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### **Main Argument**

The piece of rhetoric being analyzed is the downfall of Hope Solo's soccer career and the discourse used to compare her to violent male athletes by utilizing specific artifacts such as the various media and news outlets that reported on Solo's story. Solo was effectively defeminized by media discourse when describing her physical features, with many sources claiming her body was similar to her male counterparts. By doing so, Solo is portrayed as a more masculine figure, therefore confirming the status quo that men are usually the perpetrators of domestic violence. Consequently, Solo's career is a significant discourse because the media attempted to use this discourse to foster an explanation for violence that not only maintained mainstream perceptions of domestic violence but also actively denied rhetorical progression in itself.

The argument of this article is that "Solo was simultaneously degendered, masculinized, and used as an example of a woman committing violence" in order to obscure and misdirect conversations about gendered violence especially within sports which is historically less progressive about gender (Chase 257). Additionally, the article highlights that in order to effectively create discourse that treats all violence seriously, there needs to be an emphasis on the gender of Solo, instead of the active refusal to feminize her character.

The overall goal of the article is to contribute to previous conversations and research on "the way our language and research needs to continually change to produce the most nuanced understandings of violence and create a less violent world" (Chase 244). In order to do so, Chase outlines their paper by touching upon domestic violence in professional sports with a specific focus on the NFL relating their theories back to Solo's rhetorical presence, ending with the direct correlation made between Hope Solo and the degendering of domestic violence.

## **Contribution to Rhetorical Theory**

The key terms used in the article were domestic violence and degendering. First, domestic violence is defined as violent or aggressive behavior in the home. The article warns readers from internally connecting domestic violence to spousal violence, as Solo's altercation involved her half-sister and nephew. Next, the term degendering is typically defined as the dissociation of discourse from gender itself, meaning that no word or phrase is coupled with an insinuation of gender. Within the article, Chase emphasizes the dangers of degendering discourse related to domestic violence because this may consequently halt societal progression.

The article strategically pulls textual evidence from media outlets which reported the downfall of Solo's career and focuses on how media outlets shape discourse around Solo with the language and words used to describe her. The comparison of Solo to other male athletes is also used to purposely prove the media's desperate attempt to assimilate Solo with her male counterparts. An example of this strategic pulling of data is within the piece Cathy Young wrote in *Time Magazine* which was used to prove that "traditional stereotypes both of female weakness and female innocence have led to double standards that often cause women's violence to be trivialized" (Young 252). Not only does this corroborate the article's argument, but allows for a professional viewpoint to prove the impact discourse can have on our societal landscape.

The author concludes that it's important to not take sports commentary at face value like previous articles may have and to extensively study the impact gendered language has on society as a whole. Within their argument, the author emphasizes the implications of gendered discourse on the victims of violence themselves explaining that ignoring important factors such as race, class, sex, and sexuality may silence victims.

## **Extending the Article**

Currently, social media has a huge effect on the landscape of societal discourse and therefore it may be classified as a new artifact that problematizes the description of the article's argument. Consequently, the article forgets to question this discourse, creating a major flaw because social media would allow this article to address the questions of the general public. Additionally, authors of professional articles typically voice a similar style of opinion due to the consistencies between their education which influences their thought prohibiting the article from voicing a multitude of diverse opinions.

The most frequent key term used within the article, degendering discourse, may also be used in cases of sexual harassment and assault as well which the article misses. Similarly to cases of domestic violence, there is a significant bias against men who experience sexual harassment and assault at the hands of women. Men are taught to stay silent within situations of violence with women in an attempt to not appear weak. There is also an attempt in media to degender discourse about women committing this violence and to masculinize these women to strip them of their femininity. Therefore, the argument of this article which attempts to prove that degendering communication about domestic violence perpetrated by women effectively devalues this violence, may also be used against women committing sexual violence as well.

Artifacts that represent this development of degendering discourse about sexual violence perpetrated by women include the television and movie industry. Within shows and movies, men are mocked who do not accept or desire a women's sexual advances and are portrayed as more feminine. This effectively devalues these experiences for men which is similar to the effects of masculine discourse about women who commit domestic violence. Consequently, a revelation can be made that the media attempts to push storylines of gender towards the hegemonic idea of traditional gender lines to devalue violence that is not perceived as mainstream.

## Works Cited

- Chase, Alexandria R. “‘Equal Opportunity Violence’: Hope Solo and the Rhetoric of Domestic Violence in Sports Media.” *Women’s studies in communication* 42.2 (2019): 241–262. Web. Accessed 24 Feb. 2022.
- Young, Cathy. “The Surprising Truth About Women and Violence,” *Time*, 25 June 2014, [time.com/2921491/hope-solo-women-violence/](http://time.com/2921491/hope-solo-women-violence/). Accessed 10 Oct. 2016.