Gender is a Difference that Makes a Difference: Examining Teaching Practice Using Jane Roland Martin's Theory of Education

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Abstract

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Evidence of gender roles and dichotomies can be observed in a variety of ways in the elementary school classroom. Often, these roles and dichotomies are reflective of the values that society holds. To further explore gender in education I use Jane Roland Martin's book, *Reclaiming A Conversation: The Ideal of the Educated Woman.* By analyzing the educational philosophies of Plato and Rousseau, Jane Roland Martin illustrates the historically rooted relationship between gender and education. Martin uses this analysis to create an educational framework that works to overcome the production-reproduction dichotomy that perpetuates gendered roles and gendered traits at a structural level. Using Martin's framework, I evaluate my teaching practice and identify instances of gender-bound education and trait genderization as well as instances where I placed reproduction in the ontological basement, like Plato and Rousseau. By critiquing and reflecting on my practice, I hope to use Martin's theory to identify strategies and teaching moves that disrupt socialized gendered roles and traits. Through these strategies and moves I hope to encourage all students, regardless of gender, to value and develop traits associated with reproduction and production.

Introduction:

"Miss Janson? Why do all of those posters have girls on them?" The student was referring to laminated photographs of young women building robots with #ILookLikeAnEngineer plastered on them. The images were given to me, specifically for my classroom, by a high school robotics team who is determined to challenge the status quo by launching a campaign that encourages participation and representation of women in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. The photographs depict the female team members, power tools in hand, working on large robots, sitting in front of computers with 3D modeling software on the screens. The young women are serious in each photo, no smiles, and intensely focused on whatever engineering project they have in front of them. I had about six of these posters hung around my third grade classroom. I also had numerous books focused on the accomplishments of women in my classroom library because I wanted my female students to see themselves in roles that are not typically depicted in the media. As well, I wanted my male students to recognize that girls and women are capable of being engineers.

The student who asked about the posters was genuinely curious and was also probably confused as to why there were no pictures of men with similar messages in the room. I responded by telling him that girls and women often are not depicted to be engineers, which may discourage them from perusing engineering or science fields. When girls don't have someone to look up to, they may feel like they do not belong in the role. Some of the female students in my room echoed my message by nodding their heads or saying things like, "We can be engineers!" I felt successful after this exchange because I was empowering my female students to be who they want and to

pursue their interests, despite societal pressures. Quite a few of my female students were excited and engaged with science and robotics, and still are today.

Some of my female students, however, were unmoved by my encouragement. Due to their religious beliefs, these students were uninterested in the idea of STEM. They were especially uninterested in the idea of pursuing a STEM related career, or any career for that matter. These students dreamed of a future that included raising a family, being stay at home mothers and taking care of a household. At the time, I was somewhat put off by this as I wanted my female students to realize their potential to be great scientists and inventors and changemakers.

However, my heavy focus on bringing representation of women in STEM fields into my classroom prohibited me from seeing the value and importance of including representation of women in traditionally female roles as well as men in traditionally female roles. While some students directly benefitted from seeing the #ILookLikeAnEngineer posters, these posters were only representative of some women. In retrospect, I realize that while increasing representation of women in STEM fields within my classroom may have encouraged and inspired some of my students, it may have had a more negative impact on others. The boy who inquired about the posters, for example, may have interpreted the message differently, or the girls who had no interest in college or careers, may have felt isolated by those images. Rather than encouraging all of my students to pursue their unique interests, those who were socially associated with their gender and those who are not, I was creating a space where only certain interests were explicitly championed.

This calls to mind a quote from Jeremy Bem, son of Sandra Lipsitz Bem who, with her husband, attempted to raise her children with nontraditional gender constraints. When asked about his experience being raised as gender-neutral as possible, Jeremey said to his mother[1] “Well, if

[1] Bem, Sandra Lipsitz. *An Unconventional Family*. Yale University Press, 2005.

you were doing it all over again, I would advise you to make it clearer to me that it's okay to have conventional desires as well as unconventional ones" (p. 189). In my attempt to fight against gender dichotomies and gender socialization, I failed to represent students who identified with socialized aspects of gender.

This is not the only experience with gender roles and traits that I have had in my experience as a third-grade teacher. Gender dynamics were always at play in my classroom space, on the playground or in the larger school community. Some examples are obvious, like the one I mentioned above. Others have been more implicit and come to mind only when I specifically search my memories for such instances. Even still, there are likely numerous examples of the way gender dynamics impacted my classroom and students every day of the school year. In my experience, gender is similar to breathing: always functioning, always influential, but not always explicitly noticeable. You tend to notice your breath when it is faster than normal or when you are taking deep breaths; gender rises to the forefront when it is questioned or confronted, or when the individual is specifically focused on it. This is a rather privileged viewpoint. I am able to claim that gender operates in the background of my life because I am able to live my day-to-day life without my gender coming into question. Many people do not experience this privilege and are forced to negotiate or defend their gender daily.

To better understand the multiple and nuanced implications that gender has had on my elementary education classroom, I turn to Jane Roland Martin's book, *Reclaiming a Conversation: The Ideal of the Educated Woman*[2]. I intentionally chose this book because of its heavy grounding in philosophy of education and because of its overarching feminist tone. I first encountered Jane Roland Martin when browsing the education section of a used bookstore, right when I was in the

[2] Martin, Jane Roland. *Reclaiming a Conversation: the Ideal of the Educated Woman*. Yale University Press, 1987.

process of applying for graduate school. The title, *Coming to Age in Academe*[3], caught my eye and felt particularly important at this point in my life. I added the book to my cart and eventually to my bookshelf where it has sat mostly untouched.

Despite not reading *Coming to Age in Academe,* I was curious about gender and education, specifically about how masculine words such as, guys, founding fathers and, mankind, were often used as if they were gender neutral. Over time this curiosity moved to the back of my mind as I became preoccupied with other seemingly more pressing issues. However, I was reminded of my interest in gender when *Reclaiming a Conversation* appeared on the syllabus for a Western Philosophies of Education course I was taking. Reading and discussing this book renewed my interest in the impact that gender has on education. I was excited by Martin's analysis of Plato's and Rousseau's philosophies of education. Martin's analysis was eye-opening for me and reignited my interest in the relationship between gender and education.

Jane Roland Martin focuses on the lack of visibility of women in educational philosophy and argues that this invisibility and the erasure of women from such work is a feminist issue. *Reclaiming a Conversation* is born out of Martin's concern "for the harm done to both sexes because we do not study the ideals of the great thinkers of the past about the education of women" (p. 7). Ignoring the thoughts that educational philosophers have had on the education of women further erases women as being knowledgeable and perpetuates the idea that the education that women receive ought to be the same as the education that males receive. I will illustrate Martin's concern with this idea in the next chapter. Basically, it perpetuates the devaluation of women and societal roles associated with women.

[3] Martin, Jane Roland. *Coming of Age in Academe: Rekindling Womens Hopes and Reforming the Academy*. Routledge, 2000.

It is important to note that Martin's theory goes beyond gender identity and gender norms. Rather, Martin's theory is built from her historical observation that masculine traits are being associated with production, while feminine traits are associated with reproduction roles. Social roles associated with production include paid professional labor while social roles associated with reproduction include unpaid work associated with families and domestic life. Martin's theory helps me understand how gender binaries continue to exist at a systematic level.

My experience as a White, cisgender, heterosexual, middle-class, educated and able-bodied woman necessarily influences my understanding of Martin's work and its relationship to education. My privileges have allowed me to thrive in the public education system and have allowed me to analyze and critique the public education system in an effort to identify areas of improvement within my own classroom. Most notably, being White in the US has inevitably shaped my life in ways that I am aware of and in ways that I cannot possibly fathom. Looking back on my educational experience, I never witnessed race discrimination, nor did I interact with race politics on a regular basis. This can largely be attributed to my upbringing in a predominately White community, though that should not explain my lack of awareness of race differences. As an elementary school child, I was always surrounded by White teachers and administrators. I saw illustrations of White children in books we read in class, and I could always find someone who "looked like me" in a history lesson. I was taught about people of color during February and on holidays. In retrospect, these lessons were brief and tokenizing. I was always represented in classroom spaces. Many students are not.

The experiences I draw from in this paper are from my first-year teaching, where I was working in an elementary school located in a rural part of Washington. I was one of six third-grade teachers in the building. I had 23 students in my classroom. My students were mostly White and

cisgender, though they came from a variety of income levels, which was also representative of the larger school community. The staff and administrators also were mostly White, though the age and experience level of the teachers was varied. At 22, I was the youngest and one of the most inexperienced teachers on staff. I was hired alongside three other first year teachers. These factors played a role in my teaching practice and provide context for my perspective and analysis of my experience.

While my experience does not make me an expert, it does grant me insight into the innerworkings of the education system that shaped me and that I now teach in. This insight should not be left untouched. Rather it should be interrogated and critically analyzed in order to understand how to better my practice so that it benefits all students. To do this, I will be turning to Jane Roland Martin's work.

In this thesis I will use *Reclaiming a Conversation* to explore the following questions:

1. What is Jane Roland Martin's argument regarding the role and impact of gender on education?
2. How does Martin's theory allow me to interrogate and extend my own teaching experience?

To answer these questions, I will first analyze Martin's philosophy of education in Chapter Two. Then, in Chapter Three I will reflect upon my experience in light of Martin's theory and consider ways I can employ Martin's framework in my future teaching career. To conclude, I will pose questions to keep thinking about while considering Martin's theory.

Chapter Two: Jane Roland Martin on Plato and Rousseau

In her book, *Reclaiming a Conversation*, Jane Roland Martin analyzes the historical impact of gender[4] on education through critical evaluation of the educational philosophies of Plato and Rousseau. Through her analysis, both the insights and the flaws in each philosopher's thinking on education become clear. Martin shows that Plato's focus on sameness, that is, providing the same education for individuals while ignoring gender, in combination with the way that Plato devalues domestic life, does not produce success in attaining the same educational outcome, where both male and female individuals succeed to the same degree and in equal numbers. Additionally, Martin shows that Rousseau's focus on providing an education based on gender, combined with the way that he devalues reproductive roles, has its own limits. To address the issues that both Plato's and Rousseau's philosophies raise, Martin offers ways to negotiate the space between identical educations that ignore difference and different educations that problematically entrench difference. In so doing, Martin shares pedagogical strategies that can be used in classroom settings to address the issues that surface in education when it is problematically tied to gender.

First, I will examine Martin's analysis of Plato's philosophy of education. I will then turn to her analysis of Rousseau's philosophy of education. In so doing, I will show why Martin believes that both Plato and Rousseau devalue reproduction and domestic life, even though neither philosopher recognizes that this is what he is doing. I also will show why Martin believes this is problematic for each philosopher's view of education. After I present Martin's analysis of Plato and Rousseau, I will turn to how she reframes each thinker's philosophy of education.

[4] Throughout this chapter, when using the term gender, Martin is not referring to the gender identities of individuals. Rather, she is referring to the socialization of roles and traits as either male or female, based on an individuals biological sex.

Plato's Philosophy of Education

It is necessary to understand Plato's ideal society, the Just State, to recognize the significance of his view of education. The Just State focuses on the individual and their ability to contribute to the public sphere in terms of filling a variety of jobs and roles. For Plato, these jobs and roles, from trade workers to artisans, leaders and soldiers, are all absolutely necessary for society to function. Plato also believes that each individual is inclined to fulfill one of these roles. Martin writes, "Each one of us, Socrates says, is born with more aptitude for one task than for others" (p. 13).

Both men and women are born with intrinsic talents, which Martin calls the Postulate of Specialized Natures. While the Postulate of Specialized Natures applies to every individual, Martin highlights Plato's belief that gender does not determine an individual's social role. "People are different from one another in many respects," Martin writes. But for Plato, gender differences are not consequential. To illustrate Plato's belief that gender is irrelevant, Martin cites Plato's idea that "some men are bald and others long-haired. Would it not be ridiculous to suppose that only bald men – or, alternatively, only those with long hair – could become cobblers? Some differences affect the pursuit a person follows, and others do not. Sex, like baldness, is a difference that makes no difference" (p. 14).

Initially, the idea that "sex is a difference that makes no difference" seems enticing. In his Ideal State, Plato allows both men and women to occupy the same social roles, despite gender. Both women and men are capable of becoming artisans, for example, if they are born with the natural talent to do so. Both women and men are capable of becoming leaders or members of Plato's guardian class, again, if they are born with the natural talent to do so.

Plato recognizes the need for various social roles in order to achieve a Just State, and he recognizes that individuals possess different capacities to fulfill social roles. In so doing, Plato highlights the importance of difference in achieving his goal of a Just State. Education then, must be geared towards developing the skills that allow each individual to perform their specialized task, which is based on their intrinsic talent. As Martin describes, "education is a servant of the state which equips individuals born into it to perform the functions preassigned to them by nature" (p. 17). The role of the teacher thus becomes part detective, as they need to help the student figure out what "function" lies within them. The teacher must also help build and develop the skills that will maximize the individual's functionality. In short, education becomes driven by the need to fulfill functions that are necessary to society. Teachers are equipping students with skills that increase their ability to perform the role that they will perform in the Just State.

In practice, education for Plato becomes identical for any and all individuals who have the same natural inclination. Those who are inclined to be soldiers will all receive identical education; similarly, those who are inclined to be artisans also will receive the same education, though the education of artisans differs from the education of soldiers. Because Plato does not see gender as a contributing factor to determining what role an individual by nature is suited for, the education for both men and women pursuing an identical role must also be identical. As Martin states "…in the Just State females who are by nature suited to rule will receive an education identical to that given males who are by nature suited to rule. For women in the Just State, then, both equality of *role opportunity* and equality of *access to identical education* exist" (p. 19). Martin calls this the Postulate of Identity, in which all the individuals with the natural inclination to be guardians receive an identical education that produces guardians.

In sum, Plato believes that providing identical education to all individuals who share the same specialized nature will produce the same outcomes. Plato also recognizes the different social roles that are necessary to create a Just State. Because there are different roles, education *for those roles* must be different. The skills needed to become a guardian are different from the skills needed to become an artisan; thus education needs to be tailored to the social role. Further, Plato argues that anyone who possesses the natural inclination to fulfill a social role ought to develop that role through education, despite gender. In order to have a Just State that is successful, individuals must develop skills necessary to fulfill social roles by receiving education that is identical to others fulfilling the same social role.

Martin's Critical Analysis of Plato

Martin finds pieces of Plato's philosophy of education appealing. Plato's proposal that gender doesn't determine social role is enticing because it suggests that women can fill the same roles as men, particularly as guardians and rulers of the Just State.

However, Martin identifies places that could benefit from a critical analysis. Specifically, Martin shows that identical education for both males and females may produce different outcomes. She writes, "However, there is no guarantee whatsoever that identical education will yield identical results" (p. 19). In making this argument, Martin puts aside any possibility of biological sex difference impacting learning and focuses rather on the impact that gender-based socialization has on modes of learning.

To illustrate why educational strategies and opportunities must respond to individual differences, Martin describes her experience with tennis lessons. Struggling to serve the ball, Martin writes, "Tennis instructors are fond of saying, 'Watch my racket as I serve the ball.'" She

continues, “I, for one, can watch till doomsday without its having any apparent effect on my serve, while my more visually oriented colleagues proceed to hit aces” (p. 19). In this example, she describes one mode of learning, through visual input, which is effective for some individuals, but not for Martin. She goes on to say, “When finally the instructor analyzes the serving motion verbally, introduces a meaningful metaphor, tells me to listen to the sound the ball makes, or takes hold of my arm and puts it through the correct motions, my serve will equal my colleagues’” (p. 19). Again, Martin is describing different modes of learning, particularly ones that work for her. Now, it is unclear as to why these modes work better for Martin than the visual example given earlier, but this is not uncommon in education. Some individuals learn more effectively through hands-on learning than from purely auditory learning, while some may learn more effectively through reading rather than watching or doing.

However, Martin takes this example further by analyzing the gendered component of serving a tennis ball. “Many beginning female tennis players have more difficulty then their male counterparts do in acquiring an adequate serve,” Martin continues, “Why? Because the serving motion is similar to throwing a ball, and most females have had much less experience with this activity than males have” (p. 19). It is important to point out that while Martin is highlighting a gendered aspect of her experience, she is not focused on biological differences between sexes. Instead, she is pointing out that males generally have more experience throwing balls than females, because of societal expectations. While males are often encouraged to dabble in athletics so consequently, gain experience throwing balls, women are often encouraged to play with dolls. This difference in socialization because of gender means that women do not have the same set of skills as males do when learning to serve a tennis ball.

Martin's analysis of her gendered experience learning to serve in tennis helped me recognize a similar experience within my own life. When I became involved in my high school robotics team, I had my eye on a coveted role on the team: driving and operating the robot during competition. This job was important and required a certain skill-set that was taught to those who expressed interest. The human drivers used game controllers to make the robot move in various directions and at different speeds. Like Martin, I came up against issues when learning to drive the robot. I had a hard time understanding the orientation of the robot and how that translated to the thumbstick I was moving. Countless people tried to explain it to me and had me watch them drive, but I could only really understand and learn by practicing.

During my childhood, video games were far more popular among boys than girls and where marketed to boys. The boxes containing the product were blue. Games predominately featured men, and if there was a female character, she was often depicted as beautiful, wearing minimal clothing and high heels. My female friends who had gaming consoles in their houses didn't play them, but their brothers often were occupied by the games. Despite having a gaming console in my house, my sister and I rarely touched it. The games that we had were mostly racing games or Star Wars games, which were not of great interest to me as a child. I wanted to play games with female leads like Nancy Drew, but these were not available on consoles. Our family gaming system became a glorified DVD player and I barely touched the game controllers.

While I am limited to my own experience and cannot speak for or generalize to others, my lack of experience as a girl using a game controller could have made it more challenging for me to understand how to drive a robot. I had the opportunity to play video games and I had easy access to the console. Yet societal expectations, the marketing strategies that targeted boys and men, and the type of games that were available: all of these implicitly pushed me away from playing video

games in my spare time. I played with Barbies instead. Even now, when I play video games, I struggle to use the controller and push the right buttons because I haven't had much practice.

"Where education is concerned natural talent is only part of the story," Martin writes. "People with similar talents often learn in different ways. To the extent that people learn differently, they require different educational treatment to attain the same ends" (p. 19). Much like Martin needed a different treatment to learn to serve in tennis, and I needed a lot of practice operating a game controller to drive a robot, the women in Plato's Just State need a different educational strategy to be successful in their social roles. Through the Postulate of Identity, Plato believes that the same strategies will yield the same outcomes, but Martin argues against that. Just like auditory modes of disseminating information do not yield identical results for individuals who prefer to learn by doing, Martin suggests that "there is no reason to suppose that male-based educational methods will transform most potential female guardians into actual ones" (p. 20). Thus, Martin illustrates that ignoring gender and focusing on providing an identical education will not produce success in attaining identical educational outcomes. As Martin makes clear, she did not have the same success with serving a tennis ball. I did not have the same success driving the robot.

Plato ignored the impact that gender-based socialization had on the people in his Just State and maintained the idea that education should be identical for all individuals who are suited for the same role. Martin addresses Plato's knowledge gap and develops a deeper understanding of the impact that gendered socialization can have on lived experience. Martin argues that social roles are associated with traits. These traits, she observes, are gendered. Martin coins the term, "trait genderization" to describe this phenomenon. For example, leadership often requires individuals to be assertive. When asked to describe an assertive male leader, women used words like "successful,

heroic, capable, strong" (p. 31). In contrast, when asked to describe an assertive female leader, women used words like "pushy, bitchy, domineering" (p. 31). The sharp contrast between the adjectives is obvious. Women used far more critical and harsh words when describing assertive women leaders than they did when describing assertive male leaders. Associating women with assertiveness connotes negative feelings and thus discourages females from acting in ways that could be perceived as assertive. On the other hand, associating males with assertiveness connotes positive feelings and, in turn, encourages men to act in ways that demonstrate this trait. This example shows how the same trait, assertiveness, evokes very different responses when associated with men or with women.

The problem is exacerbated because gendered traits are associated with social roles that are not explicitly gendered. The social roles then become implicitly gendered. To be successful in a leadership role, for example, an individual may need to be intelligent, capable, rational and strong. Though anyone is capable of having these traits or characteristics, society places different value on these traits depending on whether they are seen in men or in women. A male may be considered fit for a leadership role when he is demonstrating strength and heroism, words that are also associated with assertive males. A woman, on the other hand, may be written off for a leadership role when she exhibits the same traits, strength and heroism, because they are not necessarily valuable traits for a woman to have. "Thus, even supposing that the traits Plato's guardians will possess are judged to be highly desirable ones for males," Martin writes, "we must not assume that they would have been evaluated so highly when possessed by females" (p. 31). Though Martin is speaking about Plato's guardians and the social atmosphere of his time, her observation also can apply to contemporary times. Currently, traits carry different connotations when they apply to women and when they apply to men, despite the societal role that both individuals hold.

Another contemporary example to consider is the way that women on the 2020 presidential campaign trail are described by the media. At the time of my writing, the 2020 campaign has four women frontrunners: Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren, Amy Klobuchar and Kirsten Gillibrand. Despite their strong backgrounds and long histories in politics, all four women have been more negatively portrayed by the media than the male nominees, according to an ongoing study by Storybench[5], an online journal published by Northeastern University's School of Journalism. The researchers examined over 1,000 articles from five top news websites, using an information retrieval strategy known as term frequency-inverse document frequency. This tool determines a numerical statistic that highlights the relationship between a word and its importance to the document.

While conclusive results cannot yet be drawn due to the small number of articles that have been analyzed, the data are still intriguing and suggestive. To the everyday audience, it would appear that women are being portrayed more negatively in the news. This could be connected to society's view that women are not fit to serve in leadership roles for one of two reasons: 1) the women may exhibit female gendered traits while leaders ought to exhibit male gendered traits, or 2) the women exhibit male gendered traits and are perceived by society as being unfeminine and abnormal. Unfortunately, this negative perception of women in leadership roles is being supported and perpetuated by some of the most powerful members of society. Regarding Kamala Harris' questioning of Attorney General William P. Barr during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, President Donald Trump described Harris as "nasty"[6].

[5] Frandsen, Alexander, and Aleszu Bajak. "Women on the 2020 Campaign Trail Are Being Treated More Negatively by the Media." *Storybench*, 24 Apr. 2019, www.storybench.org/women-on-the-2020-campaign-trail-are-being-treated-more-negatively-by-the-media/.

[6] Stevens, Matt. "Trump's New 'Nasty' Woman: Kamala Harris." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 2 May 2019, www.nytimes.com/2019/05/02/us/politics/trump-kamala-harris-barr.html.

Martin also argues that social roles can remain gendered, even when they are separated from gendered traits. She writes, "…although they are attached to social roles, traits can remain genderized even when the social roles to which they belong are detached from gender" (p. 34). In contemporary society, gender does not explicitly determine social roles, meaning people of any gender can be nurses or engineers, for example. Though the jobs themselves are not explicitly gendered, the traits associated with them are. Society tends to think that nurses ought to be caring, compassionate, communicative, fair and intelligent: traits that society historically has gendered as female. In contrast, society believes that engineers ought to be goal-oriented, rational, critical thinkers, possess technical skills and, be trustworthy. These are mostly traits that society genders male. When a man wants to pursue a nursing career, he takes on "feminine" traits and risks being called a "sissy" or "girly". Similarly, when a woman wants to pursue an engineering career, she takes on "masculine" traits, and risks being considered "nasty" or "not a real woman".

Plato's guardian class is a prime example of trait genderizaton. Martin writes, "…the qualities or traits [Plato] assigns his guardians were considered in his day and are still considered masculine. By this I do not mean that males possess these traits and females do not, or even that males are more likely than females to possess them, but simply that the traits of Plato's guardians belong as much to his cultural stereotype of the male as they do to ours" (p. 28). Even though the guardian class is open to both men and women, successful guardians are those who have traits that are associated with maleness. Ironically, women who exhibit the traits that would make them successful guardians may not necessarily be successful, precisely because they possess the necessary traits! The guardian role may be open to any gender. However, because the traits associated with the role are considered masculine women who possess the requisite traits will likely not be taken seriously and may even be ridiculed.

Although Plato offers women the same opportunities as men and denies that gender is an influence on natural born talent, he fails to address differences in the socialization of males and females. This failure impacts the effectiveness of "the same" education for females. Martin writes, "…as there is differential socialization for girls and boys in Plato's Just State, there too we should expect gender to make a difference, even if biological sex in itself does not, in the *way* females learn, in their *motivation* to learn, and in the degree of *readiness* they possess when their formal education for ruling begins" (p.22). By failing to recognize the impact of gender-based socialization, Plato fails to provide an effective education for the women who were born to pursue guardian roles, because of the association of male traits with the role.

Consider this popular riddle, for example. A father and son are in an accident and are taken to the hospital. Upon arrival, it becomes apparent that the boy needs surgery. In the operating room, the surgeon says "I can't perform this procedure. This is my son!" How can this be? I was stumped by this riddle the first time I had heard it. The answer is that the surgeon is the boy's mother, not his father, as one may initially think.

This riddle relies on trait genderization to work. According to a quick Google search, some of the traits associated with being a surgeon or doctor are: confident, rational, dedicated, professional, intelligent, courageous, compassionate, empathetic. Many of these traits are often associated with men, rather than with women. Being rational, for example, is associated with males. When women are rational or are dedicated to their profession, society often critiques them for lacking emotions or for not being interested in raising a family. In other words, they are unfeminine. Professionalism also is often associated with males because of the predominance of men in the work force. By contrast, women are socialized to be taking care of a household, not to work outside of the home. Even though gender does not determine whether or not one can be a

surgeon or a doctor, these roles are still genderized, because the desirable traits in the profession are gendered.

Martin calls to attention the fact that Plato's Just State and his philosophy of education over-value public life and the traits that are associated with being successful in public life. In so doing, Plato devalues the significance of private life and the domestic sphere. Martin distinguishes public life and private life by referring to them as "production" and "reproduction" respectively. Production includes not only public life, but also professional roles and jobs that are compensated, such as so-called white-collar professions and skilled labor. For Plato, roles associated with production include warriors, rulers, artisans, guardians: roles that provide for the efficiency of society's well-being and success. Reproduction includes unpaid tasks and jobs that are mostly done in the privacy of the home, such as raising a family or bearing children. While reproduction can include labor, this labor is unpaid and is considered unprofessional.

Through trait genderization, Martin highlights the trouble that arises because Plato focuses on production to create his Just State. "Historically, warriors and rulers have been predominantly male," Martin writes. "No doubt this explains why Socrates and his companions never entertained the possibility that members of the male sex might not qualify by nature to be guardians; only females are problematic in their eyes" (p. 28). Here, Plato is associating the guardian class and the traits associated with this role with men. Because Plato values efficiency in his Just State, he emphasizes the importance of production in creating and maintaining an ideal society. Because male traits are associated with production, Plato places greater value on men.

By contrast, Plato views the domestic sphere of reproduction to be a threat to the Just State and to the ruling class. Martin writes, "Because he considers private property in general and family in particular to be potentially divisive institutions, and because he wants to ensure that rulers and

warriors function as a cohesive unit…he substitutes for them communal living and child-rearing arrangements" (p. 15). This belief suggests that any woman of the warrior or ruling class would be burdened by having children or by engaging in other reproductive tasks. Plato's female guardians should not raise families. Rather, they should concentrate on the productive tasks associated with ruling.

Plato's belief that reproduction and the female traits associated with reproduction impedes ruling, combined with his belief that production and the male traits associated with it ought to be maximized, serves to put women in what Martin terms the "ontological basement"[7]. She uses this metaphorical space to illustrate the placement of men as being superior to women. For Plato, men and their male traits will maximize production, while women and their female traits will impede production. Just by existing, women are inferior to men because they cannot provide as much production value as men.

Women guardians, then, face a catch-22, which makes it incredibly difficult, if not impossible, for them to succeed in their role as guardians even though they are allowed to occupy this role. "So long as the guardian role is defined in terms of traits that are considered masculine," Martin writes, "in Plato's Just State potential female guardians would be in a no-win situation. They would have to acquire traits thought to be masculine in order to meet the requirements of the guardian role. Yet, if they acquired those traits, they would very likely be viewed as abnormal and would be derided or belittled for possessing them" (pp. 33-34). The education that a potential female guardian would receive would be designed to develop male traits, as the guardian role is one of production, and production is associated with male traits. Because the potential female guardian would have to acquire traits that are societally unacceptable, she would risk being

[7] Jane Roland Martin cites Lorenne Clark as introducing this term.

ridiculed. Rather than educating all individuals to succeed in their natural role, per the Postulate of Specialized Natures, the education that Plato suggests allows men to succeed in the roles that he finds valuable: those that are public and contribute to the efficiency of the Just State. Women, on the other hand, if they are inclined to fulfill a public role, will be subject to an education that is fit for men and may not set them up for success.

In sum, by allowing women to fulfill the same roles as men, Plato attempts to remove gender as an influence in identifying an individual's societal role. However, Martin shows that this is ineffective because traits remain gendered by society and because society still associates certain traits with specific roles and jobs. While parts of Plato's philosophy of education are appealing, giving men and women equal opportunity for social roles, for example, Martin shows that education needs to be renegotiated for males and females to successfully achieve the role that is, as Plato believes, assigned to individuals by nature. This cannot be done without acknowledging that gender necessarily plays a role in the lived experience of *every* individual.

Rousseau's Philosophy of Education

Before discussing how Martin reframes problems in Plato's philosophy of education, I will turn to her analysis of Rousseau. If Plato's philosophy denies gender differences, Rousseau's philosophy of education emphasizes differences in gender traits and roles. In her analysis of Rousseau's *Emile,* Martin writes, "…Rousseau argues that being male or female *is* a difference that makes a difference in determining a person's place in society; indeed a close reading of Book 5 suggests he believes sex is the *only* difference that makes a difference" (p. 43).

This acknowledgement of sex as determining one's place in society is key, as it also will dictate the type of education one receives. Rousseau distinguishes between an education for males

through his depiction of Emile, and an education for females as depicted in his education of Sophie. Different educations are necessary for males and for females because the roles they will fill in society are based on nature, which for Rousseau constitutes biological sex. Martin writes, "Emile's education is totally different from Sophie's, because, having a different nature, she is to have a different role" (p. 46).

Rousseau also counters Plato's ideas about the significance of reproduction within a society. Rather than seeing family and reproduction as removed from society and potentially harmful to the ruling class, Rousseau sees family as necessary for creating the ideal society. "…[Rousseau] argues that if the family is removed from a society," Martin continues, "the bonds of love which Plato wants to establish among members of the guardian class and the attachment he wants them to have for the state cannot develop" (p.43). Rather than ignoring the reproductive aspects of society that are typically associated with females, Rousseau acknowledges that family life is necessary. Because he believes that, by nature, women are to fill reproductive roles, Rousseau argues that the education females receive should fit that role. Men, on the other hand, are to fulfill different societal roles, those associated with production. Thus men's education ought to be geared towards those ends.

For Rousseau the societal role that is associated with production is one of an active citizen who is free and autonomous. This stems from his perception of the ideal state, which is one that allows a person to be free while still being a member of civil society and subject to the laws of society. Rather than allowing individuals to act on their own while ignoring a common good, Rousseau argues that an ideal society would focus on a collective good. Martin writes, "In contrast to what Rousseau calls the Will of All, which is the sum of the private wills of all citizens and as such disregards the common good, the General Will has the common good as its object" (p. 45).

Martin continues, "[General Will] is the result of deliberation in isolation from one another by citizens who are rational, impartial, and sufficiently informed about the issues" (p. 45). Rousseau is educating Emile to be able to participate in the General Will, which means he is educating Emile to be self-regulatory, rational and, objective. For Rousseau, men ought to be participants in the General Will as doing so allows them to be citizens of the state while also remaining morally pure. Martin says, "…for Rousseau the General Will is always right, the individual's moral integrity as well as his autonomy is preserved in the state" (p. 45).

In contrast, Sophie's societal role demands a different set of skills. Rather than being objective or strong like Emile, Sophie needs to develop a demeanor that is agreeable, attentive and modest. So, her education must be different from Emile's. Sophie's education must fit the roles that Rousseau defines for women ,which are wife and mother. In order to be Emile's wife, Sophie must learn to be "industrious, vigilant" and "subjected to early constraints" (p. 51). Sophie needs to be obedient and care for Emile's reputation. Sophie will need to know how to sew and embroider. Rousseau believes these traits and skills will equip Sophie to be fit as Emile's wife and the mother of his children. Of Sophie's education, Martin writes "Sophie is not given as much freedom as Emile. Because idleness and disobedience are a girl's most dangerous defects, she must learn to conquer herself" (p. 51).

Both Emile and Sophie's educations, though different, are intended to be complementary to one another. Martin writes, "The moral person created by the marriage of Sophie and Emile is supposed to be a harmonious whole. Its two parts, while perfect of their kind, are not in themselves complete, for Emile lacks those traits belonging by nature to females and Sophie lacks those belonging by nature to males" (p. 53-54). Martin calls this the "Theory of Complementary Traits" as Emile and Sophie must individually be taught skills that allow them to come together.

As Rousseau argues, because sex is the difference that determines social role, education must be different for males and females. Males need to develop and learn skills that allow them to become free, productive citizens and patriarchs; while females need to learn skills that will allow them to raise a family and support their husbands. These educations will be distinctly different because Rousseau believes that in marriage a "harmonious whole" person will be created.

Martin's Critical Analysis of Rousseau

Like Plato's, Rousseau's philosophy of education has positive and negative aspects. Martin finds Rousseau's acknowledgement of reproduction as significant for society appealing. Martin also appreciates Rousseau's acknowledgement of gender socialized differences.

However, she is critical of the Theory of Complementary Traits. Specifically, she questions the quality of Sophie and Emile's marriage. Martin also is concerned with Rousseau's treatment of gender as the determinate of social role, as this directly impacts the relationship between gender and traits.

Though Rousseau intends for Sophie and Emile's marriage to produce a "harmonious whole", Martin questions the reality of Sophie and Emile's union to actually manifest harmony. Emile and Sophie have distinctly different traits and, according to Rousseau, because of their difference in biological sex, and because of their different educations, they have no traits in common. Martin writes, "for two people to live in harmony some traits must be shared" (p. 55). Not only do Sophie and Emile not share any traits, they each have traits that serve a different purpose. While Emile is to fight against injustice and to exhibit strength, Sophie is to agree and submit. How can individuals with such great differences have a happy and whole marriage?

Through the marriage, Rousseau believes that Sophie is being rewarded because she can care for and tend to Emile. However, Martin reminds us that because of Emile's education, "he will not – indeed cannot – reciprocate" (p. 55) the love and tenderness that Sophie provides. Rousseau knows this. That is why he focuses on developing complementary educations for Emile and Sophie: ultimately when the two are married, Emile can have a mate who is kind and loving because Martin writes, "the marriage [Rousseau] arranges is intended to correct Emile's emotional deficiencies – not by teaching him to be tender and caring but by giving him a tender, caring mate" (p. 55). However, Rousseau's assumption calls into question the likelihood that Sophie will be able to tolerate acting tenderly and caring for Emile, who cannot do the same. Additionally, one wonders if Emile will be capable of receiving Sophie's tenderness.

While Rousseau recognizes the impact that gendered socialization has on individuals as evidenced in his Theory of Complementary Traits, Martin is concerned that Rousseau over emphasizes and entrenches differences in gender. Rousseau acknowledges that both Sophie and Emile have different traits because they are socialized to pursue different social roles, which is an important step forward from Plato. Yet because Rousseau maintains the importance of biological sex in determining social roles, he ties biological sex to traits associated with social roles. Martin writes, "… contrary to Plato, Rousseau maintains that sex is *the* determinant of a person's nature" (p. 43). By tying biological sex to social roles, Rousseau doesn't allow for any change in roles or traits. Rather, he expects that individuals born male will be socialized as male and will fulfill male roles. He expects the same thing from females although he is more suspicious of the female's nature and the traits females may develop if left without "female" education. Martin writes, "… Rousseau is inordinately concerned that Sophie might become something other than the obedient wife and nurturant mother he wants her to be," (p. 41). Without education, females like Sophie

may develop skills and traits that Rousseau does not want to attribute to women, for fear they will disrupt their ability to be mothers and wives. Rousseau's fear implies that women in fact are capable of developing skills and traits that are not "female". This will upset Rousseau's Theory of Complementary Traits, his philosophy of education, and his ideal society.

Martin also recognizes that the union of Sophie and Emile illustrates the power differential between production and reproduction in Rousseau's ideal society. Martin writes, "Nonetheless, we must not overlook the fact that in Rousseau's philosophy the dependency between females and males runs in two directions. Sophie's dependence on Emile is neither deeper nor more fundamental that Emile's on her" (p. 65). Despite the intended mutual dependency between male and female, part of Sophie's education includes constraint and subordinacy. By contrast, Emile's education focuses on developing freedom and self-sufficiency.

Rousseau recognizes Sophie's dependence on Emile. But he does not recognize or value Emile's dependence on Sophie. This prompts Martin to think about why this double standard is not addressed. Martin writes, "… Rousseau, like so many other political thinkers, assigns both women and the reproductive processes of society to the ontological basement and therefore does not consider Sophie's services important enough to classify Emile's reliance on them as an instance of dependence" (p. 66). Despite Emile *needing* Sophie to be whole, Rousseau maintains that he is not dependent on her, because doing so would undermine Emile's social role as a morally autonomous man.

"Rousseau considers the family a training ground for citizens," Martin writes, "because his state is to be a genuine community" (p. 60). If the family is to serve as the training ground for citizenship, Sophie's sons would need to develop the skills associated with citizens. Sophie's daughters on the other hand, would be allowed to develop only the skills associated with being

mothers. If Sophie's sons are to remain in the family however, it is unclear how they will develop such skills. Sophie must educate her male children to be productive citizens, without being able to participate in that role herself. Rousseau values the family as a community that can create citizens. But at the same time, Rousseau removed Emile from his family to be educated for autonomy. Martin writes, "While the hearts of Rousseau's citizens must be attached to the state, the thoughts and actions of these men are supposed to be both autonomous and governed by reason. So far as reason and autonomy are concerned, Rousseau takes the family to be a corrupting influence" (p. 59). Emile needs to be both bound to others and also autonomous. Rousseau cannot reconcile this contradiction. Hence, he is ambivalent about the family.

However, Rousseau doesn't remove Sophie from the family because he believes that the family provides Sophie with a vision of her future. Sophie needs to develop skills that will enable her to be a wife and mother. Rousseau deems it necessary for Sophie to have experienced a loving family life in order to eventually maintain a loving family life with Emile. Although Rousseau values reproduction, Sophie isn't destined to be a citizen, and her education will ensure she does not become a citizen. Martin writes, "The price Rousseau pays for his autonomous man, Emile, is Sophie, Emile's wife. For the sake of his security she is hidden away in the 'ontological basement'" (p. 39). Rousseau essentializes gender through his philosophy of education, which binds gender to traits, and ties traits to social roles. Males are tied to production roles and the traits associated with such roles, while females are associated to reproductive roles and the traits associated with them. There is no room to stray.

Martin's Reframing: Gender-equivalent & gender-sensitive education

Martin's reframes both Plato and Rousseau's philosophies of education. In so doing, she provides a language and offers a framework that can be used to interrogate contemporary education practices. Martin also uses this framework to propose a more appropriate approach to address gendered traits and roles within education.

First, Martin uses the term "gender-blind" to describe Plato's claim that gender should be ignored and that it is not a significant factor in one's experience. Gender-blind theory would suggest that boys and girls are able to achieve the same results when given the same (i.e., identical) educational opportunities. However, Martin argues that boys and girls will not achieve the same educational outcomes because of trait genderization and differential socialization. Education is often preparing individuals to be successful in public life and to fulfill professions and roles associated with production. Because roles associated with production are valued in education and in society at large, the traits that are associated with these roles are also valued. As Martin has illustrated through Plato and Rousseau, the traits and roles that are associated with production are male gendered. When women take on the male traits that are associated with production, they are devalued and are considered to be strange and not feminine. When women take on the female traits associated with reproduction, they are devalued because roles associated with reproduction are stuck in the ontological basement. Likewise, when men take on the female traits that are associated with reproduction, they are devalued because they are considered abnormal and not masculine. Gender-blind education is not an equal education because it skews towards production roles and male traits.

As a counter to Plato, Martin proposes "gender-equivalent" education. Gender-equivalent education considers both educational goals and outcomes as well as educational practices and opportunities. Gender-equivalent education aims to provide the same outcomes for people of all

genders, with that outcome being high quality, relevant instruction that enables individuals to serve in both reproductive and productive areas of life. However, in order to achieve the same goal, different educational practices and opportunities must be employed. “If sex equality is what we want,” Martin states, “then, knowing what we do, we must start to worry less about the sameness of education for girls and boys, women and men, and more about its equivalency” (p. 36).

Within the high school robotics community, various schools hold all female events. These events are examples of a gender-equivalent intervention; they provide an opportunity for young women to have an experience that is geared specifically to the way girls are socialized so that they can achieve the same educational outcome as their male peers. As a student, I appreciated the all-female event because it intentionally made space for me and the other young women on my team to learn and grow. Unfortunately, that space was otherwise rarely available.

Because of its associations with production, high school robotics teams that I have observed or coached tend to favor typical male traits such as outspokenness, risk-taking and critical thinking. Currently, I am somewhat involved with the team I was on when I was a student. I have relationships with the students and the adult coaches, some of whom I have known for 10 years. The adults openly say that students need to be willing to jump in and speak up for opportunities, yet they ignore or devalue the female voices when they arise. Although this is likely unintentional, it still greatly impacts the young women, because girls are socialized to be docile and nonconfrontational. Over the years, I have had numerous conversations with female students about their experience on the team, particularly if they feel welcome and included. Almost all of the female students I have spoken to have felt ostracized by their peers or the coaches. While I have brought up my concerns multiple times, the coaches have yet to hear me out.

While this is just one team, this experience is not unique: countless young women from other teams across the country share similar stories online. Having an all-female event, then, seems like a reasonable way to provide an opportunity for young women to compete in an environment that acknowledges the difficulties they might face on their teams. These events encourage the young women to take on male traits, such as outspokenness, without fear of being silenced or ostracized. These events encourage young women to fill productive roles, such as engineering, without erasing positive feminine traits associated with reproduction. Most importantly, these events create a space where young women can learn and compete, can practice their robot driving skills and work together while acknowledging that their lived experience is fundamentally different from their male counterparts, because of the way our society socializes gender.

While this example focuses on providing a different educational strategy for young women in order for them to be successful at a task typically associated with production, gender-equivalent education goes both ways. Gender-equivalent education requires more than just inclusion of females in productive roles. It requires educators to acknowledge the socialization of females for reproductive roles and to provide opportunities to develop traits associated with production. Likewise, gender-equivalent education requires educators to acknowledge the socialization of males for production roles and to provide opportunities for boys to develop traits associated with reproduction. Gender equivalent education places *equal* value on both productive and reproductive roles *and* maintains that both males and females can and ought to take on traits, skills and roles associated with both production and reproduction. For this to happen, boys and girls need to receive different educational opportunities and different pedagogical strategies.

To describe Rousseau's thinking, Martin uses the term "gender-bound". Gender-bound education captures Rousseau's tendency to essentialize gender differences and perpetuate the

dichotomy that men ought to be socialized and educated for production, while women ought to be socialized and educated for reproduction. Rousseau's focus on gender as the deciding factor in determining social roles perpetuates and further solidifies the links between men and production and women and reproduction. By so doing, the roles and traits associated with each gender are further reinforced.

Historically in the United States, high schools have perpetuated gender-bound thinking by requiring male and female students to take different courses. When my grandmother[8] was in public high school in the late 1950s female students were required to take a year of home economics, which consisted of learning to cook and sew. Male students, on the other hand, were required to take a year of woodshop. Both of these classes entrench gender differences and, by Martin's definition, are gender-bound. The male students were learning labor skills that would undoubtedly prepare them to work in the local papermill or to go into the work force. This continues to perpetuate the connection between male traits and production. During their home economic classes, the female students were learning skills that were preparing them to be wives and mothers, much like Sophie. Again, this further perpetuates the connection between female traits and reproductive roles.

While this anecdote from my grandmother is an example of explicit gender-bound education, in my experience, education can be implicitly gender-bound, and it can happen unintentionally and without much scrutiny. I went to the same public high school as my grandmother but graduated about 50 years later. During my schooling, all students were required to take four semesters of physical education. Two semesters were elective courses, meaning that students could choose from a variety of fitness classes. One of the courses I chose was called

[8] Personal conversation with Elsie Janson

Bodyworks. It was a mix of various types of exercise, from group games like Kickball to Pilates and Yoga, even Zumba. The course had the reputation of being one of the more relaxed and easy classes. Semester after semester, the course was taught by a female teacher and consisted predominately of female students. During the same class period, a Strength Training course was offered that consisted of much more intense physical activity and weightlifting. This course was taught by a male teacher and was predominately full of male students, semester after semester. Female students were participating in a physical education class that was less intense while male students were participating in the more rigorous class.

In retrospect, it seems like the Bodyworks class was appealing to young women who didn't place a lot of value in athletics, or who valued variety and fun in their athletics. Conversely, it seems like the Strength Training class was appealing to young men who were focused and committed to developing their physical strength. Using Martin's framework, I would argue that the Bodyworks class was implicitly perpetuating the idea that women are suited for reproductive roles that do not require physical strength. I would also argue that the Strength Training class was implicitly perpetuating the idea that men are suited to fulfill productive roles that demand physical strength. It would seem that these classes were gender-bound, as they were further entrenching gender differences and gendered traits.

To negotiate the space between Plato and Rousseau's thinking, Martin suggests that education must be "gender-sensitive" in addition to being gender-equivalent. Gender-sensitive education values and recognizes the impact that gender has on lived experience. While gender-sensitive education appreciates differences between traits associated with reproduction and traits associated with reproduction, it does non entrench these differences rather it challenges the false dichotomy that production is more valuable than reproduction. Additionally, gender-sensitive

education attempts to disrupt the production-reproduction dichotomy and encourage both men and women to be socialized for both production and reproduction. Martin writes "So long as sex and gender are fundamental aspects of our personal experience, so long as they are deeply rooted features of society, educational theory – and educational practice, too – must be gender sensitive…we must constantly be aware of the workings of sex and gender because in this historical and cultural moment, paradoxically they sometimes make a big difference even if they sometimes make no difference at all" (p. 195).

By being aware of the workings of sex and gender at the structural level, one can reflect on the impact of sex and gender on the individual level. Identifying examples at the individual level can help determine if the example reflects the structural entrenching of gender. Further, individuals who are aware of the workings of sex and gender at the structural level will be better equipped to dismantle the reproduction-production dichotomy.

Martin's proposal for gender-sensitive and gender-equivalent education recognizes and values gender differences without further entrenching them. It also recognizes that educational outcomes for both males and females should be the same. Because of the historical valuing of productive roles and the historical devaluing of reproductive roles, as seen with Plato and Rousseau, traits associated with both types of roles have become gendered. This socialization has an impact on individual's lived experience. By valuing these gender differences, Martin argues that educational strategies and opportunities may need to be different in order to achieve equal outcomes. Further, Martin's proposal encourages both men and women to pursue reproductive and productive roles and traits and illustrates that these traits are not mutually exclusive. Ultimately, this could lead to traits being detached from roles and also leads to roles and traits being detached from gender.

Martin's analysis of both Plato and Rousseau's philosophies of educations provides a good look into the historical relationship between gender and education. From Plato, we see that gender-blind education is not "blind" at all but instead tends to favor male traits and roles associated with production. Promoting a "one size fits all" approach to education doesn't work. From Rousseau, we see that gender-bound education, which focuses on gender as the determining factor for social roles while also favoring roles associated with production, further entrenches differences between genders. By attempting to understand the way that education has valued production roles while de-valuing reproduction roles, we can better see that gender is intricately entangled with education and cannot be extracted from the education system. Though contemporary society and contemporary education practices are becoming more critical of the gender binary, the systematic entanglement of gender and education at the level of social institutions still exists.

Chapter Three: Jane Roland Martin's Educational Theory in Practice

Martin's analysis of Plato and Rousseau and her proposal for gender-sensitive and gender-equivalent education have helped me critically reflect on my own teaching practice in order to better understand how my strategies are impacting my students. I proudly hung the #ILookLikeAnEngineer posters in my classroom because I wanted my female students to have women to look up to. I wanted them to see themselves as smart, innovative and capable of succeeding in the engineering field, which is dominated by men. By hanging these posters, I wanted to help my students avoid the lack of representation that I encountered throughout my primary and secondary schooling years. Even though I loved math and science, I didn't know that I could be a mathematician or a scientist when I was in third grade. In middle school we learned about the famous scientists who changed the world, but there was not a single female scientist included in that list. Even in my high school STEM Magnet program, women mathematicians and engineers were hardly discussed. While I still stand by my intentions, considering Jane Roland Martin's analysis of Plato and Rousseau's philosophies of education, as well as her own philosophy of education, I readily admit that hanging the posters may not have lead to the outcome I had intended.

In this chapter I use Martin's framework and language to critically reflect on my practice as an elementary school teacher in order to better understand the potential impact of my practice on my students. I will then describe how Martin has influenced my future practice and consider various ways that I can become a more gender-sensitive and gender-equivalent educator. Finally, I will pose additional questions that could be considered in light of Martin's framework.

Examples of Martin's Theory

Using Martin's theory to reflect on my own practice has allowed me to identify examples of gender-bound education and trait genderization that happened in my third-grade classroom. I also will provide an example of how I continued to place reproductive roles in the ontological basement. Each of these examples extend my knowledge of Martin's philosophy of education and illustrate the need to move to a more gender-sensitive and gender-equivalent education.

In my process of reflecting on my teaching experience, I was unable to identify an example of gender-blind education, where I ignored the impact of gender entirely. This does not necessarily mean that my classroom and practices were entirely free from gender-blind strategies. However, I would need to continue to evaluate and reflect upon my practice to be sure that gender-blind moves are not implicitly employed.

Taking into consideration gender-bound education, where education reinforces the idea that males and male traits are associated with production, while females and female traits are associated with reproduction, hanging the #ILookLikeAnEngineer posters could be considered an example of a gender-bound educational strategy. By having images of young women in engineering roles, I was trying to play down female traits historically associated with reproduction and to instead highlight masculine traits associated with engineering. Engineering certainly falls into the productive aspect of society, as it is a paid career that provides a direct benefit to the public. Additionally, traits associated with engineering such as rational and mathematical thinking, the ability to problem solve, and common sense are typically gendered male. Thus, male gendered traits become associated with engineering and production.

In attempting to disrupt this association, I tried to flip it around. With my posters I wanted to show that women could be engineers. However, I didn't have other posters that depicted men in engineering. My posters therefore sent the message that *only* women could be engineers.

Moreover, while these posters depicted women as engineers, they did so by associating women with the male gendered traits that engineering calls up. The young women on the posters didn't smile, which makes them seem serious and rational. Perhaps this was done in an attempt to overcome traits associated with reproduction such as being emotional. Being emotional is a trait considered to be positive in the context of reproduction roles. However, in the context of a production role like engineering, being emotional is considered a negative. Dressed in jeans and matching t-shirts, the young women depicted on the posters are representative of only a certain group of girls and women: those that do not typically associate with female gendered traits or with reproductive aspects of society. Hence, my posters were not only gender-bound: they also perpetuated trait genderization.

My attempt at representation fell short. By exclusively displaying posters that showed women who associate with male gendered traits, I was sending the message that a large group of individuals don't "look like" engineers. Female students who identify heavily with female gendered traits may have been discouraged from engineering. The #ILookLikeAnEngineer campaign did not include pictures of women with children or older women. Although these women exist as engineers, they were left off the posters. Further, male students who personify male traits associated with production and male students who personify female traits associated with reproduction also were excluded. Though male students, especially those who personify male traits associated with production, may be represented as engineers in other areas, they were excluded from representation in my classroom.

The posters provide an example of how well-intentioned educational moves can go wrong, especially when they are not critically reflected upon. My desire to uplift and encourage girls to succeed in engineering specifically, and in productive roles generally, was done at the cost of discouraging other groups of individuals from engineering.

Martin highlights an additional issue with focusing exclusively on encouraging women to succeed in productive roles. She writes, "fearing that even today women may be kept from equal participation in the productive process of society, we find ourselves claiming an education devoted solely to preparation for these functions…" (p. 176). My desire was born out of fear that girls would be unprepared to participate in engineering and STEM jobs, and my teaching moves reflected that. I focused on giving my female students strength and confidence in STEM subjects and increasing the representation of women in STEM in my classroom. But Martin warns: "…education is also needed if society's reproductive processes are to be performed well" (p. 176). Education needs to strike a balance, one that values both production roles and reproduction roles, while also disrupting the gender dichotomy associated with production and reproduction. Rather than educating females for reproductive roles exclusively, and males for production roles exclusively, individuals of all genders need to be educated to succeed and encouraged to fulfill both roles. I failed to do this in my classroom and like Plato and Rousseau, I placed reproduction in the ontological basement.

In sum, my posters were gender-bound; they exemplified trait genderization; and they put reproductive roles and traits in the ontological basement. In my future classroom, there needs to be representation of individuals of all genders in reproductive roles in addition to representation of individuals of all genders in production roles. As Martin warns, a focus on educating for production roles may lead to forgetting to educate for reproductive roles. I was guilty of this. To

promote reproductive roles and inclusive representation in my classroom, there should be posters of women who identify with female gendered traits fulfilling reproductive roles as well as images of men who identify with male gendered traits fulfilling reproductive roles. Students also should see women who identify with male gendered traits fulfilling reproductive roles and men who identify with female gendered traits fulfilling reproductive roles. These posters would exist alongside posters depicting both men and women in productive roles. Students of all genders should be able to see themselves in any job in the classroom setting, which helps deconstruct the narrative that Plato and Rousseau push: men are suited for production roles, while women are suited for reproductive roles.

Representation needs to be understood as more than plastering posters around the classroom. Students need to see themselves in books, movies, science and math worksheets, and images of famous writers and artists. When students feel included and see themselves in roles that they want to pursue, they are more likely to go after those roles. My female students who wanted to be engineers and who wanted to build robots saw themselves in the #ILookLikeAnEngineer posters, and they have continued to pursue robotics. They regularly attend robotics events and join robotics teams. I am proud of these girls and their excitement for science and technology, but I am still aware that not all of my students saw themselves in the roles that they wanted to fulfill in my classroom. While I actively sought out books and curricula that put women in the forefront of science and technology, I was failing my female students who had no interest in these subjects. I was failing my male students who wanted to be engineers by not providing them role models. And I was failing my male students who wanted to pursue reproductive roles.

Now, I will turn to additional examples of trait genderization in my third-grade classroom. Recall that Martin coins the term trait genderization to explain the phenomenon that traits

associated with societal roles become gendered. Traits associated with production roles become associated with males and traits associated with reproduction become associated with females. There is also an aspect of punishment or shame to trait genderization. When a female takes on traits that are associated with production, they are shamed by society. These women are called unfeminine, nasty, and strange. Likewise, males who take on traits associated with reproduction are punished. Society labels them as weak, cowardly, and effeminate.

One of my male students who played football was sensitive. At the beginning of the year his parents made a point of telling me how strongly he feels emotions and that he sometimes he needs help processing and understanding them. This student personified male traits associated with production, such as being strong and physically tough, but he also personified female traits associated with reproduction. When he was upset, he would cry and need time and space to understand how he was feeling and why. Sometimes this happened in class, sometimes at recess. Most of the time, no matter where it happened, his male peers were put off. They didn't understand why he was crying and they called him a cry-baby and taunted him: "Don't be such a girl". When this student demonstrated traits associated with reproduction, his peers punished him.

Even though I would intervene when I heard such taunts, his behavior was still shamed by his male peers because being emotional is associated with reproduction and femininity. In the future when my students reinforce the production-reproduction dichotomy, I could challenge them and push back against their thinking. I could help them challenge trait genderization, too. "Why do you think crying makes someone a girl?" I challenged this dichotomy in other ways. For example, I would tell my students, "There are no boy colors and girl colors, colors belong to everyone!" I also told them: "Star Wars has girls in it, it is not just for boys!"

Towards the end of the year, I was supervising my students during an extra recess. We were on the playground with two other third grade classes. A few of my students were running around on the concrete and two of them fell down, including my student who was taunted for taking on traits associated with reproduction. As I was walking over, my sensitive student stayed on the ground, while his friend popped right back up. While I was kneeling down to chat with him to see if he was okay, one of the other third grade teachers on the playground walked by and said, "Miss Janson you are overreacting. He is fine". Then he looked at my student and continued, "Shake it off man, you don't need to cry. You're fine."

To this day I am taken aback by the comments this teacher made both towards me and to my student. First, he told me that I was overreacting by checking on my student who fell down. By labeling my action as an overreaction, he reinforced the association between women and being emotional. Checking on a student is a reasonable and rational response to seeing a nine-year-old fall, especially because this student does tend to react strongly to pain. By labeling my response as an overreaction and implying that I do not know what is best for my student, this male colleague implicitly perpetuated trait genderization. As a woman, my action was skewed to be an overreaction, because being irrational and being emotional are female gendered traits that are not valuable in productive roles. I was shamed for demonstrating traits associated with reproduction, while fulfilling my productive role as a teacher.

Additionally, his comment to my student perpetuates the association of males with physical strength and females with weakness. My male student was supposed to personify male gendered traits such as toughness and independence. By crying and not "shaking it off" this student did not take on the traits that society associates with males. Rather, he was hurt and crying. Though any person of any gender can be physically hurt and can cry, giving into pain and expressing emotions

are typically female gendered traits. My student took on those female gendered traits and was reminded by an adult male that he should not be crying and that he was not hurt. My student was shamed by an adult male for taking on traits associated with reproduction. This colleague likely was unaware that he was sending the message that males ought to be tough and not cry, that weakness and expressing emotions are not male traits. But implicitly, that is what he is doing.

Trait genderization was also evident when students were taking on different roles in the classroom. For example, students were expected to be responsible leaders. In my classroom, being responsible meant staying on task, taking care of your supplies, helping others when they were off task or confused, etc. In theory, these tasks look very similar. Taking care of supplies may look like pushing in chairs or treating books gently. Helping others may look like lending your tablemate a pencil or helping them clean up their desk.

However, in my experience, these skills look different depending on whether boys or girls are exhibiting them, because of the production – reproduction dichotomy. During group work, one of my female students reminded one of her male peers who was off-task, of the instructions. I would consider her act as being responsible, because she was being a leader and was helping the group refocus. The male student who was reminded of the instructions disagreed, however. He thought he was being reprimanded by his female peer and called her bossy. The female student was upset and cried because she was called bossy.

By attempting to be a responsible and helpful leader, she was assertive. She told her male peer that he was not following directions and reminded him of what they were. Rather than being seen as responsible and helpful and assertive, she was called bossy. She was shamed for being assertive, a trait that is associated with leadership roles and production. Girls and women are socialized to be submissive and passive, while boys and men are socialized to be assertive and

direct. By being assertive, the female student was seen as domineering by her male peer. She was personifying a male gendered trait that is associated with production and was punished for it.

While I have been focusing on trait-genderization, I would now like to turn to an instance when I placed reproduction in the ontological basement. In so doing, I placed more value on production roles and the traits associated with production and devalued reproductive roles and the traits associated with reproduction. Some of my former students dreamed of being stay-at-home mothers, raising families and running in-home daycare for their neighbors. Although these girls were successful at school and were eager to learn, they had no desire to go to college or have a job outside of their homes. Many of these girls were already taking care of younger siblings and helping their mothers around the house. Unfortunately, I was not actively supporting these students by providing representation for them. My classroom was not overflowing with examples of women in domestic roles, nor did I actively seek out such examples. I thought that because society already encourages females to take on reproductive roles, I didn't need to continue to perpetuate that idea in my classroom. In retrospect, I can see how this group of students may have felt ostracized because they didn't see themselves in materials within my classroom.

While I was intentional in providing examples and role models for my students who may not typically see themselves represented in production roles, I was not providing examples for students who desired a reproductive role. I was overemphasizing the importance of production and the traits associated with those roles in my classroom. Like Plato and Rousseau, I was not valuing reproductive roles or the traits associated with them. Going forward as an educator, I will need to be intentional in representing all students and their desires, including the desires that align with how society associates gender with traits and roles.

Educating for both productive and reproductive roles is necessary in order to stop putting reproduction in the ontological basement. Martin argues that historically, women and the family have fallen outside of the educational realm, because of their relation to reproduction. She writes, "despite the fact that the reproductive process of society, broadly understood, are largely devoted to child rearing and include the transmission of skills, beliefs, feelings, emotions, values, and even world views, they are not considered to belong to the educational realm," (p. 178). Historically, despite the need for reproductive roles in a functioning society, the skills and traits associated with such roles are removed from education because they do not directly relate to production. Because education is primarily focused on production, it needs to put more focus on reproduction.

Moving to Gender-Sensitive & Gender-Equivalent Education

Martin's philosophy of education offers the term gender-sensitive to refer to education that values and recognizes socialized gender differences without entrenching differences that perpetuate the production-reproduction dichotomy. Martin also offers the term gender-equivalent education. Gender-equivalent education is also gender-sensitive, but it goes further as it also focuses on producing the same educational outcomes for all students. I will use Martin's framework to further analyze my previous examples and consider ways I can improve my practice to move towards gender-equivalent education.

Turning my attention to my future classroom, I can start to see ways in which I may need to adjust my methods, activities and atmospheres. I think recognizing the impact of gender on the lived experience of an individual and differentiating or adjusting teaching moves and strategies to account for socialized gender differences would be a step towards gender-sensitive education. Acknowledging socialized gender differences and providing different educational treatments to

students based on this socialization may help individuals achieve equal educational outcomes, where all gendered students receive an education that prepares them for both reproductive and productive roles. In this way, my practice could become both gender-sensitive and also gender-equivalent.

Differentiation already is happening in classrooms and is recognized by teacher preparation programs as being necessary. Teachers take into account the needs of all of their students on a daily basis, and they strive to meet those unique learning needs by adjusting assignments, providing multiple entry points for learning and, giving students additional time on assignments if needed. In my past classroom I was differentiating and adjusting lessons for students based on ability, socioeconomic class, interests, and more, in order to ensure that each and every student would be successful. Differentiation based on socialized gender differences would be a natural next step,

In my third grade classroom, I had some students reading at a first grade level, some students reading at a fifth grade level, and everywhere in between. If I taught to the entire class using third grade material, I would be doing a disservice to the students who fall below or above that level. For my struggling readers, I taught different reading and comprehension strategies and focused on phonics and phonetic awareness. These students benefitted from small group lessons and from direct instruction on the fundamentals of reading. My students above grade level also needed lessons that were challenging and engaging. They read books that were at their level and practiced comprehension skills that involved higher level thinking, such as making inferences and comparing fiction and nonfiction texts. With 25 students at various academic levels, I had to make content accessible for all of them.

The socioeconomic status of a student and their family can also impact the student's education. Like ability, the socioeconomic status of my students varied greatly. The socioeconomic status of my students was revealed in a variety of ways in my classroom. For example, my homework policy included reading every night and having an adult sign off on a reading log. A few of my students would return to school with a half-filled reading log or with it not signed. When talking with the students, they told me they were reading but their parent didn't have time to sign the log or weren't home. One of my students asked if it was acceptable for his older sister to sign off on his reading because she was the one who was supervising him after school. Another student told me she couldn't read at home because she didn't have books. After sending her home with books from my classroom library, she returned the complete reading log on time. I quickly learned that for students and families who were of lower socioeconomic status, I needed to provide additional materials so that students could continue learning outside of the school day.

I even found myself adjusting lessons to incorporate student interests in hopes of increasing engagement and excitement about a subject. The majority of my students needed practice with math facts but did not want to use flashcards to practice. They wanted something more engaging and interesting, and I wanted something that would increase their numeracy skills. My students loved art and were excited anytime we were doing a craft project. So I found math-fact coloring sheets that students could complete if they finished an assignment early. The sheets were simple color-by-number and revealed a hidden picture. But students had to solve a math problem in order to figure out what color to fill in the spaces. With this small change, numeracy skills improved, and students were excited to practice their math facts.

I could apply this same principle of differentiation to to the #ILookLikeAnEngineer posters. My students would benefit from seeing a variety of individuals represented. Now that I

know about the production-reproduction dichotomy, I can strive to differentiate my posters and classroom library to include materials that value both production roles and reproduction roles and the traits associated with these roles. Embracing a variety of resources that recognize socialized gender differences and encouraging students of all genders to pursue productive and reproductive roles will help my classroom become a more gender-sensitive space. Additionally, recognizing and accounting for different education treatments due to socialized gender traits in order to help all of my students meet the goals I want them to achieve will help me provide a more gender-equivalent education.

As equity training becomes more present in public school districts, I believe it is important to include discussions of gender in addition to discussions of race. Equity trainings are already happening. Districts form equity teams in buildings and facilitate training to help educators understand the relationship between race and lived experience. In my experience, these trainings are designed to help educators understand that their students come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. All of these backgrounds and experiences impact the students and the way they learn and act. Students' lived experiences exist in the classroom space. The goal of equity training is to broaden teachers' understanding of the tangled relationship between race and education in an effort to have teachers think critically about their teaching methods and practices, which may be implicitly biased. The training is understood as a process and journey as individual teachers explore and reflect on their practice.

I believe gender should be evaluated in a similar way. Educators need to be made aware of the relationship that education has with both the gender dichotomy and the production/reproduction dichotomy so that they can understand how a student's gender can impact their education. Martin states, "Assigning greater importance to its productive than its reproductive

processes, our society places a higher value on masculine than the feminine gender. Those who remain blind to gender will not see this disparity and consequently will not address it explicitly" (p. 196). By equipping teachers with knowledge regarding the historically rooted relationship between gender and production, as well as production and education, teachers can be cognizant of their practices and evaluate them for instances of implicit gender bias. Through the process of reflection and the journey of understanding systematic inequity pertaining to both race and gender, educators will have a better understanding of themselves and of their students and will be able to use that understanding to provide quality education.

Now, I will return to my example of trait genderization in the classroom with my male student who was shamed by his peers because he took on traits associated with reproduction. In his case, I failed to communicate to both him and his peers that being sensitive and emotional are traits that are valuable for everyone to have. Being sensitive allows individuals to recognize and understand emotions as well as relate to others through shared emotions. Being sensitive and emotional are not traits that are only valuable when associated with reproduction, though that is what Martin's historical observation suggests. Being sensitive and being emotional are traits that are important to being human.

On a larger scale, I think that trait genderization can be challenged by continuing to teach all students skills associated with reproduction as well as production. Numerous curricula exist that teach "soft skills" such as being kind, responsible and respectful. While these curricula do not get as much teaching time as curricula that focus on content knowledge such as math and reading, which are directly valuable to productive roles, elementary students are being taught traits that would benefit reproductive roles. These curricula are typically known as character education programs or socio-emotional learning programs that are designed to help students learn how to

understand and regulate their emotions, understand the emotions of others, and build problem-solving skills to negotiate relationships with others. Some of the programs include skills or virtues of the month, where the whole school focuses on kindness or responsibility, for example. When I was a child, my elementary and middle schools held monthly assemblies focused on the skill of the month. In my classroom, we read stories focused on one skill. We also role-played and practiced the skill of the month. Although it was not part of the mandated curriculum, as a teacher, I made expressing emotions part of the classroom atmosphere, encouraging students to express their feelings so that their underlying needs could be addressed.

By adopting character education programs, schools are showing that the social and emotional well-being of their students is important. This is a good step forward to including reproductive traits and roles into the education realm. However, I question the impact of these programs on students' everyday lives. Are schools trying to instill positive life skills in their students to prepare them for life outside of the classroom walls? Do schools adopt these curricula in hopes of creating a better school climate and unify the students towards a common theme? The intentions are probably good, but I fear that the outcomes of these programs reinforce gendered traits both inside and outside the school walls, especially when the school community is not working to deconstruct gendered traits. Students may learn and develop these soft skills at school, but if they are not valued outside of the classroom, are students practicing them?

Take my female student fulfilling her leadership role, for example. My class knew that there was an expectation for all of them to be responsible and to be leaders. I explicitly taught my students that being responsible could be demonstrated by reminding people to stay on task. However, when my female student practiced being responsible in the way that the class was explicitly taught, she was punished by her peer. Rather than seeing her as responsible and assertive,

some of her peers saw her as being pushy and bossy. By taking on a productive role and the traits associated with it she was shamed, even in a space that taught all students to take on the leadership role. Even though I was teaching soft skills like responsibility, I did not acknowledge the difference in gender socialization for my students and how this would impact the way they perceive their peers. While all my students were taught to be responsible and helpful, this example shows that character skills can be understood and performed differently because of trait genderization.

Developing character skills and values is a good start to teaching traits associated with reproduction. However, for reproduction and the traits associated with it to be valued in education, schools must recognize the production-reproduction dichotomy that is at work on a structural level. Because society continues to value production roles, schools educate for these roles and prepare students to fill these roles as adults. While content is standardized and taught to students of all genders, education as a system is not free from the influence of gender. Martin writes, "One of the lessons to be learned from our conversation is that institutions, roles, tasks, traits are detachable from one another and from gender" (p. 177). Because gender cannot be separated from education as an institution, the lengthy relationship between gender and education must be acknowledged and interrogated for education to include reproductive roles and traits.

Finally, I will return to the example of my female students when I put in the ontological basement because of their desires to fulfill reproductive roles. These students' desires to be stay-at-home mothers and wives came from their religious upbringing. When I was first hired, my fellow teachers and administrators told me about this population of students at my school. Most of the talk was about needing to make accommodations for these students because of their religious beliefs. For example, these students had limited access to technology and internet at home. I

assigned a weekly online writing task to develop typing skills, but these students did the task by hand. Otherwise, from my perspective these students were typical third graders.

Throughout the year, this group of students would talk about growing up and raising families or running in-home childcare like their mothers. They told me and their peers that they didn't want to go to college, and that they instead wanted to have children. When I asked my colleagues about these students, they further described the girls' religious belief that women were destined to be wives and mothers. I am ashamed to admit that I was initially put off by this belief. Now I have come to understand that my initial reaction was because I value choice and autonomy. When I was young, I was told that I could be anyone and do anything when I grew up, and it bothered me that these girls did not have that option.

On the one hand I was shocked and upset that these students didn't want to be more than mothers. I wanted to push these girls and encourage them to explore their options. I wanted to show them that they could have careers as teachers or doctors or police officers, or that they could go to college. Most of all, I feared that they would graduate high school and get married and start having children. On the other hand, I didn't want to overstep. I was their public-school teacher, not their sister or their mother. Who was I to challenge their religion, especially when I knew so little about it?

I now realize the disservice I did to those girls. I failed to recognize and communicate the value of being a mother and raising a family. There is nothing inherently wrong about not wanting a career or being married straight out of high school. However, like Plato and Rousseau, I placed more value on production. I equated filling a production role with being successful in life. I still believe it is important that these girls have the choice to hold a production role or a reproduction role: to go to college or to raise a family or both. Because their desires were born out of their

religion, I was unsure how to help. I tend to shy away from religion both as a teacher and as a human, because it can be such a polarizing topic. I feel like I would have been better equipped to help students if they wanted to be stay-at-home mothers or were unable to go to college because of economic status or race. Instead of thinking about how I could show my students that they had power over their future, I backed away from the topic. However, in backing away I also devalued their desires to be mothers and kept reproduction in the ontological basement.

Moving towards a gender-equivalent education will help bring women and reproduction out of the ontological basement. Increasing representation in my classroom to include individuals of all genders in both production and reproductive roles disrupts gender-bound education. Recognizing socialized gender differences and differentiating opportunities and strategies based on those differences in order to ensure high-quality education for all students also will help move towards a gender-equivalent education. When I return to the classroom, gender-equivalent education will be at the forefront of my mind.

Jane Roland Martin has helped me interrogate the production-reproduction dichotomy and its relationship to education. It also has allowed me to critically reflect on my past practice and to look forward to my future practice. What can I do in my classroom to deconstruct the gender dichotomy, the dichotomy of production and reproduction, and equip my students to think critically about gender both inside and outside the classroom? In deconstructing and examining these dichotomies, Martin argues that teaching as a practice is likely to change. She writes, “When the productive/reproductive dichotomy and its accompanying hierarchy of values is rejected, teaching methods, learning activities, classroom atmospheres, teacher-pupil relationships, school structures, attitudes toward education may all be affected” (p. 198). Knowing this, I will need to be intentional in creating a classroom community that challenges the gendered traits and roles that

are perpetuated by society. I will need to remain open to changing my practice in response to continued critical reflection and in response to the unique needs of my students. Most importantly, I will need to engage with my colleagues and the larger school community to educate and encourage the deconstruction of the gendered production-reproduction dichotomy.

Questions for Further Consideration

While reading *Reclaiming A Conversation* and writing about Jane Roland Martin's framework for gender-sensitive and gender-equivalent education some questions, came up that are beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, they are incredibly thought provoking. I would like to keep thinking about them:

1. How does the increased visibility of transgender and genderqueer identities impact trait genderization on a structural level? How will the increased visibility impact the production-reproduction dichotomy on a structural level?
2. Can Martin's framework and language be used to understand other relationships and historical patterns in education, such as the relationship between race and education?
3. Although Martin's theory focuses primarily on socialized gendered traits, she acknowledges the need to examine socioeconomic class, race, etc. in regard to the production-reproduction dichotomy. Can Martin's framework be used to understand intersectionality? Can intersectionality reinforce or extend Martin's framework?