Women Not in the Kitchen: A Look at Gender Equality in the Restaurant Industry

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Rosalie Platzer

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In 1929 Virginia Woolf wrote *A Room of One's Own.* In it, Woolf raised questions that remain relevant about the lives of men and women today. She said, "in a hundred years…women will have ceased to be the protected sex," adding that, "logically they will take part in all the activities and exertions that were once denied them."[1] Hopefully she is right, as she technically has until 2029 for her prediction to still be valid. Going further, she even suggested that, "all assumptions founded on the facts observed when women were the protected sex will have disappeared."[2] When exploring what the life of a "woman born with a great gift in the sixteenth century" would be like, she surmised that the woman "would have certainly gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage outside the village, half witch, half wizard, feared and mocked at."[3] Though things have gradually gotten better for women since the sixteenth century, an essence of what Woolf said is still felt today. To a talented woman, the "world did not say to her as it did to them, Write if you choose; it makes no difference to me. The world said with a guffaw, Write? What's the good of your writing?"[4]

Cooking is one area that women have been included in, and women have long been associated with being in the kitchen. Culturally, women have been expected to cook. They have been the ones providing the family with nourishment by putting warm meals on the table. Some even argue that it is a woman's "biological role," to nurture the family through her cooking.[5] So, it seems logical to assume that a woman's dominance in the home kitchen would be reflected in professional restaurant kitchens. With years of experience of handling the heat of the kitchen, so to speak, women would be able to transfer their domestic skills into the professional field. But,

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[1] Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (London: A Harvest Book, Harcourt Inc., 1929), 40.
[2] Woolf, 40.
[3] Woolf, 49.
[4] Woolf,52.
[5] A.K. Whitney, "Feminoshing: Why Are Most Chefs Men?" (17 May, 2009) http://sirensmag.com/2009/05/feminoshing-why-are-most-chefs-men/ (accessed 1 October, 2010).

the numbers suggest otherwise. Estimates place women as only about ten percent of executive chefs in the United States.[6] In the field of cooking, which has been traditionally dominated by women, how do you explain such a huge discrepancy in the numbers?

Professional kitchens are today, and have historically been, male dominated. This is explained by military history in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, during times of wars, members of the army were expected to cook.[7] This developed into a military style hierarchical structure in the professional kitchen.[8] And at the top of the kitchen hierarchy was the executive chef. This "machismo," atmosphere still exists in many professional kitchens even to this day.[9] For decades, men have controlled restaurant kitchens, distancing their work from the mere cooking that women have been doing at home.[10] It was not until the second half of the twentieth century that women began making inroads into professional kitchens. Especially in the 1980s and 1990s a surge of successful women chefs began making their name in restaurant kitchens.[11] Women have also increasingly been entering and graduating from culinary schools. In the 1970s and 1980s, women represented about five to ten percent of those enrolled in culinary schools.[12] As of 2003, of the students enrolled at the San Francisco Culinary Academy, about half were women.[13] However, even with the increase of women culinary graduates, women are still not equally represented in the higher restaurant kitchen positions.

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[6] Rebecca Flint Marx, "Plenty of female chefs run New York City's kitchens. So why are men getting all the fame?" (15 January 2009) http://newyork.timeout.com/articles/restaurants-bars/70474/bitchin-confidential (accessed 26 October 2010).
[7] Ann Cooper, *A Woman's Place is in the Kitchen: An Evolution of Women Chefs*, (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1998), 12.
[8] Cooper, 13.
[9] Sadie Stein, "Are Women 'Chefs' Or Just 'Cooks?'" (20 November, 2008) http://jezebel.com/5094682/are-women-chefs-or-just-cooks (accessed 4 October, 2010).
[10] Cooper, 13.
[11] Peggy Katalinich, "Now Starring in the Nation's Best Kitchens, The road has been long and often rocky, but more and more women chefs are making it to the top." *Newsday,* 19 August 1987, 01.
[12] Cooper, 116.
[13] Carol Ness, "Not A Woman's Place? Chefs jobs are a bitter choice," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 November 2003, A19.

Though they have made some inroads and achieved some successes in the restaurant industry, women still have not gained true equality in the professional kitchen. There are many possible explanations as to why. One of the most pervasive arguments is that professional kitchens are still a "boys club."[14] According to Gary Alan Fine, though women may have more access to male dominated occupations, women still have to work on being accepted by the "boys."[15] Becoming "one of the boys," entails accepting the "informal" work structure of men, such as vulgar or sexual joking and language, discrimination and harassment.[16] Fine argues that for women to be accepted they have to at the minimum, accept and play by the rules of the "boys club."[17] Joan Acker argues that organizational structures are never gender neutral and thus push women out of organizations.[18] In addition, the idea of the "abstract worker" is also male gendered.[19] This means that any bodied processes, such as pregnancy, menstruation, expressing emotions, which are bodied processes of women; do not fit into the organizational structure or the idea of the ideal worker.[20] One of the other more pervasive arguments as to why women are less represented at the top of the kitchen hierarchy is the work-family conflict. Deborah A. Harris and Patti Giuffre argue that the work-family conflict acts as a "gendered mechanism," that prevents women from reaching higher levels of representation in male dominated fields.[21] They argue that there are three ways to resolve this conflict, which are either delaying or choosing not

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[14] Lois Baker, "Woman in the Boys Club: Ann Giordano Endured the Roadblocks to Becoming a Chef." *Buffalo News,* 2 January 2000, M12.
[15] Gary Alan Fine, "One of the Boys: Women in Male-Dominated Settings," in *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1987), 131.
[16] Fine, 1987, 134.
[17] Fine, 1987, 145.
[18] Joan Acker, "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations," *Gender & Society* 4, no. 2 (Jun., 1990): 139.
[19] Acker, 150.
[20] Acker, 151-152. This is most evident, for example, if a woman becomes pregnant. Extended time off work, such as maternity leave, do not fit into the organizational structure.
[21] Deborah A. Harris and Patti Giuffre, . "'The Price You Pay:'How Female Professional Chefs Negotiate Work and Family," *Gender Issues* 27, no. 1-2 (12 May 2010): 27.

to have children to succeed professionally, to leave the professional kitchen for another career in the culinary field, or to adapt the two roles to make them more "compatible."[22]

Still others argue that gender is a less pressing issue. Chef Ana Sortun argues that it's not about being a man or woman, but about having the confidence and personality.[23] Top Chef Cat Cora also believes that there isn't a lack of women chefs, just a lack of visibility, and that woman chefs need to promote themselves more.[24] Lisa Belkin argues that women have redefined what it means to be successful with terms like, "sanity," "balance," and, "satisfaction."[25]

Possibly, women are beginning to slowly change the male-centered kitchen ideal. That the long, grueling, physical, emotional, and stressful work that it requires to reach the top positions of a restaurant kitchen isn't what it means to be successful to women anymore. That now, instead of the workplace forcing women out at higher levels, women are rejecting the workplace.[26] Or, they are choosing to work in other areas of the culinary field, such as writing, catering, or pastry.[27] These areas of the culinary field tend to be more flexible, and without much of the "machismo" that dominates the restaurant kitchen, which allows women to be better able to pursue their new definition of success.

I argue that gender bias still plays a large role as to why women are less represented in the higher rankings of the restaurant kitchen. Many female chefs have proven that they are capable of professional cooking and able to run a restaurant kitchen as head chef. I agree with Charlotte Druckman in her argument that much of this has to do with our culture's definition of

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[22] Harris and Giuffre, 27.
[23] Editor "Interview With Ana Sortun," (November 2007) http://www.starchefs.com/features/woman_chefs/ana_sortun_interview.shtml (accessed 30 September 2010).
[24] Lauren Laborde, "Interview: Cat Cora of Food Network's 'Iron Chef America,'" (13 August 2010) http://www.bestofneworleans.com/blogofneworleans/archives/2010/08/13/interview-cat-cora-of-food-networks-iron-chef-america (accessed 26 October 2010).
[25] Lisa Belkin, "The opt-out revolution," *New York Times Magazine,* October 2003, 45.
[26] Belkin, 44.
[27] Ness, A 19.

what it means to be a "great" chef.[28] It is not that men are better at, or more capable at being an executive chef, but that we perceive what it means to be a "great" chef in male terms.[29] That "it is the masculine values that prevail."[30] My argument is very much in line with Linda Sue Reynolds, who argues that "culturally generated" ideas about gender roles, including "traditional patriarchal and cultural attitudes," work to limit the way we view what a woman should be doing and what she is capable of, thereby limiting her and inhibiting possibilities.[31] That lack of female representation in the highest levels of the "public sphere" have largely to do with the different way men and women are "gendered," as well as "myths" and "stereotypes," that are perpetuated by our society.[32] I argue that the structural organization and macho atmosphere of the professional kitchen, in addition with the gendered expectations that our society holds of women, account for the lack of female representation in professional kitchens.

Culturally, women in American society have been expected to cook. As the saying goes, "a woman's place is in the kitchen."[33] There seems to be a persistent belief in our society that suggests that women are biologically the more "nurturing" of the sexes.[34] And what better way to nurture the family than through the nourishment of a home cooked meal.[35] Moreover, along this line of thinking, the mother is the most suitable person to complete such a domestic task. This is an example of gender roles in American society. Since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a woman's role has largely been confined to that as 'home-maker.'[36] To simplify, that it is a woman's role to take care of the house, the cooking, and the children. And while the woman

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[28] Charlotte Druckman, "Why Are There No Great Women Chefs?" *Gastronomica 10, no. 1 (Winter 2010):* 24.
[29] Druckman, 26.
[30] Woolf, 73,
[31] Linda Sue Reynolds, "The Evolution of the American Woman Chef: An Ecofeminist Approach to Gender, Food, and Power" (MA thesis, Union Institute & University, 2008), 125.
[32] Reynolds, 125.
[33] Whitney.
[34] Whitney.
[35] Cooper, 13.
[36] Cooper, 9.

plays the multiple roles of housekeeper, babysitter (mother), and cook, the husband is out of the house with a career and salary. Of course, this is just a general analysis of gender roles in American society, as it is much more complicated than to merely say women stay home and men work.

Still, this is a reality that rings true for women even today. In contemporary society, not only are women still expected to fulfill their role as mother of the household, but also, many women hold jobs and have careers. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women still carry the brunt of household chores. Data shows that, "on an average day," 51 percent of women do housework, compared to only 20 percent of men (cleaning, doing laundry, etc.).[37] On these "average days," women spend about 2.6 hours on household tasks, and men spend about 2 hours (tasks such as mowing the lawn are also included).[38] Though, on average, men do work about 56 minutes longer than women on working days.[39] This is in part because women more often work part time than men.[40] It seems rather like a cyclical phenomenon then. Women often seek part time work because of societal expectations that require women to be home.

Aside from cooking, women are still expected to be the primary care giver of their children. Even though children also have fathers, this goes back to the idea that women are biologically more nurturing, and therefore, naturally suited to raise children. "Mothering," is still the tradition when it comes to parenting.[41] And as of late, the pressure and expectations placed on a mother are ever increasing.[42] Not only is raising a child, or children, hard enough in and of itself, but contemporary mothers in American society are expected to be concerned that their

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[37] Bureau of Labor Statistics, "American Time Use Survey Summary" (22 June 2010) http://www.bls.gov/news.release/atus.nr0.htm (accessed 2 February 2011).
[38] Bureau of Labor Statistics.
[39] Bureau of Labor Statistics.
[40] Bureau of Labor Statistics.
[41] Pamela Stone, *Opting Out? Why Women Really Quit Careers and Head Home* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 41.
[42] Stone, 42.

children perform well in school, are well rounded, etc. This is referred to as "intensive mothering," where the mother must, "pay close attention to," their, "child's development, and to nurture that development at every stage of the child's life so as to build his/her self-esteem, autonomy, and self-reliance."[43] Mothers face a great amount of social pressure to conform to this "intensive mothering," ideology, as this ideology is generally recognized as the norm in regards to proper parenting.[44] Mothers who do not conform to this way of parenting often face some social stigma. In contrast it is much more acceptable, and almost expected, that men are not as involved in child rearing, freeing them from much of the demands of parenting.

Such cultural expectations of women have hindered their advancement in many professional fields. It doesn't seem too hard to understand the concept that societal expectations of women, for example "intensive mothering," in combination with other factors, inhibit women's development and advancement in the professional world. Obviously, with women socially expected to devote so much time to their children and home, there really is not as adequate time and energy for much else. Especially, since parenting is often referred to as "a full time job." And in part, seeing as the male gender does not face these time demands as greatly or to the same extent as women, there is more time for them to put into their careers and public life. This is really evident, especially with a quick examination of some recent American history, which reveals that generally speaking, women have had a late start in most professional fields.[45] Many professional careers require an advanced degree, which is acquired through extended learning at the university level. However, when were the majority of American women allowed to, and fully supported by their peers, family, and society, to enroll in college? And following

[43] Stone, 42.
[44] Stone, 42-43.
[45] Anonymous, "Women Chefs: Does Gender Matter?" (2011) http://www.culinaryartsonline.com/women-chefs/ (accessed 28 September, 2010).

graduation, to obtain a professional career? I would argue, not until the second half of the twentieth century. Another quick glance reveals that men, varying by class of course, have been allowed to, and fully encouraged to pursue advanced education and seek entry and promotion in professional careers.

In part, the lack of female representation in professional fields can be described by a "time Lag." It has only been in recent American history that women really have been encouraged to pursue an advanced education followed by professional career. And though the social expectations and popular myths assumed about women, that once really worked to keep women in the home, aren't as strong as they once were, they are still in existence and accepted to varying extents. Yet, the women's movement began over decades ago. There are many who thought women should have "caught up" by now. And while to a certain extent women have "caught up" on some levels, however, as can be seen in the discrepancy between the numbers of female and male executive chefs, there is still much more work up to do. And it is not only a lack of female representation in the top ranks of the restaurant kitchen. There is a significant and notable lack of women across a broad spectrum of professional fields. For example, much of the evidence used to explain, let's say, female chefs from the highest ranks could also be to a certain extent applied to women in the corporate as well. There are many various factors at play.

Discrimination in many forms additionally works to inhibit many women from advancing to top positions in the culinary field. This is particularly true in male-dominated professions, such as in the restaurant kitchen. In the past, men who have overtly discriminated against women have run restaurant kitchens, and their bearing can still be felt today.[46] Many restaurants have been known for their "machismo," or militaristic style atmosphere.[47] For example, many

[46] Whitney.
[47] Stein.

restaurant kitchens have an informal, "boy's club," ambiance that women often have to accept and adapt to.[48] There is a general assumption that only an exceptionally tough woman would be able to handle this environment, as well as be able to compete at the same intensity level as men.[49] This assumption is an extension of traditional and stereotypical notions about the supposedly innate differences between these two genders. For example, this age-old "woman as nurturer, men as performer" pigeonhole.[50] The conviction that women are not as naturally capable to perform fundamental restaurant tasks and responsibilities as easily or satisfactorily as men makes it difficult for a woman to even cross the threshold into a restaurant position. When Chef Mary Sue Milken went to apply for her first restaurant job, 'the chef wouldn't hire a woman in the kitchen,' and offered Milken the position of 'hatcheck girl.'[51] Only after some persistence was Milken hired, and her first job was 'peeling onions,' at minimum wage.[52] Often times, there is a notion from the get go that women are not capable of being efficient workers in the restaurant kitchen. Male-dominated settings, such as restaurant kitchens, tend to have barriers in place that women have to face and men do not.[53] It is already presumed that men are up for the task, but many women are put to the test before their male coworkers will accept them.[54] For example, Chef Ana Sortun was forced to carry heavy stockpots by herself before she was allowed to work at the stove.[55] She was called 'salad girl," even after being promoted to the position of kitchen manager.[56] This exemplifies the "macho," and "boy's club," attitude of the

[48] Fine, 1987, 132.
[49] Stein.
[50] Stein.
[51] Cooper, 39.
[52] Cooper, 39.
[53] Fine, 1987,144.
[54] Fine, 1987,132.
[55] Editor.
[56] Editor.

restaurant kitchen can pose further obstacles to women. In Sortun's opinion, she believes that the restaurant kitchen is still a "boy's club,' in many ways.[57]

In general, it must be acknowledged that the kitchen is a hard place for anyone to succeed. In any profession where one wants to advance, it requires hard work, determination, practice, and so forth. This especially pertains to advancement within the restaurant kitchen hierarchy, where promotion is difficult to achieve. First off, the actual structure of the kitchen often times replicates a military brigade style with a hierarchy of workers.[58] This set up is supposed to ensure maximum use and organization of the kitchen, and the head chef really is almost like an "autocratic," ruler of the kitchen.[59] Under the very direct control of the head chef, many lower chefs and cooks often feel they have no "autonomy."[60] Moreover, members of the kitchen staff work under intense pressure.[61] For example, to work at the right pace, prepare food properly, and make sure it appeals to the senses. Cooks have to be able to multitask, often having to prepare more than one item at once.[62] They regularly work long hours, often into the late hours of the night and on the weekends. [63] In addition, pay is often low, especially at the beginning, and benefits, such as insurance, are often non-existent.[64] Hence, no matter a cook's gender, to succeed requires time, patience, determination, as well as sacrifice.

The physical conditions of the kitchen itself may also serve as a potential difficulty. The kitchen is usually a hot place, often unclean, and filled with strong smells.[65] One can imagine

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[57] Editor.
[58] Cooper, 13.
[59] Cooper, 13.
[60] Gary Alan Fine, *Kitchens: The culture of Restaurant Work* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 20.
[61] Fine, 1996, 40.
[62] Fine, 1996, 19.
[63] Ness, A19.
[64] Fine, 1996, 41.
[65] Fine, 1996, 41.

working on the line where the food is cooked, positioned for hours behind a hot stove.[66] And at this stage as well, the cooking is very routine and repetitive.[67] The kitchen is also considered to be a dangerous place.[68] Everything is happening at a fast pace, there are spills and wet floors, flames and burns, and heavy lifting.[69] Obviously, the use of sharp knifes and other utensils have the potential to inflict serious harm. At least at the outset, cooking in a restaurant kitchen is not a really glamorous profession. There is a very real difference between romanticized notions of what some imagine a chef's work to be like and the exceptionally taxing reality of working in a restaurant kitchen. It is seldom the case where a cook can simply walk into the kitchen and express their culinary creativity in the way they desire. Employed restaurant cooks have two "masters," those above them in the hierarchy and the most important, the customers, and are restricted to preparing only items on the menu.[70] A cook has to make it through these conditions if they want to advance. It would be a very extraordinary case for someone to only walk into the restaurant kitchen and take charge.

The process of entering the kitchen to being promoted to executive chef can take years, usually at least ten years.[71] Chef Ann Cooper got her first restaurant job when she was 17, and received her first position as chef when she was 26.[72] In between these years, Cooper worked as a prep cook, line cook, baker, and even apprenticed in a hotel kitchen.[73] As it is hopefully clear now, working in a restaurant kitchen is not easy, though it may at times be rewarding, it may more often than not be stressful and tolling on many levels, not just physical.[74] Especially

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[66] Ness, A.19.
[67] Ness, A 19.
[68] Cooper, 39.
[69] Cooper, 39.
[70] Fine, 1996, 19.
[71] Cooper, 39.
[72] Cooper, 28.
[73] Cooper, 28.
[74] Cooper, 39.

starting at an entry-level cook position, as one really has to put in the effort and consistent quality work to be considered for a promotion. In addition, Cooking somewhat lacks 'professionalism," and a set career path.[75] Technically, education is unnecessary to enter the restaurant kitchen, though it is definitely advantageous to have some kitchen experience. A cooks training and education is often very "informal."[76] By and large, cooks enter the kitchen through either graduating from culinary school or entering an apprenticeship in a kitchen.[77] For chefs, one of the best ways to learn the trade is through hands on training. Young cooks are encouraged to study early in their career with a more experienced chef who acts as support system, "role-model," and "coach."[78] Formal schooling is another avenue aspiring chefs may turn to. Though a formal education in cooking allows an aspiring chef to master the fundamentals of cooking, some believe that these schools do not really prepare students for the 'real world,' when it comes to working in a restaurant kitchen.[79] A classroom setting may not be able to replicate the intensity of the restaurant kitchen environment. Literally, incoming cooks must "climb the ladder," step-by-step to be promoted.[80] The position of executive chef is no easy task, and every skill a cook may pick up along the way will help.

There are several positions an aspiring chef must go through to make it to the executive chef level. Each member of the restaurant kitchen hierarchy has a delineated set of responsibilities and tasks. [81] Accordingly, with more experience and cooking expertise comes more responsibility. At entry level, beginner cook usually start off by learning to prepare side

[75] Fine, 1996, 45, 49.
[76] Fine, 1996, 51.
[77] Cooper, 64.
[78] Fine, 1996, 51.
[79] Fine, 1996, 51.
[80] Cooper, 39.
[81] Fine, 1996, 92.

dishes and cold foods.[82] New employees are often "put to the test" so to speak as a way to prove to the others that they can handle the kitchen environment, and will be a valuable asset to the kitchen team, not a liability.[83] Here, there is an emphasis on "teamwork," as though a cook may only be a beginner preparing cold foods, each member of the team has a task that contributes to the end result. From here, a chef moves up to line cooking, or cooking at the stove.[84] Line cooks may be described almost as, "manual laborers," in that they cook and assemble the main dishes, which can be a very repetitive and tedious post.[85] Working the line, a cook learns many skills that will help them advance.[86] Specifically, a cook may, "develop stamina, coordination, memory, timing, the ability to function under stress, and ability to replicate flavors and cooking techniques under pressure."[87] These are skills that one may not necessarily be taught in culinary school, but nevertheless, are essential skills that a cook needs to have thoroughly developed in order to advance. From the line, a chef may be promoted to sous chef.

The sous chef is the second in command in the line of chefs, and oversees the line cooks.[88] Based on their experience, a sous chef should be able to ultimately pick up and work at any post, supervise lower status cooks, and most importantly, be able to take charge when the chef needs them to.[89] The next level is chef, which is very hands on with the actual food and cooking, as well as helping those in lower positions.[90] As evidenced, each position builds off the previous one, requires more experience and know-how, as well as new roles.

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[82] Fine, 1996, 93.
[83] Fine, 1996, 93.
[84] Cooper, 39.
[85] Fine, 1996, 88.
[86] Cooper, 120.
[87] Cooper, 120.
[88] Cooper, 119.
[89] Cooper, 119.
[90] Cooper, 118.

Above the chef is the executive chef. The position of executive chef is somewhat distanced from the more hands on cooking experience of cooks and lower level chefs. Executive chefs tend to work less with the food and cooking, and their roles are more managerial.[91] As Chef Jody Adams expressed, 'when you go from being a cook to being a manager, it's a huge leap. It's not natural! What drew me to restaurants is cooking and food—having hands-on everything, touching, tasting, and playing. As the chef of this big operation, I just don't have the opportunity to do that anymore.'[92] For instance, executive chefs are typically responsible for things like staffing, the budget, and ordering food.[93] Clearly, these are not the responsibilities that one would normally find representative of the position of a chef. Some chefs are ill prepared for the managerial qualities that are required with being executive chef.[94] Generally, a cook's training does not include such managerial responsibilities, which can pose problems in the transition to becoming an executive chef.[95] Or, as Chef Kerry Heffernan expressed, "At this point, sixty percent of my job is human relations; forty percent is thinking of and executing menus. It's evolved into something other than what I imagined I would be as a chef.'[96] Finally, beyond the executive chef is the chef-owner. Chef owners oversee all aspects of the kitchen, particularly financial concerns.[97] In this fashion, everyone has to work his or her way up the kitchen hierarchy. No matter one's possible gender, this is a long and demanding career path to pursue. But, there are more barriers to women in the advancements of chefs.

Barriers exist in the organizational structure of the kitchen that hinder the advancement of female chefs. Barriers in the form of organizational structure are not limited to the kitchen, but in

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[91] Cooper, 117.
[92] Cooper, 41.
[93] Cooper, 117.
[94] Fine, 1996, 90.
[95] Fine, 1996, 89.
[96] Cooper, 41.
[97] Cooper, 117.

addition exist in other professions. Moreover, in most professional organizations, men hold the vast majority of leading positions.[98] With men making up the majority of those represented in the top ranks, they are in the position to "make decisions" that will directly impact the lives of their employees of both genders.[99] This is especially evident in male-dominated fields.[100] As noted earlier, organizations are not "gender neutral," and in fact, organizational structures are created from the male point of view and "processes," that are then claimed to represent, "the human."[101] Such structures work to covertly "marginalize" women and maintain the current gender status quo of professional positions.[102] Seeing as, for the most part, such structures remain unchallenged reveals that enough people accept them as "normal." For instance, this means that there is no room for 'bodied' processes in an organization.[103] Bodied processes for females include expression of emotions, sexuality, and the ability to menstruate and give birth.[104] This gives men an advantage over women, who experience less bodied processes, and are assumed to be better able to handle emotions than women.[105] Indeed, many organizational structures were created at a time when women were fully excluded from taking part in organizations, so there was no need to make room for such "processes." Obviously, as women have, currently are, and in the future will continue to make up part of an organization, such outdated policies must be brought up to date to accommodate all potential employees. The bodied processes of women are used to regulate, and even eliminate or reject women from organizations.[106] Traditionally, since

[98] Acker, 146.
[99] Acker, 146.
[100] Acker, 139.
[101] Acker, 142.
[102] Acker, 139.
[103] Acker, 151.
[104] Acker, 151.
[105] Acker, 152.
[106] Acker, 152.

women have been excluded from many occupations, this creates a "workplace culture," that allows for structural organizations to advantage men.[107]

Specifically, organizational policies regarding maternity leave affect the lives of many professional women. This is part of the "work-family conflict," which is a "gendered mechanism," that works to inhibit women's advancement in their careers.[108] Put simply, women are still expected to be the primary caregiver for their child or children, and this is a responsibility that must be balanced with their career. This is especially true in the restaurant business. In the restaurant business, there are few days off, insurance benefits are limited, and the hours are long and demanding.[109] Imagine then having the additionally demanding responsibility of taking care of and raising a child. In addition, the years that it takes a cook to work their way up to the executive level are often the years that men and women begin having children. Again, because of the long hours cooks must work, which is expected of a cook if they want to be taken seriously and promoted, cooks and chefs do not have much time outside of the kitchen. Taking the time out to birth a child and stay home during that first month or so can be damaging to a cooks career path, especially in such a competitive profession. Moreover, it is difficult "regain entry" in the restaurant kitchen if one leaves for an extended period of time.[110] These specifically impacts women who are still culturally expected to raise children and only have a certain biological time frame in which they can have children (though, developments in modern sciences might help to assist with such issues).

[107] Harris and Giuffre, 28.
[108] Harris and Guiffre, 27.
[109] Harris and Guiffre, 28.
[110] Harris and Guiffre, 40.

Even if an organization has some maternity friendly policies, they are usually insufficient.[111] Often, informal policies of the workplace do not support motherhood. [112] Even though an organization may have friendly maternity leave policies, work place culture is often unfriendly.[113] This workplace culture can sometime pressures women to take a "macho maternity," leave, where women will take shorter maternity leaves in order to miss less work.[114] Doing so is a way to for a female chef to display her determination, dedication, strength, and so forth, to continue and show she is serious. Furthermore, much of the problem lies after the woman has already had her child, when work policies are usually unsupportive of reincorporating these working mothers.[115] Many female employees with children find that their work environment is too "inflexible."[116] Again, as a cook, especially in the crucial years of working one's way up, there really is little time to really pursue any thing other than work. This may pose a problem for women with child-bearing responsibilities in addition to her career.

Women deal differently with this work-family conflict. Women may choose to either postpone childbearing until after they have succeeded as a chef, leave the kitchen for other careers within the culinary field, or has to somehow adjust her dual roles as chef and mother.[117] First off, it is a very considerable sacrifice for women to delay, or even give up, their own family life and aspirations in order to succeed in their chosen profession. Of course, success in any career requires some amount of sacrifice, but I would argue, not at the same level. Especially when men do not as nearly as often have to make such a choice. Though, it must be pointed out that not all professional women face this conflict. Some women actively choose not to start a

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[111] Stone, 85.
[112] Stone, 119.
[113] Harris and Guiffre, 30.
[114] Harris and Giuffre, 30.
[115] Stone, 119.
[116] Stone, 83.
[117] Harris and Giuffre, 27.

family or have children for a plethora of completely valid reasons. And, some women actively choose and desire to leave work and raise their children. Another possibility for some women may be to choose to become a pastry chef, food writer, a personal chef, or a culinary instructor.[118] Such options are often seen as a more "flexible" option for women and mothers to choose.[119] This goes along with the idea of "gendered division of labor," in which men maintain their standing in the most prominent and well-paying positions.[120] Some women may also choose to work part-time. But, in the fast paced and long hours of the restaurant kitchen, part-time for a chef is not really an option. In addition, working part-time may carry a "stigma" to it, and is may be interpreted by others as a "demotion."[121] In addition, full-time workers may be viewed as harder or more committed workers, and therefore might be given better work projects and more important responsibilities.[122] However, the situation is not so grim for all female chefs and cooks that are also mothers. Some women are able to rely on their "extended kinship and friendship networks," for help and support in child rearing.[123] Though not easy, as it requires a lot of planning, scheduling, and reliance on others, it can help to alleviate some of the demands professional women face with the work-family conflict.

The work-family conflict acts to "shut out," women from the workplace.[124] Again, some women actively and legitimately choose to leave their careers for the home. But this is not the case for all professional women, and it is not necessarily true that women are "opting out" of, or rejecting the workplace, as Lisa Belkin argues.[125] In reality, "family pulls," and "workplace

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[118] Cooper, 122.
[119] Cooper. 122.
[120] Christine L. Williams, *Still a Man's World* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 10.
[121] Stone, 92-93.
[122] Stone, 90.
[123] Harris and Guiffre, 42.
[124] Stone, 215.
[125] Belkin, 44.

pushes," work together to "shut out," women from the workplace.[126] Some women choose to leave their careers because, based on their "lived" and "observed realities," it seems as if it is the only, and best decision to make.[127] A woman's gendered role as "mother" and "caregiver" are often "invisible," even though they have strong influences and consequences on society as a whole.[128] Even though women continue to enter into universities and careers at increasing rates, the "traditional" idea that the husband makes all the money while his wife attends to the home is still extremely pervasive in our society.[129] This often results in the husband or father's career taking precedence over the mother's, which goes on unquestioned, as if it were natural.[130] In addition, there is also the idea that numerous contemporary women have redefined success in terms of "sanity," "balance," and "satisfaction."[131] Needless to say, everyone is allowed to have, create, as well as alter or accommodate his or her own definition of success. And, one's definition of success can influence their future career decisions and goals. But not matter how one defines success it ignores the reality and barriers that women face.

Women also face a variety of forms of informal discrimination in the restaurant kitchen. In many cases, the majority male workforce may harbor somewhat unwelcoming and antagonistic sentiments toward women who do "play by," or at minimum "accept,' these informal rules.[132] Women must actively work to be accepted in male-dominated settings.[133] Woolf's words still ring true, "there would always have been that assertion—you cannot do this, you are incapable of doing that—to protest against, to overcome."[134] To fit in, women must adapt

[126] Stone, 215.
[127] Belkin, 215.
[128] Stone, 63.
[129] Stone, 64.
[130] Stone, 64.
[131] Belkin, 45.
[132] Fine, 1987, 132.
[133] Fine, 1987, 131.
[134] Woolf, 54.

their behavior to this informal way of behaving.[135] Adapting their behavior to fit the informal workplace environment is much easier for women than trying to outright change their work environment.[136] This means that women, for the most part, must become, 'one of the boys,' which entails accepting things like sexual humor, teasing, harassment and so forth.[137] If women are unable to adapt, or at least accept, such informal behavior they run the risk of being excluded by male co-workers and miss opportunities to bond.[138] Friendly relations among all members of the kitchen staff is especially important, as "teamwork" and "cooperation" are both vital for a kitchen to run efficiently.[139] Depending on the woman, her experiences, and personality, she may find it no problem to adapt, but this is not the case for all.[140] The strength of bonds between male and female chefs in the kitchen greatly, and unfairly, depend on the woman's behavior and point of view toward these informal male policies[141] Some men, I would assume especially those that work in male-dominated settings, frequently perceive women to be less valuable as well as less efficient workers.[142] Because of such false perceptions, many women find they have to actively work to confirm their capabilities in the kitchen.

Often times, men working in male-dominated settings may feel threatened when a women enters their workplace environment.[143] Not to say that these men are unwelcoming to women just for the mere fact that they are women.[144] There seems to be nothing wrong with a woman being a woman, at least, depending on what your definition of a "woman" is and how a

[135] Fine, 1987, 132.
[136] Fine, 1987, 132.
[137] Fine, 1989, 131.
[138] Fine, 1987, 134.
[139] Fine, 1987, 142.
[140] Fine, 1987, 141.
[141] Fine, 1987, 137.
[142] Fine, 1987, 143.
[143] Fine, 1987, 132.
[144] Fine, 1987, 132.

woman should behave. Or, "Not so much that she shall be inferior as that he shall be superior."[145] Problems seem to arise when the informal work environment of men is brought into question or challenged in anyway. For instance, women often promote and encourage formal changes to the "status quo."[146] When one group dominates, in this case the majority of male chefs, they get to set the rules.[147] Everyone else needs to follow, or face possible exclusion or marginalization. This is especially evident in the design of the 'old boy,' network, which works to preserve the rewards men receive in the workplace.[148] This network is an "informal male social system," where members "transfer the competition and power advantages realized in the formal structure onto friendship patterns and alliances within the informal system."[149] Cleary, this disadvantages those that are not members of the network, meaning they do not receive the privileges members receive, such as easier career advancement.

Even though there is evidence of such discrimination in the restaurant kitchen many chefs, including women, claim that gender discrimination is not prevalent in the kitchen. Or at least, that it does not inhibit or prevent female chefs from advancing in their careers. Though many agree that women were once prohibited from entering the kitchen, some argue that 'the doors are now open for women.'[150]This is exemplified through the evidence of a somewhat substantial amount of successful women chefs.

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[145] Woolf, 54.
[146] Fine, 1987, 328.
[147] Fine, 1987, 144.
[148] Judith C. Oakly, "Gender –Based Barriers to Senior Management Positions: Understanding the Scarcity of Female CEOs." *Journal of Business Ethics* 27, no. 4 (Oct 2000): 328.
[149] Oakley, 328.
[150] Michelle Weldon, "Success is on the Menu: Talent and Ambition Open Doors for Chefs." *Chicago Tribune,* 4 August 1996, 7.

For example, the book *Women of Taste* by Beverly Russel profiles the great achievements of many women chefs.[151]Especially in the 1980s and 1990s there was a surge of successful women chefs.[152] As Executive Chef at the Ritz Carlton in Chicago, Chef Sarah Stegner, exclaimed in 1996, 'the doors are open for women.'[153] The number of women in culinary school continues to increase.[154] In the 1970s and 1980s, female enrollment in culinary school was at about 5-10%, and now it has reached an average of 35%.[155] Some argue that it will only take time, and that young women chefs are now working their way up.[156] Though I agree with this idea of a "time lag," I feel that it ignores the realities of the work-family conflict that will, if they choose to start families, impact these young women later as they advance in their careers. For the work-family conflict to be diminished, our culturally gendered expectations of women need to end. Therefore, the idea of a "time lag" only offers part of an explain in regards to the lack of female representation in the top positions of a restaurant kitchen.

Still, some maintain that gender doesn't matter in regards to the promotion and advancement of a cook's career. Again, this includes female chefs as well. Many chefs believe that it depends on a person's personality, not gender, about whether they can advance in the kitchen.[157] I agree that it definitely requires a certain personality, dedication, and passion to persist as a chef and move forward in one's career. In the end whatever your gender, a cook or chef has the same responsibilities. Whatever your gender may be, if you want to make it to the executive chef level, or even become a celebrity chef, there are certain things that all cooks must

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[151] Beverly Russel, *Women of Taste: Recipes and Profiles of Famous Women Chefs* (New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 1999).
[152] Marian Burros, "Missing: Great Women Chefs in New York," *New York Times*, 10 February 1999, F1.
[153] Weldon, 7.
[154] Cooper, 207.
[155] Cooper, 116.
[156] Daphne Duquesne, "Where the Great Women Chefs Are" (25 February 2010) http://www.gastronomista.com/2010/02/where-great-women-chefs-are.html (accessed 18 November 2010).
[157] New York Magazine, "A Woman's Place?" (21 October, 2007) http://nymag.com/restaurants/features/39595/ (accessed 28 September, 2010).

be capable of. Whether it involves physical strength, speed, multitasking, an aspiring chef must be able to handle it all. And then, they have to go back to work the next day, and do it all over again. This is similar to the way many minority chefs feel. Minority chefs face discrimination and obstacles to advancement in the kitchen as well.[158] No matter, because as one minority chef said, 'you still have to go to work and earn it, regardless of who you are.'[159] And as successful Chef April Bloomfield stated, 'I don't think of myself as a woman in an industry of men.'[160] Still though, it cannot be ignored that there is a great lack of women in the top positions of the restaurant business.

In our society, perceptions of men and women serve as barriers to female advancement in the professional world. This is evidenced, for instance, by social perceptions of women as more "nurturing," and therefore better suited to rear the kids. This perception leads women right into the work-family conflict. Furthermore, women in our society face a "double-bind."[161] For example, those employed in leadership positions are expected to be "authoritative" if they want to be treated with respect and obeyed by those in lower positions.[162]Often times though, a women in the workplace who acts aggressively is more likely to be perceived as a "bitch," while in direct contrast, an aggressive man is more likely to be perceived as a good leader.[163] Women more often than not have to find a balance in their behavior to be accepted and respected. Often women are perceived to be less competent and less efficient than men when it comes to management and leadership.[164] To illustrate, "women's linguistic styles," when it comes to

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[158] Allison Perlik, "Melting Pot?" *Restaurants & Institutions* 111, no. 11 (May 1, 2001): 68.
[159] Perlik,74.
[160] Lauren Collins, "Burger Queen: April Bloomfield's gastropub revolution." (22 November 2010) http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/11/22/101122fa_fact_collins?currentPage=all (accessed 18 November 2010).
[161] Oakly, 324.
[162] Oakly, 324.
[163] Oakly, 325.
[164] Oakly, 326.

communication at work is often seen as less forceful or firm than the "linguistic style" of men.[165] Sadly in our society, the "norm" is "male."[166] And consequently, what have come to be labeled as "masculine" traits are often associated with "competence" and "leadership."[167] On the other hand, what have become labeled as "feminine" traits, or "femininity," are often associated with "incompetence."[168] This causes some women in leading positions, or who aspire to be in those positions, to "downplay" their more feminine characteristics.[169] Much of this goes back to the "socialization" of boys and girls in childhood, where the socialization of boys makes them better suited for top careers in their futures.[170] It gets to a point where it does not even seem to make sense anymore; there are too many contradictions, generally speaking. Women are perceived to be less efficient workers and leaders. But from the get go boys and girls are socialized to behave differently. And boys are socialized in a way that better prepare them for the professional world. A professional world where the "rules" have almost all been set by men and are well established by now. And when a woman attempts to adapt her behavior to be more traditionally "masculine," (or if she has a more "masculine" personality to begin with) she runs the risk of being perceived as a "bitch."

In addition, our society's definition of what it means to be a great chef is also gendered.[171] This directly stems from the idea that what has become identified as "masculine" traits are associated with competency and leadership skills, while what are identified as "feminine" traits are associated with incompetence. As addressed earlier, to reach the top positions of a restaurant kitchen, such as executive-chef, comes with more managerial

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[165] Oakly, 325.
[166] Oakly, 326.
[167] Oakly, 326.
[168] Oakly, 325.
[169] Oakly, 326.
[170] Oakly, 325.
[171] Druckman, 26.

responsibilities in addition to being able to cook well. In this way, terms like "marketability," "business acumen," and so forth are used to define a great chef.[172] Or, when you think of a chef in terms of their physical strength, speed in the kitchen, or technical skill, these have some covert "masculine" associations with them. And again, much of this goes back to the socialization of girls and boys, when boys are encouraged to be assertive, and women not so much.[173] In general, boys are socialized to act confidently, competitively, and "show off."[174] Girls, in contrast, are generally led to believe if they become overly confident, they may be disliked.[175] The skills that boys are more typically socialized to develop out them at an advantage in the professional world. For example, men are much more likely to "self-promote" themselves at work than women are.[176]

Furthermore, our perceptions of the way men and women chefs cook are different as well. This is an issue that is surrounded by some debate. If both a male and female chef cooked a plate of spaghetti, the woman's would be more likely described as cooked from the "heart" and the man's from the "head."[177] More specifically, a man's dish may be described as having an 'intense,' 'rich,' or 'bold' taste, while a woman's dish may be described as being 'homey,' 'comforting,' or 'prepared with love."[178] The old stereotype that 'women have hearts and men have brains.'[179] We perceive women as more nurturing or caring, and this translates into how we perceive their actions. This goes back to the view that in our society, "men's work," is seen as

[172] Druckman, 26.
[173] Oakly, 325.
[174] Oakly, 325.
[175] Oakly, 325.
[176] Oakly, 325.
[177] Druckman, 25.
[178] Druckman, 25.
[179] Druckman, 25.

more important than "women's work," and this is true in the restaurant world as well.[180] For various reasons, when a man accomplishes something it is deemed "more important," or "better" than if a woman is able to accomplish something similar.[181] As Woolf asks, "Is it better to be a coal-heaver or a nursemaid; is the charwoman who brought up eight children of less value to the world than the barrister who has made a hundred thousand pounds."[182] Oftentimes, achievements of women are "trivialized," "sexualized," or at worst, even completely unnoticed.[183] At least in terms of home cooking, this is something women are culturally expected to do. The idea that cooking for the family is something women just do naturally, and is something they want to do and understand. This is just an outdated cliché, but still has great influence of societal perceptions of women, their roles, and their inherent nature. Even some women argue that women have an "inherent" understanding of food and nourishment.[184] For instance, Chef Ann Cooper states that women have a "desire" to "nourish" and "nurture" their families, in part by cooking and preparing meals for them.[185] Or as Chef Alice Waters puts it, "women understand instinctively," that "food is primarily about nourishment."[186] In effect, that men have "distanced" themselves from the traditional cooking from their mothers.[187] But, it is not about the gender of the chef, what it really comes down to is cooking style, preference, training, skill level, and whether the food was cooked with a "certain sensibility."[188]

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[180]Mariah Burton Nelson, "Boys Will Be Boys and Girls Will Not," in *Rereading America: Cultural Context for Critical Thinking and Writing*, ed. Gary Colombo, Robert Cullen, and Bonnie Lisle. (Boston: Bedford Books, 1998), 477.
[181] Nelson, 477.
[182] Virgina Woolf, 39.
[183] Nelson, 478.
[184] Julie Stillman, *A Celebration of Women Chefs: Signature Recipes from Thirty Culinary Masters* (Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1996), 6.
[185] Cooper, 13.
[186] Russel, 6.
[187] Cooper, 13.
[188] Mike Weiss, "What is it about the cooking of women chefs that makes it more memorable, more comforting, than that of men?" (24 June 2007) http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/06/24/CMGCVQ6DAA1.DTL (accessed 15 February 2011), 1.

Our perceptions of men and women chefs are evidenced by gendered portrayals on the Food Network as well. Though women are underrepresented at the top levels of the restaurant business, they do receive coverage on the Food Network. There is Paula Deen, Rachel Ray, Sandra Lee, Cat Cora, and Giada De Laurentiis, to name a few. According to Top Chef Cat Cora, there are plenty of women that either own or work in a restaurant. [189]In her opinion, it comes down to the lack of marketing and visibility of women chefs.[190] She states that the restaurant industry is not necessarily male-dominated, but that we "see" male chefs more often because they "promote" themselves more.[191] In reality, women chefs receive a lot of airtime on the Food Network, but are portrayed as "motherly," and as "domesticated goddesses," with a hint of sexiness.[192] As Druckman puts it, the problem is not about "lack of airtime," but the "quality" of that airtime.[193] In contrast, men on the Food Network are portrayed as "experts," "adventurous," as "serious," and as "competitors."[194] These are exaggerated portrayals of male and female cooks based off of seemingly everlasting gender perceptions. In the actual restaurant kitchen, women often aim to look "androgynous," in an effort to be taken seriously.[195]

In this way, society's perceptions of what a great chef is, coupled with reinforced stereotypical portrayals of men and women chefs work as barriers to prevent women from advancing and from being taken seriously in the kitchen.

There are many factors that work together to hinder the advancement of women in the restaurant business. Such factors include discriminatory policies in the organizational structure of the workplace, as well elements of more informal and cultural forms of discrimination.

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[189] Laborde.
[190] Laborde.
[191] Laborde.
[192] Druckman, 29.
[193] Druckman, 28.
[194] Druckman, 29.
[195] Druckman, 39.

Specifically in the restaurant kitchen, the work culture and certain policies can work against the advancement women.

The work-family conflict also specifically works to prevent women from advancement. To change this, policies need to be adopted that are mother friendly and encourage women to stay.[196] For instance, more "flexible" work schedules that work around a mother's schedule, instead of the mother trying to schedule her life around work.[197] Or possibly, as proposed by the Deputy Prime Minister of Britain Nick Clegg, "a system of shared parental leave."[198] This would be beneficial for society as it would allow the parents more options in balancing child rearing and work, allow and encourage fathers to spend more time with children, and lessen the many burdens that rest on the mother.[199] Without any change in policy, the industry will continue to weed out women before they can advance to the top. This will prevent more diversity and openness from entering the kitchen. And, with a change in policies more women will be able to make it to the top and therefore become role models and mentors to other women chefs.

Gendered societal expectations of women need to change as well. Changing policies to reflect the lives of various employees is one step, but for any policy reform to genuinely take hold, attitudes need to change as well. As Nelson puts it, "in this society, the question of women catching up to men has enormous significance."[200] Currently, there is a wide range of structural, personal, cultural, and institutional forces that work to maintain the status quo and "reinforce gender difference."[201] I worry that even though there are increasing amounts of women in culinary schools, until we adapt new policies, and until gendered expectations of women significantly diminish or

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[196] Cooper, 219.
[197] Stone, 221.
[198] Helene Mulholland, "Nick Clegg promises 'properly flexible' system of parental leave" (17 January 2011) http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/jan/17/nick-clegg-properly-flexible-parental-leave (accessed 19 January 2011).
[199] Mulholland.
[200] Nelson, 475.
[201] Nelson, 478.

disappear, women will still be somewhat restrained or held back from advancing to the level of executive chef and beyond. This applies to professional women of other occupations outside of the restaurant business as well.

I believe that our society as a whole needs to change its definition of what it means to be a certain gender to accurately reflect the complexity of being a human being. And even further, thinking of the world in only two genders is limiting, and does not take into accounts cases of intersexuality, which are treated as medical problems.[202] Though this is an oversimplified analysis, we need to view women as more than inherently nurturing and overly emotional beings, and view men as more than emotionless and assertive beings. Though overall, boys tend to be socialized one way, and girls the other, this does not been that all women are always "feminine" or that all men are always "masculine." And, there are different ways to be or act "feminine," just as there are different ways to act "masculine." In terms of gender, there are so many perceptions in our society that contradict each other, just don't make sense, or are outdated. As our society evolves, as our daily lives change, our policies and perceptions need to be updated as well.

We need to see women and men as equal (with a few biological differences), and realize that both men and women can have the same capabilities if we allow them too. Because people are interesting, and there are some very different individuals that identify with various genders, religions, ethnicities, languages, cultures, sexual orientations, and so forth, that it really becomes hard to generalize. And why should you? When we generalize or assume, we miss so many interesting aspects of the story as a whole. But so often we generalize, we omit, ignore, or skim over. There is so much we miss, so much we will never know or understand, almost as if we do

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[202] Suzanne J. Kessler, "The Medical Construction of Gender: Case Management of Intersexed Infants," *Signs* 16, no.1 (Autumn, 1990): 4.

not even try. To allow the status quo to remain, and our society to stagnate is unacceptable. As dramatic as that may sound, in my opinion, it is a very real possibility. Just take a general glimpse of the history of our society, and the looks of those in authority have not changed too much. What is more is that those in power do not voluntarily give it up. It is not about replacing the majority of executive male chefs with female chefs, or taking the "power" of men in society and turning it over to women. No one should be held back by other people's perceptions of them, or by outdated and discriminatory policies. To return anew to Virginia Woolf, about her character being denied entrance to a university library without the supervision of a male, "That a famous library had been cursed by a woman is a matter of complete indifference to a famous library…It sleeps complacently and will, so far as I am concerned, so sleep forever."[203] No matter what, in the end a kitchen is a kitchen. When it comes to it, it does not matter the gender of the person behind the stove, all that matters is how well that person can cook. It is about giving all people a chance, the opportunity to learn, explore, to flourish. It is about true and genuine equality, fairness, and justice. To put it simply, allowing all members of society to be productive. And what society could be better than one where all its members are valuable?

To leave with this, as Woolf once wrote, "so accurately does history repeat itself."[204] Even today, in the twenty-first century, society as whole still struggles with how to define the roles of men and women. "At the same time…there was a young man living freely…picking up unhindered and uncensored all that varied experience of human life …"[205] Men still today for the most part enjoy much of this same freedom (well, to clarify, middle to upper class white males). When one group is allowed so much more freedom, or does not have to worry about facing any additional obstacles, it seems clear that they would have more opportunities to pursue the

[203] Woolf, 8.
[204] Woolf, 54,
[205] Woolf, 70.

educations and careers that they want. In the end, "it is much more important to be oneself than anything else," for really, this is all you can do.[206] Finally, in the words of Woolf, "lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt you can set upon the freedom of my mind"[207]

[206] Woolf, 109.
[207] Woolf, 75.