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# Verbing History: A Textualist Approach to Gendered Politics in U.S. History Curriculum

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Verbing History: A Textualist Approach to  
Gendered Politics in U.S. history Curriculum

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction

by

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## Abstract

Using three curricular interventions from World War II, I employ an alternative rhetorical history to understand how social studies curriculum has become a space for the simultaneous deliberation of both national identity and gender politics. In working through the propaganda of Rosie the Riveter, the stories of the women of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and the experiences of gay men and women in the military during the war, I suggest that social studies curriculum normalizes and reifies gendered, racial, and queer citizenship in relationship to white, masculine, and heteronormative citizenship. It also utilizes epideictic rhetoric to rhetorically and historically construct problematic notions of citizenship as the curriculum creates and circulates collective memories about gender and the war. I conclude that the result is a national collective memory that is fragmented and that erases significant contributions of political actors that are not considered ideal. Beyond the masculinizing of both history and memory, I argue that history education curriculum generates double consciousness in marginalized groups through language that reinforces active citizenship as hypermasculine targeting “ideal” men and passive citizenship for women, men of color, and non-normative white men.

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## Chapter 1

### The Genesis of a Movement

“War is men’s business, not ladies’. ” -Gone With the Wind

#### Introduction

In September 1939, an unscheduled plane flew over the White House in Washington D. C. en route to the Capitol, violating secure airspace and alarming security officials. Tensions grew as the unidentified airplane began dropping “bombs” of antiwar leaflets on the White House grounds. When the plane eventually landed, Laura Ingalls, well known during this time for her stunt flying and landmark aviation from New York to Los Angeles in 1930, emerged from the plane and was subsequently arrested. The leaflets were meant to persuade Congress to block President Roosevelt’s proposal to sell arms to support the Allied Powers in their efforts against Hitler. While Ingalls joined Charles Lindbergh as a proponent for the America First Committee, an isolationist group in the U.S. Prior to World War II, she went so far as to partner with the German government to spread pro-Nazi messages throughout the United States.

Ingalls went to trial in 1941 and again in 1944 for her espionage. In 1941 she was tried for being an unregistered agent of the German government after diligently seeking out von Gienanth for contacts to “continue our work in this country” (Yellin, 2004, p. 333). In 1944, Ingalls was incarcerated for being a Nazi sympathizer. While on trial, she denounced the Allied invasion of Normandy and applauded the Nazis for “fight[ing] the common enemy. They fight for independence of Europe—independence from the Jews, Bravo!” But Ingalls was just one member of the Mothers’ Movement. It was called the Mother’s Movement because among its component groups were the National Legion of Mothers of America, the Mothers of Sons Forum, and the National Blue Star Mothers. The themes of the movement were hatred of Jews,

Communists, the British, black people, and the Roosevelts (Yellin, 2004, p. 337).

The contributions of the Mother's Movement helped to give rise to women's political activism through citizenship. Motherhood has historically been a feature of female citizenship because it was considered the duty of the mother to instill patriotism in her children. The Mother's Movement was significant not only because of the volume of women involved, but because of the ability of these white women to assemble publicly and mobilize other women, and also because of the women's explicit motivations (Jeansonne, 1999). The Mother's Movement also acts as a contradiction to destabilize meaning because it was a women's movement without feminism and an anti-war movement that wasn't peaceful (Jeansonne, 1999).

In this project I use examples like the Mother's Movement to illustrate the process by which the rhetoric and history of curriculum influence the displacement of women and gay men as agents in history and history education, particularly as the standardization movement has become the predominant marker of what constitutes knowledge in public schooling experiences. As William Pinar (2012) contends, "it is the symbolic character of curriculum that renders debates over the canon struggles over the American identity itself" (p. 188). I examine the structural and ideological elements within narratives representing women and gay men –the arguments, figures, and tropes – that infused and pervaded the political milieu of the 1940s. Thus, this dissertation seeks to understand and operationalize "constitutive rhetoric" that creates narratives that expose American identity as special (Charland, 1987).

Within this project I argue that the curriculum itself is a form of power because the historically limited access to schooling for many Americans has produced intellectual and social inequality. But I also suggest that the production of formalized curriculum circulates hidden assumptions about gender, race and class that are entrenched in institutional inequality.

Beginning in the 1980s, the standardization of social studies curricula has changed the goals of social studies (Ross, 2014). Instead of focusing on mechanisms that influence peoples' lives, standardization shifts focus to notions of a stable past that distract classroom conversations "about the past, and their place in the world" (Leahey, 2014, p. 57). Considering what ought to be taught in U.S.history courses provides opportunities to parse various curricular visions and different goals of social studies. Consequently, standardization has prompted the creation of curriculum maps to meet certain outcomes in social studies instruction.

I have selected a curricular pacing guide for a U.S.history course using standards created under the 2002 No Child Left Behind Act. Teachers from seventeen school districts in the southern United States deliberated and collaborated on the construction of this curriculum map (M. Sanders, personal communication, August 26, 2015). This particular curriculum map was selected for its robust pedagogical and historical content infused by history educators. It provides an opportunity to trace the formal curriculum informed by the state standards to the enacted curriculum because educators are demonstrating how they suggest implementing the state standards by adding objectives, a task analysis, essential vocabulary, and additional materials or resources. Ross, Mathison, and Vinson (2014) purport that the "central aim of curriculum work is to improve the practical effectiveness of the theories that teachers employ in creating the enacted curriculum" (p. 43). However, this objective can fall short when teachers are not attentive to the reasons for their curricular decision-making or simply enact curriculum made by another person or entity (Ross, Mathison, & Vinson, 2014). Teachers, then, act as gatekeepers for history classrooms especially since standardization limits opportunities for students to interact with historical evidence. This process may result in students perceiving "the world as it is artificially constructed in the curriculum, textbook, and test and not necessarily as it is" (Leahey,

2014, p. 62). Thus, traditional curricula materials develop a schism between what students learn about women and men in the past and what they experience in their own lives and relationships.

The texts selected for this study are within the genre of popular history. While historians and history educators focus on academic scholarship, the general public largely relies on obtaining historical knowledge outside of academia. Popular history is one avenue to construct historical knowledge where compelling narrative combines with historical scholarship to fill in gaps where formal history has glossed over important or interesting figures or moments (Beck, 2015). In searching for means to contextualize the fragmented master narratives in history education, I propose the use of well-crafted popular histories as an intervention to enrich and infuse a polysemic approach that places gender at the center of history curriculum.

The curricular interventions that will be used in this dissertation act to reframe a curriculum by articulating a conception of gender within U.S. history curriculum that demonstrates how the elevation of “great men” occludes the tremendous participation of women and gay men in American history. By providing an alternative rhetorical history using these curricular interventions, I will attempt to challenge and regenerate conceptions of historical significance within U.S. history curriculum. These interventions serve to enact a Deweyan notion of curriculum as experience that regenerates conceptions of gender, citizenship, and curriculum in the social studies discipline.

In order to bridge the gap between students’ life experiences and their experiences with history curriculum, this dissertation turns to the milieu of 1939-1945 to explore constructions of gender, gendered citizenship, and curriculum. World War II is a significant backdrop for the understanding of gender as a category of analysis in social studies curriculum because it anchors twentieth century modernism and marks significant political paradigm shifts for schooling,

citizenship, and conceptions of gender, race, and sexuality. American schools during and after World War II influenced conceptions of citizenship and citizenship education arguing that everyone has a narrative that useful for exploration. It makes sense then that World War II created significant cultural shifts surrounding gender, race, class, and sexuality at the same time that master narratives were forming for the era (Smith, 1997).

For the purposes of this dissertation, gender is conceived as multiple, intersectional, and performative. It is a constitutive element used to imply social relations among the sexes and a signifier of power. Echoing Judith Butler's (2004) articulation that gender is something we do, not something we are, I articulate gender as relational and signifying the importance of subjectivities to a gendered identity. Gender emerges then at the intersection of race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, and other identifying features. Gender is also multiple because women can only constitute a group within a political context of feminist struggle. Because *woman* is "not the naming of an essence," we must consider the specific "attributes of women's experiences" (Young, 1997). Therefore, in this project, I will attempt to properly identify the women throughout this paper by signifying the experiences of *white women*, *black women*, *working-class women*.

The aim of social studies and citizenship education has been contested since the birth of the discipline. Traditionally, curriculum has reinforced citizenship education as a loyalty to the status quo. This dissertation will attempt to broaden the view of citizenship from a monolithic view towards one that acknowledges multiple citizenships and the power differentials that exist within conception of citizenry.

Masculinity and whiteness have been normative features of citizenship discourse and nationalism in the United States. Citizenship has been the boundary to define membership and

oppression in communities. In the way that woman is defined in terms of man, the non-citizen is defined in relationship to the citizen. Recent scholarship has brought queer citizenship to the forefront connecting its features with nationalism.

Queer citizenship has a unique relationship between constructed identities (e.g., gender, race, and class) and nationalism. Jasbir Puar (2007) introduces homonationalism for understanding gay and lesbian subjects as an acceptable Other in a time when American nationalism supports “homophobic demonization of sexual others” (p. 10). Through exploring “sexual exceptionalism, queer as regulatory, and the ascendancy of whiteness—and their relations to the production of terrorist and citizen bodies,” Puar traces the “management of difference” that allows for queer subjects to receive membership in American culture by displaying the same “American ideals, habits, and goals as their heterosexual counterparts” (p. 46). That is to say, the acceptance and inclusion of gays and lesbians has become a qualifier for American exceptionalism and a measuring stick for sovereign power. In terms of citizenship, heteronormativity has been the ideal citizen while queerness has been on the outskirts. Thus, sexuality has become a part of the tapestry of the “good citizen” across other subjectivities like gender, race, and class.

For women, entrance into the public sphere would not come without many hardships and exclusions. Because citizenship is normatively gendered as a masculine enterprise confined to the rights granted to financially secure heterosexual white men, women have not been traditionally included within historically significant curriculum. As a result, women are displaced as agents with social power in history and history education, despite their intrinsic significance to U.S. history. When women *are* present, they are portrayed in stereotypical roles, which is problematic because it normalizes and socially reproduces political, economic, and social

inequities. Gay men are all together absent. In order to trace the influence of women as agents in history as well as the influence of women as agents in history on gender, I consider the following questions: *How do U.S.history curriculum maps interpret history? What are the rhetorical and historical exigencies that displace women and gay men as agents in history? Where can we create opportunities to rectify the displacement of women in history and history education to create space for critical discussion of gender in social studies education? What has to happen for such critical conversations to take place? What methods can help history educators do these things?*

Using three curricular interventions from World War II, I construct an alternative rhetorical history of gender during World War II to understand how social studies curriculum has become a space for the simultaneous deliberation of both national identity and gender politics. In working through the propaganda of Rosie the Riveter, the stories of the women of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and the experiences of gay men and lesbian women in the military during the war, I suggest that social studies curriculum normalizes and reifies gendered, racial, and queer citizenship in relationship to white, masculine, and heteronormative citizenship. It also rhetorically and historically constructs problematic notions of citizenship as the curriculum creates and circulates collective memories about gender and the war. I conclude that the result is a national collective memory that is fragmented and that erases significant contributions of political actors that are not considered “ideal. ” Examining these particular curricular interventions is pertinent to history education scholars because it complicates the legitimacy of status quo history standards and curriculum. The interventions wash over and parse out concepts of gender and citizenship to stimulate multiple notions of identity and memory through tracing the significant paradigm shift in American culture for what “nationalism,” “belonging,”



“citizenship,” and “normal” looked like for women and gay men in the 1940s.

My purpose in this dissertation is to center gender in the history of the United States as a rhetorical and theoretical resource for history education scholars to develop curricular tactics and ideology. In highlighting gender as a category of historical analysis as a strategy, I seek to underscore how women and gay men have shaped history and reframe collective identity. I argue that curriculum is a critical space for transformation from a master narrative to a gender equitable curriculum, especially in U.S.history. To do so, I examine interventions of World War II through the histories of Rosie the Riveter, the women of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and the experiences of gay men and women in the military, and provide an alternative rhetorical history of these extremely pertinent, yet understudied accounts of World War II. Through these accounts, women and gay men have overcome and taken action to expound tenets of active citizenship that move beyond conventional activity (i. e. , voting), to other modes of citizenship such as social movement citizenship, social change citizenship, and enterprise citizenship (Ross, 2014).

### **Why Gender? Gender as a Category of Historical Analysis**

Gender occupies an especially critical space in which to question and disentangle the means by which knowledge is constructed, since it calls into question the mode by which U.S.history curriculum normalizes and socially reproduces gendered roles and gendered citizenship. Citizenship can be defined as “participation in civic life;” however, it also enacts an identity (Roy, 2005, p. 6; Kymlicka & Norman, 1994). This dissertation builds on the work of Joan Wallach Scott (1986), who defines gender as “perceived differences between the sexes” and “a primary way of signifying power” (p. 1067). I suggest that the “perceived differences” to which Scott refers are more than just “differences between the sexes,” but, instead, how perceived gender differences are used to establish social, political, rhetorical, and economic

dominance of men in curriculum through the exclusion of women. Gender history is also different than women's history. Gender history rejects studying men as "neuter beings," which assumes that gender attributes, such as masculinity and sexuality, have no meaning (Cott, 2015, p. 2). Nancy Cott contends that "understanding of the past cannot be gained without paying attention to women and men as such, to systematic differentiation of womanhood and manhood, masculinity and femininity" (p. 1). Investigating gender attributes in history traces the changes of womanhood and manhood that reveal the constitutive elements of gender.

Consequently, gender, often takes on meanings that Scott did not intend (Weed & Butler, 2011). The use of gender has been most commonly and incorrectly used in two ways: as synonymous with sex and as interchangeable with women. When gender is used synonymously with sex it suggests that gendered differences are biologically determined rather than culturally and socially constructed. Simone de Beauvoir (1973) put it simply that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (p. 283), echoing what Judith Butler has articulated as "'being' female and 'being' a woman are two different sorts of being" (Butler, 1986, p. 35). As Butler famously intoned: gender is something we do, not something we are (Butler, 2004). Similarly, gender is often used to mean women, which, according to Scott (1986) "suggests that information about women is necessarily information about men" (p. 1056). Like Scott, I understand gender as a "social category imposed on a sexed body" (Scott, 1986, p. 1056). As such, the term gender becomes a series of representational symbols that project normative or ideal expectations, creating hierarchies with which to signify power (Scott, 1986). Until recently, even compelling feminist scholarship in history education failed to take into account the complexity of women's lives at the level of social temporality. Studies like those by Bair, William, and Fralinger (2008) focus on integrating women's history into U.S. history merely suggests including women into the

traditional male-dominated curriculum. This “add women and stir” model serves to be problematic because it does not resolve the Otherness of women or take into consideration the relationship between the experience of men and women (Harding, 1991).

In history, gender has been used as a rhetorical construct to uphold hierarchical structures privileging men. Gendered rhetorical devices position the ideal woman as beholding “a closed mouth (silence), a closed body (chastity), and an enclosed life (domestic confinement)” (Glenn, 2004, p. 1). Devices such as victimization, silence, space, and tokenism are particularly used to establish women’s citizenship.

Wartime intensifies ideological structures through modes such as propaganda, epideictic calls, and political mimesis that compound rigid gender identities. These rhetorical devices expose ways in which gender functions as a mechanism of political thought. Margaret Higonnet and Patrice Higonnet (1987) point out that war exposes gendered citizenship and “therefore necessarily redefines the relationship between the rhetoric of gender and the gender-specific assignment of tasks” (p. 41). They also point out that this process can create ruptures over time that “makes possible a new consciousness of gender discourse as a social construct” (p. 41). This transformation can be seen through women’s labor contributions during World War II that evolved into the women’s rights movement and civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

### **Expressions of Citizenship**

Citizenship is a particularly striking space in which to question the means by which gendered discourses are articulated, since it calls into question the modes by which discourses of power are fashioned. While some citizenship is directed towards building community, much of the impetus for active citizenship is directed towards the creation of rhetorical identification through exclusion (Glenn, 2004). Historically and rhetorically “the ‘citizen’ was defined and

therefore gained meaning through its contrast with the oppositional concept of the ‘non-citizen’ (the alien, the slave, the woman), who lacked standing because she or he did not have the qualities needed to exercise citizenship” (Glenn, 2004, p. 20). Language of citizenship helped build the ethos of women’s participation in the war effort while the actions of women as a category of people were traditionally politically obscured.

Citizenship, like gender, has been bifurcated in its social construction to create an Othered. As women are defined in relationship to men, so the non-citizen is defined in relationship to the citizen. The definition of citizenship is often in terms of how an individual interacts with the state in legal, civic, political, and social way (Newmann, Bertocci, & Landsness, 1996; Heilman, 2010). However, citizenship is a “slippery term” because it has been used to draw boundaries of membership to determine who is "entitled to respect, protection and rights” among community members and “those who are excluded and thus not entitled to recognition and rights” (Riley, 1992, p. 182; Glenn, 2004 p. 1). Those that have been the non-citizen have been relegated to the private sphere, where the focus has been on domestic life and mostly outside of historical exploration, while the ideal, masculinized citizens have been privileged as part of both spheres with the historical record focusing on life in the public sector.

The public and private sphere separation is a starting point for critiquing citizenship, membership, and exclusion. For example, prior to women’s suffrage, women were considered dependents and, as such, “their interests were assumed to be identical to those of their husbands” (Glenn, 2004). Because women were considered dependent, they had no need to vote. Thus, “American citizenship has been defined, by those who have it and therefore speak for all citizens” (Glenn, 2004, p. 24). Historically, this has been problematic because of citizenship’s exclusionary practices. Christian Kock and Lisa Villadsen (2012) argue that citizenship’s core

hinges on public deliberation as a unifying perspective. This unifying perspective centers maleness, white-ness, and straight-ness as nation-ness. It then becomes the responsibility of the oppressed group to bridge the gap between the actualities of their lives and the consciousness of the ideal (and oppressive) group (Lorde, 1980). Thus, citizenship is rhetorical. Rhetorical citizenship “embraces inquiries into social and institutional deliberative practices” as a means to parse “norms, and issues or access, scope, and strength of an individual or group discursive initiatives in the public realm” (Kock & Villadsen, 2012, p. 169).

American citizenship has been constructed and organized based on categories of gender, race, and sexuality, which have excluded different groups at different times. It is important to problematize whiteness as a feature of citizenship in American culture. Historically, marginalized groups such as the Irish, Jews, and Italians have assimilated into a culture of whiteness to receive membership and privileges because whiteness has been the normative citizen for obtaining legal rights. Because of the cultural assimilation of certain groups, policies have constructed a bifurcation of race into a black and white. Women of color, in particular, have been doubly excluded as gendered and racial subjects (Glenn, 2004). Therefore, masculinity and whiteness have been normative features of citizenship discourse and nationalism in the United States.

Gendered citizenship influenced male citizenship by asserting normative views linked to military service for men (Steward-Winter, 2007). Men were universally expected to be willing to enlist and fight for their country during World War II. This complex negotiation creates tension for gendered citizenship, which is appealing to the public with a mast of civic equality while at the same time reinforcing material inequalities. Thus, Glenn (2004) explains that citizenship is “essentially defined in opposition to womanhood...thus the notion of natural hierarchy was inherently locked into liberal notions of citizenship (p. 21). In doing so, citizenship devices are

defined through public standing and marked through the republican notion of citizenship that relies on a polity of public deliberation. Citizenship becomes rhetorical through this deliberative practice. Conflicts arise, however, when certain groups are not granted membership to participate in deliberative practices during times such as Jim Crow for minorities and suffrage for women.

While the consequences for men were distinct, gendered citizenship created a paradox for women's citizenship. "They [women] find they have to make both arguments at one and the same time; no sooner do women deny they are different from men because of their sex, and protest against their political and other exclusions, than they find themselves calling on the very difference (they are not the same as men, they have special needs) that they want to eliminate" (Stepan, 1998, p. 27). This double bind for women creates a means for exclusion because they have to conjure relevance and irrelevance of their sex difference concurrently. As a result, the stories of women and gay men become fragmented and framed in service of masculine or ideal history and citizenship.

### **Verbing History**

Social studies and its aims have been contested over time (Evans, 2004). In 1916, the *Report on Social Studies* released a definition of social studies articulating the importance of citizenship education (Jorgensen, 2014). Deweyan conceptions of citizenship education focus on curriculum as the vehicle for which "intellectual advancement as well as social change was to occur" (Jorgensen, 2014, p. 5). For example, populists in the last nineteenth century argued over what a "good citizen" looked like. The populists argued that a good citizen exhibited agency in mass movements that challenged positions of power while corporate leaders wanted to promote good citizenship as "loyalty to the status quo" (Kinchloe, 2001, p. 27). This latter version of citizenship has come to be the normalized perspective in history curriculum.

In the crosshairs of intellectual engagement and daily experience, this study positions itself in a quest to cultivate what John Dewey (1916) calls “enduring substance” (p. 208). He pushed for the importance of community-building and agency as an aesthetic of “the space in which we are denizens” recognizing that “our ordinary daily experiences cease to be things of the moment and gain enduring substance” (Dewey, 1916, p. 208). As a result, learning needs to be meaningful in the lives of all students.

As I connect the representations of women and gay men in U.S.history curriculum, I will consider the following arguments concerning the writings connecting the relationship between gender and citizenship. One set of activities will trace how the rhetorical and political representations of creating Rosie the Riveter(s) led to the reluctant acceptance of women in the workforce. After the federal government’s propaganda campaign used the fictitious character as a “role model” to recruit women to enter the work force during the war, it would project a temporary cultural norm as an “ideal women worker: loyal, efficient, patriotic, and pretty” (Yellin, 2004). In popularizing the “We Can Do It!” attitude of Rosie the Riveter, the women’s rights movement was publicized as an extension of the character’s inspiration. The media simultaneously promoted and denigrated women in the work force, which made it increasingly possible to paint women as “the capable, active woman who could manage a house, raise children, and work full-time” (Papachristou, 1976, p. 214), particularly after the emergence of the women’s rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s.

The second set of activities will trace women as political actors as they have participated in the construction of the atomic bomb in light of their marginalization, and segregation for some, in society. I argue that the secrecy of Oak Ridge was just as much to obscure the women performing the work as the work being done. The women that lived in Oak Ridge were able to

utilize skills for tasks that remained largely secretive, even to them. These women's stories note the centrality of their exclusion as active citizens, especially by the men and media that created fragmented and fictitious portrayals of their contributions.

The third set of activities will look at the decisions of gay men and lesbian women, how they utilized rhetorical strategies to cope with the homophobic policies, and regulations of the military and became the catalyst for a transformation in gay culture in America. Gay Americans used rhetorical choices regarding: 1) the use of patriotism to escape the confining roles left for them at home; 2) the attempt to establish communities of homosexual identification that utilized military bases as subcultures of the gay community.

Documenting the rhetorical and political contours of gendered citizenship and war rhetoric through a historical-critical textual analysis helps to build interest in history and history education as a locus for both ideological inquiry and political mobilization. Most importantly, in this project I use gendered rhetorical structures to describe how the language of war has deployed rhetorical forms that organize gendered citizenship to manipulate women and gay men's participation in war efforts. In using gendered rhetorical structures, women and gay men entered into more privileged positions of citizenry on the home front while also excluding their participation on the front lines (Goldstein, 2001). The use of these devices simultaneously empowered women to employ political mimesis to align themselves with more masculine and privileged tropes of citizenship after the war. Consequently, as GI's began to return home the government released propaganda undoing epideictic calls for women to enter the workforce by positioning women as dependents once again. Without the publication of narratives of women during World War II these political actors would have been completely erased from the historical discourse that yields to nationalistic features of *patriotism* and *exceptionalism*. In publishing



accounts that undergird the ideological structures of citizenship and war, these gendered discourses scrawl their stories out of silent spaces and into the collective memory, transforming attitudes and dispositions about essentialism, gendered roles, and collective consciousness for the better and the world. These stories demonstrate the complex and rhetorical insight of women who were recreating new spaces for themselves within their civic responsibilities within the state, against men, and between other women. Gendered rhetorical structures are a way of writing women and gay men as political actors into the history of national memory that frames the American consciousness.

Practical theories of teaching are attentive to curriculum and consciousness as a reflective space to consider the “language, manners, standards, beliefs, and values” that establish normativity through classroom experiences (Ross, 2014, p. 43). John Dewey (1916) asserts in *Democracy and Education* that “we rarely recognize the extent in which our conscious estimates what is worthwhile and what is not are due to standards of which we are not conscious at all” (p. 18). Wayne Ross argues that, “social studies teaching should not be reduced to an exercise in implementing a set of activities predefined by policymakers, textbook companies, or a high-stakes test” (2014, p. 42). History regenerates conceptions of citizenship and reflections of the collective conscious by focusing on critical examinations of taken-for-granted experiences of women and gay men.

## **Method**

Historical significance is intricately tied to historical understanding, marking the rhetorical space where feminist and historian scholars and state policymakers conflict over the purpose and perspectives that are illustrated in curricular representations. A rhetorical perspective in history offers a unique standpoint to represent significant aspects of history that

may not be filtered through alternative perspectives. This is, at least in part, due to what is considered evidence and accuracy (Turner, 1998). Peter Seixas (1997) points out that historical significance has traditionally and “implicitly” privileged “powerful white men and their decisions and activities” (p. 22). However, historians have begun to redefine notions of historical significance by including “activities of women, workers, the poor, and ethnic minorities” that have been historically obscured and excluded (Seixas, 1997, p. 22). The purpose of considering significance is to be able to “connect particular events and trends to others in a variety of ways” (Seixas, 2006, p. 2). Therefore, significance lies in the “interpretative frames and values of those who study it—ourselves” (Seixas, 1997, p. 22).

Social studies is considered to be the most severely divided when it comes to defining discipline aims for education. Linda Darling-Hammond and John Bransford (2007) acknowledge that “there are many competing definitions of social studies” and “these competing definitions of the subject matter have made it difficult for the field to develop a commonly embraced set of standards” (p. 209). Tony Blankley (2009) contends that patriotism and exceptionalism have been replaced by multicultural approaches that seek to include everyone at the expense of teaching our students to “grow into good citizens capable of sacrifice, when necessary, for the good of their country. ” (p. 169). He expresses concern that history curriculum that emphasizes multiculturalism or social justice “is largely unrecognizable to a patriot or an honest historian” (p. 162). This argument for patriotism and “good citizens” is problematic because it underscores the dichotomous and “common sense” framing that to include women, men of color, or gay men and women is the opposite of “true” history.

In melding together the histories of multiple representations of women and gay men within U.S.history curriculum as each navigates the simultaneous “common sense” and

complicated tropes of an “angry feminist” culture, this study highlights the importance of feminist historians and feminist scholars of history education in creating and circulating the rhetorical resources necessary to build and sustain gender as a category of historical analysis. As such, this dissertation draws heavily on curricular representations, popular histories, and cultural artifacts. It places the representation of women and gay men in the context in which they occurred in order to assess their contributions to the larger ideological structures of the times. In doing so, I examine the rhetorical and historical elements within American history curriculum—the standards, vocabulary, and resources—that are used to frame historical events in American history classrooms. Thus, this dissertation seeks to understand and operationalize a constitutive framework that James Jasinski (1998) articulates as focusing “attention on a relatively narrow sense of historical context, usually encourages critics to assess textual influence on the immediate audience, and attempts to assess the advocate’s attempt at solving a particular problem or exigence” (p. 73).

To understand how the “common sense” rhetoric of curriculum influenced by policymaker responses to revisions that would embrace gender as a category of historical analysis, it is imperative to understand the historiography that dictates the interpretation of history. This dissertation enacts a rhetorical-historical approach blending rhetorical criticism with rhetorical history in understanding the complicated nature of the use of gender as a category to reframe curriculum. Accordingly, Culpepper Clark and Raymie McKerrow (1998) emphasize rhetorical history as a body of rhetorical elements that rely on the interaction of “argument and narrative in the construction of history” (p. 44). Such relationships become rhetorical history “in a sense that recognizes the role of language in the construction of history, as well as in the sense that positions one to use history as an impetus to social change” (p. 44). Using an alternative

rhetorical history, I expose gender as a useful historiography.

Because of my commitment to the critical work that charts the history of ideas, this dissertation uses a textualist approach to tell the story of ideas surrounding representations of women and gay men, World War II, citizenship, and patriotism. I agree with Bruce Gronbeck (1998) who explains that “a particular context is both a way of looking and a mechanism for coherence” (p. 52). I suggest that the ideas and arguments articulated in representing women as political actors can only be understood within the complicated history from within which they emerged. Context is important because it organizes a series of past events in a way that can be “narrativized” into a previously fragmented story. Thus, the relationship between text and context form the make-up of this dissertation to help understand how and to what degree the role of women’s citizenship shifted and changed during and after World War II.

The central theme of this research is the lens of “Gender as a Category of Analysis,” which seeks to understand the ways in which gender acts as a category of analysis for curriculum and those that create curriculum to understand how gender functions as representational inventory particular to feminist scholars. This dissertation builds on the work of J. W. Scott, who defines gender as “perceived differences between the sexes” and “a primary way of signifying relations of power” (Scott, 1986, p. 1067). Consequently, gender as a category of historical analysis takes to task evidence of how roles for men and women are produced and maintained.

In her work on women’s oppression, Simone de Beauvoir suggests that the social construction of Woman is the prototypical Other since her existence “just as in America there is no Negro problem, but rather a white problem; just as anti-Semitism is not a Jewish problem; it is our problem; so the woman problem has always been a man problem” (p. 148). Feminists

adopted de Beauvoir's tactics and mobilized a rhetorical approach that justified the study of women as a category of people. The study of women disrupted dominant tactics of patriarchal supporters as it forged alliances with other.

### **What Ought to Be Taught?**

Tracing historical evidence is important to interpreting the past in ways that contextualize the socially constructed notions of gender and citizenship. Curricular materials, such as textbooks, pinpoint who is ultimately responsible for what gets taught in the classroom. Conservative influence typically favors a traditional approach that values both patriotism and American exceptionalism. Patriotism is often perceived as a "political virtue" that demonstrates a "love of one's country;" however, patriotism is "shallow" in that it only exists "at the level of mobilization" and is enacted "through crude manipulation" (Mare, 2007, p. 115). American exceptionalism supports the United States as more than a unique country, but as "superior when compared to other nations" (Edwards, 2011, p. 1). Conservative arguments for American exceptionalism distort views of the past that romanticize America because "the state of fantasy of exceptionalism justified Jim Crow, the Indian Removal Act, Operation Wetback, and Japanese internment camps" (Pease, 2009, p. 6-7). Perspectives that privilege patriotism and exceptionalism avoid conversations and allow the United States to act in a manner that truly seeks to solve global issues and instead skirt or stall issues without preventing or solving them in the long run (Edwards-Weiss, 2011, p. 4).

History is a creation of the historian, and the construction of spheres in the stories of history presuppose that men and women live in different spheres. Michelle Zimbalist Resaldo (1980) insists upon a shift away from a private/public sphere focus in history because "the dichotomies... teach that women must be understood not in terms of relationships-with other

women and with men- but of difference and apartness” (p. 409). In other words, history positions women in history in terms of their relationship to men or the sphere they are associate with.

Linda Kerber (1988) warns that the continued “language of separate spheres” creates coverture for the “reciprocity between gender and society” as well as “impose a static model on dynamic relationships (p. 35). To position women in the private sphere is to ignore her as a force in history.

Ignoring women and gay men falsify our understanding of the past. To question a term, a term like history, is to ask how it plays, what investments it bears, what goals it achieves, what alterations it undergoes. Mary Beard’s popular book *Woman as a Force in History* (1946) is perhaps most remembered for its fierce assertion that “all women made an active contribution in history” (Alberti, 2014, p. 7). Gerda Lerner (1979) pinpoints Beard’s thesis that “focusing on the concept of women as victim obscures the true history of women” (p. xxiii). Essentially, women occupy dual positions in society as “subordinate, yet central, victimized, yet active” (Lerner, 1979, p. xxiii. ). In order to recognize these complex positions, history must shift from facts to interpretation through the inquiry of multiple points of view.

And while the field of history education is revitalizing scholarship regarding representations of women, there is still more inquiry needed. This is especially evidenced since research has yet to deal with the relationship between U.S.history and the rhetorical history of multiple identities of women from the curriculum. I undertake this task of situating women and gay men as political actors within their contexts aware of the rhetorical and political constraints that result from language of citizenship and strategies of war rhetoric. Mardi Schmeichel (2014) and Sandra Schmidt (2012) have outlined a central focus of this kind of textual work, including attention to the intersecting relationship between gender, race, and ethnicity; status and its

relationship to class position; geographical sites of rhetorical production; rhetorical domains, genres, and modes of expression. In doing so, I understand that this approach must balance multiple interpretations, be reflective, and also reflexive towards the historical actors and the rhetorical and political constraints within which they were operating at the time. Additionally, I argue that adding gay men as a focus creates a particularly salient space to explore the construction of history, gender, citizenship, and nationalism.

Given the focus on gender, this study merges regenerative strategies of citizenship with feminist theory committed to intersectionality to examine the relationships and histories among subjectivities and oppressions involving gender, race and class. While this study recognizes the social construction of oppression and identity, it embraces the intersectionality of oppression because of the nuanced experiences within these subjectivities. Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2004) “we must conceptualize race and gender as interacting, interlocking structures and then consider how they are incorporated into and shaped by various social institutions” (p. 6). This intersectional approach provides space for scrutiny within identity symbols within the study.

It has become “common sense” to view the world in dualities: dominant/subordinate, good/bad, superior/inferior, male/female, black/white, or straight/gay. This silent agreement has become a marker of identity in a way that places individuals and groups within the power hierarchy of society. Audre Lorde (1980) argues that the silent acceptance of these constructs manifest “historical amnesia’ that ignores the oppressiveness of these “common sense” structures on the groups that become marked as subordinate or inferior. Lorde refers to the unmarked as a “mythical norm” (p. 856). The mythical norm in this sense is the idealized notion of personhood that cultivates power and inflicts oppression. Thus, the mythical norm delineates how oppression is shaped rhetorically and how oppression is conceived. For example, while this dissertation

specifically focuses on women and gay men, I recognize that the experiences of women are not the same across the tapestry of class, race, age, etc. I attempt to parse out these experiences of both men and women across the intersectionality of identity to counter the historical amnesia that Lorde problematizes.

Fortunately, new scholarship regarding the representation of women in history education has emerged highlighting the renewed public and political interest in U.S.history curriculum's purpose and perspectives. Margaret Crocco (2001, 2003) has been a pioneer in history education through acknowledging a lack of "feminist consciousness" in social studies, and therefore, laying a foundation for embracing scholarship that considers gender as a social construction in history education, and has provided many theoretical perspectives as well as on-the-ground interventions for teachers in such books as *Clio in the Classroom* with Carol Berkin and Barbara Winslow. Crocco (2000a, 2000b, 2002, 2004) and Christine Woysner (2002, 2003, 2004), in particular, have investigated women's place in social studies history as well as the influence of women's organizations in education to argue that women should be represented as political actors in ways that move beyond contributory history and towards infusing women in complex ways to demonstrate their political contributions. Jessica Shocker and Christine Woysner's "Cultural Parallax and Content Analysis: Images of Black Women in High School History Textbooks" (2015) provides a much needed interpretation of the representation of African American women in textbooks, which creates a need for research exploring interventions to challenge master narratives. Additionally, Mardi Schmeichel's work with the representations of women in social studies and Sandra Schmidt's work on the normalization of women in U.S.history demonstrates strategies to fully contextualize the portrayal of women in U.S.history standards as interventions of traditional curriculum could look like beyond the "add women and stir" approach that history



education curriculum still clings to (Harding, 1991). Pointing out the normalizing features of curriculum that portray women in ways to construct identity for her through her sexuality, role as a mother, or through gendered labor.

Positioning women and gay men in U.S. history curriculum in this way lacquers conceptions that these identity markers are essential and not socially constructed and reproduced. In fact, Kathryn Engebretson's (2014) analysis of gender in the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies standards provides insight into how the 2010 revision of the National Council of Social Studies standards are indicative of Tetreault's (1986) first phase of Feminist Phase Theory: male-dominated curriculum. Unfortunately, little attention is still paid to ameliorating these gender inequalities in scholarship and in practice, despite the heightened attention to women and gender from the women's right's movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

### **Précis of Chapters**

This dissertation offers curricular interventions using Norman Rockwell's depiction of *Rosie the Riveter*, Denise Kiernan's *Girls of Atomic City*, and Allan Berube's *Coming Out Under Fire* as interventions to U.S. history curriculum. In the writings and visuals of this study, each author seeks to portray the political actors as active citizens by providing historical interpretations that position them within a male-dominated history. In the process of representing these women and men as integral components of American history, they are perpetuating the fantasy of a temporary cultural ideal. They also articulate ideologies of nationalism that position multiple identities as having civic responsibility and agency that has been privileged only to white, heteronormative men in American history curriculum. These political actors also employ strategies that illustrate the importance of community, which underscores the strategies of their experiences that become part of the collective identity necessary for critical consciousness. In the

case of Rosie the Riveter(s), emphasis on women's empowerment is also connected to projected hope, albeit an unintended consequence of the federal government's propaganda strategy, which have the potential to motivate emerging feminists. Although, outright similarities exist across the writings and visuals, clear differences also exist with their strategy for active citizenship.

Chapter 2 examines representations of women and gay men as political actors, discusses the function of American history curriculum, and establishes a primer for teaching with gender in American history classrooms. This chapter traces narratives that define American history curriculum for gender as a category of historical analysis to showcase how women as historical agents served as pragmatic discourses for interrogation of multiple identities in a male-dominated curriculum. In doing so, I chart the language and representations of World War II in history and history education that have fundamentally shaped the American perception of individual and national identity. Across the country, history and history education scholars are employing feminism to help describe and analyze the relationship between stark structural inequalities and male-dominated curriculum.

Chapter 3 offers curriculum using the three curricular interventions as ways to verb history. Verbing history is the process of doing history rather than simply receiving history. The first curricular intervention examines the well-known character, *Rosie the Riveter*. The first curricular intervention analyzes and compares representations of this iconic figure by Norman Rockwell (1943) to Howard Miller's (1942) "We Can Do It!" to understand how Rosie reconstitutes female identity within the third wave of feminism. I contend that Rosie's identity acted as an unintended consequence of the federal government's propaganda initiative to recruit women for the workforce during World War II by inspiring a notion of active citizenship and agency under the ideology of nationalism that women had not experienced before. Norman

Rockwell's representation of Rosie the Riveter exhibits strategies of feminine masculinity, strength, and national sovereignty that construct a new identity for women in the public sphere. Her character emphasizes the importance of women's agency to support men at war and the feminization of certain occupations through rhetorical strategies that create Otherness.

The second curricular intervention uses Denise Kieren's (2013) *Women of Atomic City* to examine the significant and secretive contributions of women in the Manhattan Project. Denise Kiernan's strategies of representation begin with a centering of push and pull factors that attracted women to the war effort through interviews with women from Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Kieren provides narratives and anecdotes collected from interviews she conducted over a three-year time span. This analysis tackles issues of representing women through gendered citizenship, centered particularly on notions of secrecy as the federal government obscures the work of the women as well as the women themselves. It also highlights how the marginalization of women is replicated multiple ways through positioning women as "assistants" or excluding them in the development of the atom bombs altogether.

The third curricular intervention complicates "common sense" notions of supporting heteronormativity in American culture while repressing non-normative sexual proliferations, particularly in the military, using Allan Berube's (2010) *Coming Out Under Fire*. This intervention examines the intersection of gender, sexuality, masculinity, and class to clarify the politics of representation in *Coming Out Under Fire* in the context of the 1940s. It highlights homosexuality's emergence in the military during World War II, despite the homophobic regulations, policies and culture at the time. It also underscores the extent to which gay men and women were willing to fight for their country despite opposition from within the military institution that needed soldiers to fight in the war. The use of gender as a category of analysis

seeks to parse and contextualize features of queer citizenship and homonationalism as epideictic calls to undergird ideologies of patriotism and exceptionalism that condemn queerness (Puar, 2007). At the same time, membership is privileged for queer tourists with access to capital, such as consumerism, or, in the case of World War II, military service to protect the American people.

Chapter 4 examines the legacy of these historical actors and their gendered messages in the present. The celebration of women as active citizens in the narratives and visuals combine with their ordinary lives to create a phenomenon that truly parallels what Laurel Thatcher Ulrich (2007) meant when she remarked that “well behaved women seldom make history. ” The conclusion contends that restructuring history to position the experiences of the multiple identities of women alongside the multiple identities of men help to reconceptualize gender roles and roles of citizenship in ways that are important to overcoming a legacy of marginalization and oppression within the master narratives of a male-dominated society.

Finally, Chapter 5 suggests how my findings can be used for multiple purposes. By encouraging societal discourse, informing classroom practice, informing social studies education policy, and guiding future research into gender as a category of analysis in U.S.history curriculum. I will discuss how society will benefit from a more engaged discourse regarding gender and U.S.history curriculum, as well as how general classroom practice can be influenced and how a dialogue can be started regarding gender and U.S.history curricula.

## **Conclusion**

More scholarship is needed to understand how women and gay men as agents in history have been transformative actors for American history. Barbara Winslow (2013) argues that research on gender in social studies demonstrates that progress has been made over time, but also acknowledges the superficial and often misrepresented relationships between the sexes. I agree,

adding that it doesn't help that anti-feminist discourses permeate our culture and are embedded in several assumptions about feminism involving man-hating, radical lesbianism. Social production of these stereotypes makes feminism's voice discredited before it is ever heard (Schmeichel, 2015; Tomlinson, 2010).

In conclusion, writings and actions of women and gay men in American history are complex rhetorical resources that provide significant interpretive challenges for scholars. They are complicated because the approach is somewhat amorphous and malleable. I echo Kate Weigand (2013) in embracing the challenge because "the questions aren't settled. They need to be debated and it's only out of that rich argumentation and confrontation that you get new forms. You get a new synthesis that will lead you to something else" (p. 25). Understanding the historical relationship between representations of women and the history that obscures them might make bridging this divide an easier task.

## Chapter 2

### Representing and Reinforcing Gender through World War II History and Curriculum

“The white man who made the pencil also made the eraser. ” -Yoruba Proverb

The Texas State Board of Education’s assertion of what ought to be taught in social studies in 2015, as well as Oklahoma’s decision regarding AP courses, Arizona’s abstinence stickers for education, and Louisiana’s history standards adoption have all marked a milieu where conservative activists have been able to reframe the movement for traditional social studies in the face of the opportunity to reconsider the role of citizenship and gender in social studies education. State legislators, school officials, and conservative political interest groups have turned to rhetorical and political strategies to articulate how a lack of American Biblicism and exceptionalism are ruining citizenship and patriotism (Kock & Villadson, 2012; Smith, 2006). These officials have made the case for expanding state and federal control in dictating what is taught in U.S.history classrooms, especially as education has been shifting from No Child Left Behind to Race to the Top at the federal level (Anderson, 2007). As a result, history curriculum and subsequently, history textbooks, are being regenerated to reflect a nostalgic representation of a romanticized past.

Textbooks act as a fundamental resource for teaching American history. So much so that the textbook often shifts from being a material resource to becoming curriculum for many teachers. One major drawback to national history textbooks is that it is known for its insular approach to history (Lindaman & Ward, 2004). This insular approach mirrors curricular revisions instigated by state legislatures that conflate identities and experiences across space and time. Trenchant debates since 2012 on social media and in academic journals take to task the curricular changes made by conservative republicans that “help to reproduce raced, classed, and

gendered realities, which in turn are shaped within a confluence of spaces, including schools, homes, community centers, and popular media” (Brown & Au, 2014, p. 377). These revisions communicate a lack of value for difference.

I assert that social studies curriculum utilizes history as a synecdoche to represent the experiences of *some* as the experiences of *all*. This can be seen more explicitly within the U.S. history curriculum map. One standard asks students to “describe the United States’ mobilization for the war on the home front” (Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative, 2006). Underneath this standard, students are asked to consider the roles of women. The educators selected to extend the standard worked together to develop a task analysis, provide essential vocabulary, and suggest materials. Rosie the Riveter was the only example of including women, which is why the curriculum in Chapter 3 explores the iconic image as a cultural touchstone that is simultaneously a synecdoche and a polysemic based on how she was mobilized and utilized by oppositional publics.

World War II serves as a significant backdrop for understanding the significant cultural shifts surrounding gender, race, and class. These cultural shifts were occurring at the same time master narratives were framing conceptions of the era (p. 63; Smith, 1998). Dana Nelson (1998) exposes the privileging of white, masculine (and I would add heteronormative) citizenship as the marker for civic participation and national unity because “it worked symbolically and legally to bring men together in an abstract but increasingly functional community that divert their attention from differences between them” (p. 6). In other words, citizenship acts as a false identity to highlight or obfuscate certain political actors depending on time and place. As such, it is important to understand and trace the rhetorical situation of education reform, focusing

specifically on World War II, nationalism, citizenship, and gender, as a constitutive frame for the curricular present that has disembodied spaces in the names of universalism.

The rhetorical situation of World War II in history curriculum has only intensified in curricular representations as the federal government harnesses more control over education and the high stakes testing that informs historical significance at the state level. Writing about the prevailing opinions of policy makers, board of education members, and school officials in constructing content standard and curriculum pacing guides, Eric Foner (2010) argues that “judging from the updated social studies curriculum, conservatives want students to come away from...education with a favorable impression of: women who adhere to traditional gender roles, the Confederacy, some parts of the Constitution, capitalism, the military and religion” (para. 3). Conservatives have mobilized nationalistic rhetoric to discredit and destroy any revisionist attempts to incorporate women, gay men, and men of color in curriculum more proportionately (Richardson & Blades, 2006). State education officials have become a major force of disrupting any curricular revisions that stray from the current canon that privileges white, straight men as the predominant political agents in U.S.history (Richardson & Blades, 2006). In fact, the reformists have swung towards revisions that in fact occlude, exclude, and minimize these political actors and representations in U.S.history curriculum.

In this chapter, I am developing techniques to improve the history education curriculum via gender as a category of analysis in history. As a history teacher and teacher educator I have been exposed to multiple perspectives on how historical inquiry takes place. At this juncture what I am trying to accomplish isn't just replacing one history with another history or put alternative histories in competition with the dominant history, but to teach to expose gender by by acknowledging that more multiple conceptions exist and ultimately playing with and



exploring different ways individuals can “verb” history. In the present context of history education debates, no matter which history *wins* as being the *most* historically significant, we, as educators, still lose because demarcating winners and losers (we vs. they) is to miss the point of history. I argue that privileging either of these frameworks would be to miss the point of learning and understanding history in meaningful ways. We must begin with a foundational understanding of what we are trying to accomplish and have a frame with which to consider when tending to such goals. If curriculum is not transferrable it is highly unlikely to be at all useful for students to have a better understanding of content in any meaningful way. In this sense, the historical content is the least important part of the curriculum, but in the current development and practice of curriculum it is the *only* important piece.

I argue that the curriculum itself is a form of persuasion influenced by the standardization movement, which has hinged upon whether conservatives or liberals have controlled the frame and how closely it became associated with American exceptionalism. American history, as both a symbol and an ideological intervention, has been articulated by expressions of citizenship with varied meanings as the definitions of national inclusion and exclusion have expanded and contracted for different groups across time. As a result, citizenship, influenced by gender and homonationalism, has shaped the relationship between patriotism and belonging differently at different times in history, particularly in propaganda in popular media and educational settings. Especially within the leadership of the conservative right, the conversation has shifted to reflect a stripped down approach to education that emphasizes such ideographs as *success*, *achievement*, and *progress* in the service of masculinity and heteronormativity (Barton & Levstik, 2013). Consequently, I see American history curriculum as a natural extension of this “back-to-basics” strategy, and as part of a continuous strategy of interrogating history through school curriculum.

Using three curricular interventions from World War II, I employ an alternative rhetorical history to understand how social studies curriculum has become a space for the simultaneous deliberation of both national identity and gender politics. In working through the propaganda of Rosie the Riveter, the stories of the women of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and the experiences of gay men and women in the military during the war, I suggest that social studies curriculum normalizes and reifies gendered, racial, and queer citizenship in relationship to white, masculine, and heteronormative citizenship. It also utilizes epideictic rhetoric to rhetorically and historically construct problematic notions of citizenship as the curriculum creates and circulates collective memories about gender and the war. War rhetoric legitimized American exceptionalism to unify the nation as distinct and different from the Axis powers. By couching epideixis in war rhetoric through his Fireside chats, FDR was able to frame how the nation remembered World War I and positioned them to mobilize for World War II before Pearl Harbor had even occurred (Foster, 2012).

I conclude that the result is a national collective memory that is fragmented and erases significant contributions of political actors that are not considered ideal. Rhetorical history is no different in that it is a masculine enterprise used by men for men. Beyond the masculinizing of both history and memory, history education curriculum generates double consciousness in marginalized groups through language that reinforces active citizenship as hypermasculine targeting “ideal” men and passive citizenship for women, men of color, and non-normative white men. As a result, civic estrangement is reified and masked for non-normative citizens, such as women and gay men.

Examining these particular curricular interventions is pertinent to gender and history education scholars because it complicates the legitimacy of status quo history standards and

curriculum. The interventions wash over and parse out concepts of gender and citizenship to stimulate multiple notions of identity and memory through tracing the significant paradigm shift in American culture for what “belonging,” “citizenship,” and “normal” looked like for women in the 1940s. Domestic containment, as a mythical norm, enacts a particularly significant area of exploration for gendered citizenship, particularly during World War II. Conceptions of expanding roles as the everywoman entered the workforce permeate authoritative discourses regarding the war. However, Elaine Tyler May (1988) insists that the war promulgated “women’s tasks as homemakers, consumers, and mothers” just as much as expanding paid labor in the public sphere (p. 75). Despite the attention and promise of empowerment Rosie the Riveter carries, few women transitioned into jobs previously held just for men (May, 1988). Domestic containment idealizes motherhood. Media messages sternly pushed the “ultimate fulfillment of female sexuality” of motherhood at the beginning of World War II.

### **Gender in History**

History is important because it introduces the context for which sex has historically been used as symbolism in different societies and eras to question the permanence of identity markers over space and time. Scott (2011) argues that sex has been historicized as a foundation for social and cultural discourse. However, it has been the rejection of biological determinism that has led to queer theory. As Scott (2011) put it “gender was no longer seen as commentary on sex; instead, sex was understood as an effect of gender. Or to put in other terms, gender and sex were both cultural constructions, creating rather than reflecting a prior reality” (p. 8). By recognizing gender as a cultural construction, perspectives shifted in terms of recognizing norms of culture and society by shifting away from these legislative matters as natural and recognizing it as a producer of regulation. Still, many feminist historians failed to look at categories of “men” and

“women”. This implies that these roles were still viewed as fixed. Scott (2011) recognizes that women had a history, but it was “‘women’ outside history”. The implications of looking at history this way is that it reifies the biological assertion that feminist historians were trying to deconstruct.

Looking at the limits of cultural construction through causality parses the complexity of the cultural construction of gender. Citing Judith Butler and Jan Copjec, Scott articulates the elusiveness of gender and even more so the indeterminate meaning of cultural construction to explain such things as gender. The premise is to point out that meaning is fluid and to try to attribute meaning to gender, even as culturally constructed, is futile because it “cannot be reduced simply to exposures to implicit meaning or to interpretations of resistance or defense” (Scott, 2011, p.15). Psychoanalysis is particularly useful to discuss sexual difference, although psychoanalysis has never adopted the terminology specifically. Scott uses questions as sexed identities as useful. Where do I come from? What do these bodies mean? How are the differences between them to be explained?

Women are interpreted by what they are lacking and men are interpreted as a universal identity. Charland (1987) argues that constitutive narratives rely on “totalizing interpretations” to contain and control individuals’ actions to be consistent with the narrative being purported (p. 141). This constraint is important because subjects believe they are able to act freely while their actions are in fact barred by the constitutive narrative. The situation in World War II was particularly successful in utilizing constitutive rhetoric that has been mimicked in The War on Terror. In both situations, women were contained in the service of masculinity, obscuring and subordinating experiences outside the service of masculinity and heteronormativity.

At the level of argument, rhetors, such as Christian Kock and Lisa Villadsen (2012) embraced a new approach that highlights the subordination of women, men of color, and gay men through the use of rhetorical citizenship, which illustrates the relationship between citizenship and social capital in the United States. With notions of the militant citizen clearly in place, defining “citizenship” became the rhetorical mechanism to discipline and harness labor on the home front and military participation on the front lines. This system of exploitation was intrinsically linked to the development of the economy during World War II, but it was also driven by the patriarchal features of capitalism where interest convergence extended a hand to women and gay men compressing power stratification while at war. For example, Koch and Villadsen (2012) argue that “focusing on how citizens actually deliberate allows us to consider both macro and micro practices, but always with an eye to the significance for the individuals involved (p. 6). They discuss deliberation in both the public and private spheres as sites for constructing reasoning strategically where they outline the usefulness of using one’s own rhetorical agency to destabilize mechanisms of “power and influence,” while simultaneously acknowledging that disentangling such norms cannot be tackled so easily (p. 63). Unraveling the tendrils of multiple citizenships has helped feminist scholars reframe the ideologies of gender to emphasize political contexts that commonly situate women’s “contributions to the ‘public’ and ‘national’ good” as problematic and fragmented (Grayzel, 1999, p. 206).

Domestic containment was certainly a rhetorical feature particularly from the Great Depression through the Cold War to provide security and a sense of safety against the perceived danger of national security (May, 1988). Domestic containment idealizes motherhood. But this focus on feminine domesticity “ultimately fostered the very tendencies it was intended to diffuse: materialism, consumerism, and bureaucratic conformity” (p. 10-11). For example, women

planted Victory gardens, rationed food, and purchased war bonds in support of the war effort. Despite the attention and promise of empowerment Rosie the Riveter carries, few women transitioned into jobs previously held just for men (May, 1988). Media messages sternly pushed the “ultimate fulfillment of female sexuality” of motherhood at the beginning of World War II.

### **Gender Before, During, and After World War II**

Within the United States, entering World War II is portrayed as inevitable from the perspective of President Franklin D. Roosevelt even before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. After the fall of France in June 1940, Britain was operating alone against the Axis Powers in the Eastern hemisphere rallying Americans to become “the great arsenal of democracy” (Goodwin, 1994, p. 195). As FDR’s fireside chats permeated the consciousness of the country, rhetoric of evil provided a compelling strategy for unifying the nation and reframing the collective memory of World War I in preparation for war abroad. In hindsight, the strategies used to meld the collective consciousness had implications that lasted far beyond the war.

From the early days of The Great Depression, President Franklin Roosevelt used rhetorical strategies to unify the country through epideictic discourse. Epidexis acts as a salient rhetorical strategy because “it persuades on deliberate questions but without seeming to do so” (Bostdorff, 2011, p. 2). Epideictic discourse is able to establish unity through constitutive rhetoric by enacting collective values to explain and understand the meaning of events through praise and blame (Condit, 1985). The public developed “radio consciousness” through FDR’s fireside chats and the overall attentiveness radio broadcasters paid to the war. Orson Wells also tapped into this radio consciousness with his fictional and famous *War of the Worlds* broadcast (Carsaregola, 2009). “As war began for real, many Americans at home could experience it most

intimately through the magically disembodied voice of the radio” (Carsagola, 2009, p. 18). Never before had Americans felt so immediately connected to the war.

However, prior the America’s entry in the war, the 1930s and 1940s served as a time of great uncertainty for the American family. During the Great Depression, security came in the form of opening up the home to distinctly shift the roles of the family in two ways: “one with two breadwinners who shared tasks” and another “with spouses whose roles were sharply differentiated” (May, 1988, p. 38). Popular culture encouraged women to enter the work force during the economic crisis, especially targeting single women as strong and independent, leading many women to forego marriage as they had the ability to lead self-sustaining lives. However, the “tough and rugged career woman” was glamourized in a way that was a separate archetype than that of a wife (May, 1998, p. 42). As the familiar ideology continued to shift with the United States’ entry into World War II, so did the spaces that women could occupy. At the beginning of the war, women flooded the workforce “as a result of combined incentives of patriotism and good wages” (May, 1998, p. 59). However, despite the expanded roles for citizenship during World War II, the residual tropes of Rosie the Riveter did not revolutionize gender roles for women in the long term.

During World War II, women’s civic membership expanded, more so for white women than women of color, while still being subjugated within the spaces of the mythical norm. Honey (1984) argues that women acted as a symbol to articulate masculinity by being “the woman making it in a man’s world” (p. 215). As a result, the stigma of subjugation would act as a dominant discourse to reinforce rhetorical silence for women and their contributes in a post war America. Additionally, the inclusion of gay men and women as an acceptable Other was central to America’s mobilization in World War II. During this time, policies were constructed to enlist

more than sixteen million men in the war, while at the same time evolving policies restricting sexuality that would evolve from America's entry into the war to the war's end (D'Emilio, 1998). In other words, women and gay men became an acceptable Other in opposition of an enemy (i.e., the Nazis and the Axis Powers), but only in the service of American masculinity.

America's entry into the war seemed to "speed up the process" for young Americans to establish families, reversing the decline in marriage and reproduction of the 1930s. Second, the categorization of women increased divisiveness between "independent" women and "domestic" women. Women that chose marriage over a career during this time period were characterized as heroic, while women that juggled both a career and domesticity were demonized. Third, popular conceptions of gender roles during World War II portrayed expanding roles for women in society; however, while women's capabilities were represented through iconic cultural representations such as Rosie the Riveter and Wonder Woman, these expanded views of women did not actually extend to most characters in popular culture at the time. "One study found that although female characters were more likely to hold jobs in the 1940s than in the 1930s or 1950s, the stories of the war decade represented 'the strongest assault on feminine careerism'" (p. 62).

As gender and familial ideology transformed active citizenship into sites for patriotism, equality, and freedom, several moments defined the solidification of domestic containment and gendered citizenship in collective memory: The Great Depression (1929-1939), Pearl Harbor (1941), Japanese Internment in America (1942-1945), and the Dropping of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945). While historians have done these moments justice in recounting the events that transpired, these accounts highlight the role of domestic containment as well as the rhetorical strategies emerging from each moment to understand how American women and



gay men's participation in being a "good" citizen transformed America's participation in World War II.

The adult, white, heteronormative, and male-dominated space of the public sphere was transformed into a space for the feminine and shared breadwinning. Rosie the Riveter certainly provided a model for women to embody feminized labor as a gateway into the previously male-dominated workforce during the war. However, it would not be a permanent fixture for most women in a postwar society even though she also became the figure most associated with feminine masculinity as a permanent condition of gender universalized as the everywoman.

But even as conservative curricular revisionists use citizenship to connect with historical significance and symbolism in U.S. history, the particularity of women and gay men representation has been contextually central in the analysis of oppression emerging from feminist scholars. By the end of the war, domestic containment urged women back into the hearth and home by giving domestic tasks patriotic purpose and focusing on the needs of returning veterans to re-enter the workforce.

### **Gender in History Education**

Traditional curriculum still focuses on political and military history (Woyshner, 2012). Social education as an approach is meant to parse out traditional social studies to include social dimensions in history that women have historically filled. Woyshner (2012) notes that this approach was targeting the inclusion of women specifically and she would like to broaden it to women, girls, and gender. The findings from recent research indicate a need for attention to gender in social studies, both in terms of structural problems and curricular issues. There are few empirical studies that demonstrate a benefit of gender inclusion (Woyshner, 2012). No Child Left Behind is mentioned as a reason why a shift away from gender in social studies education

has occurred. Examples of curricular efforts are given such as the Zinn Educational Project and Women in World History Project, but both deal primarily with integrating women into the history that already exists (Woyshner, 2012). In terms of future directions, it is suggested that changes still need to be made in social studies textbooks and curricular materials, other social studies content areas (e.g., geography, economics, civics, etc.) need a more inclusive curriculum, as well as history, and professional organizations need to be adding gender issues in their activities.

The social sciences and humanities have seen tremendous changes in the academic discourse of gender and sexuality since the 1970s (Crocco, 2008). Despite these transformations, social studies has felt almost no impact from these disciplines. Crocco (2008) characterizes social studies in the 1970s and 1980s to explore why such transformations didn't make it to social studies. One reason is due to women already working in social studies before the women's movement in the 1970s and 1980s. While more men were in the classroom, women were gaining ground in leadership positions as president of the National Council of Social Studies, chairs of the College and Faculty Assembly, as well as working as editors of premier academic journals, such as *Theory and Research in Social Education* (Crocco, 2008). During this time textbooks saw the biggest change. Educators were concerned for gender-balancing school curriculum and this resulted in more women being included. However, there was still little research being done on gender (Crocco, 2008). Perhaps the biggest gap between social studies and other disciplines was the transition towards a new linguistic discourse used to discuss gender and sexuality. Social studies did not transition from sex to gender the way other disciplines have. Changing the use of language from sex to gender has illustrated a paradigm shift that social studies has missed.

Crocco posits several questions to get at the implications of social studies education's failure to

transition. “Does the change in nomenclature from sex to gender represent a reorientation with significance to the social studies mandate of citizenship education? If so, what has this shift meant for research regarding gender and sexuality in social studies” (Crocco, 2008, p.173)? [add transition sentence]

### **U.S. History Curriculum Map**

Curriculum itself is a form of persuasion influenced by the standardization movement, which has hinged upon whether conservatives or liberals have controlled the frame and how closely it became associated with American exceptionalism. Generally, curriculum follows a political perspective, explaining events chronologically based on political eras or presidential terms. Many view this approach as essential without considering other organizational options or without interrogating the curriculum politics inherent in such a schema. For example “the French, *au contraire*, avoid this political history in favor of a more social or economic history, one in which the history of ideas figures more prominently” (Lindaman & Ward, 2004). Additionally, Anglophone countries are more likely to inculcate a way of seeing the world (and history) through a single story (Lindaman & Ward, 2004). It becomes important, then, to consider the cultural and political elements that underlie any text, including curriculum.

One way curriculum follows a political perspective is through insulating the U.S. as a super power that is distinctly different and/or isolated from the rest of the world. Lindaman and Ward (2004) argue that Americans need to “examine the way our national texts approach the study of other nations” (p. xviii). Interestingly, when American history curriculum mentions other nations it is only in context of the U.S. foreign policy of U.S. interests. By positioning other nations and cultures in relationship to the U.S. is to sorely misinterpret cultural contexts as

the U.S. developed within a global context. Why not consider these intersecting roles in history content?

Consequently, curriculum is plagued with cultural misunderstandings. U.S. history curriculum eschews an inability to read cultural context and cues. Lindaman and Ward (2004) argue that to move beyond such biases and judgments and into understanding “we must honestly consider other perspectives” (p. xx). This understanding comes from learning to ask questions that move beyond a singular story. Some other ways that curriculum interprets history is through using extremist view that privileges certain groups while oppressing others (Dancer, 2014). In this way curriculum becomes bloated because it focuses largely on content knowledge, yet students do not know history. Oftentimes, what students do know is skewed. Yet, teachers do not know history either. However, what is taught is a matter of competing opinions. What if there were more options than just Howard Zinn or Lynne Cheney?

I chose the curriculum map used in this study for its unique components in an effort to provide insight into multiple levels of decision-making for formal curriculum, intended curriculum, and enacted curriculum. State curriculum offers a nuanced perspective that national standards miss. Based on the framework of this study to confront the American mythical norm, geography acts as a critical piece of that norm to influence how curriculum is constructed and delineated. For example, Hawaii and Washington have very progressive history standards, while other states like Arkansas and South Carolina perpetuate the imagined community narrative born out of the World War II era. While some state standards could ostensibly contradict the scrutiny of the standards in this study, it still exists as a fruitful area of exploration because the curriculum map was created by the state board of education, policy makers, and educators of the state. In fact, seventeen school districts participated in embedding the state standards in a curriculum map

that reflected their notions of how the curriculum should be taught, so it provides insights as to how teachers intended to bridge the gap from intended to enacted curriculum.

### **Nationalism**

Nationalism is conceived of in terms of its political purpose and can re-shape within the context of time and place. In U.S. history and the way it is taught, American exceptionalism (and patriotism and citizenship) serve as markers for nation-ness (Anderson, 2006). Lindsay Calhoun (2012) notes that this American exceptionalism paradox “stems from America’s celebration of its unique degree of diversity and its simultaneous tendency to (strive to) unite all Americans under one identity banner” (p. 7). Deborah Madson (1998) has suggested that American exceptionalism offers Americans a “mythological refuge from the chaos of history and the uncertainty of life” in favor of a romantic nostalgia for a mythical norm contrived by historical amnesia (p. 166). Jason Edwards (2011) extends Madson’s critique of American exceptionalism by terming its rhetorical voice in history an “ideological straightjacket” that deems America’s founding documents as “sacrosanct” and therefore unquestionable (p. 52). The projection of American exceptionalism as a telos for American history curriculum has been felt mostly among students with subjective identities that have been constitutively Othered by those in positions of power that are able to determine historical significance in curriculum.

World War II is crucial to current conceptions of nationalism because all revolutions since the war’s end have defined itself in terms of the imagined community of nationalism. In this way, nationalism is not a political ideology, but rather acts to mobilize ideological attachments. While Benedict Anderson (2006) contends that nationalism functions as an imagined community enacted to manifest fraternal bonds among strangers (i. e. , soldiers that are willing to die for citizens they have never met), some historians contend nationalism enacts a

more complex dynamic. For example, Claudio Lomnitz (2000) argues that the imagined communities of nationalism “systematically distinguishes full citizens from part citizens or strong citizens from weak ones in what he calls ‘bonds of dependence’” (p. 337). Therefore, nationalism cultivates fraternity while simultaneously calling for separateness through sacrifice, domestic containment, and private/public spheres.

Nationalism still foregrounds American history curriculum today. The curriculum map selected to inform this study is no exception. An enduring understanding of the curriculum map regarding World War II states, “the international community’s failure to respond to acts of aggression led to World War II” (Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative, 2006). This attempt at an enduring understanding fails to mention in it, or in any subsequent standards, that the international community, including the United States actively participated in the build-up to World War II through a series of neutrality acts that facilitated Hitler’s occupation of surrounding European countries and allowed for the Axis Powers to gain momentum leading to World War II. It also ignores the privilege of the United States’ geography that allowed for isolationism for much of the war. Using the language of “failure” implies an absence of action that does not service America and the larger global community’s complicit behavior to facilitate the aggressiveness leading to World War II.

It makes sense then that the posture of these nationalistic terms (and those wielding it) not only alienate many students in public schools, but normalize the rhetorical features that the curriculum embeds in the collective conscious through mythologizing a fragmented historical memory. Through the use of the jeremiad as a paradigmatic structure of American exceptionalism, curriculum is able to frame history by employing strategies to instill fear and agency in nationalistic terms. Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (2006) demonstrate

how use of the jeremiad as a feature of collective memory gives the illusion of cohesion through history because “[n]ationalist memory describes a geography of belonging, and identity forged into a specified landscape, inseparable from it” (p. 269). These features point to the legacies of citizenship in modern America, highlighting the stratification of power and inequality by white agents of the state, and protesting the exclusion of women, gay men, and men of color, in U.S.history curriculum (Ross, 2014).

### **American Exceptionalism**

The ideological influence of American exceptionalism messaging has been drawn from its explanatory power in tracing the origins and development of citizenship and patriotism in America. This is particularly true as feminist historians have used citizenship as a vehicle for tracing the history of oppression for marginalized groups in the U.S. to help build a coherent collective memory in an effort to raise the historical consciousness about gender and citizenship (Scott, 1999).

Within this context, the rhetorical posture of American exceptionalism’s is more comprehensible since it is a logical extension of earlier iterations of patriotism, privilege, and power. And, as historians have used U.S.history curriculum to craft their messages about collective identity and memory in the United States, they have also pointed to the features of patriotism that stem from ideas about the value of citizenship and exceptionalism. Gender scholars have looked to the entire history of the United States as a rhetorical resource for investigating the power of citizenship and found continuity in the oppression and containment of women and gay men throughout the nation’s history.

## Citizenship and Citizenship Education

Fundamentally, citizenship expands and contracts in ways that history curriculum does not recognize. The writing of social studies curriculum since the 1980s has highlighted American exceptionalism, patriotism, and the public sphere as features of citizenship in America and created new rhetorical modes that express and prioritize progress, achievement, freedom, and equality in important and contradictory ways. In this way citizenship is a constitutive rhetoric. The language of rhetorical strategies within curriculum writing of U.S. history, especially transcendent in representations of the 1940s, highlight tensions between the representations of citizenship in curriculum and the curricular aim of citizenship education that shape students' thinking surrounding ideological orientations about civic life and political participation. Representations of citizenship in curriculum demonstrate contradictions of national unity (conservative republican ideology) and cultural pluralism (political liberalism ideology) through an elusive expansion of roles for citizenship (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). Adrien Oldfield (1998) describes this tension as "exclusive membership" within the civic republican ideology and emphasizes the use of "expressions of political membership," particularly during times of crisis or war (p. 81). It is important for curriculum and the educators enacting it to recognize and communicate the contortions of civic participation across space, time, and identity. While formal curriculum articulates citizenship in universalistic and even vague ways, the enacted curriculum follows a different path.

The ways in which citizenship education is enacted in classrooms is often very confining. Kathleen Abowitz and Jason Harnish (2006) explain, "texts in this discourse, stressing the importance of conserving and maintaining U.S. democratic ideals and traditions, emphasize the importance of learning facts and information about democracy's history and institutions" (p.



659). They go on to say, “such civic knowledge, in civic republican discourse, focuses on American history, institutions, and pivotal texts (the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, etc. ), reserving a far smaller place for more humanistic, international, and critical content and pedagogy” (p. 659). Thus, nationalistic rhetorical strategies in curriculum writing have been tied intrinsically to issues of citizenship and group identity as American women, gay men, and men of color, marginalized by public culture and denied access to the political sphere, looked for spaces from which to forge individual and group identities.

Within the political milieu, the language of citizenship surrounding World War II crystallized the participation of women, gay men, and men of color as political actors to create salient rhetorical resources for foreign relations highlighting systems of inequality, ostracism, and sacrifice. This globalized the audience of America’s power structures after World War II, which anchored the United States as a global hegemon (Everett & Charlton, 2014). As a result, nationalism became a large part of the conversation in the second half of the twentieth century as postwar conservatives pushed back against the progressive education agenda. Conservative revisionists often took the most aggressive nationalistic stance in the rhetorical posturing of social studies curriculum, especially in the portrayal of World War II, as a means to “represent their educational program as a critical security measure” (Giordano, 2004, p. 242). This would become a permanent fixture in social studies curriculum and history classrooms.

As national security became the dominant political rationale of social studies curriculum, several educational changes were set forth to mold dutiful citizens and distinguish the United States as exceptional. Gerard Giordano (2004) adds that conservative educators encouraged scholastic nationalism that emphasized teachers as “preparers of patriotism” to help students become “loyal soldiers” (p. 173). Because nationalism is at the center of what it means to be an

active or “good” citizen, history curriculum representing World War II centers American exceptionalism, patriotism, and gendered citizenship to demonstrate how citizenship and nationalism functioned together to unify the United States, both through armed and domestic service, to “win” World War II. <sup>1</sup> Conversely, many liberals found “displeasure at the rapid growth of scholastic nationalism” (Giordano, 2004, p. 202). Some consequences of this political discourse were “curricular bans against the languages of the foreign countries with which America was at war” (p. 239). These patterns set a precedent of exceptionalism for decades to come.

I argue that framing of citizenship around *sameness* casts a shadow of the dominant group to encompass citizenship that does not take into account the systematic differences between groups. The rhetorical and legal platform stemming from institutional inequality had drastic repercussions for women, gay men, and men of color throughout the United States, particularly during World War II. Nakano Glenn (2004) explains that citizenship was defined through the opposition of a “noncitizen” (p. 20). She writes that “the autonomy and freedom of the citizens were made possible by labor (often involuntary) of non-autonomous wives...children, servants, and employees” (p. 20). To plant and perpetuate the canonical collective memory, tropes of the “good” citizen constrained the voices of women, men of color, and gay men as political actors. Glenn explains this dichotomy is created through the division and opposition of the private and public sphere, whereas “the public is the realm of citizenship, rights, and generality, while sexuality, feeling, and specificity—and women—are relegated to the private,” p. 21) She continues, “After World War II, liberal politics emphasized equality under the law and an assumption of sameness in daily encounters. ” However, this rhetoric cannot

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<sup>1</sup> The U. S. did not “win” WWII and Russia lost many more soldiers and invested a lot more in the war than America did (Tharoor, 2015).

counter the normalized and embedded features of American life actually entrenched in inequality.

It is possible to see how conservative republican activists saw an opportunity for avant-garde citizenship education, given its historical position within the American patriotism myth that “enshrine” individual liberty and collective unity simultaneously (Smith, 2006, p. 125).

Sonya Rose (2003) cogently describes the shift in masculine citizenry and the way in which it circumscribed women and gay men. She writes that

very early in World War II the virtues of a domestic, conservative, and middle-class nation were those that came to define manhood and ‘good citizenship’ as well. In World War II, the virility of the ‘good citizen’, and masculinity itself, were tempered...If both national identity and masculinity are constructed in opposition to an ‘other’, there was no more ‘hyper-masculine’ than the Nazis against whom to fashion nationhood and masculinity (p. 153).

In other words, women and gay men became an acceptable Other in opposition of an enemy (i.e., the Nazis and the Axis Powers), but only in the service of American masculinity. The aesthetics of feminine masculinity within citizenship catapulted women and gay men into popular culture and media attention through representations predominately influenced and created by propaganda used to mold the new shape of membership for the previously precluded groups in the American identity.

**Domestic containment.** Family as a metaphor became a space to frame citizenship during World War II, as well as in current curriculum of citizenship in social studies, where it was connected to participation in the war effort, as the active citizen broadened its belonging to include domesticity. In the words of Elaine Taylor May (1998), “the war underscored women’s tasks as homemakers, consumers, and mothers just as powerfully as it expanded their paid jobs” (p. 75). The “Northwest Arkansas Instructional Alignment of U.S. history” (2009) curriculum map characterizes how gender containment is reflected in curriculum as symbolic representations

of gender as background for the United States' mobilization in the war, particularly on the home front. For example, a student learning expectation outlines a goal for students to “describe the United States' mobilization for war on the home front” through looking at the “roles of women” (p. 17). This content was created in the curriculum standards by the state. Educators expanded the learning aims to include tasks, vocabulary and resources. A single vocabulary term and resource recommendation was added pertaining to women: Rosie the Riveter. Rosie the Riveter acted as a symbol for women's citizenship during World War II that nested gender within masculine expressions of citizenship through propaganda disseminated by the federal government.

In charting the complicated and shifting relationship between passive and dominant citizenship, it is clear that masculine proclamations about feminine deviance have had the effect of forcing women and gay men to draw on gendered and queer experiences through strategies that necessarily reference the “secondary and separate status” that gender containment confined them to (Zieger, 1999, p. 142). But these civic actors also used political critique, historical evidence, anecdote, personalization, mimesis, and invective (among other strategies) to problematize the very limited commitment of state and federal officials to civic participation for all members of society as soldiers returned home after World War II. Certainly the Cold War era magnified domesticity as a citizenship frame, so that the lenses that characterized women and gay men's role were still quite stable and exclusionary by the time Reagan was inaugurated, using the demonization of the teachers and public education in *A Nation at Risk* to ignite the standardization movement that became part of his legacy. Still, the accounts of these non-normative citizens showcase the new conversations about repression and liberation that emerged in the domestic containment of World War II as well as the strategies that authors of artifacts that

can be accessed by the masses (i.e., visual artifacts and popular histories) utilized to bridge new audiences and activists even now.

### **Conclusion**

It makes sense then that the posture of these nationalistic terms (and those wielding it) not only alienate many students in public schools, but normalize the rhetorical features that the curriculum embeds in the collective conscious through mythologizing a fragmented historical memory. Through the use of the jeremiad as a paradigmatic structure of American exceptionalism, curriculum is able to frame history by employing strategies to instill fear and agency in nationalistic terms. Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (2006) demonstrate how use of the jeremiad as a feature of collective memory gives the illusion of cohesion through history because “[n]ationalist memory describes a geography of belonging, and identity forged into a specified landscape, inseparable from it” (p. 269). These features point to the legacies of citizenship in modern America, highlighting the stratification of power and inequality by white agents of the state, and protesting the exclusion of women, gay men, and men of color, in U.S. history curriculum (Ross, 2014).

The following chapter examines how visual artifacts and popular histories articulated war and domestic and gender ideology in their accounts to understand the multiple ways that the women and gay men appeared in this new period of active citizenship for Othered groups. What emerges from these chapters is an account that showcases how the successes and failures of citizenship as this rhetorical frame pivoted upon who controlled and crafted the meaning of the term, the portraits of the agents in history, and the assessment of U.S. history curriculum goals. Because women and gay men’s slogans and ideology were articulated by mothers and formerly occluded actors, particularly as the military and business industry targeted their civic and

domestic participation, gender containment took up the relationship between identity construction and citizenship as a place to excavate new arenas for the struggle for active citizenship participation, particularly in the accounts of women and gay men.

## Chapter 3

### Verbing History

“We spend most of our lives conjugating three verbs: to want, to have, and to do. ”

–Evelyn Underhill

### Introduction

Verbing a word is the process of making a noun actionable. Doing so changes the word from one of simply being to a word of doing. It also creates new words out of old ones. In history classrooms across the United States, students aren't *doing* history. Instead, they are memorizing a series of names, dates, and facts without really considering what all of those pieces of information mean or questioning why these bits of information are the ones being poured into their heads.

But it is not just students who are not contemplating what is being taught in their classroom; this is a dilemma for teachers as well. Teacher education research tells us that teachers teach the way they were taught in school, which perpetuates teaching for “facts” frameworks (Bodur, 2003). In the field of history education research, prominent scholars have widely-read books, articles, and curriculum modeling how students can think, read, and write like historians in the classroom. This is a considered the “better” way of teaching by having students take on the role of the historian when looking at historical evidence. However, I argue this is a missed opportunity.

More than seventy-five years have passed since World War II, yet the nationalistic features from this era have been maintained and reified since then as can be seen in the rhetoric of the Cold War Era, as well as the War on Terror since 9/11. The language used to talk about nationalism and citizenship has been structured around notions of difference, like gender,

and wartime is a useful time period to see how roles for men and women expand and contract. What did these changes mean for women and gay men in the United States during World War II? A focus on gender and World War II will serve as a prism to gain insights into some of the characteristics of the American gender systems and into the options and obligations assigned based on gender.

### **Verbing History**

People resist making changes unless they become dissatisfied with the status quo and find plausible alternatives that appear meaningful for further investigation. Conceptual change is a cognitive-affective process a learner engages in when attempting to process new ideas into a schema (Dole & Sinatra, 1988; Gregoire, 2003; Posner, 1982). Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog (1982) developed conditions for conceptual change that require: 1) a dissatisfaction with existing conceptions; 2) a new conception that is intelligible; 3) a new conception that is plausible; and 4) a new conception that suggests potential for extension. It is necessary to disrupt the mythical norm with consideration to gender, citizenship, and nationalism in order to provide a deep understanding of how Americans have come to understand and represent (or misrepresent) the history of wars based on World War II as a turning point in framing such conceptions.

Students begin with an examination of how history is taught and how identity markers construct the unequal power structures that inform how history is portrayed. In doing so, students begin to explore their own identity while also looking at how human behavior has distributed power historically. They will then explore ways to question current conceptions of history using the elements of the pentad as an example of a model to follow. Then students will explore ways to verb history and why those conceptions exist through three curricular



interventions from World War II: *Rosie the Riveter*, *Girls of Atomic City*, and *Coming Out Under Fire*. The purpose of the curricular interventions are to showcase ways of verbing history. It is paramount to acknowledge by understanding why conceptions of those three curricular interventions are important in order to understand World War II and its aftermath more deeply. This guide also provides resources to help students understand body politics that control conceptions of identity markers in society and apply the power dynamics from history to both the political actors of the past as well as within their own lives.

A social studies teacher should realize the nature of conceptual change of students, try to find the nuances of students' learning, and cultivate strategies to create conditions for conceptual change teaching. In order to understand the difference between incorrect knowledge and misconceptions, teachers must consider the presentation of knowledge at three different levels: individual beliefs (a single idea, such as "the government consists of three branches"), mental models (internal or interrelated concepts, such as "democracy," "citizenship," or "nationalism"), and categories (an ontological view of a concept, such as "World War II resulted in expanded gender roles for women") (Chih-Chiang & Jeng-Fung, 2012).

### **Curricular Interventions**

Popular histories showcase interesting and important gaps in American history that can be useful in understanding how gender equates to men and masculinity in traditional history curricula. Historian Peter Beck argues that popular histories are an important resource in transmitting historical knowledge. Popular histories are, in the words of Jerome De Groot (2012), "necessary to comprehend the entire way in which history pervades culture, from history as import to historical education" (p. 2). He then goes on to discuss the importance of popular history in exposing normative features: "History can be used to create a national characteristic

which disavows other cultures and attacks alienness; it can also inform a complicated, fragmented sense of ontological fragility which challenges such striving for legitimacy” (p. 3). The masses are obtaining their historical knowledge predominately from historical fiction and microhistories, not academic history, indicating a need for historians to publish histories to attract a wide readership. In doing so, popular histories provide innovative spaces for marginalized groups that have been contained within dominant narratives that dictate their standpoint as existing within the master narrative rather than understanding the fabric of experiences that have taken place historically. Thus, expressions of citizenship and rhetorical positions are highly constrained, particularly by conservative assertions about gender and queer ideologies. Consequently, this project also demonstrates the way in which women and gay men rhetorically engaged constraining assessments of their civic participation.

Additionally, these popular histories teach a kind of critical literacy about gender in history that traditional curriculum texts deliberately ignore. Mary Kay Tetreault (1982) contends that we need “to find ways to apply new conceptualizations of women’s history to a history that relates men and women’s experiences” (p. 43). To recognize how women and men of various subjectivities (race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. ) experience the impact of various forces and institutions differently is to broaden what historians typically consider a force in history.

### **Gendered Life Experiences**

Since women and men are hardly a homogenous group, understanding their diversity is a first step. These experiences are shaped not only by gender, but also by sexuality, class, ethnic identities, race, religion, and geography. Diverse groups of people experience different challenges when expressing citizenship. The mythical norm positions men to fight on the front lines of war in defense of freedom and patriotism, while women have to sacrifice their husbands,

brothers, and sons to war and teach their children about the importance of freedom and patriotism as an American ideal. However, these notions do not do justice to the multiplicity of experiences of men and women. Cultural differences are important in shaping the multiple obstacles in the path to nation-ness.

Few women actually participated in jobs represented in Howard Miller's "We Can Do It!" poster. These women were mostly white, middle class, and single, and their positions were impermanent. Dot Wilkinson made a transformation to Oak Ridge, Tennessee after her brother was killed in Pearl Harbor working as a "calutron girl." Dot's role in Oak Ridge, Tennessee helped enrich uranium to build atomic bombs, but she had no idea what she was doing. Dot and the other operators were all young, white women with high school educations, at best. The men in charge of procurement joked that the "hillbilly girl" operators exceeded the work that scientist could perform because they were trained like soldiers to not ask questions (Kiernan, 2013). A middle-aged black man, Ebb Cade, became a martyr of Atomic City. His experiences at Atomic City showed that perceived cultural differences have caused women, men of color, and gay men to suffer disproportionately in World War II and serve as a reminder of the forgotten stories left out of the legacy of the war.

The different life experiences of gay men serve as a constant reminder that everyday life in the U.S. is still shaped by the systems of stratification that survived the founding of the nation. Interaction among women during the war led to the short-term creation of new identities for women and redefined the relations between men and women for a period of time. The consolidation of these roles at the end of the war relied on the introduction of the nuclear family and on race- and gender-based mechanisms of establishing political hierarchies that still exist.

Concepts of gender and citizenship in this historical context depend on specific notions about gender that are connected to the formation of nations.

### **Defining Gender**

In 1986, Joan Wallach Scott, provided a two-part definition of gender that has been widely used and accepted by feminist scholars. Gender is defined as “perceived differences between the sexes” and “a primary way of signifying power” (p. 1067). I suggest that the “perceived differences” to which Scott refers are more than just “differences between the sexes,” but, instead, how perceived gender differences are used to establish social, political, rhetorical, and economic dominance of men in curriculum through the exclusion of women. As Butler (2004) famously intoned: gender is something we do, not something we are. Similarly, gender is often used to mean women, which, according to Scott (1986) “suggests that information about women is necessarily information about men” (p. 1056). Like Scott, I understand gender as a “social category imposed on a sexed body” (Scott, 1986, p. 1056). As such, the term gender becomes a series of representational symbols that project normative or ideal expectations, creating hierarchies with which to signify power (Scott, 1986). Until recently, even compelling feminist scholarship in history education failed to take into account the complexity of women’s lives at the level of social temporality.

### **Gender and Citizenship: Analytical Approaches**

Utilizing gender as a category of historical analysis illuminates the differences between the expressions of citizenship that women and men confront over the course of their life. Feminist scholarship on gendered citizenship concerns more than women as mothers and men as breadwinners, and extends beyond biological differences of the sexes. Approaches that treat gendered citizenship as a mainly unifying term rely on an understanding of liberal citizenship

that “questions the freedoms and rights of citizenships and groups” (Kock and Villardson, 2012, p. 2). Freedoms and rights do mark men and women’s lives, but the understanding of gendered citizenship should not be confined to it. Racial identification, economic status, geographic location, as well as a woman’s role in the family or community affect her membership in society. Clearly, the relation between social, cultural, political, medical, and economic issues alike are critical to understanding the varied needs of both men and women.

Historical documents on American life in the 20<sup>th</sup> century are marked by the absence of women and gay men’s voices, and a presence of more powerful men to speak for or on behalf of women. Gay men and women are left out entirely. The focus on gender and citizenship adds an additional challenge to the search for women’s voices in historical documents, as citizenship, for many, is confined to the private sphere and not easily discussed within the confines of the public sphere. The voices that remain absent from historical content and context on citizenship are often the voices of the least powerful, so one must consider the primary sources in that light.

That is why non-academic histories such as popular histories, are fruitful areas of exploration for using gender as a category of historical analysis (Beck, 2015). While historians and history educators focus on academic scholarship, the general public largely relies on obtaining historical knowledge outside of academia. In searching for means to contextualize the fragmented master narratives in history education, popular histories help to understand the ways in which history constructs cultural markers and reifies notions of power and difference.

Additionally, these popular histories teach a kind of critical literacy about gender in history that traditional curriculum texts deliberately ignore. Mary Kay Tetreault (1982) contends that we need “to find ways to apply new conceptualizations of women’s history to a history that relates men and women’s experiences” (p. 43). To recognize how women and men of various

subjectivities (race, class, gender, sexuality, etc.) experience the impact of various forces and institutions differently is to broaden what historians typically consider a force in history.

### **Tracing History to Contemporary Challenges: The Lives of Women and Gay Men**

Contemporary experiences of women and gay men, through testimonial accounts, visual artifacts, and popular histories illustrate the variety of challenges different groups of women and gay men have had to confront. Their accounts reveal uncertainty, anger, poverty, and fear—but they also demonstrate creativity in addressing problems, courage in challenging oppressive and painful systems, and the desire to act and engage in activities that improve their lives and lives around them. Geographic isolation, nationalistic sacrifice, and the widespread lack of access to political channels and power encourage admirable and surprising ways women and gay men find to resist power and find spaces to express citizenship. After all, it is important to keep in mind that the topics of gender and citizenship are closely connected to contemporary real-life experiences, to women and men who experience the ups and downs of modernity, homonationalism, and white supremacy. The study of the historical roots of gender and citizenship offers learning experiences that can be moved beyond the realm of academic history and the public sphere to guide future thought and action.

### **Resources**

Students will prepare for a deep investigation of historical actors and events during their study of World War II and for thoughtful excavation of rhetorical themes about war, citizenship, and gender. U.S. history is driven by themes embedded in patriotism, citizenship, and the public sphere. U.S. history curriculum interweaves two primary goals of content and skills. Throughout the unit we observe the disequilibrium that current conceptions of history and history education cultivate and develop skills to question, reframe, and more wholly conceive of historical events

through inviting in multiple conceptions regarding World War II and evaluating the investments of such artifacts.

Therefore, it makes sense that before students begin to learn about Rosie the Riveter, *The Girls of Atomic City*, and *Coming Out Under Fire*, they take some time to examine the experiences that U.S. history curriculum typically offers to conceptualize and reflect on the past. By starting here, students will be prepared to analyze more deeply the ways this tension plays out in the U.S. during the political milieu of 1939-1945. As a result, they will reach a richer and more nuanced understanding that extends beyond the characters or the event (i.e., act/actor in the pentad). Examining the complexity of identity markers and the rhetorical situation also enables students to make personal connections with the political actors, reframing their conception of the materials and the time period itself.

The resources used in this study are below (also see Appendix A):

- Source 1: Constructing an Identity Chart
- Source 2: White Privilege and Male Privilege
- Source 3: How Gender Affects Us, and What We Can Do About It
- Source 4: Visual Artifact Ranking
- Source 5: Putting History Into Perspective or Putting Perspective Into History
- Source 6: Overview of Propaganda
- Source 7: Passage about World War II Tactics
- Source 8: Symbolism and World War II Tactics
- Source 9: “The Rosie the Riveter” Story
- Source 10: “We Can Do It!” in Context
- Source 11: Varga Girls Comparison

- Source 12: Visual Analysis of Westinghouse Series
- Source 13: “We Can Do It!” In a Programmatic Serious
- Source 14: Myth-making and the “We Can Do It!” Poster
- Source 15: Rosie the Riveter Lyrics
- Source 16: On Writing Rosie the Riveter
- Source 17: “Isaiah Effect”
- Source 18: Rosie the Riveter in the Saturday Evening Post Series
- Source 19: Visuals of Atomic City
- Source 20: Passages of Girls of Atomic City
- Source 21: Women Scientists in the Manhattan Project
- Source 22: Visual Artifacts for Coming Out Under Fire
- Source 23: Passages from Coming Out Under Fire

## **Teaching**

### **Introducing the Central Question**

As students progress through an inquiry of World War II, I recommend you use a central question to provide clarity and focus throughout the activities and discussions you will have in class. For the goals of this study, the following central question will guide the learner towards deeper understanding: *How have different individuals and groups in the United States experienced World War II?* The purpose of this question is to seek “‘emic’ (insider) understandings and cultural understandings of the event” (NCSS, 2013, p. 81) from multiple individuals and groups with varying identity markers to more deeply understand the World War II era and the influence of the event on individuals of the time and the implications for individuals and society today.



## Alignment with the Common Core State Standards

The unit is guided by the Common Core State Standards and C3 Frameworks for Social Studies State Standards.

### Grades 9-12, ELA-Literacy.

- RH.9-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources
- RH.9-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

The standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects are integrated into the reading standards for kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade:

- WHST.9-12.1.a Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically
- WHST.9-12.1.b Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources
- WHST.9-12.1.c Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence
- WHST.9.12.1.d Establish and maintain a formal style
- WHST.9-12.1.e Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Arkansas Frameworks were also used for this unit from Grade 5-8 Social Studies, Standard 6:

- Students shall analyze significant ideas, events, and people in world national, state, and local history and how they affect change over time. The strand is divided into four categories, one for each grade each building vertically on the depth students are expected to work with primary sources.

Having students analyze historical evidence requires the use of prior *knowledge* of World War II to analyze (*skill*) an artifact in order to understand its influence on difference audiences (*understanding*).

### **C3 Frameworks for Social Studies Standards.**

- D1.1.9-12 Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the field
- D1.4.9-12 Explain how supporting questions contribute to an inquiry and how, through engaging source work, new compelling and supporting questions emerge
- D1.5.9-12 Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential use of the sources
- D2.Civ.2.9-12 Analyze the role of citizens in the U.S. political system, with attention to various theories of democracy, changes in Americans' participation over time, and alternative models from other countries, past and present
- D.2.Civ.6.9-12 Evaluate citizens' and institutions' effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level
- D.2.Civ.6.9-12 Critique relationships among governments, civil societies, and economic markets

- D.2.Civ.10.9-12 Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights
- D.2.His.1.9-12 Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts
- D2.His.2.9-12 Analyze change and continuity in historical eras
- D2.His.3.9-12 Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context
- D2.His.4.9-12 Analyze the complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras
- D2.His.5.9-12 Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape peoples' perspectives
- D2.His.6.9-12 Explain how the perspective of people in the present shape interpretations of the past
- D2.His.8.9-12 Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical resources represent perspectives of people at the time
- D2.His.9.9-12 Analyze the relationship between historical sources and the secondary interpretations made from them
- D2.His.10.9-12 Detect possible limitations in various kinds of historical evidence and differing secondary interpretations

- D2.His.11.9-12 Critique the usefulness of historical sources for a specific historical inquiry based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose
- D2.His.12.9-12 Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources
- D2.His.13.9-12 Critique the appropriateness of the historical sources used in a secondary interpretation
- D2.His.16.9-12 Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past
- D2.His.17.9-12 Critique the central arguments in secondary works of history on related topics in multiple media in terms of their historical accuracy
- D3.1.9-12 Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection
- D3.2.9-12 Evaluate the credibility of a source by examining how experts value the source
- D3.2.9-12 Identify evidence that draws information directly and substantively from multiple sources to detect inconsistencies in evidence in order to revise or strengthen claims
- D3.4.9-12 Refine claims and counterclaims attending to precision, significance, and knowledge conveyed through the claim while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both

- D4.1.9-12 Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses
- D4.5.9-12 Critique the use of the reasoning, sequencing, and supporting details of explanations
- D4.6.9-12 Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.

### **Strategies**

The sources on gender and citizenship in this curriculum allow educators to explore World War II through different angles. On one level, this curriculum guide introduces characteristics specific to the United States as a global hegemon. It is designed to illustrate the characteristics of lives through the lens of gender specifically connected to an American nationalism trajectory. Women and gay men, the selections suggest, have a common history that illustrates the tensions of citizenship and the features of nationalism particularly during times of war. What are the characteristics that shape the experiences of women and gay men? How are gendered experiences, or legacies, related to contemporary structures of everyday life that could influence men and women differently? How can gendered experiences influence the experiences of men and women differently within varying cultural differences? Why is this significant?

On a second level, the curriculum guide is designed to enable students to develop an understanding of diverse experiences during World War II. Adopting a comparative perspective, educators might compare and contrast women's and gay men's lives and gender systems within

the United States. Doing so would remind students that the category of women, and men, is not a homogenous category. Consider questions that explore how race, class, age, and geography all shape American women and gay men's lives. They confront a variety of challenges shaped by categories other than gender. Why do women of color confront challenges differently from white women? What distinguishes the lives of straight men from gay men?

On another level, the curriculum guide allows for an exploration of general, structural as well as particular, personal influences on women and gay men's lives. Several sources expose official views and cultural perceptions regarding essentialist ideas about women and men. Students can find such perceptions, for example, in the propaganda used to mobilize citizens for World War II. Other sources should inspire questions regarding women's views and understandings of the worlds surrounding them. What are the problems women identify in their local experiences? How are their problems (and experiences) shaped by the legal, political, and cultural systems? All three levels of analysis might be addressed simultaneously through the following discussion questions.

### **Discussion Questions**

- How are women's roles defined or limited in visual artifacts, such as propaganda?
- How are gay men's roles defined or limited in popular histories, such as *Coming Out Under Fire*?
- What is the underlying understanding of the nature of women and gay men that has shaped these roles?
- How have women and gay men attempted to control their own lives and citizenship in political, social, and cultural settings as demonstrated in popular histories?

- To what extent to women and gay men's reactions and different ways of mobilizing confirm that women in the United States are, indeed, not a homogenous group?
- What factors in women and gay men's lives do we need to consider to understand the options and limitations they confront when addressing their roles and expressions of citizenship?
- Which voices are we willing to take more seriously than others? Why?

### **Analyzing Sources**

Popular histories are important historical resources that help us to understand human behavior. It is the stories told about ordinary, everyday individuals that portray a larger picture of a historical context. Because women and gay men have been excluded and erased from the historical record academic historians use to construct history, personal accounts that are documented through oral histories and archived in microhistories assist to fill lacunae in an otherwise fragmented history. While personal accounts are highly subjective, it is through these multiple conceptions that students are able to reflect on certain historical events from a variety of perspectives and even through their own experiences. It is through this range of voices and perspectives that we see how gender functions to construct what it means to be a man or what it means to be a woman at certain times and places in history.

### **Unit Plan**

**Title: Verbing History Using Gender in World War II**

#### **Time Estimate**

Approximately ten 45-minutes class periods.

#### **Objectives**

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Summarize the issues regarding gender and citizenship for American women and gay men.
2. Explain how identity markers influence a person's role as a citizen in the United States.
3. Analyze historical artifacts to determine their effectiveness as political investments in history.
4. Evaluate how political investments expose gender and distribute power.

### Materials

1. Sufficient copies of the recommended sources.
2. Whiteboard, and markers or overhead projector.

### Strategies

#### 1. Historical Background/Prior Knowledge:

- Some knowledge of World War II history and politics from 1939-1945.
- Knowledge of the role of nationalism in constructing citizenship.
- Some knowledge of the language of war: patriotism, sacrifice, freedom, equality.
- Definition of gender.

2. **Hook:** Ask students to define the term “citizen” as best they can. Ask the students for examples of citizenship. Do/should citizenship vary by culture, gender, sexuality, religion, age, or socio-economic status?

3. **Identity Markers and Cultural Difference:** Once students begin exploring World War II, they will engage in a deep analysis of the context of people, ideas, and events surrounding the time period as well as explore a variety of factors that contribute to how we conceive of World War II and why it is presented in particular ways in the history



classroom. Ostensibly, these students are exploring the identities of the fictional (Rosie the Riveter) and non-fictional (women of Oak Ridge, TN as well as gay and lesbian GIs) and using their analysis of the historical actors to reflect on their conceptions of their own identities. In doing so, these students will be challenging the historiography that is traditionally used by historians to construct the materials used for learning about history.

Facing History and Ourselves uses identity as the introductory component to their framework. In the study guide for *Teaching Mockingbird* (2014) identity is defined:

One's identity is a combination of many things. It includes the labels others place on us, as well as ideas we have about who we want to be. Gender, ethnicity, religion, occupation, and physical characteristics all contribute to one's identity. So do ties to a particular neighborhood, school community, or nation. Our values and beliefs are also a part of who we are as individuals, as are the experiences that have shaped our lives (p. 3).

The public and private spheres are another example of social construction that has been used to segregate groups. Historically men have been allowed in both the public and private sphere while women are isolated to the private sphere through domestic containment. World War II is commonly discussed and taught as an era that greatly expanded rights for women that have carried on through the present; however, looking at historical artifacts from within and without the master narrative tell us that while roles were expanded for women's citizenship *during* the war, the space granted to them was short-lived. While roles for men and women looked differently after the war than before, the spaces for gender and what it means to be a man or a woman evolved, delineating the argument that gender is also a construction. While gender may be fluid, the roles prescribed to men and women tightened after the war to press women back into the private sphere and domesticity when the men returned from the war. Acknowledging the use of the public and private spheres as spaces of power distribution are important to

understanding how history is constructed, citizenship is distributed, and gender is lacquered into our minds.

**Identity chart.** Have students read Source 1: Constructing an Identity Chart. What are the labels they assign to themselves? What labels do others attach to them? How do cultural and societal labels influence how they see themselves?

**Privilege and the construction of history.** Have students read Source 2: White Privilege, Male Privilege. What is privilege? What is the relationship between privilege and citizenship?

**Why Gender?.** The resources for talking about sex, gender, and sexuality will help students to explore multiple components about identity and citizenship of the political actors discussed in the unit. Have students read Source 3: How Does Gender Affect Us and What We Can Do About It. Sex, gender, and sexuality are defined and explained in this handout. These terms are often conflated and understanding them separately as well as how they interact with one another is important to understanding the conceptions of the many political actors of World War II and establishing a framework for the historical context that will be introduced later in the chapter. As students will discover, sex, gender, and sexuality are very important politically as coverture for power hierarchies and historical significance.

**World War II and Gender.** Analyzing how young women responded to messages about their role in the war effort can help students uncover their own responses to messages in their lives. Uncoverage is making ideas accessible and real while coverage is more superficial or just surface level information to communicate ideas quickly. An understanding *can* be covered; it *must* be uncovered. Cover is like the surface or breadth

of information shared, giving equal value to each topic. Uncover is like depth, exposure or to find. It is more closely associated with understanding. Uncovering information also tends to be more engaging and effective for creating understanding because it is enabling students to utilize knowledge skills and understanding in relationship with the material to be presented (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

**Visual artifact ranking.** This activity works to rank visual artifacts and is intended to disrupt certain thinking on behalf of the students and provoke a natural inquiry of questions. Students will look at images of World War II; some are from high school textbooks that would be conventionally viewed historically significant, while others were selected from the popular histories used as curricular interventions in this curriculum. There are also some images included from other sources that would be considered alternative histories. Students will begin to see how World War II is represented and get a sense of just how fragmented the story actually is. Have students read Source 4: Visual Artifact Ranking to uncover their conceptions about gender and World War II. Activities moving forward will begin layering context to allow students to see the roles for men and women more clearly.

**Putting history into perspective or putting perspective into history.** Students will be given handout Source 5: Putting History into Perspective or Putting Perspective Into History. It contains passages from a high school American history textbook used in a local school district. It is here that the teacher should engage in a classroom discussion that anytime a story focuses on just the act/actor (and sometimes scene) that the story is being fragmented. Students should learn that dichotomous thinking (e.g., good/bad,

we/they, male/female) is a false dichotomy and is a sign that there is more complex data for mining beneath the surface.

**Overview of propaganda.** Propaganda is information that is biased or misleading. It is often used to promote a particular point of view. Providing students with an overview of propaganda fulfills the same purpose as giving students and overview of World War II: it gives them data to mine as a means to explore war, nationalism, gender, and citizenship. This particular overview points out Audre Lorde's (1980) mythical norm that identities the "ideal" citizenship as white, elite, heterosexual, able-bodied, and Christian. This reading begins to explore what it meant to be a man and what it meant to be a woman during World War II, what those roles looked like, and how gender roles and gender politics evolved as a result of the war.

**Tactics and symbolism of WWII propaganda.** Have students look at Source 6: Overview of Propaganda, Source 7: Passage about World War II Tactics, and Source 8: Symbolism and World War II Tactics. What were some tactics that mobilized women to enter the war effort? What were some tactics that mobilized men to enter the war effort? How were the roles for men and women different? Why is that significant? Students are able to notice how roles for women and their capacity for civic participation expanded at the same time their already established roles of domesticity in the private sphere were maintained. This reading also problematizes the expanding roles for women while they were simultaneously charged with "holding down the fort" while the men were away. The handout highlights the symbolism used to mobilize both men and women. Students will learn that propaganda was such a significant aspect of war recruiting that the

government even created the Office of War Information (OWI) that distributed images to frame war, citizenship, nationalism, and gender in very specific and purposeful ways.

- 4. Rosie the Riveter and We Can Do It!.** Students will begin to independently employ the questioning and inquiry techniques they have been developing. They will be given the singular, traditional story of “Rosie the Riveter” and will be asked to use questioning techniques to poke holes in the story and begin to uncover a more nuanced perspective of the iconic character. The following section demonstrates three ways students could engage in verbing history. The first intervention continues with the exploration of “Rosie the Riveter” and a comparative analysis including “We Can Do It!” while the second and third interventions use the popular history novels *Girls of Atomic City* and *Coming Out Under Fire*.

**“We Can Do It!” in context.** Have students look at Source 9: The “Rosie the Riveter” Story and Source 10: “We Can Do It! In Context”. How does gender influence a person’s citizenship?

**“Rosie the Riveter” in context.** Have the students read Source 11: Varga Girls Comparison, Source 12: Visual Analysis of Westinghouse Series. Source 13: “We Can Do It!” In a Programmatic Series, Source 14: Myth-making and the “We Can Do It!” Poster, Source 15: Rosie the Riveter Lyrics, Source 16: On Writing Rosie the Riveter, Source 17: “Isaiah Effect”, Source 18: Rosie the Riveter in the Saturday Evening Post Series. How does Rosie the Riveter effective as a force in history? How is Rosie the Riveter effective as a political investment in history? How does Rosie the Riveter fail? How do these political investments lacquer roles about gender and citizenship in the public consciousness?

- 5. Girls of Atomic City:**

**Visuals of Atomic City.** Have the students read Source 19: Visuals of Atomic City How does gender influence a person’s citizenship?

**Passages from Atomic City.** Have the students read Source 20: Passages of Atomic City. What were some of the roles for women in World War II? Why is that significant?

**Women scientists in the Manhattan Project.** Have the students read Source 21: Women Scientists of Atomic City. How are the men and women in *Girls of Atomic City* effective as a force in history? How is *Girls of Atomic City* effective as a political investment in history? How does *Girls of Atomic City* fail? How do these political investments lacquer roles about gender and citizenship in the public consciousness?

## 6. Coming Out Under Fire:

**Visuals of Coming Out Under Fire.** Have the students read Source 22: Visual Artifacts for Coming Out Under Fire How does gender influence a person’s citizenship? What were some of the roles for women and gay men in World War II? Why is that significant?

**Passages from Coming Out Under Fire.** Have the students read Source 23: Passages from Coming Out Under Fire How are the gay men and lesbian women in *Coming Out Under Fire* effective as a force in history? How is *Coming Out Under Fire* effective as a political investment in history? How does *Coming Out Under Fire* fail? How do these political investments lacquer roles about gender and citizenship in the public consciousness?

## Document-Based Question

Students will use the resources analyzed in this unit to construct an essay in response to a critical question. Document-Based Questions (DBQs) essays are written by students to demonstrate their own knowledge in interaction with several provided sources. Students will be

given a handout (See Appendix A) with directions and the following question: Discuss whether “traditional” women’s roles and views of women change during World War II? To what extent does this vary by race, class, location, etc.?

## Chapter 4

### The Legacy of Gender

“I write for those women who do not speak, for those who do not have a voice because they were so terrified, because we are taught to respect fear more than ourselves. We’ve been taught that silence would save us, but it won’t. ” –Audre Lorde

#### Introduction

This dissertation has attempted to trace the shift of American nationalism as a significant rhetorical and political intervention into the discourse about World War II because of the centrality of gender and citizenship as a common sense discourse and fantasy of identification. Using gendered, racialized, and queer citizenship, oral histories have emerged in popular histories as a significant space for women and gay men before, during, and after the World War II.

Women and gay men excluded from the public sphere prior to the war became even more conscious of their status as outsiders and acknowledged their status in the war effort. In general, domestic containment is successful when it transcends the spaces produced by the intellectuals articulating its style and content across geographic and political locations. As domestic containment has essentialized citizenship and gender in the United States, it has pollinated other contexts with its ideology and it has also borrowed from other locales, movements, and times to reassemble a politics for modern times. Domestic containment as a form of nationalism for women has been a flexible response to war and its ever-present, though constantly changing relationship to gender and citizenship.

The three curricular interventions included in this dissertation help to interrogate the relationship between gender, citizenship, and what Benedict Anderson (2006) calls imagined communities. The voices of the civically estranged provided some of the most significant



contributions to the United States efforts in World War II and as a site of learning, the history classroom is a fertile space for disrupting or maintaining male-centered conceptions in history. Because popular histories and microhistories circulate the masses it is no wonder they have such a wide appeal for readers. It is also no wonder that these stories have been excluded from history education curriculum. This is particularly true as Carl Degler (1974) notes that omitting women from history is to deny them from the “stream of human experience” (p. 70).

Although the stories of women and gay men have been vital in the portrayal of human experience during World War II, the terrain of gender and citizenship also include other forms of civic production that have been ignored and even considered taboo. We know that Rosie the Riveter’s portrayal of citizenship was salient for her audience at the time of its first release in 1943 because of its wide circulation. The re-release of the iconic image “We Can Do It!” in the 1960s included a refreshed message of woman empowerment. This new missive manipulated the conception of the iconic character of World War II to mobilize women in a climate entrenched in identity politics.

In their circulation, popular histories and microhistories of the civically estranged help to expand and deepen collective consciousness by documenting histories of people whom academic historians have left invisible. In producing *imagined communities*, the interventions in this study also allow the voices included to become a *force in history*, to borrow from Mary Beard. As Alexis de Tocqueville (1945) noted in *Democracy in America*, “As for myself I do not hesitate to avow that although the women of the United States are confined within the narrow circle of domestic life, and their situation is in some respects one of extreme dependence, I have nowhere seen women occupying a loftier position; and if I were asked to what the singular prosperity and growing strength of the [American] people ought mainly be attributed, I should reply: to the

superiority of their women” (p. 201). However, women have not been included as a force in history. The tropes of the private/public sphere dictated these gender roles in American culture.

This chapter examines popular histories as artifacts and teaching for conceptual change, as a means to assess the legacies of *Rosie the Riveter*, *Girls of Atomic City*, and *Coming Out Under Fire*. In many ways these artifacts function in such popular culture texts as *forces in history* whose discourse transcends the public/private sphere separation and gender containment to become ideological forces in facilitation the regeneration of nationalism, war, citizenship, and gender.

Typically forces in history are important cultural images because they are considered historical significant in the name of freedom, progress, and achievement. Jack Hexter (1946) argues that women were not included by historians because they weren't present in the places historians were exploring. Rose the Riveter has, of course, been the most referenced woman as a force in the history of World War II because, as Maureen Honey (1984) notes “women were manipulated by the media into false consciousness of their role as workers” by messages “tying war work to traditional female images” reinforcing “women's inferior position in the work force at a time when material conditions challenged sex work divisions” (pp. 4-5). Likewise, male soldiers have often been called a force in history due to false identification with gender and body politics. Christine Jarvis (2010) argues “that during World War II the American military, government, and other institutions shaped the male body both figuratively and physically in an effort to communicate impressions of national strength to U.S. citizens and to other nations (pp. 4-5). Thus, political actors are often used by historians as starting points to reference the contributions of citizens as patriotic in the war effort. Forces of history are an extension of both the imagined community and the ideologies of those forces in history that have been albeit

intentionally or unintentionally removed from historical significance in history and history education and whose agency is restricted in ways that is largely invisible or rationalized as irrelevant.

The notion of a force in history is often quite visible in the U.S. history classroom and associated with American nationalism. Since patriotism and sacrifice have been an essential part of civic participation, especially during wartime, the first section analyzes the role of women, particularly white women from within conceptions of Americanism to understand how the Greatest Generation has promoted contradictory consciousness and circulated images and messages that have overlooked or misappropriated the curricular interventions in this dissertation. To this end, these sections also explore the ways that gender and citizenship cast each intervention as a force in history, embodying the principles of legitimate expressions of citizenship necessary for civic participation. The sections also focus on the importance of the war in connecting both gender and messages of regeneration that are exhibited in the citizenship expressions for women and gay men during the 1940s.

First, the chapter looks at the ways in which Rosie the Riveter's strategies of regenerating citizenship for women are reflected in several portrayals like Miller's "We Can Do It!" and Rockwell's "Rosie the Riveter. " This section illustrates how Rosie's notions of masculine femininity, sacrifice, and impermanence are found as features of nationalism. Rosie's messages are also abound in expressions of citizenship where most portrayals of women in history exist. Within these expressions, Rosie acts as a force in history in ways that are not traditionally conceived or portrayed. Rosie's image functions as the impetus for the further interrogation of history education curriculum. From these examples, and from the women's rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s, we can see that Rosie's strategies of regenerating expressions of citizenship

have been lacquered into public memory in ways that solidify domestic containment and continue to circulate and influence the role of women, with Rosie as a celebrity and leader.

Second, the chapter considers the ways that strategies of regeneration found in *Girls of Atomic City* find their way into nationalism and expressions of citizenship. Here, women like Dot connect her messages about citizenship to roles of gender and the family. This kind of citizenship positions women in Oak Ridge as a force in history that expressions of citizenship must allow for and support. Katties's own comments on her role in "The Secret City" and expressions of citizenship illustrate her continuing relevance as a force in history because her gendered and racialized experience assert the centrality of women in the war effort, where battles come to define the war and men are valorized as fallen heroes. Additionally, men of Atomic City, like Ebb Cade, also provide fruitful areas of exploration between the intersection of gender and race that fit into the larger context of power structures. The women of Oak Ridge also function as forces in history for issues surrounding the military industrial complex because this was the first time that private corporations, such as Kellogg and Monsanto invested in building and maintaining military initiatives.

Third, the chapter considers the contributions of gay and lesbian GIs as forces in history during World War II, where the controversy over allowing homosexuals into the military compelled psychologists to police the sexuality of GIs that enlisted in the war. As a result, it also examines body politics, where military examiners confronted enlistees about their sexuality, based on gender stereotypes, to discover and disqualify homosexual men and women from combat and military service (Berube, 1990). In expressions of citizenship, queer soldiers like Tom Reddy must negotiate his identity within the service of masculinity and the importance of respect with his comrades: "I enlisted in the Marine Corps and they accepted me. And once they

did that I was one of *them*. I was welcomed with open arms” (Berube, 1990, p. 187). “Greg Aaron recalls “I know a lot of guys in my company suspected me. I think that they wanted to catch me, yet there was also a degree of respect for me because I was a rifleman. They thought, ‘whether he’s a homo or gay or a fruit or a fag he’s still one of us’” (Berube, 1990, p. 187). The ability to communicate experiences like these have been severely limited by censorship of traditional history and history curriculum. Stories like these in Berube’s *Coming Out Under Fire* and George Chauncey’s *Gay New York* (1994) herald LGBT historical narratives by labeling the political actors as a force of study worthy of study.

Fourth, the chapter considers the potential problems with the regeneration of citizenship through strategies like the reification of gender containment and sacrifice and the commodification of these two ideologies for the “American Dream” or “the good life” without acknowledging the exclusionary practice of these creeds. Highlighting the pervasiveness of gender inequality and the repression of civic participation in history acts as a strategy to expand conceptions of citizenship as a socially constructed force used to sustain inequality because it connects gender containment and the repression of political actors as they struggle to be considered forces in history through traditional historiography.

Finally, the chapter looks at the ways that gender/domestic containment continues to constrain expressions of citizenship, particularly the ongoing attempts to regenerate the educational reform movement. It highlights the continuities between the repression of World War II and the private sphere and that of domestic containment within the political milieu of 1939-1945. It also looks at the centrality of men, the public sphere, and heteronormativity to understand why history education curriculum is at the core of what many feminist history

educators perceive to be a quest to maintain an empire of men, assessing the centrality of these forces in history to the future of such regenerative efforts.

### **Women, Expressions of Citizenship, and World War II**

In the history of gender and citizenship, domestic containment represents a key strategy of mobilization and oppression. Carl Degler (1974) writes about the impact of the voice of women on those listening: women will be recognized as a force in history “when we cease to individualize and thereby masculinize the actors in history from the family context in which they really functioned” (p. 72). He continues, “One could, for example, interpret much of it as portraying women as “appendages” to great public men, but to do so would be unfortunate, for it would mean falling into the trap of defining women’s history as precisely the same as men’s, to be measured against male standards of achievement” (p. 72). Even at the peak of second wave feminism, Degler could recognize the gulf between women and history because of the scope of what history defined as a force in history. This is one of many critiques that became resistant to authoritative discourses of masculine citizenship.

Elaine Tyler May (1988) also understood the power of domestic containment as it was used from the 1920s to the 1960s as a secure role for women among the uncertainty brought with the Great Depression, World War II, and the Cold War. The women in these contexts serve to remind us of the legacy of both sacrifice and nostalgia in the United States and to inspire them to fight against the Axis Powers. John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman (1998) remind us that these accounts of lesbian and gay soldiers serve as the birth of LGBT history because of the gay culture that emerged as men and women came to discover their sexuality during the war. Despite policies to exclude and dishonorably discharge queer soldiers, they became an intrinsic fixture of

the war effort during the 1940s as many fought in the war for ideological values that weren't even extended to them.

By the mid-1960s and 1970s domestic containment began to shift as second wave feminists opted for risk over security and began pushing for expanded roles in the women's rights movement. Rosie the Riveter serves as a good example here for the revival of the past. Just as Rosie re-emerged and re-appropriated messages to reject Cold War ideology and domestic containment, her character also embodied the traditional notions of femininity and the family that supports national and personal security. Because Americans failed to secure alternatives to domesticity once again bound young adults, specifically young women, to the home (May, 1988).

Today gender roles and domestic containment express the ideals of the nation as political leaders have sought to distinctly separate the United States from international enemies. This is not new; these tactics were used to contrast the United States from the Nazis in World War II, communists in the Cold War, and Islamic Radicals in the War on Terror today (Ritter, 2009). Here, the Bush Administration utilized a rhetorical strategy of gender politics between the liberation of women in Afghanistan and Iraq in relationship to the United States (again a mimicry of the contrast to the Nazi regime in Germany and Communist regime of the Soviet Union). Contemporary domestic containment began its ascendancy during the Cold War Era between the 1950s and 1980s, and it tackled "American's intense need to feel liberated from the past and secure in the future" (Ritter, 2009, p. 440). The War on Terror has taken the vestiges of domestic containment, particularly its commitment to the traditional marriage, and wed them to musings of American national identity under the guise of tolerance and social order (Ritter, 2009). Consequently, the War on Terror, and I would add the War on Education, rely heavily on

deep connections to gender. Jerry Falwell, conservative evangelist leader, illustrated the pairing between the War on Terror and gender after 9/11 when he said, “I really believe the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists...all of them have tried to secularize America. I point the finger in their face and say “you helped this happen” (CNN. com, 2001 as cited in Ritter, 2009).

### **Feminizing Forces in History: Expressions of Citizenship, Domestic Containment, and Rosie the Riveter**

Rosie the Riveter has been a site of contestation among feminist historians as a leader, a hero, and a force in history for World War II. She has been heralded and mimicked in popular culture, most notably Beyoncé’s post as Rosie on Instagram and the Time Magazine cover “The Case for National Service. ” Both highlight Rosie’s message of “We Can Do It!” as a call to action. Her image, thus, functions as a force in history and as a synecdoche to represent women as a whole.

The legacies of Rosie’s strategies for mobilizing women are apparent as Maureen Honey (1984) recalls of Rosie’s unintended consequences evoking conceptions of equality, while blurring distinctions between male and female occupations, and conflating the experiences of women (i. e. , white, straight, middle class) as the experiences of all women. Honey is invoking the duality of women’s roles during wartime as both the weak citizen men are fighting for and the strong citizen protecting the family, home, and jobs. The song “Rosie the Riveter” highlights the impressive role for women.

The chorus of the song reifies Rosie as feminine and dependent: “That little frail girl can do more than a man will do” (Evans & Loeb 1943). These kinds of sentiments echo the themes of feminine masculinity Rosie has come to be identified with. Throughout the song, Redd Evans and John Jacob Loeb (1943) describe her with delicate terms. The song praises her sacrifice and



self-abnegation, acknowledging the basis for her patriotic identity. Perhaps the most revealing part of the song is the connection of Rosie to her boyfriend Charlie and her duty to protect him by working in the factory. Evans and Loeb see Rosie in relationship to men and masculine expressions of citizenship clearly feminizing her role in the war effort and confining her to domestic ideology. They clearly see Rosie as the *weak* citizen as they refer to her as a *girl* throughout the song (i. e. , “there’s a *girl* who’s really putting them to shame,” she was as proud as a *girl* could be,” and “that *girl* really has sense”).<sup>2</sup> Here they are infantilizing Rosie through their use of language of girl. This points to a contradiction of the language actually making Rosie smaller while also attempting to elevate her as a patriotic women of sacrifice with service to masculine citizenship.

Probably the most effective political investments Rosie the Riveter made is during World War II were the ideation of self-abnegation, feminine dependence on male authority, and the disruption of family life as impermanent. Several examples of this can be seen in Elaine Tyler May’s (1988) *Homeward Bound*:

The war in general has given women new status, new recognition. . . . Yet it is essential that women avoid arrogance and retain their femininity in the face of their own new status. . . . In her new independence she must not lose her humanness as a woman. She may be the woman of the moment, but she must watch her moments. " . . . When women work, earn, and spend as much as men do, they are going to ask for equal rights with men. But the right to behave like a man [means] also the right to misbehave as he does. The decay of established moralities [comes] about as a by-product. " In this remarkable passage, the authors state as if it were a scientific formula their opinion that social freedom and employment for women would cause sexual laxity, moral decay, and the deconstruction of the family. (May, 1988, pp. 68-69).

Many saw women’s roles in relationship to men’s. In the last several lines this passage shows clear distinctions in what it meant to be a woman, specifically a white, middle class, straight

<sup>2</sup> Research on referring to “girls” instead of “women” is a limit of language that acts as a signifier of power. Derrida.

woman during the war. Here, expressions of authority are granted for men while women are asked to give to their country and ask for nothing in return.

At the end of World War II, Rosie becomes a symbol of nostalgia for women. Rosie speaks to women through media messages and subtle visual symbolism. Honey (1984) explains, “the traumas of the depression and the war years had come to produce in most citizens a desire for stability” (p. 3). As a result, many women old enough to work during the war returned to domesticity in the postwar era, while the next generation of women that would have missed the opportunity to work increased entry into the labor force, particularly in jobs focusing on clerical work and manufacturing (Bellou & Cardia, 2013). This move established an understanding for Rosie’s shift to represent feminism and equality during the women’s rights movement.

The legacy of Rosie the Riveter’s feminization of World War II is clearly visible when the iconic character is placed in context. Rosie’s story is the exception, not the rule. The message during World War II was one directed towards white, middle class women and later representative of white feminism. The messages of Rosie the Riveter and wartime propaganda also speak to issues of race. The “racist treatment of black women in propaganda demonstrates that their gender failed to outweigh the negative stereotypes attached to their race” (Honey, 1984, p. 214).

Rosie the Riveter’s messages travel through history and they also very clearly travel through popular culture, which is crucial to understanding how Rosie acted as a metaphor for the role of women has been malleable across space and time from organizing the Greatest Generation to second wave feminists. Rosie’s presence in history education curriculum illustrates the legacy of her regenerative strategies to mobilize women on behalf of World War II and later the women’s rights movement.

### **Being the Secret: Girls of Atomic City's Presence in History and History Education**

Like Rosie the Riveter, the messages that the women of Atomic City have to offer have been obscured. Unlike Rosie, it hasn't been through misappropriation and in the service of masculinity, but instead simply in the secrecy of not only the work, but also the lives of the men and women, as well as the corporate interests that funded and maintained the Secret City that would be the beginning of the military industrial complex. On August 6, 1945, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the cities of Hiroshima and three days later on Nagasaki, ending the war and causing the deaths of approximately 120,000 Japanese citizens. Although many names are tied to the controversial decision to drop the atomic bomb, like Harry Truman and J. Robert Oppenheimer, the women that enriched the uranium for the atomic bomb have been kept a secret, probably due to the fact that the individuals living in Atomic City were not aware of the work they were doing. However, it is important to note that the expressions of citizenship in Oak Ridge closely resemble that of the rest of the country and perhaps reveal the tensions of gender and citizenship more so than other areas of the country at that time because its secrecy allowed for more overt distinctions of how gender roles were defined.

For example, Ebb Cade was forced to navigate fear, secrecy, and racism in his experiences at Oak Ridge. After breaking his arm and leg in a car accident, the fifty-three-year-old black man arrived at the Manhattan Project Army Hospital for what he thought would be treatment for the injuries endured during the accident. Cade was the first of eighteen individuals injected with plutonium, against his will, as part of a federally funded experiment. While tied to a bed, the scientists interviewed him about his state of health. The scientists refused to set his broken bones for five days, and during that time, they took samples to explore how his body retained plutonium. The samples were cut from his bones as well as from fifteen teeth pulled for

testing. At no point did Cade receive an explanation for what was happening. He finally escaped one night according to a nurse that discovered his empty bed the never morning. He died in 1953 of heart failure (Kiernan, 2013).

The connection between history education curriculum and women extends to the Girls of Atomic City, as feminist scholars like Mardi Schmeichal, Sandra Schmidt, Christine Woysner, and Margaret Crocco highlight the importance of gender in spreading messages about the significance of women, gay men, and men of color in expanding the deepening messages about the importance of women to the historical record. Their work also highlights how women and gay men are a force in history through critique of gender and domestic containment that circulate in the broader American culture.

The Girls of Atomic City's messages and strategies of regeneration also proliferate history and history education, though their stories are not included in prescribed curriculum. For example, Dot's experience in losing her brother at Pearl Harbor provides insight into how women could willingly engage in so much uncertainty by signing up for an unknown job, at an undisclosed location, and for an indeterminate amount of time. One of the most compelling accounts at Oak Ridge is by Dot, who tells of her reaction when confronted for the first time about her participation in making the bomb:

But one woman in particular strode up to Dot, glaring and asked, "Aren't you ashamed you helped build a bomb that killed all those people?" The truth was, Dot did have conflicting feelings. There was sadness at the loss of live, yes, but that wasn't the only thing she felt. They had all been so happy, so thrilled, when the war ended. Didn't any of these people remember that? And yes, Oak Ridgers felt horrible when they saw the pictures of the aftermath in Japan. Relief. Fear. Joy. Sadness. Decades later, how could she explain this to someone who had no experience with the Project, someone who hadn't lived through that war, let alone lived in Oak Ridge? Dot knew the woman wanted a simple answer, so she gave her one. "Well," she said, "they killed my brother. (Kiernan, 2013, p. 305)

Highlighting the voices and experiences of these men and women of Atomic City convey messages to the extent of which femininity and whiteness mediated the lives and membership of those represented in the curricular interventions.

### **Blurring Boundaries: Gender, Civic Participation in the Military, and Gay and Lesbian GIs**

As a framing discourse of the new millennium, gay and lesbian GIs provide a new series of images and rhetorical inventions that have not been previously explored or included in history education. Where some readers may look to these curricular interventions for representations of how “things really were,” this book has used the texts within it for a critical evaluation of the past, attempting to understand the conceptions of women and gay men attempting to build identity while conforming to societal norms. Nationalism and domestic containment became increasingly confrontational, particularly as repression of women and gay men increased.

Certainly accounts of gay and lesbian GIs act as a catalyst in the production of history regarding World War II military issues centering upon body politics, sexuality, military policy, and nationalism. In recent military policy, women and gay men have been the source of contestation. For example, it was not until January 2016 that the military expanded roles for women to enter combat positions. Many of these policies are extensions of issues that were first confronted during World War II.

Additionally, a group of scholars including Allan Berube, George Chauncey, Brock Thompson, and C. J. Pascoe created an ever-growing database that showcase the lives of queer men and women in U.S. history. The contributions of these researchers have been ignored by textbooks, curricula, traditional historians, and policy makers as forces in history. Nonetheless, these histories continue to resonate with concepts of gender, citizenship, and nationalism in

American culture. Berube characterizes queer participation in World War II as a “struggle with the government” for “justice and equal rights” (p. 7). As the gay and lesbian veterans look back, they champion their legacy as a site of liberation towards the struggle for justice.

Like Rosie the Riveter and the Girls of Atomic City, history education curriculum should embrace the popular histories portrayed in *Coming Out Under Fire* as a force in history and an example of expressions of citizenship that underscore sites of power that gender construction creates and reproduces. Many people, like Berube, see gay and lesbian soldiers as forces in history. Even though the most invisible, these stories harness the most potential for teaching for conceptual change because their stories haven't been sanitized by the master narrative.

This use of the genre of popular histories is vast and includes opportunities to excavate forces in history that disrupt the certainty of history, nationalism, citizenship, and gender. Popular histories teach a kind of critical literacy about gender in history that traditional curriculum texts deliberately ignore. Mary Kay Tetreault (1982) contends that we need “to find ways to apply new conceptualizations of women's history to a history that relates men and women's experiences” (p. 43). To recognize how women and men of various subjectivities (race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. ) experience the impact of various forces and institutions differently is to broaden what historians typically consider a force in history.

The legacy of gay and lesbian GIs in regenerating conceptions of World War II appears all over cultural studies and microhistories, which help to bolster access to these political actors as a force in history and as leaders in the pre-cursor for the gay rights movement. In the context of the current debates of American history curriculum, fringe histories like the accounts of gay and lesbian GIs have also been the subject of agitation by psychiatrists, which sought to use gender stereotypes to screen for homosexuals enlisting for the war.

By examining expressions of citizenship that disrupt the norm in U.S. history curriculum, we can see the legacies of each curricular intervention as a strategy to regenerate and reconceptualize not only the construction of World War II, by how it is articulated in messages of curriculum. Rosie the Riveter embodies the double function for women and emphasizes impermanence and self-abnegation are reflected in the stories of ordinary women in their daily lives during World War II. Like Rosie, the women of Atomic City have been obscured, but in different ways. We can see the legacies of their city participations, as well as civic estrangement as part of the larger national identity in American culture. Popular histories are circulating these interesting and complex stories, which is broadening the window with which we see the past.

Finally, *Coming Out Under Fire* is understood as a gendered expression of citizenship in U.S. history dedicated to nationalism and sacrifice for their country. In both spaces, queer citizenship is positioned in relationship to an authorizing discourse. However, understanding these experiences in relationship to each other illuminates the potential contributions of including these taboo stories in history classrooms.

### **The Constraints of the War on Social Studies**

*A Nation at Risk* employed strong nationalist language and war rhetoric regarding the effectiveness of public schools in America (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Japan's strong economy at the time was used to carve an Otherness to construct an enemy with which the public could unify towards a collective aim that ended up being the birth of the Standardization movement in the United States. This same rhetoric was used again by Lynne Cheney following the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> to promote civic education as a means to "maintain our democratic U.S. society" as paramount to the study of history (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006, p. 259).

The standardization movement that began in the 1980s became preoccupied with economic prosperity as the perception emerged that America's schools were failing after the release of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983. These topics were part of a series of positionalities (i. e. , war metaphors, free market ideology, individualism) that helped to amplify educational reformers' use of the crisis rhetoric which served as a constant critique of student achievement and school performance. The framing of Sputnik during the Cold War demonstrated the ways in which the economic functions of power in the 1980s and 1990s (via educational opportunity and human capital) served in similar ways to how *A Nation at Risk* shifted attention from how education could be used to achieve equality to how education acts as a means of economic competition (Johanningmeier, 2009). The Standardization Movement that began in the 1980s employed a vernacular that highlighted student achievement while neglecting training for civic participation perpetuated by high stakes testing (McIntush, 2000). These postures were meant to justify decisions over what ought to be taught in classrooms by occupations dominated by white heteronormative men that had no background or experience in education.

The representation of historical events and political actors in curriculum that emerged from this political milieu focused on the relationship between citizenship and nationalism, particularly during times of war. With the congressional decision to pass *No Child Left Behind* (2001), momentum increased for standardization of curriculum and high stakes testing, particularly in Math and English, which left significant implications for the social studies discipline.

In many ways, the political climate in the U.S. since *A Nation at Risk* has been one that has exploited the same fears, ignorance, and privilege that fueled civic participation in the 1940s.



With the passage of No Child Left Behind and the continuation of federal control through Race to the Top, the most vulnerable citizens in the U.S. are now the students receiving public education. Political reformers organizing around issues of education and gender/race/class are branded un-American. Since 2001, discourse on patriotism has been clouded by fear of “terrorism” and an emphasis on “security” and “social control” have shifted education towards an insular model that position history in dualities in the same way gender did for women and gay men during World War II. The intensity of American nationalism furthers the obfuscation surrounding fringe history.

In the framework of this dissertation, the war on education has affected all those whose writings seek to regenerate American history. Of course the three curricular interventions are part of a collective that underscore the politics of gender. All three interventions pose a threat to essentialist views of history, spheres, gender, citizenship, and nationalism. Most obviously, in the case of queer soldiers, the discourse framing gay culture is changing as policies regarding gay marriage reconceptualize homonationalism in American culture.

From this framework, we can see the continuity of misogyny and repression that has characterized gender in the United States and which continues to give rise to feminist agitation. Ultimately, these three curricular interventions help to contribute helpful, albeit complex strategies to teach for conceptual change in history education.

### **Writing American History, Rebuilding Expressions of Citizenship, and Recentering the History Classroom**

The autobiographies of Rosie the Riveter, Girls of Atomic City, and gay and lesbian GIs demonstrate how women and gay men have responded to their exclusion and inclusion at various times and places in history and how their conceptions of World War II have helped to re-frame

how we conceptualize and interpret the past. Scholars would be wise to remember that gender and citizenship were major forces shaping World War II in the 1940s. The women's movement, civil rights movement, and gay movement are all significant elements in the aftermath of World War II.

There is no doubt that the oppositional politics of social studies education continues to be a source of debate. However, the strength of the conceptual change versus rote memorization of "facts" continues to be a permanent feature of the American educational debates. The state has always privilege those in power to determine what gets taught in history. The political and rhetorical orientation of critical thinking and teaching for conceptual change makes a more confrontational posture inevitable as the young women and gay men encountered more and more efforts of the state to undermine and destroy organizing efforts.

Consequently, this dissertation has attempted to trace how the rhetorical confrontation of nationalism and domestic containment influence the experiences of women and gay men. Centering gender as a primary space necessary in the interrogation of the semiotics and imaginary of nationalism and domestic containment, I have endeavored to demonstrate how nationalism and "common sense" have been co-constitutive discourses, constantly shaping and reshaping one another through rhetorical and political action and reaction. Constant across time is the fact that quite often agents of the state have worked against equality efforts, complicating and sometimes foreclosing deliberative avenues for change. The private, invisible space that women and gay men have occupied are rhetorical resources that have been used to give insights into their inclusion and exclusion as citizens. Its symbols, signs, and images have become more and more helpful as the conservative right attempts to mask American history in education. Rather than providing a traditional, masculine-leaning view, the interventions in this study have

demonstrated a usefulness to confronting the universalized notions of nationalism, gender, and citizenship propagate in history and history education.

As they have written from ostracism and obfuscation, feminist historians and rhetors have understood World War II as a vital space for organizing and for theorizing new politics that harnessed gender, sexuality, and race as mobilizing tropes for mobilizing the war effort and returning to normalcy. Even at the turn of the millennium, curriculum makers have sought to use World War II's conception of nationalism, American exceptionalism, and domestic containment as a lens to continue the master narrative.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

#### Implications for Society, Practice, Policy, and Research

As stated in the opening chapter of this dissertation, the purpose of this study was to gain understanding of how women and gay men are displaced as political agents in history using gender as a category of historical analysis, using three curricular interventions as interventions to illustrate ways gender could function as a way to texture texts in U.S. history curriculum. Using data derived from a local curriculum map about World War II, it was possible to assess how curriculum functions as constitutive rhetoric to frame representations of men and women in nationalistic terms.

Given what was learned from the data, I will suggest how my findings can be used for multiple purposes: encouraging societal discourse, informing classroom practice, informing social studies education policy, and guiding future research into gender as a category of analysis in U.S. history curriculum. More specifically, I will first discuss how society will benefit from a more engaged discourse regarding gender and U.S. history curricula. Second, I will discuss how general classroom practice can be influenced and how a dialogue can be started regarding gender and U.S. history curricula. Third, I will discuss how history education policy might benefit from being more open to connections between identity politics and historical construction. In the final section, I will examine how this line of research, using gender as a category of historical analysis, can be further developed to benefit both classroom practice and social studies education policy as well as be used to continue the productive engagement of U.S. history content through the gender lens.

Before suggesting any implications that this research may propose, I would note that this approach to rhetorical history is only illustrative of ways that gender may be used in U.S. history curriculum. Any claims or generalizations are only immediately applicable to the specific example and not intended to be representative of all contexts nor to be intended as a formulaic approach. Despite the limitation of generalizability, insights may be drawn from the interventions in this study.

### **Societal Implications and Why They Matter**

Most simply put, the societal implications for this study show that there is a need for individuals to be engaged with both U.S. history content and context in order to have the opportunity for effective participation in community membership. Since World War II anchored current conceptions of nationalism, there has been a continuous attempt to imprint notions of nationalism, citizenship, gender, and domesticity as essentialist in representations of history. While there have been attempts to pull history curriculum towards a more critical approach, particularly in the form of examining dissent in U.S. history, there have also been more publically successful efforts to insulate U.S. history to represent the nation as a global hegemon while simultaneously universalizing the experiences of Americans in history. While multiple revisionist attempts have been made to encourage discourse between the master narrative and fringe histories, traditionalists opt to maintain a significant distance from a critical approach that encourages multiple perspectives in the name of patriotism. The efforts of progressive policy makers alone are not capable of combating the myth of nationalism without the support of historians, educators, and administrators, which seem reluctant to provide it.

The insight gained from this research study is that most of the representations of history did not come with an understanding of the social construction of gender. The majority of

political actors are not recognized for their multiplicity of experiences and conceptions, as described by Audre Lorde's "mythical norm" (1980) and affirmed by the majority of history curriculum. Even though World War II was a time when everyone felt like that were a part of the war movement, regardless of gender, race, class, or sexuality, the theater of war in curricular representations fail to acknowledge the continually shifting boundaries of citizenship based on gender and the interest convergence of war. I cannot say that curricular representations did not recognize the boundaries of nationalism, citizenship, or gender; only that they failed to recognize the ability for these features to have malleable boundaries. If students of U.S. history are not being taught to recognize the boundaries of nationalism, citizenship, gender, and domesticity, then history education must be held to a level of responsibility for the myth of these representations in history content. Otherwise, the discussion of gender and history would only be taking place within their own disciplines. A failure to have a dialogue between these discourses is a detriment to history, history education, gender studies, and society as a whole. Confining an open discourse about gender and history in the larger society, or the classroom, would also be just as detrimental. When we seek to limit the potential of the new generation of ideas, we seek to limit the ways in which we interpret, understand, and explain our physical and social worlds. Based on the supporting evidence provided by the curricular interventions of popular histories, there is an argument to be made that there is a need for fringe histories in history curriculum. The reality of how history is constructed is that the historiography privileges a historical record that does not include voices from the fringe.

### **Implications for Classroom Practice**

This study has implications for multiple types of classrooms. The social studies classroom is where policy meets teaching and learning. Under that distinction, I will first discuss

implications for the social studies education classroom separately from the implications for social studies education policy, which will follow in the next major section. I will consider literacy practices in content area classrooms in terms for reading interpretations and implications to literacy views as a whole with regards to disciplinary literacy practices.

Scholarship used in this study expressed strong concern for the experiences of students in the social studies classroom, in which dissenting stories are often discouraged from discussion or accessed in terms of seeking understanding within traditional social studies content. While I chose curricular interventions that were popular histories related to gender due to my concerns about the ability of history to incorporate women and gay men as political actors, my aim is not to replace the master narrative with fringe narratives, but to place gender as the center of exploration of study in U.S. history. The experiences of students in traditional history classroom focuses predominately on a single story that privileges master narratives. Social studies education has traditionally resisted the presence of the private sphere and fringe narratives on the basis of nationalism. Looking at the current practice of many social studies educators I have to ask: What are the benefits produced by the practice of ignoring a student's identity and how those differences influence how they engage with history? I answer: none. Why not consider engaging a student's struggle with conceptualizing traditional history and gender instead of ignoring the struggle?

While English/Language Arts teachers are traditionally prepared to encourage students' interpretation of fiction texts as well as to critically read non-fiction texts, social studies teachers typically receive a minimum level of training regarding reading and literacy instructions. Rhetorical criticism is not the historical purview of social studies teachers, and, actually, it has been removed from much of ELA instruction, as well. If students are to be encouraged to access

their identities to better engage in historical content and context, then social studies education teachers must be able to identify rhetorical strategies to better engage with historical artifacts. As a former U.S. history teacher, I found that the most difficult style of interpretation my students demonstrated—one that I immediately registered as being highly suspect when attempting to understand objectively defined traditional history content—was a style that took into accounts of nationalism and citizenship. The literacy practice of Americans in historical interpretive practices has been considered legitimate by academic historians that identify and explore primary sources as the most historically significant. The acceptance of primary sources as the primary analytical practice has significant implications to my study and the social studies classroom. It is a strategy that students are expected to adopt to be considered competent as historical knowledge.

While my study did not focus exclusively on historiography and the methodological process of determining historical significance, it did not preclude the possibility that alternative processes of historiography exist. In point of fact, Linda Kerber (1988) established her interpretive strategies for historiography between history and gender that included a reliance on nationalism and citizenship through exploring the construction of spheres. Many historical actors do not fit the mythical norm of American nation-ness and citizenship. This was ultimately displayed in Joan Scott's work on gender as a category of historical analysis. Scott focused on gender as an integral piece to history and maintained that history is fragmented without considering gender in its analysis.

The interpretation strategies that that could be used in the social studies classroom are wide ranging. Despite the vast array of possibilities, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in literacy do not cover such a breadth of possibilities for interpreting content area texts, especially popular histories. Instead, the CCSS pertaining to literacy in the content areas promote



an interpretation of texts that promotes literalism of texts (Juzwik, 2014). Interpreting texts using rhetorical strategies is not included in the CCSS. “The promotion of literalism by the CCSS restricts the possibilities of expanding the types of text materials at best, and the interpretation of materials at worst” (Hutchins, 2014, p. 169). In other words, students are not receiving critical skills to interact with the texture of texts. As a social studies and literacy educator, I see a place of tension in placing value in one type of content text over another. While this is not an unheard of practice, it is one that is contradictory to the aims of social studies education to cultivate active citizens in a participatory democracy.

### **Gender as a Benefit for the Social Studies Classroom**

The implications for classroom practice are widespread. That is especially important when considering the narrowed focus of the CCSS. Due to the nuance of perspective-taking, there are no strategies that can be universalized in a social studies classroom because the identities of students as well as the content being investigated are not themselves universalized. The strategies employed in my dissertation point to issues that are presently found in the social studies classroom, such as master narratives privileging a single story, history content being seen as a synecdoche, and the lacquering of misconceptions to reify identity as solid.

Strategies that were displayed throughout the curricular interventions can best be understood by examining them in relation to the identity markers imposed through cultural messages within the context of World War II. Gender acts a starting point into investigating these markers, but it is not the only way to do so. Chandler (2015) utilized critical race theory as a method for investigating historical artifacts. Sandra Schmidt (2012) has utilized space as another method to explore identity markers and cultural experiences in a historical context.

These studies provide further examples of ways to verb history in a social studies classroom in similar ways to using gender as a category of historical analysis.

Using gender as a category of historical analysis provides strategies that demonstrate opportunities to explore contexts using a different historiography than traditionally used by academic historians and traditional history classrooms. By demonstrating these strategies for exploring gender through history, students are given a wider set of skills for reading strategies that can be transitioned from ELA to content area classrooms and are also valuable resources for media literacy in a cultural time of deep tension between competing ideological forces.

### **Implications for Social Studies Education Policy**

Outside of the instructional practices of social studies teachers in their own classrooms, social studies education policy stands in the area between where historical construction and identity politics are most engaged through teachers, school administrators, district officials, and state, national, or private social studies organizations interested in social studies education policy. Social studies education and gender are never far from the national forefront of attention due to the myth of conflict being continually perpetuated through framework debates.

Throughout state legislatures across the nation, U.S. history education is constantly challenged for not allowing the instruction of fringe histories. Proponents on both sides, those that want to teach exceptionalism in isolation and those that wish to integrate alternative histories and dissenting narratives, square off as if they are the only two sides in the debate on policy-making involving social studies education standards. These two contingents are not the only choices, yet they dominate the discussions due to a myth of conflict.

Many other stakeholders are not represented in most of these debates, such as teachers, parents, students, and feminist historians. They are proponents of an informed social studies

education policy that no longer disregards the views and values of cultural differences based on gender, race, class, age ethnicity, or religion. In no other content area are students expected to abandon their identity or their experiences for the sake of learning a mythical norm or to simply avoid the discussion of identity markers as is exhibited when learning history, particularly U.S. history. Based on my own personal experience in teaching, many teachers ask or expect students to bracket their own experiences for the sake of instruction, a practice I view as a moral failure. Similarly, many teachers ignore the teaching of women and gay men because they do not want or know how to handle multiple viewpoints, and are told not to engage in any discussion that would be perceived as “controversial,” or flat out dismiss students’ identities as legitimate. Any or all of these behaviors on the part of teachers simply perpetuate the myth of conflict between gender and history education.

Many teachers of social studies recognize that it is not culturally beneficial to have students taught U.S. history in a way that does not address identity politics. During my experiences with social studies education programs in my undergraduate and graduate studies, I was never exposed to research pointing at these beliefs, possibly because I was being trained in social studies education and such research was counter to traditionalist views and many academic historians. Even so, I could have stated that I knew what the results would be based on my time teaching in public schools with diverse students. In these settings, alternative histories were not to be discussed, and for this reason, students felt ignored or not valued in their interpretations. Providing professional development to in-service teachers on gender, or other identity markers and alternative methods of historiography will assist in removing the disturbing trend in social studies classrooms of shutting down discussion involving identity.

Even with the calls for engagement of cultural understanding and historical understanding in students' social studies education, there is no evidence that the direct instruction in gender as a category of historical analysis is being called for in history education. The practice of teaching dissenting perspectives is a counterstrategy social studies education policy has employed as a way to put gender to rest due to there not being a method for effectively teaching the influence of gender in U.S. history. The idea for proponents who embrace the inclusion of dissenting narratives is that it would doom the idea of teaching traditional history when students come to learn that U.S. history is fragmented and how power construction has obscured the voices of so many. The proposed idea of teaching gender as a category of historical analysis in this manner does little beyond close off opportunities for productive engagement with students who would favor a productive discussion that the curriculum constructed in this dissertation would attempt to provide.

My research can inform social studies education by making clear that a development of dialogue for the social studies classroom needs to take place, but that it does not have to promote master narratives over fringe histories or the other way around. This policy reform should also not hinder the understanding and expression of those students for whom gender is a valuable part of their life experience and framework for understanding their world, including their understanding of identity in the culture of the United States. By using gender as a category of historical analysis in social studies education classrooms, the options for bridging possible gaps between traditional and progressive engagement with U.S. history content becomes achievable for social studies educators in a way that can respect the complex and varying identities of their students. When students are permitted to engage their cultural identities in the classroom or in an academic understanding with U.S. history content, they engage in an active form of learning.

### **Implications for Gender as a Category of Historical Analysis in Social Studies Education**

The implications for future research involving social studies and gender among social studies educators and learners, as well as with using gender as a category of historical analysis are vast and still in the infancy stage. Beyond this research and Mardi Schmeichel's (2015) and Sanda Schmidt's (2012) research involving social studies and gender, there is a sizable gap in research into where gender can be incorporated into all classrooms. This research was built upon the base that was established using gender as a frame in the K-12 classroom setting. To that end, the immediate growth of this research onto the K-12 classroom, specifically to the secondary education level, to expand gender as a category in social studies education is, for me, the most logical next step. The issue does arise, specifically in public schools, as to how to properly address the role of identity being discussed in the classroom. To this end, research could be directed solely to the use of gender to explore insights into how students' perceptions, interactions, and understandings with the curriculum created in this dissertation of where gender and history interact.

This research would be interesting to myself, particularly if school administrators can be convinced of the benefits of research in student engagement with artifacts that are not directly tied to standardized testing. An issue here is that this goal is not directly compatible with the current CCSS being implemented nationally. The argumentative rubric for CCSS privileges single stories that the master narrative provides. When students are provided multiple viewpoints, their ability to take a definite stance becomes conflated with their engagement with historical thinking (Wright & Endacott, 2015). The CCSS argumentative rubric, as a result, does not take into account nuanced thoughts and deep understandings of multiple perspectives in its evaluation of student learning. Additionally, rhetorical criticism has been almost completely

eradicated from ELA CCSS standards, which diminished the skill level students have to engage with artifacts for deep understanding.

Future research with students using gender as a category of historical analysis could further trace the development of students' interpretation and accessing of historical content and context. Currently there is not a very much work that expands beyond looking at women and categorizing their involvement as historical actors in history. Furthering research on gender, specifically, would expand and deepen opportunities to provide textures to texts used in the social studies classroom.

### **Conclusion**

The future for research in all the areas that this study has engaged is expansive. However, it hinges on being open to the possibilities of gender's usefulness in constructing history. Doing so forces the recognition that gender is socially constructed and used as a means to structure power. The exploited conflict between nationalism and patriotism through only exploring the master narrative is a myth. Allowing students to see their relationship with U.S. history without just seeing citizenship through the mythical norm encourages engagement in the history classroom and also in communities. Gender as a category of historical analysis educates students on the myth of conflict as unsubstantiated except in the view of traditionalists that do not take into account the social construction of cultural differences in identity politics.

While there may be hesitation in the public education sector, as well as in policy-making, to embrace the encouragement of constructing history through the lens of gender, this study has demonstrated by using three curricular interventions in the form of curriculum, that gender acts as a constitutive rhetoric to make tangible the narratives of women and gay men. The ultimate result is that the disengagement of students in history can prevent the development of new

knowledge in both the classroom and through policy by stalling any shifts in paradigmatic thought regarding U.S. history education. This study acts as a challenge to any attempt that stalls thoughtful examination of U.S. history and encourages an engagement with more than merely learning new history, but verbing history.

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## Appendix A

Source 1

### Creating an Identity Chart

Use the following steps to create an identity chart for yourself:

1. Draw a circle in the middle of a blank piece of paper or page in your journal.
2. Begin with the words or phrases that describe the way you see yourself. Add those words and phrases to your chart.
3. Most people define themselves by using categories important to their culture. They include not only gender, age, and physical characteristics but also ties to a particular religion, class, neighborhood, school, and nation. Consider if any of these characteristics belong on your chart.
4. You may wish to add new categories to your identity chart. How much of your identity do you create and how much of it is determined by things beyond your control? What other factors influence your identity? What can you add that does not fall into any of the categories listed above?
5. How does the way that other people think about you impact your identity? Consider multiple perspectives. Think about these questions as you think about what else to add to your chart:
  - What labels would others attach to you?
  - Do they see you as a leader or a follower? A conformist or a rebel?
  - Are you a peacemaker, a bully, or a bystander?
  - How do society's labels influence the way you see yourself? The kinds of choices you and others make each day? For example, if a person is known as a bully, how likely is he or she to live up to that label?

(Example Chart: <http://www.pbs.org/daringtoresist/qprologinnoncn.html>)

(Sigward, 2014, p. 11)

Source 2

## How Gender Affects us and What Can We Do

### Part I: Sex

Olympic Testing Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Kyvm9uYgCM>

“Woman Enough to Win?” <https://thesocietypages.org/specials/sex-testing/>

“The Olympics: Break the Gender Binary?” <http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/exchange/critical-feminist-studies-2013/maya/olympics-break-gender-binary>

### Part II: Gender A Rainbow Creation

Author Lori Duron and her husband, Matt, have two children, both boys. Duron writes about the reaction of her young son, C. J., the first time he saw a Barbie doll:

For days after C. J. discovered her, Barbie never left his side. When I’d do a final bed check at night before I retired for the evening to watch reality television and sneak chocolate when no one was looking, I’d see his full head of auburn hair sticking out above his covers. Next to him there would be a tiny tuft of blonde hair sticking out as well.

The next time we were at Target near the toy aisle—which I’ve always tried to pass at warp speed so the kids don’t notice and beg me to buy them something—C. J. wanted to see “Barbie stuff.” I led him to the appropriate aisle and he stood there transfixed, not touching a thing, just taking it all in. He was so overwhelmed that he didn’t ask to buy a single thing. He finally walked away from the aisle speechless, as if he had just seen something so magical and majestic that he needed time to process it.

He had, that day, discovered the pink aisles of the toy department. We had never been down those aisles; we had only frequented the blue aisles, when we ventured down the toy aisles at all. As far as C. J. was concerned, I had been hiding half the world from him.

I felt bad about that, like I had deprived him because of my assumptions and expectations that he was a boy and boys liked boy things. Matt and I noticed that C. J. didn’t really like any of the toys we provided for him, which were all handed down from his brother. We noticed that C. J. didn’t go through the normal boy toy addictions that Chase [C. J.’s older brother] had gone through: he couldn’t care less about balls, cars, dinosaurs, superheroes, The Wiggles, Bob the Builder, or Thomas the Tank Engine. What did he like to play with? We didn’t worry ourselves much about finding the answer (a case of the secondborn child not getting fussed over quite like the first-born); we trusted that in time something would draw him in. Which it did. It just wasn’t at all what we were expecting.

At about the eighteen- to twenty-four-month mark of a child's life, the genderneutral toys disappear and toys that are marketed specifically to boys or to girls take over. We didn't realize it until later, but that divide in the toy world and our house being filled with only boy toys left C. J. a little lost at playtime. We and the rest of society had been pushing masculine stuff on him and enforcing traditional gender norms, when all he wanted was to brush long blonde hair and dress, undress, and re-dress Barbie . . . .

Reflecting on C. J. 's identity, Duron concludes:

. . . On the gender-variation spectrum of super-macho-masculine on the left all the way to super-girly-feminine on the right, C. J. slides fluidly in the middle; he's neither all pink nor all blue. He's a muddled mess or a rainbow creation, depending on how you look at it. Matt and I have decided to see the rainbow, not the muddle. But we didn't always see it that way.

Initially, the sight of our son playing with girl toys or wearing girl clothes made our chests tighten, forged a lump in our throats, and, at times, made us want to hide him. There was anger, anxiety, and fear. We've evolved as parents as our younger son has evolved into a fascinating, vibrant person who is creative with gender. Sometimes, when I think of how we behaved as parents . . . I'm ashamed and embarrassed.

### Connection Questions

1. What is the difference between the toys in the "pink aisle" and those in the "blue aisle"? What assumptions do the toys in those aisles reflect about gender?
2. How do you explain the anxiety, anger, and fear Duron describes feeling when C. J. started playing with "girl toys"?
3. How do you respond to the assumptions people make about your gender? To what extent do you embrace and reflect them? To what extent do you reject them?

1 Taken from Mockingbird Unit created by Facing History and Ourselves

2 Lori Duron, *Raising my Rainbow: Adventures in Raising a Fabulous, Gender Creative Son* (New York: Broadway Books, 2014), 9-10.

### Part III Sexuality

1. Fill in the blank in the sentence below, then explain why you think the world needs to hear from teenagers about what you wrote down.

*“If newspapers printed articles by teenagers about \_\_\_\_\_, the world would understand what it is really like. ”*

Explanation:

2. Go to the “Coming Out” Website” and pick at least one story explore. Use the following discussion questions to guide your thinking:

(source:<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/23/us/20110523-coming-out.html>)

What strikes you most about the stories in “Coming Out”?

How did these stories affect you? Which moments did you find most moving or surprising?

What commonalities exist across all of the stories shared in this feature?

Why do you think these teenagers decided to share their stories with an enormous audience on NYTimes.com? How do you imagine that experience has been for them?

Why do you think The Times decided to create this feature?

What impact might this feature have on the LGBT community? On the people who view and read it? Will different groups interpret these stories in different ways? How so?

How does the experience of looking and listening to the audio slide shows compare with reading the reader-submitted narratives? What is the effect of listening to the featured teens’ voices and seeing them and scenes from their lives, as opposed to reading first-person personal essays without sounds or images?

What questions do you have after reading and listening to these stories?

(Lesson plan source: [http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/05/24/on-coming-out-exploring-the-stories-of-gay-teenagers/?\\_r=0](http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/05/24/on-coming-out-exploring-the-stories-of-gay-teenagers/?_r=0))

Source 3

**Visual Artifacts**

Rank the following pictures according to what you think its relevance is to World War II (1 = most relevant), then provide a brief explanation for the decisions you made.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Image</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
	Image 1	
	Image 2	
	Image 3	
	Image 4	
	Image 5	
	Image 6	
	Image 7	
	Image 8	
	Image 9	
	Image 10	
	Image 11	
	Image 12	

Image 1:

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/12/We\\_Can\\_Do\\_It!.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/12/We_Can_Do_It!.jpg)

Image 2:

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/0/02/RosieTheRiveter.jpg>

Image 3:

<http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com/.a/6a00d8341c60bf53ef017c31857c3a970b-pi>

Image 4:

[https://encrypted-tbn3.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcT277\\_OwUsHkmrS8BH96YSWnc1Lur0Av1IAkcvhqSjUnl80LWY](https://encrypted-tbn3.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcT277_OwUsHkmrS8BH96YSWnc1Lur0Av1IAkcvhqSjUnl80LWY)

Image 5:

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/a/a1/WW2\\_Iwo\\_Jima\\_flag\\_raising.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/a/a1/WW2_Iwo_Jima_flag_raising.jpg)

Image 6:

[https://encrypted-tbn1.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRXBezCz2zky2enyLPITW\\_bq9XFPsdqULSraUD\\_4rA11FT1jzUq](https://encrypted-tbn1.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRXBezCz2zky2enyLPITW_bq9XFPsdqULSraUD_4rA11FT1jzUq)

Image 7:

[http://www.ducksters.com/history/world\\_war\\_ii/atomic\\_bomb\\_nagasaki.jpg](http://www.ducksters.com/history/world_war_ii/atomic_bomb_nagasaki.jpg)

Image 8:

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/ad/Y-12\\_Shift\\_Change.jpg/1280px-Y-12\\_Shift\\_Change.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/ad/Y-12_Shift_Change.jpg/1280px-Y-12_Shift_Change.jpg)

Image 9:

[https://thesocietypages.org/socimages/files/2011/03/tumblr\\_lfyxjgCVyU1qfu6z3.jpg](https://thesocietypages.org/socimages/files/2011/03/tumblr_lfyxjgCVyU1qfu6z3.jpg)

Image 10:

[http://questgarden.com/64/19/3/080417100246/images/internment\\_camp.jpg](http://questgarden.com/64/19/3/080417100246/images/internment_camp.jpg)

Image 11:

[https://carolynyeager.net/images/PW\\_Mothers%20Movement\\_html\\_m32828bd.png](https://carolynyeager.net/images/PW_Mothers%20Movement_html_m32828bd.png)

Source 4

### Putting History into Perspective or Putting Perspective into History

The following passages are taken from textbooks regarding World War II. As you read annotate the text with any noticings, questions, connections, or reflections that come to mind.

Passage #1 “Women Join the Armed Forces”

*Women joined the armed forces, as they had done during World War I. The army enlisted women for the first time, although they were barred from combat. Many jobs in the army were administrative and clerical. Assigning women to these jobs made more men available for combat.*

*Congress first allowed women in the military in May 1942, when it established the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) and appointed Oveta Culp Hobby, and official with the War Department, to serve as its first director. Although pleased about the establishment of the WAAC, many women were unhappy it was an auxiliary corps and not part of the regular army. A little over a year later, the army replaced the WAAC with the Women’s Army Corps (WAC). Director Hobby was assigned the rank of colonel. “You have a debt and a date,” Hobby explained to those training to be the nation’s first women officers. “A debt to democracy, a date with destiny. ”*

*As early as 1939, pilot Jackie Cochran had written to Eleanor Roosevelt suggesting that women pilots could aid the war effort. The following year, Nancy Love wrote to army officials to suggest that women be allowed to deliver planes. (The air force was not yet a separate branch of the military. ) Training programs began in 1942; the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) began the next year. Although the WASPs were no longer needed after 1944, about 300 women pilots made more than 12,000 deliveries of 77 different kinds of planes.*

*The Coast Guard, the navy, and the marines quickly followed the army and set up their own women’s units. In addition to serving in these new organizations, another 68,000 women served as nurses in the army and navy.*

Passage #2 “Women in the Defense Plants”

*During the Great Depression, many people believed married women should not work outside the home, especially if they took jobs that could go to men trying to support their families. Most working women were young, single, and employed in traditional female jobs such as domestic work or teaching. The wartime labor shortage, however, forced factories to recruit married women for industrial jobs traditionally reserved for men.*

*Although the government hired nearly 4 million women, primarily for clerical jobs, the women working in the factories captured the public’s imagination. The great symbol of the campaign to hire women was “Rosie the Riveter,” A character from a popular song by the Four Vagabonds. They lyrics told of Rosie, who worked in a factory while her boyfriend served in the marines. Images of Rosie appeared on posters, in newspapers, and in magazines. Eventually 2. 5 million*

women worked in shipyards, aircraft factories, and other manufacturing plants. Working in a factory changed the perspectives of many middle-class women like Inez Saur:

*“I leaned that just because you’re a woman and have never worked is no reason you can’t learn. The job really broadened me.... I had always been in a shell; Id always been protected. But at Boeing I found a freedom and an independence I had never known. After the war I could never go back to playing bridge again, being a club woman.... when I knew there were things you could use your mind for. The war changed my life completely”*

- Quoted in *The Homefront*

*By the end of the war, the number of working women had increased from 12. 0 million to 18. 8 million. Although most women were laid off or left their jobs voluntarily after the war, their success permanently changed American attitudes about women in the workplace.*

Passage #3 “You’re in the Army Now”

*More than 60,000 men enlisted in the month after the attack on Pearl Harbor. At first, the flood of recruits overwhelmed the army’s training facilities. Many recruits had to live in tents rather than barracks. The army also experienced equipment shortages. Troops carried sticks representing guns, threw stones simulating grenades, and practiced maneuvers with trucks labeled “TANK. ”*

*New recruits were initially sent to a reception center, where they were given physical exams and injections against smallpox and typhoid. The draftees were then issued uniforms, boots, and whatever equipment was available. The clothing bore the label “G. I. ,” meaning “Government Issue,” which is why American soldiers were called GIs.*

*After taking aptitude tests, recruits went to basic training for eight weeks. They learned how to handle weapons, load backpacks, read maps, pitch tents, and dig trenches. Trainees drilled and exercised constantly and learned how to work as a team.*

*Basic training helped to break down barriers between soldiers. Recruits came from all over the country, and training together created a “special sense of kinship,” as one soldier noted. “The reason you dorm the beaches is not patriotism or bravery. It’s the sense of not wanting to fail your buddies. ”*

(Appleby, Brinkley, Broussard, McPherson, & Ritchie, n. d, pp. 718-719)



Source 5

## Overview of Propaganda

### “Gender of a Nation”

Since its beginning, the United States has idealized a shifting image of the perfect American man and woman. The early U.S. had the Founding Fathers, men of Enlightenment principles and courage in the face of tyranny, and Republican Mothers, women who kept their husbands devoted to the good of the country and raised the first generation of proper American citizens. As the U.S. grew and developed, the heroes and ideals of the nation grew and adapted with it. The iconic image of "Uncle Sam" first appeared in 1916 as a way to encourage the nation to support World War I, and the next generation of propagandists adapted it for World War II. More famously associated with World War II is "Rosie the Riveter," a figure who graced several different posters including the most famous version, "We Can Do It!" But these were simply two figures among many used to show the nation just what the American man or woman was supposed to be in wartime. As World War II ended and the Cold War began, Rosie the Riveter and G. I. Joe became the parents in the perfect nuclear family, showing the world the blissful life of capitalism and sheltering their children from the impending nuclear war. While the physical realities of World War II led to broader gender roles for men and women, the shift to a largely ideological war in the 1950s led to a narrowing of gender roles and focus on the 'nuclear family.'

While all of these ideals were meant to show the lives of everyday Americans, they were less concerned with matching reality than with creating it. As is usually the case with popular media, the people portrayed and idolized are usually benefit from privilege: they are white, heterosexual, middle-to-upper class, able-bodied, and Christian. Wartime propaganda usually addressed an audience made up of that fraction of society, at least implicitly. This was the image that the United States wanted to project to the world, which had unfortunate implications and consequences for those who did not quite fit into these ideals. By constructing an “American” way to be a man or woman, people following any other path of gender would consequently be labeled un-American. This, then, was the "gender of a nation": a fusion of patriotic symbolism and gender expression.

On both a national and individual scale, people perform gender by attempting to emulate an unreachable perfect ideal of masculinity or femininity. Judith Butler explains that much of gender, even on a personal level, is a performance done with human bodies: such acts, gestures, enactments, generally constructed, are performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. . . This also suggests that if reality is fabricated as an interior essence, that very interiority is an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse, the public regulation of fantasy through the surface politics of the body.

Gender is not so much a state of being or an identity as it is a series of gestures, images, and symbols all creating the concept of 'male' or 'female.' People create gender using their bodies, but social portrayals of gender around them also influence them greatly, because society does not accept gender expressions that are outside of acceptable norms. Nations create and enforce

gender portrayals as well, based upon the image that a nation wants its people and the rest of the world to have. Both World War II and the early Cold War are iconic periods in American culture, particularly with regards to ideals of how various Americans should embody femininity and masculinity, and are thus suited to a conversation about national gender. During the war, America needed strong, powerful, masculine citizens, male and female, to defeat the Nazis and Japanese. Once the fighting was over, however, the U.S. wanted to portray the American family, with the perfect American citizen as part of that family. Communist ideals featured the individual worker in a happy, equal workforce, with little difference between male and female workers. American ideals, in contrast, emphasized gender roles and gender relations in society, with feminine women and masculine men.

History defines twentieth century America largely by its wars: World War I begins the modern era, World War II begins as the Depression ends, and the Cold War dominates every area of life until 1991. Popular culture and historical consensus refer to the ideological conflict between democratic and communist nations as the "Cold War." The Cold War featured very few official U.S. military wars, hence the title 'cold,' but the constant barrage of talk about a potential U.S.-Soviet war and the intense amount of propaganda made it as encompassing as the war that had just ended. This is particularly true for the early years of the Cold War, colloquially known as "the Fifties," where schoolchildren practiced duck and cover drills and Senator Joseph McCarthy hunted down communists. By 1952, the U.S. had established ideological and military conflict with the Soviet Union: in 1947, the "Truman Doctrine" declared that the U.S. prevent communist expansion at all costs; in February 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy gave his famous speech on secret communists in the U.S. government, and in June 1950, the Korean War began.

While the United States had allied with the Soviet Union a few years before, now they were deadly enemies fighting for ideological domination of the globe. President Dwight D. Eisenhower took office in 1952, and throughout his presidency used a tactic called the "New Look" to change U.S. military policy. Rather than fighting battles with large armies, he instead focused on stockpiling nuclear weapons, and gave the impression to all that he would be willing to use them. He kept peace, therefore, by using the constant threat of war: no one could afford to start a military conflict with a nation that could annihilate them within hours. The U.S. shifted its primary warriors from hearty soldiers and strong factory workers to clever psychologists and subtle spies, from a full charge toward the enemy to a delicate balance between war and peace. While the physical realities of WWII led to broader gender roles for men and women, the shift to a largely ideological war in the 1950s led to a narrowing of gender roles and focus on the 'nuclear family.'

## World War II

Transforming a nation barely out of the Great Depression into a machine capable of winning a global war was not easy. World War II was clearly a total war: a war in which the entire nation, including all aspects of civilian society, had to be geared toward the war effort. Factories needed to produce ships, airplanes, and weapons for the military to send overseas, regardless of what they had produced in peacetime. Millions of Americans left home to fight and die abroad, and those who remained behind had to manage the home front on their own. Every aspect of

American life had to be beneficial to the war effort in order for the U.S. to win the war and have a country to which they could return. The government had to convince an entire country to undergo rationing, military service, dangerous factory jobs, and the financial burden of a war. In many ways, they succeeded: even by early 1942, over half of the U.S. population believed that “after finding out what each person can do. . . the government [should] have the power to tell each citizen what to do as his part in the war effort and require him to or her to do it. ”

In order to mobilize the country for total war, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Office of War Information (OWI) as a method for spreading wartime propaganda. The office, formed "in recognition of the right of the American people and of all other peoples opposing the Axis aggressors to be truthfully informed about the common war effort," would provide information and advertising for the U.S. war effort. The OWI used all available media to "adequately and accurately" deliver news of the war to the public, though it also had the power to alter and censor other media coverage of the war if secrecy was necessary. Furthermore, the OWI worked to convince the nation that every citizen, regardless of gender, should devote themselves to wartime service. Posters, radio messages, newspaper and magazine articles, and cartoons urged listeners to join military groups, take factory jobs, adjust their own lifestyle, and convince those around them to do the same.

These messages appealed to people's patriotism, showing them the perfect American man or woman and challenging them to become that ideal. Because gender played a huge role in deciding what particular part a person would have in the war effort, propaganda usually emphasized gender roles and attributes. The classic text on women and gender in World War II is Maureen Honey's *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II*. Her study focused on popular magazines and images of the time, including popular figures like Rosie the Riveter, with an emphasis on the difference between images aimed at middle-class women and those aimed at their working-class counterparts. . Knaff's approach to the issue of gender in World War II expands Honey's approach, with particular emphasis on "female masculinity," the fear of alternative sexualities, and the relationship between female and male roles in society. Both of these scholars provide excellent examinations of gender and women during World War II. By furthering their research, we can examine the ideals of women in propaganda in terms of national gender. These standards for women embodied the proper American woman of the day, the woman that the U.S. needed to win the war.

The OWI had to engage its audience without alienating them, which meant that its portrayals of men and women could not stray too far from the acceptable notions of femininity and masculinity. At the same time, the OWI had to expand gender roles, particularly for women, in order to staff factories and military units. The United States was at war, a very masculine endeavor, and so the citizens had to become as tough and manly to support it. For men, this was merely an exaggeration of existing standards, made all the more difficult by the sudden influx of women into traditional male spheres. If women were to be in factories, operating dangerous machinery and hauling heavy building materials, or in the military, working as drivers or nurses, then that would have to be the minimum standard of masculinity which men would need to surpass.

### **Becoming G. I. Joe**

Because the U.S. needed a military capable of fighting in two theatres of battle at once, wartime propaganda needed to convince American men that they wanted to fight in war. Military leaders needed to increase their troop numbers and thus would have to train new recruits for battle. This meant that a lot of the American soldiers fighting in World War II were part of the “selective service” program, drafted into military service by the government. The U.S. needed to convince the country that men ought to be off fighting, that ‘real’ men took up arms to defend their country. In a pamphlet titled “The Army and You,” given out to recently drafted men, the narrator portrays military service as the embodiment of American freedom:

Your country has selected you for a most important part in the national-defense program. You are to receive training as a soldier in the Army of the United States. Ours is an army of free men joined in a common effort to preserve those human liberties and dignities which were brought for us by the blood and sweat of earlier Americans. From village and city, from farm and office and factory, hundreds of thousands of young Americans have been selected for military service—without distinction of class, or creed, or color. The aim has been to choose those American men who have the best physical and mental qualifications to become efficient soldiers.

The American soldier is healthy, hearty, and devoted to preserving freedom— an ideal that applied, theoretically, to all American men regardless of race, class, or religion. As a country, the U.S. has always taken pride in the fairness of the American system, where all men are created equal and have the same chance of achieving success through hard work. Obviously, this was not a reflection of reality: during World War II, the U.S. government maintained segregation among troops and operated internment camps for Japanese-, this was the vision that the government wanted people to believe, especially men eligible for military service.

“American” men loved freedom above all else, and so the U.S. workers writing the pamphlet drew on this patriotic ideal to convince its audience that freedom-loving men would join the army and fight proudly. By adapting an existing nationalistic gender ideal, the U.S. created a version of manliness that best suited the country’s needs at that time.

Propaganda emphasized American male masculinity as a contrast to enemy soldiers. They fought “in a world agonized by men made mad with the lust of conquest, [while] the United States of America stands free, strong, and unafraid. . . The great nation we have built, our high standards of living, our political and religious liberties are an inspiration and an idea to free men everywhere men were strong and unafraid to fight, but unlike the German and Japanese soldiers, they were not “mad” with “lust of conquest. ” While war consumed their enemies’ minds and bodies, these soldiers remained dignified, powerful, and firmly self- controlled, because that was how the defenders of democracy and freedom ought to act. American soldiers controlled their emotions and destructive tendencies the way truly masculine men ought to do, and so American men must be masculine men.

In contrast to the masculine American men, popular depictions of enemy leaders and soldiers emphasized their feeble and pathetic nature. Artists emasculated both Hitler and Emperor Hirohito, as the example in Figure 1 displays. The soldier in the middle appears nearly twice as large as the enemy leaders, smiling with pride and confidence while the other two tremble in fear and spit in portrayals connect directly to the ideals of masculinity. The American man is self-confident, dressed in a military uniform, and standing in a wide- legged pose that makes him

seem even larger. As a soldier, actively risking his life in a physically taxing battle of strength and wit, this man is the embodiment of masculinity, which gives him and the soldiers he represents more room to defy traditional norms if he so wishes. No one would question the masculinity of a man fighting back two enemies and triumphing. The enemy men, in contrast, seem almost childlike in comparison, like tiny little boys who have been caught misbehaving and now face the terrifying prospect of the principal's office. While the artist did not present them in a precisely feminine manner, neither man could qualify as 'masculine' in their current physical and emotional condition.

While artists portrayed Americans as manlier than both enemy leaders, contrasting the depictions of Emperor Hirohito with that of American men show that American masculinity contained heavy racially coding. In the previously-referenced drawing, the artist used racial caricatures in the portrayal of Hirohito that are absent in Hitler. The emphasis on racial features in images of Japanese enemies began early on in the war. In late December 1941, Life magazine even ran an article explaining how to distinguish between the Chinese (allies) and the Japanese (enemies) based largely on distinctive facial features. radicalized portrayals of enemy masculinity appeared in other types of media. The OWI released a series of three films about "Our Enemy: The Japanese" that attempted to explain the enemy to the American public. The Japanese army, whose "primitive moral code" inspired their moral code, needed a full two years simply to "learn how to take care of [themselves]." The narrator noted with disdain that Japanese men were, on average, shorter and lighter than American men and thus need to "compensate for [their] small size with fanaticism." These statements contrast with those about American men, as portrayed above, who fought for ethical principles with a rugged individual spirit and great courage.

While America supposedly chose men for selective service without regard to race, the country tied race and masculinity tightly together. Wartime propaganda depicted men of color, particularly Asian men, as silly, weak, and foolish. It portrayed Japanese men in a very feminine light, as delicate individuals who could not take care of themselves, much like a damsel in distress or a silly little girl. Most American soldiers shown in propaganda were white, drawn with distinctly Caucasian features. These were the men who were masculine and tough, the proper embodiment of American manhood, and they were certainly not men of color. Because the American national male ideal implied whiteness, gender and race became inherently linked.

### **Accepting G. I. Jane**

While women could not fight in combat units, plenty of women served in the U.S. military during the war. Groups like the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAC/WAAC) and Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services (WAVES) allowed women who wanted to join the military. People found female military participation highly controversial, particularly at the beginning of the war. Military service has always been a masculine endeavor, and women traditionally did not serve in those roles. However, the U.S. needed every helping hand in wartime, and so wartime propaganda set about making female military members respectable. One such poster (Figure 2) shows a respectable-looking grey-haired mother holding her son and daughter, declaring that she is "proud of her two soldiers." The artist depicts her in uniform, both looking equally like upstanding members of the military and as devoted children. Even this ordinary, kindly-looking mother can support her son and her daughter in the military, the poster

implies, so other parents can safely send their daughters into military service without worrying that she will lose all social respectability and shame them. Female soldiers could make even the most traditional mother proud by joining the army and remaining a dutiful daughter at the same time. This line of propaganda suggested that they would be serving both family and country at once, and nothing could be more American than that.

Female soldiers had to walk a fine line between their status as inherently masculine military personnel and the feminine persona that proper women needed to embody.

Knaff argued quite convincingly that World War II brought the concept of female masculinity to the forefront of discussions on gender roles, though the term ‘female masculinity’ came later. People feared that the images in wartime propaganda, especially those concerning women in the military, “[had] a certain ‘queerness,’ as having encouraged a ‘butch’ quality in women, revealing or perhaps pushing them towards lesbianism. While contemporary society never accepted openly gay women, it could tolerate women who preferred a more masculine dress or attitude because such traits matched the atmosphere in the military and war factories. The poster “Do Your Part, Join the WAC” (Figure 3) displayed the contrast between gender presentations. It shows a WAC member standing proudly in a stiff military stance, gazing sternly off into the distance as troops march behind her in the background. The artist portrayed her in the same manner that male soldiers traditionally posed, and no less masculine than the male soldiers behind her. Both genders are fighting the war together in the armed services, but this woman, with her fitted jacket, skirt, and stockings, remains visibly female. The poster does not suggest that women must try to become men to fight, but rather that there is a place for female bodies in masculine areas: that American women have a place in the military.

### **Active Duty on the Homefront**

Because the military was the most patriotic way to serve their country, American civilians tried to transform their homefront service into a mirror of the military roles. For men who either could not or did not join the military, and for the majority of women, who remained civilians during the war, homefront operations became part of American defense. One of the foremost duties of a civilian wanting to help the country was to join the various volunteer services, particularly those that helped to fund the war through the sales of war bonds or other fundraising organizations.

Fundraising groups often paralleled the jobs of their workers with those of soldiers fighting abroad. The National War Fund, a government-endorsed group working in accord with the President’s Relief Control board, sent out a guide to workers entitled “Marching as [sic] to War.” Workers, the guide said, should “think of the American fighting man, as you start your job for your War Fund. . . what makes the American fighting man what he is, what wins battles, is his pride in himself, his outfit, and his cause. You’re not out begging. You’re not out on any casual mission. You’re a leader. . . Though male workers for the National Fund did not do the same fighting as the soldiers, they still maintained their masculinity. Men who could not fight in the war in a traditional manner could still be tough and manly, fighting the war back home with similar traits. Civilians could be proud leaders out on serious missions, just like the soldiers they idolized during wartime. They could embody the same American maleness that government officials lauded in the soldiers despite remaining in a more domestic environment.

For civilian women, homefront activism embodied the patriotic struggle of the nation while providing a domestic setting that reinforced their feminine nature. Women, too, could embody the masculine aspects of the military even on homefront, working for an entirely respectable cause. They would fight like the soldiers abroad, but focusing on a domestic war for their loved ones in battle, often their husbands and sons. One example of this is the poster displayed at the War Bond Rally (Figure 4). The woman in the poster scolds viewers as she cradles her infant, declaring that she gave a man, surely the viewer could buy war bonds. Another federal publication focused on the importance of fixed prices for certain foods during wartime, telling "every housewife" that "it is up to you as a good wartime shipper to call any mistake in a price to the attention of your storekeeper. " In both cases, the patriotic duty of every American woman is heavily associated with domesticity and family, showing that national duty applied to even the most feminine of realms. The women off in the military used female masculinity to show their patriotism, but women at home could use more traditional fields to show theirs. The possibilities of the proper American women expanded far beyond the traditional realms, but they did not exclude those areas when it came to national gender.

### **Rosie the Riveter**

While the iconic "Rosie the Riveter" poster is ubiquitous today, contemporary portrayals of factory women in propaganda were far more varied. J. Howard Miller created the original version of Rosie and her slogan "We Can Do It!," the one most famous today, as part of a Westinghouse factory campaign to encourage female workers. Workers at the Westinghouse factories knew the poster well, but the outside world saw little of it. The more famous image at the time was Norman Rockwell's cover of the Saturday Evening Post, picturing a muscular woman with a sandwich and rivet gun stepping on a copy of Mein Kampf. The model for Rockwell's Rosie, a woman named Mary Doyle Keefe, told the press many years later that the picture was largely fictional: she had been a petite and thin teenager, holding a lightweight fake gun, and Rockwell had actually "called and apologized for making [her] so large. " These posters were unrelated, just part of a whole series of Rosie the Riveter types— the woman crying "We can do it!" is not explicitly named Rosie, like Rockwell's version is— but the stock figure of a female factory worker during World War II tended to be nicknamed "Rosie the Riveter" because of the famous 1943 song by that name.

Artists portrayed female factory workers with a mix of feminine and masculine characteristics as evidence that these women could perform masculine duties while remaining proper women. 'Rosie' was a muscular woman in her portrayal, even when the model was not. She was, as the song went, a "little girl [that] will do more than a male will do. " But in the song Rosie had a boyfriend Charlie she was trying to keep safe, and many of the posters explicitly gave the woman a husband. In one such poster (Figure 6), the artist appeals to both patriotic women and men. The proud factory worker, dressed in overalls but with a face full of makeup, declares that her husband supports her in the war effort, a fact which makes her proud. Because many men felt uneasy about respectable women working in factories and dressing in trousers, posters like this were used to show that factory work was still acceptably feminine and heterosexual.

As with the portrayal of military women, artists and writers promoting female factory workers made certain to emphasize the workers' utter respectability in every other aspect.

As Knaff explains, "a woman who worked was now her country's patriotic sweetheart. " Women could justify their masculine behavior with a distinctly feminine role, keeping the homefront for their soldier overseas as they had kept house for their husband at work. For example, the woman in the poster (Figure 6) has a husband for that she works. Once again, the most respectable women in that particular category were chosen to represent the group: the women shown in factory posters emulated proper standards of femininity, class, and race. Posters advocating female wartime workers did not portray women of color and certainly did not address the incredible amounts of discrimination that women of color faced in wartime plants.

Women who transgressed social norms in one area but fit the ideals of American womanhood in every other respect could most easily justify their divergence from the norm with patriotism. This aberration, they could claim, was merely a temporary expansion of female roles to meet the needs of the country, and thus they remained true American women.

(source: Badore, Angela A. , "Gender of a Nation: Propaganda in World War II and the Atomic Age" (2014). Student Publications. Paper 210. [http://cupola.geysburg.edu/student\\_scholarship/210](http://cupola.geysburg.edu/student_scholarship/210)

Source 6

### **Passage about WWII Tactics**

#### **“Propaganda to Mobilize Women for World War II”**

by: Susan Mathis

From colonial times until the 1940s, most Americans believed that a woman's natural environment was her home and family. During wartime, however, society is interrupted and people are forced to make changes. In World War II, the government used propaganda to communicate the need for changes in women's roles for the duration of the war. These changes enabled women to enter factories by the millions, and proved that women were capable of much more than having babies and washing dishes. The propaganda certainly helped the government to achieve its goal of mobilizing American women. But did it have enough impact to bring about a lasting change in gender roles?

#### **The Need for Working Women**

Government propaganda during World War II was responsible for much of the change in society's acceptance of women in the workplace. Posters, radio programs, magazine articles, and advertisements showed women in overalls with greasy hands during these years for the first time. Through these media, the Office of War Information (OWI) and other agencies urged women to come out of their kitchens and move into the factories. They also communicated the need for women as nurses and as careful consumers.

The extensive propaganda campaigns were necessary in order to change public attitudes about women's roles left over from the previous decade. In the Depression years, the man of the household was the breadwinner, and since jobs were scarce, men usually received whatever jobs were available (Hartman 1982, 16). Middle-class married women had an especially tough time



finding a job; many states had even passed laws against married women in the workplace (U.S. Department of Labor 1946, 1). As a result, women stayed home and made a career of running the household. During World War II, the labor force lost many men to the draft, and the few poorer and single women who had already been working took over some of their jobs. But the largest untapped resource for labor was the middle-class woman at home ("More Women Must Go to Work," 74).

To mobilize these women, all of the government propaganda needed to communicate a central theme. The OWI rejected the idea of emphasizing high wages, for fear of an increase in consumer spending, leading to inflation. Instead, it concentrated on personal patriotism and emotional appeals: The patriotic appeal had two aspects, the positive "do your part" approach and the negative "a soldier may die if you don't do your part" warning. The campaign slogan "The More Women at Work-The Sooner We'll Win" promised women that their contributions could bring their men home sooner. (Rupp 1978, 156)

By mid-1942, the draft was taking from 150,000 to 200,000 men a month, and one million women were needed in the factories if production was to follow schedules ("When Women Wear the Overalls," 70). By September 1943, 10 million men had gone to war, and almost all of the remaining men were already employed: More than any other war in history, World War II was a battle of production. The Germans and Japanese had a 10-year head start on amassing weapons. . . the side with the most bombs, aircraft, and weaponry would be the side that won the war. Production was essential to victory, and women were essential to production. (Weatherford 1990, 116)

The Office of War Information was responsible for "selling" the war to women. It sent monthly guides to magazine and newspaper editors and radio commentators, suggesting approaches to war topics. The OWI also allocated air time and print space, so that the media would stress the same themes at the same time. It distributed films and maintained a close relationship with the War Advertising Council. The agency launched campaigns and urged magazines to cover working women in their articles (Berkin and Norton 1979, 344).

These campaigns were initially successful. In December 1941, about 12 million women were employed; by early 1944, this number was over 16 million-an increase of 36 percent. In manufacturing alone, a reported 6 million women labored to make weapons for the fighting men (Pidgeon 1944, 2).

The problem for the government seemed not to be employing women in these defense plans, but in convincing women to do the other 82 percent of the work that was unglamorous but had to be done. The War Manpower Commission (WMC) and the OWI tried to point out that every job a woman could take would help to solve the acute manpower shortage. The two agencies wanted to communicate to women that "any kind of service in the labor force is a distinct contribution to winning the war" ("More Women Must Go to Work," 76).

### **Problems of Working Women**

As women entered the labor force in increasing numbers during the war, many problems arose. Childcare, housework, and transportation were all left up to the working woman. This resulted in many women quitting their jobs to take care of these domestic responsibilities ("Women Lagging in War Effort," 24). The largest and most urgent of these problems was childcare. Until this time, middle class women were expected to care for their own children. There were no profit-making childcare centers as there are today. Some factories made their own provisions for workers' children, setting up in-plant care (Weatherford 1990, 169).

Housework was an all-day task. Still, women were expected to handle it by themselves: "It was an era of cooking from scratch and washing dishes by hand. It was before clothes dryers and permanent press. . . . The work of running a home required a far greater commitment of time [than today]" (Weatherford 1990, 161). If a woman had a job on the night shift in a factory, she would work all day doing household tasks, then all night as well.

With new tires virtually unavailable due to lack of rubber and gas rationing, transportation also reached a new urgency. Many women lived in semirural areas and needed to drive to work. These women often carpooled and drove their neighbors to the factory as well. One woman wrote, "You seldom see an empty back seat" (Weatherford 1990, 162).

Many of these problems had never been an issue before the war. As a result of the mobilization of women, the government woke up to the realities of childcare and women's difficulties in the home. These women communicated their need to share household tasks with their families and this, in turn, illustrated the need for change in stereotyped gender roles.

### **Volunteer Efforts**

Even those women who stayed home played a major role in government campaigns. The OEI and WMC needed to communicate the importance of these women to the war effort, for it was this group that was primarily responsible for complying with rations and doing volunteer work: "In every city and village of the nation women are sewing for the Red Cross, participating in the civilian defense activities, organizing recreational services for members of the armed forces" (Kingsley 1942, 29).

When food production began to stagnate, women were encouraged to volunteer for the Woman's Land Army (WLA). This organization was responsible for taking women out of the cities and onto the farms. At first, many farmers were reluctant to comply with the WLA. They didn't believe city girls, ignorant of the ways farms function, would make a significant difference in food production. But women were the last available resource. By the first summer of the war, women working in agriculture had risen from one to 14 percent. Many of these women were volunteers (Weatherford 1990, 220).

Rationing was a necessary irritation for Americans during the Second World War. Women needed to learn the difference between "certificate rationing," "coupon rationing," and "value points." Such items as beef, wool, silk, coffee and tea, rubber, and even cotton were rationed. Because they were the primary consumers of their families, the government concentrated its messages on rationing toward women. The Ladies Home Journal printed this reminder: "We still

get ten times as much beef a week as people in England, twenty times as much as they get in Russia, and &Mac222;fty times as much a week as the lucky ones get in China" (Weatherford 1990, 201).

### **Military Service**

Another major change during World War II with regard to women came when they were able to be inducted into the armed services. At the beginning of American involvement in early 1942, a bill went before the House of Representatives to establish a women's auxiliary in the Army. In May 1942, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was formed. (The Auxiliary status was dropped in July 1943 as the Women's Army Corps gained full military status. ) Later, the Navy formed the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service), the Coast Guard established the SPARS (Semper Paratus-their motto meaning "Always Ready"), and the Marines accepted women, called simply "Marines. " As of January 1943, all branches of the United States military included women. Two other groups formed to give women a chance to fly. The WAFSA (Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron) and the WASP (Women's Airforce Service Pilots) took on the job of testing planes, ferrying them from one American coast to the other, and even towing targets for soldiers to practice on (Weatherford 1990, 43).

By January 1944, over 100,000 women had entered the WACs, WAVES, SPARS, WAFSA, and Marines to release men for combat duty (Palmer 1944, 19). The movies and films of the time made up a large part of the propaganda influencing women to join the armed forces. Newspaper and magazine articles, too, showed a glamorized picture of military life (Lotzenhiser 1993). Although their numbers were small, these women were important because they were the first to be recognized with full military status.

Nurses on duty with the armed forces numbered only 36,000 in 1944 (Palmer, 1944, 19). Those who served abroad during the war received a great deal of publicity in relation to their small numbers. Still, nurses in Bataan had to care for 200 to 300 men apiece. Even before American involvement in 1941, some hospitals had to close wings because no nurses were available to work in them. By 1944 the United States needed 66,000 nurses for the military and 30,000 for civilian duty. To cope with this severe shortage, Congress passed a bill in May 1943 to provide funding for nursing schools. But when even this measure did not improve the situation, 73 percent of Americans polled approved of a draft for women to fill the much-needed nursing vacancies. In the House of Representatives, the Nurses Selective Service Act of 1945 passed 347-42 with 43 abstentions. The Senate Military Affairs Committee favored it, but one month later the Army entered Berlin and ended the war in Europe. When "the tradition of protection for women was placed against the need of wounded men for nurses, tradition was quick to go" (Weatherford 1990, 19).

### **Postwar Changes**

The fact that women came so close to being drafted seems to remain a forgotten part of American history. When the end of the war finally came, Americans were too busy rejoicing to notice this fundamental change in the government's attitude toward women. Congress had agreed that the Constitution made no provisions for the protection of women from a draft, and all in

Congress who were involved in that debate agreed that they had the authority to conscript both men and women. If the war had continued, it is likely that women would have been conscripted (Weatherford 1990, 19).

When the Second World War ended, many women wondered what would happen to them. There was no doubt in people's minds that many things had changed, especially regarding women's employment. But for many women, the choice was made for them:

The problem was to avoid massive unemployment after the war, and to government policy makers, unemployed was a male adjective. . . . Eighty percent of . . . working women . . . tried to keep their jobs. Most were unsuccessful. Layoffs, demotion in rank and pay, outright firings, all eliminated women from their wartime positions. . . . The government assisted women's early retirement by cutting off federal funds for day care in 1946. (Berkin and Norton 1979, 279)

Propaganda was then concentrated on putting women back into the kitchens. Magazines began picturing suburban life and large families. Although the urgency for women in the factories had diminished and propaganda began to focus on homemaking, more women than ever before in peacetime were entering the workplace in the 1950s. They did not receive support or attention on any scale nearly like that of the war years, but the new phenomenon of a woman with a family and career continued to expand and grow.

Government propaganda proved a fast and efficient method for changing public opinion during the war. When the need for women to work and to be careful consumers reached the point of urgency, the OWI and other agencies took it upon themselves to communicate these needs to the American public. The focus of their propaganda was on patriotism and working for the country, but only for the duration of the war.

The propaganda released by the agencies was specific in that regard. The programs, articles, and advertisements communicated the ideals that the government thought the majority of middle-class Americans would support. However, the World War II working experiences aided in breaking down the stereotypical gender roles in the home. As a result of World War II propaganda, women learned and showed they could do additional and important jobs and were further motivated to achieve the advances they have made in the fifty years since the war. As writer Dorothy Thompson put it, "There is no example in which a class or group of people who have once succeeded in expanding the area of their lives is ever persuaded again to restrict it" (Weatherford 1990, 308).

(Source: *Social Education* 58(2), 1994, pp. 94-96  
National Council for the Social Studies [http://www. socialstudies. org/system/files/publications/se/5802/580210. html](http://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/publications/se/5802/580210.html))

Source 7

**“The Rosie the Riveter Story”**

Painted for the cover of the May 29, 1943 edition of The Saturday Evening Post, Norman Rockwell's Rosie the Riveter gave visual form to this phenomenon and became an iconic image of American popular culture. Rockwell portrayed Rosie as a monumental figure clad in overalls and a work-shirt with the sleeves rolled up to reveal her powerful, muscular arms. Seated against the backdrop of a rippling American flag, she is shown pausing for lunch, with a riveting machine and a tin lunch box balanced on her substantial lap, her visor and goggles pushed back on her head and a ham sandwich clasped in her hand. Despite her massive bulk, sturdy work clothes and the smudges on her arms and cheeks, Rosie's painted fingernails, lipstick and the tidy arrangement of her bright red curls wittily convey her underlying femininity. Pausing between bites, she gazes into the distance with a detached air of supreme self-assurance, while casually crushing a tattered copy of Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf under her feet.

Rockwell found the model for Rosie in Mary Doyle (now Mary Keefe), a nineteen year old telephone operator in Arlington, Vermont. Mrs. Keefe recalls meeting Mary Rockwell, the artist's wife, when she came in to pay her telephone bill. Like many other residents of the small town, Mary eventually became acquainted with the artist and readily accepted when Rockwell called and asked her to pose. Mrs. Keefe remembers arriving at the studio, where Rockwell had assembled her costume, which originally included a white shirt and saddle shoes. She sat for several photographs (all of which were destroyed when Rockwell's studio burned to the ground during the summer of 1943), but had to return for a second session with the artist when he decided he wanted Rosie to be wearing a blue shirt and penny loafers. Mrs. Keefe saw the final composition for the first time during a trip to a newsstand in Bennington, Vermont, where she happened to see a poster advertising the May 29, 1943 edition of The Saturday Evening Post. She remembers being rather shocked by Rockwell's transformation of her slim figure into Rosie's overly muscular physique, but adds that the artist later called her to apologize for his exaggerated enlargement of her size.

(source: [http://www.normanrockwellvt.com/rosie\\_riveter\\_story.htm](http://www.normanrockwellvt.com/rosie_riveter_story.htm))

Source 8

### “We Can Do It!” In a Programmatic Series

Although today Miller’s poster appears to portray a performance of women’s empowerment and strength, we believe that it also circumscribed them so thoroughly as to diminish an interpretation of it as feminist—in any modern sense. First, the poster’s circulation only on the Westinghouse factory floors among women and their male coworkers who were already Westinghouse employees advises against an interpretation that the print empowered millions of housewives by moving them into the work force.

If the “We Can Do It!” poster’s message was an image vernacular, available and intelligible especially to Westinghouse employees during World War II, it is still conceivable that it served to empower the many women employed by Westinghouse. After all, Miller’s Rosie is, at first glance, both determined and confident. This impression, at least, must have been the same on the home front as it is now. What woman would not have received a message of feminist strength from seeing the poster while at work?

This viewpoint fails to take into account the poster’s use in a programmatic series that was produced by Miller. As we have established—and as the print itself clearly indicates—“We Can Do It!” was displayed for only two weeks in February 1943. Both before and after it appeared, dozens of other works by Miller were posted in the Westinghouse factories. Most did not feature or refer to women at all, a curious absence if one believes that Rosie’s posted “space” was a site of feminist empowerment during the war. Amid the various portrayals of male workers, munitions, soldiers, factories, and scenes of battle, Miller’s posters displayed a noticeable emphasis on *men*.

When Miller’s posters did feature women, they revealed a clear pattern of traditional and conventional femininity, including some characters who were emphatic in their devotion to home life over work life. Perhaps the best illustration of the latter is Miller’s “MAKE TODAY *a Safe day*.” In this poster, a woman calls out a word of farewell from the front of a white home with green shutters and a multipane window to a man (presumably her departing husband), a broad smile on his face conveying his pleasure and satisfaction at the prospect of going to work at the Westinghouse factory (which is visible in the valley below the house). The woman appears in partial profile, a red ribbon in her hair, while her husband strides toward the distant factory in his work clothes. She wears lipstick and has extremely long eyelashes, much like the woman in “We Can Do It!” Yet unlike that more familiar character, this woman is a vision of domesticity, seeing her breadwinner off to enact his masculine role in the factory. Such a representation of femininity is often viewed today as circumscribing women’s potentiality and as being patriarchal in its implications.

While “MAKE TODAY *a Safe day*” is perhaps the most extreme example of what viewers today could see as a disempowering image among Miller’s Westinghouse posters, there are others that function in a similar fashion. Of the ten posters that explicitly feature women, two feature only a little girl, while a third features a girl with her parents planting a victory garden. In each case, the female images appear as emblems of home and family. Even when they do not appear as part of a family, Miller’s women always wear cosmetics—and so do the little girls, as in “NOW is the

time to plan a VICTORY GARDEN. ” In fact, if a woman’s face or fingers are visible in the posters, without exception they have cosmetics or are otherwise adorned. The women’s eyelashes are regularly so long that they seem to cast shadows. Even when they are expressing verbal support for the war, their glamorous and objectifying beauty presents a jarring contrast to war’s destruction and violence, as in “Sure, *WE’RE* in the War, Too!” Because feminists’ diverse understandings of cosmetics have changed over the decades, the ramifications of such imagery for women are quite different today than they were during World War II. In 1940s U.S. culture, cosmetics often suggested a female’s preoccupation with appearance and desire to become an object of sexual attention. In fact, when cartoonists depicted men using cosmetics in the World War II era, the cartoons insulted and belittled them as superficial and unmanly. One of Miller’s posters, “DRESS SAFELY for *your* protection,” illustrates eloquently the conflicted, mixed messages sent to women workers at Westinghouse. In this poster, although the worker is doing a traditional male job by using a drill press, a disembodied voice addresses her patronizingly, as though she cannot figure out that her attire should not compromise her safety. (Men were not exempt from this paternalistic attitude, to judge from another Miller poster entitled “LOOK ’EM OVER!,” in which a befuddled male is instructed to “Return *Idle* Ones to the Tool Crib”). Another poster, “IT’S A TRADITION WITH US, MISTER!,” appeared only two months after “We Can Do It!,” and may have featured the same model. Here the Westinghouse worker is juxtaposed with a ghostly female forebear packing a musket behind her. In contrast with “We Can Do It!,” the absence of a word balloon for the title makes it appear that someone else is speaking for the depicted women. Another stark contrast is that both the musket-packing ancestor and the wartime worker gaze downward as the viewer looks at them. Displaying women in such a pose, wrote Gillian Dyer, can often “symbolize dependency and submissiveness. ” Finally, the pictorial analogy of the “TRADITION” poster implies that women have stood behind and beside their men for centuries, not killing enemies themselves but helpfully supplying men with the means to do so.

Each of these prints sends an objectifying and unrealistic image of women’s beauty, especially considering the dirty conditions of the munitions factories. Viewed together as a series, the posters convey a traditional, conventionally masculine perspective toward women and their relationship to family and the workplace. They suggest that, even while women are engaged in industrial labor, they continue to be subjected to men’s gaze. Some of Miller’s female depictions share similarities with the voluptuous characters of the artist Alberto Vargas, whose objectifying images—the so-called “Varga Girls”—were considered by many on the home front to be both titillating and offensive. In all, of the 42 posters by Miller for Westinghouse that we have located to date (there were certainly more), only 10 explicitly feature women, in one case represented only by her well-manicured hands. In other words, the main focus of the vast majority of the prints was on male workers and the war itself, while only a small fraction, less than 25 percent, featured women meaningfully. Even then, most of those images were traditional or conventional in their depictions of women in subordinated roles. The whole poster series, we must conclude, creates a message far different from the one implied by the single “We Can Do It!” poster.

These images also help to clarify the serial context of the “We Can Do It!” image. Even if the now-famous poster’s role as a backstage performance seen by both men and women in Westinghouse factories is not enough to show that its empowerment was much narrower in scope than viewers commonly assume today, its juxtaposition with other posters from the series puts its

apparent strength in sharp relief. If the poster was indeed empowering for some viewers in the factory, its potency was significantly diminished by at least other images, most of them ignoring women altogether, while several others explicitly validate women only in domestic scenes, feature unrealistic images of femininity, and presume a consistent male gaze. Moreover, since “We Can Do It!” appears to have been the first poster in the series to depict a woman, the domestic nature of Miller’s subsequent posters suggests that, if any feminist messages were sent for two weeks during February 1943, they were an exception, even an aberration.

Excerpt from: (Kimble & Olson, 2006, pp. 555-560)



Source 9

### Myth-Making and the “We Can Do It!” Poster

Gwen Sharp, PhD on January 4, 2011

Most of our readers are probably familiar with the now-iconic “We Can Do It!” poster associated with Rosie the Riveter and the movement of women into the paid industrial workforce during World War II:

It is, by this point, so recognizable that it is often parodied or appropriated for a variety of uses (including selling household cleaners). The image is widely seen as a symbol of women’s empowerment and a sign of major gender transformations that occurred during the 1940s.

In their article, “Visual Rhetoric Representing Rosie the Riveter: Myth and Misconception in J. Howard Miller’s ‘We Can Do It!’ Poster,” James Kimble and Lester Olson argue that our current interpretations of the poster don’t necessarily align with how it was seen at the time.

While the poster is often described as a government recruiting item (Kimble and Olson give many examples in the article of inaccurate attributions from a variety of sources), it was, in fact, created by J. Howard Miller as part of a series of posters for the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company — the Westinghouse logo is clearly visible just under the woman’s arm, and the badge on her shirt collar is the badge employees wore on the plant floor, including an employee number. The War Production Co-ordinating Committee was an internal Westinghouse committee, similar to those created by many companies during the war, not a government entity.

The assumption of current viewers of the image is usually that it was meant to recruit women into the workforce, or to rally women in general — an early example of girl power marketing, if you will — and was widely displayed. But the audience was actually only Westinghouse employees. The company commissioned artists to create posters to be hung in Westinghouse plants for specific periods of time; this poster specifically says, “Post Feb. 15 to Feb. 28” [1943] in small font on the lower left. There’s no evidence that it was ever made available to the public more broadly. For that matter, the poster doesn’t identify her as “Rosie,” and it’s not clear that at the time she would have been immediately identifiable to viewers as “Rosie the Riveter”.

The image that was more widely seen, and is often conflated with the “We Can Do It!” poster, was Norman Rockwell’s May 29, 1943, cover for the *Saturday Evening Post*: Here, the woman is clearly linked to the idea of Rosie the Riveter, through both the name on her lunchbox and the equipment she’s holding. She is more muscular than the woman in Miller’s poster, she’s dirty, and her foot is standing on a copy of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*. Rockwell’s image presents the woman as a vital part of the war effort; her work helps defeat the Nazis. The image also includes fewer details to make her look conventionally attractive than Miller’s, where the woman has emphasized eyelashes and visibly painted fingernail.

Most interestingly, Kimble and Olson question the female empowerment message presumed to be the point of the “We Can Do It!” poster. We see the poster on its own, through the lens of a

narrative about World War II in which housewives left the kitchen in droves to work in factories. But Westinghouse workers would have seen it in a different context, as one of a series of posters displayed in the plant, with similar imagery and text. When seen as just one in a series, rather than a unique image, Kimble and Olson argue that the collective “we” in “We can do it!” wouldn’t have been *women*, but *Westinghouse employees*, who were used to seeing such statements posted in employee-access-only areas of the plant.

Of course, having a woman represent a default factory employee is noteworthy. But our reading of the poster as a feminist emblem partially rests on the idea that this female worker is calling out encouragement to other women. The authors, however, point out a much less empowering interpretation if you think of the poster not in terms of feminism, but in terms of social class and labor relations:

...Westinghouse used “We Can Do It!” and Miller’s other posters to encourage women’s cooperation with the company’s relatively conservative concerns and values at a time when both labor organizing and communism were becoming active controversies for many workers... (p. 537)

...by addressing workers as “we,” the pronoun obfuscated sharp controversies within labor over communism, red-baiting, discrimination, and other heartfelt sources of divisiveness. (p. 550)

One of the major functions of corporate war committees was to manage labor and discourage any type of labor disputes that might disrupt production. From this perspective, images of happy workers expressing support for the war effort and/or workers’ abilities served as propaganda that encouraged workers to identify with one another and management as a team; “patriotism could be invoked to circumvent strikes and characterize workers’ unrest as un-American” (p. 562).

And, as Kimble and Olson illustrate, most of Miller’s posters included no women at all, and when they did, emphasized conventional femininity and the domestic sphere (such as a heavily made-up woman waving to her husband as he left for work).

Of course, today the “We Can Do It!” poster is seen as a feminist icon, adorning coffee cups, t-shirts, calendars, and refrigerator magnets (I have one). Kimble and Olson don’t explain when and how this shift occurred — when the image went from an obscure piece of corporate war-time propaganda, similar to many others, to a widely-recognized pop cultural image of female empowerment. But they make a convincing argument that our current perceptions of the image involve a significant amount of historical myth-making that helps to obscure the discrimination and opposition many women faced in the paid workforce even during the height of the war effort.

[The article appears in *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9(4): 533-570, 2006. ]

(source: <https://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2011/01/04/myth-making-and-the-we-can-do-it-poster/>)

Source 10

### “On Writing Rosie the Riveter”

Excerpt from Speech, Book Launch Event, Nontraditional Employment for Women, March 30, 1995

Writing the true story of *Rosie the Riveter: Women Working on the Home Front in World War II* was an intense experience for me: in part, I think because I was born in 1944 and grew up in the 1950s post-war America—a time of cultural amnesia about the role of women during World War II. A time when stories about women war workers in popular magazines were replaced with stories about women homemakers. A time when parades and statues honored men in military uniforms not women in overalls. A time when movies featured bloody battles not dangerous defense jobs. (And, yes, the jobs were dangerous: in 1944, the Office of War Information reported that since Pearl Harbor 37, 600 workers died in industrial accidents, 7,500 more than military dead; 4, 710, 000 temporarily or permanently disabled, sixty times the number of military wounded and missing. I grew up during a time when I never heard the popular World War II song “Rosie the Riveter” with the line: “She’s making history working for victory. ” I started my research in the early 1990s. I studied statistics, read old magazines and newspapers, viewed propaganda films, read oral histories, studied posters aimed at recruiting women into a previous hostile workplaces, and talked with former women workers.

In unraveling the mystery of Rosie the Riveter here is what I uncovered: the catch-phrase Rosie the Riveter was not a real person or even based on a real person, but first entered the American culture through the song, “Rosie the Riveter,” which was written by Redd Evans and John Jacob Loeb in 1942. Recorded by The Four Vagabonds and released in February 1953, the upbeat song was heard on the radio, on records, and in coin-operated machines located in restaurants and bus and train stations that played three minute versions of songs called “soundies. ” I interviewed Janet Loeb, the widow of John Jacob Loeb. The title, she said, was not based on a real person. It was selected because of its alliteration.

As for the Norman Rockwell painting, “Rosie” that first appeared on the cover of *Saturday Evening Post*, May 1943: Norman Rockwell titled his painting just “Rosie. ” I interviewed Mary Doyle, who was Rockwell’s model for that model. At the time, she was a nineteen- year-old telephone operator and neither she nor Rockwell knew any riveters. Although initially Curtis Publishing Co., the publishers of *Saturday Evening Post*, sent out prepublications blow-ups of the cover with the title “Rosie the Riveter,” it quickly changed its mind because it was afraid of being sued for plagiarizing the newly released song title, “Rosie the Riveter. ” According to a newspaper article that was published under the headline, “Painting of Rosie, a Riveter, Starts Tempest in Teapot,” a hundred thousand news dealers from coast-to-coast received urgent instructions from the Curtis Publishing Co to ditch the ‘blow-up’ and to sign a solemn statement certifying that they had done so. ”

In response to a reporter’s question about what he thought about the “tempest,” Rockwell was quoted as saying, “It’s Miss Doyle, our telephone operator, who should sue me. She is really a beautiful girl, but since I wanted to portray a girl of husky propositions, I had to distort the picture. I made a mistake in detail that people will be calling me down for. The cover shows

‘Rosie’ with goggles and an isinglass protective shield. I don’t think riveters use both. It was silly of me. ”

And, by the way, if you’re wondering about Rosie’s pose, Rockwell later explained that he modeled her after the Prophet Isaiah that Michelangelo painted on the Sistine Chapel. Other interesting tidbits about “Rosie” include the facts that Mary Doyle, Rockwell’s model, really is tall—6 feet, in fact and really had red hair; Rockwell originally had her wear saddle shoes; and at the time of the painting the ham in her ham sandwich was 11 ration points per pound. Also, in case you missed it, if you look at the right hand pocket of Rosie’s overalls you’ll see a gold trimmed white compact and lace-edged handkerchief.

As for the “We Can Do It” Poster, it was produced in late 1943 by graphic artist J. Howard Miller for Westinghouse Corporation. I also interviewed Charles Ruch, who was head of publications at Westinghouse at the time and a friend of Miller’s. According to Ruch, Westinghouse didn’t even have any riveters at the East Pittsburg plant and the identification badge on the woman in the poster is clearly from East Pittsburgh. That poster, Ruch told me, was produced to represent all women workers and to show that women were rolling up their sleeves and saying “We Can Do It. ”

Of course, in keeping with the emphasis on traditional feminine appearance, Miller depicted the woman with a carefully crafted curl peaking out front her bandana, plucked eyebrows, mascara and eye liner, bright red lipstick, and her one visible fingernail is perfectly manicured. Only 1,000 posters were printed for distribution in Westinghouse plants. But, a copy of the poster did end up in the National Archives and some time in the 1970s, it was selected to be printed for sale as a postcard and poster and with few exceptions is mislabeled with the title “Rosie the Riveter. ”

By the end of 1944, it was clear that the war was not going to go on much longer. On June 6, known as D-Day, allied troops had invaded France and were pushing the German troops back to Germany. In the war against Japan, U.S. troops had capture island after island in 1943 and 1944. As 1945 began, the peak of industrial mobilization in America was over. Slowly the number of jobs in defense industries declined. Although more bloody fighting lay ahead, Japan and Germany were just months away from surrendering. Before 1945 ended, millions of men would return from the battlefield to the home front. And soon there would be enough male workers again. The propaganda would now be aimed at telling women war workers to return to their home.

Some women were ready to leave their jobs, “I was ready to go home. I was tired” said Charlcia Neuman, a wartime riveter. Helen Struder, another riveter, said, “I was glad it was over. . . I’m going to stay home and be a housewife. My husband never wanted me to work in the first place. But many women *did* mind losing their jobs. In Highland Park, Michigan, 200 women who had been laid off a the Ford Plant conducted a protest. Marching in front of the plant, women carried signs that read “Stop Discrimination Because of Sex” “How Come No Work For women?” After Ottilie Juliet Gattus, who had worked at Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corporation for the duration of the war, was laid off, she wrote to President Roosevelt: “I happen to be a widow with a mother and son to support. . . I would like to know why, after serving a company in good faith for almost three and a half years, it is now impossible to obtain employment with them. I

am a lathe hand and was classified as skilled labor, but simply because I happened to be a woman I am not wanted. ”

Given that what kind of ending did I write for *Rosie the Riveter*? Here it is:

*As they lived their lives after World War II, many women war workers did not talk about their experiences . . . . But women war workers never forgot the job experience that they had for the duration of World War II. They never forgot the thrill of getting a chance to do a war job and doing it. They never forgot the satisfaction of earning good wages. They never forgot the excitement of being independent. They never forgot that once there was a time in America when women were told that they could do anything. And they did.*

(source: <http://pennycolman.com/on-writing-rosie-the-riveter/>)

Source 11

## Passages of *Girls of Atomic City*

### Introduction

*The Girls of Atomic City tells the true story of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, a secret city founded during World War II to help create fuel for the atomic bomb. Oak Ridge didn't appear on any maps, but thousands of workers moved there during the war, enticed by good wages and war-ending work. Their jobs were shrouded in mystery, but the workers – many of them young, single and female – were excited to be “all in the same boat,” buoyed by a sense of shared purpose. But these hardworking young women also faced unexpected challenges. One young woman, Helen, was recruited to spy on her fellow workers. An African-American janitor, Kattie, faced daily discrimination and separation from her children in segregated Oak Ridge. Toni, a secretary, was mocked by her Northern bosses for her Tennessee accent. Dot, a factory operator, had lost a brother at Pearl Harbor and had two others still away fighting. Through it all, day in and day out, nobody knew what they were working on, only that they had been told it would help end the war. The secret wasn't out until after the first atomic bomb, powered by an uranium enriched in Oak Ridge's massive factories, fell on Hiroshima, Japan. Today, Oak Ridge and the other Manhattan Project sites continue to carry the legacy of helping to make the first atomic bomb a reality.*

(source: [http://books.simonandschuster.com/The-Girls-of-Atomic-City/Denise-Kiernan/9781451617535/reading\\_group\\_guide](http://books.simonandschuster.com/The-Girls-of-Atomic-City/Denise-Kiernan/9781451617535/reading_group_guide))

### Chapter 1 “Everything Will Be Taken Care Of: Train To Nowhere, August 1943”

Celia p. 3-14

p. 3-7 Celia Doing her Part (Everyone's War)

p. 7-14 Recruiting Celia for the War

Tubealloy p. 15-17

### Chapter 2 “Peaches and Pearls: The Taking of Site X, Fall 1942”

Toni p. 20-22; p. 29-31

“The Taking” (obtaining the land): p. 22-29 \*p. 25 bottom of the page

Tubealloy “Ida Noddack” p. 32-34

### Chapter 3 “Through the Gates: Clinton Engineer Works, Fall 1943”

Kattie p. 35-67

Celia p. 37-40

Toni p. 40-42

Jane p. 42-46

Kattie p. 46-48

Life in Atomic City p. 48-50; p. 55-56

Celia p. 50-55

Tubealloy p. 57-62

**Chapter 4 “Bull Pens and Creeps: The Project’s Welcome for New Employees”**

Virginia p. 63-68

Dorothy p. 68-71

Helen p. 72-74

Tubealloy p. 75-80

**Chapter 5 “Only Temporary: Spring Into Summer, 1944”**

Colleen p. 81-82; p. 84-87

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Life in Atomic City “Sexual Infractions” p. 94-98 \*p. 98

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**Chapter 6 “To Work”**

Ernest p. 109-110

Life in Atomic City p. 110-111

Celia and Toni p. 111-112

Dot and Helen p. 112-118

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Rosemary p. 127-129

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**Chapter 7 “Rhythms of Life”**

Life in Atomic City p. 133-140

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**Chapter 8 “The One About the Fireflies”**

Frances p. 156-158

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Dot p. 163-165

Propaganda Tactics p. 165-167

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Kattie p. 169-171

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### **Chapter 9 “The Unspoken: Sweethearts and Secrets”**

Jane p. 176-178

Toni p. 178-181

Rosemary p. 181-182

Vi p. 182-184

Virginia Spivey p. 187-189

Colleen p. 189-190

Tubealloy p. 191-192

### **Chapter 10 “Curiosity and Silence”**

Celia p. 193-196

Rosemary p. 196-201

Kattie p. 201-203

Virginia p. 203-204

Tubealloy p. 205-208

### **Chapter 11 “Innocence Lost”**

Ebb Cade p. 209-211; 221-222

Virginia p. 211-214

Colleen p. 214-216

Dot and Celia p. 216-219

Kattie p. 219-221

Tubealloy p. 223-231

### **Chapter 12 “Sand Jumps in the Desert, July 1945”**

Ed Westcott p. 232-233

Joan p. 233-234

Elizabeth Graves p. 234-235

Test Gadget p. 235-237

Joan p. 237-238

Potsdam p. 238-246

Girls of Atomic City p. 246-248

### **Chapter 13 “The Gadget Revealed”**

Toni p. 249

Dropping the Bomb p. 250-268

### **Chapter 14 “Dawn of a Thousand Suns”**

Toni p. 269-270

Virginia p. 270-271

Jane p. 271-272



The Atomic Bomb p. 272-285

**Chapter 15 Life in the New Age”**

After the War p. 286-309

Source 12

### **“Women Scientists in the Manhattan Project”**

October 13, 2015 is Ada Lovelace Day, which commemorates the achievements of women scientists, engineers, and mathematicians. Many women worked on the Manhattan Project. Some worked in the production facilities as technicians, monitoring for leaks or adjusting the controls of the Calutrons at Oak Ridge; a small number of women were scientists involved at the highest levels of the project.

The Atomic Heritage Foundation’s website “Voices of the Manhattan Project” seeks to preserve the memories of Manhattan Project veterans, highlighting the diverse experiences and backgrounds of those who worked on the project. Here are some excerpts from interviews with women who were involved on various portions of the project. For more oral histories with women, follow the links and visit "Voices of the Manhattan Project. " Also, Ruth Howes and Catherine Herzenberg write about women scientists in the Manhattan Project in “Their Day in the Sun” (1999).

Anne McKusick (Oak Ridge): When I got to Oak Ridge, it was perhaps not surprising that there were no girls who were physicists. I remember somebody saying to me once, “You consider that you're a girl who happens to be a physicist, or a physicist who happens to be a girl?” It was just that women weren’t thought to be capable of learning the subject, or thought that it was strictly a man’s field at that time.

Life in Oak Ridge was very casual. I remember being dressed up for work, but after work we were wearing blue jeans all the time. I lived in a house with five other girls, no one of whom was in physics. In fact, at the time I came I was the only girl who had studied physics.

Lilli Hornig (Los Alamos): I had a job in the chemistry department doing what was called “fundamental wet research,” which involved working with plutonium, determining the solubility of various plutonium salts. It was essentially nothing known about plutonium chemistry at the time. And there was one other woman in the division, she and I worked together and we had our little cubby hole and did our little procedures and put them under the Geiger counter. It wasn’t terribly inspiring and nobody actually really spoke to us.

We clunked along there for a couple months. And then they got the first results from Hanford with the bad news about 240, plutonium-240, which was much more active than 239. And the first response was to fire both of us instantly. And I complained a bit about that. They were worried obviously about reproductive damage. I tried delicately to point out that they might be more susceptible than I was; that didn’t go over well.

Colleen Black (Oak Ridge): There were many women involved. You know, the men had been drafted. There was manpower shortage. And so the men who were here were, you know, top brass or 4-Fs or G. I. s. I mean, it was an Army-looking camp and I guess the Army ran this area. Everything was according to the Army. All the rules and regulations were Army, so that’s the rules we lived by. And whatever they said, we did.

And then the women worked. There was no problem getting a job. In those days there were not any women engineers that I knew of, or any chemists, or physicists. The women usually were educated: home ec. [economics] majors, teachers, nurses. And they got jobs readily. And the others, they would train you. We had a lot of teachers that came and they'd train them for leak test or supervisors or something like that.

Leona Woods Marshall (Chicago, Hanford): I worked with John Wheeler and I helped solve the riddle of the Hanford xenon poisoning. Remember, this was the first big reactor in the world. Here were all these big shots, lining the walls, to watch the startup. The operators were all coached. They had manuals. They had been through the routine X-Y-Z times. So here comes startup. You can see the water getting hot, the readings going up on the Brown recorders, you could hear it rushing in the tubes, you could see the control rods coming out and out and out. Later, something happened, and there was no more reactivity. The reactor went dead, just plain dead. People stood around and stared at each other.

Wheeler had been at Oak Ridge, so he knew about the Oak Ridge reactor, which had showed signs of misbehavior, which could have been interpreted as poison, but you couldn't prove it. At Hanford, we had the time period, the time it took for the reactor to go up to power, die and come back on. I would say Wheeler solved it, no doubt.

(Source: [http://www. atomicheritage. org/article/women-scientists-manhattan-project](http://www.atomicheritage.org/article/women-scientists-manhattan-project))

### **Reaction to the Bomb**

Excerpt from *Girls of Atomic City*:

*But one woman in particular strode up to Dot, glaring and asked, "Aren't you ashamed you helped build a bomb that killed all those people?"*

*The truth was, Dot did have conflicting feelings. There was sadness at the loss of live, yes, but that wasn't the only thing she felt. They had all been so happy, so thrilled, when the war ended. Didn't any of these people remember that? And yes, Oak Ridgers felt horrible when they saw the pictures of the aftermath in Japan. Relief. Fear. Joy. Sadness. Decades later, how could she explain this to someone who had no experience with the Project, someone who hadn't lived through that war, let alone lived in Oak Ridge?*

*Dot knew the woman wanted a simple answer, so she gave her one.*

*"Well," she said, "they killed my brother. (p. 305)*

Source 13

**Visual Artifacts Regarding *Coming Out Under Fire***

**Directions:** Look at pp. 112-113 in the book and consider the following question. Write your response below.

What do the pictures have in common?

Source 14

**Passages from *Coming Out Under Fire***

April 8, 1990

**“Gay Soldiers: They Watched Their Step”**

By Doris Kearns Goodwin, the author of "The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys," is working on a book about Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt and the American home front during World War II.

In recent weeks, the Supreme Court refused to consider two constitutional challenges to the military's policy of barring homosexuals from service. The first case involved a male Navy officer, the second a female Army sergeant, both of whom were discharged for displaying "a propensity to engage in homosexual conduct." In neither case did the military present evidence of such conduct; the "propensity" alone was considered sufficient grounds for discharge. In the wake of the passions generated by this controversial issue, Allan Berube's historical account of gay soldiers in World War II, "Coming Out Under Fire," provides a timely and valuable perspective.

In theory, during the war, homosexuals were supposed to be screened out at induction centers on the grounds that they would make poor combat soldiers and that their presence would threaten discipline and morale. (The same rationale was applied at the outset against blacks as well.) The screening devices typically used with male inductees included observation of female bodily characteristics and mannerisms, answers to questions regarding occupational choice (men who checked off interior decorator or dancer were immediately suspect) and responses to the question: How do you like girls?

But in practice, Mr. Berube argues, since the pressure to meet unfilled quotas was so great, the examinations were often perfunctory. As a result, hundreds of thousands of homosexuals, perhaps a million or more, made their way into the armed forces, serving in all branches of the military - as tank drivers and clerks, riflemen and bombardiers, messmen and gunnery officers. "Coming Out Under Fire," the product of more than 10 years of research, of digging into archives and interviewing scores of veterans, is the story of how - out of necessity - the military coped with this large influx of homosexuals, and how gay men and women coped with the military. It is the contention of Mr. Berube, a historian of homosexuals in the United States, that the majority of gay male soldiers experienced an unexpected, if somewhat uneasy, acceptance by fellow soldiers so long as they refrained from aggressively pursuing uninterested men. Inspired by the necessity of living together in close quarters, heterosexuals developed "their own pragmatic ethic of tolerance: 'I won't bother you if you don't bother me.'" To be sure, some gay soldiers were harassed and abused by straight soldiers, but if a homosexual performed a useful function in his unit, that generally took precedence over the suspicion or even the knowledge that he was gay. Necessity also played a role in relaxing the policy of discharging homosexual soldiers if they were caught having sex. Whereas in World War I, solely on the discovery of a love letter written by another soldier, a young Navy man was convicted of sodomy and sentenced to 15 years in prison, the more common practice in World War II was to send offenders to sick bay, where psychiatrists and other doctors attempted to distinguish "experimenters" from "confirmed perverts." Since the long public trials of the type conducted during World War I were

considered too costly in time and energy, a simpler procedure was adopted: the "experimenters" were generally returned to duty, while the "perverts" were subjected to administrative discharge. "There was a war on," said Ted Allenby, a gay Marine who fought at Iwo Jima. "Who in the hell is going to worry about this . . . ?"

The book is at its best in describing the experience of gay soldiers who had never admitted, perhaps even to themselves, that they were gay. Thrown together with their buddies in secluded places, with the constraints of small-town mores and family life left behind, many homosexual soldiers came to terms for the first time in their lives with their sexual inclinations. (Interestingly, the recruits who had acknowledged they were gay before entering the service were often the most reluctant to have sex; their fear of exposure was more finely tuned. ) Although Mr. Berube's main focus is on gay men, he also deals provocatively with the experience of homosexuals in the Women's Army Corps. He makes the assertion that "butch" women - identified by mannish builds, close-cropped hair and the absence of makeup - occupied a more respected status within the armed forces than did effeminate men, since aggressive, masculine traits more comfortably fit the stereotype of the good soldier. Indeed, he says, such women were more likely to assume responsibility and become the leaders of their units.

Mr. Berube vividly portrays the painful choices many veterans had to confront, once the war was over, in deciding whether to commit themselves to heterosexual marriage and children or to follow a homosexual life. A great many veterans who had formed their first gay relationships during the war chose marriage and raised families. Others, believing their identity as homosexuals to be integral to their lives, continued their gay existence and settled in the cities. A handful began to speak out. Organizations formed. The early sounds of opposition to discrimination and persecution against homosexuals began to be heard not long after the war was over.

Mr. Berube tells his story with a clear and remarkably evenhanded voice. At times the absence of modern social science techniques left this reader wishing for more conclusive evidence, and at times I wished the author had opted to look in depth at the life stories of five or six veterans instead of painting a broad canvas. Nevertheless, particularly in the context of today's debate over who has the right to fight and die for his or her country, "Coming Out Under Fire" is well worth reading.

Photo: a WAC lieutenant teaches a soldier how to impersonate a woman for a soldier show during World War II. (From "Coming Out Under Fire")

(source: <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/04/08/books/gay-soldiers-they-watched-their-step.html>)

**Introduction:** "Why We Fight" p. 1-7

**Chapter 1 "Getting In"**

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**Chapter 2 “Fitting In”**

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**Chapter 3 “GI Drag: A Gay Refuge”**

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**Chapter 4 “‘The Gang’s All Here’: The Gay Life and Vice Control”**

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**Chapter 5 “The Fight for Reform”**

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**Chapter 6 “Pioneer Experts: Psychiatrists Discover the Gay GI”**

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**Chapter 7 “Comrades in Arms” p. 175-200**

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**Chapter 8 “Fighting Another War”**

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**Chapter 9 “Rights, Justice, and a New Minority”**

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**Chapter 10 “The Legacy of the War” p. 255-279**

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 p. 257  
 p. 279

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Why were female impersonators so popular in World War II military culture?
2. What are some of the criteria that define healthy masculinity in *The Best Years of Our Lives*?



Source 15

### Document Based Question

The following question is based on the documents included in this curriculum guide. This question is designed to test your ability to work with and understand the historical documents. Write an essay that:

- Has a relevant thesis and supports that thesis with evidence from the documents.
- Analyzes the documents by grouping them in as many appropriate ways as possible.
- Does not simply summarize the documents individually.
- Takes into account both the sources of the documents and the authors' points of view.
- You may refer to relevant historical information not mentioned in the documents.

Question: Discuss whether “traditional” women’s roles and views of women change during World War II? To what extent does this vary by race, class, location, etc. ?

Be sure to analyze point of view in at least three documents or images.

What additional sources, types of documents, or information would you need to have a more complete view of this topic?

(adapted from:

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/wwh/modules/lesson15/lesson15.php?c=dbq&s=0>)