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For one drop of blood

Virginity, sexual norms and medical processes in hymenoplasty consultations in the Netherlands

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Ayuandini, S. P. (2017). For one drop of blood: Virginity, sexual norms and medical processes in hymenoplasty consultations in the Netherlands.

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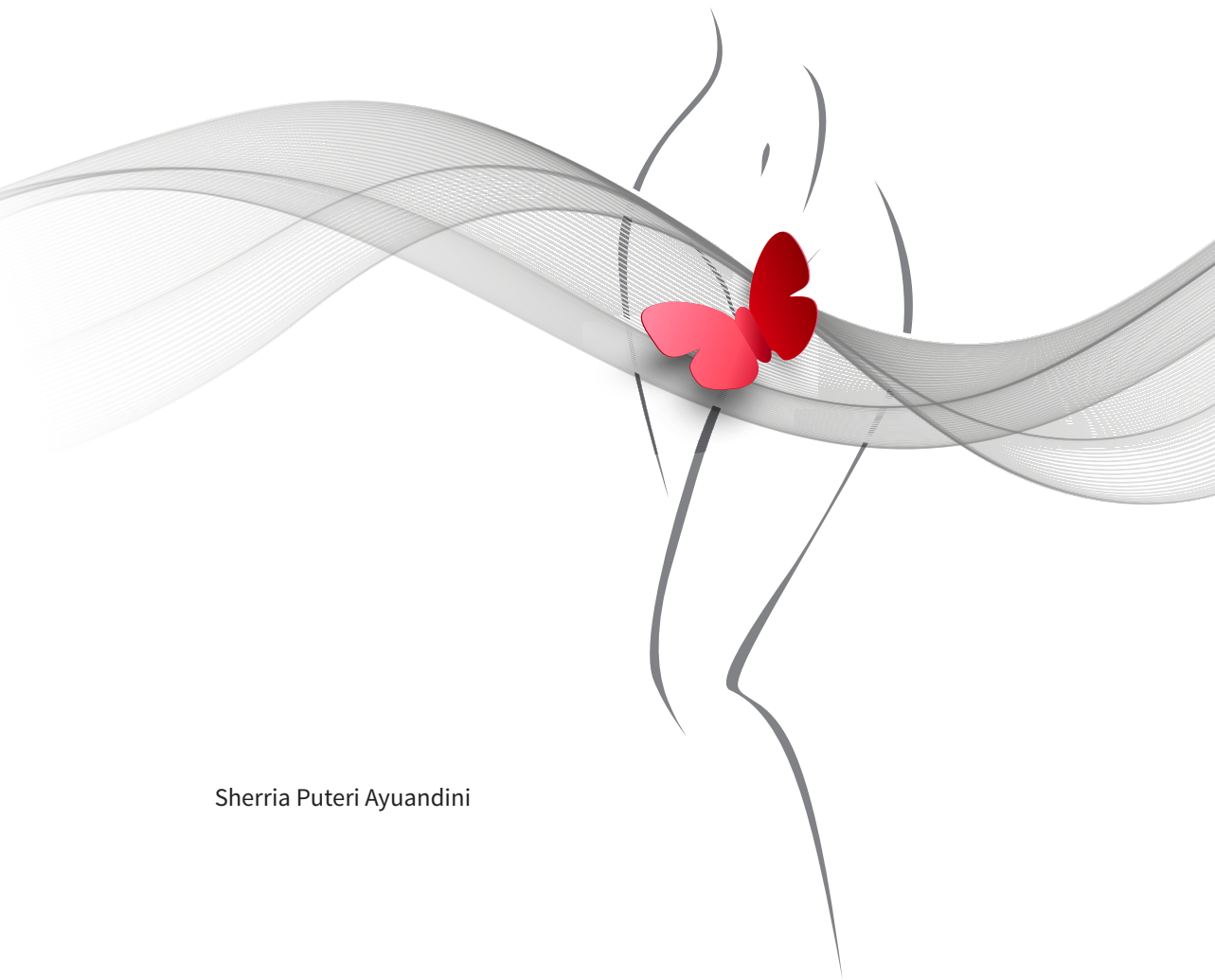
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For One Drop of Blood

**Virginity, sexual norms and medical processes
in hymenoplasty consultations in the Netherlands**



Sherria Puteri Ayuandini

For One Drop of Blood

**Virginity, sexual norms and medical processes
in hymenoplasty consultations in the Netherlands**

Sherria Puteri Ayuandini

to Iwan Tjitradjaja

He who laid eyes on an engineer and saw an anthropologist

For One Drop of Blood:
Virginity, sexual norms and medical processes
in hymenoplasty consultations in the Netherlands

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus
prof. dr. ir. K.I.J. Maex
ten overstaan van een door het College voor Promoties ingestelde commissie,

in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Agnietenkapel
op donderdag, 06 juli 2017, om 14.00 uur
door Sherria Puteri Ayuandini
geboren te Pekanbaru, Indonesia

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This thesis was prepared within the partnership between the University of Amsterdam and Washington University in St. Louis with the purpose of obtaining a joint doctorate degree. The thesis was prepared in the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences at the University of Amsterdam and in the Department of Anthropology at Washington University in St. Louis.

Dit proefschrift is tot stand gekomen binnen een samenwerkingsverband tussen de Universiteit van Amsterdam en de Washington University in St. Louis met als doel het behalen van een gezamenlijk doctoraat. Het proefschrift is voorbereid in de Faculteit der Maatschappij- en Gedragwetenschappen van de Universiteit van Amsterdam en de Department of Anthropology van Washington University in St. Louis.

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For One Drop of Blood:

Virginity, sexual norms and medical processes
in hymenoplasty consultations in the Netherlands

by

Sherria Ayuandini

A dissertation presented to The Graduate School of Washington University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

July 2017

St. Louis, Missouri

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have to first and foremost thank the team of doctors I worked with in the three medical establishments where I collected my data. Aspiring to the highest level of confidentiality, I sadly could not name them one by one. Even though some have indicated that they will be gladly identified in my dissertation, I have grown accustomed to adhere to the anonymity of my respondents. My priority is first and foremost the hymenoplasty patients I had the privilege to meet and share their stories. To provide added protection to these surgery-seeking women, I have deliberately blurred any possible identifying markers that might lead to personal identification. This practice I extended to doctors I talked to as well. I will be the first to say that I sincerely admire these physicians with whom I have worked closely. Throughout my years of observing their practices, I have witnessed first-hand their dedications to their patients and their passions in providing help to hymenoplasty-seeking women. These are medical professionals who genuinely care about the sociocultural aspects of their patients' lives and treat them as more than just another medical case. In my writings, I have at times been critical of their medical practices but never have I seen myself to have the right to judge their decisions or to say what is right or what is wrong. My gratitude is to them, not only for my unprecedented access to observe hymenoplasty consultations, but also for the privilege to still be their friend and colleague while maintaining my position as an analytical scholar.

I am also forever grateful to patients who have allowed me to be part of their private conversations with the doctors. I am in awe of their bravery and kindness to help me with my study. I was a stranger and they trusted me with one of their deepest and most important secrets. Their research consent is an honor to me and I only hope to

do them justice by writing up their story as best I could. To all my other research participants, my gratitude for allowing me into your life. What a wonderful story each of you have. To my research assistants, my unending gratitude for your companionship and your support for my study. Each of you is a brilliant scholar of your own right.

I am indebted to each of my advisors who have been tirelessly and enthusiastically supporting me throughout my PhD years. John Bowen is a miracle worker in my eyes. Almost nothing is impossible in his book and many doors have opened to me because of him, directly and indirectly. I am humbled to call John my mentor and hope that his brilliance has rubbed off on me somewhat. It is my privilege to have Jan Willem Duyvendak as my promotor but also my co-author. Jan Willem never ceases to make you feel that you have a thing or two of real ingenuity. Being a highly accomplished and leading scholar in his field, his amazement is nothing but encouraging and confidence boosting. Two things a PhD student like me often desperately needs. I thank Marguerite van den Berg for her many many times reading my drafts and for all the excellent insights she shared. My manuscript's quality is exponentially better because of her. Many thanks to Geoff Childs and Shanti Parikh for the ideas and thoughts they have shared with me throughout the year. I am deeply grateful to Brad Stoner. His support and feedback helped me to my first publication. I have benefited greatly from his inputs ever since. How he has always found the time to send me his comments to my manuscripts despite his busy schedules is my admiration and gratitude.

I thank the Wenner-Gren foundation, The National Science Foundation, Utrecht University, Universiteit van Amsterdam and the Anthropology Department of Washington University in St. Louis for supporting my dissertation research in one phase or another. I want to especially thank McDonnell Academy for the financial but also emotional and personal support I have received as a cohort. Jim Wertsch who never fails to believe in me, Mary Wertsch who has been a good friend especially through my toughest time, and Kristin Williams, Angie Rahaman, Carla Koberna, Henry Biggs, Teresa Sarai and Latonya Barnes who have always had my back and made me feel like a part of a family. To my fellow McDonnell scholars, I am proud to call myself one of you. To some, it was a friendship for life that we have built. I intend to keep it. Do not be surprised if one day I showed up on your doorsteps, expecting to be shown around your town. I have no shame.

To all the professors in the Anthropology Department of Washington University in St. Louis, my gratitude. The knowledge and friendship you have shared with me

throughout my years at the university are my privilege. You have given me voice and with it, many others. To the professors and colleagues at the Sociology and Anthropology Department at Universiteit van Amsterdam, thank you. I cherished every banter, every critic, every query as I grew with each of those.

To my post fieldwork group, Natashe Lemos Dekker, Carla Rodrigues, Tanja Ahlin, Lianne Cremers, Carola Tize, Silke Hoppe, Laura Vermeulen, Hunter Keys, and Eva Ver-nooij, it was my pleasure to be part of the group. Thank you for reading my drafts of draft and for your thoughtful feedback that only bettered my writing. To Lauren Marr, Katharina Rynkiewich, and Steven Ellis, thank you for helping with the English editing. To my Washington University fellow anthropologists, you are my heroes. I envy and admire each of you. Some of you I hold dearly in my heart. You know who you are, you geniuses, oddballs and misfits. Come visit me before I get too homesick.

To my family, my everything. I thank my Dad, Dasriel Noeha, for my endless curiosity and excitement for life, my Mom, Zailly Dasni, for my discipline and for teaching me that excellence is the norm not the exception, and my sister, Dewi Putri, for the belief that everything is magic. To Rivandra Royono, thank you for being my forever sunshine, to you, a million times always. To my youngest sister, Intan Saputra, who is without a doubt the better version of me, you are my role model. To Tezar Saputra, thank you for being the kindest human being I have ever met. To Aiden Saputra, I love you in three different languages and more. To my new family, the Kedems, you are all radiance.

Finally, to the person whose existence in my life is my endless enigma, Dor Kedem. I sincerely hope that good things do not come in finite amount in a person's life. Because I am pretty sure, I have used up my quota on you.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Hymenoplasty is a medical procedure done to alter the shape of the hymen membrane. Dutch women of predominantly Muslim migrant ancestry resort to the surgery to maintain the appearance of premarital virginity. This dissertation research studies hymenoplasty as a social phenomenon. It asks: how do the interconnecting issues of gender, religion and migration play out during interactions between doctors and Dutch patients of migrant ancestry in the medical and institutional context of hymenoplasty in the Netherlands? Findings were collected from 2012 and 2015 through participant observations of 70 hymenoplasty consultations in medical establishments in the Netherlands. These observations were complemented with interviews with hymenoplasty providers and patients as well as with people of similar ancestry with the surgery seeking women. Written as a collection of journal articles, this dissertation addresses the issue of variability of treatment, demedicalization of the 'broken' hymen, patients' rhetoric of religion, national identity as medical recommendations, and women empowerment as topics of analysis. By closely paying attention to exchanges between hymenoplasty seeking women and medical professionals, this study posits that patients' identity markers shape the course of interactions between them and the doctors. Ultimately, differences between doctors and patients, including gender, religion and migration history, are not only brought to light during hymenoplasty consultations in medical institution, but they are also specifically addressed and treated as integral aspects of both patients' motivation for the operation as well as the cornerstones of their problems which, when dealt with, will lead to the surgery seeking women's 'salvation'.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	I
DISSERTATION ABSTRACT	IV
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of Research and the Main Research Question of the Study	1
1.2 The Method and Process of Data Collection	3
1.3 Chosen Form of Writing and Objectives of Each Article	6
1.4 The Ever-Present Backdrop to the Study	8
1.5 Terms and Definitions	10
1.6 The Chapters of the Dissertation	12
The First Article: Variability of Hymenoplasty Recommendations	12
The Second Article: Religion and Hymenoplasty	14
The Third Article: Demedicalization of the ‘Broken’ Hymen	16
The Fourth Article: Enacting Dutchness in Hymenoplasty Consultations	18
The Fifth Article: Women Empowerment and Hymenoplasty	19
1.7 Bibliography	21
CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY	27
2.1 The Timeline of the Study	27
2.2 The Sites of the Study and Hymenoplasty Procedures at Each Site	28
The Hospital	28
The Clinic	30
Profiles of Physicians	32
2.3 Data Gathering Method	33
Participant Observation of Hymenoplasty Consultation	34
Follow-up Interviews with Patients	34
Interview with Providers of Hymenoplasty	36
In-depth interviews with women of patients’ age	37
In-depth interviews with women of patients’ mother generation	37
Interviews with Dutch young men of migrant background	38
2.4 Addressing Invisibility – A Word on Access	38
2.5 Data Analysis	41
2.6 Limitation of the Study	41
2.7 Protecting Privacy and Ensuring Confidentiality	42
2.8 Bibliography	44

CHAPTER III: VARIABILITY OF HYMENOPLASTY RECOMMENDATIONS	46
3.1 Article Title	46
3.2 Abstract	46
3.3 Introduction	47
3.4 Methodology	49
A hospital and a clinic: the sites of the study	49
Data collection	49
Data analysis	50
3.5 Findings	50
The procedural set-up of the consultation	50
A cultural motivation for the operation	51
Philosophy of the consulting doctors	52
The purpose of question and answer	52
Questions about bleeding after the first penetration	53
The aim of the gynecological examination	55
3.6 Discussion	57
Similar but fundamentally different	57
Addressing the financial gain	58
Study Limitations and Future Work	59
3.7 Conclusion	59
3.8 Bibliography	60
CHAPTER IV: RELIGION AND HYMENOPLASTY	65
4.1 Article Title	65
4.2 Abstract	65
4.3 Introduction	66
Islamic Jurisprudence on Hymenoplasty	68
4.4 Methodology	69
4.5 Findings	71
No Mention of Bleeding in the Qur’an	71
Blame it on Culture	73
Performing Virginit	75
Valuing Virginit, Seeing the Loss as a Mistake	75
Psychological Need for Hymenoplasty: Not to Purge One’s Sin	76
4.6 Discussion—Defending Religion	78
4.7 Conclusion	79
4.8 Bibliography	81

CHAPTER V: DEMEDICALIZATION OF THE ‘BROKEN’ HYMEN	85
5.1 Article Title	85
5.2 Abstract	85
5.3 Introduction	86
Medicalization and Demedicalization	86
The Role of Physicians in Demedicalization	88
5.4 The ‘Broken’ Hymen: A Medical Perspective in the Case of Hymenoplasty in the Netherlands	89
5.5 Methodology and the Context of the Study	90
5.6 Findings	91
Demystifying an ‘Intact’ Hymen	91
The Role of the Pelvic Muscles and the Absence of Bleeding	93
Cultural References and Cultural Solutions	94
Medicalizing to Demedicalize	96
Culturally Informed, Medically Manufactured	97
5.7 Discussion and Concluding Thoughts	98
5.8 Bibliography	100
CHAPTER VI: ENACTING DUTCHNESS IN HYMENOPLASTY CONSULTATION	106
6.1 Article Title	106
6.2 Abstract	106
6.3 Introduction	107
6.4 Methodology	110
6.5 Findings	111
Patients of Migrant Background	111
Hymenoplasty and Patients’ Ancestry	111
Incompatibility Between Being Dutch and Hymenoplasty	113
Always Connected to ‘Foreign’ Roots	115
Assumed Characteristics of Dutchness	117
Advising, Worrying, Praising	119
To be Modern	120
Empowering Patients through Consultations	122
Other People See Patients as Dutch	122
Responding to Dutchness	123
6.6 Conclusion: Being Dutch as the State of Flux	124
6.7 Bibliography	126

CHAPTER VII: WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND HYMENOPLASTY	131
7.1 Article Title	131
7.2 Abstract	131
7.3 Introduction	132
Empowerment as Process – A Brief Overview of Theories of Empowerment	133
7.4 Methodology	136
7.5 Findings	137
Compelled to Help	137
Educating Women of the Hymen and Virginity	138
Knowing Your Body	142
Men Do Not Know	145
Talk to the Man	147
Change the Expectation	150
Shaping Future Generation	151
Empowering Migrant Women	152
7.6 Discussion—Shaping the Women Subject	153
7.7 Conclusion	159
7.8 Bibliography	160
CHAPTER VIII: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	169
8.1 Identity Markers in an Institutional Context – Conclusions and Summaries of Articles	169
8.2 Looking Ahead – Possible Future Research	173
8.3 Extending the Scholarship – Final Thoughts	175
8.4 Bibliography	177
DISSERTATION SUMMARY	179
Variability of Hymenoplasty Recommendations	179
Religion and Hymenoplasty	180
Demedicalization of the ‘Broken Hymen’	180
Enacting Dutchness in Hymenoplasty Consultation	181
Women Empowerment and Hymenoplasty	182