I feel that I have suffered from the effects of marginalization since childhood. I also have always expressed myself in an artistic, unique way, but I did not discover my talents for photography or other arts until later in life. My mother placed me in a private born-again Christian school from seventh through tenth grade. The school was an institution with no room for questions, change or growth. Puritanical values and dress codes were strictly enforced. In a daily-required Bible class, I was taught patriarchal values, in which homosexuality is an abomination to God and something I would be punished for. This school also did not have art or music classes, which was a big disappointment.

The experience of going to such an inhibiting, judgmental school and being raised by a parent with such extreme puritanical views became an experience that has shaped my passions and values. Being in an environment where sex and sexuality is shamed, and where there is no sensitivity towards diversity or individuality, creates an oppressive dynamic that has a major impact on one’s life. Moreover, it has fueled my passions and motivated me to make art that is loaded, direct and deliberate.
I feel drawn to exploring gender dynamics and gender roles. I feel that society has split
gender and sexuality into two defined boxes, of male and female, when really they are
much more complex and fluid than those classifications. We live in a time where there
has been so much progress and change, yet at the same time none at all. As many
artists have projected throughout history, I feel responsible as an artist to articulate
areas of cultural concern. This includes having awareness in my work of how images may
play into, or challenge, cultural norms. In addition, as photography is a pastime
activity often attainable to the general public, when used as a fine art form, it also
becomes a more accessible means of visual expression.

Over the last year I have realized my path of becoming a photography teacher for either
a community college or university. I am leaning towards teaching at a community
college because I am much more drawn to the intimate environment, as well as the
diversity in age and life experience among the student population. When I attended
Greenfield Community College I felt that the faculty and students challenged me to
evolve and clarify my work, while at the same time I felt an abundance of support. This
is the type of environment I would like to create both within a classroom and through-
out a department that I hope to teach in.

Along with teaching, it is very important that I am able to exhibit my personal photo-
graphic work on an ongoing basis. I aspire to show my work in galleries and museums
and to be in a position where I can share with many people the complexities of the
topics that I portray in my photography. I would like to share with people, my thoughts
on gender and sexuality oppression. I feel that by exhibiting my work publicly, I will
be able to achieve the goal of presenting images that raise important questions that the
general public might choose to avoid. The combination of teaching photography and
creative forms of freedom of expression is how I see myself contributing to the
community at large that I have learned from.