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SMALL BATCH: WOMEN'S POSITION IN SOUTHERN CRAFT BEVERAGES

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts

Southern Studies

The University of Mississippi

Victoria De Leone

May 2018

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores three different forms of narrative in order to understand how and why craft beverage industries, specifically beer and whiskey, have been framed as masculine spaces. Women who seek to work in or around these industries are often sorted into the marketing, sales and service corners of the industry, and the production floor still hosts very few women, and those women must negotiate performing their femininity and the masculinities deemed necessary for the environment simultaneously. I argue that the way that we talk about women who choose to do this work is rooted in a history of domestic expectations around the production of household alcohol, the gender shift of industrialization and the creation of a regulated market, and the de-regulation and re-regulation of the 18th and 21st amendments. These historical roots that offered agency through production only to men lead to a male-dominated industry. The industry has maintained itself through advertising, branding, external media, and social media. These representations form a grand narrative, in which each piece reinforces the centrality of masculinity to the beer and whiskey industries, consumers and producers alike. Even as each form of representation might center women who work in the industry, they do so in such a way to continue marginalizing and exceptionalizing the women. The last narrative that is explored in this project is the personal narrative of three women who work in the industries in question in the South. Through a set of oral history interviews, I seek to understand the types of performance, kinship building and communality that must take place in order for women to feel comfortable in the production side of craft beverages. Through the

analyses of these interviews I find that the key to creating a work environment that is welcoming to women is diversity in management, and the creation of family-like bonds between staff.

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## INTRODUCTION

My goal in this paper is to show the way that representations of craft beverage industries depart from history, and shape the personal experiences of women in the industry. I'm mainly interested in women in craft brewing and craft distilling, as the whiskey and beer industries have been strongly gendered as masculine. While many alcohol-based industries have operated as masculine spaces, the presence of women who work with wine and clear spirits (gin, tequila) is more widely taken for granted than women in similar positions at Southern distilleries and breweries. Rarely would a woman be accused of not knowing enough about wine to produce or sell it, while many women in the beer and whiskey worlds are likely to be asked, "Do you even drink beer?" During the research process I spoke with a woman who, upon entering a bottle shop, was immediately directed to the small section of cider. When she told them that, no, she was actually there for a specific beer release, they asked if it was for her boyfriend. This is by no means a rare experience, and I have personally had my share of similar ones.

These beverages are also integral to a contemporary moment in which craft beverages are celebrated in the Southeastern United States. Bourbon has long been associated with Kentucky, and is often mistakenly believed to only be authentic if made in that state<sup>1</sup>. Meanwhile, craft beer is on the rise around the country, but the extreme youth of the industry in the South<sup>2</sup> means that

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<sup>1</sup> There isn't actually a rule about the production site of bourbon, only about ingredients and aging processes.

<sup>2</sup> Most Southern states only legalized homebrewing and direct to consumer sales within the past 5 years.

there's an excitement and novelty surrounding the industry that is unparalleled in other markets. Each of these beverages have an important role in what some call the "New Southern" food movement, with a focus on transparency, origin, and tradition.

In order to show that current representations depart from their historical origins, I first will compile a brief history of women in brewing and distilling. Through doing so, I will show the ways in which, and the reasons for, the transition from alcohol as a woman's job to its position as an unfeminine product, both to consume and to produce. This regendering took place through shifts in regulation and domestic expectations, brought about by early capitalism, and yet was not strictly disadvantageous for women. Next I will perform an analysis of media produced by, about, and for these industries. I will split the second chapter into two sections, although the line between media representation and self-representation becomes especially blurred for a current audience, and for the people producing the content. The first section will show the way that media talks about the industry as a whole, about men within the industry, and then about women in the industry. The second section explores the ways that the industry talks about itself, focusing on social media.

The final chapter in this project will outline and analyze a series of oral histories collected from female professionals in craft beer and whiskey. These women share their experiences, and offer insights into the masculinization of these industries that is more personal both in scope and sensibility. Stephanie Batty is a distiller at New Riff Distilling, Hannah Lowen is the General Manager at the distillery. Katie Smith is a brewer at Highlands Brewing, the oldest craft beer company in Asheville, North Carolina.

Though there are many theories of gender construction available, this project will be

working out of postmodernist gender theory, which defines gender not as a constitutive fact but rather a performative act, which is continuously constructed. “The critical insight offered by such formulations is that rather than work organization and practices reflecting inherent gender differences, it is the organization and practices of work, informed by broader social discourses, that produces gender identities and inequalities” (Bryant and Garnham 413). As such, the presence of female workers does not necessarily mark a profession as feminine. Women are capable of reinforcing, rather than challenging, conceptions of gendered work despite their presence through their own presentations of gendered behavior. Negotiating gendered practices to maintain femininity while also framing oneself as “one of the guys,” for example, does little to break down conceptions of what feminine traits are. In fact, this practice can reinforce the idea that an individual must have certain masculine traits in order to exist in a certain space, regardless of whether or not they identify as male.

Especially in section one, I switch frequently between talking about women were allowed to make or how they were allowed to work, and what they were expected to drink. The thought of female brewers or distillers was so unheard of between the industrialization of alcohol production, when it switched to men’s work, and the current craft beverage surge where there is hardly any scholarly work surrounding it. Moreover, the gendering of the work surrounding beer and whiskey is compounded by the gendering of the consumption of each product.

## 1. GENDERED HISTORIES

Before we dive into the contemporary reality of gendered work in the craft beverage industry, it is necessary to understand the history of the presence of women in the production of beer and whiskey, and their eventual exclusion from the industries. The history of alcohol production can be broken up in many different ways, but I aim to focus on the segments of time defined by the sources and types of regulations imposed on it, and, by extension, on the gendered beings that produce and consume it. These segments can be summed up by the processes that take place within them: the move from domestic to industrial production; de-regulation; and re-regulation. The first and last of these processes position women not as agents who can create change and take ownership over their roles, but as actors who fulfill the requirements of production and the requirements of femininity at the same time. During the move from domesticity to industrialization, women participate heavily in production, before being barred from it, and in the last they refrain from it entirely, and yet all of those moves are necessitated by male desires, anxieties, expectations and economics. Only in the de-regulation process — which, perhaps paradoxically, occupies the brief moment in time between the 18th and 21st amendments — were women able to gain any meaningful agency through the production and consumption of alcohol.

As far as the geographics of this chapter are concerned, they shift around much like the history of alcohol itself. Scholarship on ancient production histories is usually initiated in

Sumeria, then shifted to Western European countries before settling in the United States. This is as much due to lack of scholarship in non-Western contexts as to tracing some sort of historical lineage. And yet, Sarah Hand Meacham convincingly argues in *Every Home a Distillery: Alcohol, Gender, and Technology in the Colonial Chesapeake* that the alcohol traditions of the colonists were drawn from their largely English ancestry, so perhaps the jump is not an altogether manufactured one.

When questioning the idea that the labor of alcohol production provided agency to women in this chapter, I mainly define agency in terms of power, or the prospective of grasping power. When a form of labor is prescribed by structures outside of a woman's control, either through expectations of femininity and domesticity or through codified regulations set out by the state, performance of that labor loses the ability to offer power. For most of history, the decision of who should perform the labor of alcohol production rested on men, even when women were the group elected.

#### DOMESTIC-INDUSTRIAL

It's important to remember, as we explore the shift from domestic to industrial production, that drinking was not yet seen as a vice. While studies of gender in later periods focus on the ways that female consumption was regulated, scholarship of the pre-modern and early modern period relies on the understanding that everyone was drinking, and excessively by today's standards. "[A]lcohol records provide a glimpse of a world that is lost and is no longer fully understandable — a world in which alcohol was critical to survival. The shift to a world where drinking is highly circumscribed began in the late eighteenth century" (Meacham x). As Meacham notes in her introduction, alcohol was not relegated to taboo status at the time largely

because it was so widely and critically used. Alcohol was safer to drink than water, even in the days when the science was uncertain and bad batches were likely common. It was used as payment for work done, a perk to keep slaves from rebelling, a bribe for elected officials, medicine, beauty routine, and cleaning product. Creating a taboo around alcohol required that society not be so dependent on it (Meacham 2). This period lasted for much longer in the North American colonies than it did in other places.

When we tell the story of women and alcohol, the most popular starting point is the ancient Sumerians. The first known intentional fermentation, and the first prototypes of distillation technology, come out of the area that is now Northern Iraq. Add to the that fact that those who were in charge of producing alcohol for their households and for the public as brewsters and “pub” owners were women creates a tidy beginning of a story, and a research question is posed. Why have the first distillers and brewers been forced away from the profession? Fred Minnick’s book *Whiskey Women: the Untold Story of How Women Saved Bourbon, Scotch, and Irish Whiskey* uses this location and question as the beginning of its exploration. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro’s library has started a research project about the history of beer called Well Crafted, and they use the Ancient Sumerians in many of their promotional materials. Anita Riley’s *Brewing Ambition*, a collection of short essays on women in the brewing industry, also uses the anecdote in its introduction. In each case, the author points to Ninkasi, the Sumerian goddess who was in charge of sacred beer production, and to Kubaba, a brewpub owner and later female king who, when she died, was memorialized as a deity, to show that women who produced beer were revered (Minnick 2; Riley xvii). These were not housewives brewing and distilling for domestic consumption, but keystones of public and ritual life. The

problem, especially in Minnick's book, is that there's never an effort to point out that later women, in most cases and especially in England and Ireland, didn't gain any agency from production. Without that differentiation in later chapters, the book celebrates the fact that women were doing the work without recognizing the ways in which it trapped them. It relies on an assumption that the work itself provided agency, or should be celebrated, without examining the impact on the women themselves. Most of the women that Minnick profiles up until, and after, industrialization were performing the labor of alcohol production based on the gendered expectations of productivity. The moment that they were not pressed into this labor by virtue of their claim on household duties, but rather began to make a name for themselves and create their own identities surrounding this specific work, was the moment that they were prosecuted as heretics. There is nothing inherently freeing about this, or any, labor.

Those later women, the ones that took the rudimentary processes that made ritual alcohol and slightly refined them for household use, were given the job of alcohol production as a domestic chore. Men brought home the grains and fruits used in brewing and distilling, and women processed them into consumable goods such as bread and ale. They also collected and grew plants for use in distilled spirits, which were then used as medicine. Early cookbooks, both in England and the colonies, included many recipes for alcohol production and the household chores that were associated with it (keeping bees, cultivating berries for wine, etc.), connecting it solidly with cookery in the woman's sphere (Meacham 30).

As distillation technology progressed, and the shape of the economy shifted towards early stage capitalism, those same women were able to gain some public agency through selling their beer and distilled spirits to neighbors. This unregulated market allowed women to maneuver pseudo-

public spaces, contribute to household or personal finances, and bolster personal recognition.

The prevalence and profitability of the unregulated alcohol market, however, drew the attention of the state, both in Ireland and England. Royal forces established taxation on the product and certification for the production. The first brewers and distillers to be denied certification and targeted by tax collectors were women making alcohol for domestic consumption or to be sold at market. As approved production required more space and technology, women became criminalized for distilling and brewing while their husbands began to build businesses based on their wives' domestic knowledge. At about this time, associations between natural healing and witchcraft, as opposed to the "scientific" healing of physicians, meant that authorities restricted distilling to those that were certified physicians, and that regulation came down particularly hard on the women who were making their own alcohol for domestic consumption (Minnick 10).

Despite disparate timelines, Meacham argues that the North American colonies, specifically in the Chesapeake region, underwent the same process as the English and Irish did in the 1700s, but their transition from domestic to industrial production started in the mid-1800s. The colonists brought with them and preserved the drinking culture of their homes, mostly in England, and regarded alcohol to be basic foodstuffs and water to be unsafe. Brewing the beverages was the responsibility of the wives, who might be admonished if they brewed insufficient quantities or qualities (Meacham 24). The South, in particular, was slow to make the switch in gendered production. "Chesapeake colonies continued to rely on women to make alcohol for at least a hundred years after Europe, New England, and the Middle Colonies had turned to alcoholic beverages produced by men" (Meacham 3). Unlike their English ancestors, however, the Southern colonists made their alcohols out of the fruits that grew wild and in their orchards,

opting for ciders and brandies instead of ales and whiskies. Grains, and later hops, were too labor intensive and not profitable enough to take up land dedicated to the tobacco monocrop. “In most of the world, including Western Europe, Latin America, and New England, the introduction of new technologies, particularly the flower of the hop plant, had led men to assume control of alcoholic beverage production by or during the seventeenth century. In contrast, seventeenth-century Chesapeake men, fixated on their tobacco monoculture, continued to rely on cider produced by women” (Meacham 3). Their monoculture in tobacco was also labor intensive, which meant that all male hands, servants and slaves included, were needed to maintain the crop and therefore money coming in. Women’s hands were the only ones “available” for such work as alcohol production (Meacham 35). Instead, both production and tavernkeeping were women’s share of the household duties. They were so dependent on women to make their alcohol that, when the population was lopsided with more men than women, instead of learning how to produce alcohol for their own consumption, men without wives would drink the unsafe water, often making themselves sick (Meacham 32). But unlike women in other parts of the world, Chesapeake women did not enjoy any social or economic gains through that reliance. Although Meacham is pointing to later periods when she writes, “[w]omen supported this masculinization of labor by purchasing the liquors that men distilled— happy, in some cases, to forget that making alcoholic beverages used to be their responsibility,” (Meacham 5) the fact that women were all too happy to give up a complicated labor to the market shows that they found neither joy nor power in the process.

The largest difference between the transition to industrialization in the Chesapeake and that in England and Ireland, according to Minnick and Meacham, is the unevenness with which it was

applied. The poorest colonizers always had to purchase spirits from large landowners during the spring and summer, as they didn't have the capital to buy the stills used to produce more shelf stable brandies. Those wealthy planters still avoided modern English technologies that would enable them to produce larger quantities of alcohol and turn that production into a full market, partially because they were expensive and partially because they were distancing themselves from British rule until the early 1800s (Meacham 25). But as the Chesapeake plantation owners became more wealthy, and had enough slaves to take over the field work, purchasing contemporary technology enabled them to increase their incomes. They also built taverns that were essentially extensions of the plantations, and further increased their market share and the smaller landholder's reliance on them. As technology, both in equipment and plant varieties, changed and allowed each family to distill their own spirits and trade with other middling families, men became increasingly in charge of the distilling process (Meacham 5). It became an opportunity for homosociality, with men exchanging ideas, recipes, and new technologies with their peers.

There is never a single reason for the re-gendering of labor, as Meacham points out.

“Historians who have studied the masculinization of other forms of labor, such as delivering babies and dairying, have concluded that men took over these arenas because of misogyny or anxiety. However, the shrinking of women's roles in making alcohol was not due to misogyny or male anxiety alone. It was a combination of men's enthusiasm for newly scientific forms of production, the increasing density of the population, and the requirements of supplying the Continental Army with liquor during the American Revolution that led to the re-gendering of alcohol production during the late eighteenth century.” (Meacham 5)

However, the patterns do show that as a production activity becomes a source of capital and recognition, regulations are usually put into place, which disproportionately impact women's

ability to participate in that activity. While those regulations might not always be created specifically to block women out of the young industry, that is usually the outcome. For example,

“the brewers [in London] had formed the Brewer’s Guild in the fourteenth century with both male and female members. Increasing urbanization and competition led the Brewer’s Guild to expand its apprenticeship and membership requirements, and over time women increasingly found themselves unable to join the guild because women, who were expected to marry, raise children, and maintain households, could not spend three to seven years training with a master as the guild required to become a licensed brewer.” (Meacham 30)

The professionalization as much as the shift in technology cemented the gender transition in England.

#### DE-REGULATION

Prohibition is an example of over-regulation, which is, in effect, de-regulation. Although the 18th Amendment is often pointed to as a failed, overly-restrictive measure in the fight against intemperance, it also represents a space of de-regulation over the production of alcohol. When all production was outlawed, the established and regulated businesses which had been operating in plain sight were either forced underground, converted to producing other goods, or closed altogether. The men and women that had already been operating outside of the regulated economy were suddenly the only way to buy alcohol. Because no one could be making, selling, or drinking alcohol legally, the regulations that used to keep women out of the industry while promoting men were lifted, and the industry was essentially equalized. This was, of course, an unintended consequence of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and other temperance groups’ efforts. Nevertheless, that practical de-regulation opened up the opportunity for women to exercise their agency through the production of alcohol, outside of both the

domestic and capitalistic spheres.

The movement for temperance was started, and sustained for much of its duration, by middle-class white men, many of whom relied on leveraging their positions in the church to gain followers. And yet those men are often forgotten in historical work on temperance in favor of a focus on the female reformers, especially the WCTU. The scholarly consensus is that the temperance movement would not have been successful without the political organization of women, who tied their right to vote and abolition with campaigns for the 18th amendment.

The place to begin to understand women's roles in the process of de-regulation and re-regulation is at the roots of the temperance movement. Over-consumption became seen as a social issue late in the eighteenth century, as the increasing availability of tea and coffee relegated alcohol away from a healthful necessity and toward a willful vice. In the South, particularly in the Chesapeake region, fear of slave uprisings focused itself on the overindulgence of slaves in liquor, creating the conditions for Southern temperance (Meacham 30). Across the country those that managed the labor classes, whether paid or forced, centered their arguments for temperance around productivity. As early as the 1780s (Fletcher 8) Americans connected temperance with ideal masculinity, tied to economic stability and a harmonious domesticity. Drunkenness released both the unpleasant masculinities (violence, selfishness) and the effeminacies (being overly emotional and unproductive) that were undesirable in a husband and worker. The American Temperance Society started in 1826, and was tied to the Second Great Awakening and to the hyper-rise of capitalism. This society was also tied to class, as its literature portrayed middle class abstainers, fighting against poor drunks. The early reform movement also portrayed women as victims of male drunkenness, and according to Fletcher, the defining female characteristics were

helplessness and morality (Fletcher 20). As such, they welcomed women into their ranks in a limited capacity, relying on the optics of female involvement but not on the actual agency of the women (Fletcher 26). The women involved were still middle class, and the movement's allowance of them in public meetings was not as much of a progression in rights as one would think. "Contrary to earlier historical interpretation, as the household economy eroded, (which in itself occurred unevenly and over a protracted time span), women of the new middle classes were not quarantined to isolated, domestic enclaves" (Fletcher 13). Women, even as they ran the home, ran complex and important economic units, participated in the wider market, and participated in politics, and therefore challenged no prior public regulations by being present in temperance meetings. "Although gendered spheres were not strictly geographic or actual, antebellum Americans did hold the idea that men and women embodied different qualities and values... Women's function was to temper male behavior and values and lend them, in the words of Brian Roberts, 'a veneer of respectability,' both in public and in private" (Fletcher 15).

The backlash to the upper-middle-class organizing of the early temperance movement was not to drink more, but rather for the targets of The American Temperance Society to form their own organizations. Working class men who had signed pledges to abstain started the Washingtonian movement, which used former alcoholics, instead of preachers and business owners, as their spokesmen. Washingtonian women, or Martha Washingtonian groups, were granted limited agency in the form of organizing charity for the families and communities of the intemperate, further cementing themselves as moral authorities. Whereas earlier temperance unions portrayed those that produced, sold, or drank alcohol as wrongdoers, Washingtonians reframed the issue to say that men had little control over their alcoholism. They made alcohol,

not drunkards, the problem, while women maintained their position as the victim, essentially absolving drinking men of any guilt. They redefined masculinity as sentimental, affectionate, and communal rather than competitive. (Fletcher 20) It's also within the media produced by the Washingtonian groups that the "drunken woman" shows up, perhaps not so coincidentally around the same time that Martha Washingtonians begin to create their own media outlets. While men were the victims of alcohol, and were figures to be sympathized with and aided, drunken women were portrayed in temperance newspapers as vicious or criminal, luring decent men to their doom through the provision of alcohol, or neglecting their own families (Fletcher 18).

It's out of these two waves that the WCTU, and other, more progressive reformers, gained their feet. Women found their path to influence through the temperance cause, organizing groups and working for temperance newspapers. The first newspapers owned and run by women were temperance papers, such as the Lily (Fletcher 38). Participating in the temperance movement created a platform for ambitious women, some of whom were considered more radical than others. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, both now icons of the suffrage movement, began their political careers as temperance advocates, and viewed the way that temperance societies treated women as abhorrent. "For feminists, the families of alcoholics exhibited not the elevation of female virtue but the loss of female personhood. Just as bad, misguided conservative temperance reformers exalted this erasure as inspirational sacrifice" (Fletcher 42). Stanton, in particular, argued for changes in family law to allow for divorce when the husband was intemperate, a stance that was vehemently opposed by other temperance reformers. "Stanton noted that when women acted as victims, as did some New York women who violently protested the repeal of the License Law, they were 'applauded for these acts of heroism by the press and

temperance leagues.’ But when women sought to engage the cause as men’s equals, through associations and conventions, ‘then began the battle in the temperance ranks, vindictive and protracted for years’” (Fletcher 40). Suffragettes argued that men had had their way fighting intemperance for decades with little to no progress on the front, and therefore women, who still maintained the moral high ground, needed to be able to vote in order to make full progress. These agitators were marginal prior to the Civil War, especially in the South due to tying temperance and women’s rights to abolition as moral issues. Ultimately, the calls to more traditional femininity of the WCTU would be the deciding factor in passing the 18th Amendment.

Though the South was surely not the only region to actively undermine the new amendment, its history of doing so is still inscribed into the consciousness of the region. While moonshiners existed in the North as well, they did not grab the popular imagination in quite the same way that they did in the South. Part of this might be due to the persistent rurality of the region, meaning contraband rum and gin weren’t as available outside of port cities such as New Orleans. It was also likely tied, however, to the South’s increasing suspicion of the temperance movement both pre- and post-Civil War. In the antebellum period, temperance advocates were either intentionally tying their cause with that of abolition, or anxiously distancing themselves from their peers who did so. “If temperance bound northern and southern men together in a common pursuit of authority, abolition ripped through that bond by attacking the basis of southern men’s masterhood and threatened not just the movement but the nation” (Fletcher 50). As Southern masculinity relied not just on values of brotherhood and productivity, but also on the mastery over their slaves, they viewed temperance as diametrically opposed to their

masculinity. At that point, Southerners were substantially less likely to make temperance pledges, as they formed 44% of population and only 9% of pledges (Fletcher 48). This perception of Prohibition as a Northern attack on their masculinity (and with it, their ability to shape a society and economy) only intensified after the Civil War. Some scholars believed that Prohibition failed due to a combination of poor enforcement and the fact that most of the population would not feel morally outraged at disobeying a law that they disagreed with. With the enduring resentment of Northern meddling into Southern business, the South was ripe for the permeation of moonshining.

This acceptance of illegal activity, though surely not by all Southerners (there were, and still are, religious teetotalers in every nook and cranny of the region), not only lead to the enrichment of the bootleggers but also cemented their position in Southern mythology. In Elizabeth Engelhardt's book *A Mess of Greens: Southern Gender and Southern Food*, she explores that mythology with a particular eye toward the narratives surrounding female bootleggers. Engelhardt tracks the evolution of anxieties about New Womanhood, which is directly tied to the more radical of the female temperance reformers in the form of independence and personhood, through three accounts of Appalachian women making and selling moonshine. In each of Engelhardt's case studies, it's understood that these women are operating in a sublegal economy, and that their femininity is challenged by that fact, and yet each of them also is able to gain some semblance of agency through the act of unregulated alcohol production. The first, the title character from Lucy McElroy's 1901 novel *Juletty*, is a wild, confident woman taking care of herself and others through moonshining and writing. In the end, Juletty is "tamed" by the lawman, not through incarceration but through marriage, and she's successfully reincorporated

into the regulated domestic sphere. The second, Mrs. Rose, was a real life moonshiner with a large operation who turned to moonshining after her husband died and she was left to care for her children through whatever means necessary. Her role as first a woman, second a moonshiner is cemented when she capitulated while in jail, saying that she would prefer to return to domestic tranquility and that she only turned to moonshining as an extension of her role as a caretaker (Engelhardt 31). Both of these stories have the women experimenting with the kind of femininity that Stanton, Anthony, and their feminist peers espoused, before being redirected into the traditional, dependent femininity that the rest of the temperance movement had held up. The third woman was Kit Brandon, another fictionalized title character, this time of Sherwood Anderson's 1936 novel *Kit Brandon: A Portrait*. Kit, unlike Juletty or Mrs. Rose, was able to make an escape from traditional roles of femininity. She went into moonshining not to support a family but to support herself, resulting in an unheard of mobility through both capital and physical means after she buys a car to travel the country in. Through this grouping of female characters, we see the anxiety and attraction that surrounded Southern women who occupied this de-regulated space. Much like the women who had begun to sell their distilled spirits and ales before being regulated out of the market, the women were able to gain agency through the production of alcohol, even as they were blocked out of more regulated industries. It is perhaps unsurprising, given the anxiety around women who were able to use the de-regulated production of alcohol to grasp a version of agency, that the repeal of the 18th Amendment, in the form of the 21st Amendment, was framed as a return to law and order. In a fascinating turn of events, the tactics and moral imperatives employed by the WCTU were turned on them by the women leading the repeal movement in the late 1920s. The Women's

Organization for National Prohibition Reform (WONPR) argued that prohibition had endangered the home, not through a trespassing on personal liberty or privacy laws but through the wanton displays of unlawfulness it engendered. They argued that prohibition had “nurtured a criminal class, created a ‘crime wave,’ corrupted public officials, made drinking fashionable, engendered a contempt for the rule of law, and set back the progress of ‘true temperance’” (Rose 2). By relying on the same gender roles that gave birth to the women’s temperance union of moral high ground and protecting domesticity, they both mirrored and doggedly opposed the WCTU. It’s telling that, as Rose points out, the more liberal women’s movements against Prohibition did not shift public opinion in the way that appealing to conservative notions of femininity did. Even as these women redefined what temperance meant, framing it as controlled drinking instead of total abstinence, they maintained the definitions of femininity that had preceded them.

#### RE-REGULATION

After the repeal of Prohibition, alcohol businesses sought to reinforce these appeals to traditional femininity through their advertising. Nathan Michael Corzine compiles beer advertisements that were produced between the repeal in 1933 and 1960. Corzine argues that until World War II, “repeal was deemed as much an experiment as prohibition had been” (Corzine 843). This leads to beer companies that are anxious about being welcomed back into mainstream society. Their advertisements remained conservative in message for much longer than many other industries, as they were reluctant to rock the boat and risk being the targets of reformers. “For men, the ads summoned them to drink, be manly and be American. Good times were waiting. For women the ads represented a symphony of complications and contradictions. They were being offered a ticket into a world heretofore belonging to men, but

the price of admission was steep” (Corzine 844). The beer ads showed women where, and in what manner, it was acceptable to drink: in the home, in service to their husbands. Advertisers sought to make beer aspirational, portraying a can or bottle of beer as central to middle class tableaux, even while they maintained its working class prices. “Swept along in the current of social upheaval, brewers made familiar a new vignette of the middle-class American couple; the hardworking, happy man and his thoughtful, obligated wife” (Corzine 846). Women, including housewives who should have been under the influence of their husbands, were regarded as wasteful and frivolous, both the main consumers and the ones most likely to overspend. “Controlling women’s leisure was equated to controlling middle-class waste. Better women consume goods than make them, but it was important to tell them exactly what they should be buying” (Corzine 847). So the breweries were teaching women to buy beer... but not for themselves. For their husbands and his friends. This message simultaneously communicated that while women were blocked out of most professions, the production of alcohol, as well as its consumption, represented a male-only space.

This period of redefining feminine drinking as domestic served to re-masculinize public drinking spaces. In many ways, public drinking spaces, especially when connected to beer or whiskey, are still strongly masculinized. Emily Nicholls shows in her article, “‘What on Earth is She Drinking?’ Doing Femininity through Drink Choice on the Girls’ Night Out” that women in the United Kingdom still view spaces like pubs as masculinized, while women are more able to use what she terms the Night Time Economy (NTE) in places more geared to either heterosexual socialization, such as clubs, or in the form of “girls’ nights out.” Women are allowed to drink in public, but the things that they drink are confined to fruity cocktails or white wine when they are

in groups of other women, regardless of whether or not the women were attempting to attract male attention. Interestingly, the women felt the most compelled to perform their femininity through drink choice when they were in a group of all women. If they, for example, went to a pub with their fathers or brothers, they felt comfortable getting a cider (though notably still not an ale) (Nicholls 77). This shows a reliance on communality to define what is an acceptable performance of femininity. Nicholls points out that some of these practices can be traced to the idea of gendered glassware. Women define pint glasses as masculine, partially because of shape and partially because of volume, while wine and coup glasses are more “elegant” (Nicholls 84). And yet some groups of women are using these expectations to push back against the informal regulation of public spaces. An organization called Girls Pint Out plays with the expectations of woman-only social spaces by using them to teach women about craft beer, co-opting both the gendered glassware of the pint and the gendered social space of the girls’ night out to create new versions of femininity. In order to combat the feeling that many American women have that the bar is judging them when they attempt to order a beer, combined with their own perceptions and those of the bartenders that they don’t know what they’re ordering, Girls Pint Out provides a safe space for women hoping to explore the world of beer while surrounded by other women who either have knowledge or are also seeking it. “Our mission is to build a community of women who love craft beer and who are an active, contributing part of the greater craft beer community” (Girls Pint Out). Events can be educational or charitable, but many are purely social. They are both interacting with and pushing back against the trope of women as charitable workers that the WCTU and Washingtonians traded in.

These women, and others like them, struggle to take up space in public spheres that have

traditionally regulated them out of the industries. Though the re-regulation of the industry had not been targeted at women in quite the same way that it had previously, “soft” regulations in the form of gendered expectations and the maintenance of masculinized public spaces still blocked women from fully grasping the agency that a de-regulated space offered. This maintenance of gendered forms of labor and leisure cannot be entirely blamed for the lack of women in craft beverage industries, but it did create a landscape that accepted the lack of women in production roles as normal.

## 2. CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVES

While the previous chapter focused on the regulatory practices that determine what kind of people are allowed to make alcohol, a contemporary understanding requires that we look instead at the ways that those people might be excluded through narrative. Foucault notes that “Discourses should be understood as statements with a material existence” (Foucault 122). As such, the way that we talk about these industries inherently shapes the industries themselves. The current craft food and beverage climate relies heavily on different forms of media production to survive, telling the stories of each product and person to a modern consumer who cares almost as much about the narrative as they do the product itself. Unfortunately, the methods and topics used to tell these stories don’t always highlight everyone equitably.

In November 2017, the food industry was in crisis after a series of exposés revealed the pervasiveness of sexual assault in the industry, especially from some big name chefs and restaurateurs. Dirt Candy chef and owner Amanda Cohen wrote an article in response to the media inquiries she, and many women in the industry, were receiving.

“For the past two weeks, my Twitter feed and email inbox have been filled to overflowing with food journalists begging me to Come Forward With My Story, demanding that I Make a Statement, encouraging me to Speak Out. Apparently, the rules have changed. Women may not have value as chefs, but as victims we’re finally interesting!” (Esquire)

Cohen notes that food media reviews male-helmed restaurants far more frequently than those owned or run by women. She argues that this silencing of women's talent leads to a lack of power, which then promotes and shelters abuses of the kind that the reporters were suddenly concerned about.

Cohen's argument is similar to the one that Gabrielle Hamilton made in her memoir, *Blood, Bones & Butter: The Inadvertent Education of a Reluctant Chef*. Hamilton describes being asked to be on a panel entitled "Where Are the Women?" at the Culinary Institute of America. It made her angry, to be asked to be on a panel with such an obvious answer: "Letting my mind roll over my own payroll, female after female after female... I couldn't imagine that we were still having this conversation, this draining, polarizing conversation about where the women are in the industry" (Hamilton 203). And yet by the end of the panel she is ruminating on the actual barriers to entry, the actual reality of women in food. Such as being on your feet for 12 hour workdays, while pregnant. Such as constantly negotiating being the only woman in an all-male space. "It was not until I opened my own place that I realized how present and ongoing the struggle to be female in a professional kitchen had been. It's like the hood during service. Everybody talks about the heat in the kitchen, ... I never realize how much space the noise of the hood takes up in my mind... until I shut it off, and total bliss and relief set in" (Hamilton 211). The ability to forget this struggle comes exclusively from the privilege of owning a restaurant instead of working in someone else's.

For both of these women, it is not just being a woman in this space that is fraught with dangerous assumptions, but also the representation of them as women. Neither is particularly happy about the way that people do the representing, either on panel discussions or a sustained

media narrative. Craft beverages hold just as many rhetorical traps for the women who choose to work in the industries.

The contemporary movement surrounding craft beverages has its own body of media production. This body includes magazines and websites that cater to craft industry insiders and enthusiasts, such as *Beer Advocate* and *Good Beer Hunting*, along with larger food media outlets, social media, radio shows, advertisements, and branding. These various outlets obviously communicate disparate messages, coming, as they do, from many viewpoints and sectors. And yet largely the image of the craft brewer is consistent: white male, late 20s to early 40s. Beards and tattoos are encouraged, but not required. There are two exceptions to this rule. Female makers are acknowledged when media is talking specifically of the phenomenon of women in the industry, through either a celebratory trend piece or through a recognition of their victimhood. One writer for *Beer:Simple*, a website that caters to homebrewers, described the treatment of women in beer media thusly:

“Tell me if you've read any of these articles lately (they come in lots of different forms, under different titles, and by different authors, but these are the possibly-hyperbolic archetypes): 1. ‘Blatantly Sexist Beer Names: How Men Use Porn to Sell Beer to Other Men, Insulting and Ignoring Female Drinkers’ 2. ‘Hey, Women Can Brew Too! Did You Know That? Here are Spunky Women Who Can (and DO!) Lift Heavy Things!’ 3. ‘Women Drink Craft Beer! And It Isn't Even All Fruit Beer!,’ AKA ‘How to Deal With an Alehole of a Bartender Who Assumes You Don't Know Beer Because You Have Breasts’” (Weikert)

These three titles are made up of two impulses on the part of the media, which frame the stories that get told about women, and how they're told. These two impulses are toward victimization and celebration, neither of which satisfactorily redefines what it means to be a brewer or distiller, but rather maintains masculinity at the center of alcohol production and consumption.

Internally produced media, such as advertisement, branding, and social media, follow much the same tropes, unless women are in positions of power, such as the owners of a brand, and personal or woman-directed social media pages. In these cases, women are either free to highlight their work in light of their femininity, or to create a counter-narrative in which gender is secondary to the work itself.

In his book *Craft Obsession: The Social Rhetorics of Beer*, Jeff Rice forms a theory of narrative surrounding the use of social media by articulating not only what he calls a “Grand Narrative”, but also showing how constant interruptions, anecdotes and re-beginnings from different narrators reinforces that larger accepted narrative rather than detracting from it. The “Grand Narrative” in question is made up of, not separate from the interruptions. While Rice is using this conception of narrative to speak about user-generated content, the mass of media surrounding craft beer and whiskey effectively operates in the same way as the constant stream of social media. As each piece is published, it offers a chance to re-form the existing narrative, interrupting the overarching story, and identity, of craft beverages and usually reiterating it.

These reaffirmations start, of course, as personal experiences that are then translated into collective experiences. I do not mean to suggest that these experiences are manufactured to fit into a masculinized grand narrative, but rather that each differing experience communicates a tiny thread of the grand narrative that both shapes perceptions of the industry and the experiences that individuals have with it. For example, craft beer narratives attach themselves to larger grand narrative through the anecdote of the narrator, in childhood, drinking beer for the first time. In doing so, each narrative attaches itself to a cultural history of taste memory being anchored to childhood, perhaps not beginning but most famously repeated by Marcel Proust. The difference

is that almost universally, and certainly the examples given by Rice, beer becomes an agent of male bonding between father and son, normally on a hot day after some type of manual labor. It's a far departure from Proust's narrator dipping a madeleine in tea and thinking of his aunt. They interrupt the larger narrative as taste sharing existing between a child and a female elder, but in these interruptions they form another grand narrative: beer as a male homosocial experience. Even if the child is a girl, she's accepting the taste not from a mother, but from a father. "Writer Lisa Morrison responds, 'My dad's beer was Busch. He would let me have sips of it whenever I wanted. And I liked it! I remember enjoying the way the bubbles tickled my tongue'" (Rice 26). Notably, though she was receiving this experience from a male elder like the other stories, it was leisure ("whenever I wanted") instead of tied to manual labor, and her taste memory is even girlish, as she notes the bubbles "tickled [her] tongue" instead of relaying the taste to refreshment or relief from discomfort.

The instinct to communicate experiences surrounding beer and whiskey, especially in the craft space, comes from the intense communality that is implied by act of drinking. Even the most successful brewery owners often say that they do what they do for the camaraderie. In a digital media age, it's only natural that the group experience of sharing beverages at a pub would be pushed into online forums. That instinct can be clearly seen when Rice quotes *Brewpublic* writer Kim Schimke: "Though seemingly just a beverage, beer is a vehicle for human contact, collaboration, and innovation. Each follower is a potential new friend, networking opportunity, educator, etc." (Rice 32)

## EXTERNAL MEDIA

The landscape of media that is externally produced about the craft alcohol industry is

housed in outlets ranging print and digital sources, both in text and film. Outlets focus from the macro-level (general lifestyle and culture, food and beverage) to the industry-specific. Although magazines and other content providers might be largely geared toward and consumed by women, they don't seem to conspicuously be aimed at them, and most only mention women in the beer and whiskey industries when they do trend pieces about women in the industry. Most book length popular media, as opposed to works of scholarship, are written by men, whether they're home brewing reference books, encyclopedias of beer, or cultural guides. A notable exception is the *Southern Foodways Alliance Guide to Cocktails*, which was co-written by Sara Camp Milam, but which has almost no women cited.

One outlet that does seem to be actively gearing itself toward a female audience is *October*. The site is relatively new, and focused specifically on craft beer. One of the pieces on the site, "The Perfect Match: Beer, Feminism and Weed", author and managing editor Eno Sarris writes that more women than men read the site. *October*, which uses the tagline "Falling for Beer", mostly hosts short pieces about beer releases, reviews, some trend and travel pieces, sprinkled with a few more critical and cultural pieces such as the one above. It also hosts its own podcast, which is narrated by a woman and uses a light indy-pop piano tune for its theme music, instead of the heavier rock that supports most beer podcasts. The site itself uses stylized illustrations of beer instead of photos, and the design is reminiscent of a lifestyle blog, with what's now being called "millennial pink" — a muted salmon pink that has been used to sell rosé, period panties, and minimalistic makeup — as its main color anchor. The "About" page is tucked away through a footer link, but there readers will find the origins of the site. It was funded and designed through a partnership between three entities: a venture capital firm connected with AB-Inbev,

one of the largest beer parent companies, and one that is quickly buying up “craft” breweries in order to maintain its market share; Pitchfork Music Festival; and *Good Beer Hunting*. The list of staff is almost entirely made up of men, with one woman, Hillary Schuster, serving as Experience Director. October is funded by a group of businesses that seek to profit off of the niche of female beer drinkers, but the lack of women with bylines or staff positions shows that they are not actually making substantial efforts to represent women.

The rest of the outlets, again, don’t seem to be actively gearing themselves to the female gaze, and don’t represent themselves as feminine in focus. Few beers and whiskies that are “reviewed” by publications or publicized releases include details on the brewmasters or head distillers. When profiles of these people are written, they’re written to highlight men. This can’t be chalked up entirely to overrepresentation the way that coverage of female chefs is, since the best estimations place women as about 4% of brewmasters (Women in Craft Beer), and yet through these pieces the narrative is maintained that women simply aren’t brewing.

Oddly, the outlet that is able to buck the trend of an overly-celebratory of victimizing lens toward female brewers is one that is notoriously representative of a male gaze. Vice produces a digital filmed series called *Beerland*. The show follows Meg Gill, the co-founder of Golden Road Brewing in California as she stops in one state or city per episode to try local homebrewed beers and meet their brewers. At the end of each episode one of the brewers is invited to show off their beer in a showcase in Los Angeles. During the last episode, the beers at the showcase are judged, and the winner of that showcase will get to do a production run of their beer at the Golden Road facility. Generally, the only time homebrewing pops up in media about the industry is either in the back story of brewery founders or in statistics that use growth in homebrewing equipment

sold to equate growth in interest in the industry or market share, so the show represents one of the few ways that non-homebrewers, even viewers who are interested and invested in the craft beer industry, can look into this enormous, yet private, segment of the industry.

Despite being hosted by a woman, Beerland often plays into Vice's reputation for crass humor and masculine culture, which also reinforces perceptions of beer as part of that culture. In the Portland, Oregon episode of Beerland, a homebrewer who continues to work on his beers despite his ALS diagnosis makes crass jokes, saying, "beer is the number two thing that I think about. Sex is the first." That same brewer, the only one in the episode that is part of an exclusively male brewing team, instructs his assistants to "tap it out, give it a spank", referring to the bucket with which they were mashing in the grain. The other two men brewing for him laughed heartily at the verbiage. Though seemingly harmless, the presence of sexual jokes in a piece about brewing is gratuitous, and like an attempt to cater to Vice's base of 20-30-year-old white men. It's notable that although these two individuals are in "caretaker" roles... they're still men, suggesting that the masculinized work of beer trumps the feminized work of care. Meg, meanwhile, is clearly charmed by him, in no small part because of his backstory, but she also laughs at these jokes. This doesn't negate her ability to be a female brewer, or seen as representative, but it is an example of reinforcing male culture.

Despite these reliances on male culture as a proxy for beer culture, the structure of homebrewing requires that Meg spend some time with female brewers. According to the American Homebrewing Association, women represent about 4% of homebrewers, which is a discouraging statistic regardless of context. However, the same survey shows that almost 30% of homebrewers periodically brew with their wives or partners. Women might not be identifying

themselves as homebrewers, but they are brewing at home. Most episodes of Beerland reflect that, as each episode is split into three brewing teams, and most brewing teams had at least one woman involved. Women rarely make up the entire team, however. The exception to this is the episode that the show did in Alabama. Although they call it the Alabama episode, Meg pretty much sticks to Tuscaloosa and the surrounding counties in Northern Alabama. Of the three brewing teams that she visits, only one person identifies as female, a Japanese immigrant from Osaka named Miki who uses beer as a way to create a community in an unfamiliar place. Miki points out her precarious position, saying, “At the beginning it was hard, because nobody think I can brew beer, because I don’t look like it,” which prompted Meg to ask, “who is supposed to brew beer?” “It’s more like bigger guys” Miki says, and then makes a comically wide circle with her arms, almost exactly representing another of the Alabama contestants, Willy Bob. And yet it seems that Meg is at her most uncomfortable when interacting with women. Through tense body language, eye contact with the camera, and the tendency to tell women she liked their beer and then, when alone with the film crew, point out all the issues with it, set her interactions with female brewers apart from the easiness with which she interacts with men, even when they are sexualizing her, as Willy Bob does from the beginning to the end of the episode, when he’s chosen as the brewer to go forward to represent Alabama in the finals. While Beerland is by no means the only piece of media that centers a woman, it is one of the few examples of media that doesn’t center her femininity. Meg is the judge of the show, ultimately giving her more agency and implying more knowledge than the many men she encounters, even when those men perpetuate the narrative of a male-only space.

Tokenism as a way to talk about women in alcohol production really reached its peak

between 2014 - 2016. Though certainly not the first piece of content to focus on the trend of women drinking, and making, whiskey, NPR's The Salt published a May 2014 article entitled "Not Just a Man's Drink: Ladies Lead the Whiskey Renaissance." The piece implies that women are, in fact, largely behind the resurgence of whiskey of all types as preferred spirit. Though short, the piece introduces readers to a handful of women professionals, from writers to distillery owners, as well as statistics about women's growing share of the whiskey market. With a celebratory tone, the piece is hardly insulting. And yet, three years later, the same piece is written and rewritten with enough regularity for those that pay attention to the industry to roll their eyes. A Forbes article published in May 2017 titled "Why We Don't Talk More About Whiskey Loving Women" sums up the issue. "Call it the influence of post-feminism, an ideology embraced primarily by Millennials. Just as in the craft beer and other traditionally male-dominated industries, post-feminist women resist being identified by their gender. They don't want to be segregated from their male colleagues for fear of getting viewed with condescension or cynicism, and they usually loathe the ubiquitous question of what it's like to be a woman in a male world" (Nurin). In the end, Nurin seems to think that the distancing of self, the unwillingness to be made a token, works against women. And perhaps she's right in some ways, as each of these roundup pieces are celebratory, highlighting and promoting women whose work is surely good. But added all together, and viewed as interruptions to the grand narrative, it's easy to see that these articles, as a group reinforce the fact that women are a departure from the norm.

Each of these pieces creates a subtle impression to readers that women are to be celebrated in the industry because there aren't very many of them. Collectively, they create a thread of a narrative that get woven in with the great narrative of craft beverages: women are an exception to

the rule of who gets to make alcohol. The repeated tropes, the absence of any focus on the quality of the women's work, which surely would not only be present in a profile of a male brewer or distiller, but would be the reason for the profile in the first place, imply that male is still the default identity for the industry. These recognitions, when viewed as interruptions of the grand narrative, do more to de-centralize women in the industry than they do to include them.

Recall that quote from *Beer:Simple* above. The first headline prototype that he mentions is an example of a call-out culture in craft beverage media that focuses on victimhood. There is, indeed, a prevalence of branding in the industry that can make it hard for women to see beer, in particular, as a space where they'll be welcomed. Pieces responding to these aspects of the industry that work to exclude women have become increasingly prevalent in the last two years. Good Beer Hunting, in particular, has started a series of articles called Humanity in Hospitality, which addresses issues of inclusivity in the industry. Though the series is only eight pieces along, one piece, in particular, has sparked a strong response in the industry. "I Know What Boyz Like" is somewhat of an exposé on some semi-hidden representations of specific breweries. The author, Bryan Roth, corrals examples of specific Instagram accounts (many of which use "boyz" in some way in their handles) that are considered "unofficial" representations of the breweries the account owners work at. Most use the brewery name in the handle, and are acknowledged by the brewery despite the fact that the marketing department has no control over them. They've been used as a way for breweries to communicate with each other, hypothetically creating a sense of community between breweries in different locales with follower lists largely made up of other, similar, accounts. This interconnectivity and group support is often cited as one of the reasons that brewing isn't "exclusive". These accounts, in particular, however, showed a different

side of that interconnectivity, as the author found that they were home to sexual jokes and objectification that could make women, especially those tasked with working with the men posting, uncomfortable. Roth used these examples to open up a wider discussion of the inability for major industry organizations, such as the Brewer's Association and state brewer's guilds, to regulate the behavior of companies within the industry. The backlash to the article, however, focused exclusively on the accounts, rather than on the larger issue of accountability, with individuals either coming to the defense of their favorite implicated brewery, saying that the accounts don't prove an inclusion problem, or support for the author. Published in January of 2018, the piece drags the beer industry into the conversation surrounding public reckonings of sexual assault in industries ranging from film to restaurants. These responses mirror those that were provoked by some of the other Humanity in Hospitality pieces, and similar call-out culture pieces from other outlets. "Dreamsicles and Shelf Turds — Where to Turn When the Shouting Stops", a piece by Melissa Cole, attempts to capture that exchange while acknowledging call-out culture. In the piece, she wonders whether the anger that is usually directed toward anyone within Twitter reach after acknowledgements of exclusivity is productive, and calls for a calm dialogue instead. The controversy in question this time is a collaboration beer released by J. Wakefield Brewing and Cloudwater Brewery, two craft darlings based in Florida and the U.K., respectively. J. Wakefield is known as one of the most routine offenders in the struggle against sexualized marketing, and some beer critics, Cole included, challenged Cloudwater on their collaboration partner, leading to J. Wakefield changing one of their labels. "But is the removal of labels like these real change? Is angry social media honestly making a difference? And why is there so often a failure by so many people in beer to see how sexist branding can deter women,

and men, from working in beer or put them off from drinking it?” And yet Cole is not asking for everyone to calm down and hear the brewers out. Instead, in this piece, she points out that changing the label wasn’t an act of reflection, but deeply reactive. One can see that lack of self-accountability in the label that was released for the collaboration brew, on which the brewers themselves were cartoonized, in their underwear, and arrayed on a shelf like merchandise. The label displays with full clarity that the brewers still had no understanding of the deeply felt alienation of women in the industry, as they poke fun at, and willingly subject themselves to, an objectification that they deem comparable. As Cole points out, the whole controversy provided those that won’t engage with the discomfort of women with more ammunition.

Call-out culture pieces, designed to acknowledge the challenges the industry faces on the path to inclusivity, are a recent interruption in the craft beverage great narrative, and in many ways are actually capable of shifting the narrative in a way that the celebratory pieces are not. This shift is evident in the frustration they are met with by those that are invested in the established grand narrative. Each piece multiplies the recognition of gender issues in the industry, therefore leading to a higher chance of interventions.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

When thinking about internally produced media, it’s easy to focus on more established media such as branding. And yet in the craft sphere, brand design and social media are often considered to be the same thing especially due to small branding budgets. Product releases, events, and everyday identity formulation are all communicated to consumers, and other craft beverage companies, through the use of social media.

Which is perhaps why Roth, the author of the “I Know What Boyz Like” piece on Good

Beer Hunting, was so shocked to find public social media accounts, visibly tied to breweries, that were trading in exactly the kind of humor that creates discomfort for female professionals and consumers. But as Roth notes, the accounts were largely “secret” accounts which casual observers would rarely come across. Instagram, and other social media platforms, allow for an off-the-radar expression of personality from the people behind the beer. That can lead to an opportunity for women to present themselves in an industry that largely ignores them. It also, as with the various “boyz” accounts, enables men to reinforce the casual, ironic misogyny that permeates other forms of internally produced representations. The group of “boyz” accounts targeted in the article use sexual humour, specifically often placing their male brewers in compromising positions and captioning the photos in suggestive ways, communicating that women who would like to join the industry should be prepared to be subject to a sexually-focused humour. Beer releases are often publicized with images of their cans on social media. When those cans center illustrated women in positions of subservience, with exaggerated bodies and suggestive names, it can only be assumed that women who work for the company will have to contend with these representations to be heard.

While these examples of direct and explicit misogyny incessantly pop up in the beer industry, there are other forms of communication that imply, rather than state, the way that women aren't quite welcome in the industry. This can present itself as either a simple erasure of women, or communicating distinct masculinity through who is in the photo and how the photo is composed. In an Instagram post published on April 5, 2018, Burial Beer, a growing and popular brewery based in Asheville, North Carolina, publicized current collaboration beers being developed at Barrier Brewing Co. and 3 Floyds Brewing. The two pictures are masculine in

makeup, with seven men lined up in one. Further, the composition of both photos are readably masculine. In the first photo the men are lined up, not unlike a team photo, all unsmiling with hoodies on. Most hands are in their pockets, but their body language communicates bravado, not comfort. The only man who does not fit into this mold is the man in the center, standing with his arms crossed and his eyes turned upward in a slatted coffin stood up on its end. The second image shows two men up front, one on a knee and raising a “rock on” symbol with his left hand. Behind them are two life-sized cutouts of professional wrestlers, one shirtless and one dressed head to toe in leather. And, behind even the cutouts so that viewers can easily mistake them for cutouts themselves, are two more male brewers. The combination of heavy metal imagery and wrestlers, which the brewers are both mirroring and equating themselves to, makes the picture feel distinctively masculine. This is only one post on one brewery’s page, but it also is representative of the overall feel of many breweries’ accounts, especially those on the smaller side of craft that likely have a brewer, usually the owner, running the social media.

As breweries grow, like Burial’s neighbors Highland Brewing and Wicked Weed, their social media presence begins to reflect the more polished work of a marketing department, which are disproportionately female according to the Brewer’s Association and Pink Boots Society statistics (Women in Craft Beer). Each of these two examples have social feeds that feel almost explicitly gender neutral. An equal number of men and women are pictured, and most photos have no people in them at all but rather are visually appealing shots of their packaging, their event spaces, or beer in glasses with the ingredients in the beers as props. The seeming gender-neutrality of these accounts might be due to a more professionalized branding department, a more diverse group of staff deciding what to post, or the simple fact that the larger breweries

have a vested interest in attracting a more diverse consumer group. Most likely, it's a combination of all of these reasons. As craft beer grows, and an increasing number of craft breweries expand to include professionalized marketing departments, it's possible that the grand narrative of craft beer will naturally start to feel more inclusive, at least from the spectator's view. Such a framing uses Rice's conception of a contagion. "Contagions mark, as Roland Barthes notes, beginnings for those who repeat and allow them to spread. 'Such an introduction can only repeat itself,' Barthes writes, 'without ever introducing anything'" (Rice 24). In social media, the inconsequential interrupts the major narrative and becomes the focal point, and such will be the case with the neutralizing of gender in professional accounts.

The feminine erasures seen on brewery accounts is also interrupted once a year. On International Women's Day, Pink Boots organizes a brew day, in which their members gather at a brewery to create a collaboration beer. On that day, anyone who follows more than one brewery will suddenly be treated to a look at every woman in the industry, as photos of groups of ten or twelve women in a brew space spread across social media using the hashtag #pbbrewday. Breweries that have never posted an image of the women that work for them are, for one day, part of a community of feminist businesses, by virtue of Instagram handles and geotagging.

On the other side of the coin are explicitly feminine social media accounts. These are relatively few and far between, although each chapter of the all-female group Pink Boots Society has their own social media pages. These pages mostly include photos of their members, smiling with their arms around each other, holding beers, leading to a page almost entirely made up of women. The captions often advertise chapter meetings, deadlines for the classes and scholarships that the organization offers, or shoutouts to the breweries that their members work at.

Though the distilling industry has, perhaps not a weaker, but definitely a less tightly bound community, there are some analogues to the female-backed social accounts. There are a handful of organizations and businesses purported to make the world of whiskey drinking more accessible to interested women, though none that cater to those women already in the industry. The most recognized professional woman in the bourbon industry, on social media and otherwise, is Marianne Barnes. The master distiller maintains an Instagram page that manages to feel personal while also almost exclusively focusing on Castle and Key. Her posts range from selfies (with her blonde hair tied back neatly and a subtle face of makeup on, even while she's working) to photos of the progress on the renovations to the distillery. Castle and Key does have its own account, but Barnes has at least three thousand more followers, and has become the de facto spokesperson, despite her production role. Consumers, it seems, want a personality to engage with. Barnes has become the "ideal" woman for this industry. She is pretty and visibly feminine, but also "cool," unlikely to complain about the masculine culture. She's safe. She both acknowledges her femininity through photos of herself, and redirects attention away from the fact of her gender toward the business.

There are, of course, many other ways that companies and the individuals who run them represent themselves to the world outside of social media. But the social media and the external media narratives, made up as they are of constant interruptions, redirections, contagions and anecdotes, are pervasive and interactive. They create the foundation of the way that the industry is thought about, and how it thinks about itself; both are perceptions that shape the ways women interact with the industry. They also blur into one grand narrative through the overlap of each kind of media. Social media allows for readers, whether consumers or industry professionals, to

interact with and share externally produced articles. These actions create re-interruptions, in which the same interruptions can become contagions and spread to wider parts of the community, and become inscribed on the grand narrative. They also allow for people to spin and re-contextualize the interruptions, moving them away from the original work of the external media. They are then collected and incorporated into reaction pieces, which then become canonical in the grand narrative. In this way, social media and externally produced media produce a feedback loop in which the community is able to tweak the messages of their peers until each fragment is satisfactorily woven into the grand narrative, which is either reinforced or redefined by the whole process.

### 3. NEGOTIATING SPACES

Though a bulk of media, both externalized and self-representational, exists around craft beverage industries, it's hard to tell how well these various platforms communicate the experiences of women in the industries. The best way to get at their experiences is, obviously, to ask them. And yet even interview-based media feels somehow mediated by the writer. The volume written and edited by Anita Riley to benefit the Pink Boots Society, *Brewing Ambition*, for example, seems to be based off of interviews, and yet the pieces are too short to get a sense of who these women are, and the focus mostly on the nuts and bolts of their career or community contributions rather than on their experiences. Instead, much like *Whiskey Women*, the book romanticizes the accomplishments of the women involved without discussing any hardships or resistances they have faced.

There is, of course, no way to understand the experiences of female brewers and distillers without mediation. About half of the information my subjects shared with me consisted of the kind of things that can be found in Riley's book: the histories of the companies they work for; how they got into their careers; etc. The other half was largely deeper reflections on their experiences as women: resistance or acceptance to their presence; community building through or in spite of gender; how their jobs made them feel. Both halves shed light on the state of the industry, and the role of women in it. I've broken this chapter into sections that reflect the topics each woman wished to discuss, including how they started in the industry, what it's like to work

in a male-dominated field as a woman, and how they interact with people outside of the industry. There are a few analytical themes, however, that each woman touches upon at different points in their story and therefore crop up in each section. Firstly, the problematization of female bodies continuously presents itself in production work, and my subjects have all negotiated and resisted that problematization in different ways. Secondly, the questioning of female competence and training is pervasive in the industry and in the consumer base, although having women in positions of power often undermines that lack of confidence. Thirdly, each of these women have used the performance of gender to create and strengthen community bonds, alternately using traditional feminine and masculine traits to create support structures.

My three subjects are Katie Smith of Highland Brewing, and Stephanie Batty and Hannah Lowen of New Riff Distilling. Katie Smith has lived in or near Asheville, North Carolina for her entire life. She works as a brewer at Highland Brewing, the oldest brewery in Asheville. Stephanie Batty lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, and commutes across the river to New Riff in Newport, Kentucky. She's been at New Riff as a distiller for two years, and has been with the company in other capacities for three. Hannah Lowen is the general manager at New Riff, and was part of the hiring committee when Stephanie moved onto the production team. Hannah identifies as a queer woman, and before she started managing New Riff she was involved in not-for-profit work and political advocacy. Partially for these reasons, Hannah is more likely to talk about systemic issues in gendered representation, and often articulates patterns of behavior more extensively than either of the other women. As she puts it, "I think about and read about these things, so I might be slightly more self aware" than women who are just conceptualizing themselves as doing a job. Readers might notice Hannah tying together or

explaining Stephanie's experiences, and it's important to note that this is not an effort by her or by me to speak over Stephanie's interview, but rather to add context and show the differences between how each woman thinks about the industry and the workplace.

What does it mean to problematize women's bodies? In Lia Bryant and Bridget Garnham's article in *Gender, Work and Organization*, "The Embodiment of Women in Wine: Gender Inequality and Gendered Inscriptions of the Working Body in a Corporate Wine Organization", the authors show that even when an organization itself holds diversity pledges, women were hired less frequently for full-time work due to the problematization of their bodies, including the assumption that they would be starting families and the belief that they would not be able to perform some of the manual labor. These types of "soft" discriminations are more pervasive than any outright redlining of women's work in the beverage industries.

Bryant and Garnham also use post-modern gender theory to explain the ways in which women's bodies can be both the thing that restricts the professional mobility of women and the thing that frees them from traditional constraints. "[It] is crucial to note that whilst Foucault and Butler view the body as the object and target of power, they also theorize the body as a site for resistance. This is because Foucault did not conceptualize resistance as external to the power relations but rather 'coextensive with it and absolutely it's contemporary'" (Bryant 415). Gender is performed through and acted out upon the body. It's through these performances, and the ability to make them fluid, that each woman has been able to gain respect and agency in their positions. It's through performance, for example, that each woman is able to both become "one of the guys" at work, while creating and maintaining woman-only networks and relationships. Finally, although the idea of skepticism about female experience and competence doesn't seem

all that complicated to explain, it is important to remember that that skepticism is not always externalized. It's not only possible, but common, for women professionals to internalize the belief that they are under-trained or don't have sufficient experience, even when their coworkers only have nominally more experience than them.

## GETTING STARTED

Each woman started down their career path in different ways, and at different times in their lives. For both Stephanie and Hannah, their jobs at New Riff started before any deep interest in whiskey did. Ken Lewis, the founder and owner of New Riff, recruited Hannah through family friends while she was taking a break from political organizing and not-for-profit work. She was worried about taking a job that wasn't mission driven, but now finds that New Riff does, in some ways, mirror her previous work experience. "I wasn't really in the real world. I went from college to political work. When I came here, pretty much working in a manufacturing plant, I realized that this is how the world really works, people making things and selling them." Even though Hannah views that jump to the real world as a beneficial move, it's the way that the company takes care of their own that really enables her to feel fulfilled. "I think about the people we employ and their families and my family. It is making change in a small way." She also knew very little about distilling whiskey, and expressed deep appreciation for the company's willingness to train her and the head distiller Brian Sprance before the doors opened. Brian's training was under another Kentucky distiller, while he was being paid by New Riff, and Hannah's was at Ken's other business, Party Source, to learn about consumer care and for a crash course in managing a liquor business. Hannah recognizes this flexibility in timeline and funding as the reason that each of them was able to step into such key roles in the young company despite

the fact that neither she or Brian had worked in whiskey before. It's also why they, as a team, value people who are "excited about and dedicated to the company over those with a lot of experience," which Hannah says is part of the reason that they felt comfortable moving Stephanie onto the production team without any training at all.

Stephanie started at the distillery in a sales role downstairs, organizing tours and selling merchandise to guests. "I was really up for anything," she says, and soon had expanded her part-time job into a full-time events position. While she was working events, she recognized that she would rather be working with the production team. "I just kept hounding the guys in distilling, I was like, I want to do that, I'm more of a manual labor type of person. And they needed someone and they were willing to train me. So it went from one day a week to what I hope will be my career for ever." In this quote, Stephanie ascribes a traditionally male form of labor to her feminine body, and then pursues that form of labor in an aggressive way. She's playing with her performed gender by adopting the signs of masculinity that will enable her to get the job she wants. Later she notes that while the guys on the production team might have been open to having her on the team, Brian also slightly discouraged her, telling her that "it was a lot of waiting, and you will, excuse me, you will fuck up."

Katie Smith's position at Highland Brewing was in no way a fluke. While she started her associate's degree in nursing, she quickly found she wasn't cut out for it and switched to taking classes in their Brewing, Distillation, and Fermentation program. In the Asheville area alone there are three community colleges that offer comparable degrees, designed to prepare aspiring beer professionals for all aspects of the industry, from the business of selling and marketing beer to proper pipework for breweries. Katie actually thought she would focus on the marketing side

of the industry, before she took a class that allowed students to work with the brewers at Oskar Blues, a local brewery with a national reputation. It was through that class that she decided that she would rather be on the production side, though, unlike Stephanie, it had less to do with the physicality of the job and more to do with the science. “I like the fact that I’m constantly thinking and constantly learning new things.” Katie ended up not finishing the program, because “it was either finish the program or brew full-time, and I chose brewing.” Her first position in the industry was as a bartender at Twin Leaf Brewing, and she was part of the opening team there. It didn’t take long for her to start brewing for them, and she started a series of her own flower-based beers there before she moved over to Highland Brewing. During her time at Twin Leaf, Katie was able to do both the customer-facing labor that she enjoyed and the brewing that challenged her. She switched to Highland Brewing in order to focus more on her craft, and then got more involved with the Pink Boots Society in order to maintain her connection to consumers and the community.

Before she got to Twin Leaf, Katie tells me that she applied for a bartending position at a local taproom. She was in school, taking classes in beer, and had completed the first round of cicerone certification.<sup>1</sup> “They told me I wasn’t qualified enough. I was like, ok?” Katie points to two forms of embodiment when explaining why people sometimes didn’t believe she was qualified for the positions that she would end up getting elsewhere: her perceived age, and her gender. “Sometimes at festivals, when I tell people I brew beer they say, ‘Are you even old enough to drink beer?’ Yes, yes I am.” Katie is about five feet and five inches, an average height for a woman. She wears her hair mostly in a ponytail. These are the only physical cues that might

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<sup>1</sup> Cicerones are the sommeliers of the beer world, and the first round of certification qualifies the recipient to serve beer in a craft beer environment.

tell people who interact with her that she is young. Although she's more likely to ascribe disbelief to her perceived age, it's likely that the only reason that people feel comfortable questioning it is due to her gender.

Katie decided to apply for the opening at Highland because of her relationship with then-brewmaster Hollie Stephenson. The community in Asheville was small, and Katie and Hollie met at events and around town in tasting rooms. "I knew Hollie, I loved what she was doing at Highland, and a position opened up, and I figured, might as well try for it." Hollie has since moved to Baltimore to head up the Guinness production facility there, which makes Katie once more the only woman on the brewery floor. The sensory lab, which tests each batch of beer extensively before it is sold, also mostly consists of women, and founder Oscar Wong's daughter, Leah Wong, now runs the brewery.

Hollie also introduced Katie to the Pink Boots Society. Founded by Terri Fehrendorf, the organization supports women in brewing through scholarships, educational opportunities, and networking. Katie is now the head of the Asheville chapter, and has a hand in planning events like Biere de Femme, a beer festival highlighting the female brewers who work in North Carolina's craft beer industry. Katie is quick to point out that she hates pink, and isn't particularly fond of being pigeonholed as a female brewer, but she also says that her work with Pink Boots has "connected [her] to other women in the industry, and that's worth it." Despite a personal dislike of feminine performance, Katie recognizes that there are some forms of femininity that allow her to create and maintain networks outside of her immediate coworker circle.

The problematization of women's bodies is a major issue in the interviews, and yet each of

these women were able to surpass that obstacle during the hiring process. Part of that, according to Hannah is the fact that “presence is power.” The diversity in management at both New Riff, in the person of Hannah, and at Highlands, through former head brewer Holly Stephenson and owner Leah Wong, means that people in power were less likely to dismiss my subjects’ experience or training. Hannah and Katie both talk about the importance of women in power, both as mentors and simply as the people willing to give less experienced applicants a shot. Women in power are less likely to question another woman’s demonstrated experience, and might even go so far as to hire women that they know they will have to train.

#### WORKPLACE CULTURE

The bulk of each interview was comprised not of the obstacles to getting into the industry, but the way that the women feel about their jobs and how they operate in male-dominated spaces. For Stephanie, the men that make up the production team at New Riff are pretty much the extent of her whiskey community. “We just act like a bunch of kids,” she says, clearly comfortable in the male-dominated environment. There are five people on the team, and she is the only woman. She clearly strongly identifies with these four men because she quickly corrects herself: there are other women in the company, including Hannah, but she’s the only one on the production side. “But nobody that’s in this space (laughs) lots of testosterone.” She goes to a brewery next door with some of the men who work with her at the end of their days, and she considers each of them close friends. “We’re just a bunch of random misfits. We all come from different backgrounds, and everyone really wants to be here... everyone really wants everybody to really succeed and do well here.”

When I interviewed Hannah, she mentioned that Stephanie was able to get along with the

guys in a way that other women might not. She couldn't necessarily articulate what made that possible, but Stephanie mentioned that the men could be crude or goofy in a way that she was comfortable with. This isn't the first time that she's worked with teams made up almost entirely of men. Stephanie says that she prefers it due to the playfulness and casualness. "Not that all female environments are like this, but there's not the cattiness, and that just fits my personality better." Her qualification at the beginning of this quote ("Not that all female environments are like this...") shows that Stephanie knows that her perception of female environments might be unfair. The perception that female-dominated work environments are less hospitable or shallow is a dogged one, paralleled by the perception that male-dominated work environments are crude. In this moment, Stephanie shows that she aligns herself as "one of the guys," and actively distances herself from traits, such as cattiness, that are deemed more feminine.

When asked what her favorite part of the job is, Stephanie pairs loving her coworkers with the low-key environment. "I wear a work shirt and boots and I walk into work with my hair wet, like it's not fluffy at all." Stephanie doesn't see these physical practices as a performance of masculinity, but rather as a release from the performances of femininity that she used to do for her job at a salon. They also serve another way that she defines the physicality of her job. "I just wanted to be active. We sweat our asses off here. It just makes the beer at the end of the night taste better." Wet hair tied up and work boots allow her to maintain an active position. Traditionally, manual labor is masculinized labor, and it making the beer at the end of the day taste better is a trope in beer advertising, and yet Stephanie conceptualizes both of these things only in terms of her own pleasure. This simplification might even further code her status as being "one of the guys."

My interview with Stephanie was also after the exposure of sexual harassment in the food industry that hit the media in late 2017. As such, she brought up sexual harassment despite the fact that none of my questions were pointed in that direction. She asked, first, if any of my other subjects had talked about harassment, and when she was told that that wasn't the focus of my research but that I would be happy to hear her insight, she said, "I don't know if it's my personality, or if I've been really lucky to work around really stand up guys, but I've never felt belittled or pushed aside, they've always just respected me. I guess I wouldn't be doing this job if they didn't respect me." This statement, unprovoked as it was, seemed to perfectly sum up both her relationship with her coworkers and her relationship with herself. It seems that if her body had been problematized to the point of harassment, then a line would have been crossed and she believes she would have maintained her bodily autonomy rather than stay in the position she was in. It also shows that in some ways, she views herself apart from the larger movement of women who had been subject to various forms of abuse.

While Katie sees the mental stimulation as the key pleasure in her position, Stephanie is aware of her inexperience in the position and both seeks out and graciously accepts opportunities to learn more about distilling craft whiskey. The learning that Stephanie does on the job is split between formal and informal training. Brian might, for example, pull her from her normal rotation so that she can learn how to distill their gin, but he's just as likely to bring her, and the rest of the crew, a taste of their product and talk about tasting notes in a conversational tone. Stephanie notes that he'll often come to her first with those informal lessons, and chalks it up to her continued interest and her perceived inexperience. It is in this context that she notes, "I'm like the little sister. In a non-condescending, twerpy way." The familiarity connotes

protectiveness, affection, and learning. When asked if she thought that her feeling of being inexperienced was partly due to an internalized “imposter syndrome”, Stephanie was positive that, no, she really didn’t know very much and she was excited to learn.

Stephanie is notably uncomfortable talking about her position as a woman in the industry. Much like Katie, as well as other women in male-dominated industries, she would rather be recognized for the work that she does, and prefers not to draw attention to the fact of her gender if possible. This will come up more intensely when we explore the ways that she interacts with the world outside of her company, but it also, in some ways, defines the way that she interacts with the men with whom she works as well. Hannah points this out in the interview with her, saying that Stephanie “gets along well” with the men on the team, and is able to make herself palatable to them in way that other women might not. At the same time, Hannah recognized the ways that this is a form of performance. She says that she’s had conversations with Stephanie that she knows Stephanie wouldn’t have with the guys, and neither would Hannah. Instead of seeing those conversations as evidence of Stephanie putting on a show, Hannah delves into the way that people, especially women, become what they need to be in order to exist in the spaces they want to be in. “Is that not authentic? I don’t know. I do the same thing. It’s not that I’m loud or forceful by nature, but that my personality requires that I be in control. I do that by being loud and forceful.” They just have to be on, have to consciously take up space in a way that isn’t artificial, but that happens when you’re trying to control a room. She does think there’s an element of performance, but not in a conscious way, rather as a method of developing the relationships that they need.

Hannah notes that there is a double standard for women in positions of power, especially

when they have to wield that power over men. Speaking about the woman who's in charge of events at New Riff, Hannah says, "before I even started, people would talk about her like, be careful of Amy, she can be a bitch. And she's not, she's just a powerful woman who knows what she wants and why she's there. And even, like, for me, if I have to like scold someone, I think back on it later and worry about whether I was a jerk or not. And I know that the other person, a man, won't be worried about that." Hannah puts this into the perspective of the larger food scene, saying, "it's a double edged sword, where it allows for women to be this way, but also cuts it off sometimes." The food and beverage industries have become a haven for women deemed too loud or forceful for more traditionally feminine work, but also seek to control those women.

Katie admits that the first few weeks in the production space was less smooth than she would have liked. She was the only woman in the back after Hollie left, not long after Katie was hired. The other people on the production team were initially anxious about saying certain things in front of her. She grew up with two brothers, and feels like she can hold her own. "I'll tell you if I don't want to hear crap, but I give them as much crap as they give me. It's like a sibling or something." This is another connection to familiarity, but in a different way than Stephanie's. Here, Katie notes the other side of the relationship between sisters and brothers: the teasing. While Stephanie sees her education as the way in which her coworkers view her as a sibling, Katie talks about being able to hold her own, letting the men around her know when something is inappropriate but also being game for some "crap."

That starting period also showed her her own misconceptions about the gendered space. "I was, stupidly, worse than some of the guys." When she first started she was sensitive about the physicality of the work, refused help when she could have used it "to prove a point". Now she

says she realizes that the guys, too, would have accepted help. There are some things that just require more than one person. She also cites other women's experience with physical requirements, saying that she's heard other female brewers have been asked if they could lift fifty pounds above their head while applying for jobs, which is an unrealistic requirement for almost anyone. Katie says that women just have to be smart. At Twin Leaf they would get a pallet of thousands of pounds of malt with just a pallet jack to get it off the street and into the brewery. "Of course I had difficulty, just like everyone else would." They use forklifts at Highlands. "I'm throwing the same amount of malt as every other guy back there." Instead of lifting bags of malts or hops higher than she feels is safe for her, she uses a scoop to scoop out half the bag before pouring the rest in. "And, you know, there are probably a lot of women that are a lot stronger than me," she qualifies.

This idea, that women have to be able to do literal heavy lifting in order to be a brewer, is another example of problematizing female bodies. The perceptions that these physical feats are necessary as a brewer, and that women are inherently unable to meet these qualifications, means that fewer women will be given a chance to prove themselves in breweries. But Katie is able to turn this problematization on its head by adapting the necessities of brewing to her body, effectively redefining what it means to be strong enough to be a brewer.

Like Stephanie, Katie is hesitant to be pigeonholed as a female brewer, but she also isn't afraid to be simply recognized as one.

"I've seen the whole side of, we're hiring you because you're a girl, we don't really care how good you are at your job. Which stinks, and I totally don't agree with that. And the thing is, when I first started being acknowledged for being a girl in this industry, it was kind of like, I would rather be noticed for my work ethic and stuff like that, but I've come

to realize that being acknowledged as a woman in this industry has connected me with more women. I feel like, women in any industry like this, if you are amazing at your job, and have the work ethic, and kick ass? People will know that. It will come out eventually.”

Katie sees her exposure as a way to connect with more women, creating networks, rather than something that has shaped her career.

She does, however, see the way that she makes beer as slightly different from the men that she works with. “Women, just point blank, have better sense of taste and smell.”<sup>2</sup> Her first beers were based on foraged flowers, including a lavender blackberry dark lager. The kinds of beers that she makes are based in older techniques, with complex flavors, and she watches cooking shows for inspiration on flavors and adjuncts. “I don’t know if women have a different creativity or something, but, I might be sexist and say that we’re more open to things.” She dislikes the current trends, such as cloudy New England IPAs, that don’t rely on traditional styles and are considered more masculine due to hop content. She has been able to make her own recipes at Highlands in their pilot brewing room.

These interviews can hardly be seen as fully encompassing each woman’s experience in their positions, and yet these were the sentiments most readily communicable by each to describe the culture of their workplace. Each woman decides how to play with the expectations of gender in order to fit into their special circumstances, and in the process creates unique networks and relationships.

## IN THE PUBLIC EYE

The networks that each woman builds within their workplace are defined separately during

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<sup>2</sup> A series of studies from Rutgers University, cited by Barclay, show that women do in fact have a higher number of taste receptors, which some food and beverage professionals have cited to explain women’s higher sensitivity to things like the bittering agents used in hoppy, more masculine-coded beverages.

the interview from the interactions they have with the public. While the people within each company are spoken of with respect and affection — being likened, in fact, by both Katie and Stephanie, to family — the public can be seen as the source of more anxiety surrounding their identities and their positions. This shouldn't be a shock, as the men that each woman works with likely becomes used to them and sees their intersectional identities, while outsiders likely only see their most visible traits.

Hannah speaks at length about this duality of perception. Within the company, she is extremely comfortable being out as a lesbian woman. That comfort extends outside of the company, which she says is partially due to the culture of the company. There are other out, queer people on staff, and she has felt insulated from any sort of backlash against her queerness because she knows she has the support of Ken and her staff. Furthermore, she finds it rare that outsiders would even be able to read her queerness. People who don't automatically assume she's queer might never make that connection, or "don't have the knowledge to pick up on that." Hannah's sexuality is, in some ways, a more dominant identity for her, and more actively performed, and yet she says that interactions that skip over that fact of her personhood not only happen, but are extremely common, especially when she's networking with individuals that she considers to be much more "conservative". She says that she feels a sort of "smugness" when she is interacting with someone that probably doesn't believe in marriage equality, but they are buying her product and paying her wage, then she "turn[s] around and donates to Planned Parenthood."

Hannah believes that people are more likely to be surprised that she's a young woman running the distillery than that she is queer. She tells me a story of a man calling right after New

Riff held their opening celebration, which included a short local news spot on television. The next morning, they had a voicemail. “‘I never expected to see a general manager of a distillery look like that.’ I was thinking that he was going to say something horribly homophobic, and then he was just like, ‘I thought they all had mustaches.’ (Laughs) He was just surprised I was a girl.” This disbelief that someone without a mustache could run a distillery might seem outlandishly specific, but the caller was using the code of masculine body traits to make sense of Hannah’s position in the company, and to communicate his confusion in a way that he likely thought was slightly humorous and therefore less offensive.

Hannah maintains a sense of humor about the call, and the other instances of the general public placing their expectations of women and distilleries on women in distilleries. In particular, she laughs about the media’s obsession with Marianne Barnes, master distiller at Castle and Key. “They haven’t even released anything yet. We love her, she’s a great person, but there’s this obsession with a mantle, with an image of a woman in a position of power.” While Hannah seems to be ok with the recognition of Marianne, she finds the media circus odd, as its clearly an attempt to focus on Marianne’s femininity instead of on the product she makes.

For Stephanie, the public eye holds a great deal more anxiety than it does for Hannah. “It’s a lot of science, and I think, being still really new with it, that’s the part that scares me. I hesitate talking about it, although I love this job, but I’m worried about people asking me questions and trying to confuse me or trick me or call me out on it.” Stephanie’s discomfort with her experience level means that being seen in public as a feminine voice for the company places a great deal of pressure on her. Though there is no doubt that Stephanie is very much in the learning stages of her position, only having been in it for two years, it’s also hard to imagine a man with two years

under their belt at a job saying that they were afraid people were trying to trick them or make them look stupid. Later she says that some people she knows have asked her, ““Batty, how did you get such a cool job when you know nothing.””

Hannah and the rest of the New Riff team apparently see those insecurities and are careful not to put Stephanie in a position where she would have to prove her competence. “They completely understand that I am not 100% comfortable being put in a situation where I would have to answer certain questions, but they know I’ll come around.” Hannah clearly made an exception when she connected me with Stephanie for an interview.

Stephanie is more comfortable relying on the narrative of the distillery, its products, its history and ethos, than talking about herself as a woman in this position. “I love my job, I can’t really believe I get to do this, so its more just talking about New Riff and people being really excited about it.” She’ll reluctantly admit that she’s “one of a lucky few women in a male dominated industry”, and that means that she knows she’ll eventually have to talk about it, but it seems that she would like to put it off.

When asked if her family thought her choice of professions odd, she replied “I’m one of three girls, and I always said I was like the boy that my dad never got because I was the tomboy, so I don’t think anyone ever questioned it.” This, of course, implies that the reason that no one questioned her choice was because she presented herself in tomboyish ways even as a child, instead of presenting herself in feminine ways. It leads us to wonder, if she had been a more traditional woman, would her parents have felt differently about her job?

Katie’s relationship with the public is slightly different from the other two subjects. She experienced the beer boom in Asheville as a teen, and part of the reason that she got into beer

was its prevalence in the community. “Realizing how much I loved downtown Asheville, it was kind of like, yeah, I want to be part of this community, part of this growing, thriving community, and beer was a big part of that.” That community has both grown and become more tightly knit. “Everybody knows everybody” in Asheville, especially in the brewing industry. “If you’re in this industry, you’re a pretty awesome person, so you might as well go and hang out with other people.” She feels that she’s been welcomed into both the beer industry and the wider Asheville community, often because of her work not in spite of it.

Still, she does experience interactions that single her out as a woman in the industry, and seems to roll her eyes at them. “I still think that when people see women in a brewery, they still think they’re in marketing or a bartender, but there’s not the shock there used to be. Like, ‘oh my god, how?’” The assumption that she is part of the marketing team is sometimes followed up with misidentifying her as one of the other women that brew in Asheville, even if they work at different breweries. She often gets mistaken for Hollie, who doesn’t live in Asheville anymore, and has had friends tell her that someone came into other breweries and ask if they were Katie. “They look nothing like me. That’s kind of sexist... no, there’s more than one woman back here.” There are, in fact, a great many women in brewing and distilling positions, not just in Asheville but around the South and the country. These interactions make up a small portion of Katie, Hannah and Stephanie’s experiences, and yet they reveal much about how the world conceptualizes women in these jobs.

## CONCLUSION

Women are, of course, not the only minority to be enormously under-represented in the craft beer and whiskey spaces. People of color, queer and gender non-conforming people, and even different economic classes are disregarded as consumers and creators of craft beverages. These perceptions effectively block a large portion of the country from interactions with the industries, which is frustrating both for those blocked from it and those trying to create more market share. Though outside of the specific scope of my project, focused as it is on Southern women makers, further research into the historical and contemporary presence of these groups in the industries is much needed, perhaps more urgently than research on women. I have, for example, only heard of one black woman who works with beer, and she is based in California. I've heard of a handful of Latina women, also based in California. There is a surprisingly strong showing of black brewers and black-owned breweries in Alabama, but outside of that state it is, again, colloquially rare. The various forms of media discussed here have not in a meaningful or targeted way explored the question of people of color in the industry like they have the question of women. This is likely because there are a good number of female beer and whiskey journalists, and far fewer people of color to point out, hey, we're here too.

And that, is essentially what this thesis is. It's a study of the ways in which women, from the de-regulation known as Prohibition to current brewers, have stood up and said, we're here too. In the introduction to *Brewing Ambition*, Anita Riley calls the profiles in her text "smoke

signals.” Hopefully this paper is slightly more substantial than smoke, and yet I know that many of the woman I’ve turned my eye toward would prefer to step back into the shadows. They’re content to simply exist, and be understood as existing, in these industries.

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