters.

The patriarchal God also protects his male followers from menstruating and birthing women, defiling unclean people, and sexually transmitted diseases. Under Hebrew law, Yahweh sequestered menstruating and birthing women: “[a]nd if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be in her impurity seven days; and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even.” (Lev 15:19-21). He does not only sequester her but warns against touching her. Leviticus is often concerned with cleanliness, purification, and uncleanliness. Leviticus contains instructions for identifying and responding to “unclean people” with “defiling skin disease.” Paradoxically, while Yahweh sequestered birthing and bleeding women, he demands to see newlywed wives’ blood on their wedding night; if she could not prove her virginity with “cloth,” “then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die; because she hath wrought a wanton deed in Israel, to play the harlot in her father's house; so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee” (Deut 22:20-21). Yahweh’s regulation of women’s sexuality indicate man’s need to be assured of his rightful heirs for posterity, but it can also be a trace of fear of sexually transmitted diseases. While Ballif argues that rationalism was a “clean birth” that suppressed blood, bodily fluids, and flesh by projecting it onto “woman,” it is apparent in this context too.

For Worsham, ancient humans developed language and tools to overcome predation trauma and deny their vulnerability. As Ehrenreich argues, humans turned grief, depression, and helplessness into rage, “from listless mourning to the bustling preparations for offensive attack” (139). They developed warrior culture and faced the predator. While ritual sacrifices were a means to symbolically alleviate nature’s torments, the cleaning of blood, sequestering of menstruating and birthing women, and the ritual responses to the “diseased” takes the rhetorics to a new level. Worsham describes the role of language in context of predation trauma:

seeking to overcome our naked vulnerability through tools and technologies ... humiliated (indeed, mortified) of our animal vulnerability and mortality ... we engage in both symbolic and material practices that are essentially violent in a vain and futile attempt to deny vulnerability and reassert our distinctiveness, our separateness from and superiority over animal life (718).

For Worsham, ancient humans used language and technologies to overcome corporeal vulnerability. Her reading of the categories “human” and “animal” suggest that the word “human” signifies superiority to “animals.” This identity, in its construction of superiority, repressed their traumatic encounter with predators. She writes that ordinary life depends on the mass slaughtering and killing of animals; “The living beings we call animals are humanity’s designated victims who are brought into being to be abused and slaughtered in the interest of what we see as our superior form of life” (62). Like animals, “woman” is a conceptual category that provides “man” with power over life.

Patriarchal rhetorics in the emerging “Western” and colonial culture

In their excavations and interpretations of the ancient Near East, Western scholars viewed Mesopotamian goddesses through their patriarchal commitments to the divine wife and mother. In doing so, they reified their own beliefs about women and their positions in both societies and households. Feminist scholars in the collection *Ancient Goddesses: The Myths and the Evidence* (1998), intervene in such essentialist interpretations of the figures, elaborating the complexities of the

goddesses in the ancient sites. These scholars critique the tethering of female goddesses to the heteronormative patriarchal binary and shift the scholarly focus from fertility gods and goddesses. Even as they critique “Western” constructions and acknowledge their own preconceptions and interpretations, I wonder about the fetishization of these goddesses from a Western perspective. Are they using the goddesses in their own self-interests, projecting their desires onto these figures? Is there any way around fetishization in this goddess worship?

More recently, Rune Rattenborg (2018) critiques the “very new British imperial discourse, politics, and military prowess” that constructs the ‘Land Between Two Rivers’ (162). This Western intellectual thought, she writes, “is much more problematic in its incorporation into historical and archaeological analyses than is often believed” (150). The naming of Mesopotamia itself seems to itself be an act of colonization as the name is first known to be used by the Roman historian Arrian from 85-100 CE and sources from the Hellenic conquest of Alexander the Great (151). In their nineteenth century imperialist excavations, descriptions, translations, and discoveries of the Ancient Near East, Rattenborg observes, Western researchers construct Mesopotamia as a spatial entity of the past distinct from the spatial entity that is the present. Both seeking to excavate the truth of the region and while ignoring the truth of the region, deflecting what Said calls the trauma of the “savage” or “primitive” expanded empire.

My intent in turning to Mesopotamia is to think through the emergence of patriarchy as a mode of hierarchical relation that uses language to conjure one’s own sovereignty and power by casting others as “savage” or “terrorists” or “women” or “other.” While this traumatic act of deflection and sacrifice emerged in this collection of texts, patriarchy as a mode of relation and being refined and cultured over time. Although Gerda Lerner constructs the Israelite tribes of the Hebrew Bible as patriarchal, the word patriarch has roots in the Roman church and in its bishops that colonized the ancient Near East— “[t]he bishop of any of the chief sees of the ancient world, having some jurisdiction over other bishops in the

patriarchate.” It is in this Roman context that the Dobashes find patriarchal and domestic linked in an extreme form; they write “the early Roman family was the cornerstone of society and was one of the strongest patriarchies known” (34). In this context ruled by Romulus, adultery and drinking wine were punishable by death as both evident by laws and a record of a man who “beat his wife to death because she had drunk this wine” (37).

The Geneva and King James Version Bibles are said to be the first to land on the “Western” shore (Wilson 2). Both Bibles similarly depict Genesis, Deut 22:21, and Leviticus. Further erasure of the body, in context of men, is apparent in the gender roles prescribed by the patriarchal God. In marital union, husbands are characterized as the “head” (Ephesians 5:22-24; Corinthians 1:11). As the heads, men are supposed to be self-controlled and disciplined, sober-minded. “Head” associates husbands and men with the rational mind rather than the carnal body or flesh. While “head” can signify the self-controlled and sober-minded man (Timothy 1:3), it also refers to the gender dynamics and roles regarding production and consumption as man has power over her body. While God provides power over fleshy embodiment, it comes with great responsibility and expectations. Timothy 1:5 states that “if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” The threat of being “worse than an unbeliever” must have caused great anxiety. This patriarchal script casts man as the paternal provider and protector of his family coupled with the expectation of sober-minded discipline. I am reminded of a man in a 1990 interview with sociologist James Ptacek, who when describing his violence says, “I’d lose my head” (148). I am also reminded of Abel and John, who both expressed anxieties about their abilities to provide for and protect their families. The only way they could protect them was through the sacrifice, which gave the men a sense of stillness and peace.

María Lugones (2007) describes the benefits of historicizing patriarchy in context of its imposition of gender and racial binaries onto cultures that honored intersexed people and communal

modes of relation. Such colonialism took place, Freud writes, as “pious America laid claim to being ‘God’s own Country’” (24). As European settlers arrived in what is now the United States, they brought their modes of patriarchal gender and ethnic violence. In this context, men were the heads of governing institutions and households, as mandated by religious and political doctrines. Religious doctrines sanctioned moderate wife and child abuse, but communities and families surveilled and reported disruptive cases of domestic violence to Church courts.

This orientation viewed non-Christians—or Native people—as “unchosen” ones, and settler colonialism sought to kill or convert Native people, who both practiced matriarchal and communal modes of being. With settler colonialism, Anglo-American missionaries coaxed Native people into spiritual conversion. Despite persistent domestic violence in the forms of wife and child abuse, when Puritans and Protestants landed on the Eastern shore, they idolized their patriarchal culture as the pinnacle of civilization, and in doing so, justified colonialism and violence toward nonwhite, non-Christian people. This patriarchal colonialism is apparent in the 1668 case of Sarah Ahuaton, who was married to her husband, William Ahuaton, the minister of Ponkapoag for 10 years. Ponkapoag was one of the fourteen New England “Praying Villages” established by the Anglo-American minister John Elliott (Wood 484). Archaeologist Joyce M. Clements (2011) examines the 1668 legal testimony recorded by Baniel Gooker, “the English Puritan Superintendent of Indians” (104). In the court testimony, William accuses Sarah of infidelity, and Sarah denies his accusation and testifies to his adultery and physical abuse. After Sarah was released with a warning, she fled to her tribe and returned to Ponkapoag, her husband again accused her of adultery, and she was imprisoned in Boston. The Massachusetts General Court sentenced her to the gallows on charge of adultery, returned her to prison, and publicly whipped no less than 30 times. In doing so, they asserted their own self-righteousness as they enacted this violence.

This violence continued throughout early American history. American historian Nancy Cott explains that as colonists transitioned toward a nation state, officials preached the righteousness of the nuclear family and used it to garner support for the emerging government. In this eighteenth-century political atmosphere, politicians used the marriage metaphor as for democracy. As a wife consents to a marriage contract with her husband, citizens consent to a legal contract with their elected officials. Although these cultural forms were idealized as penultimate modes of being, domestic violence lingered in their shadows. In the nineteenth-century, public discourses emerged that lauded what historian Nancy Cott calls the cult of domesticity, which is discussed by rhetorician Jessica Enoch. Homes and their gender and labor roles were idealized in domestic science textbooks as domestic violence permeated the homeland—on labor camps, reservations, boarding schools, homes. Under the banner of idealized homeland and homes, domestic and intimate partner violence remained, as apparent in the stories of John, Abel, and the nineteenth-century newspapers discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation. These historical violence persist still today. Arguments that the past is over, that we've moved on and progressed, fail to see the ways the past haunts the house of the ideal, the natural, the moral.

Chapter Four

Intimate Partner Violence, Disciplinary Divides, and Rhetorical Listening:

An Ecological Approach

In 1979, Lenore Walker published *The Battered Woman*, which uses clinical research to both describe the psychology of abused “women” and the cycle of intimate abuse. In the cycle of violence observed by Walker, an abusive person courts their partners while slowly building anger and tension. They then explode with direct and emotional violence, and following the explosive violence, the abusive person makes excuses, promises, and begins the process of courtship once again. While Walker describes the nature of cyclical abuse, she also describes common “personality,” sociodemographic, and family background traits of men who batter women. Walker’s observations are part of a body of research that describes elaborate rituals of physical and emotional violence. Donald Dutton names people who enact this form of intimate partner violence cyclical assaulters. Michael P. Johnson names them patriarchal terrorists, Evan Walker names them coercive controllers, and Judith Herman does not name them at all.

One does not have to look far to find people’s harrowing testimonies of intimate partner violence that fits the typology developed by these researchers. Documentaries, *YouTube* videos, news articles, social media posts, and even the subreddit *r/domesticviolence* explicate its severity. The National Domestic Violence Hotline website, for example, features stories by abused women. Sil Lai, one of many women, shares her “soul crushing” experience with a boyfriend who fits the typology of the coercive controller. She states:

I knew that going into the relationship that my then boyfriend was controlling and prone to what I thought were temper tantrums . . . He belittled me, called me names and cursed at me . . . He constantly accused me of cheating on him and made me feel ashamed of who I was and the

mistakes I had made in the past . . . he eventually began using physical violence as a means to try and break my spirit. Our relationship was a crazy, unpredictable, 4 ½ years of soul crushing abuse.

Sil Lai's testimony exemplifies the patterns of historical and contemporary abusers—control, name calling, jealousy, physical violence, and soul crushing abuse. After Sil Lai shares her story, she explains the essential role of the National Domestic Violence Hotline, which helped her escape her abusive partner. Rhetorician Suzanne Marie Enck-Wanzer's (2006) description of her local domestic violence shelter shows the lengths these shelters go to protect women: she describes the shelter's metal door, bulletproof glass, and surveillance system that protects residents and staff from the residents' abusive partners.

Contemporary people who abuse their partners use coercive tactics, including surveillance, emotional violence, terror, and isolation to coerce their partners into their control. A snippet from hotline.org, a resource for victims of domestic abuse, demonstrates the lengths some people go to coerce their partners. When one first goes to this website, a safety alert window immediately pops up on the user's screen. It warns:

Safety Alert: Computer use can be monitored and is impossible to completely clear. If you are afraid your internet usage might be monitored, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 . . . Users of web browser Microsoft Edge will be redirected to Google when clicking the 'X' or 'Escape' button.

The safety alert is first and foremost a warning to victims of domestic abuse, warning them that their use of this website can be monitored and informing them the means to a hasty departure and a number to call. The website warns about intimate partner surveillance, which evokes the image of Yahweh in the previous chapter who, as elaborated by rhetorician Linda Day, voyeuristically monitors Jerusalem as his "adulterous wife." Sil Lai's description of her boyfriend's temper tantrums, name calling, and shaming

further evokes Day's reading of Yahweh, who she compares to Lenore Walker's profile of cyclical abuse. From the past, this specter reaches into the present, and the ongoing need for shelters, legal advocacy, hotlines, and website safety alerts demonstrates the severity and extent of intimate abuse.

While sociologists and psychologists similarly describe this type of intimate partner violence, their attribution of motive often directly and overtly conflicts with one another. While feminist domestic violence research often explains intimate partner violence as a patriarchal enactment of power and control, psychological research often attributes domestic violence to individual psychology and pathology. Since the inception of this research, competing disciplinary approaches have placed the spotlight on theoretical feuds that defend and rebut differing approaches. Rhetorician Lynn Worsham describes deflection in context of debate and argumentation: "[d]ebate and argumentation are forms and practices of deflection that take us out of our vulnerable and mortal animal bodies" (58). In domestic and intimate partner violence research, this debate and argumentation, a trace of the patriarchal inability to render oneself vulnerable, has prioritized the quest to prove disciplinary truths. This tendency occludes the opportunity to listen to and learn from one another. Both academic disciplines have a common goal: to understand contributors to and thus prevent intimate partner violence. To accomplish this goal, research needs to speak with instead of past one another.

Rhetorical listening offers a way through disciplinary and theoretical warfare. Rhetorician Krista Ratcliffe defines rhetorical listening as a process of "listening for the (unconscious) presences, absences, unknowns" (206). Through a brief literature review, I listen for the *presence* of overt disagreements between feminist and anti-feminist intimate partner violence researchers. I listen for the *absences* left gaping in their theoretical feuds. And I listen for the *unknown* that emerges from weaving otherwise combative research. A significant absence in this research that demands immediate attention is its overwhelming whiteness, which indicates a larger trend in which intimate partner violence research excludes discussions of race and ethnicity despite surveys that indicate that intimate partner violence

affects people of color at higher rates.⁴ Research has also described the predominant cultural narrative that excludes non-normative gender identities and sexualities from discussion of intimate partner violence. These people have been advocating for themselves. It is time for research to listen.

Although sociological and psychological intimate partner violence researchers often position themselves against one another, ecological research models offer the means to bridge sociological and psychological research. After rhetorically listening to disciplinary debates, this chapter uses an ecological approach to violence to bridge feminist and non-feminist sociological and psychological research. Intimate partner violence researchers often use the ecological model to describe common traits and contexts of intimate partner violence, not unlike the traits and contexts that Lenore Walker outlines in her 1984 description of intimately abusive people. Rather than using this model in this way, my use of the model aligns with child psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner (1977) vision for the model, which considers the ways customs, practices, and norms reach into the environments of a developing person. By considering patriarchy as a rhetorical cultural “macrosystem,” this chapter considers the way patriarchal violence reaches into homes in the forms of both child abuse and patriarchal enculturation.

Disciplinary approaches to intimate partner violence

Disciplinary disputes about intimate partner violence motives tend to pivot around the relationship between patriarchy and intimate partner violence. Central to this debate are questions about who perpetrates intimate partner violence and who the victims are, why people abuse their intimate partners, and how research defines and researches intimate partner violence. Rather than seeking how disciplinary methods and understandings of abuse can contribute to one another, intimate abuse violence researchers position their research against other theoretical models, which occludes the

⁴ Robert Hampton, William Oliver, and Lucia Magarian assert this problem, writing that while data indicates higher rates of domestic abuse in Black communities, research shows that “African Americans are disproportionately represented among victims of intimate partner violence” (536). Similarly, Tameka L. Gillum (2002) demonstrates the need to “examine the significance of race and culture to understand and respond appropriately to domestic violence and to develop culturally appropriate interventions” (64-65).

possibility to realize the ways feminist, sociological, and psychological research can inform one another's conceptualization of that which moves people to violence.

In the 1970s, feminist research identified patriarchy as the preeminent contributor to husband-wife abuse. In 1979, sociologists R. Emerson Dobash and Russell Dobash published *Violence against Wives*, which used historical methods to analyze “the society in which wife beating occurs and the cultural beliefs and institutional practices that contribute to this pattern” (12). By interviewing a total of 67 women in battered women refuges in Scotland, Dobash and Dobash demonstrate the way women testify to contemporary beliefs and economic conditions that mirror the historical precedence of wife abuse. They also describe child abuse, and as such, domestic violence more generally, but they argue that violence against wives must be studied “in its own right” (9). The use of historical research to attribute patriarchy to wife abuse is also apparent in the work of feminist legal scholar Susan Schechter and independent researcher Terry Davidson. Later, with his publication of *The Coercive Controller*, Evan Walker wrote an extensive history of intimate partner violence. This history is incredibly important to realize the significance of the patriarchal societies and economies that influenced intimate partner violence.

In the 1970s, family approaches to sociological research looked to society and the family home to explain domestic violence. In 1972, Richard Gelles published *The Violent Home: Violence Between Husbands and Wives*, which studied 80 families in two New Hampshire cities through police records and private social work agencies. The research found the prevalence of intimate abuse—over half of the sample engaged in at least one incident while nearly one quarter practiced routine violence. This research considered family situations that contribute to intimate partner violence such as where in the home it takes place, but it also describes societal conditions such as low income, education, and occupation statuses. This research gazes at the household but also the economic stressors on a family.

As feminist research exposed historical and contemporary patriarchal violence in relation to wife abuse, feminist research positioned itself against both sociological and psychological research. Dobash and Dobash (1979) write, “we do not need to seek the explanation of family violence through an emphasis on pathological individuals or family structures” (23). They then accuse these “explanations” of ignoring “the simple fact that violence is endemic to modern Western societies” (23). Schechter refutes research that focuses on individual and family lives instead of the “traditions that maintain abuse, or the institutions that support male domination” (212). Again, she states feminist approaches do not “label battering as pathology or family systems failure” (215). In their claims, feminist research attributes violence to a choice made to exert traditional paradigms of power over women—they seek not to consider the ways patriarchal family structures and pathologies can collectively play a role in intimate partner violence. Their emphasis on patriarch as a system that gives men power overlooks the way patriarch more generally inhabits the family home.

Although Gelles and the family systems researchers did not use the term patriarchy to identify that which moves people to abuse their partners, in their 1980 publication *Violence in the American Family* they describe a culture of violence and the “sexist” character of society and the family. Like the feminist research, they describe the way patriarchy entails not only wife abuse but also child abuse. Societal contributors in American households include poverty, unemployment, stress, and rising food costs. They advocated both for men and women: “Women’s liberation needs to have a men’s liberation counterpart” (242). This focused not only violence toward women but violence in the *home* more generally, as well as the economic and cultural structures that reach into the home. As a model, they provide the potential to bridge the patriarchal framework with the sociological, as patriarchy creates not only a family hierarchy but also an economic structure. Yet, they pit themselves against psychological approaches, as apparent when they say, “we believe that violence in the family is more a social problem

than a psychological problem” (117). This indicates an academic tendency to pit oneself against another discipline rather than working with another discipline.

Psychological approaches to intimate partner violence motives focus specifically on the people who abuse their intimate partners. Rather than describing the patriarchal culture, sexism, and economic equality, they gaze more closely into the embodied subjectivity that moves people to abuse their partners. In *The Batterer* (1990), social psychologist Donald Dutton argues that cyclical intimately abusive people embody depression, jealousy, rage, and dissociative episodes as trauma symptoms. Dutton also uses case studies to argue that childhood trauma contributes to cyclical abuse. Erin Pizzy’s research also focuses on trauma in *Scream Quietly or the Neighbors will Hear*. Pizzy and Dutton are early researchers that acknowledge the role childhood trauma. As Dutton makes this argument, he has also strongly positioned himself against feminist methods throughout his career. Yet, as will be evident later in this chapter, Dutton often makes feminist arguments, which suggests his adamant stance against feminism is more than meets the eye.

One of the ways academic research dissociates patriarchy from intimate partner violence is through surveys that demonstrate that both men and women abuse their partners. Gelles and Straus 1975 and 1985 Family Violence Surveys indicated gender symmetry between male and female perpetrators of intimate abuse. In response, feminist research vehemently disagreed. Dobash and Dobash (1979) argue that these surveys generalize family violence rather than accounting for wife abuse—which is a specific form of systematic, frequent, and brutal violence (11). They also argued that generalizing this violence and claiming that women are as violent as men trivializes the violence that wives endure. Reviewing these disputes, sociologist Michael P. Johnson (1995) developed a typology to make distinctions between types of batterers: situational violence, reactive violence, and patriarchal terrorism. Despite his attempts to settle these disagreements with a violence typology, they raged on. Today, Dutton is part of an entire body of research dedicated to disproving the relationship between

interpersonal violence and gender.⁵ In a study in which Dutton and Hamel join forces (2010), they argue that the gender paradigm misleads custody assignments in family court. In their excruciating study Hamel et. al (2017) found more similarities across abusive people, regardless of their gender. Yet, they do not take the intimate partner violence typology into consideration.

As some continued their pursuit against feminist methods, some feminists pursued their psychological approaches. In a 2009 article, Dobash and Dobash use casefiles from the “Murder in Britain” study to compare previously-convicted domestic murderers to never-convicted domestic murderers. They find that men without previous convictions had more “conventional childhoods” whereas male murderers with at least one previous conviction had “abusive childhoods.” Since they have differences, Dobash and Dobash claim, it is not childhood abuse that motivates domestic homicide but rather these characteristics and contexts, which include jealousy and possessiveness, remorse, and empathy. True to character, they position themselves against sociodemographic traits and psychological characteristics or conditions (200). Interestingly, nearly an equal amount of both pre-convictions and no-convictions had divorced or separated parents, but Dobash and Dobash do not include this as a condition that could cause insecure attachments to partners. They also do not consider the way the people may not mark their childhoods as violent, as is the case in the first chapters, where interviewees described their violent fathers as not violent.

Today, the CDC somewhat settles the gender symmetry debate, and its ecological model somewhat resolves the attribution debates, albeit superficially. The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey does not show exact gender symmetry, but it does show that women abuse men. It also shows that women of color experience the highest rates of violence. The survey, like most

⁵ See Dutton (2002), Hamel (2017) pg. 98, *Gender and Batterer Intervention: Implications of a Program Evaluation for Policy and Treatment*, John Hamel, Regardt J. Ferreira, and Fred Buttell; Felson and Outlaw (2007), in “The Control Motive and Marital Violence,” Daniel G. Saunders in “Wife Abuse, Husband Abuse, Or Mutual Combat?: A Feminist Perspective on the Empirical Findings”

of the academic research, does not include rates of violence experienced by people who are not gender normative or heterosexual. The CDC does, however, state that the 2016-2017 survey is “*Coming soon!*” and includes the lifetime and 12-month rates of intimate partner violence victimization for bisexual, lesbian, and gay individuals. It does not mention the inclusion of gender non-conforming people. The survey typology of violence does not consider violence context but rather categorizes violence based on types of “direct” violence, including sexual violence, physical violence, coercive control—each of which are subdivided into unsettling and explicit details of violence. Although the survey includes coercive control as a type of violence, it conceptualizes it as emotional abuse, which misleads and distills the coercive control described by intimate partner violence research—which includes systematic terrorism toward an intimate partner. This research does not account for intimate partner homicide, familicide, or murder-suicide—or those who can’t pick up the phone.

The CDC also uses an ecological model approach to violence to describe societal, community, relationship, and individual factors that create “risk for intimate partner violence perpetration.” For example, at the societal level, the CDC identifies traditional gender norms, income inequality, and “weak” social policies or laws as societal risk factors for intimate partner violence perpetration. In terms of individual risk factors, the CDC identifies low self-esteem, low education, drug use, anger, depression, emotional dependence, and histories of abuse as indicators of intimate partner abuse. The CDC’s use of the model represents interpersonal violence research that uses the ecological model to discover and describe influential contexts and personality traits that make a person intimately abusive. For example, Hannah Jeffries (2016) uses NISVS data and interviews to find that intimate partner violence often occurs in relationships in which both partners have abuse histories, current substance abuses, child dependents, and low socioeconomic status. Lorie Heise previously used the model to synthesize research, which includes both feminism and psychology. The ecological approach is important because it identifies points for intervention and prevention, but it tends to be apolitical and does not use the

model as a nested model that considers the social-psychological development of a person who abuses their intimate partner.

Feminist sociologists have attacked and refuted psychologists; psychologists have refuted and attacked feminist theoretical frameworks. It seems this is a disciplinary refrain, the norm of defending one's turf over another. Stuck in patterns, they claim their truths. In this academic warfare, both sides lose. In *Missing Bodies: The Politics of Invisibility* (2009), Monica J. Casper and Lisa Jean Moore describe problems with surveys, demographic registers, and epidemiological surveys in context of infant mortality, which "is never about actual dead babies or the terrible grief and pain of child loss" (17). They also critique the use of quantification to "represent individual episodes of suffering and disease" (17). In their disciplinary battles, researchers who study the etiology of intimate partner violence they have prioritized the use of quantitative research to prove their points over working to understand the etiology of *suffering and disease*. Understanding the emotional embodiment of a person who abuses their partner is as important as understanding the social and cultural forces that *mold* this embodiment. For appropriate prevention and response, research must understand the ways patriarchal cultural, structural, and direct violences shape the corporeal subjectivity of people who abuse their intimate partners.

Patriarchy, ecology, and intimate partner violence

Although patriarchal theory has somewhat fallen away in intimate partner violence research, patriarchy is significant concept as it explicates a historical mode of organizing people into roles, including labor and household roles. In households, adults are supposed to provide for their dependents, support one another, be faithful. As a concept, patriarchy can account for domestic violence, including both child abuse and intimate partner abuse. It can account for systemic violence toward people of color and queer people. And it has the potential to shape all relationships, regardless of sexuality, gender, race, or ethnicity. As argued by Catherine Donovan and Rebecca Barnes (2020),

“regardless of sexuality or gender identity, patriarchal, heteronormative and cisnormative gendered norms of intimacy and love shape and inform DVA in adult relationships” (121). Patriarchy reaches into heteronormative and queer relationships; it reaches into the lives of children; it affects us all. While feminist domestic violence research often defines patriarchy as a form of control and domination in which men have and enact power, patriarchy can also move non-male people to intimate partner and domestic violence. Along with further expanding the concept of patriarchy to be more inclusive and account for its many historical and contemporary violences, the remainder of this chapter posits that unresolved trauma mixed with patriarchal enculturation creates the conditions for intimate partner violence.

In the 1970s, feminist resurfaced histories of suppressed systemic wife and child abuse. The surfacing of these abuses created cultural tidal waves as feminist consciousness raising groups and campaigns gave victims a means through which they could express and escape their abuse. Herman explains the significance of this movement; “[t]o hold traumatic reality in consciousness requires a social context that affirms and protects the victim and that joins victim and witness in a common alliance” (9). While feminists surfaced, affirmed, and witnessed abuse, they turned away when it comes to those who grow to be abusive. As people who worked directly with the women who were systemically held captive and tortured by their intimate abusers, one cannot blame feminists for refusing perspectives that victimize or make excuses for intimate abusers. There is also danger to the sentimentalism of abusive people. Terry Davidson expresses this concern: “[w]hile psychiatric descriptions of intimate abusers can make sympathetic toward individual abusers, they cannot erase the fact that batterers are dangerous” (211). The Battered Women’s Movement took great strides to shelter victims, cultivate institutional response, and demonstrate the severity of abuse. Yet research and response can still understand the danger, prioritize victim safety, hold abusive people accountable, attend to patriarchal contexts, and bear witness to trauma. It does not have to be one or the other. Davidson argues that not all abused

people become abusive people, but the same can be said about patriarchy: not all men abuse their partners, and not all people who abuse their partners are men.

Patriarchal violence is manifest as cultural, structural, and direct violences in the homeland and its homes. It gives people power over other people in what psychiatrist Terrence Real calls “a ‘dance of contempt,’ a perverse form of connection that replaces true intimacy with complex, covert layers of dominance and submission, collusion and manipulation” (hooks 33). Feminist rhetoric that identifies males as enemies, bell hooks explains, “often closed down the space where boys could be considered, where they could be deemed as worthy of rescue from patriarchal exploitation and oppression as were their female counterparts” (39). Throughout *A Will to Change*, hooks describes patriarchy as not only a system in which men *have* power control but instead as a system that *insists* men have control. Insistence is stubborn; it is active; it takes work. It requires a *performance* of manhood; “[t]o maintain persistently or positively *that* a thing is so.” hooks considers patriarchy’s reaches into the homes of children, who are both physically and emotionally abused. Patriarchy does not only provide men and others with power and control; it *insists* they be powerful and in control, even when they are powerless and without control. As patriarchal traumas collide with patriarchal enculturation and habituation, abusive people express their traumas through violence. Attending to abusive people not as enemies but as people also haunted by patriarchy can create conditions for radical intervention and prevention.

In the remainder of this chapter, I use the ecological model to synthesize research in a way that attends to the patriarchal and social-psychological aspects of intimate partner violence. Although researchers often use the ecological model to describe the traits and contexts of intimate partner violence, these approaches often abstract from the embodiment of the people who abuse their intimate partners. Yet to understand intimate abuse, it is imperative to take the body that inflicts the abuse into account. My use of the ecological model centers abusive people as they develop through patriarchal families and cultures. In 1977, psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner developed the ecological model to

research the way various environments contribute to the childhood development. The four systems include the macrosystem, exosystem, microsystem, and mesosystem. As a nested model, the outermost level, the macrosystem, reaches into the levels inside of it. The macrosystems refer to “prototypes,” “blueprints,” and “carriers of information”—that determine everyday modes of being through laws, regulations, rules, and ideology (515). Patriarchy, then, is a macrosystem or rhetorical culture. Exosystems describe major societal institutions including the mass media, the world of work, governmental agencies, and informal social networks that “impinge upon” a person’s immediate environments. These immediate environments, named the microsystem, identify the places in which a developing person interacts with others who have roles in the environment, such as parents in a household. The mesosystem refers to the interrelations between these settings.

According to the logic of the ecological model, patriarchal rhetorics, norms, and habits are institutionalized into rhetorical domains, including hegemonic institutions and immediate environments, including homes, schools, and churches. Of course, this is not absolute—many homes in this homeland operate without the violent aspect of patriarchal culture. But as Avery F. Gordon suggests, structural violence is akin to ghosts, haunting those who suffer from its reach. Moving forward, I use the ecological model to consider the way the patriarchal macrosystem or rhetorical culture reaches into “micro” environment of households, or the way the patriarchal homeland reaches into patriarchal homes. In the last section of the chapter, I consider the abused person as an abusive person and offer a rereading of feminist analyses of perpetrator interviews.

Patriarchal violence in the household: physical, emotional, traumatic

One of patriarchy’s blueprints is domestic violence, including violence toward partners, children, or any person that belongs to a household. Patriarchy creates the conditions for people, regardless of gender, to enact domestic violence. Fathers, mothers, and other caretakers can all be the hands and mouths of child abuse. Men, women, and queer people can be the hands and mouths of patriarchy.

hooks writes, “[i]n patriarchal culture women are as violent as men toward the groups that they have power over and can dominate freely; usually that group is children or weaker females” (82). In Dutton’s framework of a traditional nuclear family, fathers abuse children, and mothers abandon and engulf their children. However, any caretaker can enact abuse toward a child. Child abuse takes many forms: physical, sexual, emotional, neglect. Moving through this section, I present research that links different types of child abuse to intimate partner abuse and end this section with the thought that these varying forms of abuse can be grouped together through Bessel Van Der Kolk’s concept of developmental trauma disorder.

Intimate partner violence research has found that people who abuse their intimate partners have histories of parental and caretaker abuse. In a study of men referred to domestic violence treatment programs, Gondolf (2002) found that 26% of the men’s parents physically harmed them as children. More than half had parents with drug or alcohol problems (98). In *When Men Murder Women* (2015), Dobash and Dobash write that “one-fifth of the boys (20%) were physically abused ... and a small proportion (5%) were sexually abused” (70). In their research, they include a testimony by a person who murdered his wife:

“I was about six when I was first put into Care and I think I was about nine or ten when I was in foster care. *Why did you go into Care?* I was beaten. *By your mum and dad?* Mother and father. *So how would you describe the relationship with the people who brought you up: foster parents, residential care workers?* I didn’t like none of it. I was being physically abused in the children’s homes, with a washing up liquid, bars of soap, shoe polish, and [hot] mustard down my throat. *Sexually abused as well?* No, not until I got to my foster home. *And who did this to you?* My foster father. *Did it go on for a long time?* All the way until I left, from age nine to about sixteen” (71).

Dobash and Dobash indicate that abuse can be experienced in both traditional nuclear families and alternative living arrangements such as foster parents or residential care. In this testimony, the person testifies to seven-years of physical and sexual abuse. Although Dobash and Dobash include this testimony in their research, they argue that “issues of gender and gender relations stand out” (99). Thus, they use this testimony yet at the same time deny the role of the abuse in domestic violence. One is left wondering why they include the testimony at all. Still, the testimony indicates some of the extreme forms of abuse that children can experience abuse in institutional households. Although Dobash and Dobash strictly stake claims to the gender aspects of domestic homicide, research connects childhood abuse to female and transgender people who abuse their intimate partners, which complicates their strict claim to patriarchy as gender relations.

Patriarchy in the form of child abuse can also move women and transgender people to abuse their intimate partners. In her interview of 12 people, Carol Smith finds that 9 of 12 were abused in their heterosexual origin families, and 2 of 12 were sexually abused. Smith writes that some also “suffered racism and were encouraged by their parents to bully others” (136). One participant, Renee, testifies to her father’s abandonment and mother’s abuse which took the extreme form of being tied in the basement and whipped with electrical cords. Children who are exposed to and experience violence from and between parents or caretakers lose trust and live in fear. Humans are inherently dependent and social beings, especially children who do not have the means to take care of themselves. Research shows that men, women, and transgender or queer people alike have histories of child abuse. Adam M. Messinger writes, “C-IPV and T-IPV may often share a core origin in exposure to childhood and family violence” (114). As children develop through abusive environments, they live in fear of the abuser’s next strike which can take many forms.

Witnessing violence between parents or caretakers contributes to intimate partner violence. In *Behind Closed Doors: Violence in the American Family*, Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz found that 1 in 7 of

their participants parents had witnessed their parents hit or throw something at their partners (98). Edward D. Gondolf found that 33% of intimate abusers had parents who hit each other (98). Lee H. Bowker et. Al found that 70% of abused women's children were also abused in the form of hitting, slapping, kicking, and punching (162.) Hotaling and Sugarman (1986) "found a significant relationship for men between witnessing violence against their mother and later abusing a partner themselves" (Heise 267). In *No Visible Bruises*, Rachel Louise Snyder interviews adult perpetrators who described their fathers, and five of seven men recounted their fathers' abuse of their mothers. Snyder also describes Patrick O'Hanlon, who murdered his wife and daughter, and who described his dad as someone who "drank too much and yelled too much and sometimes terrified his family" (162). O'Hanlon also recalls that "[o]ne time he pulled a knife on his family and threatened to use it on anyone who took a step toward him" (162). Pizzey describes one letter from a mother: "My children scream because he shouts and hits me in front of them. He has thrown me out at night and told to go but I can't leave the children and it is a job to get a room with children" (48). The relationship between witnessing violence between parents demonstrates the ways that intimate partner and child abuse often happen in the same household.

Social-learning theory suggests that abused and children who witness domestic violence model their caretakers' violence. Such modeling is apparent in Albert Bandura's Bobo doll experiments in the 1970s, where children exposed to aggressive models expressed similar violence, including emotional *and* physical violence. After being exposed to a violent model—who verbally and physically abused the Bobo doll, children were put in a similar environment, with the Bobo doll and other toys. Both boys and girls who were exposed to violence imitated the violence. Further, the experimental research found that boys imitated physical aggression more than girls, and the groups did not differ in verbal aggression (579). This approach demonstrates a view that children mimic or model their violent caretakers. In their discussion of the link between child abuse and the later enactment of violence, Messinger writes that

the “intergenerational transmission of violence theory contends that exposure to—such as experiencing child abuse or witnessing interparental IPV—socializes children to justify violence as a normal response to conflict” (114). Solely focusing on modeling violence, however, overlooks the roles of emotional abuse, abandonment, and trauma.

While research indicates that physical child abuse contributes to intimate partner violence, research also finds that emotional abuse contributes to intimate abuse, especially in context of shame. hooks writes that “[m]ost patriarchal fathers in our nation do not use physical violence to keep their sons in check; they use various techniques of psychological terrorism, the primary one being the practice of shaming” (47). Dutton also emphasizes the role of shame: “[w]ife assaulters had experienced childhoods characterized by global attacks on their selfhood, humiliation, embarrassment, and shame. Their parents would often humiliate them and punish them at random. Often parents would say, ‘[y]ou’re no good. You’ll never amount to anything’” (83). For both hooks and Dutton, it is primarily the fathers who shame their children. The father shames their soul; they are not only shamed for what they do—wetting the bed, crying, not doing what is impossible but expected—but for who they are. hooks also emphasizes that women verbally abuse and shame their children, especially their sons. She writes that maternal sadists are overly harsh and emotionally withholding in order to help their children become more masculine (46). These violences, she argues, are hard to document and realize as they are not physically visible to the external world (82). Emotional abuse can also take place through threats. Dutton (2002) describes Robert who was a participant in the “Assaultive Husbands Project” and beat his wife. In therapy, Robert revealed that whenever “he failed to comply with the wishes of his adoptive parents, they threatened ‘to send him back’ (39).

Childhood abandonment and neglect can also play a role in intimate partner violence. Children not only undergo emotional and physical abuse, or witness others get abused, but also never fully experience love or secure emotional attachment. hooks writes that “[w]orking with groups of men,

listening as they talk about boyhood, I hear the stories they tell about their fathers' lack of emotional connection" (48). She describes young boys longing to connect with their father and the fathers' refusal to love their sons in what she calls "a crisis of longing" (47-49). Dutton writes, "I found that the recollections of assaultive males were characterized by memories of rejecting, cold, abusive fathers" (82). For hooks, "Without a positive connection to a real adult man, they are far more likely to invest in a hypermasculine patriarchal ideal" (49). Often, children experience these forms of childhood abuse and adversity not as one form or the other but rather a tangle of witnessing and experience multiples forms of violence and neglect. Divorce, moving homes, hunger, and adverse experiences that can lead to the development of an insecure, emotionally dependent person, regardless of gender or sexuality. Often, feminist research refutes claims about childhood abuse and intimate abuse.

More recently, clinical research demonstrates that child abuse and trauma motivate intimate partner violence. Ana I. Maldonado and Christopher M. Murphy (2021) find that "[s]tudies of IPV perpetrators in Relationship Violence Programs (RVIPs) reveal that 78% to 100% have been exposed to at least one potentially traumatic event" (347). Aliya Weberman (2019) finds that both literature and clinical practices suggest that childhood abuse and exposure to emotional and physical neglect "is a key risk factor for perpetration of IPV as an adult." Turning to developmental trauma disorder as a theoretical framework is can both expand the notion of the abuses experienced by children and limit it to a single framework. In *The Body Keeps the Score*, Van Der Kolk defines developmental trauma disorder as the exposure to "multiple or prolonged adverse events over a period as at least one year beginning in childhood or early adolescence" (362). These adverse events include direct experience or witnessing of interpersonal violence and "[s]ignificant disruptions of protective caregiving as the result of repeated changes in primary caregiver; repeated separation from and the primary caregiver; or exposure to severe and persistent emotional abuse" (362). Developmental trauma disorder (DTD)

names all the types of adverse events described, and it also identifies the behavioral and emotional symptoms.

The consequences of developmental trauma disorder include affective and physiological dysregulation, attentional and behavioral dysregulation, and self and relational dysregulation (362-363). They also exhibit post-traumatic stress disorder syndromes and functional impairment. While Dutton argues that abusive people experience post-traumatic stress disorder (82) and later “ambivalent attachment,” (88) this can also be considered under the concept of development trauma. Children with DTD are unable to moderate, tolerate, or recover from extreme states and can suffer prolonged and extreme tantrums and immobilization. They are under and overreactive to touch and sounds. They have numbed diminished awareness and dissociate from sensations, emotions, and bodily states. They have impaired capacities to describe emotions or bodily states. Their bodies are electric or numb to affective and physiological states. This is especially prevalent in context of relational attachments, as children feel arousal but don’t have the capacity to name or describe their emotional states.

Physical abuse is the most recognizable abuse and what many feminist researchers refute as related to intimate partner violence. For example, Dobash and Dobash’s survey of intimate partner homicide counted child abuse as indicative of abuse, but they do not consider other forms of abuse. Further, not all abusive people consider their experiences as violent, as male and parental violence is culturally normalized. For example, the men who testified to their childhood experiences in the first chapter described their father’s physical acts of violence but did not name them as violent. Rather, they characterized them as loving. Dutton (1990) also speaks to this as he states it “is not unusual for an abusive man to be unable to recall his childhood” (89). Dutton also describes the questionnaires filled out by men; explaining that men who did not write histories of childhood abuse into the questionnaires were the most likely to have “suffered the most abuse” (89). While this is partially the nature of trauma,

it is partially the consequence of patriarchal enculturation, which, along with abusive caretakers, teaches children gender roles, including violence toward women and others.

Patriarchal enculturation through parents and media

As patriarchy reaches into households in the forms of domestic abuse, it reaches into households in the forms of gender roles. This can take place both through parents as arbiters of patriarchal roles and through media, which makes up the exosystem of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. Intimate partner violence research—and feminist research—often describe the way that patriarchy sanctions male violence toward women and others. While patriarchal violence is certainly a part of patriarchy, patriarchy also teaches children gender roles in a binary that codes boys in opposition to girls. This happens first in the hospital, when institutional arbiters stamp a birth certificate with the label of male or female. Along with the label comes a host of traits that are opposed against each other, and a primary opposition in male-female stereotypes has to do with emotional expression: males are stereotyped with emotions; females are stereotyped without. Patriarchal parents—especially violent parents—transfer these codes to their children, who then internalize and enact violent behaviors. As patriarchal parents assault children, patriarchal culture carried through parents and media collides with this assault.

Patriarchal enculturation happens through caretaker-child relationships. In *Gender, Emotion, and the Family* (1999) Leslie Brodie writes that parents are themselves the products of gender-role stereotypes and thus socialize their children into these gender roles. Brodie writes that feel pressure “to socialize their daughters and sons differently in accordance with the family's culture (129). However, parents may not feel pressure but just go through the patriarchal motions. Research shows the ways that caretakers treat children identified as boys differently than children identified as girls. hooks writes that parents fear that “holding baby boys too much, comforting them too much, might cause them to grow up wimpy” (35). hooks cites a trove of research about the ways that “boys are being emotionally

damaged” (36). While patriarchal parents withhold emotional coddling of children identified as males, violent patriarchal parents scare their children into silent withdrawal. Along with witnessing and experiencing abuse, children learn patriarchal cultural norms that can prevent them from realizing or having the means to express their vulnerabilities.

Another level in the ecological model is the exosystem, which includes societal systems such as mass media and informal social networks. Nested within a patriarchal macrosystem, the exosystem manifests patriarchal violence through institutional practices and norms. The exosystem does not refer to physical places but rather it refers to structures that impinge upon a person’s local environments. One such way the exosystem reaches the developing person is through media. Being vulnerable and powerless in a world that says one should be strong and powerful leads children to feel shame about who they are, but patriarchy forbids them from expressing this shame. Dutton writes, “The double burden of shame and cultural conditioning makes him retreat to his inner world” (87). Similarly, hooks writes, “[f]rustrated in their quest for father bonding, boys often feel tremendous sorrow and depression. They can mask these feelings because they are allowed to isolate themselves, to turn away from the world and escape into music, television, video games, etc” (49). As children grow through abusive environments, they grow through patriarchal environments that encourage gender roles. Moving through life, children often wear masks that hide the sorrow and pain that simmers beneath their surface.

Cartoons, videogames, and children’s books stereotype men as powerful, in control, and authoritative. In *Gender Development* (2009), social psychologists provide a comprehensive overview and the most up to date research about the gender development of children and its influences, which includes social agents of gender development. Cartoons have been found to show males in leadership roles, diverse occupations. While children’s books have sought to be more gender-neutral, research shows that that male gender roles remain consistent. Children books rarely show boys doing activities

that might be considered feminine code, and they rarely show men doing housework or tending to their children (Blakemore et. al 340-351). This media also suggests male superiority and roles as leaders and workers. As children are abused and vulnerable, media makes the impression that they should be powerful and authoritative.

Research also describes the way culture more generally teaches boys that they cannot express vulnerability, grief, sadness. Psychologists Terrence Real and Donald Dutton both describe the way that hegemonic culture inhibits males from showing what is coded as “feminine”—sadness, weakness, and fear. Patriarchy does not only teach them what they should do; it teaches them what they should not do. Real finds that masculine culture teaches boys a series of don’t’s: “don’t cry, don’t be vulnerable; don’t show weakness—ultimately, don’t show that you care” (Real qtd by hooks 41). Like Real, Dutton stresses the “don’t” of masculinity, writing that a growing child “is aided and abetted by a socializing culture that for centuries has taught men not to be emotionally expressive—that’s only for wimps” (87). Psychiatrist William S. Pollack also describes the “boy code,” which “shames boy away from their emotional vulnerability and basic need for human connection” (190). In doing so, he writes, boys are “cut off from healthy relations with each other and a full range of emotions within their own selves” (190).

Along with stereotyping males as authoritative leaders who do not show vulnerability or weakness, cartoons also stereotype males as aggressive, violent, and dangerous. Videogames also include violence and aggression. Dutton describes both “MTV culture” (133) and “macho movie heroes and monomaniacal sports” (121) that contribute to young boys’ notions of masculinity, or what it means to be a man. Although he argues against feminism, he makes arguments about patriarchal male roles. In *Conjugal Crime*, feminist Terry Davidson writes, “[t]he wifebeater is also a victim in that he gets subliminal encouragement from his culture to view aggressiveness as a good and proper stance for a male person” (11). Frantz Fanon, in *Black Skin, White Masks*, describes the ways racism reaches into

media written “by white men for white children.” In colonial media, “the Wolf, the Devil, the Wicked Genie, Evil, and the Savage are always represented by Blacks or Indians” (112). The Black child’s contact with the white world, Fanon writes, can collapse the egos of psychic structures. These texts depict the good-bad heroic and warfare narratives that displace emotional vulnerability and celebrate violent masculinity. For Black and Brown children, the disorientation between masculine symbols and vulnerable embodiment can be amplified through racial tropes. Violent symbols can replace emotions and anxieties with violence, moving one through violent motions instead of actions.

As children learn male roles, they learn the female roles that stand in opposition to male roles. Gillum writes that “[s]tereotypes influence information processing and subsequently affect perceptions and interactions with members of stereotyped groups, having important implications for one’s perception and behavior toward these group members” (66). Thus, stereotypes not only shape the child’s understanding of male codes but also of female codes. Like media transmits male gender norms, it transmits female gender norms. Blakemore et. al find that cartoons show females as helpless, dependent, affectionate, nurturant, and complaining. They are also mostly doing domestic roles in homes (346). Children’s books show women in the home, looking after and serving others. They rarely portray women outside the home (340). Blakemore et. al also find that MTV portrays women as submissive and nurturant. These gender roles associate women with the home and domesticity, it teaches growing children about the role of partners to be nurturing.

In addition to showing women as affectionate, nurturing, dependent, homely, cartoons show women as “complaining,” Blakemore et. al find that videogames mainly include men, and when they do include women, they are coded as sex symbols in skimpy clothing, as evil obstacles, or support characters. They also represent women as victims or damsel in distress (351). Music videos and MTV portray females as sexual, submissive, fearful, and nurturant. They wear skimpy clothing and are the targets of sexual advances. This stereotype is amplified for Black women. Hampton et al. write that

“[s]tereotypical representations of African American women as aggressive, domineering, castrating, independent, sexually promiscuous, and money hungry may reduce socialized inhibitions against hitting a woman or treating a woman like a man (Good, 1980; Hannrz, 1969)” (547). Gillum also explains that “The two most prevalent stereotypes of African American women that have been theoretically linked to negative relationships between African American men and women are the matriarch and jezebel stereotypes” (65). These stereotypes can fuel a person’s anxious attachment. As a woman signifies a matriarch or nurturer; she provides a glimmer of hope. Yet, as she signifies a jezebel or a whore, she ruptures that hope and fuels anxious attachments.

While these discussions of cultural media and enculturation have operated in a strict gender binary, sexed female children can identify with masculine roles and sexed male children with the female and everything in between. Queer and female children can internalize symbolic anxieties about fidelity as much as boys. As children grow through abusive and lonely worlds, they have anxious attachments, are vulnerable in relationships, and fear losing their intimate attachments, regardless of gender. Patriarchal depictions of families, boys, and girls can create more anxieties for queer children, whose understandings of relationships are molded by patriarchal media about relationships, love, and intimacy. Herman writes that “[t]raumatic events call into question basic human relationships. They breach the attachments of family, friendship, love, and community” (51). Entry into the world of love and relationships reignites emotional vulnerability. Hyperarousal, which puts a person in constant alert and expectation of danger, is a symptom of trauma and can lead to coercive control. Along with rage toward the person who exposes a person’s vulnerability—what is beneath the mask—intimate partners become an opportunity through which they can summon power and control. More than simply providing boys and children permission to enact violence toward intimate partners, patriarchy socializes them into violent expressions of vulnerabilities, anxieties, and traumas. Patriarchy socializes cultures into

misrecognizing these violent expressions of trauma. As teenagers grow into adulthood, patriarchy can further contribute to intimate abuse.

The abusive person as an adult and in a patriarchal ecology

Patriarchal structural violence—as a macrosystem—operates continuously, is often invisible, like a ghost. It includes racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, all of which can occlude access to careers, housing, the so-called American dream. It can cause microaggressions that continuously build and wear on a person, fueling their anger or numbing, hyperarousal and hypoarousal. For children shamed and told they will never live up to anything—for those who felt vulnerable, weak, and small when they were supposed to be strong and powerful—the structural violences of racism, classism, sexism, and transphobia and their intersections can even further shatter their integrity and sense of self and others.

Low socioeconomic status, frustrated masculinity syndrome, and minority stress can colonize the body of a person. Research indicates the link between income and abuse. Lori Heise cites several research studies that demonstrated a link between low income and unemployment (274). Terry Davidson describes “oppressed personalities” in which intimately abusive people feel powerless, impotent, and lack self-esteem. Failing to provide for one’s family, partner, or self can lead to further attempts to channel power and control through violence. Experiences of societal discrimination has also been considered in context of transgender intimate abusers. Messinger describes minority stress and disempowerment theory, which both have been used by researchers to explain the etiology of transgender intimate partner abuse. Messinger states that “disempowerment theory suggests that some people who feel disempowered by societal discrimination targeted at their own demographic group may choose to perpetrate IPV to regain a sense of power and control in their lives.

Disempowerment theory has been speculated to apply to IPV perpetrated by LGBTQ people in general as well as IPV perpetrated by transgender people in particular” (119). Combined with childhood trauma, discrimination can amplify violence toward intimate partners.

The expectations and failure to fulfill masculine ideals is amplified in Black communities due to systemic racism. Robert Hampton, William Oliver, and Lucia Magarian argue that intergenerational exposure to gender and racial oppression, including racial prejudice and institutional barriers, contributes to African American men's frustration and anger that is sometimes displaced toward wives and lovers (539). They cite psychologist Nathan Hare's concept of "frustrated masculinity syndrome" which describes the way men who have been socialized to associate manhood with employment, economic independence, and being the breadwinner and are unable to achieve this status react with anger and frustration. Similarly, in "Through Black Eyes," in Nash's interviews, African American women expressed their beliefs that historical and contemporary White racism contributed to marital tension and displaced anger in the form of intimate partner abuse. Often, Black men are dependent on their working wives and partners resources, which can be a threat to one's sense of masculinity, also leading to violence (1433-1434). The notion of frustrated masculinity syndrome, or what sociologist J.L. Connell calls marginalized masculinity (80), can also be applied to non-Black men of color affected by patriarchal racial and ethnic hierarchies. For example, Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart describes historical trauma and grief, as well as ongoing racism, oppression, and discrimination as they relate to "the prevalence of psychiatric disorders among American Indians/Alaska Natives" (283). This historical trauma and violence can also be considered in context of intimate partner violence.

These societal discriminations, unemployment, and various forms of racism can also be bridged under the concept of insidious trauma. Maria Roots defines insidious trauma as "usually associated with the social status of an individual being devalued because a characteristic intrinsic to their identity is different from what is valued by those in power, for example, gender, color, sexual orientation, physical ability. As a rule, it is often present throughout a lifetime and may start at birth" (240). Insidious trauma is "incurred by minority groups usually starts early in life before one grasps the full psychological meaning of the maliciousness of the wounds" (241). Insidious trauma can account for the ways that

children who develop through abusive environments experience abuse that can collate with insidious trauma. While this research describes the ways that structural conditions contribute to intimate partner violence, the combination of these structural conditions with a person who embodies patriarchy and trauma can exacerbate this violence. Psychiatrist Bernard Chodorkoff describes the ways that “actual victims” can symbolize fantasy or abusive victims. The fantasy target is one who seems castrating or dominating—it can symbolize racists, colonizers, or maybe a demanding boss. Enacting violence toward the “actual” victims is a means through which they can take out their anger and exposure to these people. In comparison, the primary target is the person who directly abused or abandoned the abusive person—parents, caretakers, family members. The actual victim can symbolize the abusive victims, as the conduit through which an abused person acts out their rage at the abandonment and violence they underwent as children.

Together, patriarchal traumas and patriarchal cultures mark the corporeal subjectivity of a person. The CDC describes intimately abusive adults as marked by low self-esteem, depression, suicide attempts, borderline personality disorder, emotional dependence and insecurity. Similarly, Dutton (1995) characterizes cyclical abusers as prone to “profound depressions, delusional jealousy, and disproportionate rage—all in an intimate complex” (72). Dutton also claims that intimately abusive people have borderline disorder, and David Adams argues that intimately abusive people narcissistic disorders—both of which can have roots in trauma histories. Like Dutton, the CDC identifies histories of physical or emotional abuse as risk factors. Together, these can be bridged under developmental trauma disorder, historical trauma, insidious trauma. While diagnosing depression or rage can lead to medication or anger management, acknowledging the role of trauma and patriarchal enculturation is important for both intervention, prevention, and to unravel the surface of patriarchal rhetorics.

Rereading intimate abuse rhetorics

Feminist methods often cite the way that intimately abusive people express patriarchal beliefs as they deny and make excuses for their violence, but this overlooks the way they may be incapable of exposing their vulnerable selves as well as dissociative trauma-responses. For example, in “Why Do Men Batter Their Wives,” James Ptacek interviewed 18 “batterers” that were in a counseling program, seeking to understand their “accounts” of their actions (141). In his work with these people, they express the women’s “failure to fulfill obligations of a good wife” (147). The men lament the women’s failure to cook, fulfill sexual duties, be deferential, silent, and faithful. Dutton similarly writes about the way they blame their wives for not fixing the meals, not dressing the kids, not keeping the house clean (43). They play what Dutton describes as “the bitch tape” (43). For Ptacek, this victim blaming reflects the patriarchal script of blaming women and denying responsibility. Yet, it also reflects an inability to expose oneself, to admit flaw, or take accountability. Dutton connects this “blaming attributional tendency” to “attempts to ward off shame” and neutralize the threat of “weak self-concept” (229). Another interviewee inadvertently demonstrates aversion to exposure. He states, “[w]omen can verbally abuse you. They can rip your clothes off, without even touching you, the way women know how to talk, converse” (145). While they are patriarchal scripts, these scripts also symbolize one’s inability to understand and expose oneself.

More than simply blaming victims, patriarchy and trauma strip people of attunement to their interiority. They don’t have the language or senses to realize it. The same person who expresses being stripped with women’s verbal abuse also states men “weren’t brought up to talk as much as women do ... So it was a resort to violence, if I couldn’t get through to her by words” (145). This inability to use words aligns with Dutton’s observation about people who abuse their partners. He writes they have “an inability to use language in a way that produces a sense of control . . . these men are either extremely unassertive, leading to occasional explosions . . . or they become dominators who use every form of

control (financial, emotional, physical) instead of negotiation” (93). As trauma ruptures the capacity to express one’s affective states through language, patriarchy does the same.

Dissociation is another trauma response that risks being overlooked in feminist claims about abusive people’s tendency to deny, excuse, and justify their violence. While some interviewees attribute their loss of control to drug and alcohol use, others just cite being “completely out of control” (143). For example, one batterer states, “When I got violent, it was not because I really wanted to get violent. It was just because it was like an outburst of rage” (143). Ptacek characterizes loss of control as an excuse, but it is not this simple. Rather, it can be dissociation—a trauma symptom. Dutton explains dissociation in context of a man who sees a “sea of red’ during a violent episode. Terry Davidson, an abuser named Wally recounts his violence: “I felt all fogged up, in a rage. I don’t know why. Lack of trust, I guess. I went there, grabbed her by the hair. She screamed ... I don’t remember hitting her, but our friends stopped it” (41). While this can be read as a denial of violence, it can also be read as a post-traumatic syndrome. In her clinical research, Aliya Weberman (2019) found that intimate partner abusers who had childhood adversity and neglect showed “dissociative symptoms” including ‘amnesia, blackouts, depersonalization, derealization, flashbacks, and aggressive self-states” (11). While feminist research attributes the interviewees’ loss of control as an excuse for their violence, upon closer examination, it can be read as a trauma-response embedded in a patriarchal culture. Violence is a rhetoric that communicates patriarchal trauma. To undo it, then, requires bearing witness.

Patriarchy and trauma strip people of the ability to express their experiences of developmental, insidious, intergenerational, historical traumas. Researchers of trauma and violence describe the way trauma occludes people from the opportunity to speak out and against those who hurt them. As described by hooks, patriarchy denies men the capability to grieve and mourn (105). Dutton, similarly, writes about the inability to mourn and grieve through his reflection that “Despite this experience of pain, men rarely speak about their history of family abuse” (86). Preventing and intervening in domestic

violence requires giving children, teenagers, young adults, and men, the space to realize and speak their fears anxieties and traumas. It requires the shedding of masculinity and the space to be vulnerable, in the open. Research risks contributing to the silencing of patriarchal trauma and violence, which has implications for both intervention and prevention practices. Sadly, even services that can offer help are not trained to recognize childhood trauma and consequently misdiagnose developmental trauma disorder as a range of other mental disorders, perpetuating cycles of patriarchal and domestic violence.

Chapter Five

Intimate Partner Violence in Law and Order:

The Violence Against Women Acts, STOP Grants, and Narrative Fetishization

The left-hand corner of President Joe Biden's official website holds a block of text which reads "BATTLE *for the SOUL of the NATION*." Outlined on the website is Biden's Vision which includes many plans, among which is "THE BIDEN PLAN TO End Violence Against Women." A webpage dedicated to this plan applauds Biden's fight "against abuses of power" which motivated him to "write and champion the Violence Against Women Act of 1994." In his new presidential role, Biden promises to prioritize passing the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2019, which includes "significant, forward-looking improvements and innovations proposed by advocates, survivors, lawyers, experts, prosecutors, and law enforcement who are in the trenches protecting and supporting survivors." From the ashes of the Trump administration, President Joe Biden promises to lead the state into a triumphant battle against its enemies.

While the Violence against Women Act (VAWA) has provided essential funding for victim services and made attempts at intersectionality, the law responds to tragedy with a morality place. Although legislation is and has been in place to provide victim services and law enforcement, people continue to abuse their partners physically, emotionally, and economically. Further, patriarchal and racist law enforcement and judicial systems continue to perpetrate systemic and individual acts of violence against women, people of color, and gender nonconforming people. Currently, Biden's promise to end violence against women falls in the shadow of failed attempts to pass the Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019 and 2021—a new precedence after the law was previously reauthorized in 2000, 2006, and 2013. Through annual spending bills, lawmakers have approved VAWA

funding cycles, but the latest VAWA rests at a stalemate as lawmakers are unable to settle disputes over convictions right to gun ownership and protections for Native American women.

Feminist, rhetorical, and sociological researchers have both critiqued the VAWA and praised its accomplishments. Building from this literature, this chapter views the VAWA through the perspective of narrative fetishization, a concept first used by historian Eric Santner and later developed by rhetorician Lynn Worsham. As I work my way through feminist and abolitionist research about the VAWA, I posit that the state, in many ways, enacts the same rhetorical gesture of deflecting its own violence by blaming and justifying its violences by criminalizing people. Then, trauma theory sets the foundation for this analysis as I read the law as an act of narrative fetishization that triumphantly and obsessively refines its heroic quest to role as to protect abused people and incarcerate abusive people. To demonstrate the VAWA's narrative fetishization, I limit my analysis to the STOP grants and the formal reports documenting their efficacy in the battle against violence against women. The STOP grants provide funding for Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors that make up the acronym, STOP, which is presumably meant to signify the law's heroic role in STOPping, reducing, and combatting violence against women. Before moving into contemporary literature, however, I describe the historical roots of patriarchal courts in that hold individuals accountable for the very violences that patriarchal cultures motivate.

Panhistorical Deflection of Cultural Violence and Punishment of Individual Violence

Since colonists arrived in the "New World," the primary response to domestic violence—in the forms of wife and child abuse—has been punishment through the court of law. In seventeenth-century colonial Massachusetts, Puritans enacted laws against wife beating and child abuse, were seen as sins and tried in church courts. In churches, the accused would make a confession, and the church would try him. In response to asking "[w]hat is the nature of our tragic flaw as a nation, the flaw that has resulted in our uniquely high levels of criminal violence?," Gilligan writes, "I would describe the flaw as a

Puritanical kind of moralism and punitiveness, which is generated by the illusion that ‘we’ have a monopoly on the knowledge of good and evil” (246). Rather than considering the way religious patriarchy moved husbands to abuse their wives and children, these courts upheld the patriarchal order by casting individual people as abusive sinners. In many ways, the court of law enacts this same structure as it criminalizes intimate partner violence and in doing so affirms its own self-righteousness.

While Puritans were outspoken against and punished domestic violence, the turn to the eighteenth-century saw the rise of individualism, which moved the states to consider intimate partner violence as a “private matter.” American Historian Ruth L. Bloch writes that following the American Revolution, revolutionary ideals about individual liberty took hold in courts of law, and legal consideration of abuse as a public offense lost relevance. While abusive husbands could be tried in local courts, for men to be convicted wives had *prove* that their husband threatened death or permanent injury. In 1776, a problem of wife abuse is apparent in Abigail Adams handwritten letter to her husband, John Quincy Adams. The letter urges him to “remember the ladies. ... Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of husbands,” who would all “by tyrants if they could.” In response, John Quincy Adams writes, “[a]s to your extraordinary code of laws, I cannot help but laugh.” A woman asks for “protection” of her own freedom from her husband John, who laughs.

Nearly seventy-five years later, Elizabeth Cady Stanton published the 1848 the Declaration of Sentiments, which publicly decried and protested husband abuse including man’s “repeated injuries and usurpations” toward woman and chastisement” of wives by husbands. The Sentiments, however, advocated legal protection for a limited group of people understood as “ladies,” as observed by Angela Davis, who explains that the Sentiments “proposed an analysis of the female condition which disregarded the circumstances of women outside the social class of the document’s framers” (58). Along with ignoring the domestic lives of nonwhite, rural, and poor women, the Sentiments expresses white supremacy as it states “[t]hat woman is man’s equal—was intended to be so by the Creator,

and the highest good of the race demands that she should be recognized as such" (3). Such appeals are also apparent in an 1865 letter, Stanton claims, "[w]ith the black man, we have no new element in government, but with the education and elevation of women, we have a power that is to develop the Saxon race into a higher and nobler life and thus, by the law of attraction, to lift all races to a more even platform that can ever be reached in the political isolation of the sexes" (Davis 77). Stanton suggests that by elevating Saxon white women, the Saxon race will more generally be "higher and nobler" and thus better situated to "lift the races." As Stanton and her social-political circle sought to improve the lives of "women," in the homeland and its home, they reified patriarchy as the highest and noblest of the races.

As white women sought protection from their husbands abuse and ignored nonwhite and poor women, the south elaborated what historian Nancy Cott calls the 'domestic metaphor,' which was an image of "a beautifully articulated, patriarchal society in which every southerner, black or white, male or female, rich or poor, had an appropriate place and was happy in it" (160). Beneath the surface of this ideal domestic portrait, middle and upper-class women were discontent and imbued with the role of motherhood. An Alabama woman wrote that "There is no question of what she can bear, but what she is obliged to bear in her position as wife and mother, she has her troubles which man, the stronger, can never know. Many annoying things to woman pass unnoticed by those whose thoughts and feelings naturally lead them beyond their homes" (Cott 163).

The persistence of domestic violence and white women ignoring Black women reached into the early twentieth-century. Activist and suffragette Mary Terrell describes domestic violence, devastating living conditions, and claims that "[o]ne of the difficulties under which colored women labor is their inability to inform white women about conditions which confront them, so that few of the latter know the facts." Around the same time Mary Terrell publicly addressed white women, the federal government published a racist report about the domestic lives of Native American people. The 1928 Meriam Report:

The Problem of Indian Administration explains that “[a] relatively small number of Indians make the transition from primitive to civilized life successfully; the great majority tend to shift from primitive ways to the ways of the poorest and least enterprising of the white population” (547). The document directly opposes the primitive to the civilized, claiming that few Indians make the transition “successfully.” The report describes Native American homes as “characterized by poor structure, poor repair, overcrowding, lack of sanitation, and bad housekeeping” (547). About women’s domestic status, the document reports that “the women are poor homemakers. Whether due to physical inability, lack of training, discouragement, or general shiftlessness, the idleness of the housewives of many tribes constitutes a barrier to the improvement of home conditions” (547). The report tropes Native American people as primitive and blames them for their poor, unsanitary, and overcrowded households. It tropes Native Women as poor homemakers, physically disabled, unskilled, shiftless, and ideal. The U.S. government systematically sought to destroy Native people’s connections to each other, the land, and all of their relations and then blamed and them from the horrific conditions the state put them into.

While some men were fined and imprisoned in the 19th and 20th centuries, legal scholar Carolyn B. Ramsey argues that sympathy for battered women especially declined in the twentieth century. In response to apathy and inaction by police and the legal system, and alongside feminist and Civil Rights awakenings, the Battered Women’s Movement sought to make domestic violence *visible* and demanded accountability in the forms of legal and police reform. Patriarchal cultures and institutions continue to haunt this homeland its homes.

Violence against Women Act: Prison Industrial Complex, Carceral Feminism, and Paternal Protections

Since the passage of the VAWA, feminist research, including intersectional feminist research has critiqued the relationship between the Battered Women’s Movement and the law. Professor of law Leigh Goodmark writes about “dominance feminism” that paradoxically critiques patriarchy yet rely on patriarchal systems to assuage domestic violence. Rhetorician Carolina Joan (Kay) Picart argues that the

VAWA perpetuates a paternalist and patriarchal stance as it promises to “protect” victims by locking bad men away. Kristin Bumiller also critiques bureaucratic and institutional responses to sexual violence as she argues that its rational language and administrative response leads to increased state surveillance that both targets “dangerous predators” and privileges “ideal victims” who in this response are dependent upon the state for protection. The state directs its paternalism toward some, inflicts violence toward others, and the cultural and institutional violence that contributes to direct violence remain buried beneath the surface of individual acts of violence.

One of the most glaring issue with the VAWA is its embeddedness within the historical racial violence of the prison system. State agents have historically criminalized Black citizens, policed Black neighborhoods, and unjustly put Black men and men of color into for-profit prisons. In other words, the VAWA is indicative of the prison industrial complex, which the Critical Resistance collective defines as “the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social and political problems” (Davis et al. 43). The 1994 is not a stand-alone law but rather part of the 1994 law titled “Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994.” This law was part of Bill Clinton’s tough on crime platform to police and take a tough on crime approach—a continuation of the policies developed by the Johnson, Nixon, and Reagan administrations. The tough on crime movement mobilized the carceral state through the policing of Black and Brown neighborhoods and mass incarceration.

In its first two iterations, the VAWA offered grants to States, Indian tribal governments, and local governments to implement mandatory arrest policies. In doing so, it created the conditions for law enforcement to arrest people who called for help, no matter the circumstances. Sociologist Nancy Researchers critiqued the carceral policies that both reduced victim agency and criminalized nonwhite men (Whittier). Although the policies were eliminated from the 2006 reauthorization, many states still have mandatory state policies. The South Carolina state law, for example, mandates that police officers

arrest in cases of physical injury or probable cause that a person has “freshly” committed a misdemeanor/felony assault or battery. If there is probable cause but no physical injury, the officer may arrest the abusive person. In cases of “mutual accusations,” there is “a policy of determination,” which can lead to both people being arrested. Rhetorician Christine Shearer-Creman (2004) describes police protocol as a ceremonial and “ritual-like investigation for cause as a search for truth.” Ceremonial police protocol, includes the search for injury or probably cause, looks for bruises and blood. Using French theorist Michel Foucault, Shearer-Creman compares the investigation for cause as a search for truth. The protocol Shearer-Creman argues, “glosses” and “massages” abused women’s stories. Shearer-Creman questions what it would like if victims wrote reports, or if reports were written *for* victims. The ceremonial search for truth is a patriarchal pathology as stage agents look to find truth in that which is largely invisible.

While mass incarceration and state treatment of domestic violence is itself a form of violence, shifts in protocol have created the conditions for law enforcement to appropriately identify and respond to dangerous or lethal situations. The Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) is a tool developed by domestic violence advocate, nurse, and professor Jacquelyn Campbell. It is an 11-part questionnaire used by police officers at the scene of an IPV incident and to identify if intimate partners are at risk of being killed. The program begins with a law enforcement questionnaire, which asks the “victim-survivor” if their partner has used or threatened them with a weapon, threatened to kill them, or if they believe their partner is capable of killing them. Eight other questions follow: if the abusive person has access to guns, has strangled her, if they have recently separated, if their partner exhibits extreme jealousy or controlling behaviors, is unemployed, and if they have threatened or attempted suicide. Each of these questions are asked because researchers identify them has increasing the risk for “intimate partner femicide.” If a victim is identified as high risk, law enforcement officer calls an advocate and encourages the victim to speak with the advocate. From there, the advocate encourages crisis counseling and

shelter. Amy D. Prosen and Mary Lay Schuster (2018) argue that legal rhetoric is patriarchal rhetoric, but they also note that the LAP shifted protocol toward a better understanding of both abusive people and abused people. In doing so, they discuss the power of genres to influence such changes. Yet still, many states and localities have not integrated the LAP into practice, and the LAP research constructs victims as “she,” which can contribute the failure for both law enforcement and abused people to identify nonheteronormative interpersonal violence as legitimate interpersonal violence. While such tools are necessary in the contemporary State, these responses are ultimately band aids on the festering wound that is intimate partner violence, and all the cultural, state, and direct police biases apply when police officers encounter scenes of domestic abuse.

For many, police officers symbolize oppression and violence, and they do not want to put their partners or themselves in harms way. Filing reports against “lovers,” for example, goes against Native American traditional laws of compassion; thus, “[f]or her to go the law and report or sign a complaint is practically unheard of” (274). Her statement reflects a larger issue about people reaching out to law enforcement—in many ways they are unable, and in many ways they do not want to because they are intimately entangled with their partners. As Louise Snyder states, “[I]ove is what makes domestic violence different than any other crime” (64). Along with love is the fear that many people have of their abusers. In addition to individual attachments to intimately abusive people, are attachments to communities. Given the historical violence of law enforcement toward nonwhite people, many are reluctant to turn their partners over to an abusive state—both for their partners safety and their own safety. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1994) exposes the ways that the intersections of racism and sexism makes nonwhite women’s experience of domestic violence different from others. She cites, for example, that nonwhite communities suppress domestic violence to avoid reifying “a larger script that consistently portrays Black and other minority communities as pathologically violence” (1256). Undocumented women are also vulnerable as they risk deportation if they file a report with law enforcement. Catherine

Donovan and Rebecca Barnes also cis and heteronormative public narratives “acts as a barrier to recognizing DVA, both for LGB and/or T+ people themselves and for help providers” (11). Thus, while law enforcement and shelters help some, they are exclusionary, out of reach, or not an option for others.

In many ways, the carceral approach, like people who abuse their partners, deflects the very violences that it enacts. In her own experience of experience of incarceration, abolition feminist Monica Cosby realized and then elaborated the connections between state violence and intimate partner violence by applying the Duluth power and control wheel to the structures of prison violence. Through this brilliant perspective by incongruity, Cosby compares, for example, emotional abuse by intimate partners to emotional abuse by correctional officers; she compares coercion and threats in the home to coercion and threats in the prison which includes threats to call the tactical team, threats to lose visits or programming, threats of segregation (174). While Cosby compares the prison system as it internally treats its prisoners to abusive people who abuse their intimate partners, I would also consider the State as doing the same as it deflects its own violence as it criminalizes intimate partner violence. In doing so, the state deflects, denies, and minimizes its abuse for the purposes of maintaining the paternal façade identified by feminist researchers.

Through surveillance, the state mimics the acts of an intimately abusive person. In her analysis of intimate partner violence, rhetorician Linda Day identifies voyeurism as an act through which people attempt to maintain control over their partners. Another way to consider voyeurism is through “surveillance,” which researchers often describe as a form of state violence. As abusive people surveil their intimate partners, they abuse them and then deny their own acts of violence. In their description of the prison industrial complex, the Critical Resistance Collective imply this pattern of violence and denial as they write that the prison industrial complex describes “the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic,

social and political problems.” As cyclical or coercive controllers surveil, police, and imprison their intimate partners and then deny or justify their acts, the state does the same as it blames and holds individuals accountable for the violent conditions it upholds.

Law enforcement and victim services are surface level responses to unacknowledged and sedimented historical cultural, institutional, and direct violence. As shown at the beginning of this chapter, courts of law have historically deflected their own cultural and institutional violences while promising paternal protection of victims. Both James Gilligan and Angela Davis et al. describe the way that the state deflect its own violence. Through a collective “we” that identifies, perhaps, patriarchal culture, Gilligan writes, “[w]e all too often use to rationalize, justify, and conceal, from ourselves and others, our own violence toward those we have and wish to punish” (14). Research and advocates often identify this rationalization, justification, and concealing of violence in context of abusive people, but here, Gilligan describes it as a function of the state judicial system. Uncannily, tropes used to describe abusive people also comes up in Davis et al’s comments about the state. They write that the “criminal legal system so profoundly masks the harm that it produces that even when people are not helped by the system, the system is never held responsible for its failings and the individual is instead at fault” (112). In this claim about the state, they identify the same “mask” that Donald Dutton identifies in context of cyclical abusers. As abusive people deny, rationalize, and minimize their violences, the state does the same through narrative fetishization. The law—as a patriarchal order itself—responds to cultural trauma through the narrative mode of narrative fetishization that reproduces itself while further repressing historical patriarchal trauma and violence.

Narrative Fetishization and the Patriarchal State

Domestic violence—by the homeland and in its homes—is an American psychic wound. Denying its vulnerability and enacting violence is a cycle that has been in motion since settlers first arrived to these shores. Through violence toward women, nonwhite, others, patriarchs asserts their power

through violence and control. In “Violence, Mourning, Politics,” Judith Butler describes the nationalist motions of patriarchy, posits a psyche of the homeland. She writes, “[n]ations are not the same as individual psyches, but both can be described as ‘subjects,’ albeit of different orders” (41). Like intimate abusers—and many of us who have been cultured in this ecology of violence—the nation refuses vulnerability and fantasizes mastery. Through the post 9/11 War on Terror, Butler views the United States as an extra-legal subject that “shores itself up, seeks to reconstitute its imagined wholeness, but only at the price of denying its own vulnerability, its dependency, its exposure, where it exploits those very features in others, thereby making those features ‘other to’ itself” (41). The nation—and its patriarchal ghosts—have always denied its vulnerability, covered its exposure, enacted hysterical violence. The patriarchal actors in the homeland model the patriarchal actors in homes; patriarchal actors in homes model patriarchal actors in the homeland. Cynthia Haynes describes homeland *security* as seeking to protect a homeland that is home/sick. It has to protect its ego, act outs and imagine its wholeness as it denies its vulnerability.

In its will to wholeness and integrity, the State narratively fetishizes its response to intimate partner violence. It postures to save women and children, to protect the American family. In “History Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Some Thoughts on the Representation of Trauma,” Eric Santner defines narrative fetishization as the “construction and deployment of a narrative consciously or unconsciously designed to expunge the traces of the trauma or loss that called that narrative into being in the first place” (144). Narrative fetishization is a heroic narrative that postures conquest and buries its trauma. Butler adeptly illustrates the concept of narrative fetishization as she describes the September 11th, 2001 attacks on the United States and George Bush’s claim, on September 21st, that “we have finished grieving and that *now* it is time for resolute to take the place of grief” (29). Rather than taking the time to grieve its grave vulnerabilities and national trauma, the U.S asserted its power and control. While Butler does not identify this as narrative fetishization she does characterize it as a refusal to mourn—or

integrate—the trauma. The opposition between narrative fetishization and mourning is central to Santner’s conceptualization of narrative fetishization. He writes it “is the way an inability or refusal to mourn enacts traumatic events; it is a strategy of undoing, in fantasy, the need for mourning by simulation a condition of intactness, typically by situating the site and origin of loss elsewhere (144). Narrative fetishization claims its triumph of the exposure without taking the time to process, re-externalize, and work through it with the other—with those who suffer. “What will it take us to encounter one another?” Butler asks. Instead of encountering the other the state uses them in its pithy soundbites, its promises of wholeness. Rather than bearing witness to the trauma, it overcomes it, asserts the violence as external rather than integral to the self. In doing so narrative fetishization reifies the trauma and its violence.

In context of the VAWA, the reification of the trauma and violence are evident in the ongoing rates of domestic and sexual violence; the ongoing need for training and policy, shelters and beds, the act to refine expand develop improve the law. Rhetoric and composition scholar Lynn Worsham describes narrative fetishization as a process that “substitutes for the painful work of mourning the pleasure of narrative, the pleasure that this genre provides through its power to compose—and indeed, impose—a sense of order, sequence, causality, coherence, and completion” (719). The VAWA and its reauthorizations create order and coherence, completion and causality through its technical language that seeks to master domestic violence and simulate “a condition of wholeness” (719). It posits to reach nonwhite, rural, immigrant women. Its latest version calls victims not victims but victim/survivors, the state as paternal protector. Reading the VAWA through the theory of narrative fetishization places historical patriarchal trauma and violence—and its absence—at center stage as the VAWA performs wholeness as discursive event.

The VAWA, Law Enforcement, and Victim Services

The laws are impressive legal documents, written in a tangle of bureaucratic and formal legal language. While the 1994 VAWA is often championed as the law addressing sexual and domestic violence, prior to the VAWA, the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act addressed domestic violence as family violence. The VAWA amends the FVPSA and others; the law is a complex network, amending past laws. The structure of the laws demonstrates that its priority is to hold abusers accountable. The 1994 law begins with “Federal Penalties for Sex Crimes,” which amends Chapter 109A of title 18, United States Code. The amendment updates sentence guidelines for different types of offenders including repeat offenders, offenders known by their victims, and offenders on Federal territory (1994 108). The chapter then covers mandatory restitution which requires that defendants pay victims for financial losses suffered from medical services, physical or occupational therapy, housing, transportation, joblessness, and attorneys’ and courts’ fees (1994 109). The second chapter outlines stipulations for law enforcement and prosecution grant.

The first chapter of Subtitle B—Safe Homes for Women—moves into interface enforcement after quickly outlining a domestic violence hotline grant, and then moves into restitution and grants to encourage arrest policies. With these beginning sections, the law demonstrates its position: abusive people are responsible and will face legal repercussion for their acts. The discourse does what media scholars identify as media doing as it separates itself from others and responsible for restitution. The first chapter equates justice with restitution from perpetrators, as though that can in some way provide justice to those whose partners turned on them, whose partners will be taken away. Another priority of the law is to provide funding for victim services. By providing large sums of money to subgrantees, the state funds police training, improvement of databases, shelters, the national domestic violence hotline and domestic violence coalitions. With each passing of the VAWA, the state refines and expands its reach and funding. The STOP grants encapsulate these two priorities as they provide grants for Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors. Focusing on the STOP grants allows a fuller view of narrative

fetishization in the VAWA, which as apparent as it denies holistic vulnerability and seeks to master the text.

STOP Grants, Narrative Fetishization, and Law Enforcement

The 1994 Violence against Women Act has 7 major sections with policies that respond to domestic and sexual violence. The first section is Subtitle A—Safe Streets for Women, and the second, Subtitle B, is Safe Homes for Women. Thus, the two first major sections list ways they will help to create safe streets and safe homes—two sites of violence against women. Although the STOP grants are in the “Safe Streets for Women” subtitle, the STOP grants fund training, enforcement initiatives, and victim services for both sexual and domestic violence. The remainder of this chapter first examines the STOP grants as they relate to enforcement initiatives and second as they relates to victim services. I examine each law and the reports that follow to demonstrate its cyclical narrative fetishization.

The STOP grants amends Title 1 of the 1968 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act, which demonstrates that the VAWA is contextualized not only within the “Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994” but also embedded in a crime law that precedes it by nearly 30 years. Subtitle A, Chapter 2, Sec. 40121 adds Part T, “Law Enforcement and Prosecution Grants to Reduce Violent Crimes against Women” to Title I of the 1968. The purpose of the 1968 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Acts is to assist State law enforcement with their efforts to prevent crime and ensure the safety of its citizens. The amendment to add Part T to Title 1 of the 1968 law states its purpose is to:

“assist States, State and local courts (including juvenile courts), Indian tribal governments, tribal courts, and units of local government to develop and strengthen effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies to combat violent crimes against women, and develop and strengthen victim services in cases involving violent crimes against women” (1994 115).

With the addition of Part T, Congress refines the 1968 law by offering grants to help State, local, and tribal governments and courts combat violent crimes against women. In a clause ending the sentence,

Part T also declares grants to develop and strengthen victim services. The addition of Part T suggests that law enforcement agencies and judicial courts lack the means to reduce violence against women. While the federal government agrees to train law enforcement and prosecution strategies for the purposes of combatting violence against women, the training is vague and leaves out mention of the historical patriarchal and racial biases of the legal system and its enforcers.

Between the 1968 law and the 1994 law was the 1984 Family Violence Prevention and Services Act also purports to improve police response to violence in the home, yet it responds to family rather than domestic violence. The act states its purpose is to

provide technical assistance and training related to family violence programs to States, local public agencies (including law enforcement agencies), nonprofit private organizations, and other persons seeking such assistance (1984 9).

Here, the law offers grants to law enforcement and public agencies in need of training regarding family violence programs. The 1984 law finally legitimizes and acknowledges violence against women. Absent, however, is this history that denied and trivialized violence against women. Rather the same institution that denied patriarchal domestic violence now purports to heroically protect women by developing safe streets and homes.

While Sec. 40121 defines the general program purpose of Part T, it is followed by an itemized list that more specifically describes the purposes for which the grants may be used. Regarding law enforcement and prosecution, these include:

(1) training law enforcement officers and prosecutors to more effectively identify and respond to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence;

(2) developing and training and expanding units of law enforcement and prosecutors specifically targeting violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence;

The first two means to combat violence against women include training not only police and prosecutors but also developing specialized law enforcement and prosecution units. The following purposes include:

(3) developing and implementing more effective police and prosecution policies, protocols, orders, and services specifically devoted to preventing, identifying, and responding to violence crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence;

(4) developing, installing, or expanding data collection and communication systems, including computerized systems, linking police, prosecutors, and courts for the purpose of identifying and tracking arrests, protection orders, violations of protection orders, prosecutions, and convictions for violent crimes against women (1994 116).

Along with training and developing units, the grants offer funding to develop policy and protocols that prevents, identifies, and responds to sexual and domestic violence. Finally, the grants fund organizational development of databases, communication technologies, and computer systems that identify, record, and transmit arrest and prosecution information. The structure of the itemized list demonstrates its priority falls in the law enforcement arena. Together the four items offer money to develop specialized training programs, units, policy, and data management. With these four grant opportunities, the federal government helps combat violence against women. The words suggest refinement—developing, implementing, training, installing, expanding, linking.

As part of the stipulation of offering grants, the law requires that the Attorney General submits a report to the House and Senate Judiciary Committees no more than 180 days after the end of each fiscal year. These reports detail grant distributions and how they were used. While details and analysis from

each report is beyond the scope of this chapter, snippets from the last fiscal year of the 1994 law as it pertains to law enforcement and prosecution detail some of the accomplishments of the bill. The 2000 report states that:

“The U.S. Attorney’s Office in *Washington, D.C.*, increased the number of domestic violence cases charged by 76 percent, the number of domestic violence cases tried by 76 percent, and the number of domestic violence cases resulting in conviction by 324 percent since receiving STOP funding” (14)

“The Special Prosecution Division of *Westchester County, New York*, reported more than a 25 percent increase in the number of domestic violence cases tried and resulting in conviction as a result of STOP” (14-15)

“Three law enforcement agencies in the 1999 Underserved Survey increased domestic violence arrests by over 40 percent, and two increased sexual arrests by over 65 percent” (15).

“The Lakewood Police Department in *Lakewood, Colorado*, has experienced impressive increases in the number of calls and requests for referrals received by its STOP-funded mobile response unit” (16).

The report boasts of the increase in enforcement and prosecution, calls and referral request rates. The accomplishments include increasing arrests, convictions, and services. “Safe homes” were created by removing abusers from homes and placing them into an institution that enacts its own form of domestic violence. An eye for an eye. Separation and incarceration is not always in the interest of the abusive person. It can fuel the trauma. Davis et. al write, “the short-term relief associated with state arrest and punishment is not always (or even usually) what survivors of violence want; it does not involve them in decision-making” (116). Yet, the state applauds its impressive increases in arrests and calls.

Along with demonstrating its accomplishments with data, the report does expose some of the areas in need of improvement. It describes, for example, police officers who closed their eyes during training sessions and made inappropriate comments to each other (2000 37). Further, it reports that 30 respondents identified law enforcement agencies as the weakest link in Community Coordination Response teams due to insensitivity, bias, and negativity toward victims. It also reports a law enforcements tendency to not take domestic violence seriously and bias against underserved populations (34). While this report includes a section that details areas in need of improvement, later reports omit the section that exposes weaknesses. The answer to the problems identified is, in 2000 reauthorization, more refinement, more fetishization.

The 2000 Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization structurally reorganizes and renames the first two sections of the 1994 VAWA, and in doing so, asserts its strength. Rather than beginning with the same first two section subtitles, Safe Streets for Women and Safe Homes for Women, the law begins with Title I and Title II: “Strengthening Law Enforcement to Reduce Violence against Women” and “Strengthening Services to Victims of Violence.” Beginning with law enforcement again demonstrates the bill’s priority to prosecute perpetrators. Rather than promising safe places for women (the streets and the home), the law strengthens its response to domestic violence—an interesting turn as it promises response but not safe places.

Amendments to the 2000 STOP grants include syntactical revisions and additional statutes to the itemized list. The amendment adds that STOP grants may also be used for:

“(8) supporting formal and informal statewide, multidisciplinary efforts, to the extent not supported by State funds, to coordinate the response of State law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts, victim services agencies, and other State agencies and departments, to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, and dating violence;”

(10) developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs to assist law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, and others to address the needs and circumstances of older and disabled women who are victims of domestic violence or sexual assault, including recognizing, investigating, and prosecuting instances of such violence or assault and targeting outreach and support, counseling, and other victim services to such older and disabled individuals; and” (2000 1509).

With these amendments, the 2000 reauthorization allows STOP funding to be used to coordinate multidisciplinary responses to violence, responding to the 2000 report’s identification of needing uniformed and informed responses by agencies. Statute 8 reflects the need for protocol to travel across different entities through a communication network. While Statute (8) states that grants can be used to develop communication and protocol across different disciplines, statute (4) states that grants can be used to communicate information and prosecution and arrest across law enforcement entities. While these grants to develop communication are in place, Rachel Louise Synder, in *No Visible Bruises* (2019) writes that if she “had to whittle down the changing world of domestic violence to just one idea that made all the difference, it would be communication. Across bureaucracies, certainly, but also political ideologies and programs, people and systems and disciplines” (276). Synder identifies structural problem that exceeds the need to support, coordinate, develop, enlarge, and strengthen communication technologies.

The 10th statute declares that the grants can be used to fund programs that serve elderly and disabled populations. Thus, the law admits a lack in police response to disabled and older people alongside minority and rural groups addressed in the first law. The victims do not fit the model of the “ideal victim.” The statute acknowledges ableism, ageism, racism of its institutions, suggesting that institutional training and outreach programs can solve these deeply rooted problems.

The 2006 report differs from the 2000 report by not including recommendations nor details from site visits that offer any kind of critique. In fact, the two main chapters report the program “effectiveness” and “accomplishments.” The 2006 report comes out of the Bush Administration and a Republican majority Congress, and the report emphasizes its pro-arrest stance, stating that “The STOP Program promotes a proactive, thorough police response to violence against women, with the aim of increasing the likelihood of arrests” (24). Snippets from the 2006 report include:

- “Law enforcement officers funded under the STOP program in 2005 responded to approximately 119,000 calls for assistance from domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking victims. They responded and prepared incident reports in 120,600 cases, investigated more than 122,000 cases, arrested 44,500 predominant aggressors . . . and referred more than 48,000 cases to prosecutors. Officers funded by the STOP Program served more than 31,000 protection/restraining orders, arrested offenders for 6,000 violations of court orders, and enforced more than 14,000 warrants” (25).
- “742 [subgrantees] addressed law enforcement response and 371 addressed identifying and arresting the prominent aggressor in training; 155 addressed identifying the primary aggressor and 121 addressed prearrest policies in development/implementation . . . Of all 385 subgrantees using funds for law enforcement activities, 232 (60 percent) also used funds for training and/or policy development/implementation” (25)
- “Prosecutors funded under the STOP Program received nearly 150,000 cases of domestic violence, sexual assault, and charging consideration and filed charges in approximately 115,000 (77 percent) of those cases. In contrast to this statistic, a study conducted in Minneapolis in the early 1980s showed that fewer than 2 percent of those arrested for domestic violence were ever

prosecuted” (26)

- “Nearly 60 percent of the courts receiving STOP Program funding . . . conducted judicial monitoring activities of convicted offenders, holding an average of 1.7 hearings per offender for 6,700 offenders during calendar year 2005. These courts held offenders accountable by imposing sanctions for violations and probation conditions and other court orders” (29)

The report commends the work that organizations have done but also renders absent the number of counties and cities that do not use grants. Rather than comparing the numbers to programs who do not use the grants, the report compares the numbers to other STOP subgrantees. The majority of the grants fund tools to incriminate individual offenders and save individual victims. So still, the response treats symptoms of a pathology rather than treating its source. While safety is of utmost importance, the report applauds its accomplishments rather than mourning its failures. The report does not take a moment to dwell in the state of extraordinary loss. It takes no pause.

With the 2006 reauthorization, the cogs of refinement continue to turn. For the first time, the law stands alone rather than buried within another law. The new law revises the titles of the first two major sections; the law now first promises to *strengthen* rather than *enhance* law enforcement, to *combat* rather than *reduce* violence against women. While combat can signify prevention or reduction, to combat strongly connotes a fight between two forces. The 2006 revision of the 2000 subtitles solidifies the heroic role of United States federal government, further fetishizing its response.

Communication scholar Marie Enck-Wanzer’s research determines that popular culture often illustrates domestic violence through a metaphor of war. The war metaphor structures American understandings of domestic violence, leading them to view perpetrators as enemies, the State and its appendages as military agents. For Enck-Wanzer’s, the war trope distorts perpetrators, reducing them to the category of enemy (125). Consequently, popular culture silences the structures that enable and encourage abuse.

Like popular culture, the law silences patriarchal structures that enable and encourage abuse. Further, the law and its subsequent report boasts of its heroic deeds. By changing from combat to reduce, the law makes no promise to decrease the number of assaults and abuse; rather, it strengthens its arsenal and poises itself for battle.

The 2006 amendments primarily grant funding for the victim services, which I cover in the next section of this chapter. One 2006 addition to the purposes for which STOP grant can be used, however, allocates funding to be used for both law enforcement *and* victim services. Under Statute 14, the law hereby declares that STOP grants may also be used:

(14) to provide funding to law enforcement agencies, non-profit nongovernmental victim services providers, and State, tribal, territorial, and local governments, (which funding stream shall be known as the Crystal Judson Domestic Violence Program) to promote—

(A) the development and implementation of training for local victim domestic violence service providers, and to fund victim services personnel, to be known as ‘Crystal Judson Victim Advocates,’ to provide supportive services and advocacy for victims of domestic violence committed by law personnel;

(B) the implementation of protocols within law enforcement agencies to ensure consistent and effective responses to the commission of domestic violence by personnel within such agencies (such as the model policy promulgated by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (‘Domestic Violence by Police Officers, A Policy of the IACP, Police Response to Violence against Women Project’ July 2003));

(C) the development of such protocols in collaboration with State, tribal, territorial and local victim service providers and domestic violence coalitions” (2006 14)

Following the additional use for which STOP grants can be used, the statute includes a clause declaring that any agency that receives funds under the Crystal Judson Domestic Violence Program must receive annual training about officers who abuse their intimate partners. The 14th statute, which “shall be known as the Crystal Judson Domestic Violence Program,” is named after Crystal Judson Brame. In 2003, David Brame fatally shot his ex-wife Crystal and then himself. While David was a violent individual, the police agency has also been accused of structural violence. According to [The Seattle Times](#), David was promoted to Tacoma Police Chief despite an alleged failed psychological test and rape accusations. The family pressed charges against Pierce County for failing to investigate Brame’s abuse allegations, for failing to protect her, and for intimidating her during their divorce, which exhibits the ways that patriarchal cultural violence is enacted through patriarchal institutional violence. The use of Crystal Judson Brame’s name in this statute a sentimental gesture that does not take accountability. Part B is a wordy tangle that deflects the need for protocol that prevents institutional violence. In their analysis of intimate abuser rhetorics, rhetoricians Adams, Town, and Gavey find that abusive people often expressed reference ambiguity, which muddles or deflects one’s account of abuse. Here, again, the language of the state mirrors the language of intimate abuser rhetorics. The report following this 2006 amendment does not mention the Crystal Judson Domestic Violence Program.

With each funding cycle, money filters to both old and new purpose, and the laws keep attempting to refine the police force, communication systems, prosecution, enforcement, and collaboration, continuing to fetishize the State’s heroism. Like the 2000 and 2006 reports, the 2012 STOP Report Part B evaluates STOP subgrantees activities. The document reports rates that demonstrate the 2009 and 2010 “Effectiveness of the STOP Program” and, like the 2006 report, concluding with rates displaying STOP Program Aggregate Accomplishments. Some numbers from the 2012B report include:

- “During calendar years 2009 and 2019, an average of 296 subgrantees (13 percent of all subgrantees reporting) used STOP Program funds for activities carried out by law enforcement personnel, with an average of 262 FTEs per reporting period” (58).
- “Subgrantees also took part in the following activities to improve response and arrests of offenders: an average (per reporting period) of 288 used funds to develop, expand, or train specialized law units; 624 provided training on law enforcement response; 306 addressed identifying and addressing the predominant aggressor in training; 112 developed and/or implemented policies that addressed identification of the primary aggressor; and 83 developed or implemented pro-arrest policies” (58)

Like the others, the document reports improvements across law enforcement, including their responses, arrests, trainings, and policies. It uses research to commend the police force and encourage practices that lead to the best outcomes for survivors in the legal system, such as a 2012 study in New Haven, CT which found that 20 percent of victims visited by a police and advocate team for follow up did not need further intervention, whereas 40 percent of victims visited by only law enforcement needed repeat intervention. The report also cites the efficacy of collaboration across police forces, domestic violence coalitions, and research institutions including The Lethality Assessment Program (LAP), which is a research-based survey that allows first responders to assess the lethality of a domestic violence case. It also lauds the STOP subgrantees number of Full Time Employees (FTE). Recommendations for research-based tools such as the LAP is incredibly important as it does provide the means to better identify severe cases of intimate partner violence. Still, the report does not ponder the structures that contribute to those who are never reached.

While the 2012-B report narrates its accomplishments, under the Barack Obama administration, the report also reinscribes “remaining areas of need” as reported by state STOP grant administrators. The

section, which was included in the 2000 evaluation and removed from the 2006 evaluation, identifies the following remaining areas of need in context of the legal sphere:

- Offender accountability
- Training of law enforcement and the judiciary
- Improving coordinated community response among victim service providers and the criminal justice system, especially for sexual assault (2012B 80).

The list of needs demonstrates the stance that offenders must be held accountable for their individual acts of violence, and that enforcement must continue with their training. It also identifies a lack in law enforcement and a need to coordinate law enforcement with victim service provides and the criminal justice system. The report, and the ones that precede it, do not identify the needs of counties who do not use STOP grants. It does not gaze into the amount of deaths and cases of abuse reported those years, the amount of murder-suicides. It does not mandate state policies; it makes recommendations. Rather, the report further reifies its approach that fights enemies and rescues victims.

Like the 2012 report, the 2016 report includes data demonstrating the efficacy and accomplishments of the grants. Training, Policies, and Law Enforcement “Accomplishments” include:

- “574, or 24% of subgrantees, used funds to develop and implement more effective police, court, and prosecution policies specifically addressing violent crimes against women” (34).
- “213, or 9% of subgrantees, used funds to support data and communication systems that link police, prosecutors, and courts to assist them in identifying and tracking arrest, protection orders and violations of orders, prosecutions, and convictions for crimes against women” (34).
- “An annual average of 312 subgrantees, or 13% of all subgrantees, used funds for law enforcement activities”
- “Prosecutors in STOP-funded agencies received a total of 274,939 cases of sexual assault, domestic violence and/or dating violence, and stalking (38)

- “STOP Program-funded prosecution offices showed an overall conviction rate of 67% for cases reaching disposition.” (41)

Like the 2012 report, the 2016 uses research to address problems and the ways the grants offer solutions. The report states that “[g]ender bias affecting law enforcement’s response to domestic violence is a factor impeding the ability to bring offenders to justice . . . In jurisdiction where the discretion of law enforcement is subject to mandatory and preferred arrest laws and policies, arrest practices may compromise the interests of victims of may produce disproportionate arrest rates among marginalized populations, including people of color, and particularly African American men” (34). Here is perhaps a shift toward acknowledgement of the problems of the police force and incarceration system. Yet still, these are recommendations and not requirements. Police training and policies simply cannot redress the historical and deeply rooted biases and violence and incarceration only contributes to cycles of violence.

The remaining areas of need reported by subgrantees are extensive and include needing to hold perpetrators accountable more and increasing training and education. They also report needing more access to Batterer Intervention Programs (69). One perspective reports a lack of clarity in civil protection orders by judges and inexperienced officers who are misinterpret and are reluctant to enforce orders. Another perspective includes needing more training and needing a judicial system that understands such crimes/ The administrator reports needing more training regarding “the nature and dynamics of domestic violence” (71). The 2016 report came after eight years of the Obama administration. In 2016, the Trump administration emerged as an ultimate form of that which the VAWA repressed beneath the surface of its technical approaches.

The 2019 STOP amendments add only one statute that extends the STOP grants reach into law enforcement and prosecution agencies. To the purposes of which STOP grants can be used, the 2019 reauthorization bill adds:

“(21) developing and implementing laws, policies, procedures, or training to ensure the lawful recovery and storage of any dangerous weapon by the appropriate law enforcement agency from an adjudicated perpetrator of any offense of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and the return of any such weapon when appropriate . . .” (2019 19).

Research shows that a perpetrators access to a gun significantly increases a perpetrator’s likelihood of killing his partner. Despite this research, controversy about gun ownership remains one of the hot button issues dividing Americans. It is not until 2019 that a need to confiscate dangerous weapons – guns – is added to the bill. This is a grant opportunity and not a requirement.

The same politicians who would not pass the 2019 bill because it includes the transgender statutes are the same politicians who will not pass the bill because it includes common sense gun reform. These politicians and their followers have purist notions of America, refusing to acknowledge its patriarchal sexism, ableism, racism, and instead praising its foundations of liberty. While they fetishize America, Joe Biden’s promise to swoop in and rescue America from the Trump Administration also fetishizes its past and future use of law enforcement as a praiseworthy means to ending violence against women.

STOP Grants, Narrative Fetishization, and Victim Services

While the STOP grants refine and reauthorize grants to improve law enforcement and prosecution, they also provide grants for victim services. The utmost importance of these grants is without question as they provide desperately needed support to domestic and sexual violence victims. Yet the constant refinement and reauthorization of the same approach coupled with an ongoing demand for these services shows that domestic and sexual violence continues despite the enhancement of tools to combat and reduce violence against women.

The second of Part T of the 1994 STOP grant declares that the grants can be used for the purposes of:

(5) developing, enlarging, or strengthening victim services programs, including sexual assault and domestic violence programs, developing or improving delivery of victim services to racial, cultural, ethnic, and language minorities, providing a specialized domestic violence court advocates in courts where a significant number of protection orders are granted, and increasing and reporting and reducing attrition rates for cases involving violent crimes against women;

(6) developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs addressing stalking; and,

(7) developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs addressing the needs and circumstances of Indian tribes in dealing with violent crimes against women” (116 1994).

Each of these statutes begin with the verbs “developing, enlarging, strengthening” which demonstrate the expansion and refinement of established victim services alongside the development of new ones. The verbs connote a developing army, reminiscent of the soldiers in the trenches as described by Joe Biden’s 2021 website. Like the 1994 VAWA echoes the use of law enforcement in the 1984 Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, it also echoes the priority of victim services. The 1984 law states its purpose is to “(1) demonstrate the effectiveness of assisting States in efforts to prevent family violence and to provide immediate shelter and related assistance for victims of family violence and their dependents” (9 1984). Evidently however the 1994 bill, written ten years later, expands and refines the purpose of the 1984 law, demonstrating the shortcomings of the 1984 approach.

These statutes identify a need to develop and improve ethnic and racial minority services. The 1994 law attempts to be intersectional which is laudable. Yet the law, again, postures that historical biases and violence toward ethnic and racial minorities can be overcome through the development of programs. “Impacts” from the 2000 STOP grant report regarding victim services include:

- “The number of domestic violence victims served annually increased for 29 of the 34 agencies providing domestic violence information. Twelve agencies increased by more than 60 percent,

and eight agencies increased more than 200 percent . . . four provided domestic violence services for the first time” (16)

- “The ACCESS-York, Inc., legal advocacy program at the courthouse in *York, Pennsylvania*, was begun with STOP funding in 1997. Starting from a base of zero, it has served hundreds of women every year, many of whom had no previous contact with victim services” (18).
- “The Ramah Navajo School Board, Inc., in *Pinehill, New Mexico*, used STOP funding to institute a formal domestic violence victim service program for Navajo women. As a result of the outreach and service efforts of STOP-funded staff, the agency has increased the number of domestic violence victims served by 550 percent” (18).

The term impact signifies “The act of impinging; the striking of one body against another; collision” (OED). With this term the report further connotes a battle as it documents successful increases in victim served by warzone fortresses. The 2000 document, published during the Bill Clinton administration, overwhelmingly reports outreach to underserved communities, increases in victims served, and better services. In the war against domestic violence, the STOP grants provide indisputably necessary funding for services, and the document primarily focuses on the successes of these services rather than considering the amount of people who were not reached – as well as the grave reality of the continuous and desperate need for these services. While the report does work to acknowledge limitations and problems, each reauthorization works to train out these biases through programs and training.

The “Violence Against Women Act of 2000” underwent the structural revision described in the previous section which shifts from Safe Streets and Safe Homes to Strengthening Law Enforcement and Services. vision law enforcement and victim services grants were technically split into two sections. Despite the structural revision, some victim services grants remained bound to the STOP grants in the first section. The 2000 STOP grants are amended by adding one victim service among the three new law enforcement statute. This statute declares that STOP grants can be used for

“(11) providing assistance to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in immigration matters.” (2000 1533)

The law’s efforts to assist immigrant victims has roots in the 1994 VAWA which has subtitles A-G. The first two subtitles are A and B, Safe Streets for Women and Safe Homes for Women. G, the seventh subtitle, is titled, “Protections for Battered Immigrant Women and Children.” Subtitle G begins with amendments Section 204(a)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Along with syntactical revisions, the amendment outlines criteria battered immigrant women must meet to avoid deportation.

The clauses added to the Immigration Act combined exclusively use the word “alien” when referencing undocumented immigrant women married to United States citizens – an extremely reductive and violent term that trivializes the plights of immigrant people. The clauses declare that, for “aliens” and their children to bypass deportation, they must be of “good moral character,” have entered their marriage “in good faith,” have been battered or subjected to “extreme cruelty,” and show “extreme hardship” if deported (158). With these criteria and the behaviors reported in the 2000 report, it is no surprise that immigrant women needed the assistance offered in the 11th statute. In one fell swoop, the 1994 law shows offers protection under the condition that undocumented women are good and deserving people in need of a home. Statute 11 offers advocates for undocumented women who must demonstrate their wholesome character to the court. It should go without saying that this patriarchal act fetishizes its role as paternal protector for good women and fails to witness the violence of its words.

The 2006 report removes observations from site visits and remaining areas of need. It outlines distributions of funds and data demonstrating the STOP grant program’s effectiveness and accomplishments. Victim Services from the 2006 report include:

- 268,821 individuals were provided with victim advocacy
- 233,784 victims were provided received hotline calls

- 206,233 received crisis intervention
- 163,522 received criminal justice advocacy
- 150,970 received civil legal advocacy
- 148,632 received counseling/support group
- 143,211 received victim witness notification
- 24,007 received shelter and transitional housing
- 23,216 received civil legal assistance
- 21,170 received hospital accompaniment (22-23).

The report also includes numbers about services provided to minority women:

- “Subgrantees reported serving more than 24,500 victims who were immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers” (40)
- “STOP subgrantees reported serving approximately 26,000 victims with disabilities and more than 15,000 victims over the age of 60—4.4 percent and 3.2 percent, respectively, of all victims served . . . STOP Program subgrantees used their funds to provide training to develop and implement policies on improving the appropriateness and effectiveness of the criminal justice response and the provision of services to older and disabled victims” (39).
- “Eight subgrantees receiving STOP Program funding identified themselves as tribal coalitions or tribal governments . . .” (37).
- “Nearly 800 subgrantees—69 percent of all subgrantees offering training—provided training on issues specific to underserved populations” (36)

Under the conservative Bush administration, the report highlights its successes and erases its failures.

There is no analysis of the data which shows that the majority of women who received services were white women (57.2%) in comparison to the 22% Black women, 18% Hispanic/Latino women, and 2.2% American Indian women who received services – despite the fact that non-White women experience

higher rates of domestic violence than white Women. While each report overwhelmingly lauds its work, the 2000 report, at least, acknowledged “areas of need.” Yet neither of the reports gaze into the people hurt, tortured, and murdered. Neither of the reports dwell with the trauma. Rather, it is buried beneath program successes and failures.

The 2006 STOP grant amendments *enhance* STOP grants and *improves* victim services. It extends its conceptualization of violence against women to include dating violence and stalking among domestic and sexual abuse. Its enhancements including STOP grant funding for:

- “(12) maintaining core victim services and criminal justice initiatives, while supporting complementary new initiatives and emergency services for victims and their families;
- (13) supporting the placement of special victim assistants (to be known as ‘Jessica Gonzales Victim Assistants’) as liaisons between victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking and personnel in local law enforcement agencies in order to improve the enforcement of protection orders. Jessica Gonzales Victim Assistants shall have expertise in domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking . . .” (13 2006)

Part 12 advocates the development of new initiatives and emergency services. “New” initiatives are quite vague and conjure an image of calling into the dark for help out of desperation. It shows a need for these new emergency services along with the needs outlined in the 1994 and 2000 STOP grants.

Statute 13, to be known as the Jessica Gonzales Victim Assistants, is another statute named in honor of a victim who was failed by police officers and agencies. The statute offers STOP grant funding for Jessica Gonzales Victim Assistants who can work with prosecutors, courts, and victim service provides to develop standardized response and policies for identifying and prioritizing potentially lethal cases. Jessica Gonzales Assistants are also bestowed with the power to refer victims seeking protection orders to other services or take “other appropriate action.”

The American Civil Liberty Union’s website informs its readers about Jessica Gonzales vs. U.S.A. Her case begins in 1999, when the Castle Rock, Colorado police department ignored Jessica Gonzales’s pleas to arrest Simon Gonzales, who violated her order of protection and kidnapped their three daughters. For ten hours, the police did nothing, and the following early morning, Jessica Gonzales’ husband drove to the police station and opened fire. After the police shot and killed him, they discovered the bodies of the Jessica and Simon Gonzales’s three daughters. In response to this devastating loss, Jessica Gonzales sued the police department, and the case went to the Supreme Court, where the Court declared that she did not have a constitutional right to police enforcement of her restraining order. Justice Antonio Scalia, in an opinion-editorial, affirmed that police and police forces have the right to use discretion in cases such as these.

Jessica Gonzales and the American Civil Liberty persistently sought judicial recognition, and in 2011, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) found the United States guilty for violating Jessica and her daughters’ human rights. In turn, the ACLU recommended initiatives for better police response. The 13th statute represents the federal government’s reconciliation with their grave misdeed. With the 13th statute, the STOP grants offer funding for Jessica Gonzales Victim Assistants, who shall hereby have expert knowledge along with the power to develop standardized protocol through collaboration with other entities. These special assistants, the law suggests, will help to develop policies perhaps unrealized by the other initiatives to develop uniform policy through STOP grant funding.

The 2012 Report Part B mirrors the structure of the 2006 report in that it the three major sections cover data about grant distribution, demonstrating the effectiveness of the STOP program, and its Aggregate accomplishments includes:

- “STOP Program subgrantees provided services to an average of 452,893 victims/survivors during each reporting period” (34)

- “Of all subgrantees providing services in calendar years 2009 and 2010, 99 percent provided services to victims/survivors in at least one of the underserved categories. Subgrantees used STOP Program funds to provide services to an annual average of 9,169 victims/survivors who were black or African American; 75,897 victims/survivors who were Hispanic or Latino; 6,304 victims/survivors who were Asian; 15,807 victims/survivors who were 60 years of age or older; 24,818 victims/survivors with disabilities; 38,975 victims/survivors with limited English proficiency; 21,477 victims/survivors who were immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers; and 118,878 victims/survivors living in rural areas.” (39-40)

Here, again, the presumably high numbers of victim/survivors and minority victim/survivors are cited to demonstrate the effectiveness of the STOP program. Alongside these rates that demonstrate effectiveness the report includes demographics of victims/survivors served in its Aggregate Accomplishments section. In 2012, 54.6% of victims who received services were white women while 22.7% were Black or African American women, 19% Hispanic or Latino women, 2.2% American Indian and/or Alaska Native women, 1.4% Asian women, and .5% Islander women. The report includes these distributions as an accomplishment even though most services were provided to White women while most women who undergo abuse are Non-White. The ideal victim remains intact alongside institutional failures to protect not only women but especially non-White women.

Under the Obama administration, 2012 Report B reinscribes the “remaining areas of need” identified by subgrantees. In context of victim services, the section identifies the following needs:

- Maintaining/expanding core services to victims/survivors in an uncertain economic climate
- Services for underserved populations, especially immigrant and limited English proficiency victims/survivors
- Improving the economic stability of victims/survivors

- Improving coordinated community response among victim service providers and the criminal justice system, especially for sexual assault
- Providing services for victims in geographically isolated areas

The 2012 report lists the persistent need for victim services after sixteen years after the passage of the Violence Against Women Act and STOP grant funding. This section concludes the chapter that otherwise details the STOP program's effectiveness. Here is a grim reminder of the ongoing perpetration, ongoing need for services, and the failure of the law to truly "combat" or "reduce" violence against women. Part of this is because the heroic quest to save women and imprison men comes at the cost of burying the grim reality that this quest is unending. The report does not mention any use of the Jessica Gonzales funding.

The 2013 amendments include the addition of several more items to the purposes for which STOP grants can be used. After 13, the amendments add statutes 14-20, which allow funding to be used for developing, promoting, implementing, enhancing policy, protocol, teams, backlogs, programs, education (2013 13). The addition of six new statutes is overwhelming, demonstrating more and more problems needing response. The use of the verbs develop, enhance, implement, develop, enlarge, strengthen, are forceful. The armory stays busy, current tools are sharpened; more are added to the arsenal. Regarding victim response, the 2013 STOP grant amendments add that grants can be used for:

“(19) developing, enlarging, or strengthening programs and projects to provide services and responses targeting male and female victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, whose ability to access traditional services and responses is affected by their sexual orientation or gender identity, as defined in section 249(c) of title 18, United States Code.” (2013 13)

The 2013 amendment includes the first mention of developing programs that provide services to people who do not identify with traditional heteronormative relationships or gender identities. The same clause

that purports to provide services to these people relies on traditional male-female terminology to identify who receives these services. In doing so, the amendment contradicts itself by declaring that grants can fund services to “male and female victims” whose “ability to access traditional services and responses is affected by their sexual orientation or gender identity.” The clause does not name these people but rather defines them through exclusion from services based on their sexuality and non-traditional gender identities. Unmentioned is the powerful, patriarchal attachment to the heteronormative male-female binary that abjects those who do not conform to these roles. Amendment 19 intends to undo this violent history with a simple funded program.

The 2016 report released under the Donald Trump administration includes the following rates indicating effectiveness of STOP grants in providing victim services:

- During the two-year reporting period, subgrantees provided services to an annual average of 412,330 victims. Of those, 86% were victims of domestic violence, 12% were victims of sexual assault, and 2% were victims of stalking” (51)
- “Subgrantees provided training to a total of 7,835 staff members of advocacy organizations for older, disabled, and immigrant populations” (55)
- “An average of 232 (54%) of subgrantees who used funds for policy development reported that they established and/or implemented policies regarding appropriate responses to underserved populations in victim services, the criminal justice system, and health care each year” (55)

Here is more of the same as the document reports data demonstrating the effectiveness and accomplishments of the STOP grants. Unmentioned, again, is the number of people who did not receive training for working with older, disabled, immigrant, and not-White populations. Unmentioned is the grave reality that the standard is working with White, able-bodied people, and a systemic inability to work with people who do not fit this norm requires specialized training.

Like the 2006 and 2013 STOP grants, the 2016 STOP report to Congress includes demographic characteristics of victims who received services through the STOP program. The report indicates that 54% of services were provided to white people, 23% to Black or African American people, 18% to Hispanic or Latino women, 2% to American Indian or Alaska Natives women, 2% to Asian women, and 1% to Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander women. Unsurprisingly white people are again the majority served. The report details that 23% people in rural areas, 6% people with disabilities, 8% with limited English proficiency, and 5% immigrants/refugees/asylum seekers are provided services (85). Thus while the majority of victims are not white, a majority of white victims are given services. This gap demonstrates the ongoing privileging of White women. Since the 2000 STOP grant, numbers detailing the gender of victims who received services are categorized into female, male, and unknown, demonstrating a systemic misrecognition of gender nonconforming people.

In its remaining areas of need section, the 2016 report outlines victim needs, which include:

- Helping victims to meet their basic needs, including short and long-term affordable housing, transportation, childcare, and employment;
- Improving services and outreach to underserved groups, especially immigrants and refugees, victims with limited English proficiency, LGBT victims, victims with disabilities, and those who are homeless or suffer from mental illness;
- Expanding access to information and services to victim living in rural areas
- Providing dedicated sexual assault services as well as expanding existing services for victims of sexual assault;
- Improving victims' access to legal resources, especially in cases of divorce and child custody; and
- Maintaining existing levels of service provision given financial constraints and high staff turnover

The list of needs demonstrates that with all the fine tuning, refining, and strengthening of policies and response, needs persist. Here is a glimpse into the dire state of the battlefield and organizational

inability to meet demand. Yet, the methods remain the law of the land as the agencies attempt to treat and protect victims and enforcement attempts to arrest and prosecute enemies of the state.

The 2019 amendments, which have yet to be passed, include two statutes that grant funding for new victim services. They include:

“(22) developing, enlarging, or strengthening culturally specific victim services programs to provide culturally specific victim services regarding, responses to, and prevention of female genital mutilation, female genital cutting, or female circumcision;

(23) Providing victim advocates in State or local law enforcement agencies, prosecutors’ offices, and courts and providing supportive services and advocacy to urban American Indian and Alaska Native victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.” (2019 20-21)

Included are more culturally specific victim service programs and advocates. The previous statutes attempting to do this work are not specific enough, demonstrating the state’s inadequate understanding of patriarchal and cultural violence, their inability to work with urban American Indian and Alaska Native victims. For adequate police and legal response, specialized advocates are necessary.

There is no report following the 2019 amendments. Rather, the 2019 amendments were passed by the House on April 4, 2019 and then “Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders.” Rather than voting on the law, Democratic California Senator Dianne Feinstein and Republican Iowa Senator Joni Ernst worked to develop their own VAWA Reauthorization as a bipartisan Senate bill. However, their efforts were stalled by hang ups about the 2019 addition of statute 21. Feinstein thus wrote her own bill, S. 2843, which includes the House’s proposed changes without compromise.

In response, Senator Joni Ernst released her own bill, S. 2920, which excludes protection for LGBTQ and Indigenous women. The version also included what is known as the boyfriend loophole, which excludes non-spouse abusers from the law’s gun ownership limitations for convicted abusers. Ernst bills

contains the following amendments to the 2013 STOP grant program, outlining that grants can be used for:

“(21) developing, enlarging, or strengthening culturally specific victim services for and responses to female genital mutilation or cutting; and

“(22) developing, implementing, and training on best practices regarding victim-centered approaches in domestic violence, domestic assault, dating violence, and stalking cases, including policies addressing the use of bench warrants, body attachments, and material warrants for victims who fail to appear.” (2019-D 14-15)

In Ernst’s version, paragraph 21 is removed which changes the 2019 House and S-R version to have 22 as 21, which provides funding for female genital mutilation services. Paragraph 22 changes from developing services for Native American and Alaskan Native women to developing “victim-centered approaches” in violence against women cases. Each of the 2019 bills are stagnant, demonstrating the failure of the Congress to reauthorize the VAWA. Although the funding has not been reauthorized, Congress has continued to fund established VAWA programs.

The most recent legislation is H.R. 1620 – Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2021 which was passed by the House in March 2021 and tabled by the Senate until committee hearings on October 5, 2021. The VAWA Reauthorization Act of 2021 adds one more statute to the list of purposes for which grants be used along with the paragraphs outlined in the 2019 House and S-D versions of the law. Statute (24) declares that STOP grant funding can be used to pay governmental fees for furnishing victims with a birth certificate or identification card. Still, Conservative opposition to the “anti-gun” sections of the bill remain controversial which risks further delay of the bill being passed.

Today, the 2021 VAWA sits with the Senate and risks being buried beneath ongoing wrangles in Congress, including the social spending package. With the discrepancies over the VAWA over the past four years, Biden remains committed to battling violence against women through the reauthorization.

The reauthorization of the bill is incredibly important as it necessary to fund victim services and law enforcement that protect victims from abusers. However, the VAWA should not be lauded as a striking victory in the battle against violence against women. Rather, it should be taken for what it is – a desperate, superficial response to a deeply rooted, ongoing crisis.

In his essay “History beyond the Pleasure Principle: Some Thoughts on the Representation of Trauma,” Santner suggests that narrative fetishization retrenches rather than interrogates national identity. He writes, “Narrative fetishism releases one from the burden of having to reconstitute one’s self-identity under ‘post-traumatic’ conditions; in narrative fetishism, the ‘post’ is indefinitely postponed” (144). From its beginning to its current state, the VAWA has been a synecdoche for the United State’s integrity and commitment to justice. While Republican and Democratic Congress people may have some differences about how who receives services and how to carry out enforcement, they unite in their shared vision of the heroic act of saving women and incarcerating abusers.

Beneath the surface of this heroism, the reality remains grim as the police and legal systems still favor abusers and dismiss women, especially those who do not embody the character and skin color of ideal victims. The state shepherds abusers who are convicted into jails and for-profit prison systems, and victims continue to be murdered, abused, stalked, terrorized, held hostage. The 1994 passage of the VAWA responded to domestic violence as a problem of individual deviants—enemies of the state—rather than as a problem of deeply entrenched, historical patriarchy. As such, funding efforts primarily went to saving victims and punishing enemies, and the state lauded its approach in an act of narrative fetishization.

As the federal government continues to fund enforcement and services, its approach responds to cases of domestic violence that have already happened. Prevention is understood, and characterized, as preventing victims from experiencing further acts of domestic violence rather than as preventing people from becoming victims in the first place. Rather than acknowledging its failures, the State praises

its accomplishments, and with each reauthorization of the VAWA, the state works to refine, extend, strengthen, and develop its established approach. The reports that do document remaining areas of need suggest that funding can help to meet these remaining areas of need. There is no mention of reducing demand, only of meeting demand.

Narrative fetishization maintains illusions of wholeness and integrity and in doing so perpetuates cycles of violence—of re-enacting trauma and violence, of fetishizing the heroic response. Santner writes that narrative fetishism “releases one from the burden of having to reconstitute one’s self-identity under ‘post-traumatic’ conditions; in narrative fetishism, the ‘post’ is indefinitely postponed” (144). From its beginning to its current state, the VAWA has been a synecdoche for the United State’s integrity and commitment to justice. While Republican and Democratic Congress people may have some differences about who receives services and how to carry out enforcement, they unite in their shared vision of the heroic act of saving women and incarcerating abusers.

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its accomplishments, and with each reauthorization of the VAWA, the state works to refine, extend, strengthen, and develop its established approach. The reports that document remaining areas of need suggest that funding can help to meet these remaining areas of need. There is no mention of reducing demand, only of meeting demand. Mourning gazes into and address historical violence and trauma; restorative justice does not accuse but listens, provides the tools to surface that which has held inside for so long, at both individual and national levels. In the next and final chapter, I turn to mourning and restorative justice as a paradigm for prevention, redress, and healing.

Chapter Six

Mourning and Restoring Patriarchal and Intimate Partner Violence

To mourn is to slowly realize, recognize, and narrate trauma and integrate it self-understanding. It cannot take place alone; it has to take place with another. In mourning, people “articulate and transmit the story, literally transfer it to another outside oneself and then take it back again, inside” (Laub 69). This chapter, in some ways, ends where it began, as I turn to the words of those who have begun the process of mourning through batterer intervention groups. Eric Santner describes mourning as “a process of elaborating and integrating the reality of loss or traumatic shock by remembering and repeating it in symbolically and dialogically mediated doses; it is a process of translating, troping, and figuring loss” (144). While mourning can take place at an individual level, it can take place at a community and even national level. Restorative justice offers a path to mourning and taking accountability for cultural, structural, and individual traumas.

The criminal justice approach prevails as the predominant tertiary prevention model in the United States, but in the belly of the beast is a restorative justice model, Resolve to Stop the Violence (RSVP), that provides inmates at the San Bruno jail the space to mourn the violences they have both experienced and caused. In a group setting, participants collectively work through and mourn their patriarchal manhood, seeking to surface develop what the program calls an “authentic self.” In doing so, participants elaborate and integrate the reality of their traumas, and they trope and figure their losses, as evident in *The Whole Peace*, a collection of poetry written by participants in the RSVP program. In a way, participants in RSVP and some forms of restorative justice circles use an ecological model from the inside out, teaching participants about their relation to families and patriarchy.

The Whole Peace expresses the violence of incarceration and the promise of restorative justice. It identifies jail experience as torture, death, chaos, oppressive, dehumanizing, and stifling. The

collection identifies restorative justice as relief, creative, learning, restoring, inclusion, light, liberty, opening, authentic. As an adjective, restoration means “[t]ending to restore strength or health; capable of restoring or renewing.” As a noun, restoratives refer to food, cordial, or medicine that restores health or strength. In this case, fostering community, awareness, expression, accountability, and conversation is itself a medicine. In this space, individuals both encounter one another and themselves. In its incorporation of healing arts, community, mourning practices, and restorative justice, RSVP not only creates space for restoration but has also proved efficacious in recidivism rates. RSVP is one of many restorative justice models applied to intimate partner violence intervention and prevention. This chapter reviews restorative justice models in context of intimate partner violence prevention with a focus the participants poetry that expresses trauma and mourning.

Along with considering tertiary IPV prevention practices, this chapter considers primary and secondary IPV prevention practices. Through a reading of the CDC’s technical package about primary and secondary IPV prevention, I suggest that the CDC prevention recommendations, like the VAWA, narratively fetishizes intimate partner violence prevention. As an alternative, I move to models that forge paths to primary and secondary prevention through restorative justice and mourning, including Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY) programs and the *Violence against Native Women is not Traditional* handbook. RJOY offers a violence prevention and healing model at community and structural levels through truth-telling, reparations, policy, and community coalitions. While coordinated community responses to intimate partner violence respond to crises, the RJOY seeks to prevent crises. Although it is not situated within intimate partner violence specifically, it provides a model for primary and secondary prevention and healing through community and structural redress. In addition to a discussion of RJOY as a model of restorative justice and mourning, I turn to the *Violence against Native Women is Not Traditional* handbook, written by Karen Artichoker and Marlin Mousseau of the Sacred Circle, which is an organization that develops and circulates educational material in “Indian country”

(Haakens 40). The handbook addresses the historical role of colonial violence in relation to IPV in Native communities, advocates individual truth telling, community, and the redress of harms. Bridging RJOY with the Sacred Circle's model provides an avenue to consider mourning and restorative justice at the hegemonic cultural level. As restorative justice through mourning can prevent further acts of violence, it can prevent initial acts of violence through primary and secondary interventions. More than prevention, mourning through restorative justice can heal wounds and offer new modes of being.

While there are many restorative justice practices and philosophies, this chapter foregrounds the restorative justice principles and practices of Fania Davis as outlined in *The Little Book of Race and Restorative Justice*. After explaining restorative justice through this framework, I review research about restorative justice and intimate partner violence prevention. Feminist critiques and alternatives sometimes demonstrate hostility toward intimately abusive people and often focus on victim healing. Yet, to prevent violence is to attend the corporeal subjectivity of people who are violent toward their intimate partners. After reviewing restorative justice models in context of IPV prevention, I demonstrate the ways the ManAlive and RSVP curriculum enact restorative justice through healing, community, and sociocultural education. In a study done by James Gilligan, RSVP has shown to be effective in preventing further acts of intimate partner violence. After working through restorative justice practices in context of tertiary prevention, I consider restorative justice in context of secondary and primary prevention after briefly working the CDC's recommended prevention practices.

Restorative Justice, Prevention, and Intimate Partner Violence Intervention

In her conceptualization of restorative justice, Fania Davis combines her experiences as a civil rights activist, lawyer, indigenous scholar, and calling as an indigenous healer to conceptualize her model of restorative justice, which is committed to radically healing and redressing the historical wounds of structural, institutional, and individual racial violence. Davis grounds restorative justice model in the traditional African view of *ubuntu*, which emphasizes "humans' interidentity and

interrelationality with all dimensions of existence—other people, places, land, animals, air” (19). The model is grounded in a *relational strategy* that understands individuals as interconnected with individuals, families, communities, cultures, societies, land, animals, nature.

In context of interpersonal violence, this restorative justice model seeks to heal the wounds of abused and abusive people through community intervention. Rather than seeing violent people as criminals, restorative justice sees violent people as broken. Being broken, however, does not take away from the need to make reparations, accountability, apologize, and address. The process of healing takes place through peacemaking circles. The person responsible offers apology, recompense, and reparation to the harmed person and their community, which is central to restorative justice. In other words, they bear witness to the trauma and violence by testifying to its violence and its pains. In this model, justice heals. This restorative justice practice enacts healing through storytelling and relationship building, truth-telling and accountability, and reparative action (22-25). After discussing the individual practice and manifestations of restorative justice in context of intimate partner violence, I return to Fania Davis’s restorative justice model in context of the institutional.

The first application of restorative justice models to intimate partner abuse took place in the late 1990s and early 2000s in the form of mediation circles, sentencing circles, and victim impact panels. Sentencing or mediation circles include offender, victims, and their communities, including friends, family, church members, and anyone generally involved in the lives of these people. Criminologist Lawrence W. Sherman (2000) describes restorative justice in opposition to criminal justice. Criminal justice rarely imposes consequences for criminal acts, treats cases in a few minutes, limits emotions, does little or nothing for victims, ignores social support systems, and lacks retribution. In comparison, restorative justice always imposes offender consequences, takes “an hour or more,” mobilizes emotions, repairs harm to victims, and mobilizes social support systems, and creates “the appearance of a more retributive response” (3).

Sherman describes an example of restorative justice process in context of intimate partner violence by describing the mediation circles practiced in Canberra, Australia. To begin the circle, the officer first asks the offender to describe their crime and then asks the victim to voice the effects of the crime. The officer then proceeds to facilitate statements by family, friends, and employers, which is followed by a “deliberative democracy” process that makes decisions about how to proceed. Sherman never really describe what these outcomes include—but it does say there are a “wide range of options.” In *Insult to Injury*, Linda G. Mills describes a similar sentencing circle process. It concerns me that one can expect to achieve restorative justice in a one-hour mediation between abuser, abused, and their respective communities—or that any mobilizing of emotions can genuinely take place. This is neither healing nor redress; it is a superficial mediation that leaves abused people vulnerable to abuser control, quick emotional reconciliations that do not do the work it takes to mourn intimate partner violence.

Feminist theorists and battered women’s advocates have expressed concerns that offenders can manipulate participants, pressure victims to agree to an outcome, and compromise victim safety. Sherman notes this concern as he writes that restorative justice mediation creates “uneasiness among many victims’ advocates” (7). James Ptacek explains that for feminist advocates and researchers, restorative justice practices in context of IPV focused on the offender rather than on the victim. Donna Coker characterizes restorative justice in context of interpersonal violence as “cheap justice” because they are “too easy on offenders” (Ptacek 20). In context of intervention of intimate partners, it is imperative that victims are kept safe and that their voices are prioritized. Simply having a 60–90-minute mediation session does not guarantee the safety of the abused person, and many abusive people are unable to express remorse, redress, or apology. However, longer implemented, and separate mediations can have a lasting effect. In a qualitative study of a pilot program, sociologist Emily Gaarder finds that separate mediation circles decreased offender violence and increased victim safety, social support, and access to material resources. Early applications of restorative justice integrated restorative justice

principles into traditional criminal-legal approaches to intimate partner violence. They do not redress larger structures of harm that move people to intimate partner violence. Another problem is the absence of *healing* and *redress* in these models.

Although there are concerns about restorative justice, some models integrate the language of healing and acknowledgement of the abuser and abused as more than individuals but rather shaped in relation to systems of poverty. Ptacek writes that the “language of healing” in context of communities, victims, and “controversially, for some, for offenders” aligns with feminist antiviolence work with men of color. This model aligns more with Fania Davis’s conceptualization of restorative justice, which seeks to identify and redress social and relational conditions that give rise to harm.

In a randomized controlled study, Linda G. Mills et. al (2019) compared the outcomes of a traditional batterer intervention programs to a hybrid batterer intervention program that incorporated Circles of Peace. The hybrid model did 12 weeks of a batterer intervention program and six weeks of Circles of Peace, which incorporated discussions about individual participants and the social contexts in which they are embedded. Individual topics include reflecting on the events leading up to the crime, including histories of family abuse, violence triggers, and socio-cultural factors such as gender, identity, race, culture, religion, and socio-economic status. Victims could indirectly participate in the program, but they did not directly interact with the offenders. There is no discussion of healing in context of the group from the article although it does cite criminologist John Braitwaite’s claim that “because crime hurts, justice should heal” (1287). The study found that the integration of restorative justice practices into batterer intervention programs led to statistically significant reductions in new arrests and crime severity scores over a 24-month period. The hybrid model returns to some of the principles identified by Davis as it considers abusive people not only as individuals but in relation to others, cultures, and the society at large. This model also incorporates social education and histories of family abuse, showing attention to the childhoods that have been shown to be significant throughout this dissertation.

Rhea Almeida's "culture circles" separate abusers and victims and facilitate accountability for abusers and support for survivors. It also draws its work with "culture circles" from Paulo Freire's methods for developing critical consciousness. These circles advocate healing through awareness, teaches participants oppressive cultural systems, and connects with available resources. Another model developed by Hernandez et al. applies postcolonial theory to family therapy. The model contextualizes family troubles within social and political lineages, understanding family violence not as individual pathologies but rather as the consequences of "institutionalized terrorism suffered by a colonized people" (106). In the intake, families meet therapists who learn about family histories, including income, intergenerational family legacies, and histories of migration and loss. In group circles, participants listen to one another, question their own racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia, and link "larger societal oppressive discourses with their lives and the lives of others through discussions of the didactic materials" (109). In this context, healing develops through liberation-based stories, letters of accountability, and recognition of oppressive and harmful structures. Like the other models, this model moves beyond healing in context of traditional family boundaries and rather attends to structural and cultural environments. In these contexts, mourning takes place as participants integrate the traumatic reality of colonialism, cultural violences, family violences as it relates to their own embodiments and modes of being.

Moving forward, I detail the ManAlive curriculum which both encourages offender accountability and a critical understanding of patriarchal gender norms. I also focus on the RSVP program, which has published inmate creative writing. The two programs publicize their curriculum and intimately abusive texts, which demonstrate how the programs facilitate intervention using gender theories. Although the ManAlive curriculum does not use restorative justice principles, its model takes steps toward restorative justice as it acknowledges people in relation to cultural violence. After detailing this model, I move into RSVP, which adapts the ManAlive curriculum by explicitly incorporating

restorative justice and trauma theory. Sunny Schwartz had two of the country's "foremost violence researchers study her program, James Gilligan and Bandy Lee" (192). They found that recidivism rates dropped by 80% and those who returned to jail were for nonviolent misdemeanors (192).

ManAlive and RSVP: The Curriculum and its Healing Arts

In 1980, Hamish Sinclair began the batterer intervention program that was formally named ManAlive in 1984. Sinclair studied and worked with radical psychiatrist Claude Steiner, who sees individual pathologies as symptoms of societal structures. The ManAlive curriculum is based in gender and neurolinguistic theory and asks "men to notice their bodies, their voices, and the responses of those around them during a violent incident in a way that the vast majority of them never have" (116). Different iterations of the curriculum include Men against Violence (MAV), Men Creating Peace, ManAlive Sacramento, and VIP-ManAlive, all of which detail their programs on their websites. Concepts are an integral component of the curriculum and include the "Male Role Belief System," "Fatal Peril," and "The 4 A's, and "QTIP," "Peace Maker," "Authentic Self," and "Hit Man." Each concept helps participants understand the ways patriarchy has taught them to violently respond to perceived "threats" to one's masculinity. The concepts also help them unlearn violent responses by attending to their bodies, minds, and redirecting their violence. Essentially, the program enacts a pedagogy of consciousness raising and bodily awareness.

The ManAlive curriculum is 52-week program split into three stages, and each stages moves the participants to realize the ways patriarchy has socialized them into violent modes of being, including the ways they relate to both themselves and others. The curriculum teaches participants about the way patriarchy cultures them into beliefs and acts, including violence toward others. Thus, it moves beyond the individualist model and more toward a relational model of being. Further, it creates a community—a circle—of people that talk together and voice their experience and acknowledge their violence. Given the fact that many people deny and minimize their intimate partner violence, this is a major

development. The model, like restorative justice, teaches and reaffirm human bonds. It also teaches participants to reconnect with their bodies.

The first stage of the ManAlive curriculum asks participants to take accountability for their violence and teaches them about the ways they have been socialized into what the program calls the “Male Role Belief System.” The curriculum explains that manhood is associated with expectations of production, perfection, and presentation (the 3ps), which tell men they need to generate and provide things, be perfect, and have it all together. Further, it teaches them they are superior to others, including other men. In other words, it teaches them about the hierarchical component of patriarchal cultures—in which people relate to each other through superior-inferior relations, including the male-female hierarchy. In *No Visible Bruises*, investigative journalist Rachel Snyder describes a ManAlive group leader’s explanation of the male role belief system to participants: “*man does not get disrespected. Man does not get lied to. Man’s sexuality does not get questioned. Man is the authority. Man does not get dismissed. Woman should be submissive, obedient, supportive to man*” (143). Along with teaching participants about the male role belief system in context of male authority over women, an integral part of the curriculum also teaches participants about the ways they have been socialized to ignore their bodies and feelings.

The concept of fatal peril teaches participants to recognize the beginnings of a violent episode by listening to their bodies. The curriculum teaches them that when their roles are challenged, they embody false alarm, body signs, tensions, tightness, contraction, head tapes, deadly fear of image dying, and a rush of feelings that trigger the rise of the “Hit Man.” VIP-ManAlive describes the Hitman as “the mental characterization the man creates in his mind to enforce his belief system and carry out his controlling behavior to re-substantiate or re-establish his image of being a ‘man.’” Nothing is said about the potential of being triggered by childhood trauma and abuse, but participants are taught to listen to these signals and learn new actions such as communication and or breathing exercises. They are taught

to connect safely with their partner, nurture their selves, and take care of their needs in a peaceful way. They are also taught to build intimacy through the 4 A's which include attention, acceptance, appreciation, and affection. This first stage also explains that people often deny, minimize, collude, and blame their violence on their partners and teaches them to take accountability and bear witness to their violence.

The second stage teaches the participants about their "authentic selves" that exists behind the male aggressor image. To take conscious breaths and conscious choices, "blow out the candles / smell the roses" and identify the feelings under anger, including fear, sadness, and pain. An authentic self is sincere and honest, gentle, adaptable, patient, and can stand under their and other's experiences with empathy, compassion, to connect safely. They learn skills of compassion, empathy, love, and respect. It is about shifting away from beliefs based on fear, blame, judgement, and victimhood. It is also about the abuser's relationship with their partner, and learning to see people as equal, valuable, and powerful. By changing one's perspective, one can change their story and thus become a different version of themselves. Shifting perception allows one's partner to choose her life, liberty, happiness, and safety. Part of discovering one's authentic self includes softening and relaxing their bodies, and replacing the hit-man's story with the story of the authentic self.

The last stage, Stage 3, is meant to create a self-fulfillment plan and restore intimacy—or relationships with oneself and others. They also encourage to create balance through exercise, diet, sleep, positive thinking, and spirituality. They are also encouraged to attend 12 Step Programs, support groups, parenting classes, self-help classes, and community service. They are also taught more tools which include fascination, negotiation, collaboration, manifestation, and celebration. Fulfillment is meant to be created without depending on others, drugs, alcohol, sex or money. In 1993, the model became the standard for all batterer intervention programs used in California under State Assembly Bill

226 (mencreatingpeace.org). Today, the curriculum is implemented in batterer intervention programs held by community centers, jails, and prison programs.

Resolve to Stop the Violence (RSVP) builds the ManAlive foundation in many ways. RSVP founder Sunny Schwartz explains that the aim of RSVP is to intervene in “man to man, father to son” cycles of violence and to enact restorative justice. The program facilitates peer-to-peer mentoring, personal accountability, transformation, and healing. Schwartz claims that in her understanding, restorative justice “insists that the perpetrator acknowledge the pain and suffering he has caused and ‘restore’ his victims and community as much as possible. Reconciliation is the primary goal, through offenders meeting with domestic violence victims” (Snyder 117). The program enacts this process through the Survivor Impact program during which participants bear witness to victim testimony. The program serves men in San Francisco County Jail, where participants engage in a rigorous program eight hours a day, five days a week, for sixteen weeks.

In context of San Bruno, “general victims of domestic violence are brought in weekly to talk about their experiences and what it means to live with and beyond trauma” (117). Rachel Louis Snyder recounts her immersion in the RSVP program in the San Bruno jail, as she watched the Survivor Impact program. A woman named Victoria speaks to the group about her father, who abused her, her brother, and her mother. Snyder writes that for most of the men, “it’s the first time they’ve ever sat, quietly, and listened for several hours as someone talked about domestic violence in her life” (188). It’s also the first time “they ever considered how trauma and violence can have a long-term impact on someone. Many of them wiped away tears” (119). Victoria says to the men, “‘You’ve heard the saying ‘hurt people hurt people’ ... ‘Well, I also think healed people heal people’” (190). After Victoria speaks, the participants talk in small groups and contextualize the story within their own incidents of violence (119). Mentors lead facilitated discussions that explore the connections between the speaker and those harmed by participants. In addition to discussion, the men are also led through meditation and movement practices

that are meant to help the men ground themselves in their bodies and experiences as well as develop empathy for themselves and others. Through the Restorative Justice component, the men are part of circles of support and accountability that allow them to process the harm they have caused to their families, communities, and themselves.

Another major component of RSVP is their integration of expressive arts, which have been published as collections of creative writing. One RSVP publication, “Community Works West: Justice Demands Humanity,” holds a collection of reflections and stories written by RSVP participants. Beginning the collection is a series of personal letters written by participants to new members of the “pod.” The participants describe some their initial resistance to and difficulty with the material. One participant writes, “[t]he curriculum was very hard for me to grasp in the beginning, and I resisted the feedback I received from my peers. This led to me being removed from this program twice” (10). Another writes, “[f]or the first week, things might be somewhat of a culture shock based on the work being done . . . I ask that you stay open to receiving the information the program has to offer” (10). Another: “[t]his program is going to introduce a lot of new language, terms, and concepts that will be strange to you” (12). The men’s explanations of discomfort is part of the trauma and mourning process as participants realize and shed the violent masculine embodiment that has inhabited them for so long.

One way participants shed and realize masculinity is through creative writing and poetry. *The Whole Peace* is a collection of restorative justice poetry written by men inside the San Bruno Jail. Here I include some of the poetry written by the men who participated in this program.

The Vicious Cycle by Raya

I’ve witness domestic violence early on

I’ve seen my dad hit my mom

It didn’t make sense to me

I didn’t understand why my dad

would do such a thing
what did my mother do to deserve the blame
She's such a sweet woman
so I couldn't understand why
what made him so angry
how could he ever justify
hitting her and calling her these names
I was only four when I witnessed her pain
As the years passed by
I've adopted the same
messed up behavior
That's when I became
the perpetrator
Just like my father and my older brothers
The same violence I'd witness as a child
carried on to my child's mother
It's a vicious cycle that needs to stop
In order for that to happen
I had to learn how to forgive my pops. (7)

Raya's poem bears witness to his inner child, who at only four-years old saw his father physically and emotional abuse his mother. He describes his father as angry, his mother as a sweet woman. He describes that he did not understand why his father did what he didn't—"it didn't make sense to me / I didn't understand." He describes the cycle of violence in which he adopted "the same / messed up behavior" as he became the "perpetrator / Just like my father and my older brothers." He both

acknowledges his violence and sees his way out by forgiving his father. Another participant writes a poem that bears witness to his fear and pain:

Escape My Pain by Philip

Today I had to say to myself you're almost home
now look in the mirror and say you can do it alone
depending on my wife cause cause I felt I couldn't do it on
my own. . . Looking out the window seeing the
beautiful nature that flies free

Feeling like a bear chained and caged been down for
so long, I have this anger and rage that I feel won't
go away scared and afraid to say in better terms
devil took a hold of me now look sitting in my
cell to get a easy way to escape this pain

Slowly building the pain that I've gained but now I've
Been cursed but as I look at most of my life it feels like
I'm getting worse comin and going in the system
Keeps me losing the vision and qualities of my life is
Is insecurity

Patience is virtue something I refused to do in
the moment of my life I want it right then
no questions asked I hated to be waiting if I

felt it was important was blinded from all the
shit I was fighting inside stop in my tracks I
felt was a time machine now how much time do you
plan on to really waste. (40)

In this poem, Philip describes his feelings as he is close to going “home.” The poem begins with an address to himself: you’re almost home ... you can do it alone.” He sees beautiful free nature, expresses understanding and longing, but describes himself as a chained and caged bear, his life as cursed and only getting worse. He describes that he was blinded for all the “shit I was finding inside top in my tracks / I felt was a time machine” and he renames his “anger and rage” as “scared and afraid to say in better terms.” He focuses on his internal, corporeal subjectivity. The last two lines linger as an address to himself: how much time do you plan on to really waste.

In another poem, a RSVP participant writes about his pain and his relationship:

My Smoke Has Cleared

Jason

Tears Pain Fear Ooh Princess are you there
Lies Abandon Cheating Ooh Princess are you there
Drugs Drugs Drugs Ooh Princess are you there
Troubled Pain Youth Ooh Princess are you there
Run Fuss Fight Ooh Princess are you there
Give Giving Gave Ooh Princess are you there
Not Anymore, I am not there, you are not
there anymore. I am now your Queen my
King. (20)

Jason describes some of his troubles, traits, and embodiment in the first part of each line, followed by a plead—Ooh Princess are you there? He describes embodiment, his habits, and his past. “Run Fuss Fight” is its own rendition of fight or flight. He names person the person he addresses a “princess” but then flips the roles in the last three lines of the poem. He says, “I am not there, you are not / there anymore.” But this statement does not seem to reflect a rupture in the relationship. Rather, their roles reversed as he elevates the person to King and calls himself Queen. The princess addressee implies a Prince addressor, but the last line elevates the princess to King, Prince to Queen.. This suggests a reversal of the previous occupied positions—a transformation and even flip of the hierarchy. This symbolizes both the dissolution of a former self and constitution of another.

In context of RSVP, restorative justice offers an opportunity for these people to mourn the lives they had. It is evident that each of the people went through difficulties whether as children or adults. They describe a process in which they grow as people and realize—or bear witness—to what they were, and strive, question, and describe how their new and developing selves. Eric Santner describes mourning as a process through which one develops a new identity out of trauma, and the curriculum and the poems do this work. They bear witness to their past, address themselves in the present. Recognizing their embodiment, who they were, and who they are. They become vulnerable, open, for the first time in their lives. In *The Homesick Phonebook: Addressing Rhetorics in the Age of Perpetual Conflict*, Cynthia Haynes writes that “the rhetorical task it to find rhetoric’s home address, not to cure it so much as to allow it to speak of the unspeakable” (3). At RSVP, we find one of rhetoric’s home addresses. It is there that abusive people learn to speak the unspeakable. They are not cured but are healing in their wounds. Now, RSVP begs that we please respond.

Despite the program’s success, there has been little response. Schwartz describes her frustration with the lack of resources for those who come out of the RSVP program (194). They learn all of these “then they walk back into a world in which all of that theory is real again, and all of those

challenges are real again, plus all of those threats and all of that pain, and they're just more or less on their own" (195). Walking from the promises of theory to a cruel world can be devastating. Through its awakenings, theory offers so much. Through its closures, the world offers so little. Yet, in what often seems like an impossible world there is hope in community. The models described by Almeida and Hernandez exist outside incarceration and bring together people that support one another financially, emotionally, socially. Community and structural models offer a glimmer of hope. But for communities also require education, to learn new behaviors, skills, and practices. One way to achieve this is through primary and secondary prevention practices.

Restorative Justice, Primary Prevention, and Bearing Witness to State Violence

While tertiary interventions are important to prevent further acts of violence, primary and secondary prevention practices seek to prevent violence from happening in the first place by targeting at-risk and entire populations. After briefly reviewing the CDC's prevention models, I turn to restorative justice models developed by Angela and Fania Davis and conclude with the *Violence against Native Women is not Traditional Handbook*. The technical package enacts narrative fetishization whereas the RJOY and *Handbook* offer means mourning and enacting restorative justice.

The CDC's *Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices* outlines intervention strategies based on "the best available evidence to help communities and states sharpen their focus on prevention activities with the greatest potential to prevent intimate partner violence." Not unlike the refining, strengthening language in the VAWA, the reports begins by declaring its prevention strategies as the "sharpest," "best," "greatest." The strategies include:

- Teach safe and healthy relationships
- Engage influential adults and peers
- Disrupt the developmental pathways toward partner violence

- Create protective environments
- Strengthen economic supports for families
- Support survivors to increase safety and lessen harms.

For each strategy, the CDC includes its rationale, approaches, and evidence to demonstrate its efficacy. For example, the handbook explains that that poor communication skills, emotional regulation, and poor conflict management skills have been shown to be connected to intimate partner violence. Thus, the CDC recommends social-emotional learning programs for youths and healthy relationship programs for couples as approaches to “teach skills and promote expectations for healthy, non-violent relationships.” The CDC describes two social-emotional learning programs that have shown “effectiveness in prevention”: *Safe Dates* and *The Fourth R: Strategies for Healthy Relationships*. *Safe Dates* includes nine 50-minute sessions. In the curriculum, students learn about caring relationships and dating abuse. In one session, they identify causes and consequences of dating abuse. In another, they practice helping victims and confronting violent friends, and in another, they use writing exercises, small-group discussions, and scenarios to learn about stereotypes and how they affect relationships. Another session covers feelings and teaches student how to recognize and handle their feelings. The curriculum also teaches communication skills and sexual abuse prevention. According to the report, “Students exposed to the program reported between 56% and 92% less perpetration and victimization, respectively, at four-year follow-up when compared to control students, and program effects were consistent across gender, race, and baseline experience with TDV” (16).

Expect Respect Support Groups targets teens in abusive relationships or who have experienced any form of violence. It is a socio-emotional learning approach with 24-sessions that focus on “developing communication skills, choosing equality and respect, recognizing abuse, learning skills for safe and healthy relationships” (16). Research “found that teens who completed *ERSG* reported an increase in relationship skills and a decrease in TDV victimization and perpetration from pre-to-post-

test” (16). Although these programs show efficacy, I cannot help but question their lasting effects. Sarah Murphy writes that *Campus Rape*, a rape prevention video circulated in university, focuses on prevention, symptoms, and encourages males and females to just get a long and communicate with each other. Along with the premise that simple education practices can prevent a systemic cultural violence, Murphy argues that the video follows the structure of an unresolved traumatic structure and wound culture that overlooks systemic issues relates to violence and trauma. The CDC, as it offers prevention practices through educational programs, only touches the surface of a deeply rooted historical cultural trauma and violences such as those outlined in the educational restorative justice models.

In another target approach “Disrupt the Developmental Pathways Toward Partner Violence,” the package identifies factors such as “poor behavioral control; social problem-solving deficits; early onset of drug and alcohol use; an arrest prior to the age of 13; and involvement with antisocial peers, crime and violence” as factors associated with people who intimately abuse their partners. It describes chronic stress and adverse experiences, negative parenting, child abuse and neglect, witnessing violence, all are “risk factors for perpetration of TDV” (23). Intervention approaches include early childhood home visitation, preschool enrichment with family engagement, parenting skill and family relationship programs, and treatment for at-risk children, youth, and families. Angela Davis et al. describe the “punishing power marked as welfare and other social services” and their relationship with both surveillance and violent tropes of “welfare queens” (41). Citing Dorothy Roberts’s *Killing the Black Body*, they argue that the “family policing system,” is directly weaponized against poor families, disproportionately Black and Indigenous women ... state intervention results in grotesque outcomes for families, particularly young folks” (42). The relationship between state welfare and police is apparent in the handbook’s “Create Protective Environments” strategy, which recommends addressing community-level factors “by changing, enacting, or enforcing laws and regulations; improving the economic stability

of neighborhoods; and by changing the physical environments to improve social interaction” (30). The state does little changing and improving the economic and physical environments of low-income or “at-risk” neighborhoods and a lot of policing.

The CDC proposes intimate partner violence prevention through community, educational, and family-based interventions including educational programs, home visits, and welfare. While these programs sound promising, it is difficult to obtain the resources to implement the programs, and welfare stigma and the policing of neighborhoods and families remains. Many neighborhoods and their households in this nation are in dire state, situated in impoverished neighborhoods, vulnerable to generational violence, poverty, gentrification. Describing community interventions, Gilligan expresses his “worry that as we fritter away our time and energies debating the minutiae of small scale do-it-yourself-type community initiatives, the patient will bleed to death.” In other words, he suggests that DIY community efforts attempt stop a hemorrhage with a Band-Aid (10). While Gilligan expresses unease about community models, the structural changes he advocates face the obstacles of stigma and funding of welfare programs. Fania and Angela Davis’s models, however, offer restorative justice and mourning at community levels that are otherwise unattainable.

While the CDC seeks to prevent intimate partner violence through ephemeral educational programs, RJOY creates community coalitions that advocate for policy that redresses school inequities including segregation, school financing patterns, and teacher quality. Further, RYOJ seeks to end the school-to-prison pipeline, racist disciplinary and policing of Black students, and to enrich curricula about culture and history. This model does not simply drop in and teach a curriculum and leave; rather, they seek to overhaul curriculums through anti-colonial and anti-racist critical pedagogy—an educational model based on circles that advocates education as freedom, education as liberation, and implementation of material and practices that challenge traditional sexist and racist curriculum. These educational models bear similarities to the educational practices in some practices of restorative justice

in context of intimate partner violence. Critical pedagogy, like RSVP, is empowering. I don't think I would be where I am today if it wasn't for those college classroom circles. To be acknowledged as a human, to have a voice and discuss ideas about the systems that inhabit us. But more than education, RYOJ seeks to remove those school disciplinary structures that create harm. The banking educational model is one structure that causes harm, but the presence of law enforcement officers, the ignoring of students in need of recognition also demand redress. RJOY launched a public-school program that incorporates restorative justice into its curriculum in Oakland middle school. It used circles and restorative conversation to create connectivity between participants. In 2010, the Oakland Unified School District incorporated restorative justice into its entire district following the settlement of a civil rights violation investigation filed with the United States Department of Education.

Another RJOY program is Coming to the Table, which is a restorative justice community program dedicated to acknowledging and healing racial wounds through community, education, reparations, uncovering history, healing, making connections, and taking action. The Coming to the Table Reparations guide states, "European Americans must acknowledge their own woundedness around race. Participation in any action or system, such as the enslavement of others, that disconnects us from our own humanity must be considered a wound. The resulting culture of white supremacy, in which the accumulation of wealth is valued over community wellbeing, has damaged us all. As the architect of these systems, it is incumbent on European Americans, however, to begin the dismantling process. Until European Americans come to the table and commit to the complex process of repair, societal healing cannot occur" (5). CTT centers both bearing witness to historical racial violence, and trauma theory is a foundation of the program.

While RJOY seeks to prevent and heal the wounds of historical and systemic racial violences, *Violence against Native Women is not Traditional* bears witness to patriarchal colonial violence and its relationship with domestic violence in Native American households. The handbooks attributes domestic

violence in Native households to European colonization. As a resource, the handbook provides information about domestic violence. While it provides advice, it also educates its readers about the relationship between colonial violence and domestic violence in Native homes. It claims that education about violence against Native women is the best tool for changing themselves, their families, and their community. The handbook asserts that Native violence is not traditional. The handbook identifies the natural life way with equality as a center point and emphasizes respect, mutual sharing, spirituality, generosity, humility, compassion, hard work, fortitude, and love. It asserts the traditional modes of being and adjudicating any violence against women that did occur. It states that abusers would “be banished, ostracized, or retaliation was left to the male relatives of the victim.” Family violence, however, was very rare due to the modes of being. The handbook also identifies the role of women before colonization. They were valued, honored, and women often have significant roles in creation stories. Many tribes believe in a balance between male and female, connection to Mother Earth also demonstrates the sacred role of femininity. Courtship rituals demonstrated a male’s ability to protect and provide for women; wives and daughters did not take their husband’s and father’s names because they were not owned by patriarchs. Marriage was not a religious act and divorce did not break religious code. Husbands often moved in with the wife’s people. Prior to colonial oppression, domestic violence was incredibly rare in Native tribes.

The handbook holds colonization accountable for domestic violence in Native households. While Native men traditionally had a role of protector and provider, the government took this role and imposed “dominant society’s negative attitudes, beliefs and behaviors toward women” (5). Now, the handbook states, Native men believe that men are superior to women. The handbook identifies the colonizer’s legal relationship with women:

The colonizer that came to this country had a history where women and children were the legal property of the father or husband. A woman took the last name of her husband so that other

men would know that she was not sexually available. The sexual ownership of women had to do with a belief about ownership of the land and inheritance. First-born sons inherited the land and to make sure that the first born son was really the husband's son, a system had to be put in place to ensure paternity. So, the wedding ring and marriage came together as a symbol of ownership. With ownership comes the privilege of treating your property however you choose (6).

The handbook identifies the traditional practice and purpose of patriarchal marriage. It identifies the historical European system of patriarchy, where men marry women for the purpose of posterity – a history identified chapter two as not only for the purpose of physical but also psychological posterity. The handbook not only attributes Christianity and alcohol to domestic abuse, but more specifically, it discusses boarding schools, which missionaries filled with Native children taken from tribes for the purposes of Christian conversion. The handbook states, “[m]any of our people learned about violence in boarding schools. Boarding school distorted our ability to act as parents, sons, daughters – as relatives” (5). Compared to traditional, nonviolent parenting that nurtured children's spirits, the church and its teachings inflicted corporal punishment onto children (5). The handbook states, “The external oppression . . . of our people has now become internal oppression” (14). Native people not only internalize gender roles and expectations but also stigma about Indians and Indian culture (14). These experiences were “passed on to our children and grandchildren verbal, emotional, sexual and physical violence as acceptable means to control others when we don't get our way” (5).

This approach allows readers to realize the difference between “Unnatural Power and Control” and what the handbook identifies as “The Natural Life Way,” which could be compared to a Hit Man and Authentic Self. It advocates both addressing violence, understanding its relation to structural colonial violence, and supporting instead of fighting with each other. Although it does not use the word healing, it describes the need to “speak openly about our experiences as Native people,” not unlike the call for

truth telling and storytelling circles in restorative justice (15). The handbook holds colonial violence accountable and seeks to collectively bear witness to its violences. Yet it also seeks accountability by abusive people—it states, “we must deal with the reality that we are hurting each other . . . It is not our fault that we are where we are today” (15). The handbook seeks to heal the wounds of colonial and domestic violence through a return to a mode of relation in which communities work together to heal the wounds of their harms toward one another, not unlike restorative justice.

Restorative justice circles create spaces for individuals to listen and learn from one another. It is a different mode of being and asks participants to open themselves to witnessing and realizing the historical damages of patriarchal colonialism. Its ability to prevent further violences are promising as apparent in the success of the RSVP curriculum in which abusive people take accountability for their violence, realize the harms they caused, and seek to heal and express their traumas through community, healing circles, education, and expressive arts. But the homeland is at an impasse. As many unearth and protest systemic cultural, institutional, and direct violences, others systematically deny, suppress, and fire against those who seek to heal their wounds, as apparent in tirades against critical race theory, the banning of books, the outcry against those who kneel during the National Anthem. And then there are those who triumphantly laud policy that contributes to cycles of intimate partner violence. The suppression of domestic violences under the idolization of the homeland runs deep, and unearthing violences creates its own trauma response—denial, blame, justification, deflection—not unlike the rhetorics found in the interviews of individuals who abuse their intimate partners. For a long time, institutional actors suppressed domestic violence, as apparent in the work of psychiatrists Judith Herman and Bessel Van Der Kolk. It makes me wonder if they have ever found themselves in a circle; what it would mean for them to be in a circle. As the State continues to narratively fetishize its response, the cogs of patriarchal trauma and violence continue to turn.

Truth-telling and mourning at a structural level would not be easy. Many are melancholically attached to the vision of this country as great. It is the others who are bad, defective, responsible, outsiders. This is in a way of language of trauma that is filtered through that which cannot be spoken. And the traumas keep surfacing in this state, which is more than just this state but a state of being. Maria Root writes that “[o]ur conceptual limitations may originate in a long-standing refusal to believe that atrocities initiated by other people indeed occur and do so with alarming frequency” (Root 232). Like Worsham, Root brings attention to conceptual limitations. But perhaps through narrative and testimony the limitations, as in the case of *RSVP*, the limitations will transform into catalysts for expression.

Trauma theory suggests that testifying to traumatic events can alleviate symptoms of trauma. In *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, Dori Laub writes, “the very process of bearing witness to massive trauma—does indeed begin with someone who testifies to an absence, to an event that has not yet come into existence, in spite of the overwhelming and compelling nature of the reality of its occurrence” (57). The absence is an absence in the narrative about the history of this nation. Mourning involves testifying, or “a process of constructing a narrative, of reconstructing a history” (Laub 63). This narrative—including the narrative of colonial patriarchal violence—needs to be told and mourned. Judith Butler writes that the “entitlement of the United States must be given up, lost, and mourned, as narcissistic and grandiose fantasies must be lost and mourned” (31). Trauma theory suggests that mourning—and bearing witness—is a process, grounded in openness, community, conversation, and awareness, forgiveness. This is an ongoing, unending, polyphonic process. Fania Davis writes that restorative justice “signifies the dawning of a new justice, a Bright Sun” (26). The work that takes place in *RSVP* and *RJOY* shows the power of this process in redressing domestic violence, or violence by those who command the homeland, its institutions, and its homes. New modes of being and relation, support and recognition need to be developed and implemented in influential environments.

This dissertation has started the process of constructing and reconstructing this narrative of patriarchal, domestic, and intimate partner violence. In many ways it feels like it has barely cracked the surface. But these violences and traumas are deep, and there is so much work to be done, with and among and through others in an ongoing process of mourning.

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