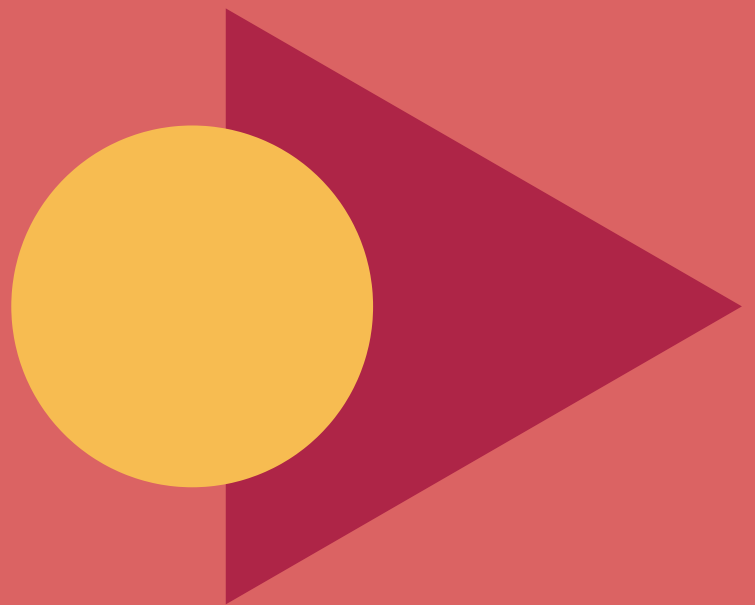


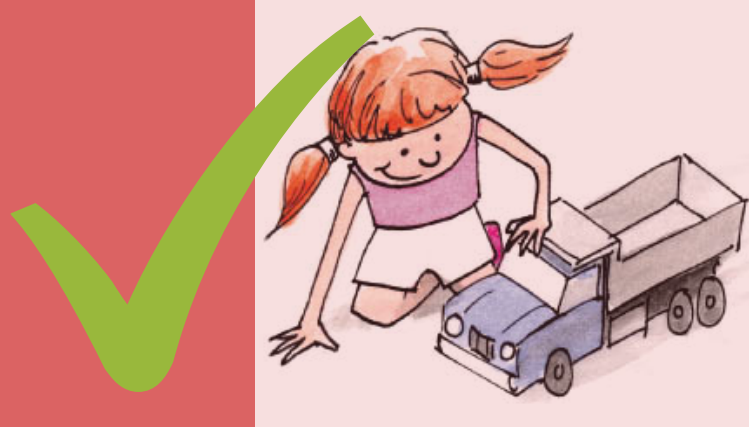
# DEVALUATION OF FEMINIZED WORK

AND WHO IT HURTS



**BECAUSE WE  
DEVALUE  
FEMININITY,**

ie. shaming boys for participating in "girl stuff" while encouraging girls to participate in "boy stuff"



**WE ALSO DEVALUE  
WORK ASSOCIATED  
WITH FEMININITY..**

ie. care work, work involving interaction, raising children

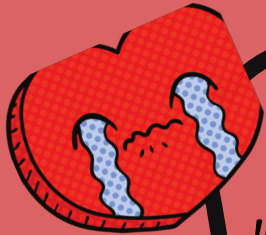


**...BY PAYING  
WOMEN AND CARE  
WORKERS LESS THAN  
MEN AND NON-CARE  
WORKERS**



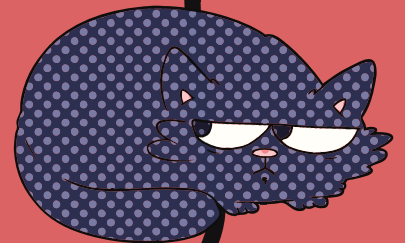
# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DEVALUE FEMININITY?

We as a culture do not value traits or activities traditionally associated with women. This can be seen in the way we raise boys versus the way we raise girls. Girls are more likely to be encouraged to break traditional gender expectations by participating in activities that display their strength, intelligence, and bravery--all associated with masculinity. From playing with blocks during childhood to taking an interest in math and science, girls are more likely to be allowed to cross the boundaries of gender, whether they are called "tomboys" or praised for not being stereotypical "princesses." However, boys are not given this same acceptance when it comes to participating in the other gender's characteristics. If a boy plays with dolls and later decides they want to work in childcare or be a nurse, they are susceptible to being chastised and having their sexual orientation questioned. This is all due to the devaluation of femininity, that marks feminine qualities as negative and masculine qualities as what is to be striven for.



## *Four Extremely Valuable "Feminine" Things We Devalue, According to Bustle:*

- 1. Parenting*
- 2. Emotions*
- 3. Caring About Animals*
- 4. People-Oriented  
Professions and Fields*



# WHAT IS FEMINIZED WORK? WHY IS IT UNDERVALUED?

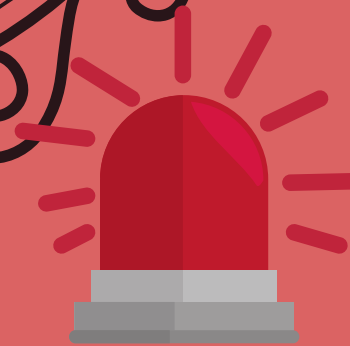


Jobs that require feminine qualities are declared feminine and thus are undervalued. Care work is a majority of this, because to be in care work you must have the defining feminine qualities of being caring, attentive, and social. Society's definitions of which jobs are feminine and which are masculine can change over time. This is because as more women enter a formerly male dominated occupation, it becomes feminized (Miller 2016). It then is devalued and the pay decreases for both the men and women in it. So feminine qualities and women's presence both create a feminized job, which becomes a job with less value, and therefore less pay. But why is this allowed? Possible reasons include the fact that the benefits that care work brings to society is not measurable like the profits of other businesses are. While care work benefits a society by helping its people and improving the world we live in, these benefits cannot be monetarily quantified like the profits that come from immediately consumable products (Carleton 2015)

## EXAMPLE:

**A study done in Russia found that doctors are one of the lowest paying professions there. Even with the same required amount and rigor of schooling, it is considered a women's occupation because it involves caring and helping others-- traits associated with femininity. This shows that as women dominate a field, it is devalued and paid poorly.**

["Patriarchy's Magic Trick" 2013]



# WHY DOES THIS MATTER?



The devaluation of feminized work hurts both men and women because it prevents them from entering and being supported by jobs they are truly interested in. Out of fear of social castration and the low pay, men avoid care work positions such as teaching and counseling. With the significant and widespread expectation that men seek fulfillment through their ability to make money for themselves and their family, taking a job with low pay does not align. Women are impacted because they must decide to either accept low pay or enter a demanding male-dominated job that allows for less time to be involved in responsibilities involving care, which are highly expected of them. We must strive to value work based on skill, the education required for it, and its contributions to society and communities, and not on the gender from which it came from.



Carleton, Cheryl. "Why We Pay Teachers, Secretaries, And Home Health Aides So Little." Business Insider, Business Insider, 13 Feb. 2014, [www.businessinsider.com/low-pay-caring-industry-2014-2](http://www.businessinsider.com/low-pay-caring-industry-2014-2). This article discusses the "care industry" specifically, and potential reasons for its devaluation. One being that because it is difficult to measure the benefits of care work, those in the profession are not recognized and materialistically rewarded for what they do. It then lists ways that companies and policy makers can fix this inequality.

Elkins, Kathleen. "20 Jobs That Are Dominated by Women." Business Insider, Business Insider, 17 Feb. 2015, [www.businessinsider.com/pink-collar-jobs-dominated-by-women-2015-2](http://www.businessinsider.com/pink-collar-jobs-dominated-by-women-2015-2). This article provided some information about jobs dominated by women. There is a chart provided in the article, and from it we can see that most of these jobs involve care, interaction, and a benefiting the community. There are extremely high concentrations of women in counseling, social work, teaching, and nursing occupations.

Liner, Emily. "A Dollar Short: What's Holding Women Back from Equal Pay? – Third Way." Third Way, 18 Mar. 2016, [www.thirdway.org/report/a-dollar-short-whats-holding-women-back-from-equal-pay](http://www.thirdway.org/report/a-dollar-short-whats-holding-women-back-from-equal-pay). This article cleared up some confusion I had regarding feminized jobs versus masculine jobs that require similar skill levels. For example, even though housekeeping (feminine) and vehicle cleaning (masculine) are similar jobs that require the same amount of skill and effort, vehicle cleaners are paid 14% more than housekeepers. The graph included about the lowest paying jobs being held majorly by women and the highest paying jobs by men also put the pay gap into perspective.

Miller, Claire Cain. "As Women Take Over a Male-Dominated Field, the Pay Drops." The New York Times, The New York Times, 18 Mar. 2016, [www.nytimes.com/2016/03/20/upshot/as-women-take-over-a-male-dominated-field-the-pay-drops.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/20/upshot/as-women-take-over-a-male-dominated-field-the-pay-drops.html). As women begin to approach the number of or outnumber men in certain jobs, the jobs become feminized. Subsequently, the pay drops for both the men and women working in them. This also applies to the reverse situation; when more men enter a feminine job, it is then seen as more valuable and prestigious, resulting in higher pay. This contributes to the gender wage gap because now that there are more men in this occupation, the pay for it will increase, and vice versa.

OECD. "Employment: Time Spent in Paid and Unpaid Work, by Sex." Health Status, OECD.Stat, [stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=54757](http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=54757). These are statistics that report the number of minutes spent per day on both paid and unpaid work, by sex. In every country listed, the amount of time women spend on unpaid work vastly exceeds that of men. The amount of time spent on paid care work is greater for men.

"Patriarchy's Magic Trick: How Anything Perceived As Women's Work Immediately Sheds Its Value." Crates and Ribbons, 13 Dec. 2013, [cratesandribbons.com/2013/12/13/patriarchys-magic-trick-how-anything-perceived-as-womens-work-immediately-sheds-its-value/](http://cratesandribbons.com/2013/12/13/patriarchys-magic-trick-how-anything-perceived-as-womens-work-immediately-sheds-its-value/). The misconception that women are paid less solely due to their choices of being in lower paying jobs is corrected. Women are not only paid less because their work is undervalued, but because women themselves are undervalued. Also, looking at other countries' occupations by gender and relative pay can help us understand that there are more factors regarding the gendered pay of certain jobs than simply schooling and skill sets.

"Redistribute Unpaid Work." UN Women, [www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw61/redistribute-unpaid-work](http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw61/redistribute-unpaid-work). Women do more than double of unpaid household labor than men do. The expectation for women to perform these activities with minimal help prevents them from contributing to society in other ways, in the ways that are more valued. Guaranteed child care by the state could potentially aid in promoting women's engagement in paid work. There is also a video included in this article that expands on this.

Sudakov, Dmitry. "Doctors: Impoverished in Russia, Fabulously Wealthy in USA." PravdaReport, Pravdareport, 18 Oct. 2010, [www.pravdareport.com/society/stories/18-10-2010/115411-doctors\\_russia\\_usa-0/](http://www.pravdareport.com/society/stories/18-10-2010/115411-doctors_russia_usa-0/). This article backed up the reported pay of doctors in Russia discussed in the article that linked me to it, "Patriarchy's Trick: How Anything Perceived As Women's Work Immediately Sheds Its Value." It stated that while being a doctor in America is in high demand and pays well, it is one of the lowest paying professions in Russia. In Russia, the highest paying jobs do not belong to medical professionals, but business managers and CEOs.

Thebaud, Sarah, and Laura Doering. "How a Job Acquires a Gender (and Less Authority If It's Female)." The Conversation, The Conversation, 14 Nov. 2018, [theconversation.com/how-a-job-acquires-a-gender-and-less-authority-if-its-female-79164](http://theconversation.com/how-a-job-acquires-a-gender-and-less-authority-if-its-female-79164). This article explains how a job becomes stereotyped as either a men or women's job. Then, both genders in a stereotyped feminine occupation are viewed as less authoritative. This is seen in loan management, a fairly new therefore a generally gender neutral occupation, as less respect is given to the all of the loan managers once the clients recognize the space as one involving women workers.

Weiss, Suzannah. "4 'Feminine' Things Our Culture Devalues." Bustle, Bustle, 13 Nov. 2018, [www.bustle.com/articles/166842-4-feminine-things-our-culture-devalues-that-are-actually-worth-so-much-more](http://www.bustle.com/articles/166842-4-feminine-things-our-culture-devalues-that-are-actually-worth-so-much-more). This list of devalued things that are associated with femininity and its descriptions allowed me to add an element to my project that wasn't just my own writing in a long paragraph. Almost everything listed was something I was able to touch on in my writings, so it was woven in well with the entire project.