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“Ideal” American Heroes: Soldiers of Color in American World War II Literature

by

Corinna Barrett Percy

A dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment

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Committee Approval

To the Graduate Faculty:

The members of the committee appointed to examine the dissertation of CORINNA BARRETT PERCY find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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About a year before I began working on my dissertation, my aunt, Susan Kuenzler, sent me letters, photographs, and a journal my grandfather, James Barrett, had written as a pilot and POW during World War II. These letters made me contemplate the intersections of his identity and his situation – he writes a lot about wanting a good steak, marks down batting averages of his fellow POWs, and creates lists of the books he read. My personal family history interested me in World War II history, and I was intrigued by the idea of studying stories that stem from the war. I want to thank my Aunt Suzie for her generosity and for entrusting me with our historical family documents. And I want to thank my grandpa not only for his service in the war, but also for his resilience and humor in the face of hardship. Reading his letters and journal made me feel like I got to know him a little bit better.

As I began examining historical ephemera to narrow my project, I looked at many World War II military recruiting posters, realizing that almost all of them featured young, muscular, white men. Around the same time I also visited the Minidoka site, the Japanese internment camp here in Idaho, again intrigued by the history of the place and the stories that come out of such history. As I started thinking about World War II literature, I realized that there was a gap in scholarship. There are many books and memoirs published shortly after the war by and about white soldiers, but not that many about soldiers of color. Most memoirs by soldiers of color were not published until forty or fifty years later, and still novels and memoirs by and about white soldiers far outweigh those written by other ethnicities. My readings, both of posters and scholarly works, made me interested in finding texts about soldiers of other ethnicities and led to the work that follows in this dissertation. I want to express my gratitude for all veterans, those

who served in World War II and those who continue to serve. My scholarly work reminds me daily of their service and sacrifice.

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Table of Contents

Illustrations

"Ideal" American Heroes: Soldiers of Color in American World War II Literature

Dissertation Abstract—Idaho State University (2019)

This dissertation discusses and analyzes marginalized masculinities and forms of manhood that differ from the privileged concept in America by interpreting novels and memoirs by and about Japanese America, African America, and Native American soldiers. Though the epitome of military masculinity in 1940s America was white, many other ethnic masculinities typify soldiers who fought in World War II. Top-down discourses homogenize people and masculinity, and those that do not fit the hegemonic ideal are often excluded from these discourses. By rereading history *and* literature, this dissertation seeks to understand the past more wholly by focusing on individual experience from a range of bodies that were actors in history.

Chapter I, "A White Man's War: WWII Soldiers and the Public Image of Masculinity," discusses how white men choose to perform their masculinity and what the public and politicized "ideal" American man looked like during the war. Chapter II, "Looking Like the Enemy: Japanese American Soldiers and the Duality of Identity," discusses how Japanese American soldiers wished to prove their loyalty to the U.S by serving in the war and, as soldiers, adapted to form a collective masculinity. Chapter III, "Fighting for a Double Victory: African American Soldiers and the Wars Abroad and at Home," illustrates that for many black men the effort to claim a black masculinity was actually an effort to demonstrate their humanity. Chapter IV, "'You're Not a Full Citizen of the United States': Native American Soldiers, Warrior Traditions, and Silence," discusses the warrior traditions of the Navajo, Kiowa, and Laguna Native American tribes, explaining that Native American soldiers are then burdened with a double ideal when they go into modern warfare—American soldier and Indian warrior. As they search for

their own versions of masculinity, they have to move away from the stereotype of Indian to become "postindian" and embrace "survivance." Chapter V, "Where Do We Go From Here?: Teaching Intersectionality and Context in the Ethnic American Literature Classroom" advocates for using Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality and providing historical and cultural context for students when teaching texts by writers of color.

Key Words: American Literature, Multiethnic Literature, African American Literature, Japanese American Literature, Native American Literature, Soldier Literature, Masculinity, Manhood, Gender, Gender Performance, World War II, English

Introduction

Being an American Man: The National Rhetoric of American Manhood during WWII

As war so often shapes a nation and culture, studying and analyzing war literature can be an important tool for linking history with current society. Numerous wars molded the United States. The Revolutionary War won independence from Britain. The Mexican-American War increased the land of the U.S. by giving the U.S. the Rio Grande as a boundary for Texas and ownership of the Alta California and New Mexico territories, as well as doubling the population by giving Mexican Americans citizenship. The Civil War tested the understanding of what America is and what it stands for in a battle over slavery and states' rights. World War I pushed the U.S. from being a neutral country to one participating in a full-scale, mobilized, European war. And World War II looms large in the memory of the U.S. as a fight for freedom, decency and morality against Hitler's oppressive tyranny and Japan's imperialistic colonization, while at the same time establishing the U.S. as a global power. World War II is often considered one of the most defining events for the United States. Therefore, reading individualized accounts of war, whether in memoirs or fiction, links the personal experience of a soldier to the public perception of war, the one (a soldier) to the many (American citizens), creating an understanding of people and relationships within the larger society.

Because World War II was a global conflict and the United States "emerged from the war as an economic, technological, and military superpower," reading about those not in power, i.e., soldiers of color who served in the war, creates an intriguing dichotomy between personalized experience and societal constructs (Jarvis 4). For example, in *Code Talker*, Chester Nez explains that the Marines recruited Navajos specifically for their language skills, to create an unbreakable code to use against the Japanese. He states that, during his service in the Pacific, the Marines treated him and the other Navajo code talkers well, that they all got along with the white soldiers,

and that "our skin color didn't work against us in the military" (172). However, when the code talkers were first testing the Navajo code in the Pacific, other U.S. soldiers mistook it for the Japanese language and mistook Nez for the enemy (a Japanese soldier), indicating how those in power or in the dominant cultural group often lump non-white ethnic groups all into one. Michael Omi and Howard Winant label this as an "ethnicity paradigm" explaining that the paradigm is unable "to deal with the particular characteristics of racial minority groups" causing whites to imagine that non-whites "all look alike" (20-21). Also, when Nez returns home from the war he goes to acquire an identification card in his "spotless Marine uniform," and the man behind the desk tells him, "You're not a full citizen of the United States, you know . . . . You can't even vote" (217). Obviously, Nez's experience is drastically different from most white soldiers returning home from WWII, who were typically heralded as heroes and praised for their service. This project specifically looks at the connections of ethnicity, gender, and war from the viewpoint of soldiers of color because their experiences were typically different from white soldiers and their stories were so often silenced.

Literary Realism and War

War writing from the Civil War era is often associated with literary realism. Broadly defined, realism is "the faithful representation of reality" (Harmon and Holman 428), and realism in the arts is the attempt to represent subject matter truthfully, without artificiality. According to William Harmon and C. Hugh Holman, "Where romanticists transcend the immediate to find the ideal, and naturalists plumb the actual or superficial to find the scientific laws that control its actions, realists center their attention to a remarkable degree on the immediate, the here and now, the specific action, and the verifiable consequence" (428). In essence, realist authors construct a

version of reality as they see it, or as they *wish* to see it. The realism movement in literature is often cited as ending around the turn of the century, but the techniques of realism have lived on because much of literature is written in straightforward language about contemporary issues. Richard Chase explains that novels in the realism tradition, "render reality closely and in comprehensive detail" and "characters appear in their real complexity of temperament and motive; they are in explicable relation to nature, to each other, to their social class, to their past" (75-76). Though, ideally, war should be a completely abnormal experience, much of war literature is associated with realism because the stories attempt to render the reality of war in comprehensive detail—the fear, boredom, horror, and destruction—while portraying characters in relation to nature (or the destruction of it), to each other as soldiers/allies/enemies, and to their past and how it affects the present as they serve in war. The memoirists and novelists I analyze in this dissertation attempt to portray the experience of World War II and the representation of it with realism so that those outside the experience can try to understand it. Because World War II *was* such a harrowing experience, much of it is written about the "immediate, the here and now, [and] the specific action."

However, while literary realism attempts to convey experiences as they are, it also reflects the blind spots of American culture. Much of WWII literature written during the period was white-washed, illustrating the limits of realism that lead to a hole in the literary history of WWII. Though many soldiers of color served in WWII, they were not treated equally or acknowledged as heroes in the same way white soldiers were. Nez's reality of the experience of war then leads to the paradoxical experience of not even being considered a citizen of the nation he fought for. Although no soldier has the exact same experience in war, it is vital to look at these depictions of soldiers of color to see how ethnic and racial reality differs from the reality of

white soldiers, leading to paradoxical experiences much like Nez's. Top-down discourses homogenize people and masculinity, and those that do not fit the hegemonic ideal are often excluded from the discourse. This absence of the embodiment of soldiers of color in historical texts, in fact, disembodies the American soldier even as top-down discourse tries to perpetuate the "ideal" body or "ideal" soldier. By rereading history *and* literature, this dissertation seeks to understand the past more wholly by focusing on individual experience from a range of bodies that were actors in history.

Marginalized Masculinities in World War II

Though the dominant and privileged version of masculinity in America during World War II was, of course, white, many other ethnic masculinities typify soldiers who fought in the war. In her book *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity during World War II*, Christina S. Jarvis notes that "representations of particular male bodies—young, well-muscled, white—were privileged as the U.S. symbolically rebuilt its body politic and prepared for war. Establishing the dominant model of American masculinity as white and able-bodied also helped create a range of alternate, marginalized masculinities that departed from the norm" (5). In this dissertation, I discuss and analyze these alternate and marginalized masculinities and forms of manhood that differ from the privileged concept in America. I examine representations of soldiers of color in World War II literature written between 1945 and the present, focusing on novels and memoirs by and about Japanese American, African American, and Native American[1]

[1] Whenever possible, I use tribal-specific names to describe the indigenous writers and characters under study. When I refer to the larger collective of indigenous peoples in North America, I use the terms "Native American" and "American Indian" interchangeably, because, as inventions of the U.S. government, neither term is more or less accurate.

soldiers. I am drawing together the history of the World War II era and the literary history that delves into the lives of marginalized soldiers.

When we are trying to reconstruct the literary history of marginalized groups, it is often necessary to widen our view of what literature is. Cherokee scholar Jace Weaver defines literature "broadly as the total written output of a people. Even biographies, autobiographies, and tribal histories would come under such a definition, because to impress form on the relative formlessness of a life or culture, to exercise selectively over what is to be included and what excluded, is an act of literary creation" (ix). Sioux writer Paula Gunn Allen notes that nonfiction has influenced Native fiction "at least as thoroughly as have more exotic folk and ceremonial traditions" so that its inclusion in any study is vital "to a proper, full-bodied representation of Native literature" (6). Though these Native American scholars are speaking specifically of Native American literature, their views of the broadness of what literature is extend to other marginalized groups, such as African Americans and Japanese Americans who I also discuss in this study. Hence, I will be examining memoirs and novels, as well as other historical ephemera, to investigate the spectrum of American manhood among different ethnic groups through a largely historicist approach. However, to discuss marginalized masculinities it is vital to establish what the dominant rhetoric of masculinity was in the United States leading up to and during World War II in order to compare the differences in representation.

Building an American Manhood

In *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, gender scholar Michael S. Kimmel argues that "the quest for manhood—the effort to achieve, to demonstrate, to prove our masculinity—has been one of the formative and persistent experiences in men's lives" (3). He goes on to

explain that in order to prove or measure masculinity, men compare themselves to other men; therefore "masculinity is largely a homosocial enactment" (Kimmel 5). Yet how do American men demonstrate and prove their masculinity differently from other men? E. Anthony Rotundo states that:

> the quest for true manhood is that manliness is a human invention. Starting with a handful of biological differences, people in all places and times have invented elaborate stories about what it means to be male and female. In other words, each culture constructs its own version of what men and women are—and ought to be. . . . Like any human creation, manhood can be shaped and reshaped by the human imagination; that is, manhood has a history. (1)

The creation of American manhood coincides with the history of America itself. At the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, the United States was a new nation trying to define itself, and its citizens were also defining and establishing what it meant to be American.

Previous to the American Revolutionary War, manhood in the American colonies was rooted in the idea of community; men measured their manhood based on their contribution to the group as a whole. Rotundo explains that communal manhood was developed in the social world of colonial New England, and a man's identity was inextricable from the responsibilities he had to his community. A man "fulfilled himself through public usefulness more than his economic success, and the social status of the family into which he was born gave him his place in the community more than his individual achievements did. Through his role as the head of the household, a man expressed his value to his community and provided his wife and children with their social identity" (Rotundo 2). In the eighteenth-century, the line between public and private

hardly existed in towns and villages, which profoundly influenced the way people perceived manhood. Individualism was not as important as community—the understanding that they belonged to a collection of people greater than just themselves. In *American Masculinities: A Historical Encyclopedia*, Bret Carroll states, "Euro-Americans considered social stability to be dependent on social hierarchy and deferential respect for authority" (65). The authority of the time was British rule and King George III, which also dictated opinions about manhood.

However, in 1763 the British began imposing taxation on the colonies, when Americans had previously only been taxed by their own elected assemblies. Many colonists opposed British taxation because they felt it reduced them to a type of slave as opposed to free men. This taxation was the beginning of dissent in the American colonies, and dissent ultimately led to the American Revolutionary War. The American Revolution severed the political relationship between the American colonies and Great Britain, "yet the Revolution's impact on construction of masculinity was complex, both reinforcing and challenging the patriarchal social and political relations that had arrived with the earliest European colonists" (Carroll 27). Robert A. Nye explains that during the American Revolution "men who made the transition from citizens to soldiers were obliged to leave behind a sense of manly competence as heads of household for a life in which they lived rough, submitted to discipline, and survived on their fighting skills and personal courage" (417). The citizen-soldier became a national symbol due to the conflict between the American colonies and Great Britain, and "the presence of self-reliant property owners willing to take up arms against distant authority in defense of emerging political rights" not only became a necessity but a marker of patriotism and manhood (Nye 417).

After the Revolutionary War, the ideas of manhood slowly started to change. Sylvia Hoffert explains that "the process of nation building offered both men and women living in what

became the United States the opportunity to modify their gender ideals, conventions, and relations to conform to their new civic identities. No longer subjects of the King of England, they were now citizens of a newly formed republic" (56-57). With independence came the birth of a republican government, the spread of a market economy, and an associated growth of the middle class. Wealth and status in Great Britain was passed down through inheritance, and the middle class was practically nonexistent; it was difficult for people to rise above the stations they were born into. In America, republicanism allowed for political participation and rights of democratic citizenship, and the market economy allowed for individual success. Rotundo claims, "At the root of these changes was an economic and political life based on the free play of individual interests. In the new world, a man took his identity and his social status from his own achievements, not from the accident of birth" (3). In essence, the concepts of manhood shifted from a communal identity based on British governance to the self-made man based on individualism and citizenship. Both Kimmel and Rotundo explain that in the nineteenth century, the American ideal of manhood was the self-made man, a departure from the British nobility and inheritance system, and was determined by being in charge of one's own life, liberty, and property. Hence, being able to prove oneself in the workplace meant one was a man, and being the provider and breadwinner for one's family further solidified his status as a "real" man. For these reasons, American manhood since the nineteenth century often focuses on individualism.

American Manhood from the Early 20th Century to World War II

These concepts of masculinity and individualism helped build an emerging nation and were carried over into the 20th century. However, Kimmel posits that in the early twentieth century, proving masculinity in the workplace became difficult as more and more women entered

the workforce and men were doing work that was considered more "feminine" in offices and department stores. The United States' entrance into World War I took men away from these "feminized" occupations, making them soldiers instead—fighting men. After WWI, "wartime victories allowed a generation of men to rescue a threatened sense of manhood" (Kimmel 127). War, then, becomes an area to measure manhood and masculinity in the 20th century, and battlefields become spaces not only to defeat the enemy, but also to prove oneself a man.

Just as WWI allowed a generation of men to reclaim what they saw as a failing or lesser manhood, WWII would provide the same avenue for men some twenty-five years later. In the period between the World Wars, the devastation of the Great Depression hit America hard. Jarvis points out that the Depression not only caused disastrous effects on the U.S. economy and standard of living, but also psychologically impacted American men. During the Great Depression, approximately one-quarter of the male workforce was unemployed, meaning that many men could not establish their manhood in the workplace nor could they provide for their families. Kimmel states that "the workplace could no longer be considered a reliable arena for the demonstration and proof of one's manhood. And many men simply lost faith in a system that prevented them from proving their masculinity in the only ways they knew. . . . For most men the Depression was emasculating both at work and at home. Unemployed men lost status with their wives and children and saw themselves as impotent patriarchs" (128, 132). What Kimmel and Jarvis are arguing is that most men felt humiliation at being unemployed and lost their self-respect. Because their economic power was removed, they could no longer claim being the head of the household, which damaged their sense of manhood.

Though American men attempted to rescue a damaged masculinity through paternal involvement (i.e., raising sons to be successful men), or vicariously through cultural symbols of

masculinity (Superman, Dashiell Hammett's detective Sam Spade, Rhett Butler), the years of the Depression provided little opportunity to reclaim what men considered a manhood that had vanished. Many men lost their faith in America's market economy due to their lack of employment and the disappearance of their breadwinner status. Caroline Bird states, "What is frequently overlooked and frequently forgotten is this: when the stock market crashed in October 1929, America stopped growing and did not really get moving again until the attack on Pearl Harbor . . . mobilized our resources" (xiv). Just as WWII helped pull the United States out of the economic depression, it also helped pull men out of the abyss of a lost manhood, and "the serviceman replaced the worker as a key symbol of masculinity" (Jarvis 11).

During the Great Depression and World War II, the nation looked to its commander in chief for strength. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the only president to be elected to four terms, embodied American power despite his physical disability. Jarvis discusses F.D.R.'s "two bodies"—his natural body and his political body—and states that his "image and power as president depended on the careful distancing between his actual disabled, often infirm body and his skillfully orchestrated body politic" (29). In order to establish his political body, F.D.R. denied his disability and created a walking performance by leaning on the arms of his sons. The press also maintained F.D.R.'s political body:

> In his 12 years as president, the press did not print a single photograph of F.D.R. in his wheelchair nor did they capture his disabled status on any newsreel. When he was photographed, Roosevelt was usually pictured from the waist up, seated in a chair or an open car. If he was shown standing, he was either behind a podium or placed with a group of people so his arm on a colleague's or son's arm was not noticeable. . . . Thus, throughout the depression and most of World War II, the press used carefully staged

> photographs to assure a first crippled, then warring nation that Roosevelt, their head of state, embodied the strength, health, and physical ability necessary to guide the country. (Jarvis 31)

Through this combination of denial, performance, and photographic staging, F.D.R. was able to create a powerful political body separate from his natural body, which allowed him to continue his political career and earn the trust of the nation's citizens.

Roosevelt's political body was formed and sustained to encourage hope during the depression. When the United States went to war, his political body became even more important to illustrate that he had the strength and boldness to lead a warring nation. The nation could not be seen as weak, nor could its leader. Though wartime cartoons sometimes praised and sometimes condemned F.D.R.'s policies, the pictorial representations of him portrayed him as robust and abled bodied. For example, Jerry Doyle's "Cleaning up his office to get down to a real V job," illustrates F. D.R. as larger than life, with his shirtsleeves rolled up ready for action,

Figure 1: Jerry Doyle's "Cleaning up the office to get down to a real V job."

Figure 2: *Philadelphia Bulletin's* "Keep the home fire burning."

as he kicks out much smaller men to rid the government of incompetent advisors (Fig. 1). In a cartoon from the *Philadelphia Bulletin*, the cartoonist has depicted F.D.R. as a regular sized man, yet he bears the great burden of a large log (or "inspiration") that he uses to feed the flames of patriotism (Fig. 2). Though cartoons of Roosevelt from the early war years focus on patriotism, production, and productivity, they also illustrate a strong, masculine leader at the helm of a strong, masculine nation. As the nation was at war, it makes sense that the American government and military wanted to convey notions of national strength to its citizens and to other nations.

World War II Military Recruitment Posters

Besides F.D.R., the United States needed "additional figures and embodied symbols to rebuild its body politic and reconstruct its public image of masculinity" (Jarvis 35). These figures and symbols were often depicted in wartime military recruitment posters. James Aulich, in *War Posters: Weapons of Mass Communication*, states, "The poster is the exemplary modern medium and it appeals to the most modern of phenomena, the masses" (11). In his study, Aulich discusses and analyzes war posters from World War I to Vietnam, explaining how advertising and images merged to create propaganda that was meant to unite, persuade, and mobilize communities and nations. During World War II, recruiting posters for both the military and the home front became an essential cog in the United States' campaign against Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. Aulich explains:

> The poster is also the most modern of media because it is integral to the urban environment. Placed adjacent to entertainment venues, by railway lines and along main urban routes, posters were in the commercial hearts, industrial centres, public squares and transport hubs of cities around the world. They adorned the trams, buses and taxis in

order to catch the average four-second gaze of the traveller. The modern man and woman were their targets: shoppers, office workers, managers, artisans and labourers. (12) Because posters were so prominent during World War II, American men would have encountered them on an almost daily basis. These men would have often seen military recruiting posters, which particularly highlighted the need for young men to join the forces to help save their country and illustrate their patriotism and manhood. Looking at military recruiting posters of the time, it is evident that the ideal portrayal of a man was, young, white, and muscular.

Perhaps one of the most iconic posters of WWII is McClellend Barclay's 1942 navy recruitment poster, "Man the Guns" (Fig. 3). The image illustrates a man of action, full of strength and purposefulness. He is shirtless, and his large muscles bulge as he lifts a huge shell (a decidedly phallic symbol) into a gun. The text on the poster holds a double meaning: seamen must "Man the Guns" (be responsible for loading and firing the guns) and also must be a "Man"

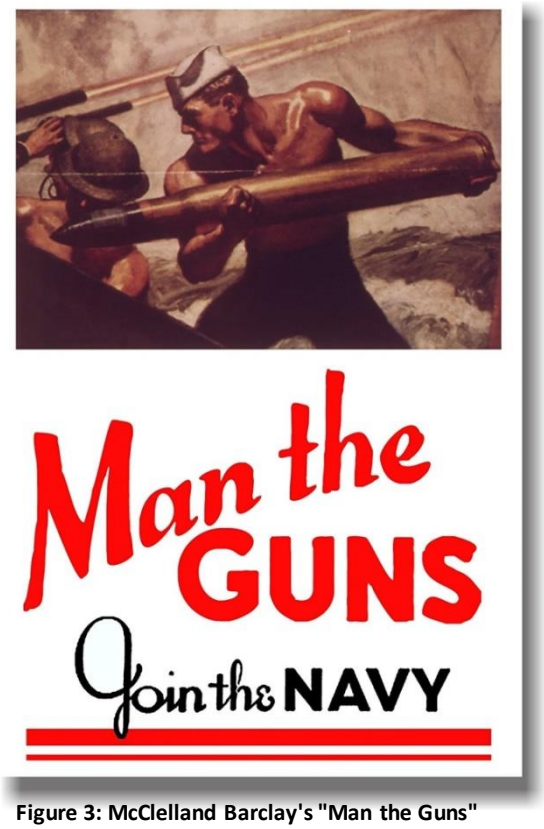


Figure 3: McClelland Barclay's "Man the Guns"

(masculine, strong, brawny) to serve in the U.S. Navy. Aulich suggests, "America's nationalism encouraged individualism, cultural pluralism, voluntarism and democracy, which contrasted starkly with Japanese Imperial, Nazi racial, and Soviet collectivist ideologies that demanded subjection to absolute authority. This was achieved through sympathetic and realistic – although often understated and sometimes heroic representations – of the common soldier" (170). Though Aulich states that wartime posters encouraged cultural pluralism, the evidence of it is slim. Few military recruiting posters featured black men (or other men of color) and black soldiers were never portrayed with white soldiers in any of the posters. Additionally, Barclay's poster is not understated, nor does it illustrate a "common soldier." Instead it depicts a heroic representation of a seaman: youthful, handsome, and burly almost beyond belief. Military recruitment posters that did not blatantly reveal the naked muscular form of a man still portrayed the men on the posters as strong, well-built, determined, and almost always white (Fig 4-7). These poster soldiers, seamen, and marines were ready to take action be it flying aircraft missions, passing on important information, or charging the front lines. The slogans of the posters also convey action and strength, illustrating the ideal of a good serviceman. These posters are "representations of powerful male bodies used to communicate impressions of national strength during the war" (Jarvis 13). Jarvis argues, "In keeping with centuries of artistic representation of heroic male

Figures 4-7: Various WWII military recruitment posters.

bodies, the symbolic muscular, youthful (often white) male body of the serviceman offered a more easily interpreted image of national strength and power than its female counterpart and was more in keeping with a nation engaged full-time in waging war (14). The United States needed to establish national strength during the war, and they rendered that through the physical strength of its male citizens, who would be the ones doing the actual fighting on the frontlines. Also, practically every military recruitment poster depicts one man alone, highlighting individualism, which had become an American standard for manhood. Based on military recruitment posters, it would appear that during WWII, a man showed his loyalty, courage, and masculinity by himself through his willingness to serve and serve well.

Another theme in military recruitment posters during WWII used the image of Uncle Sam. It is not surprising that Uncle Sam was used in wartime posters as he has been one of America's primary national symbols since the early nineteenth century. However, during WWII the image of Uncle Sam overshadowed other national symbols like Lady Liberty and Lady Columbia, and he became increasingly stronger and more virile. For example, the well-known WWI military recruitment poster of Uncle Sam stating, "I want YOU for the U.S. Army," depicts an older, more wizened man in buttoned-up, traditional clothing (Fig. 8). One cannot see whether he is muscular because he is covered up with clothing, and his purpose is calling other, more youthful men into action. In contrast, WWII posters of Uncle Sam show him as an "active and fully embodied participant in the war" (Jarvis 41). His clothing, though it still uses patriotic symbols, is less traditional. He has discarded the cumbersome coat and hat, his collar is open, and his sleeves are rolled up, allowing for him to participate in the exploits of war (Fig. 9 and 10). The underlying statement appears to be that if young American men wanted to emulate the patriotic symbol of Uncle Sam, then they too would need to roll up their sleeves and take action

Figures 8, 9, 10: WWI Uncle Sam poster versus WWII Uncle Sam posters

as servicemen. Jarvis states that these "newly hardened" images of Uncle Sam help decode the body politic during World War II and "ushered in a distinctly masculine national symbol, as the U.S. began to imagine itself more thoroughly within masculine terms" (35). The concept of the U.S. being a masculine nation would have then affected American men, as they compared themselves with the men on the posters, and influenced the dominant ideal of American manhood.

Occasionally, WWII military recruitment posters also featured women. However, the women on the posters were used as a means to motivate men to join the service. For instance, Jon Whitcomb's "He volunteered for submarine service" poster indicates that volunteering to fight will make women fawn over you (Fig. 11). The woman in the poster drapes herself over the Navy man, an adoring look on her face as she caresses his insignia. The image and text provide an obvious meaning: the man's willingness to serve rewards him with feminine attention. Whitcomb's poster also illustrates an additional common thread in American masculinity during WWII, that of heteronormativity. A "real" man was attracted to women and sought for feminine

attention. Another well-known poster from WWII is Howard Chandler Christy's "Gee!! I wish I were a Man" (Fig. 12). Though originally produced in 1917 for WWI, it was still largely used as a recruitment poster during WWII. The use of a woman stating she wishes she were a man so she could join the navy hints at the idea that all "real" men should want to join the navy. Below the main slogan it states, "Be a man and do it," again highlighting that "real" men do their duty and serve; you cannot be a man if you do not fight in the war. The slogans on such recruiting posters do not tiptoe around the idea at all; they merely state that real American men were men who served and if one did not join the service he could not consider himself a man. Though these posters use female images, they are only to emphasize the true masculinity of American men in contrast to American women. The woman in Whitcomb's poster relies on her man who has joined the service and clings to him because of it, while the woman in Christy's poster must rely on men in general to join the navy and fight because she cannot join herself.

Figure 11: Whitcomb's recruitment poster

Figure 12: Christy's recruitment poster

While young, white bodies were privileged in the United States, there were some posters that featured African American soldiers. These were typically individuals who had made notable achievements, such as Dorie Miller, a Navy Messman who was the first African American to be awarded the Navy Cross for his efforts during the attack on Pearl Harbor (Fig. 13), and Robert Diez, a Tuskegee Airman who flew ninety-three successful missions over North Africa and Italy (Fig. 14). These portraits of African Americans were "an attempt to reach that community at a time when the armed services were segregated and African Americans were financially, socially, and politically oppressed" (Aulich 170). The United States was in need of manpower for the military and advertised to the African American community in order to fill its numbers. However, because the military was still segregated, white and black soldiers were never depicted together on military recruitment posters. Jarvis states, "Despite normalizing whiteness, the American body politic accommodated racially diverse images, even if these images did not reflect the reality of wartime race relations" (52). The United States military and government recognized and acknowledged the nation's racial diversity with these posters featuring African Americans in an effort to bolster recruitment numbers and create a sense of national unity during

Figure 13: Dorie Miller

Figure 14: Robert Diez

wartime, even though there was not unity, but separation, in the regiments the military created. It is also significant to note that military recruitment posters featuring white soldiers typically did not highlight images of famous servicemen but instead used illustrations of a type of "any man," while those featuring black soldiers were of black servicemen who had fought with distinction. The underlying message, then, is that any *white* man could join the service and fight well, while black men needed model minorities as they were isolated and exceptional cases. The American military was a racist institution trying not to be racist by literally creating the poster child for what black men might be, but were not allowed to be in most circumstances.

Also, though posters featured white soldiers and black soldiers, it seems that these were the only two ethnicities represented, notwithstanding America's diverse ethnic populations and the fact that large groups of other ethnicities, such as Japanese Americans and American Indians, also served in the war. I can find no evidence of military recruitment posters that depicted American Indians, Latino Americans, or Asian Americans as American soldiers, even though men from all of these ethnic groups served in WWII. Wartime posters that did depict Japanese were of the Japanese enemy and highly racist, as evidenced by the posters below (Fig. 15 and 16).

Figures 15 and 16: American WWII posters depicting the Japanese enemy

Masculine Traits to Prove Manhood

As Kimmel posits, proving one's manhood is a significant part of American men's lives. The terms manhood and masculinity are often used interchangeably throughout this dissertation and in other scholars' works, but I also argue that in order for men to prove their manhood they must demonstrate masculinity. However, there are different types of masculine traits and behaviors that allow one to claim this manhood. "Manhood" may be a more consistent concept, but it is achieved in different masculine ways. For instance, serving in the war and being a soldier during World War II would have been a consistent marker of manhood, while physical fitness, prowess, intelligence, and bravery would have been masculine traits and behaviors that were incorporated under the umbrella of manhood. Being soldiers allowed men to claim manhood, but they still needed to prove their masculinity while under fire; hence, those soldiers who ran away from a fight or deserted could not continue to claim manhood in the same way as soldiers who did not run away or desert. Soldiers of color, who were excluded from mainstream white ideals of masculinity, had to demonstrate and perform their own versions of masculinity to claim manhood, which were sometimes different from the white version. These traits might not have previously been coded as masculine, but because they were being performed by soldiers in an effort to protect the United States and win the war, they then became masculine traits. For example, the Navajo Code Talkers used their native language as a weapon during the war. Language is not typically labeled as gendered, but Navajo soldiers used it during battle as a way to transmit messages and defeat the Japanese. Therefore, the Navajo language becomes coded as a masculine trait because of its use during the war.

Combining methods from historical, cultural, gender, and ethnicity/race studies, I ask how soldiers' race and ethnicity play a part in their patriotism toward the United States, their

understanding of their own masculinity in comparison with the national and dominant rhetoric of masculinity, their demonstration and proof of their manhood, and their feelings as Americans serving a country that so often treated them as second-class citizens (or not citizens at all). In examining the accounts of ethnic American masculinities during World War II, this study necessarily draws on other histories and theories of gender formation. Judith Butler discusses the idea that sexual and other identities are constructed by describing gender identity as performed rather than as a static essence. However, she also states that "gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and . . . gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. As a result, it becomes impossible to separate out 'gender' from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained" (*Gender Trouble*, 3). R.W. Connell explains that masculinities are defined both collectively and in terms of "relations of hierarchy"; masculine identities are not only formed in individual lives but are also "defined collectively in culture, and are sustained in institutions" (10-11). Therefore, while I examine gender and masculinity as a performance, it is in conjunction with the historical and cultural ideals of the WWII era and in relation to the dominant white society, which is the hierarchy that has the power to mold those ideals.

Intersectionality and the Social Construct of Race

Because this study looks at both masculine and ethnic identities, I also draw on theories of racial and ethnic formation. As Butler explains, it is impossible to separate gender identity from "political and cultural intersections" such as ethnicity and class. Hence, I examine ethnic masculine identity under the lens of Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality. In

"Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," Crenshaw describes how the experiences of women of color are "frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism" (1243). Though her article focuses primarily on women of color at the intersections of race and sex, her idea of intersectionality includes both genders and stretches beyond these two identity markers. She explains that her focus on the "intersections of race and gender only highlights the need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed" (1245). Therefore, I look at how various facets of identity, such as ethnicity, gender, religion, class, language, and culture play a role in the formation of ethnic masculinities among Japanese American, Native American, and African American soldiers during WWII. These facets of identity cannot be separated from each other because they are all interconnected and interact with one another to create identity. I argue that intersectionality of identity is even more prevalent for people of color because they cannot escape the pressure of multiplicity that white identity so often can. The theory of intersectionality is particularly useful for this study, as "soldier" adds another item to the list of identity markers. Intersectionality then incorporates how men of color defined themselves during WWII, particularly when a tough, strong (and white) masculine ideal was in the forefront of the country's mind as the United States attempted to portray itself as a masculine nation in order to boost morale and gain victory.

Many scholars have argued that race is a social construct. Some may grapple with this concept because after all we can "see" race—someone is visibly white, or black, or Asian. However, acknowledging race as a social construction does not make it less real. Psychologist Gordon Hodson argues that "the social aspect is what makes a phenomenon so central to our lives" (para. 4). The social construction of race, racial categories, and hierarchies among those

racial categories affect people in very real ways. Historian David Freund explains that "racial categories have had a much more concrete impact on peoples' lives, because they've been used to discriminate and to distribute resources unequally and set up different standards for protection under the law" (para. 4). And Crenshaw states:

> But to say that a category such as race or gender is socially constructed is not to say that that category has no significance in our world. On the contrary, a large and continuing project for subordinated people—and indeed, one of the projects for which postmodern theories have been very helpful—is thinking about the way power has clustered around certain categories and is exercised against others. This project attempts to unveil the processes of subordination and the various ways those processes are experienced by people who are subordinated and people who are privileged by them. It is, then, a project that presumes that categories have meaning and consequences. And this project's most pressing problem, in many if not most cases, is not the existence of the categories, but rather the particular values attached to them and the way those values foster and create social hierarchies. (1296-97)

So even though race is arbitrary and perhaps not biologically "real," race is "socially real" (Hodson para. 10). Omi and Winant posit, "Race will *always* be at the center of the American experience" (5). Because race is part of the American experience, it has added to the social realness of it, and this social realness of race has created unfair power balances between whites, the "superior" race, and non-whites, the "inferior" races.

These social hierarchies marked white skin as superior and the norm, while "other skin colors were exotic mutations which had to be explained" (Omi and Winant 15). Omi and Winant explain, "Race was equated with distinct hereditary characteristics. Differences in intelligence,

temperament, and sexuality (among other traits) were deemed to be racial in character" (15). Hence, whites perpetuated the idea of their superiority because the white race was considered more intelligent and less driven by animalistic sexual impulses. These perceived differences then legitimized racism. Arif Dirlik notes:

> It was Europeans who invented modern racism as they colonized the world, but it was on the fertile soil of the Americas, and especially the United States, that racism flourished. Racism offered an almost logical ideological legitimation to the new state, found on the colonial conquest, decimation, and cultural extermination of the indigenous population and built with the labor of slaves imported from Africa. It is not surprising that it became an ideological habit, more deep-seated in it habitualness than simple manipulation, to project the language of race on all immigrants deemed undesirable, such as the Chinese, and even to project it on the world as a whole. Americanization also meant racialization: not just fitting into a racially organized society but also thinking racially. (1367)

The reality of the social construction of race, and by extension racism, plays a large role in the formation of identity and masculinity for the soldiers of color under examination in this dissertation. Because they are non-white, they face very real prejudices and discrimination in the U.S. military during WWII because the white dominant culture had socially constructed the unequal power system. Each ethnic group's history in the U.S.—the scattering and extermination of Native Americans, slavery and segregation of African Americans, and immigration exclusion of Asian Americans—contributes to the racial and ethnic formation of each group and individual identity within each group.

Double Consciousness, the Veil, and Colonial Mimicry

Because white society was the dominant power structure of the U.S. during WWII, which perpetuated white masculinity as the ideal, soldiers of color were then faced with trying to "measure up" to white masculinity while at the same time attempting to establish their own ethnic masculinity. This multiplicity of identity correlates with W.E.B Du Bois' theory of double consciousness and the veil. Du Bois explains that African Americans live in a world of two-ness because white Americans lack clarity to see blacks as true Americans (a veil that hangs between the races), and because black Americans lack the clarity to see themselves outside of how white America defines them. Du Bois states, "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (9). Though Du Bois' theory specifically mentions African Americans it also works in tandem with other ethnic groups, such as Japanese Americans and Native Americans, as they suffer similar consequences of white society not seeing them as true Americans and with viewing themselves through the lens of white America.

In this project I look at how double consciousness becomes compounded for soldiers of color during WWII, because they lived not just in civilian society, but in the U.S. military complex with strict rules and regulations, mostly under the command of white officers. Therefore, they are seeing themselves not only through the lens of white society but also through the lens of the military. As soldiers of color served in the U.S. military during WWII, they were judged through the lens of white military masculinity, but also not seen as white. These soldiers

experiences illuminate Homi Bhabha's concept of colonial mimicry, in which the "authority of colonial discourse" wishes to teach the Other the white way without ever believing they can live up to it. Bhabha explains that it is a

> discursive process by which the excess or slippage produced by the *ambivalence* of mimicry (almost the same, *but not quite*) does not merely 'rupture' the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a 'partial' presence. By 'partial' I mean both 'incomplete' and 'virtual.' It is as if the very emergence of the 'colonial' is dependent for its representation upon some strategic limitation or prohibition *within* the authoritative discourse itself. The success of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure, so that the mimicry is both resemblance and menace. (123)

Bhabha goes on to say that this mimicry is "*[a]lmost the same, but not white*" (128). Hence, ethnic Others must often use the discourse of colonial authority in order to survive, but also use their mimicry as a type of menace or subversion. Even as men of color in WWII were, in a sense, living up to the white masculine ideal because they put on military uniforms and became soldiers, they were most often still discriminated against. Though their mimicry resembled white soldiers, they were seen as "partial" and "incomplete" because of their ethnicity. Thus, they demonstrated their own forms of masculinity in contrast to white masculinity, indicating a type of menace toward white society.

Chapter Outline

In Chapter I, I examine whiteness as a social construct and trace the ways it has changed throughout the history of the United States (who got to be white when). I then analyze two

memoirs, *To Hell and Back* by Audie Murphy and *Etched in Purple* by Frank Irgang, and one novel, *Casualty* by Robert Lowry, all by white authors, in order to compare the public ideal of masculinity presented in war posters and promoted by the government to individual accounts of the war, looking at how they portray the image of the white soldier, how they describe duty and patriotism in connection with fear and courage (typically represented as a marker of masculinity), and how heteronormativity plays a role in their performance of gender.

Chapter II traces the history of Asian immigration into the United States that resulted in the U.S government passing Asian exclusion laws in the late 19th and early 20th century and limited the kind of work Asian immigrant men could obtain. Whites then created stereotypes of Asian men either as effeminate or savage beasts, so Asian men could claim no middle road to their masculinity. The bombing of Pearl Harbor then lead to the U.S. government interning over 120,000 Japanese Americans, cutting off their means of employment, and taking away their rights of citizenship. The U.S. government then expected young Japanese American men to serve in the military, and if they refused they were sent to prison. I analyze Jack K. Wakamatsu's memoir *Silent Warriors: A Memoir of America's 442nd Regimental Combat Team* and Robert H. Kono's novel *The Last Fox* and argue that three main themes about Japanese American masculinity emerge from these works: (1) the idea that the only way to resist being unjustly judged and imprisoned and to prove their loyalty to the United States was to fight for the principles of America, including freedom, as American GIs, (2) that the 442nd Regiment's greatest strength was their feelings of family and community among the soldiers of the regiment, and (3) that the soldiers knew what abilities they needed to win the war and developed those abilities. Comparing these texts with John Okada's novel *No-No Boy*, I explain that while texts about Japanese American men who did serve in the war focus heavily on their desire to prove

their loyalty to the United States and by extension their American manhood, *No-No Boy* is set after the war and illustrates Ichiro's incomplete American identity and manhood because of his refusal to serve. I argue that much of his struggle to regain a sense of belonging hinges on how he views his own identity and masculinity, which he considers lacking; his relationship with his family, particularly his mother; and how he relates with other members of the Japanese American and non-Japanese American communities.

Chapter III explores the historical tensions between black/white relationships within the U.S., discussing how whites created multiple stereotypes about black men—that they were lazy, stupid, sexually driven beasts— in order to keep social and political power and keep blacks at an inferior status. I then analyze Chester B. Himes' novel *If He Hollers Let Him Go* in comparison with these historical tensions, explaining that Bob, a black man and the protagonist of the story, often feels humiliated and desperate because of white society and therefore fantasizes of enacting violence against whites as a way to demonstrate his masculinity and obtain power over the symbol of whiteness. I then compare the black/white relationships in the U.S. in *If He Hollers* to the black/white relationships in post-war Germany in William Gardener Smith's *Last of the Conquerors*. In the novel, many white German women have relationship with black American soldiers, and I illustrate how Smith makes a distinction between the cruelty of the white American soldiers who are supposed to represent the land of the free, and the friendship/love of the German woman who come from a previously fascist nation that preached Aryan purity, demonstrating how people can choose to accept or reject ingrained racial codes. I also analyze two memoirs by African American veterans of World War II in this chapter—*Red Tail Captured, Red Tail Free: Memoirs of a Tuskegee Airman and POW* by Alexander Jefferson and *Blood on German Snow: An African American Artilleryman in World War II and Beyond* by Emiel W.

Owens. These memoirs highlight much of the same racism and discrimination that black soldiers faced as do the two novels; however, they differ from the novels in that the endings are not as hopeless. I argue that is due to the time period in which the novels and memoirs were published—the novels were published in the 1940s, while the memoirs were published in 2005 and 2006, which allow the memoirists to view their experiences in a more hopeful light because they directly correlate their service with the changes that were forthcoming.

In Chapter IV, I discuss the warrior traditions of the Navajo, Kiowa, and Laguna tribes, explaining that the warrior ideal emerged from within tribes but also became a hegemonic narrative perpetuated by whites, as whites attempted to search for "authentic" Indians. The concept of warriorhood among these tribes did not fit with what white society considered "civilized," and illustrate how modern warfare does not coincide with the historical aspects of warriors in these tribes. I argue that the warrior ideal then causes problems for individuals who experience life uniquely as it challenges them to live up to a myth when they go into modern warfare. Native American soldiers were burdened with a double ideal (American soldier and Indian warrior), so their version of a soldier was not only based on an Indian warrior, as many tribes claimed a history of warriorhood, but was also based on the dominant white rhetoric of masculinity. In this chapter, I interpret *Code Talker* by Chester Nez, *House Made of Dawn* by N. Scott Momaday, and *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko and argue that the characters' masculinity is formed around their tribal identities, the ideal of an Indian warrior, and America's cultural standards of manhood during war. However, that masculinity is challenged when they return home from the war and are oppressed by different kinds of silence and must figure out how to move from "Indian" to "postindian" and "survivance" (Vizenor).

The final chapter makes comparisons between Japanese American, African American, and Native American soldiers' performance of masculinity and their service in the war as a way to demonstrate their Americanness and illustrates how they continually reached for freedom while power remained in the hands of white society. I connect intersectional approaches and history in the analysis of texts in this dissertation to the benefit of using the theory of intersectionality and teaching cultural context in an ethnic American literature classroom. Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality allows students to see how multiple facets of identity play into ethnic identity, and historical and cultural contexts help students to ground the texts in that knowledge and view how the context affects characters' identities. Additionally, I advocate for teaching texts in pairs so that students can see the differences of interpretation of ethnic identities from different authors and move away from making generalization about ethnic groups.

Chapter I

A White Man's War: WWII Soldiers and the Public Image of Masculinity

World War II was an all-encompassing event in American history, one that mobilized a nation both abroad and on the home front. The U.S. government pushed its citizens to join the war effort—posters urged men to volunteer for service, told women to grow victory gardens, and encouraged all citizens to buy war bonds. Men went into the military and women went to work in wartime factories. Because it was such a large global conflict that affected the daily lives of American citizens, the nation was eager to hear stories about the war both in films and novels. Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black explain how Hollywood and the Office of War Information collaborated to promote a specific view of the war, one that was largely unproblematic and patriotic. This correlates with the public view that World War II was a "good" war that America needed to fight in order to preserve its rights. Popular novels about World War II paint a different picture about the conflict, but became vastly popular among the American public. For example, Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*, published in 1948, was an instant hit, selling almost 200,000 copies by the end of 1948 and garnering laudatory reviews despite its use of foul language, violent content, and less than glamorous portrayals of war.

In this chapter, I analyze two memoirs, *To Hell and Back* (1949) by Audie Murphy and *Etched in Purple* (1949) by Frank Irgang, and one novel, *Casualty* (1946) by Robert Lowry, specifically looking at how their characters' race and masculinity intersect. However, I could find no critical analyses on these texts, and the one article that discusses Audie Murphy focuses on his movie career, not his memoir ("The Kid from Texas"). For this reason I have conducted a literature review on a broad range of early post-WWII novels to highlight the subjects and themes that critics focus on with regard to WWII novels about white soldiers.

One of the most prevalent themes that critics discuss in relation to WWII novels is what William Kelly Joyce, Jr. refers to as "The Reduction of Zero." Joyce explains, "There is a definite trend in these works to build up a character, a mission, a situation, and then to level it, reduce it to zero. It is probably correct to say that war is the villain" (8). In other words, "The Reduction of Zero" incorporates aspects of trauma and dehumanization. Novels such as *The Naked and the Dead* by Norman Mailer, *The Gallery* by John Horne Burns, *Guard of Honor* by James Gould Couzzens, *All Thy Conquests* by Alfred Hayes, *Tales of the South Pacific* by James Michener, and *The Thin Red Line* all portray some aspects of trauma and dehumanization. For instance, Kathleen Robinson explains the effect trauma plays on the narrative structures of *The Naked and the Dead*, which includes fragmentation and flashbacks, while Charles I. Glicksberg highlights the trauma in the novel, stating that by revealing the multiple dimensions of the soldiers' beings—"their hurts and hatreds, their fears and fantasies, their dreams and the trauma of disillusionment as they fight . . . in the jungle and know that death may come suddenly—by revealing all this the novel manages to communicate the tragic sense of life" (26). William Zinsser argues that one of *The Gallery's* persistent themes is of loss of innocence and what elevates it to literature "is its mixture of disillusionment and hope" (para. 12). In discussing *The Thin Red Line*, Robert J. Blaskiewicz argues that it is an extended study of the evolution of a soldier and an examination of how the military dehumanizes and makes men objects (*The Fiction and Memoirs* 55-57).

Another major theme critics discuss in early post-WWII novels is the fruitlessness of war or the "Defeat of Idealism" (Joyce). Despite the Second World War being labeled as the "Good War," many American WWII novels illustrate that war is not good no matter what its reasons and the Unites States' participation in the war is not as clear cut as it may appear. For instance,

scholars such as Harris Dienstfrey have noted that *The Naked and the Dead* is a novel of social protest that highlights the atrocities and fruitlessness of war. Discussing both *The Naked and the Dead* and *Guard of Honor*, John M. Kinder argues that "both novels reject the notion that Americans willingly deferred their ideological interests for national imperatives" indicating that public memory of the Second World War was much more ambiguous and conflicted than it appears today (190). Kinder also notes that these novels "remind us that the immediate postwar period saw no consensus or hegemonic interpretation of the war and its aftermath," which complicate the "Good War" banalities (190). And John P. Diggins notes that John Hersey's *A Bell for Adano* illustrates the failure of American humanitarians to see the grimmer aspects of Italian liberation and Alfred Hayes' *All Thy Conquests* and *The Girl on the Via Flaminia* highlight American callousness and Italian corruption. These critics focus on a combination of the effects of war, trauma, and the loss of American idealism in early post-WWII novels about white soldiers.

Though scholars have mentioned aspects of race and masculinity in these World War II novels, particularly in terms of the emasculation characters face at the hands of war, there has not been extensive research done on the subject of how soldier characters demonstrate their masculinity and prove their manhood in accordance with their race and ethnicity during World War II. I chose to conduct a literature review on *The Naked and the Dead* and *The Thin Red Line* because these are two of the most well-known novels to come out of the Second World War and to highlight the most prevalent themes in the critical analysis of World War II novels: trauma, dehumanization, the atrocities of war, and biographical links between writer and novel. However, in this chapter I analyze two memoirs, *To Hell and Back* (1949) by Audie Murphy and *Etched in Purple* (1949) by Frank Irgang, and one novel, *Casualty* (1946) by Robert Lowry,

specifically looking at how their characters' race and masculinity intersect. I could find no critical analyses on these texts, and the one article that discusses Audie Murphy focuses on his movie career, not his memoir ("The Kid from Texas"). Though these works have been critically neglected, they provide important insight into the construction of white manhood of the World War II era, 1) because they were published soon after the end of the war, when individual and collective memory about the war was still fresh, and 2) because they focus on combat soldiers in the midst of the war. In this chapter, I first examine how whiteness is a social construct and trace the ways it has changed throughout the history of the United States. I then look at the publicized and politicized ideal of masculinity that was disseminated by the government and presented in war posters, comparing it to the individual accounts of soldiers' experiences portrayed in the texts, arguing that they do not line up but that the soldiers' whiteness still allows them the privilege of claiming manhood. I then examine how the texts describe duty and patriotism in connection with fear and courage (typically represented as a marker of masculinity) and illustrate how heteronormativity plays a role in their performance of gender in the homosocial environment of the military.

Constructing Whiteness

Based on the images of men in recruitment posters during World War II, as well as historical ephemera that dominated the era, it is clear that the ideal for American manhood was a strong man in good physical condition who was willing to serve in the military, young enough to serve in the military, and typically white. Yet as scholars such as Omi and Winant and Crenshaw have pointed out, race is socially constructed, including the social construction of whiteness. Joe L. Kincheloe explains:

> As with any racial category, whiteness is a social construction in that it can be invented, lived, analyzed, modified, and discarded. While Western reason is a crucial dynamic associated with whiteness over the last three centuries, there are many other social forces that sometimes work to construct its meaning. Whiteness, thus, is not an unchanging, fixed, biological category impervious to its cultural, economic, political, and psychological context. There are many ways to be white, as whiteness interacts with class, gender, and a range of other race-related and cultural dynamics. (167)

This invention, modification, and changing nature of whiteness becomes apparent when we take into consideration how the Irish, Italians, and Jews have all been considered non-white in the United States at different times in history. Whiteness, then, is not merely based on skin color but includes aspects such as religion, culture, geographic region, and economic standing. In the early years of colonization in the United States, those who were considered white were WASPs: White, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant.

However, some groups were later able to "become" white, to achieve or claim whiteness. As immigrants poured into the United States, they challenged the presuppositions of whiteness. For instance, when the Irish started immigrating to the U.S. between the 1840s and the 1860s, most of them were poor and Catholic; hence, they came to the country as an oppressed race. Their poverty did not help them break into the higher echelons of whiteness, while their Catholicism distanced them from the Protestant WASPs. As Kincheloe notes, "Indeed, it is not contradictory to argue that whiteness is a marker of privilege but that all white people are not able to take advantage of that privilege" (168). In fact, in the early years of immigration poor Irish and blacks were often thrown together, very much part of the same class competing for the same jobs. It was only later when the Irish secured themselves better jobs, elevated their

economic standing, and were "accepted into America's racialized labour market 'on the side' of 'the whites' were they included in both Americanness and whiteness" (Bonnett 1045). Therefore, achieving whiteness for the Irish was a combination of cultural affiliation, economic power, and skin color. Blacks of the same time period, even if they could obtain economic power, would never be included into the cult of whiteness because of their skin color. So even though the construction of whiteness is not based *solely* on skin color, it is still very much a large part of it.

Although race is demonstrably a social construction, it is still very much a reality in the lives of people that are affected by it. In her article "The Social Construction of Whiteness: Racism by Intent, Racism by Consequence," Teresa J. Guess posits that "as social facts, both 'race' and *whiteness* define real social situations in American society; and, as real situations both, 'race' and *whiteness* issue into real consequences" (654). Whiteness then plays an important role for those that belong to the group, as well as for those who are discriminated by it. In the construction of race and racial relationships within the United States, binary oppositions are central to the discourse, such as white/black (or white/non-white) and male/female. Abby L. Ferber explains, "According to Derrida, the binary relationship in Western thought is always hierarchical: the first terms are always accorded greater value and worth, the second terms subordinate and derivative" (53). Hence, in these binary oppositions, which indicate that an individual can only belong to one racial group or one gendered group, white males hold the most privilege. Yet, Guess argues:

> When a subordinate group is racialized, the superordinate group is racialized as well. However, the superordinate group, in order to maintain the advantages of its constructed status, must also maintain and sustain the racial ideology of the mass culture, an ideology which 'validates' the superordinate group's position of dominance in the first instance.

> So, the structural properties of 'race,' racialization, racism, white-skin privilege, and asymmetric relations become transformed into structural principles of social organization which constitute the social system of American 'race' relations" (661).

Whites, Guess asserts, have to live up to the idea of what makes them a "superior" race, even when it is detrimental to them personally or does not fit their identity, their upbringing, or their lives in general. This idea is particularly compounded for white soldiers during WWII who most likely felt the pressure to live up to the standards of soldiers depicted in recruitment posters, i.e. both gendered and racialized standards.

Ferber notes that because "race and gender are social constructs, they are not constructed in isolation, but often intertwined with other categories of identity" (50). This is the same idea as Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality—aspects of identity are not independent from each other. These intersections can be beneficial and productive, but they can also cause undue stress on an individual when that individual is expected to fit into a certain group. For example, white soldiers in the World War II era may have felt pressure to "maintain and sustain the racial ideology of the mass culture," as well as trying to live up to the expectations of masculinity and the ideal soldier (Guess 661).

Just as race is a social construct that defines real situations and consequences in American society, so too is gender a construct, or as Butler calls it, a performance, which defines real situations and consequences. Butler maintains that "performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate 'act,' but, rather, the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (*Bodies that Matter*, 2). Therefore, the construction of identity is not a particular gesture but, instead, a process or performance that must be persistently repeated. Racial and gendered constructions must "repeat [themselves] in order to

establish the illusion of [their] uniformity and identity" (Butler, "Imitation," 24). During the World War II era, a marker of manhood was the willingness to serve in the military to protect the United States. Once in the service, repeated actions or declarations of bravery, courage, patriotism, loyalty, and heterosexual desire signaled the "correct" performance of manhood and masculinity, allowing men to belong to this "uniform" identity. Though the texts I analyze in this chapter align with the ideas of duty, patriotism, courage, individualism, and heterosexual desire, which were presented as model markers of masculinity, they also diverge in other aspects, writing about fear, collective masculinity, and soldiers who did not fit the muscular or heterosexual ideal.

Textual Images of the White Soldier

Though military recruitment posters during WWII paint the white soldier with a hyper-masculinized physique, the depictions of white American soldiers in literature varies. For example, at the beginning of Frank J. Irgang's memoir *Etched in Purple*, he explains, "Tonight [the soldiers] seemed an especially large and burly lot, what with being loaded down with machine guns, mortars, and ammunition. I had seen thousands of husky troops in training in the United States, but none of them appeared as tough as these. It's odd what a load of equipment and rations, properly distributed can do to make an average soldier look like a bristling beast of war" (1-2). Irgang's account of his fellow soldiers fits nicely into the public image of muscular soldiers portrayed in recruitment posters. However, even though he describes the soldiers as burly and "bristling beast[s] of war" it is in large part due to their equipment. There are no soldiers stripped down to the waist flexing their bulging biceps as in McClellend Barclay's 1942 navy recruitment poster (see fig. 1). Rather they are large and burly because they are carrying

machine guns, mortars, and ammunition and have been well fed with rations. They are, in effect, putting on a costume and enacting a performance of soldiers.

In his memoir *To Hell and Back*, Audie Murphy provides a drastically different portrayal of a soldier. He writes, "Steiner is a soldier, but you would never see his kind on the recruiting posters. Short and pudgy, he has the round, innocent face of a baby and a voice as gentle as a child's. He cannot get the knack of the army, though he tries hard. His gear is forever fouled up. It drips from his body like junk. Now he stumbles and falls. It is the third time he has tripped today" (5). Murphy acknowledges that the images on recruiting posters do not match up with all the types of soldiers that are in the army. Though Steiner is perhaps not an ideal soldier, he is, nevertheless, a soldier. Steiner's performance of a soldier, an example of Butler's idea of gender performance, does not correlate with the politicized and masculinized version portrayed in recruiting posters. James T. Sparrow argues that during WWII the American public "embraced an idealized figure of masculine virtue and patriotic sacrifice—the combat soldier—as a proxy for both the nation and the government protecting it" (12). Steiner is far from an idealized figure of masculine virtue, yet he still embodies patriotic sacrifice. Murphy's inclusion of Steiner indicates that he considered it important to illustrate that there were all types of soldiers in the army. In fact, Murphy himself does not match the physical depictions of a soldier because he is continuously described as short, skinny, and baby-faced. Yet Murphy is also one of the most decorated soldiers of WWII, receiving every military combat award for valor available from the U.S. Army, as well as French and Belgian awards for heroism. As Jarvis states, the U.S. was establishing itself as a masculine nation during the war, so the military created posters which highlighted a type of masculine ideal in physical terms. However, Murphy's physique and

military service record illustrate that the physical ideal of a white American male during WWII does not necessarily coincide with the ideals of heroism.

Robert Lowry's novel, *Casualty*, portrays characters that perform gender in a variety of ways, but only the soldiers and officers whose performances line up with the American ideal of masculinity are respected and well liked. Lowry describes one specific soldier in feminine terms to highlight how he is disliked and not thought of as a real man. *Casualty* tells the story of soldiers who work at a Public Relations outpost in Italy. One of the main characters, PFC Joe Hammond, describes his commanding officer, Lieutenant Lucien Pinkman: "A real pretty-boy face. Did the Lieutenant shave? He couldn't believe it. A ruddy face, capable of growing even redder when angry or embarrassed, with smooth slicked-back hair, small but widespaced eyes bright, intelligent, and malicious, and above the red, well-shaped lips which he licked with his sharp pink tongue, the feeblest expression of desire to grow a Ronald Colman mustache" (32). Hammond cannot stand Pinkman, and his loathing of Pinkman is exemplified through his feminized depiction of him. Although, as Kimmel states, men typically compare their masculinity with other men (not with women), feminizing a man is often used as a way to indicate that he is less of a man; it is typically considered a harsh insult. Hence, Hammond does not consider Pinkman to be a real man, and he expresses that by thinking how womanlike Pinkman is: a "pretty" face, the inability to grow facial hair, his propensity to blush (historically thought of as a woman's trait), and full red lips. A few pages after this description, Joe "looked up into the girlish twenty-one-year-old face of his superior and noted that it had crimsoned. He's having his period, Joe thought. I'll have to mother him" (Lowry 34). Again, Hammond associates a woman's trait (having a period) with Pinkman to illustrate how he is not the "ideal" of a soldier or commanding officer. Pinkman is generally disliked among the other soldiers, not

just for his physique and appearance, but because of his pandering attitude and his grasping for promotion. Even Callahan, who Pinkman confides in and considers a friend, thinks, "I just don't like him" (Lowry 139). Lowry uses Pinkman to symbolize the opposite of an ideal soldier. Pinkman wants to perform his masculinity to the expectation of the societal construct, but only in terms of impressing his superior officers in order to get promoted. His fellow soldiers see through his pretenses and are disgusted by his façade.

Despite the different portrayals of soldiers in Irgang's and Murphy's memoirs, they do share a common thread in discussing the desire to fight. Irgang explains that as a medic he was a noncombatant, but the action of war propelled him to take up arms in protection of his fellow soldiers, stating, "I could no longer stand by and watch others kill and be killed. I wanted to fight the common enemy myself" (12). Irgang felt the pull to fight even though his assignment was to heal. Murphy's hard childhood of sharecropping, poverty, and a broken home coupled with the fantasy of war stoked his desire to enlist. On his eighteenth birthday, he "hurried to a marine corps recruiting station. This branch seemed the toughest of the lot; and I was looking for trouble. Unfortunately, the corps was looking for men, men italicized. A sergeant glanced over my skinny physique. My weight did not measure up to Leatherneck standards" (7). Murphy's inclusion of the words "men italicized" go hand in hand with the politicized representation of what soldiers should look like during WWII—"young, well-muscled, white" (Jarvis 5). Even though Murphy was young and white, he did not fit the other standard of being well-muscled. The Marine Corps based the quality of a man on his physical stature, and Murphy's slight frame did not measure up. However, he was determined to fight in the war.

Murphy was also turned down by the paratroopers before finally being accepted into the army infantry. He writes, "I was not overjoyed. The infantry was too commonplace for my

ambition . . . I had other plans. After my basic training, I would get a transfer. I would become a glider pilot" (7-8). The yearning to join the toughest or most elite unit of the military was a common trope that recruitment posters employed, using slogans that called for skilled men. For instance, one poster proclaims, "Cadets for Naval Aviation take *that something extra* . . . have you got it?" (Fig. 17). Such slogans probed men to consider whether they were "real" men, whether they had "that something extra." In "Western Masculinities in War and Peace," Robert A. Nye posits that prep school boys were readied between the wars to become leaders of a great military power:

Figure 17: Cadets for Naval Aviation

> When Pearl Harbor occurred, the youngest of these men felt obliged not only to enter the service, but to seek out its most dangerous branches—as paratroopers, on PT boats, in the special forces—and leadership positions within them. They were constructing 'serviceable identity narratives,' which required the repression or erasure of aspects that did not meet the image of athletic, valorous, and heterosexual manhood. Since the early part of the twentieth century, this image had served as the ideal that would ensure the future reputations and the leadership of elite men. (437)

Though Murphy did not come from the prep school lot, he subscribed to the idea of the tough soldier, desiring to be part of an elite military group. He wanted to see reflected in himself the image of the ideal soldier. Murphy also recounts how he passed out during close-order drill: "I quickly picked up the nickname of 'Baby.' My commanding officer tried to shove me into a cook and baker's school, where the going would be less rough. That was the supreme

humiliation. To reach for the stars and end up stirring a pot of C-rations. I would not do it" (8). Again, Murphy ascribes to the idea that a man must do his most in the war and fight; cooking for soldiers was not enough. Not only was it something he did not want to do, but he also thought it was humiliating because other men would see his failure. Murphy was spared the kitchen, but he was never transferred to another military branch; instead he rose to the rank of First Lieutenant and received every Army medal available highlighting the idea that dedication, determination, and bravery creates heroes.

In contrast, Lowry's novel depicts soldiers and officers who are either disillusioned with the army and the war, or who are more interested in their own promotion than actually being on the front lines. Pinkman is one example of this because he does not care about his subordinate officers, but instead cares about being treated with the respect he believes he deserves as a lieutenant and with currying favor from higher ups in order to get promoted. Another example of this is Colonel Polaski, who used to be a pilot but is grounded due to his poor eyesight. The Colonel:

> constantly complained to his subordinates of his being grounded, but secretly he was glad his present situation was made so permanent or he would have felt it necessary to be continually taking on missions just to prove his ability to the other flyers. Now, in his present position, he could hold the tremendous reputation which his magazine and newspaper publicity had given him and still feel that he was regarded by the flyers at the field as a kind of wounded bird, the spirit still there, glowing but frustrated. (86)

Polaski's desire is not to be in the midst of fighting, but to prove to the other men that he is a good soldier. Perhaps Audie Murphy also wished to join the most elite military unit and continuously wanted to go back into the thick of fighting to prove himself to other men.

However, the contrast between Murphy's gung-ho spirit and Polaski's feigning of a gung-ho spirit indicate the range of feelings soldiers had about the war and the differences in the performance of their masculinity. Kimmel notes, "In large part, it's other men who are important to American men; American men define their masculinity, not as much in relation to women, but in relation to each other. Masculinity is largely a homosocial enactment" (5). This is particularly true of the military and military bases in WWII, when men would be surrounded solely by other men. Kimmel goes on to state that "much of men's relentless effort to prove their manhood contains this core element of homosociality. From fathers and boyhood friends to teachers, coworkers, and bosses, the evaluative eyes of other men are always upon us, watching, judging" (5). Shortly after WWII, General S.L.A Marshall argued that every soldier feared "losing the one thing he is likely to value more highly than life—his reputation as a man among other men" (150). And David Leverenz contends that men's real fear is "being ashamed or humiliated in front of other men, or being dominated by stronger men" (451). What these scholars argue is precisely what Polaski portrays. He is happy to be away from the front lines, but claims he does not want to be grounded, putting on a show for the sake of the other soldiers. He does not want to be judged, humiliated, or dominated by others. Because of this fear, he creates a persona of a man who desires to fight in an effort to prove his manhood.

Additionally, both Irgang and Murphy also describe the war as a type of training ground that turned boys into men. For example, Irgang briefly narrates a conversation he had with his fellow soldier, Terry, not long before Terry was killed:

> He would have been twenty-one in another month—just a boy who looked forward to manhood with great anticipation. I recalled that only yesterday he had asked if I thought he would reach the age of twenty-one. I couldn't tell him that. I knew that the average

> infantryman did not last that long. I pacified him by telling him that right then he was more of a man than seventy-five per cent of the males who had reached twenty-one. He liked that. (56-57)

At a time when the minimum voting age (as determined by individual states) had historically been 21, the age came to symbolize adulthood. Thus, Terry looked forward to turning 21 so he could consider himself an adult and a man. Irgang suggests that age does not factor into one being a man, but experience does, and the experience of fighting in a war made one a man.

Murphy states, "In training areas we talked toughly, thought toughly; and finally we believed we really were tough" (10). It is as if the training grounds of the military, in which men learn to be soldiers, also trained men how to put on the bravado of a soldier, or perform as a soldier. They had to believe they were tough in order to face the horrors of war. Murphy reiterates a story of a new recruit, Barnes, who was shaken up and about to cry after killing his first German. At this point in the memoir, Murphy is a seasoned soldier and tells Barnes to shoot the German again because he is Barnes' enemy and will try to kill him. During the attack that shortly followed Murphy explains that Barnes "soon learns that a man does not necessarily die because a machine gun sputters and that the enemy is not merely a being with warm flesh and blood. He is part of a wall of menace that expresses itself in the snapping of a branch, a roll of gravel, or a shadowy bulk that looms in the night. In the heat, Barnes learns coolness and calm fury. *He becomes a valuable man*" (emphasis added 209). Once again, the experience of war has trained a soldier to be a man—cool under fire and ready to do what he must. Barnes only becomes a valuable man when he is able to kill without showing emotion. The atrocities of war and the need for survival then change how a soldier performs his gender.

Murphy's and Irgang's memoirs and Lowry's novel highlight the many differences between the publicized concept of a masculine soldier and what actual servicemen were like, both physically and mentally. However, their works also illustrate the privilege they and their characters possess because of their whiteness. Both memoirists are determined to fight either as a way to demonstrate their patriotism (and by extension their masculinity) or to better their lots in life. As white men, their citizenship and loyalty are not called into question. Though Murphy mentions his Irish heritage, his Irishness does not hinder his Americanness because the Irish had "become" white by WWII. Murphy and Irgang are "included in both Americanness and whiteness" (Bonnet 1045). And while Lowry paints images of soldiers who do not want to fight and have to prove their manhood by pretending that they do, their race is never a question in the equation of their manhood. Joseph Darda coins the term "military whiteness," explaining "writers, filmmakers, and artists render white enlisted men as, at once, deracinated universals and minoritized outsiders . . . . Grounded in racial neoconservatism, military whiteness has allowed the white veteran to inhabit a hegemonic, deracinated whiteness while also drawing on and subsuming the accounts of American soldiers of color" (413). Murphy's, Irgang's, and Lowry's characters possess a deracinated whiteness because their race allows them privilege and is not called into question in terms of their intelligence, loyalty, motives, or worth. This is in contrast to soldiers of color who decided to fight in WWII. Though soldiers of color also mention wanting to show their patriotism to the United States and protect their homeland, they also discuss the need to enlist in order to prove their loyalty (particularly for Japanese Americans who were considered the enemy) and to gain the rights of citizenship they were denied. The white soldiers in these texts never have to fight for citizenship rights, while soldiers of color are continuously engaged in a double combat.

Patriotism and Duty

Patriotism and duty are long held values in American history. The United States has prided itself on being "the land of the free and the home of the brave" and cherished the thought that those who are brave should not hesitate to protect their country when its freedom is threatened. Joane Nagel explains that the "culture of nationalism is constructed to emphasize and resonate with masculine cultural themes. Terms like honour, patriotism, cowardice, bravery and duty are hard to distinguish as either nationalistic or masculinist, since they seem so thoroughly tied both to the nation and to manliness" (251-252). Numerous wars molded the United States, and the concepts of patriotism and duty have been incorporated into each one. World War II looms large in the memory of the U.S. as a fight for freedom, decency and morality against Hitler's oppressive tyranny and Japan's imperialistic colonization. It was by far America's largest war, one in which over fifteen million men served in the military. It unequivocally ended the Great Depression, while at the same time establishing the U.S. as a global power. In American national memory, World War II reigns as a sincerely "good" war. Most men serving in WWII considered that they were just doing their part and protecting the freedoms of their nation, as their fathers and ancestors had before them.

However, the thought of dishonor and shame also plays a part in a man's decision to fight in a war. Nye observes that the "indispensable masculine qualities of the combat soldier have altered little over the long run of modern history: personal courage, the willingness to sacrifice for comrades, the fear of shame or dishonor. Without these behavioral norms, fighting could never have endured for long" (419-420). Nagel also notes:

> Certainly there are wars that men resist, and there are men who resist all wars. However, once a war is widely defined as a matter of 'duty', 'honour', 'patriotism', a defence of

> ‘freedom’ and ‘the American way of life’, etc. then resistance for many men becomes a matter of cowardice and dishonour. For men confronted with this unpalatable threat of public humiliation (why isn’t he at the front?), there are added some sweeteners: the allure of adventure, the promise of masculine camaraderie, the opportunity to test and prove oneself, the chance to participate in a historic, larger-than-life, generation-defining event. Given this stick and these carrots, for many men the attraction of war becomes as irresistible as it is deadly. (259)

Nye and Nagel point out that without shame and dishonor there could not be bravery and duty, and during war these values become encoded as masculine. As soldiers employ these masculine attributes, they can then claim manhood. Claiming manhood then becomes a performance that is “impossible to separate . . . from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained” (Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 3).

One aspect of war that often keeps a soldier going is the idea that they are on the right side of the fight, and their nation and its soldiers are superior to the enemy. This is particularly true for American soldiers in WWII. For instance, Irgang recounts the harrowing experience of being in the midst of a bombardment. He took cover in a hole stating, “What I had just experienced was beyond conception. The spark of life still remained within me, and now, more than ever before, I wished to retain it. Once again I remembered my duty, so I got out of the hole and looked about” (34). Irgang realizes that his duty trumps his fear, and he goes back to work as he feels he should. As a medic, Irgang explains how he knew he could help save many soldiers if only he could reach them and give them aid, but it was often impossible when they were under fire. It “ate my heart away to witness this. These young boys, who looked so aged, were Americans. They were taking this as only Americans do. I had watched many nationalities

undergo this strain, but only the Americans fought anything, anywhere, without question or hesitation, and bled without a sound. The youngest dies with only a whimper. It gnawed at my very soul" (Irgang 71). This passage highlights two important aspects: 1) Irgang conveys an extreme patriotism toward America and American soldiers, stating their superiority without hesitation, and 2) the American soldiers, who were young enough to be considered boys, unquestionably did their duty and "took it like men" when they were wounded and dying.

Later in his memoir, Irgang broadly describes what a soldier in WWII was like, stating, "The combat soldier talked of the war very little and thought long and very deeply. News was no longer news to him. He cared not who had won the battles nor who had received the credit for it. He only knew that he was doing his part" (112). Once again the focus of this statement is not on who was winning battles, but on the soldiers who were fulfilling their responsibility to their nation. Murphy talks little about duty straightforwardly in his memoir, focusing more on his childhood fascination with war and how he saw the war as a way to better his poverty stricken situation. However, his actions and service record during the war indicate that he did see it as an important duty, and throughout his memoir he encourages new recruits and less experienced soldiers when they are faced with battle. In one episode, Murphy explains how "Olsen is the first to crack up. He throws his arms around the company commander, crying hysterically, 'I can't take any more.' The harassed captain tries to calm him, but Olsen will not stop bawling. So he is sent to the rear, and we watch him go with hatred in our eyes" (12). Murphy and the other soldiers do not hate Olsen because he cries; rather they have hatred in their eyes because Olsen allows his emotions to get in the way of his service, his duty. Olsen is not valuable to them in the rear, as he cannot help in the fight. In another episode, Murphy notes a conversation he has with a nurse while he is in the hospital for malaria. The nurse asks him why he is in the army, and he

replies, "I asked for it. Wanted to play soldier" (137). Murphy agrees when the nurse notes that he has had enough of it, but she responds, "But you wouldn't quit if you had the chance." When she asks him why he would not quit, he answers, "Oh, hell. As long as there's a man in the lines, maybe I feel that my place is up there beside him" (137). Again, Murphy does not plainly state that it is duty toward the United States that keeps him fighting, but instead it is his kinship with his fellow soldiers, which is another type of duty.

Lowry describes a similar feeling of duty in his novel, *Casualty*. Throughout the novel, Joe Hammond is often disgusted and disillusioned with the army. He does not like his superior officers and he does not much care for his work. When he is demoted for helping a fellow officer, he realizes that he has always been against the army. But then he thinks:

> He'd been human, that was all. He'd not wanted to make a stand, to be a conscientious objector, to tear himself away from the experience of his fellow men. He had wanted the experience if the rest of the world was to have it. He had not wanted not to suffer when all other men were suffering. He had not wanted not to know what the war meant to each other man in his acquaintance. He had not wanted to be alive ten years later when too many decent guys he knew were dead. (143)

Joe feels a duty to his fellow men, much like Murphy felt. Joe is not exactly enthusiastic about his patriotism or duty to the U.S., and he dislikes the army, but he wanted to experience the same things that other men would be experiencing. Guilt and shame play a part in Joe's joining the army as well, because he knew that if other good men suffered and died, and he did not suffer, he would feel ashamed. However, Joe's feelings of "duty" also illustrate his need to prove his manhood alongside other men; he needs to show that he too was a "decent guy." Joe's desire at not wanting "not to suffer when all other men were suffering" correlates with Marshall's and

Leverenz's thoughts on men not wanting to be humiliated and dominated by stronger men or losing the reputation as a man's man (Lowry 143).

Because most soldiers felt that duty and patriotism played such a large role in military service during WWII, they often view those not "doing their duty" with a disdainful eye. Both Murphy and Irgang mention disgust towards those whom they considered not doing their duty. For example, after Novak, one of the soldiers in Murphy's unit, is killed, Kerrigan (another soldier in the unit) rages, "All [Novak] ever got out of life was work. . . . When I think of some of those 4-F, draft dodging bastards I know back home, I want to spit nails" (Murphy 93). It is clear that Kerrigan values Novak but disapproves of men who evaded the draft, and the term "draft dodgers" has historically been an insult. Kerrigan's hatred of draft dodgers is in part because he feels these men are not performing their gender as they should be; they are not living up to the social construct of how a man should behave during WWII. Interestingly, Murphy and Irgang also both describe their resentment toward workers who were striking back home. Irgang receives a letter from his girlfriend, Mary, in which she has inserted some news clippings that she thought he might be interested in. One article gave a brief account of workers in an artillery shell factory that were on strike, demanding better working conditions. While reading it, Irgang "felt a fit of rage trying to seize" him (97). He continues:

> So they were striking in a shell factory for better working conditions? Each evening they could go to a fine home, sit with their families, and toast their shins while reading the evening paper by the fireplace. On this day I lay in the mud and slime in a gurgling field somewhere in France. I watched American soldiers die fighting seventy-five-ton steel monsters with bare hands and hand grenades, because of no artillery shells to fire at them. Our commanding officer had given the battle order for the day, "Death before dishonor;

> die rather than retreat." So they died, and their mothers would receive a telegram and a Purple Heart. They died for the lack of gasoline for our tanks and shells for our howitzers. Yes, I saw those shivering boys in the cold driving rain, lying in the slimy ooze of mud and blood. Most of them had not been paid or had not had a good night of sleep in five or six months. I suppose that evening some strikebound civilian picked up the evening paper and remarked, "Well, I see we are still holding our own on the German front." (98)

Irgang is clearly furious at the artillery shell workers, people he did not even know. But he is furious because he considers that they are shirking their duty. He cannot understand how the workers can demand better working conditions, while he and his fellow soldiers wallow in mud and blood. He views the workers as directly responsible for the soldiers' lack of ammunition because they are striking and not making enough ammunition to help the soldiers. Though he does not blatantly profess that the striking workers are less than men, based on his attitude toward them it is an underlying message.

Murphy tells a similar story in which he has a conversation with his fellow soldier Caskill, as Caskill reads the paper aloud to their unit:

> "The miners are talking about a strike."
>
> "A strike?"
>
> "Yeah. You know: People demand higher wages, shorter hours, better living conditions. If they don't get them, they quit work."
>
> "Americans?"
>
> "Why, hell, yes. Who do you think they are? The Chinese?"
>
> "Are you kidding?"

"It's the truth, it was right there in the papers."

"Jeezus!" (134-135)

Although Murphy's narration does not contain the same outright disgust toward the striking workers as Irgang's, the disbelief of the speaker is evident. He cannot not fathom why Americans would be striking during the war and within his disbelief lies the fact that he is appalled that they would do such a thing. Though Congress enacted the National Labor Relations Act in 1935, which includes the right to lawful strikes[2] that these miners and factory workers seem to be participating in, the soldiers fighting in the actual war cannot agree with them. In this instance, duty to the war effort trumps the civil liberty of the right to strike. That both memoirs include stories of striking workers during the war indicates that the soldiers felt that true American men should do their duty, whether in combat or on the home front.

Fear, Courage, and the Familiarity of War

Courage and bravery are often associated with combat soldiers, even as war is one of the most harrowing experiences an individual can go through. In his Annual Message to Congress on January 6, 1941, given before the United States had entered WWII, Franklin Roosevelt discussed his reasons for American involvement in the war "making the case for continued aid to Great Britain and greater production of war industries at home," highlighting that the "United States was fighting for the universal freedoms that all people possessed" ("FDR and the Four Freedoms" para. 2). These "four freedoms" were freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. Roosevelt explained that freedom from fear,

[2] Lawful object strikes include economic strikers and unfair labor practice strikers. Striking employees are called economic strikers, "if the object of the strike is to obtain from the employer some economic concession such as higher wages, shorter hours, or better working conditions" ("The Right to Strike" para. 7). Unfair labor practice strikers are "employees who strike to protest an unfair labor practice committed by their employers" (para. 9).

"translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor—anywhere in the world" (para. 86). When the United States did officially enter the war, Roosevelt's message about freedom from fear meant that millions of young American men had to serve in the military, take up armaments, and literally face fear in order to obtain that freedom for the rest of society.

FDR is also often attributed as saying, "Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear" (qtd in Brunner). Hence, courage is needed in order to obtain the freedom from fear. Roosevelt's statement on courage rings true in the way Murphy and Irgang write about the fear and courage they witnessed in the war. For example, Murphy describes fear as an ever present companion to the soldiers:

> Fear is moving up with us. It always does. In the heat of battle it may go away. Sometimes it vanishes in a blind, red rage that comes when you see a friend fall. Then again you get so tired that you become indifferent. But when you are moving into combat, why try fooling yourself. Fear is right there beside you. Experience helps. You soon learn that a situation is seldom as black as the imagination paints it. Some always get through. Yes, but somebody usually gets it. You do not discuss the matter. It is quite personal. But the question keeps pounding through the brain: This time will I be the one that gets it? I am well acquainted with fear. It strikes first in the stomach, coming like the disemboweling hand that is thrust into the carcass of a chicken. I feel now as though icy fingers have reached into my mid-parts and twisted the intestines into knots. Each of us has his own way of fighting off panic. (94-95)

Just as in FDR's quotation, Murphy explains that fear does not go away. Instead, the soldiers learn how to tamp down their fear in order to go into battle. Irgang describes fear similarly, stating, "The roar of battle still pounded at my eardrums, and the enemy was close on the heels of the retreating Americans. One could see the expression of tiredness and fear written on each fleeing soldier's face. They possessed a stolid, blank-faced fear that was different from that they had experienced before" (92). Just as Murphy described fear as an ever-present companion, Irgang describes it as something the soldiers possessed.

As per FDR's quotation, perhaps these soldiers felt that something else, like America's freedom and moral decency, was more important than their fear. Another explanation is that soldiers are committed to their cause and become familiar with war. For example, Irgang depicts a scene in which the enemy was taking a terrible beating from their artillery and mortar shells, and he could see entire gun crews disintegrated. He states:

> A month before I would have had to turn my head on a scene like this, because it would have been too much for me. At this time however, I looked it squarely in the face and smiled grimly. Every enemy soldier that went down before me meant we were a step closer to the final goal, a step closer to the end. Even hell, with all its conflagration, could be no worse than the slaughter which went on daily before my eyes. It gnawed at my very soul, but now I was a seasoned killer. I no longer flinched when I saw death. (16-17)

Irgang mentions that he desires to reach the final goal, in other words winning the war, which is that something that is more important than his fear. But he also focuses on how he has become accustomed to war, which overshadows his fear and fuels his determination. That determination then affects the way Irgang decides to fight, as he affirms, "I made up my mind to fight this war with all the skill and cunning I could muster. I would never be taken prisoner. The captured

soldiers that we had found with bullet holes in their heads and necks were too grim a reminder of a prisoner's fate. I would fight to the finish. I promised myself at this time so that in an hour of decision I would never have to stop and think what to do; my mind was already made up" (138). He realizes that fear and indecision are something every soldier must face, so he makes a promise to himself, while he is not in the midst of battle, that he will remain steadfast when he is.

Murphy also highlights the need to overcome fear in light of something more important – staying alive. He tells some new recruits, "You've got to learn to forget what you see. You remember those Germans yesterday. They lost their heads; so they lost their lives. Remember?" (105). In actuality, Murphy uses fear, the fear of death, as a way to motivate young soldiers so that the war does not get the better of them. He feels that the soldiers will only survive when they realize they have an important job to do and do not lose their heads, metaphorically speaking, in the heat of battle. Basically, he tells them they need to get accustomed to the war. He also reiterates a conversation that he has with a nurse, who tells him, "You can't get away from it now. I had a friend, an infantry lieutenant, who tried it. He got the medal of honor and was sent home, a hero. God, how he hated that word. He was given the full treatment. Bands, flags, dinners, speeches. Then the army handed him a desk job, but it lasted only a few weeks. When he saw how casually people back there were taking the war, it broke his heart. He asked to be returned to his unit overseas" (142). The inclusion of this story illustrates how war changes a person. Others on the outside view this lieutenant as a hero, and probably thought he was lucky to be given a desk job. However, the lieutenant cannot leave the war behind. Nye explains that the United States has attempted to create a "form of masculinity peculiar to the modern nation-state, in which the citizen must carry within himself the qualities of a warrior, but as a warrior must also remain the citizen he will become again at conflict's end" (417). Though some may

have viewed the lieutenant's return to his unit as honorable and courageous, and they would perhaps not be wrong in thinking so, the lieutenant simply cannot seem to function in "normal" society. His duty then fuels his courage to once again enter into war.

Individual and Group Manhood

Individual and group manhood is also a topic discussed in these white soldiers' memoirs. As mentioned in the introduction, American manhood has been heavily influenced by the attribute of individualism. American citizens often pride themselves on their individual success—the Self-Made Man that Kimmel describes. Even WWII military recruitment posters portrayed individual men by themselves in an effort to recruit the one. And yet, war is not an individual but a group effort. Soldiers rely on one another for survival and create a type of brotherhood-in-arms. Murphy's and Irgang's memoirs are about their own experiences in the war, but their stories cannot be complete without the relationships they have with their fellow soldiers. For example, Murphy writes, "At headquarters, we are ordered to strip and report to the medics for a checkup. The air nips at our skin; our teeth chatter lightly. In uniform we feel the strength of our union and manhood; naked we are all individuals seeming suddenly alone and ridiculous" (54). For Murphy, the uniform symbolizes unity and strength; when all the soldiers in the unit are wearing the uniform, they are stronger together, they are men. But without that bond they feel alone. Murphy's sentiment seems contradictory to Kimmel's theory that men compare their manhood against other men and compete with other men. However, Murphy acknowledges at times his disdain for soldiers who broke down in tears and asked to be sent to the rear, indicating that those soldiers who stayed at the front were superior. Hence, Murphy highlights the duality of masculinity within the military during wartime: it requires unity and teamwork

because wars are not won individually but collectively, but it also requires individual traits of masculinity such as courage and acknowledging duty.

Irgang, on the other hand, notes that men are still very much alone even while serving in a unit. He tells of how a sergeant gives them a lecture about their rifles, telling them they must know their rifles and take good care of them for the rifles will save their lives. Irgang states, "With the lecture soaking rapidly into me, I returned to our room, sat on the bed, and thought. No one really cared for me over here. There was no such thing as love. Every man lived for himself. We had to all stick together, but when it came to a real showdown, self-preservation was uppermost in every soldier's mind" (138). For Irgang, individualism in the form of self-preservation is the way of the army. He admits that as a unit they had to "stick together" and fight alongside one another, but in reality every man wants to save himself. Perhaps both Irgang's and Murphy's sentiments are true—that together the soldiers felt stronger and unified, but they all realize that some would survive and some would not. And survival instinct propels men to look out for themselves, even as they try to look out for one another.

Casualty takes a similar view on individuality as *Etched in Purple*, with the idea that every man must fend for himself in the war. Early in the novel, Joe thinks, "To hell with him, to hell with the whole false mess of men and ambition in this war. There isn't any officer in the Wing who's ever thought of the war in terms any bigger than his own personal position in it. There isn't one who would throw his weight around and take a bust to see justice done to a man who could be of no value to him. The army brings out the worst in everybody" (39). Joe believes that men only look out for themselves in the army. He also feels that the officers were not there to help or lead soldiers, but merely for their own glory and promotion. Though the politicized version of war claimed that being a soldier would make a boy into a man or make a man a better

one, Joe thinks the opposite—the army (or war) brings out the bad in people, not the good. However, Joe goes against his own ideology to help a fellow soldier by covering his guard duty when the other soldier is drunk. Coincidentally Joe is punished for it, because the officers are more concerned with protocol and rules than they are with the wellbeing of the soldiers. The Colonel tells Joe that "in the army there is no such thing as friendship or covering up for another man's failure to do his duty" (131). Some soldiers did feel stronger together, as evidenced in Murphy's memoir and in other stories of men who bonded during wartime. Still, other soldiers felt very much alone and believed that they had to prove their independence and manhood individually, as in Irgang's memoir and Lowry's novel. The ideal of American individualism holds true in some instances of war, while at other times it is broken down by soldiers' need to feel connected to one another.

Heteronormativity and Chasing "Dames"

A masculine trait that was heavily touted by the U.S. military and government during World War II was the idea of heteronormativity. Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner define this as

> the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent—that is, organized as a sexuality—but also privileged. Its coherence is always provisional, and its privilege can take several (sometimes contradictory) forms: unmarked, as the basic idiom of the personal and the social; or marked as a natural state; or projected as an ideal or moral accomplishment. It consists less of norms that could be summarized as a body of doctrine than of a sense of rightness produced in contradictory manifestations—often unconscious, immanent to practice or to institutions" (548).

During World War II, heteronormativity was unquestionably privileged, as society leaned on the idea that to be heterosexual was to be natural, moral, and right. Jarvis explains that since the late 19th century "various medical and social scientist have sought to locate the reasons for and forms of homosexual deviance in the body. It was not until World War II, however, that the American military began to outlaw homosexual persons rather than acts within its ranks" (73). Allan Bérubé, in his book *Coming Out Under Fire*, explains that the army and navy have long banned the act of sodomy, but during World War II the attention moved from punishing the act of sodomy to "introducing into military policies and procedures the concept of the homosexual as a personality type unfit for military service and combat" (2). Many people believed that homosexuality could be detected in physical characteristics such as the "feminine" distribution of pubic hair and fat deposits and through effeminate gestures and mannerisms (Bérubé 33). Jarvis notes, "The assumption was that the homosexual was linked bodily or behaviorally to the feminine gender" (75). Because the U.S. was trying to establish itself as a masculine nation during WWII, it could not allow what it deemed effeminate homosexuals within its military ranks, as homosexuality was considered to make one less of a man. The idea was that physical qualities of the male body revealed whether one was homosexual and unworthy to serve or heterosexual and worthy to serve (i.e. a real man), and "by insisting that the 'true' homosexual possessed visible 'feminine' attributes, military officials were able to preserve the notion that the military was still largely a masculine domain, where a sculpted 'masculine' body signaled heterosexuality" (Jarvis 77). Therefore, just as homosexuality was seen as unnatural and deviant, heterosexuality was seen as normal and correct during WWII.

If men were heterosexual, it then made sense that they desired to have sex with women, and the military took much effort in educating soldiers about venereal diseases. The War

Department's pamphlet, "Sex Hygiene and Venereal Disease" published in 1940, states: "Manhood—Sex is what makes a man a strong two-fisted fellow. No little undeveloped boy can grow to splendid manhood without sex organs. They make a boy grow up with a vigorous body, and they give him grit and strength" (4). In the same pamphlet published in 1942, it reads, "SEX is one of the most important things in your life, for it makes you a man. It's something to be proud of. But, like everything else you prize, it must be well cared for" (3). The 1940 edition of the pamphlet goes on to explain that a man's sex organs and their secretions contain male cells, and "[i]t is this substance that gives a man strength and bravery. It makes the voice deep, the shoulders broad, and the body active and vigorous. It causes the beard to grow and it gives power to the muscles, the heart, the brain, and other internal organs. It develops a man's personality and gives him the manhood that women admire so much" (4). While these pamphlets encourage soldiers to practice abstinence in order to avoid venereal disease, these excerpts also clearly state that having sex or the desire to have sex (with women, of course) makes one a "real" man. Again, physical attributes such as a deep voice, broad shoulders, and muscles are what create manhood, which in turn attracts women.

Among the servicemen themselves, there was surely the feeling that sexual activity was part of being a "real" man and a soldier. Historians Beth Bailey and David Farber point out that "Many high ranking military officers believed that 'any man who won't fuck, won't fight'" (121). In both Irgang's and Murphy's memoirs, as well as Lowry's novel, the matter of "chasing dames" runs throughout as soldiers always seem to have a story to tell about a girl, or talk about women in a sexual manner. For example, Murphy recounts a conversation that came up among Kerrigan, Horse-Face, and Brandon when they had to go out to bury cows:

> "If anybody hands me a shovel after the war," says [Kerrigan], "I'll brain him with it. An idiot's spoon, that's what it is. Dig. Dig. Get a good hole made, up you move. I've been fighting the whole war with this idiot's spoon."
>
> "Reminds me of an old girl," remarks Horse-Face.
>
> "Something always reminds you of an old girl," says Brandon. "Did this one have a face like a shovel?"
>
> "Hell, no. She was a beaut. But she was an idiot if I ever saw one." (110)

Horse-face continues his story about the wild road trip he had with the girl. Even when his story is interrupted by a German shell, he quickly picks up where he left off, saying that the shell was just "Small stuff" (111). His eagerness to tell the story about the "old girl" to his fellow soldiers indicates the desire to prove his manhood through his interaction with women. Several soldiers throughout Murphy's memoir do the same thing, and Murphy himself talks about eyeing the pretty nurses when he is in the hospital. There is a lot of talk of women throughout the memoir—those they have been with, those they want to get with, and trying to find women when they are on leave. The soldiers' sexual urges are perhaps not only a "natural" desire as the War Department pamphlets state, but also a social condition. As the men are in a largely homosocial environment, one in which homosexuality is looked down on, they feel the need to express their manly heterosexuality to one another. In *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick introduces the idea of the erotic triangle, in which two men are connected together by a woman. She states that "in any erotic rivalry, the bond that links the two rivals is as intense and potent as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved: that the bonds of 'rivalry' and 'love,' differently as they are experienced, are equally powerful and in many senses equivalent" (21). The soldiers that tell stories of women they pursue might not

necessarily be rivals (they are not fighting over the same woman), but they still fit within this idea of the erotic triangle because they are two men connected by a woman. The men are creating a bond with each other based on that story, and by extension demonstrating their masculinity to one another based on the model of heteronormativity. So instead of the triangle consisting of rival, rival, woman, it consists of storyteller, listener, woman.

This same erotic triangle is represented in Irgang's memoir. He recounts the story of a weekend leave the soldiers were granted when stationed in France. He and his friend Charley saw two of their roommates rushing past:

> "Where to?" I yelled after them.
>
> "Rheims!" one said without looking back.
>
> "Soissons!" the other shouted.
>
> "What are you going to do there?" Charley asked.
>
> "Women," they reported over their shoulders. (143)

When these soldiers have a moment of leave, the first thing they think about is not seeing the sights, absorbing French culture, or getting some rest, but instead getting women. Though this is not a detailed story like the one Horse Face told, it is still a bonding of the men through the association of women because they are aware of each other's actions and a demonstration of their heterosexual desires. Later, Irgang and Charley meet Camille, a woman whose head had been shaved for collaborating with the enemy, so she cannot get a job. Irgang asks her what she will do and she replies, "Oh, I'll manage. A woman can always get by, especially where there are soldiers" (147). Camille insinuates that she will be able to prostitute herself in order to earn money because soldiers are basically entities driven by their hormones; she will always have a way to "manage" with the soldiers around. Jarvis explains that some members of the military

"favored regulating prostitution instead of repressing it" because they claimed "that sexual activity was a normal part of 'being a man' and that if brothels were put out of business, some servicemen might turn to homosexuality or other 'unnatural' sexual outlets" (82). Despite the military's official stance to encourage abstinence in order to avoid venereal disease, anti-prostitution laws were often ignored and heterosexual prostitution was allowed as officials turned a blind eye. Even the military's policy of penalizing men who were diagnosed with venereal disease by suspending their pay was changed in 1944, when Congress repealed the provision, allowing for more rampant sexual behavior among soldiers (Jarvis 83). It was if Congress and the military were saying that "men will be men" by no longer penalizing soldiers for their sexual conduct.

Lowry's novel also has several incidents in which it discusses the soldiers' desire for women. For instance, on the ceiling above Colonel Charles Polaski's bed "cupids and naked ladies swirled about in pink paint" (23). Polaski thinks about the "big blow-out" the night before; the party "had all been very successful, including enough women for a change" (24). The party's success was dependent on there being plenty of "scotch, champagne, and some very fine seventy-five-year-old Italian wine," but it was also dependent on the number of women in attendance (24). There needed to be enough women for the number of soldiers, otherwise it would not have been a success. Later, when the Colonel is in the club he overhears the soldiers "making a terrible racket, joking and discussing events at the party last night, who had laid which Red Cross girl, who had passed out, who had spilt a bottle of wine all over himself" (89). The soldiers not only feel the need to have sex with women to prove their manhood, but they also feel the need to brag about it to other men. Again, the bragger, the listener, and the woman form the basis of the erotic triangle because of the soldiers' homosocial desire. It is if the soldiers believe

that if nobody knows about their conquests, then they did not actually happen. The need to boast about it and be congratulated is as big as their need for sexual release. Sedgwick argues that the term homosocial

> is a kind of oxymoron. 'Homosocial' is a word occasionally used in history and the social sciences, where it describes social bonds between persons of the same sex; it is a neologism, obviously formed by analogy with 'homosexual,' and just as obviously meant to be distinguished from 'homosexual.' In fact, it is applied to such activities as 'male bonding,' which may, as in our society, be characterized by intense homophobia, fear and hatred of homosexuality. To draw the 'homosocial' back into the orbit of 'desire,' of the potentially erotic, then is to hypothesize the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual – a continuum whose visibility, for man, in our society, is radically disrupted. (1-2)

Hence, these men's homosocial desire and "male bonding" through the medium of bragging about what women they have slept with highlights their hatred (and in connection fear) of homosexuality. Yet, as Sedgwick argues, there is an unbroken line between homosocial and homosexual desire that complicates relationships. So, a soldier's desire for heterosexual sex is as much about the man he tells the story to afterward as it is about the woman.

Even Colonel Polaski, who seems above such bragging, takes out Mary Sann, a Red Cross nurse. Polaski does not think Mary is very attractive, being too thin and having a large mouth with crooked teeth, nor does he pay much attention to her. However, he takes her out because the other woman he was seeing, Bunny, "had gotten a little too demanding" (101). Polaski believes a woman should pleasure him without getting too demanding. During the course of the evening Polaski takes Mary to his quarters, and while she's telling a story he interrupts her

and says, "Mary, let's go to bed" (117). Despite not finding her very attractive or even caring for her, Polaski sleeps with her, attesting to that idea that to be a real man and soldier meant one slept with women. There is no affection in the act, only a sexual urge.

Though Pinkman, the one character who is generally disliked in *Casualty*, is never directly called homosexual, there is indication of it. For example, when Pinkman and Callahan go out to the club together, Pinkman gets drunk and starts crying:

> "I'm miserable, Teddy," [Pinkman] wept. "I'm miserable . . . that office has got me down. . . . Teddy, don't leave me . . . Teddy—"
>
> "I'm not leaving you," Callahan said. "Try to walk, Luce, for God's sake."
>
> "Teddy, I'm lonely . . . don't leave me. Teddy, I like you, do you know that I like you better than anybody else in the Wing. Teddy, I do—"
>
> "Try to walk better, Luce. I know you like me."
>
> "Teddy, don't leave me—"
>
> "I'm not leaving you—"
>
> "Teddy, will you sleep in the same bed with me tonight? Please will you stay with me? Just sleep with me tonight, I'm so damn lonely—"
>
> "All right, all right," Callahan said. "I will, only don't talk so loud, Luce, and pull yourself together. We're almost there." (53-54)

Perhaps Pinkman's confession that he likes Callahan better than anyone else could merely be a declaration of friendship, but the fact that he wants Callahan to sleep in the same bed as him indicates that he feels something stronger. He claims that he does not want to be alone, but as evidenced by the other soldiers' interactions with the Red Cross girls, he probably has the option to have a girl in his bed. However, he only wants to be with Callahan. It is most likely due to

Pinkman's effeminate ways, which would be considered homosexual, that he is disliked. Before this incident Callahan "really liked Pinkman" (52). However, later in the novel Callahan does not feel the same way: "Ever since the night before last when they'd gotten drunk together and Pinkman had begged not to be left alone he'd felt emotionally mixed up about the man. Now he knew what it was, with this speech about Hammond and Pinkman's clean conscience. I just don't like him. I just don't feel clean when I'm around him" (Lowry 139). That Hammond does not feel clean around Pinkman is telling, as homosexuality was seen as something dirty and unnatural. Sedgwick notes, "[M]uch of the most useful writing about patriarchal structures suggests that 'obligatory heterosexuality' is built into male-dominated kinship systems, or that homophobia is a *necessary* consequence of such patriarchal institutions as heterosexual marriage" (3). Though Callahan never calls Pinkman homosexual, he insinuates Pinkman is because he feels unclean around him. Callahan is playing into this idea of "obligatory heterosexuality." Before this incident with Pinkman, they were friends and created a kind of kinship based on the assumption that they are both heterosexual, but after, when it becomes apparent that Pinkman may be homosexual, Callahan expresses his disgust toward Pinkman. This again paints heterosexuality as the norm, and "masculine" men (i.e. not effeminate) as "real" men.

Conclusion

World War II literature by white authors focuses on myriad themes: patriotism and duty, fear and courage, the hardening of a soldier, individual and group manhood, and sexual desire. As evidenced by the readings of the texts in this chapter, it is clear that every soldier experiences war differently and is beset by various challenges and struggles unique to the individual. The way Murphy reacts to a situation is different from how Irgang reacts or how Lowry's characters

react. It is also clear that white soldiers come in various shapes and sizes, challenging the idealized stereotypes that the government and the public promoted during the war. However, despite the disparities in portrayals of soldiers in posters and in text, one thing remains constant: whiteness equates privilege. Though whiteness is a construct like all races, it is still nevertheless, a privileged construct, and during the Second World War white soldiers were able to lean into that privilege. They may not look like McClelland Barclay's rippling navy man, yet they can still rely on their whiteness to support their demonstrations of masculinity. Their race is not called into question in terms of their intelligence, loyalty, motives, or worth, unlike soldiers of color who have to continually prove their manhood *as well as* their intelligence, loyalty, motives, and worth because of their race. In the following chapters, I illustrate how Japanese Americans, Native Americans, and African Americans soldiers must contend with racial stereotypes and bigotry in the United States, while at the same time finding ways to demonstrate their own forms of ethnic masculinities.

Chapter II

Looking Like the Enemy: Japanese American Soldiers and the Duality of Identity

The United States claims that one of its founding principles is equality. The Declaration of Independence states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by the Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" ("Declaration of Independence" para. 2). American citizenship, along with these rights, is constitutive of American manhood, for men are then included in the body politic and can participate in all aspects of the nation. It is only natural for those to whom full citizenship is denied to fight for the rights that are promised in the Declaration of Independence. Consequently, American women were at first not given full citizenship because they could not own property or vote. The suffrage movement united women in an effort to secure the right to vote, and by extension, the rights to full citizenship. For white women, it was gender, not race, that excluded them from full citizenship. However, for Japanese American men during WWII, it was race, not gender, which excluded them from both full citizenship and the ability to claim American manhood. Jack K. Wakamatsu, in his memoir *Silent Warriors*, writes that his fellow soldier Kats Okida proclaims that he is fighting for his rights. But Okida is also fighting to claim the right to be seen as an American man and all the privileges that are associated with that. Without those privileges, Japanese American men of the time could not prove their manhood. Many felt they first needed to prove their loyalty to the United States by joining the military and fighting in the war in order to reclaim their full rights as citizens, and by extension prove their manhood. This became a unique experience for Japanese American men, even more so than other soldiers of color, because they were linked to a nation that the United States was fighting against because of their ethnic heritage—they looked like the enemy. Though white society doubted African American and Native American men's ability,

intelligence, and resolve during the war in connection with joining the military, their loyalty, for the most part, was not a point of contention. Therefore, they, along with white soldiers, would not have had to prove loyalty to prove that they were men in the same way that Japanese American men had to.

In this chapter I discuss Wakamatsu's memoir *Silent Warriors*, Robert Kono's novel *The Last Fox*, and John Okada's novel *No-No Boy* in connection with these ideas of citizenship, loyalty, and proving manhood. No scholarship devoted solely to Wakamatsu's memoir exists, although there are some scholarly assessments of Japanese American soldier narratives in general. For example, Chris Iijima examines the congressional debates on the Japanese American redress bill in the 1980s and 1990s, focusing on how race played a prominent role in the debates and arguing that the laudatory narratives of Japanese American military service have played a vital role in labeling Japanese Americans as a "model minority." T. Fujitani also credits narratives of Japanese American military valor and heroism for the transformation of Japanese Americans from "enemy aliens" to "model minority," arguing that Japanese American military service comprises a critical part in the narrative of American national progress and its disavowal of racism. While Iijima and Fujitani primarily focus on race, Mire Koikari looks at gender and masculinity in Japanese American WWII narratives, positing that "Japanese American veterans must necessarily perform convoluted negotiations with hegemonic notions of gender, race, and sexuality so as to assert their belonging to the American nation" (550). However, her study focuses on Japanese Americans of Hawaii who served in the Military Intelligence service, most of whom were not subjected to internment before enlisting, and who also worked as translators and decoders in the Pacific, unlike the soldiers in the all-Japanese American 100th/442nd who were combat soldiers in Europe.

There is also no critical scholarship on Kono's *The Last Fox*. I assume this is because it is a little known work having been published by Abe Publishing, a small company in Eugene, Oregon. Despite the lack of critical attention on Kono's novel, it is an important text in that it is a literary representation of the 442nd combat unit. Though there is an abundance of literary texts about the Japanese American internment and an abundance of history texts about the 442nd combat team, there are very few novels about the all-Japanese American military unit. One of the only novels about the 442nd, other than Kono's, is *Four-Four-Two* by Dean Hughes. However, I do not analyze Hughes' novel because he is not of Japanese descent, and my study focuses on works written by racialized Others.

On the other hand, John Okada's novel *No-No Boy* has been the subject of much critical scholarship. Scholar Rachel Endo examines the novel around the themes of civil disobedience, disaffection, and racialized trauma, arguing that *No-No Boy* is an oppositional text that "defies the master narrative that Japanese Americans blindly accepted their fate during World War II and were thus able to rapidly assimilate into an accepting and benevolent White-dominated society after the war" (413). Wenxin Li focuses on the idea of home in the novel, illustrating the dichotomy between Ichiro Yamada's house which is wholly Japanese (food, language, and allegiance) and Kenji's home which showcases its Americanization. Li argues that by setting up this dichotomy, "Okada exposes the tension within the Japanese American community in the difficult process of assimilation into American society" (81). Scholars such as Gary Storhoff and Seongho Yoon investigate depression and anxieties in the novel due to internment and racialization, while Jinqi Ling and Stan Yogi discuss the connections between race, power, and oppositions. Several scholars such as Helen Heran Jun, Suzanne Arakawa, and Daniel Y. Kim, analyze the novel in terms of racialized masculinity and manhood, pointing out that Ichiro feels

his masculinity is lacking because he did not serve in the military and is bombarded with the white-dominated rhetoric of veteran manhood and assimilation.

Building on Jun's, Arakawa's, and Kim's work, I will interpret *No-No Boy* in terms of racialized masculinity and in conjunction with texts about Japanese American men who did serve in the military. Examining Wakamatsu's memoir *Silent Warriors: A Memoir of America's 442nd Regimental Combat Team* and Kono's novel *The Last Fox*, I argue that texts about Japanese American men who served in the war focus heavily on their desire to prove their loyalty to the United States and by extension their American citizenship, with citizenship being connected to American manhood. However, Japanese American soldiers demonstrated their own forms of masculinity, such as intelligence, ingenuity, and a sense of community, because their ethnicity would not allow them to lay claim to the "dominant wartime notion of 'American manhood' that was couched in the white, hypermuscular, warrior-like body" (Koikari 550). I then compare *No-No Boy*, which is set after the war and centers on a young Japanese American man (Ichiro) who did not join the military, with the previous two texts, illustrating how Ichiro's sense of incomplete American identity and manhood is due to his refusal to serve in the war and the complicated relationships he has with his family and other members of the Japanese American community.

Asian Immigration to the United States and American Immigration Laws

In order to understand how Japanese American soldiers demonstrate their masculinity in order to prove manhood, it is vital to know the history of Japanese Americans in the United States. The history of Asian immigration, immigration and exclusion laws, and labor opportunities restricted how Japanese American men were allowed to perform masculinity, and

thereby affected their development as both American citizens and men. I include this historical background in order to use it to interpret literature later on.

Asian immigration to the United States began in the mid-19th century with the Chinese, who came over as laborers, particularly for the transcontinental railroad and the mining industry. While industrial employers were eager to gain new, cheap labor, this "yellow peril" stirred the white public to anger. During this period, Congress banned Chinese women because employers sought only men for labor. They discouraged families, which meant that immigrants were either bachelors or men who had left their wives and families behind in their homeland. Yen Le Espiritu notes that the barring of women "brought about by class interests, racism, and (hetero)sexism, led to the desexualization of Asian men" (*Asian American Women and Men* 19). Congress's exclusion of Chinese women was a "deliberate agenda" by mainstream culture "to prevent any increase in the Chinese American population and to undermine the virility of Chinese and Chinese American men" (Goellnicht 194-195). This is just one example of how white society attempted to emasculate Asian men while uplifting their own forms of manhood. Political and labor organizations rallied against Chinese immigration because they regarded them as an inferior race. The opposition was so hostile that in 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited immigration from China for the next ten years. Congress extended Chinese exclusion in 1892 and 1902, and made it indefinite in 1904 (Espiritu, *Asian American Women and Men*, 19).

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 allowed for the immigration of Japanese, because industries were still looking for cheap labor. Lisa Lowe argues that Asian immigration has historically been the site to resolve the contradictions between the U.S. national economy and its political state—between the economic need for cheap and exploitable labor and the political need

to constitute a homogeneous nation. Espiritu states, "Thus, Asian immigrants have been both integrated in the U.S. national economy and marked—by immigration restriction and cultural exclusion—as 'foreign' and 'outside' the national polity" (*Asian American Women and Men* 9). Japanese immigrants also faced exclusion much like the Chinese, but the U.S. government did so in smaller stages out of respect to the national sensibilities of Japan, which was a rising military power. In the Gentleman's Agreement of 1907, Japan agreed not to issue passports for Japanese citizens wishing to work in the United States. In exchange, the U.S. agreed to accept the presence of Japanese immigrants already residing in the U.S. and to permit the immigration of wives, children, and parents. Japanese men in America took advantage of this opportunity and summoned wives from Japan. Bachelors who could not afford to return to Japan to seek a bride resorted to the "picture bride" practice[3]. With the influx of Japanese women immigrants, anti-Japanese groups became agitated, and the Immigration Act of 1924 stopped Japanese immigration entirely (Espiritu 20-21). David Leiwei Li argues, "The history of Asian exclusion is a history of the nation-state's 'monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence' in making explicit identity and difference, citizens and aliens" (4). From the onset of Asian immigration, the U.S. government has found legal ways to mark Asians as "Others," which is this "symbolic violence." The exclusion laws qualify who is worthy to enter the U.S. and who is unworthy, and in connection who is allowed to work in the U.S. and become citizens.

However, the types of work that Asian immigrants were allowed to labor in were also affected by immigration laws and racism. Espiritu notes, "Due to their noncitizen status, the closed labor market, and the shortage of women, Asian immigrant men, first Chinese and later

[3] The term picture bride refers to the practice in the early 20th century of immigrant workers, mostly from Japan Okinawa, and Korea, in Hawaii and the West Coast of the United States choosing brides from their native countries through a matchmaker, who paired bride and groom using only photographs and family recommendations of the possible candidates.

Japanese, substituted to some extent for female labor in the American West" ("All Men" 36). Many Chinese men entered into domestic service in rooming houses, hotels, and private homes at the beginning of the 20th century, and subsequently opened up businesses as laundrymen. Later, Japanese men followed Chinese men into domestic service. Espiritu states, "The exclusion of Asian men from Eurocentric notions of the masculine reminds us that not all men benefit—or benefit equally—from a patriarchal system designed to maintain the unequal relationship that exits between men and women" ("All Men" 35). Asian men became subordinates to privileged white men *and* privileged white women because of their service in the domestic realm, illustrating that men experience gender differently based on race and class and do not benefit equally from patriarchy.

Although domestic service was the first occupation for many new Japanese arrivals, most Issei (first generation immigrants) moved on to agricultural and city trades. One reason they were able to transition into different lines of work was because of the 1907 Gentlemen's Agreement that allowed them to bring over wives and families. Women and children provided unpaid labor, enabling Japanese men "to exit the unskilled wage labor market and to form a thriving ethnic enclave economy" (Espiritu, *Asian American Women and Men*, 38). With unpaid household labor, Issei could successfully compete with white farmers and acquire a principal share of the produce market. Self-employment and success in the job market allowed Issei men to gain back the pride of being a man that many felt they had lost as domestic servants and also to establish themselves as head of the household. An Issei man, as both the breadwinner and the decision-maker for the entire family, was the acknowledged authority over his wife and children. However, whites often became insecure when Issei gained a foothold in competitive markets. Ling explains that the racial gendering of Asian and Asian American men

> thus illustrates not only the institutional need to "emasculate" Asian males in the process of their incorporation into American society, but also the dependence of such "emasculation" on the ideological norm of male domination over women. When Asian American men are economically and politically subordinate, they are seen as feminine and incapable of living up to Western definitions of masculinity; when they struggle against odds to secure limited social space for themselves or contend for some degree of equality with the cultural establishment, they are immediately regarded as "bastardized" males whose criminal libido has to be controlled. In either case, traditional assumptions of masculinity and femininity are appropriated to rationalize Asian American men's economic, cultural, or political subjugation" (317).

Ling illustrates that Asian American men were often put in a no-win situation. If they worked in domestic service, whites labeled them as feminine, but if they excelled economically, whites saw them as dangerous and "bastardized."

U.S. immigration exclusion laws perpetuated these stereotypes about Asians, and they faced racial discrimination and oppression. The exclusion of Asian immigrants and the immigration laws targeted directly at them are "typical of the republic's consensual cleansing of its common nationality, and reflect the contradictions of American citizenship" (Li 3). Along with this uncertainty of citizenship came unfair comparisons between Asian immigrants and white American men. Michael Kimmel writes, "Successive waves of immigrants were depicted as less mentally capable and less manly—either as feminized and effete or wildly savage hypermasculine beasts—and thus likely to dilute the stock of 'pure' American blood" (128). Espiritu notes that "Asian American men have been excluded from white-based cultural notions of the masculine. Whereas white men are depicted both as virile and as protectors of women,

Asian men have been characterized both as asexual *and* as threats to white women" (*Asian American Women and Men* 90). Jinqi Ling posits that in the context of Western colonialism and Asian labor immigration to North America "the traditional Western concept of masculinity—which values men as embodiments of civilization, rationality, and aggressiveness and devalues women as embodiments of primitiveness, emotion and passivity—was extended to account for the West's sense of economic and political superiority over Asia by projecting the latter as a diametrically opposed feminine Other (314).What these scholars point out is that Asian American men were not able to claim a middle road to their masculinity. They were either feminized and emasculated, meaning they were not seen as "real men" with large "masculine" bodies who could woo and protect white women, *or* they were uncivilized savages who would ravage and harm white women. Though these two opinions seem contradictory (how can Asian men be both effete and beastly?), the contradictory nature simply illustrates that white society was painting Asian immigrants as inferior. It did not necessarily matter which stereotype Asian men found themselves linked to, merely that they were not equal to white men. The white-dominated society of the United States was trying to mitigate how racial difference led to superiority, with whites of course being superior. Elaine H. Kim argues, "Asian women are only sexual for the same reason that Asian men are asexual: both exist to define the white man's virility and the white race's superiority" (70). Though Asian immigrants were technically formal nationals, they were seen as cultural and ethnic aliens. This distinction would then allow the U.S. government to label Japanese American residents and even citizens as enemy aliens after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.

Japanese American Internment during World War II

Japanese Americans have a fraught history with the United States, being subjected to immigration exclusion and unfair stereotypes, but when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, it further complicated the relationship Japanese Americans had with the United States. David L. Eng notes that before Pearl Harbor Japanese Americans were often "invisible" (or unimportant), which meant that although they were not always treated equally, they could at least proceed with their daily lives mostly undisturbed. However, after the attack on Pearl Harbor Japanese Americans went from being invisible to hyper-visible because they looked like the enemy, what Eng refers to as "enemies of whiteness" (119). Directly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the U.S. government began to round up Japanese American residents for questions and treated them as highly suspicious. In February of 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which ultimately led to the forced relocation and incarceration of approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans in what the government called War Relocation Authority (WRA) Camps. Linda Tamura argues, "The order was based on the premise that one's ethnicity determined one's loyalty, that unsubstantiated military accusations were sound, and that concerns for security outweighed the rights of ethnic minorities" (46). Though the government claimed the "evacuation" was for the safety and benefit of Japanese Americans, the camps were heavily guarded and residents were not free to come and go and they pleased. They were imprisoned without just cause.

Although weapons, cameras, radios, binoculars and other instruments of surveillance were seized from "enemy" aliens of Japanese, German, and Italian[4] ancestry after the United

[4] Some German Americans and Italian Americans were interned during WWII. A total of 11,507 people of German ancestry and 1,881 people of Italian ancestry were interned during the war. In contrast, an estimated 120,000 Japanese Americans were forcibly removed from the West Coast and incarcerated in internment camps in the interior (Kashima 124).

States entered World War II, only the Japanese and their American born children were consequently evacuated wholesale and incarcerated in camps. Eng explains, "In contrast to Americans of German and Italian ancestry, the Roosevelt administration reasoned, the Japanese—'strangers from a different shore'—while distinct as a racial group, were difficult to distinguish from one another as individuals" (Eng 105). Arguing for the justification of Japanese American relocation, General John L. Dewitt, head of the Western Defense Command, told John J. McCloy, assistant secretary of war, "All Japanese look alike and those charged with the enforcement of the regulation of excluding alien enemies from restricted areas will not be able to distinguish between them." While those of German and Italian descent could be individually monitored, "the Occidental eye [could not] easily distinguish one Japanese resident from another" (National Archives). Therefore, the decision to incarcerate Japanese Americans was not purely made because of questions about their loyalty, but was also made because of their racial otherness. In *Farewell to Manzanar*, the television movie based on Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston's memoir, young Richie asks his mother, Misa, why German and Italian Americans were not similarly rounded up and relocated to camps. Misa replies, "Look in the mirror, Richie. We can change our names, but we can never change our faces." The stereotype that "all Asians look alike" to whites and Japanese Americans' ethnically distinct appearance led, in part, to their wartime incarceration.

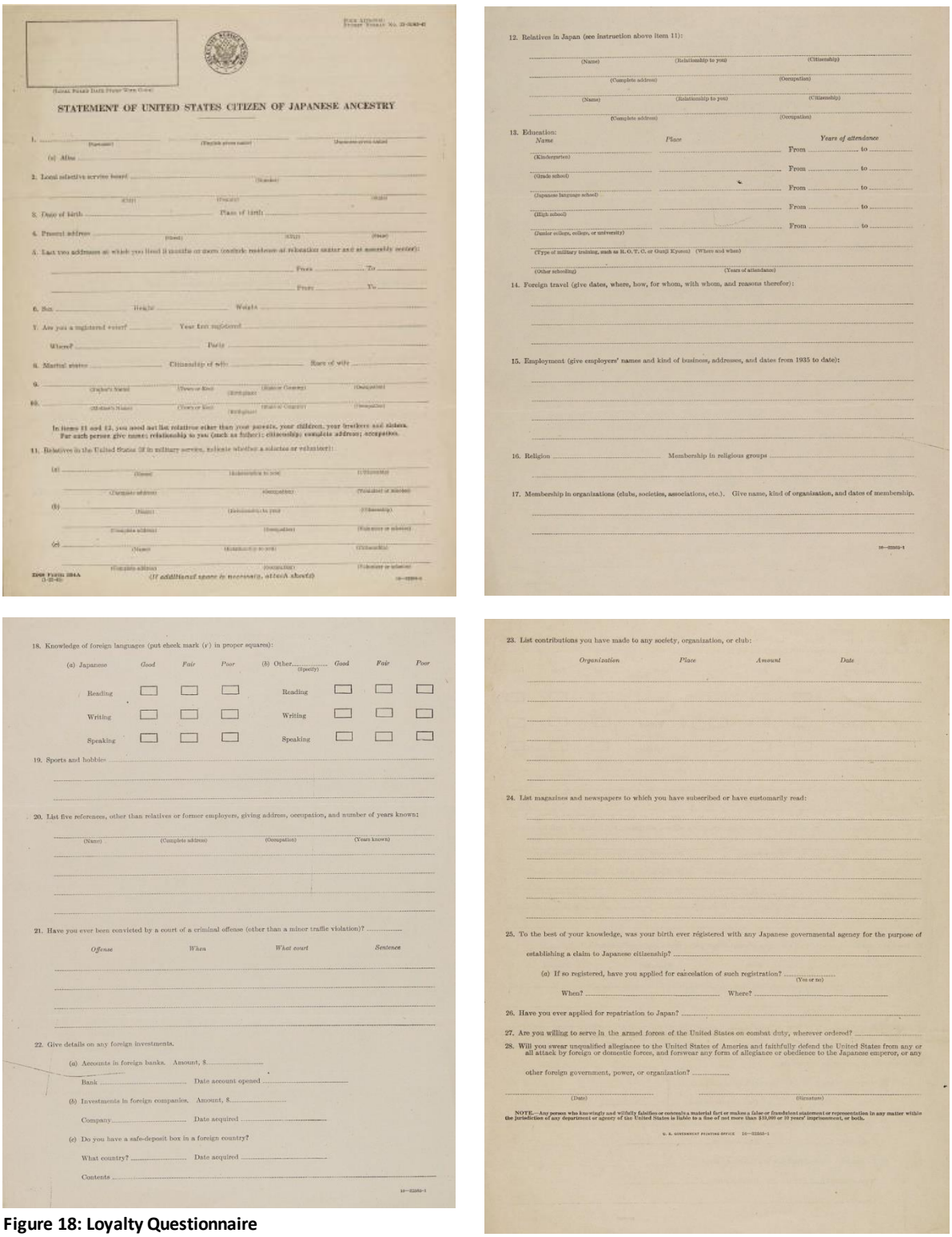
They were also incarcerated because the U.S. government assumed they were disloyal spies, giving information to Japan. A local businesswoman in Hood River, Oregon, noted that after Pearl Harbor, the "populace [was] literally scared 'pink' and actually seemed to think the few thousands of Japanese people living among our 130 or more millions were some sort of supermen endowed with the ability to travel unseen to any point and there commit unlimited

sabotage without being caught in the act" (qtd in Tamura 39). This image of Japanese American supermen is contradictory to the feminized and emasculated stereotypes of Asian men that whites perpetuated in American culture. At any moment whites can switch the script of cultural stereotypes so that it benefits them, and it is this ability to control the discourse that illustrates the unequal power dynamic. Tamura explains, "The U.S. government, entangled in wartime fears and suspicious, thus succumbed to unfounded conspiracy theories, alarmist campaigns, political pressures, and racist hysteria. Military rule would deny American citizens their constitutional rights, as directed by the president. In other words, Japanese Americans were presumed guilty without charges or evidence, simply because of who they were" (46).

Additionally, the internment changed the balance of power in families as husbands lost some of their power over their wives and children. As stated earlier, Issei men were the acknowledged heads of household as wage earners and decision makers before the war. But with internment came a shift in economic roles because an Issei man could no longer claim to be the wage earner with his income cut off; he had no rights and no control over his or his family's lives. This lack of occupation and inability to take care of their families and make their own choices led many Issei men to feel like they had lost their manhood, and at the end of interment "formerly enterprising, energetic Issei men had become immobilized with feelings of despair, hopelessness, and insecurity" (Espiritu, *Asian American Women and Men*, 44). Camp life also meant parents lost some of the control they had over their children, as their children spent less time with the family and more time socializing with friends and going to camp activities. War Relocation Authority policies privileged U.S. citizenship and U.S. education, which "further reversed the power hierarchy between the Japan-born Issei and their U.S.-born children" (Espiritu, *Asian American Women and Men*, 47). Nisei (second generation Japanese Americans)

were able to vote and hold office in the community council, while their parents were not allowed to because of their alien status. Because the WRA salary scales were based on English-speaking ability and citizenship, Nisei were also able to earn more money than their parents. These shifts in power, from parents to children, eroded the patriarchal hierarchy of Japanese American society and further emasculated Issei men who could no longer claim the title of head of household.

To add further insult to injury, in 1943 the War Department and the War Relocation Authority teamed up to form a bureaucratic method of assessing the loyalty of Issei and Nisei who were in internment camps. All adults were required to fill out a form that became informally known as the loyalty questionnaire. The form asked internees questions about relatives living in the U.S. and Japan, education, foreign travel and investments, employment, religion, known languages, the types of newspapers and magazines they subscribed to and read, whether they had been convicted of a crime, etc. (Fig. 18). But it was questions 27 and 28 that caused a great deal of unrest and concern. Question 27 asked, "Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?" and question 28 asked, "Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese Emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization?" The U.S. government disqualified Japanese immigrants from becoming U.S. citizens due to racial exclusion, "so renouncing their only citizenship would be problematic," while young Nisei men struggled with answering yes to question 27, technically volunteering for service when their country has stripped them of their rights as citizens (Lyon, "Questions," para. 2). Those who answered no to questions 27 and 28 were colloquially called No-No Boys.



STATEMENT OF UNITED STATES CITIZEN OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY

1. (Surname) (English given name) (Japanese given name)

(a) Alias

2. Local selective service board (Number) (City) (County) (State)

3. Date of birth Place of birth

4. Present address (Street) (City) (State)

5. Last two addresses at which you lived 3 months or more (include residence at relocation center and at assembly center):

From To

From To

6. Sex Height Weight

7. Are you a registered voter? Year first registered

Where? Party

8. Marital status Citizenship of wife Race of wife

9. (Father's Name) (Town or City) (Prefecture) (Name of Country) (Occupation)

10. (Mother's Name) (Town or City) (Prefecture) (Name of Country) (Occupation)

In items 11 and 12, you need not list relatives older than your parents, your children, your brothers and sisters. For each person give name; relationship to you (such as father); citizenship; complete address; occupation.

11. Relatives in the United States (if in military service, indicate whether a selectee or volunteer):

(a) (Name) (Relationship to you) (Citizenship)

(Complete address) (Occupation) (Volunteer or selectee)

(b) (Name) (Relationship to you) (Citizenship)

(Complete address) (Occupation) (Volunteer or selectee)

(c) (Name) (Relationship to you) (Citizenship)

(Complete address) (Occupation) (Volunteer or selectee)

(If additional space is necessary, attach sheet)

12. Relatives in Japan (see instruction above item 11):

(Name) (Relationship to you) (Citizenship)

(Complete address) (Occupation)

(Name) (Relationship to you) (Citizenship)

(Complete address) (Occupation)

13. Education:

Name	Place	Years of attendance
(Kindergarten)		From to
(Grade school)		From to
(Japanese language school)		From to
(High school)		From to
(Junior college, college, or university)		From to

(Type of military training, such as R. O. T. C. or Gunji Kyoun) (Where and when)

(Other schooling) (Years of attendance)

14. Foreign travel (give dates, where, how, for whom, with whom, and reasons therefor):

15. Employment (give employers' names and kind of business, addresses, and dates from 1935 to date):

16. Religion Membership in religious groups

17. Membership in organizations (clubs, societies, associations, etc.). Give name, kind of organization, and dates of membership.

18. Knowledge of foreign languages (put check mark (✓) in proper squares):

(a) Japanese	Good	Fair	Poor	(b) Other (Specify)	Good	Fair	Poor
Reading	☐	☐	☐	Reading	☐	☐	☐
Writing	☐	☐	☐	Writing	☐	☐	☐
Speaking	☐	☐	☐	Speaking	☐	☐	☐

19. Sports and hobbies

20. List five references, other than relatives or former employers, giving address, occupation, and number of years known:

(Name) (Complete address) (Occupation) (Years known)

21. Have you ever been convicted by a court of a criminal offense (other than a minor traffic violation)?

Offense	When	What court	Sentence

22. Give details on any foreign investments.

(a) Accounts in foreign banks. Amount, $

Bank Date account opened

(b) Investments in foreign companies. Amount, $

Company Date acquired

(c) Do you have a safe-deposit box in a foreign country?

What country? Date acquired

Contents

23. List contributions you have made to any society, organization, or club:

Organization	Place	Amount	Date

24. List magazines and newspapers to which you have subscribed or have customarily read:

25. To the best of your knowledge, was your birth ever registered with any Japanese governmental agency for the purpose of establishing a claim to Japanese citizenship?

(a) If so registered, have you applied for cancelation of such registration? (Yes or no)

When? Where?

26. Have you ever applied for repatriation to Japan?

27. Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?

28. Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization?

(Date) (Signature)

NOTE.—Any person who knowingly and wilfully falsifies or conceals a material fact or makes a false or fraudulent statement or representation in any matter within the jurisdiction of any department or agency of the United States is liable to a fine of not more than $10,000 or 10 years' imprisonment, or both.

Figure 18: Loyalty Questionnaire

Japanese American Soldiers during World War II

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor also affected Japanese Americans who were already serving in the military. C. Douglas Sterner notes that in 1941 more than 5,000 Japanese Americans were serving in the United States military, but when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor Japanese Americans were seen as untrustworthy, and "in the hysteria and paranoia that followed the attack, young Nisei were summarily discharged from service" (Sterner 13). They were classified as 4-F (unfit for service), even though they had been cleared for service earlier, or 4-C (enemy aliens) despite their U.S. citizenship. Virgil W. Westdale (whose father was Japanese and mother was white), in his memoir *Blue Skies and Thunder*, recounts that he was not threatened with relocation because he lived in the Midwest, but also details his experience with discrimination at being discharged from service. He had a private pilot's license, so in March of 1942 he volunteered for the War Training Service. He trained as a military pilot for three months, until May of 1942, when the CAA inspector told Westdale he had been ordered to take his pilot's license and gave no further explanation. Westdale recounts:

> It didn't matter that I had been born an American and had been raised to be as honest and patriotic as any of our Caucasian neighbors. It didn't even matter that I had an excellent reputation at the flight school. My government was treating me as untrustworthy. Suddenly, I was a second-class citizen. Overwhelming degradation flooded over me. I felt the moral anguish of being half Caucasian and half Japanese. If I hadn't been raised to overcome adversity, this event would have been enough to destroy my soul. (81)

Even if they wanted to serve the United States, most Japanese Americans were, at first, not permitted to do so. Only later, after relocating and incarcerating them and requiring them to fill out the loyalty questionnaire, did the U.S. government ask for volunteers or recruited young

Japanese American men for the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, an all Nisei unit. Those who had answered "no" to questions 27 and 28 and refused to serve in the military on account of the injustice of internment instead served jail sentences. Those who answered "yes" and chose to join the U.S. military then faced the difficulty of defending a country that did not defend them. Intrinsically, Japanese American soldiers had to prove not only their manhood in serving in the war, but also their loyalty as Americans.

Though Nisei men technically had more claim to manhood in comparison to their Issei fathers because of the situation of internment and their American citizenship, they still did not fit the white ideal. Japanese American soldiers were burdened with exclusion, racial discrimination, internment, and stereotypes of effete and feminized bodies or savage beasts and, therefore, had to create their own masculine undertakings to prove their manhood and their loyalty to the United States. During the war, the United States produced various types of propaganda posters featuring their enemies. Posters that featured the Japanese enemy often stylized Japanese soldiers as ape-like beasts threatening to harm and drag off white women, or over-caricatured the facial features of the Japanese, creating huge, fang-like teeth, and over the top expressions (Fig. 19-21). The wordings on such posters often used the slanderous term "Jap,"

Figures 19-21: American propaganda posters of the Japanese enemy

indicating the racial hatred targeted at the enemy. Japanese American soldiers, who had been previously incarcerated for looking like the enemy, were then faced with images such as these, which attempted to portray the enemy as anything but human. Mire Koikari posits, "The lack of proper masculinity among Japanese American men was a complex issue, as they had access to a certain, albeit deviant and despised, notion of manliness. Within the wartime context where the Japanese Americans were often indistinguishable from the Japanese, Japanese American masculinity could be easily imagined as no different from that of the violent, fanatical, and savage enemy" (550). It was as if Japanese American soldiers had to prove that they were not animals and savages and had to prove their humanness in war—a decidedly savage and inhumane experience—while at the same time demonstrating masculine traits to also prove their manhood.

In an effort to illustrate their masculinity, many Japanese American soldiers and writers, in history texts and memoirs, highlight their similarities with white soldiers as it would have been one of the only ways to lay claim to the dominant ideal of manhood. For example, Chester Tanaka characterizes the Nisei GIs as spunky and scrappy: "They ate K-rations and cursed the man who invented them. . . . They drank warm beer and were happy to get it. They took off as fast as any GI when the MPs started sweeping the Off-Limits areas. . . . They were typical, run-of-the-mill American GIs" (1-2). In his memoir, Jack K. Wakamatsu notes that no matter where Nisei GIs came from, whether Hawaii or the mainland, "as far as we were concerned, they were all just American soldiers" (56). Koikari notes that some scholars have not been congratulatory of Nisei veterans' narratives as they consider their patriotic discourses as "conformist and assimilationist," which play a central role in "constructing Japanese Americans as 'model minority'" (548). For example, Kathy Ferguson and Phyllis Turnbull analyze the public image of

Daniel Inouye, the US senator from Hawaii and veteran of the 442nd RCT, and argue that the "discourses of masculinity, soldiering, and national belonging converge in the figure of Inouye to open up a space for racial minority's arguments of national membership" (Koikari 549). Historian Paul Spickard theorized that Nisei did not necessarily want to be white, but simply "wanted to be accepted by Whites as Americans" (80). One way Nisei attempted to be accepted as Americans was by pointing out their similarities with white soldiers.

However, despite trying to show similarities to white American soldiers, there were still cultural and ethnic differences for Nisei GIs which divided them. Koikari points out that during WWII "Japanese American soldiers occupied an untenable space at the intersection of gender, race, sexuality, and nationality. Simultaneously too effeminate and too masculine, too submissive, and too violent, Japanese American men could be nothing but deviant and abnormal. Being of the 'wrong' race and of the 'wrong' gender, they were doubly alienated from the notion of American citizen-soldiers" (550). Serving in the U.S. military did not mean that Nisei men could automatically claim American manhood in the eyes of the dominant white society. Though they saw themselves as the same as any other American GI because of their patriotism and loyalty to their country, the same stereotypes that plagued Asian immigrant laborers plagued Nisei soldiers. Because of this alienation and inconsistent gendering, Nisei GIs had to prove themselves doubly as American citizens and American men.

Proving Loyalty, Proving Manhood

Texts written by Japanese Americans about World War II often highlight this idea of Nisei soldiers needing to doubly prove themselves as American citizens and American men. For example, three main themes emerge from Wakamatsu's memoir and Kono's novel: (1) the idea

that the only way to resist being unjustly judged and imprisoned and to prove their loyalty to the United States was to fight for the principles of America, including freedom, as American GIs; (2) that the 442nd Regiment's greatest strength was their feelings of family and community among the soldiers of the regiment; and (3) that Japanese American soldiers knew that they did not match the physical ideal of a soldier (i.e. tall, rippling muscles) and so demonstrated other characteristics of masculinity such as intelligence and quickness. Though these themes may seem like they do not correlate with the principles of masculinity, I argue that they do in fact directly correlate with Japanese American soldiers' experience as they enacted masculinity of their own different from the dominant, white society and unique to their situations.

For instance, several times throughout Wakamatsu's memoir, he expresses that the driving force that compelled Japanese American soldiers to fight and succeed was the need to prove themselves as Americans. He recounts a story about Pfc. Kats Okida, a man who had worked for the west coast tuna fleets. When Okida's commanding officers asked him "what he was doing as an infantryman when America was in dire need of experienced seamen," he explained that he had been disqualified because he was Japanese American (Wakamatsu 70). Okida replied, "I joined the Army to fight for my rights" (Wakamatsu 71). While other, white American soldiers joined the military to protect the freedoms of America, Japanese Americans joined to gain back the freedoms that had been taken away from them while also fighting to protect America. Though they were technically American citizens, one act of war from the Empire of Japan led to the United States eradicating the rights of Japanese American citizens and imprisoning them without cause. Kimmel explains that part of being a man is being independent; however, when the United States government imprisoned Japanese Americans during WWII, it removed their independence. They could not work for themselves, live in their own homes, or

even cook their own meals. They were dependent on a government that saw them as suspicious. Therefore, one way that young Nisei men could win back some of their independence was by joining the army. Though they were not completely independent as they would become a cog in the large military machines of the United States, it was at least a conscious choice on their part and they were no longer behind the barbed wire of an internment camp.

When Kats Okida states that he is fighting for his rights, he is also fighting to claim the right to be what he is—an American man—and all the privileges that are associated with that. Without those privileges, Japanese American men of the time could not prove their manhood. When the government was debating the possibility of recruiting Nisei and allowing them to join the military, "[s]ome suggested that offering young people a way out of camp (and into the military) might diminish the alienation and disillusionment many Nisei were suffering as a result of their confinement" (Lyon, *Prisons and Patriots*, 75). Scott Rowley, project attorney for the WRA at Poston, Arizona, "charged the WRA with failing in its 'obligation to the boys' in particular. Most Nisei young men would arrive at manhood while in the camps and would not be able to learn about manhood from 'practical experience" (Lyon, *Prisons and Patriots*, 75). Cherstin M. Lyon states that when the government discussed loyalty among the Nisei during WWII, "the issue of loyalty or disloyalty among Nisei women never came up. Only the matter of manhood and disillusionment of young men drove these discussions. Debates about loyalty, citizenship, and military service in relation to Nisei during World War II turned on the concepts that, during war, men were considered either citizens or potential saboteurs" (*Prisons and Patriots*, 76). As a way to prove that they were not saboteurs, many Nisei felt they first needed to prove their loyalty to the United States by joining the military and fighting in the war, in order to reclaim their full rights as citizens. This proclamation of loyalty and citizenship then extended to

the feeling that they could demonstrate their manhood. This became a unique experience for Japanese American men during World War II.

Though Wakamatsu's memoir focuses mostly on troop movement and activity of the 442nd, he mentions the need to prove loyalty multiple times throughout the work. Chapter five of the memoir is titled "Training for What?", which conveys a double meaning. The first meaning behind the title is that the new recruits were not initially told what their assignment would be and were not given details about their training. Therefore, they simply did not know what they were preparing for. But the second meaning of the title reflects the personal feelings of the soldiers. Though they had signed up to fight, many of them probably wondered why they were training in the U.S. army when their families were imprisoned in internment camps. But the recurring theme of the need to prove themselves as faithful Americans becomes the answer to their question. Wakamatsu explains that there were recruits from both Hawaii and the mainland, and they were very different from one another: "Though our Hawaiian comrades and their mainland counterparts had initial clashes of values, their beliefs, hopes and resolves were the same. They all wanted the opportunity to prove to all that their blood was as red as any other American" (56). Among Americans of Japanese ancestry, there were different cultural values as they came from different social, political, and economic backgrounds. However, because the United States lumped them all into one category and into a segregated regiment, their desires to show themselves as true Americans became the same.

Later in the memoir, Wakamatsu was in a field evacuation hospital with trench foot[5]. Just lying there gave him ample time to contemplate his situation and worry about his parents who were in the Manzanar internment camp. He writes, "I wondered about my father, because he was

[5] Trench foot is a medical condition caused by prolonged exposure of the feet to damp, unsanitary, and cold conditions.

always the strong breadwinner of our family; this incarceration and loss of freedom must be killing him. To a Japanese man, born of the traditions of Japanese culture, it is a loss of face to be forced into an institution where you and your family are fed and sheltered, and you give up the authority and responsibilities as head of the family. Dad must have felt useless and betrayed" (165). Wakamatsu's thoughts reaffirm what Espiritu discusses about internment emasculating Issei men as they could no longer be the breadwinner for their families. However, Wakamatsu encouraged his father the only way he knew how, by telling him they needed to be strong and prove themselves as faithful Americans:

> I told him that although our country had done this terrible injustice to the Japanese-American people, we had but one option, to perform and show America what we were made of. Only by this example could we transcend the injustices which had befallen us. Nothing else would convince the rest of America. I also reminded him that we in the Armed Forces had at least two strikes against us and we had to perform for all our people, no matter what, and if given the opportunity to fight for our country, we would give it all we had, for we knew that this was the one real way out for Japanese-Americans. (165)

Wakamatsu's comments to his father indicate that most Japanese Americans, both those in internment camps and those in the army, felt they needed to be an example of steadfastness to show other Americans that they were Americans too. His comments also point out multiple pressures he sensed Japanese American soldiers experienced, as they had not only to fight to prove their own loyalty, but also had to "perform for all [their] people." If their performance in the war was found lacking, then that could have negatively reflected on their families and community members.

Many scholars classify Japanese society as collectivist, and Harry C. Triandis describes collectivist societies as ones in which individuals tend to be interdependent, give priority to their in-groups, and are concerned about relationships with others rather than personal needs. Tamura explains, "Heeding their parents' admonitions that the group's welfare took precedence over their own, Nisei learned to subordinate their wishes to those of siblings or friends. . . . They also acknowledged the value of a strong work ethic, especially one involving physical effort. In their new 'culture of everyday life,' Nisei grew up learning typical Japanese behaviors by watching their parents, who modeled conformity, obedience, duty, reserve, and work" (10-11). Though Nisei grew up as American citizens and often opted to adopt American traditions in place of their parents' heritage, these in-group pressures would have been compounded for Japanese Americans during the war because they were not just acquiescing to a collectivist Japanese culture, but trying to join together to rectify the injustices of internment. Because they were literally all lumped together in internment camps, then typically the priority of the group and the needs of the group were more important than personal feelings. Therefore, Japanese American soldiers shouldered a triple pressure: (1) they needed to prove loyalty to the United States in order to claim full citizenship; (2) they needed to prove that they were American men; and (3) they needed to perform well enough as American men and soldiers in order to reflect well on all Japanese American people.

The need to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States, and by extension prove their worthiness as citizens, is a subject that runs throughout *Silent Warriors*. Because *Silent Warriors* is a memoir of war, Wakamatsu relates the daily activities of battle, the hardships they faced, the wins and losses they encountered, and the casualties of Company F and the 442nd. For instance, after being discharged from the hospital, Wakamatsu returns to Company F and is surprised by

what he saw after the terrible Vosges campaigns. He explains that 140 men had been lost to casualties and over 60 were hospitalized with trench foot or battle-induced sickness. He states:

> With these losses, our present company was operating on a daily basis as though nothing had really happened. At first my feelings were hurt, but then I realized that our company personnel were trained to continue to operate on a 'no matter what' basis—that's war. I was pleased at the ability and capacity of our men to measure up and go on. . . . Yes, we are all ordinary people, but we had that drive to succeed because there wasn't anything else we could do during WWII to show that we belonged to our American community just like other Americans. (172)

Again, Wakamatsu reiterates that the only way for the Japanese American soldiers to prove themselves as American citizens (and men) was to fight valiantly in the war. He was saddened by the losses their company had suffered, but he was also proud that the other soldiers were continuing on in their resolve. Additionally, he asserts that the men of his company measured up, meaning that they measured up to the standards of military life and, in this instance, the ideal of how a soldier is supposed to act during war.

The need to prove loyalty as well as manhood is also a theme in Robert H. Kono's novel, *The Last Fox*, a fictionalized account of members of the 442nd. Several times throughout the novel Fred Murano, the protagonist, actually claims that he did *not* volunteer to fight to prove his loyalty. Fred tells another soldier, "As far as I'm concerned, it's got nothing to do with proving you're loyal. I already know I'm loyal. They've doubted us but I don't doubt myself. I'm a free man fighting for freedom, for our folks and all of us" (58). Fred's use of the word "free" is intriguing because if he was not fighting in the war he technically would not be free. He would either still be in an internment camp or he would be in prison for refusing service. However, Fred

asserts he is free because that is how he can identify himself as an American man, as freedom (or liberty) is one of the fundamental tenets of the American experience. Fred wants to fight for freedom because he views it as a man's duty, and the idea of freedom allows him to continue to participate in masculine endeavors and claim his American citizenship. Pnina Werbner and Nira Yuval-Davis refer to citizenship in modern democracies as an "unstable political and jural formation [which] both compounds and confounds contradictory tendencies: of universalism and particularism, freedom and order, individual rights and collective responsibilities, identity and difference, nation and individual" (2). Fred (and all Nisei soldiers) is confronted with these contradictions of citizenship during WWII because they have lost individual rights but acknowledge a collective responsibility in order to regain those rights and freedom.

The current of loyalty runs among the Japanese Americans in *The Last Fox* and illustrates how the values of loyalty and freedom appear to be the ideals for American men, no matter what their ethnicity. Jean Sokolowski argues, "World War II presented American men with an opportunity to serve their country and thereby demonstrate their patriotism. This avenue to proving one's national loyalty became a double-edged sword for Japanese American males and radically impacted how this group envisioned and reconceptualized their relationship to the nation during and after the crisis of citizenship and national identity forced by the war" (69). This double-edged sword is apparent when Fred states that he already knows he is loyal, but the government doubts them. He may proclaim that he is fighting for freedom in the generalized American model, as in freedom for all of America, but as a group the Nisei soldiers have to fight to free themselves of suspicion and, eventually, to free their families from internment camps. Later Fred thinks, "What he was facing was none other than the completion of himself. The first great barrier was the war, a war he had volunteered to fight, a war which he had to volunteer to

fight, if ever he was to know manhood" (63). Fred sees the war as a training ground to achieve manhood. Not only does he want to fight for the American ideals of freedom and democracy, but he also feels obligated to fight for himself, to act against stereotypes, and to claim his manhood. Though Fred asserts that he is not trying to prove his loyalty because he already knows he is loyal, he still feels obligated to serve, "he *had* to volunteer to fight" (Kono 63, emphasis added). Even if Fred does not acknowledge that loyalty is one of the reasons he signed up, it would be an underlying current that would have affected him as it would have affected most Nisei soldiers. It is only through his service in the war that he thinks he can complete himself and make himself a whole man.

In another episode in the novel that emphasizes the need to prove loyalty to the United States, Fred and his fellow soldiers take a group of German soldiers as prisoners. One German officer and the Nisei soldiers have the following conversation:

> "And you fight for America? A country that put your people into concentration camps?" [the German officer] said with as much contempt as was safe.
>
> "That's a big misunderstanding we intend to clear up," Fred said. "We're freedom-loving Americans." He turned toward the men who had gathered around. "Right men?"
>
> "Damn right," one of the men said. "Say hello to a new breed of Yankee Doodle Dandies." (42).

This exchange between the German officer and the Nisei soldiers again confirms that one reason the Nisei soldiers fought for the U.S. was to clear up the misunderstanding, as Fred puts it, that the Japanese Americans were disloyal. When the other Nisei soldier dubs them as a "new breed of Yankee Doodle Dandies," he brings to mind a type of loyalty fed by tradition and symbol, in

the same vein as Uncle Sam. The song "Yankee Doodle" dates back to the American Revolution, when the colonies were fighting for independence from Great Britain and America was seeking to establish itself as a nation based on liberty and freedom. The song is often sung patriotically, so by calling themselves Yankee Doodle Dandies the Nisei soldiers in the novel are establishing themselves as true Americans, or at least as Americans who can also define themselves in terms of a national symbol, fighting for the principles of America even as they must fight for their own civil liberties.

However, the pressures of war and the memory of their families interned at home often cause Nisei soldiers to become frustrated and angry. Fred "had to remind himself why he had volunteered . . . and why he needed to lay his life on the line to prove not only that he was just as good an American as his next door white neighbor but also that he loved his country with an unequivocal lust that belonged to a man born into freedom" (Kono 149). It seems that a constant driving force of loyalty and love of country is what helped the soldiers continue on. Mike Masaoka, national secretary of the Japanese American Citizens League during WWII, addressed the US Senate on May 9, 1941, stating:

> I am proud that I am an American citizen of Japanese ancestry, for my Very background makes me appreciate more fully the wonderful advantages of this Nation. I believe in her institutions, ideals and traditions; I glory in her heritage; I boast of her history; I trust in her future. She has granted me liberties and opportunities such as no individual enjoys in this world today. . . . Although some individuals may discriminate against me, I shall never become bitter or lose faith, for I know that such persons are not representative of the majority of the American people. True, I shall do all in my power to discourage such practices, but I shall do it in the American way - above board, in the open, through courts

> of law, by education, by proving myself to be worthy of equal treatment and consideration. (qtd in Danver 90)

Though the U.S. government imprisoned them unfairly, many Japanese Americans held firm to the founding tenets of America, and they still wanted to believe in America's "institutions, ideals and traditions." Steven L. Danver notes that although "Masaoka does acknowledge the existence of discrimination, he clearly defines it as an individual rather than a societal trait" (91). In fact, Masaoka was the one who recommended the formation of an all-Japanese combat unit, most likely as a way for Japanese Americans to prove themselves "worthy of equal treatment and consideration" through military service. Many Nisei soldiers felt, including the characters in Wakamatsu's and Kono's work, that it was through their efforts on the battlefield that they could claim full American citizenship and, by association, American manhood.

Strength in Numbers: Nisei Soldiers' Sense of Community

The desire to prove loyalty to the United States illuminates Du Bois' concept of double consciousness and the veil. Many Nisei men viewed themselves through the lens of white America, aware that they looked like one of the enemies their country was fighting against. Therefore, this need to demonstrate their loyalty was an attempt to shift that lens into a favorable light, and by doing so claim the citizenship that they had been denied by white society. However, they were also aware of their twoness, realizing that they were American by birth and Japanese by heritage. Du Bois posits, "The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. . . . He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit

upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face" (9). This statement is also true for other ethnicities in America, as they wish to be able to be both American and their ethnic heritage.

At times, Japanese Americans during WWII incorporated aspects of their Japanese heritage into their soldiering, embracing their twoness as they fought for the United States. By doing so, they were demonstrating their Americanness because they were helping the United States win a war (proving their loyalty), and also merging their Japanese selves into their American selves. For example, Japanese American texts about World War II often emphasize that one of the Nisei soldiers' greatest strengths was their teamwork; they were a community, a family. These feelings of a close knit community are found in other Japanese American literature as well. For instance, Toshio Mori's short story collection, *Yokohama, California*, which was slated for publication just before the United States entered WWII but was not published until 1949 due to the war and internment, focuses heavily on Japanese American community spirit. Keith Lawrence describes Mori's village in the short story "Lil' Yokohama" as "situated within an internal geography: an idealized and protective community of mind and ethnic identity that is only superficially dependent upon external physical place. . . . In carefully creating the lives and values at the core of his fictional Yokohama, Mori transcends physical locality through a geographical metaphor for—and map of—Japanese American soul" (209). The soul of Japanese America, then, is one of connectedness; there were individual families, but the community was also a type of family. This of course links back to the idea of Japanese culture being a collective society. If Japanese American communities created such a familial feeling, it is only natural that the men of the 442nd, all Japanese Americans themselves, would establish this same kind of community family in their regiment and companies. This is illustrated in Wakamatsu's memoir

when he states, "'Did you know we brought our company up like family? . . . We will stick together and fight for each other.' This became the great strength of the 442nd. We fought for our comrades. We never left a buddy. Some of our men died trying to protect his buddy. The same as his buddy would have done for him. We never left a wounded man in the field. We always got to him no matter what" (75).

Most soldiers in WWII, no matter what their ethnic heritage, would have felt similarly about their fellow soldiers whom they fought alongside—that they were family and they protected each other. In fact, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, the first use of the term "brother in arms" in English appeared in 1632 in Philip Massinger's *The Maid of Honour*, indicating that the idea that those who fight together become brothers has been around for hundreds of years, if not longer. It is common among white American soldiers, too, to reference each other as brothers. However, I claim that for Japanese American soldiers, this feeling would have been compounded due to their shared ethnic heritage, as well as their shared hardships. Japanese American soldiers brought their ethnic and cultural heritage with them into the army, so it only makes sense that when transitioning from a Japanese American community at home to an all Japanese American regiment, they would also bring that community and familial spirit. Creating bonds with their fellow soldiers would not only have been important for morale and survival, but it would have been second nature to them.

Additionally, they also shared the hardships of simply being of Japanese descent during WWII: they were seen as suspicious, their families were interned, and they did not know if they would have homes to return to at the end of the war. For example, in *The Last Fox*, while trying to gain access to a hill that the Germans had heavily fortified, Fred tries not to focus on his fallen comrades. He thinks, "They were all like brothers. Training together, enduring the endemic

suspicions—the security checks and censorship—getting drunk together in Hattiesburg. He was bound and determined to bring his squad and platoon inherited by him through it, if it was at all within his power" (40). This excerpt illustrates how their brotherhood was based on both the bonds of military training *and* their shared hardships of being Japanese American during WWII. These struggles would have united them in a common front during the war.

Though creating a family community among the men of a regiment seems like it may not connect to masculinity per se, it becomes coded as masculine for Japanese American soldiers. Working together is how they were able to be successful as soldiers. Even Wakamatsu's subtitle, *A Memoir of America's 442nd Regimental Combat Team,* illustrates this group mentality. The word "memoir" is most often associated with an individual telling his own story. However, Wakamatsu is not telling just his story, but the story of an entire group of men who worked and fought together in the war. In the introduction to the memoir, Wakamatsu declares, "Writing this story fulfills my solemn pledge, made during World War II, to Technical Sgt. Abraham ('Abe') Ohama of the 442nd RCT. My promise was to tell the world—in the form of a book—why we fought so determinedly" (7). Even the reason he is writing the memoir is not for himself, but for a fellow soldier, and by writing it he tells the story of all of his men. Though Wakamatsu does use the pronoun "I" on occasion throughout the book, he more often uses the pronoun "we," again illustrating that community and familial spirit. This deferred subjectivity is in contrast with rugged individualism that has most often shaped conceptions of American masculinity. Wakamatsu writes, "The time and events of their real teamwork in battle was truly their greatest asset. Their resolve, and belief in themselves and their comrades, was the real secret of our success." (138). Crediting teamwork as their secret to success allows Wakamatsu to establish a new kind of joint or communal masculinity, which differs from the white ideal of individual

masculinity. For instance, E. Anthony Rotundo, in writing about the transformation of masculinity and American manhood, argues that "the connection between male passion and individual interest had persisted. Thus, when influential thinkers of the eighteenth century pondered the growing claims of the self, they thought only of the *male* self. From the start, individualism was a gendered issue" (17). He also notes that a man learned lessons about gender from both men and women, but those lessons were different. For example, "individualism might look like selfishness to his mother, while it showed assertive, manly autonomy to male peers" (8). So while white males were raised with this concept of assertive, manly individualism, Japanese American males were influenced by their collectivist culture, which in turn translated to their teamwork in combat.

Fred in *The Last Fox* also describes this joint masculinity, stating, "There was an unspoken bond between the men of the 100th Battalion and the 442nd: whenever you needed help there was always another buddahhead or kotonk right alongside of you to help out whatever the situation, be it on the battlefield or a barroom brawl. The mainland kotonks and the Hawaiian buddhaheads were brothers on a mission" (82-83). Again, the term brother becomes the main focus of the sentence. As stated earlier, Japanese Americans from Hawaii and the mainland may have had different cultural values and upbringings, but once again it is pointed out that they were united in a common mission. They were brothers in arms fighting for victory against Nazi Germany, and they were brothers in arms fighting for their rights as American citizens. Just as they faced the double burden of proving themselves as American citizens and American men, they were doubly bonded as soldiers and as an oppressed people.

Teamwork and community spirit helped the 442nd Regiment gain visibility among the American public, for it was the most decorated unit for its size and length of service in the

history of American warfare. Their successes could speak to their desire not only to prove themselves as American citizens and loyal to the United States, but also to illustrate how their teamwork established a new type of masculine ideal that differed from white individualism. Wakamatsu states:

> Our Company was one of the most successful combat units of our Regiment because our philosophy was not based on GI regulations, but on a family system of mutual respect, understanding and responsibility to each other. This, I believe, is the strongest relationship that can exist between people. The current misuse of the word love in our contemporary society is a good illustration of our shallowness and lack of commitment and belief. In Company F, it had the full meaning of what the word really means. I have seen many men risk their lives daily in combat to help their comrades and, in some instances, pay the supreme price for their efforts. I suppose this is the true meaning of the word, however, we never used it" (131-132).

Wakamatsu points out that, although they were GIs, they did not credit their success to GI regulations, or the dominant, white, government standards of military practice. Instead, love for one another and their connection as a family allowed them to be successful in combat. This is in direct contrast to Irgang's statement that in the military there is no such thing as love and everyone was just looking out for themselves. Wakamatsu's company's success (based in community and love) then allows them to claim manhood. Even if the Japanese American soldiers were strong individually, it is more important to highlight how they were strong together.

Not Like the Men on the Posters: A Different Kind of Soldiering

Another aspect of masculinity that Japanese American texts about WWII highlight is the ability and determination of Nisei soldiers. Often during war, soldiers must be successful and victorious to gain recognition, and this recognition allows them to claim manhood. As mentioned in the introduction, the male body was often portrayed as young, strong, and muscular during World War II. Hence, victory in war was associated with strong masculine bodies. However, most Japanese American soldiers did not live up to these standards of the male physique, "for the average Nisei was five feet four and weighed just 125 pounds" (Tamura 57). This caused the U.S. military to be in a quandary over GI uniforms, as it did not take into consideration smaller framed men as soldiers. In *The Last Fox*, Kono writes, "Sometimes the clothes fit, sometimes they didn't. The average height of the entire combat team was five-four, and of the four of them Jimmy was the shortest and had to wear the sleeves of his jacket rolled up and his socks folded back over themselves" (18). The Nisei soldiers were unjustly judged because their facial features were different from the majority of the other American soldiers, and they were also silently judged about their size because of ill-fitting uniforms. Tamura notes that the Nisei soldiers were "so small that the army shipped WAC (Women's Army Corps) clothing to Camp Shelby" where they were training (57). Sterner explains that during battle in Europe a requisition had been sent in for winter gear for the Nisei, but "due to the small stature of the Nisei as compared to other GIs, the Army Quartermasters had resorted to women's wear to find small enough raincoats for the men battling in the Vosges. . . . The Nisei bundled against the elements in the WAC raincoats without any sense of embarrassment. The clean underwear would have to wait. None of them would wear the panties that had arrived in boxes marked 'shorts'" (99). Kono reimagines this scenario in his novel, writing, "[The Nisei soldiers] were issued fresh new clothing. The only

hitch was that they were designed and made for WAC's: the quartermaster couldn't come up with clothing that fit the small men. They grumbled about the women's uniforms, turned their noses up at the effeminate undies, but gratefully accepted the raincoats" (206-207). Not only were their bodies feminized because they were small, but they were further feminized by being offered women's clothing. Thus, Japanese American soldiers had to demonstrate their masculinity in other ways, apart from having large muscular bodies.

Instead of brute strength, Japanese American texts about the war focus on Nisei soldiers' intelligence and resolve. Wakamatsu notes that training an entirely new regiment was challenging, and the NCOs largely had to train themselves: "This speaks highly to the intelligence of our men. Education, intelligence, common sense and dedication make it possible for men to succeed in just about any endeavor, even combat, as negative as that is. This was especially true when we had no other alternative but to muck through it, no matter what. Do or die trying" (51). These assets that Wakamatsu sees in Japanese American soldiers are what allowed them to thrive and establish themselves as an effective regiment. Because the soldiers were not given much instruction, most likely because they were an all-Japanese unit, they had to "muck through" and figure it out for themselves. They could only rely on their own intelligence, and not on some white "superior." Wakamatsu also states, "Winning or losing depends upon the ability and resolve of the men involved" and "We held firm—we never believed in giving up real estate purchased with a downpayment in young men's lives" (81, 98). Here he indicates that the soldiers of the 442nd possessed great ability and resolve for they were known for their winning rate in the European theater, and they were dedicated to the other men in their companies. They would not give up ground because of the memory of their fallen soldiers.

An element of this theme of intelligence and resolve in these texts is ingenuity, particularly when it contributes to victory. In *The Last Fox*, Fred Murano describes to Major Haskins what he calls the Brahms Hop. In order to get up a hill that the Germans were defending, the Nisei GIs placed one soldier on either side of the German heavy machine gun. They alternated hopping up and down and shooting at the enemy so that the Germans did not know who to target, while another soldier came up the middle to throw a grenade at the heavy machine gun. Fred explains, "Apparently, the Jerries have a shooting mentality, and they'll shoot at anything that moves. I was just providing them with targets they couldn't hit, because they had to keep swinging the heavy barrels of the MG-42's to and fro without having time to aim" (50). Here, Fred's explanation of the Brahms Hop maneuver illustrates three things. First, the maneuver involved teamwork, which links back to the Nisei soldiers' strength of community spirit, and they put trust in each other to fulfill a task. Second, the maneuver entailed forethought and intelligence. Fred and his fellow soldiers needed to be able to read and know their enemy and then plan accordingly. And third, the maneuver called for bravery and resolve from the men as they performed a dangerous task. The Brahms Hop did not require large muscles or physical strength, but instead required resourcefulness and intelligence (different forms of masculinity) that led to the success of the mission. When Major Haskins asks Fred if they thought about digging in on the foothill below instead of advancing, Fred replies, "No, sir, that would have been unthinkable. We would have had to show our backs to the Jerries," indicating that to be a real Nisei soldier (and a real man), one did not turn his back on a fight (Kono 51). It is therefore a combination of ingenuity and bravery that allows Japanese American soldiers to demonstrate their masculinity.

These portrayals of Nisei soldiers illustrate that despite not being the physical representation of the "ideal" man, they still possessed characteristics such as fortitude, courage, bravery, resolve, and intelligence which contributed to the regiment's success. The 100th/442nd soon received praise from their white officers. After their first campaign in Italy, General Mark Clark wrote to Washington, saying, "[The 100th] performed magnificently on the field of battle. Send me all [the Japanese Americans] you've got" (qtd in Tanaka 26). Tamura notes that the "Nisei's military successes made them the center of another battlefield of sorts: army generals engaged in a tug-of-war over who would get to command them" (99). After the Rome-Arno campaign, General Ryder told Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal that the 442nd is "My best outfit" as the Nisei soldiers marched by (qtd in Sterner 55). Sterner remarks that "The 100th had gained a reputation for following orders regardless of how impossible the task appeared" (27), while Fred, in *The Last Fox*, contemplates how the "Nisei had earned a reputation of being fearless. But perhaps it was because they concealed their fear so well and kept moving, forever moving forward, despite the odds, refusing to turn and run and be shot in the back" (281). Fred's thoughts indicate that the Nisei soldiers were driven by something other than merely fearlessness. The 442nd's motto became "Go for Broke," a term from Hawaiian pidgin meaning "to wager everything" (Mio 137). For the Nisei soldiers it meant that they would risk everything in an all-out effort during their service. Their dedication can be attributed to those characteristics of courage and resolve, but is also connected to the need to prove themselves as loyal Americans. As mentioned earlier, Wakamatsu points out that the Nisei soldiers were ordinary people but they had a "drive to succeed" in order to show that they "belonged to [their] American community just like other Americans" (172). Again, their success is positioned around their

duality of identity, both as Japanese and American, and the double burden they carry, to both prove themselves as men through soldiering and prove themselves as worthy American citizens.

No Rest for the Weary: Success in and Racism against the 442nd

The 442nd quickly gained recognition for their fighting ability and received praise from their commanding officers. But because of their success, they were often sent first into the most dangerous battles. Wakamatsu explains:

> Why do we have to risk our lives so often just because we are really successful and always win in lead combat. Just because we are good, we were penalized, and our chances to survive were diminishing, but, I know their pride would not let them speak the awful truth, because they were thinking of their fallen comrades who had already given their lives for our cause. This truth and inequity, because of our success has bothered all of the surviving men of the 442nd Regiment. Yes our RCT was over used again and again, but then, wars are unfair to all, even if you are victorious. (132)

The Nisei soldiers realized that they were being used more often than other regiments because they were successful, but also most likely because of their racial heritage. Wakamatsu's statement that wars are unfair to everyone rings insincere as it is obvious that the soldiers of the 442nd felt abused by their own military. Sam, one of the Nisei soldiers in *The Last Fox*, voices this concern several times. Early on in the novel, after the 442nd had suffered many casualties, Sam asks, "Why didn't they send the 132nd Regiment, the white guys? They're doing nothing but resting" (26). Later on he tells his fellow soldier Mike, "They see us as weeds. Weeds. Something that grows, not needing attention. They cut us down, and they grow some more" (176). Though Sam has volunteered to fight, he cannot help but see that the army still does not

consider the Nisei soldiers as equals. The army can claim that they use the 442nd over and over again because of how successful they are, but Sam feels it is because the U.S. army does not care how many Japanese American soldiers die. Throughout the novel, Sam becomes increasingly frustrated and angry because of this injustice. Even Fred, who is usually positive and stalwart in his beliefs about fighting for freedom, wavers because of how often the 442nd is deployed. He thinks, "They were going to be used to spearhead another attack on a highly fortified enemy position. They had either done too good a job to deserve such a dubious distinction, or they were considered expendable" (164).

On occasion, the Nisei soldiers were not awarded the recognition they deserved. After heavy fighting in Italy and clearing the way from Anzio to Rome, they were set to march into the capital. However, "they were ordered to stop on the roadside and some other American outfit entered Rome as the conquering hero" (Miho). Sterner notes, "They sat along the road watching other units march triumphantly down the Highway and into the hero's welcome lavished upon them by the liberated citizens of Rome. It was one of the saddest indignities the men who had fought so hard and given so much could have suffered" (39). There was no reason to halt the 442nd's march into Rome as they were the ones who had conquered the enemy, yet they were not the ones to receive the praise from the Roman citizens. Of course, one explanation is because they were Japanese Americans and did not fit the perceived ideal of American heroism. They were small and "foreign" and were therefore not allowed the commendation they deserved. African American soldiers faced this same kind of racial discrimination because their units were deactivated overseas, and they did not receive any praise for their service upon returning home. Though Japanese American and African American soldiers in combat units demonstrated their masculinity through resolve, faithful military service, and combat success, the white dominant

society demanded that the status quo be kept, which meant that white soldiers received accolades and praise for their service and remained the image of the "ideal" soldier.

One example of the 442nd being used because of their success (and perhaps unjustly so) is when they were sent to rescue the Lost Battalion. More than 200 Texans in the First Battalion, 141st Regiment, were trapped in enemy territory in the Vosges Mountains. They were cut off on all sides by 6,000 fresh German troops and were low on food, water, and ammunition. Two battalions from their own regiment had failed to reach them, and so the 442nd was sent in. The 100th/442nd fought for six continuous days, eventually rescuing the Lost Battalion. Tamura notes that the "units suffered more than eight hundred casualties to save 211 Texans . . . Now the Nisei looked forward to having some time to recuperate—but there would still be no time. As soon as Major General John E. Dahlquist learned of the rescue, he ordered Nisei troops to drive Germans off the next ridge . . . They fought for nine more days before German troops finally withdrew" (98). Four times as many Nisei troops were killed during the battle than Texans rescued, and the "rescue raised the question of whether the Nisei soldiers were being used as 'cannon fodder' or whether they were given the most difficult assignments because of their outstanding performance" (Grubb para. 1). Abbie Salyers Grubb argues that the rescue of the Lost Battalion is an essential part of the Japanese American experience and one which has "arguably helped improve the reception of Japanese Americans in the United States in the years since World War II" (para. 8). However, Sterner notes that even though historians discuss the manner in which General Dahlquist deployed the Nisei troops with mixed reviews, "[a]mong the veterans of the 442nd there would be no doubt. They felt used, abused, squandered and pushed beyond any reasonable limits" (91). As stated earlier, Wakamatsu claims that war is "unfair to all, even if you are victorious" (132). Nevertheless, General Dahlquist often used the 442nd without

considering considerable costs. For instance, he ordered the 442nd to take Biffontaine, despite the sparsely populated farming town being militarily insignificant and out of range of artillery and radio contact. In another example, Lyn Crost explains that Dahlquist ordered Lieutenant Allan M. Ohata to charge with his men up a hill toward the enemy, who were dug in and well supplied. Ohata considered the order a suicide mission, and despite the threat of court-martial and demotion he refused, asserting that the men would be better off attacking the position "their own way" (190). Dahlquist was not even aware of the significant amount of casualties the 442nd sustained. At one point he ordered the men of the 442nd to stand formation to be recognized for their accomplishments, but he was upset by the small number and told Lieutenant Colonel Miller, "I want ALL your soldiers to stand for this formation." Miller replied "This is all there is!" (qtd in Sterner 95). Whether Nisei soldiers' deployment is attributed to their success as a unit or because they were considered expendable, it is still clear that their white commanding officers were unaware of their sacrifices and afforded them little recuperation between battles.

Though most Japanese American soldiers were resolved to fight in WWII in order to prove their loyalty and claim their American manhood, they were often discouraged by discrimination and unfair treatment. Wakamatsu and his fellow soldiers "often wondered who our real enemies were, and why we were fighting here in France for a little town we never heard of; risking everything trying to free this place from the enemies of freedom, while our own people in America imprisoned our families and now were destroying our homes there. They tell me sometimes—this is our sacrifice for freedom" (144). The "they" is ambiguous in his sentence as there is no referent for it, but it could refer to two groups: his fellow Nisei soldiers who tried to encourage each other in a very dark time or the American government/military who attempted to justify the sacrifices of war. In either case, it is evident that even though Nisei soldiers were

praised for their fighting ability and determination under fire, the hardships they carried because of the ethnic difference were often difficult to bear. They could not automatically claim American manhood when they joined the U.S. military, but instead had to demonstrate their own types of masculine traits. It was a combination of American loyalty and Japanese spirit and values "that allowed Japanese Americans to become the properly masculine and honorable American soldiers who would fight to bring victory to the nation" (Koikari 556). Though white Americans still promoted the image of the white soldier as the ideal of American masculinity, Japanese Americans demonstrated their own type of ethnic American manhood.

Incomplete Manhood: Ichiro's Search for "Fullness" in John Okada's No-No Boy

John Okada's novel *No-No Boy* is the postwar story of Ichiro Yamada, a young Japanese American man "struggling to reincorporate into the national citizenry in the aftermath of his internment and incarceration as an alien racial enemy" (Jun 51). Ichiro is the no-no boy of the title, having answered "no" to questions 27 and 28 on the "loyalty questionnaire" in deference to his mother's wishes as she is loyal to Japan. Because he refused to declare his loyalty to the U.S. and serve in the military, he has spent that last two years in prison. The novel begins with him returning home to Seattle and recounts his struggle to "regain a sense of belonging—both to the local Japanese American community and the imagined community of the American nation" (Kim 65). While texts about Japanese American men who did serve in the war focus heavily on their desire to prove their loyalty to the United States and by extension their American manhood, *No-No Boy* is set after the war and illustrates Ichiro's incomplete American identity and manhood because of his refusal to serve. Much of his struggle to regain a sense of belonging hinges on how he views his own identity and masculinity, which he considers lacking; his relationship with

his family, particularly his mother; and how he relates with other members of the Japanese American and non-Japanese American communities.

Ichiro feels when he returns home from prison that his American manhood is not complete because he did not serve in the U.S. military. Suzanne Arakawa suggests that in Japanese American World War II internment-themed texts "…one recognizes that the Japanese American 'yes-yes boys'—the young males who agreed to take up arms for America—are established as coherent bodies; the 'no-no boys' (those who refused to show American loyalties), on the other hand, become 'incoherent' bodies" (184). Ichiro is portrayed as an incoherent body for he cannot seem to reconcile being both Japanese and American, and because he did not serve in the military he finds it difficult to claim his American side despite not feeling completely Japanese. Early on in the novel, when he first speaks with his mother he thinks:

> . . . we were Japanese with Japanese feelings and Japanese pride and Japanese thoughts because it was alright then to be Japanese and feel and think all the things that Japanese do even if we lived in America. Then there came a time when I was only half Japanese because one is not born in America and raised in America and taught in America and one does not speak and swear and drink and smoke and play and fight and see and hear in America among Americans in American streets and houses without becoming American and loving it. But l did not love enough, for you were still half my mother and I was thereby still half Japanese and when the war came and they told me to fight for America, I was not strong enough to fight you and I was not strong enough to fight the bitterness which made the half of me which was you bigger than the half of me which was America and really the whole of me that I could not see or feel. Now that I know the truth when it is too late and the half of me which was you is no longer there, I am only half of me and

> the half that remains is American by law because the government was wise and strong enough to know why it was that I could not fight for America and did not strip me of my birthright. But it is not enough to be American only in the eyes of the law and it is not enough to be only half an American and know that it is an empty half. I am not your son and I am not Japanese and I am not American. (Okada 15-16)

Ichiro speaks of himself in halves; half of him is Japanese or half of him is American. However, these halves do not make a whole, for he feels like he has lost the Japanese half of himself—"the half of me which was you is no longer there" (15). He cannot seem "to merge his double self into a better and truer self" (Du Bois 9). Instead, he can only see himself through the veil that white Americans view him through, and they see him as unworthy and disloyal. He himself does not feel worthy enough to claim his American half because he believes he did not love America enough to fight for it. He acknowledges that being American is more than being a legal citizen; it is a feeling and a commitment; however, it is commitment that he thinks he failed at keeping, which is why the American half of him is empty. Daniel Y. Kim explains, "Ichiro implicitly evokes and mourns a lost moment of potential wholeness—a time when he could have been both 'whole' and 'American,' a time when he could have said yes and fought for the United States. . . . it suggests that those Nisei who served and proved their loyalty to the United States are capable of experiencing a sense of 'wholeness' from which Ichiro, as a result of his refusal, has been cut off" (67-68). Helen Heran Jun states, "Ichiro's refusal to be inducted into the U.S. military provokes a crisis of national identity as well as racialized masculinity, since the discursive terrain of citizenship makes the soldier the classical embodiment of manhood and national representative" (62). Ichiro's self-identification as incomplete is what makes him an incoherent body throughout the novel struggling to find coherency, or a complete manhood. Nevertheless,

he is unable to claim that classical embodiment of manhood because he did not confirm his national identity as American.

One reason that Ichiro feels incomplete is because of what he feels is the constant need to choose between his American self and his Japanese self. Stan Yogi notes that these feelings of conflicting uncertainty arose as a result of "[t]he failure to distinguish between 'Japanese' and 'Japanese-American' [which] created polarized ideas of 'Japanese' and 'American' and forced upon the Nisei the implicit yet false choice between the two" (64-65). Ichiro struggles in his relationship with his mother, Mrs. Yamada, whom he blames for his unfortunate situation, in part because she embodies a wholly Japanese identity. Mrs. Yamada had "lived in America for thirty-five years without becoming less Japanese" (Okada 19). In clinging stubbornly to the belief that she can keep a pure Japanese identity by simply refusing any type of assimilation into American society, she ends up "denying the existence of America" (Okada 205) itself, creating a false sense of self that is dependent on a denial of reality. She is obsessive in her loyalty to Japan, convinced that Japan has won the war and is sending boats to pick up their loyal Japanese citizens. Ichiro notes that all Mrs. Yamada "had wanted from America for her sons was an education, learning and knowledge which would make them better men in Japan. To believe that she expected that such a thing was possible for her sons without their acquiring other American tastes and habits and feelings was hardly possible and, yet, that is how it was" (205). In essence, Mrs. Yamada is denying her sons from embracing their twoness, wanting them to be completely Japanese as she is. However, they were born in America, grew up in America, are American citizens, and as such they should be able to be both American and Japanese. When the United States goes to war with Japan, Ichiro (because he is of age) is required to demonstrate his

Americanness and loyalty by being willing to join the military, yet he feels pulled away from America by his mother. His strength cannot keep him "from being torn asunder" (Du Bois 9).

Mrs. Yamada is also characterized as the head of the household, while his father is submissive and emasculated. Ichiro thinks, "Pa's okay, but he's a nobody. He's a goddamned, fat, grinning, spineless nobody. Ma is the rock that's always hammering, pounding, pounding, pounding in her unobtrusive, determined, fanatical way until there's nothing left to call one's self. . . . It was she who opened my mouth and made my lips move to sound the words which got me two years in prison and an emptiness that is more empty and frightening than the caverns of hell" (Okada 12). Throughout the novel, Ichiro continues to blame his mother for making him say "no-no," when he now feels he should have said "yes-yes." Because of her loyalty to Japan, he cannot "prove" his loyalty to America in the same way that other Nisei men did through military service, and by extension he cannot claim an American manhood. Kim argues, "While the primary effect and symptom of Ichiro's disloyalty is, then a damaged masculinity, the primary cause of this compromised gender identity is an inversion in the parental roles taken by his mother and father" (69). As mentioned in the section about Japanese American Internment, internment would have shifted power away from Ichiro's father (like all other Issei men) because he would not have been able to claim the position of head of household as he was not allowed to earn money for his family. However, Ichiro's father is doubly emasculated because even after returning from internment he is still not established as the "man of the family." Instead, he is subservient to his wife, and he "occupies no position in the male public domain, effectively consigned to an effeminate role as some kind of ineffectual househusband" (Jun 68). Even though he realizes his wife's delusions of Japan winning the war and sending boats for them are false, he continues to appease her. Ichiro is ashamed and disgusted by his "feminized and

infantilized father" (Jun 69). Ichiro is self-loathing because he feels that he too, like his father, had acquiesced to his mother's demands. Because of her loyalty to Japan and his misplaced loyalty to his mother, Ichiro refused service in the U.S. military, distancing himself from the concept of American manhood. Kim explains:

> The outbreak of the war created a painful dilemma. To enact the samurai role celebrated in his mother's stories would have meant fighting for the United States, but since this would have entailed combating the Japanese, it would have meant violating the nationalistic ideal his mother had held out for him. Ichiro was thus caught in a double bind. In choosing not to fight out of loyalty to his mother, Ichiro cut himself off from the possibility of embodying the very ideal of martial masculinity that she had raised him to identify with and emulate. (68)

As this project argues, being a soldier was equated with being a man during World War II. Therefore, upon returning home from prison after the war, Ichiro can only feel hatred for his mother, whom he sees as the cause of his incompleteness and his inability to claim American manhood. It was for her that he held onto his Japanese half and refused service in the U.S. military, but now he no longer feels Japanese nor can he feel completely American because of his perceived disgrace. He condemns his father's spinelessness, which he also condemns in himself for giving in to what he now sees as his mother's fanatical views. Ichiro desires to break from his mother in order to regain his American manhood that he believes he lost because of her.

Ichiro's feelings of incomplete manhood are also reflected in how he compares himself to and relates with other members in his community. One of the first people he encounters is his younger brother Taro. Taro is curt with Ichiro, not wanting to speak with him. When Taro tells Ichiro that he is going into the army after high school, Ichiro urges him to go to college for a

couple of years before the draft or to try to get a deferment. Taro replies, "I don't want a deferment. I want in" (Okada 18). Ichiro asks if Taro is joining the army because of what he did (refusing service), but Taro avoids the question. His avoidance of the question seems to confirm that he is joining the army because of Ichiro and is ashamed of him. Ichiro muses, "he told himself that he understood, that the reason why Taro was not a son and not a brother was because he was young and American and alien to his parents, who had lived in America for thirty-five years without becoming less Japanese . . . and because Taro hated that thing in his elder brother which had prevented him from thinking for himself" (Okada 19). In Ichiro's eyes, Taro is completely American, while he (Ichiro) is not. Taro tries to accept assimilation wholesale by attempting to disassociate and "cut himself free" from anything that potentially reminds him of this Japanese heritage (Okada 67). He repeatedly disobeys his parents, refusing to study and not caring how they will feel about him joining the army. His actions are completely opposite of Ichiro's, who was unable to defy his mother or "[think] for himself." Taro even refuses to finish high school, instead coming home on the day he turns eighteen to inform his parents that he is joining the army. Ichiro thinks, "If he were eighteen and in Taro's shoes he would probably do the same thing. And not having done it when it was his to do, there was really nothing for him to say. It was not Taro who was rejecting them, but it was he who had rejected Taro and, in turn, had made him a stranger to his own parents forever" (Okada 67). Again, Ichiro believes that he did not fulfill his duty, so he cannot blame Taro for wanting to rectify his brother's mistake. Though Ichiro is older than Taro, he does not consider himself a role model for Taro because he refused service. He rejected Taro by rejecting the American side of himself, causing Taro to cling to his own Americanness.

Taro's actions illustrate his desire to distance himself from Ichiro and his Japanese identity, instead wanting to proclaim his American identity. For example, Taro demonstrates his disgust of Ichiro by luring him into an alley behind the bar where Ichiro was getting drunk; two other Japanese American youth (Taro's friends) taunt Ichiro calling him "Jap," telling him to "say no-no in Jap," and accusing him of being homesick for Japan (Okada 78). They then begin to beat him, with one pulling a knife. They only stop when Kenji, Ichiro's friend and a veteran, demands they let Ichiro go and wields his cane as a weapon. They leave, but not without calling Kenji a "Jap –lover" (80). After the incident, Ichiro ruminates:

> Taro, my brother who is not my brother, you are no better than I. You are only more fortunate that the war years found you too young to carry a gun. . . . And you are fortunate because the weakness which was mine made the same weakness in you the strength to turn you back on Ma and Pa and makes it so frighteningly urgent for you to get into uniform to prove that you are not part of me. I was born not soon enough or not late enough and for that I have been punished. It is not just, but it is true. . . . I am not to blame but you blame me and for that I hate you and I will hate you more when you go into the army and come out and walk the streets of America as if you owned them always and forever. (Okada 81)

Ichiro acknowledges that his situation is not his fault nor is it just, and hates Taro for the blame he places on his shoulders. However, this hatred can also be seen as envy for Taro is able to claim an American identity and wholeness that Ichiro cannot. Ichiro senses that once Taro is in uniform, once he has served his country, he will be able to "walk the streets of America as if [he] owned them," in essence claim a belonging that is unattainable for Ichiro. While Ichiro sees himself in halves—half Japanese and half American, but not really belonging to either—Taro has

rejected the fanatical Japanese side of his family to assert a wholly American identity. The intersections of Ichiro's age and gender affect his feelings of not belonging because these play a crucial role in the time period – he is male and in the age bracket to serve in the war. In contrast, Taro's intersections of identity are different because he was too young to serve in the military during the war, and, therefore, does not have to face the same familial and social pressures. Because Taro can claim this wholeness of American identity, Ichiro's envy of Taro is translated to hate for something that he himself cannot seem to achieve.

Both Mrs. Yamada's and Taro's actions, one holding firm to a completely Japanese identity the other holding firm to a completely American identity, make Ichiro feel like there can be no middle road. One is either Japanese or American but not both. This is an example of an unproductive and negative sense of double consciousness, in which the parts are unequal or do not coalesce to form a complete entity. However, many Nisei soldiers during the war establish a productive and positive idea of double consciousness where they embrace their American citizenship and identity by serving in the military, but also embrace their Japanese heritage by incorporating it into their service through culture, language, and collective masculinity. But because Ichiro did not serve in the American military and was instead isolated in prison, he has difficulty understanding these ideas of productive twoness and double consciousness. He was not able to serve in a unit that was successful in large part because of their teamwork and joint masculinity (aspects of a Japanese American sense of community). He also did not earn recognition for his intelligence and resolve as other members of the 442nd did due to their success as a unit, and as a result, white society and other Japanese Americans judge him for not "proving" his loyalty to the United States. He is always at odds with himself, because that is how others view him as well.

Ichiro's interactions with Mr. Carrick also demonstrate his sense of incompleteness or unworthiness. Mr. Carrick, a white man who runs a small engineering firm in Portland, goes out of his way to hire Japanese American employees after the war. He tells Ichiro, "The government made a big mistake when they shoved you people around. There was no reason for it. A big black mark on the annals of American history. I mean that. I've always been a big-mouthed, loud-talking, back-slapping American but, when that happened, I lost a little of my wind. I don't feel as proud as I used to, but if the mistake has been made, maybe we've learned something from it. Let's hope so. We can still be the best damn nation in the world. I'm sorry things worked out the way they did" (Okada 150). Carrick's personal apology to Ichiro and his hiring practices are his attempt of providing a type of national apology, and also illustrates that he feels one can be both American and Japanese. As a white American male, he represents the dominant society that imprisoned Japanese Americans, yet he knows and acknowledges the mistake. By hiring Japanese Americans, perhaps he senses that there can be a productive view of twoness "without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in [their] face[s]" (Du Bois 9). Carrick wishes "to rectify the wrong he felt to be his own because he was part of a county which, somehow, had erred in a moment of panic" (Okada 151). He offers Ichiro a good job and reiterates his offer of employment even after Ichiro tells him about his refusal to serve in the military. Carrick again apologizes to Ichiro for the national injustice and tells him it was not his fault, because, for him, military service does not equate being a worthy American citizen. Ichiro's encounter with Mr. Carrick is a turning point because he realizes that "There was someone who cared. Surely there were others too who understood the suffering of the small and the weak and, yes, even the seemingly treasonous, and offered a way back into the great compassionate stream of life that is America" (Okada 153).

Despite this turning point, Ichiro decides not to take the job. Ichiro believes if "he was to find his way back to that point of wholeness and belonging, he must do so in the place where he had begun to lose it. Mr. Carrick had shown him that there was a chance and, for that, he would be ever grateful" (Okada 154-155). Ichiro returns to the ghetto in Seattle instead of allowing himself the employment opportunity in Portland and a chance to start over somewhere new. Jun points out that "the novel's utopic imagining of white male benevolence is poignant as it reveals the depth of Ichiro's formation as an undeserving and pathological subject, who is unworthy of the kind opportunities that Carrick has the power to offer. It would seem that the state's disciplining of Ichiro as a deviant racial subject who cannot be incorporated into the nation has produced an irreconcilable contradiction: Ichiro's intense desire for inclusion and acceptance cannot subsume the racialized differentiation that he has come to embody" (71-72). Even though Ichiro claims that he can only find a sense of wholeness and belonging in Seattle, where he initially lost those things, he in fact feels unworthy to possess a good job with good wages with a benevolent white man as his boss. Despite Mr. Carrick seeing Nisei as both American and Japanese, which is something positive, Ichiro still views himself through the veil that most of white American society views him, which is something negative. The job in Portland might have given him a sense of purpose and led him back into wholeness and belonging; however, Ichiro cannot seem to allow himself such privileges. Instead he returns to the Seattle ghetto neighborhood "that he seems to detest so thoroughly . . . where he wanders through the same dirty streets and dark alleys until the novel's conclusion" (Jun 72).

Perhaps the relationship that most profoundly illustrates Ichiro's lack of wholeness is with his friend Kenji, a veteran of the war who has lost one leg. Kenji has suffered through multiple amputations, as the doctors cannot seem to cut away enough flesh to stop the decay.

While other Japanese American veterans mock, hate, and even spit on Ichiro, Kenji is kind and understanding. He does not judge Ichiro for his decision to refuse service. In a key scene in which Ichiro and Kenji begin to strengthen their friendship, they ask each other the question "Whose is bigger?" (64). The thing they are comparing is not the physical representation of their manhood, but "something that suggests its absence" (Kim 68). The two are debating who has bigger problems: Kenji's physical handicap of a lost leg that continues to plague him or Ichiro's emotional wound of uncertainty and shame. Ichiro believes his problems are bigger, thinking, "I'll change with you, Kenji. Give me the stump which gives you the right to hold your head high. Give me the eleven inches which are beginning to hurt again and bring ever closer the fear of approaching death, and give me with it the fullness of yourself which is also yours because you were man enough to wish the thing which destroyed your leg and, perhaps, you with it but, at the same time, made it so that you can put your one good foot in the dirt of America and know the wet coolness of it is yours beyond a single doubt" (64). Ichiro is envious of Kenji because of Kenji's service during the war. In his eyes, Kenji's ability to don a uniform allows him to claim his American identity and with it a wholeness of belonging and manhood. Ichiro sees Kenji as "man enough," which is one of the reasons he wants to trade places with him. Kim argues, "The 'wound' that has injured Ichiro's masculinity is one that has been self-inflicted. It was through his own refusal to serve that he denied himself the sense of masculine 'fullness' he believes Kenji to possess" (69). Though America made a mistake in doubting Japanese American citizens and interning them, Ichiro feels he can only blame himself for his weakness and inability to go against his mother. His refusal of service in the U.S. military thereby isolates him from masculine fullness.

Though Kenji is not physically whole, Ichiro sees him as spiritually or emotionally whole. Jarvis notes that "during World War II the myth 'that combat was the ultimate test of the soldier's courage and manhood' was still very much alive. Thus wounds incurred while fighting bravely, in the context of killing a large number of enemy soldiers or taking a key location, could bestow honor or sense of purpose to the wounded individual" (94). Kenji's wound allows him to stand out as a veteran; no one can question that he gave himself in the service of his country because of the visual proof of a missing leg. And because being a soldier during and veteran of World War II was the societal marker of manhood, Kenji can claim American manhood. It is Kenji's "sacrificial Japanese American male body—whose masculinity, despite successive amputations and resultant humiliations, is never questioned—that secures his martyr-like and iconic status within the victorious American World War II narrative" (Arakawa 192). Ichiro cannot claim this same type of masculinity and American manhood because he was not a soldier and he has no marker to prove that he was. Even though Kenji once tells Ichiro, "I'm only half a man, and when my leg starts aching, even that half is no good," in society's and Ichiro's view, he can still claim wholeness (Okada 89).

Kenji also represents a kind of wholeness because he has merged "his double self into a better and truer self" because he walks the middle road to claim a truly Japanese-American identity (Du Bois 9). He is not fanatically Japanese like Mrs. Yamada, nor is he devotedly American like Taro. Instead he shows awareness and acceptance of both sides of his identity. Kenji and his family are exposed to American assimilation, as they "watch baseball on television" (128) and consume "coffee and milk and pop and cookies and ice cream" (130), and his status as a war veteran also highlights his Americanness. Yet he also does not turn a blind eye to the injustices that people of Japanese descent still face in America in the way that Taro does.

He tells Ichiro, "The guys who make it tough on you probably do so out of a misbegotten idea that maybe you're to blame because the good that they thought they were doing by getting killed and shot up doesn't amount to a pot of beans" to the nation, because racism is still prevalent (163). He recognizes that he is still part of the Japanese community and as such still faces discrimination. Even though his war wound makes him feel, at times, like half a man, he never expresses that his twoness of identity does. Ichiro's inability to incorporate both sides of his identity is what causes him to believe he is fragmented, and he feels that his problem, or emotional wound, is bigger than Kenji's, despite Kenji's incomplete body. Arakawa explains:

> . . . the powerful influence of the World War II narrative compels this text to move toward some form of symbolic coherency, and this coherency on one level manifests in the form of how the male Japanese American bodies confer a reality—the dissenters' bodies seems to have little currency as they do not fit into the domestic or the public spaces, while the living and wounded veterans' bodies appear to have more veracity than characters who enact violence or remain dissembled, and even more clout in the text as makers or producers of a constitutive male Seattle Japanese American body" (188).

Ichiro's body, notwithstanding its physical wholeness, remains incoherent because he does not have the clout of a veteran and does not fit into the public space of a Japanese American community trying to reestablish itself. Even though Kenji eventually dies from his wound, his body is seen as a "constitutive male" body and is therefore coherent, as opposed to Ichiro's incoherent body.

Conclusion

Japanese American men saw World War II as an opportunity to reclaim the full rights of

their citizenship. To that extent, texts about Japanese American men who served in the war focus heavily on their desire to prove their loyalty to the United States in order to salvage the privileges of their American citizenship, with citizenship being connected to American manhood. This became a unique experience for Japanese American men, as white soldiers' loyalty was typically not called into question, and they would not have had to prove loyalty to prove that they were men. Additionally, white society had stereotyped Asian American men into two camps: effete/emasculated and savage/bestial. Because of these stereotypes due to their ethnicity, Nisei could not lay claim to the dominant wartime notion of American manhood that was based on the ideal of a white, hypermasculine body. Therefore, Japanese American soldiers demonstrated their masculinity in other ways, such as through their determination and ingenuity. They also established a new type of joint masculinity in which they created a bond of brotherhood and family in their all-Nisei unit. While white masculinity is often built on the idea of individualism, these texts written by Japanese Americans highlight the community and collectivist masculinity shared among the soldiers, which was again part of their ethnic upbringing. Narratives about Japanese Americans serving in the military during the war demonstrate their loyalty, determination, and masculinity, and Fujitani argues that these narratives are what caused the transformation of Japanese Americans from "enemy aliens" to "model minority."

In contrast, Okada's *No-No Boy* illustrates an incomplete sense of American identity and manhood because Ichiro refused to serve in the war. He does not feel worthy to reclaim his American citizenship, instead always feeling half American and half Japanese, with those halves never making a whole. He views his friend Kenji, who did serve in the war, as a complete American man notwithstanding his missing leg because his military service marks him as worthy, whole, or coherent. Ichiro always feels incomplete or incoherent. This is in large part

because Kenji can claim a twoness or double consciousness that is productive and positive, while Ichiro only sees the negative aspects of these concepts because his mother only ever demonstrated a oneness of Japanese identity. His two identities are figuratively at war with one another because he cannot see the middle road. Ichiro must also contend with the intersections of his ethnicity, gender, and age in the era of internment and WWII. The government did not imprison white men with their families, question their loyalty, or make them sign a loyalty questionnaire asking them to give up their only citizenship or serve a country that had unjustly imprisoned them. Therefore, the decision to serve in the military was often less complicated for white men. Ichiro does not "prove" his loyalty by serving in a unit in which the men demonstrate their intelligence and resolve, nor is he part of the Nisei soldier community that created a type of joint masculinity. Because of this Ichiro is bitter after the war and believes that he should have joined up, but he cannot go back in time and his decision affects how he views his identity as fragmented, rather than as a whole Japanese-American identity that embraces a positive view of twoness. In Ichiro's eyes, those Nisei who did serve in the war are able to claim a complete American manhood. However, as evidenced in some of the experiences of Nisei soldiers in *Silent Warriors* and *The Last Fox* (being overworked, not receiving the acclaim for liberating Rome, etc), the dominant society still perpetuates the ideal of American manhood and heroism, and it is almost always white. The image of the ideal white soldier, of course also affected African American soldiers, and African American men shared some of the same difficulties as Japanese American men, because they too were labeled with unfair stereotypes and called to serve in the military during World War II for a country that had continuously discriminated against them and dehumanized them.

Chapter III

Fighting for a Double Victory: African American Soldiers and the Wars Abroad and at Home

Just as Japanese American soldiers' experiences are different from white soldiers, so too are African American soldiers' experiences unique to them. Both Japanese American and African American soldiers struggle with the concepts of citizenship and double consciousness as they face fighting for a country that has never considered them equal. African Americans grapple with racial bigotry and the disparity of relationships between blacks and whites in the United States, while at the same time being called to protect their country. This chapter examines two African American novels, Chester Himes' *If He Hollers Let Him Go* (1945), which centers on Bob Jones, a black worker in a shipyard in L.A. during World War II, and William Gardner Smith's *Last of the Conquerors* (1948), which centers on Hayes Dawkins, a black American soldier stationed in post-Nazi, American occupied Germany. I analyze these novels because they illustrate the intense power struggle in black/white relationships during and shortly after the war, as well as highlighting Bob's and Hayes' feelings of double consciousness. In addition, I look at two memoirs by black veterans of World War II, *Red Tail Captured, Red Tail Free: Memoirs of a Tuskegee Airman and POW* (2005) by Alexander Jefferson and *Blood on German Snow: An African American Artilleryman in World War II and Beyond* (2006) by Emiel W. Owens, in order to showcase the similarities they have with the two novels in describing discrimination, but also to explain differences in tone based on publication date.

Early reviews and scholarship on Himes' novel often compare it to Richard Wright's *Native Son*, citing it as a protest novel and a work of social realism. However, Stephanie Brown argues that the novel "simultaneously embraces and resists the protest genre, imitating but also

questioning and subverting its core themes, strategies, and assumptions" (42), emphasizing the generic boundaries of protest fiction. Other scholars such as Keith Wilhite, Lynn M. Itagaki, and Addison Gayle, Jr. discuss how Himes foregrounds and complicates structures of white privilege, emphasizes urban racial geographies, and critiques the class consciousness of the black community. Gilbert Muller posits that in Himes' novel, Bob is limited by his socioeconomic position and "the configuration of race, class, caste, and gender conspire to render the protagonist in postures of guilt" (27).

Little scholarship has been dedicated to Smith's *Last of the Conquerors*, but criticism that does discuss the novel falls into two main themes: the disparities in racial relations among Berlin, Bremburg, and the United States, and the meanings of the interracial relationship between Dawkins, a black American soldier, and Ilse, a white German woman. For example, Brown argues that Smith uses the city of Berlin and "its history of diversity and artistic and political innovation" to incorporate ideas of "interraciality, biraciality, and cosmopolitan duty in a deliberately utopian vision in which African Americans lead the way toward a future that is not 'raceless' but rather free of outmoded, reified notions of racial difference" (104). Keith Mitchell explores how Berlin represents freedom and a place where Dawkins can be a man, while Bremburg, the city Dawkins is later transferred to, "represents a microcosm of the South" because of the white commanding officers and strict racial regulations (37). Jennifer C. Jones explains that Smith makes comparisons of racial politics through the white female body, as many black soldiers have relationships with white German women, arguing that the white female body substitutes for the white male body in the racial quest for manhood.

Scholars have been slow to enter the conversation on the relationship between African American veterans' memoirs and African American World War II novels. I will position

Jefferson's and Owens' memoirs in conversation with Himes' and Smith's novels to discuss the similarities and differences in theme and tone. Building on the works of the scholars mentioned here, I analyze the difference between the black/white relationships in the United States versus the black/white relationships in postwar Germany depicted in the two novels, illustrating how people can choose to accept or reject ingrained racial codes. The intersectionality of time period, race, class, and gender influence the focal characters' perception of their own racialized masculinity and attainment of manhood. I will then discuss Jefferson's and Owens' memoirs, arguing that the more hopeful endings in comparison to the novels is due to the time period in which they were published and genre. The novels were published in the 1940s, while the memoirs were published in 2005 and 2006, which allow the memoirists to view their experiences in a more hopeful light because they directly correlate their service with the social changes that were forthcoming. Again, intersectionality (including time period, race, class, gender, and education) plays a pivotal role in how the memoirists demonstrate and perform their masculinity.

Black and White: Racial Tensions and Relationships in the United States

Before getting into the interpretations of the texts, I offer a brief discussion of the historical tensions involving black/white relationships within the U.S. and African American involvement in World War II to illustrate how this history affects the characters. The racial tension between African Americans and Whites has a long and complicated history in the United States. Obviously, this tension stems from slavery and the fact that many white people did not consider African Americans human. Even after slavery ended, the promises of emancipation were not fulfilled. African Americans constantly face discrimination, segregation, and inequality. Because of this discrimination, "African Americans always realized the importance of military

service in furthering their demands for equality" (Wynn 1). In *A Freedom Bought with Blood: African American War Literature from the Civil War to World War II*, Jennifer C. James posits that "…before the desegregation of the military, African Americans, although victims of violent racist practices in the United States, clamored for an opportunity in each and every war to use a 'self-determining' violence against a common external 'enemy,' not simply for national preservation but for individual identity formation, to remake themselves as 'citizens'" (172). Even though African Americans inhabited the United States from its beginnings, they were nevertheless unable to gain entry into the nation as humans or citizens. Therefore, many saw war as a means for blacks to demonstrate their national loyalty as well as their humanity. James explains that "African American men relied upon a deracialized interpretation of the words 'manhood,' 'men,' and 'people' to seek entry into the nation, not simply as citizens, but as de facto representatives of the black American body politic" and that before "black men could enact their 'manhood'—their biologically inscribed position as the rightful leaders of the 'nation within a nation,' they had to demonstrate that they were *men*. War promised to be one ground upon which black manhood could be created" (12). Though the photograph below was taken during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, it demonstrates the same inequality that black men twenty years earlier were trying to overcome (Fig. 22). As black men in the 1960s protested, holding signs declaring that they were men, black men during WWII held the figurative sign of the U.S. military uniform also declaring that they were men. Melissa T. Brown, in her book *Enlisting Masculinity*, suggests, "Military service and citizenship were conceptually linked from the beginning of the republic, and since then, various groups—African American men, women, gays and lesbians—have fought to participate in the military on an equal basis with white men,

Figure 22: "I AM A MAN"

in order to claim the fights and benefits of both service and of first-class citizenship" (30). For African American men, war provided what many considered a double opportunity: to be recognized as a full and loyal citizen and as a real man. However, history rarely measures up to a population's desired hopes.

Despite African American soldiers having served in every U.S. war in attempts to claim their rights to full citizenship and manhood, the system of oppression is so entrenched against them that their service rarely produces these desired outcomes. The history of dehumanizing African Americans continued through the 19th and into the 20th century. For example, African Americans eagerly volunteered for service during World War I because they viewed the war as an opportunity to show their loyalty, patriotism, and worthiness for respect and equal treatment in the United States. Even though African Americans comprised just ten percent of the U.S. population, they supplied thirteen percent of inductees. Jami L. Bryan explains that black

soldiers expected to come home heroes but "received a rude awakening upon their return. Back home, many whites feared that African Americans would return demanding equality and would try to attain it by employing their military training. As the troops returned, there was an increase of racial tension" (para. 31). Race riots erupted in over twenty-five cities across America in 1919 and "more than eighty African Americans, some still in uniform, died at the hands of lynch mobs" (Wynn 12). According to the NAACP, 4,743 people were lynched between 1882 and 1968 in the United States; of these people that were lynched 3,446 were black (or 73%). The high numbers of African Americans lynched highlights that the white dominant society, which made promises of emancipation and equal citizenship, had no intention of keeping said promises.

Remembering what happened after WWI, many African Americans considered World War II a "white man's war." Nevertheless, many also saw what was happening in Germany as an opportunity to make connections between Nazi anti-Semitism and U.S. racial discrimination and segregation. Maria Höhn explains, "The rise of Nazism, which posed not only a threat to democracy, but was also ideologically grounded in racial inequality, provided the black press and civil-right advocates with a whole new arsenal to take on discrimination at home" (611). For example, a 1934 article in the *Philadelphia Tribune* states that the "persecution of the Jews in Germany by the Nazi government is deplorable, stupid, and outrageous. . . . the persecution of colored Americans by Americans is deplorable, stupid, and outrageous" (qtd in Höhn 611). Most African Americans felt that there was no difference between Nazi state-sanctioned violence and the mob violence of the South. Writing in *The Crisis*, Kate Stack questions what is the difference to a "murdered man—between the government sanctioning his murder by decree, or permitting his murder" by simply disregarding his humanity?

After the fall of France to Germany, many black Americans came around to supporting the struggle against Hitler. Höhn notes that "black leaders and the black press also understood that the war offered unprecedented opportunities to improve the lives of black Americans" (614). The NAACP reminded black Americans of Hitler's hateful language in *Mein Kampf,* stating, "If Hitler wins, every single right we now possess and for which we have struggled here in America for more than three centuries will be instantaneously wiped out by Hitler's triumphs. If the allies win, we shall at least have the right to continue fighting for a share of democracy for ourselves" ("Fight for Liberties"). But even as black American men acquiesced to the idea of participating in the war, they still faced discrimination in their efforts to serve and fight in the military. Wynn notes:

> [u]nbeknownst to the black population, the War Department had no plans to use African Americans, even if they wanted to serve. In the interwar period the army produced reports supposedly based on the experiences of World War I that confirmed the worst racial stereotypes: black officers were failures; black men lacked the intelligence and courage to make good combat soldiers. By the 1930s planners had determined that segregation was fundamental to efficient military organization and that African Americans should be confined largely to noncombat roles. (23)

The idea that black soldiers were inferior was still vastly present leading up to and throughout World War II. Stereotypes of black soldiers' unintelligence, laziness, and lack of courage dominated the narrative about them in the largely white U.S. military, mostly because they were not offered the same training and opportunities as white soldiers.

As the war continued, the U.S. military realized that they lacked manpower and started openly recruiting and drafting African Americans. The *Pittsburgh Courier* published a letter

from 26-year-old African American James G. Thompson on January 31, 1941, in which he asks, "Should I sacrifice to live 'half American'?" Thompson then urges "colored Americans [to] adopt the double VV for a double victory. The first V for victory over our enemies from without, the second V for victory over our enemies from within" (qtd in Wynn 40). From this letter, the *Pittsburgh Courier* launched the "Double V" campaign for victory abroad and at home, prompting black men to use their service in the military as a means to claim full citizenship and equality within the United States. However, even when combat roles in WWII were opened up to black soldiers, they still faced brutal discrimination and inequality. Wynn notes, "With generally white and often southern officers, African Americans were constantly addressed as 'boy' or 'nigger,' given menial jobs, passed over for promotion, and frequently humiliated. They were expected to follow the Jim Crow laws and accept the racial mores of the South without question, no matter where they came from" (46). Technically, African Americans have had the right of citizenship since 1866, but those rights have not been protected. In the 1940s, 80 years after gaining the right of citizenship, whites continued to find ways to demean and mock African American soldiers, and black men in the U.S. military could not get away from the epithets ("boy," "nigger") that had persisted since slavery.

Being repeatedly called "boy" by white men signals the inequality that black men faced. Whites did not see them as possessing any adult attributes (intelligence, work ethic, etc), and therefore called them "boy" to indicate that they would always be inferior—ignorant children at the hands of smarter, more powerful (white) adults. Explaining America's fascination with black forms of expression, Trevor B. Milton notes that in the beginning in the nineteenth century white actors dressed up in "Black face in order to act out the worst stereotypes of African American[s]" (18). These stereotypes "embodied the perceived intellectual inferiority, laziness, and gluttony of

African American[s]" (Milton 18). From the beginning of the United States, African Americans have not only been judged by their skin color, but also subjected to unfair representations of their personalities, and whites' stereotypes of blacks treated (and treats) a whole population of diverse individuals as one entity. Again and again, black men and women have been faced with stereotypes born out of centuries of institutionalized racial subjugation. The stereotypes of laziness and unintelligence continued through the twentieth century, which is why whites so often called black men "boy."

However, the unintelligent child is not the only stereotype black men faced. Paradoxically, whites also considered them as dangerous, uncontrollable beasts. Milton explains that after slavery and during the Reconstruction Era in America, working class whites promoted the stereotype of the "violent/rapacious Black male in order to justify the solidification of legal segregation in the 1890s. African American men were equated with animals: physically strong, sexually unrestrained, and intellectually inferior" (18). In *Black Masculinity: The Black Male's Role in American Society*, Robert Staples argues, "One needs a deep understanding of the importance of sex in the United States in order to see the interrelationship of sex and racism in American society. In a society where white sexuality has been repressed, the imagined sexual power of the black male poses a serious threat" (76). White Americans came to fear these supposed attributes of black men. Because black men bore this label of being animalistic and sexually unrestrained, that then led to white society fearing that black men would rape white women. However, Calvin Hernton asserts, "Symbolically, the Negro at once affirms and negates the white man's sense of sexual security. . . . Contrary to what is claimed, it is not the white woman who is dear to the racist. It is not even the black woman toward whom his real sexual rage is directed. It is the black man who is sacred to the racist. And this is why he must castrate

him" (111-112). The need for white men to assert their own superior sexuality and masculinity perpetuated the idea that free black men were more dangerous than slaves because they were free to roam about and find white women to rape. However, as Hernton states, this narrative was not really about protecting white women but white men's own fragile masculinity.

A large portion of lynching victims were black men accused of raping or attempting to rape white women. Often these black men were taken out of jail by white mobs and lynched without a trial, the white mobs simply taking the word of white women. Amy Louise Wood explains that whites

> believed that what African-American men really wanted was to engage in miscegenation, taking white women by force, the prospect of which threatened the entire edifice of white supremacy: the purity of the white race. The protection of white homes, white lives, and, above all, white purity from menacing "black beast" criminals became the primary justification for lynching. . . . The crime of rape, when committed by black men against white women, particularly horrified white southerners because it was considered an assault not only on white women's purity, but white men's authority to protect and control that purity; in other words, it was an attack on white masculine dominance. Lynching, to white men, was thus more than a legitimate response to crime; it was a patriarchal duty. (765)

African Americans were subject to attacks borne out of white hatred and fear, in large part because white society feared the loss of "white purity" and the decline of white masculinity. Many newspapers often did not use lynching victims' names, illustrating that it was unimportant who they were, merely that they were black and, therefore, guilty and needed to be lynched. One of the most famous cases is that of Emmett Till, particularly because the "rapacious black man"

was just a 14-year-old boy buying candy. Till was visiting family in Mississippi in August of 1955 and was accused of offending (possibly flirting with and whistling at, though accounts vary) 21-year-old Carolyn Bryant, the white married proprietor of a small grocery store. Bryant's husband, Roy, and his half-brother, J.W. Milam, abducted Till, beat and mutilated him, shot him in the head, and then sank his body in the Tallahatchie River. An all-white jury acquitted Bryant and Milam. Again, to the white population, Till was just a black boy and because of that was guilty. Those who were actually guilty of a crime, Bryant and Milam, received no punishment. The NAACP notes that from 1882 to 1968, 4,743 lynchings occurred in the United States and of those 3,445 were black—72.7% ("History of Lynchings"). Though it is not stated how many of the black lynching victims were accused of raping or attempting to rape white women, the disproportionate number illustrates the fear and loathing whites had of blacks. Jamelle Bouie notes, "Behind the myth of black rapists was an elemental fear of black autonomy, often expressed by white Southern leaders who unhesitatingly connected black political and economic power to sexual liaison with whites" (para. 4). Hence, lynching had become the ultimate public expression of white male dominance.

This white fear of black men raping, or having relationships with, white women, is portrayed in two World War II era novels by black authors: *If He Hollers Let Him Go* by Chester B. Himes and *Last of the Conquerors* by William Gardner Smith. Each of these novels illustrates the discrimination black men face at the hands of white Americans. In analyzing these novels, I argue that the black protagonists of these novels (Bob and Dawkins) desire to be seen as men and attempt to demonstrate their masculinity through their occupation and military service. However, whites continuously remove Bob's and Dawkins' agency, falsely accusing them of crimes they did not commit, relegating them to second-class citizens, and barring them from claiming

manhood. For the first 250 years in the United States, the legal status of African Americans was not even human—they were property. Slavery never allowed them to have a community, as it broke families up and isolated individuals. What we see in these texts then is not the kind of coalitional masculinity that we see in Japanese American texts because they were always isolated and always fighting for humanity. Herbert Sussman argues, "The African-American quest for manhood is essentially a quest to eradicate the effects of chattel slavery. In its practice in the Deep South, chattel slavery was designed to continue the system by eradicating any trace of manhood in the enslaved black man. As we have seen, in its varied forms, masculine identity depends on both an inner sense of self-worth and the validation of this self-being by society. Chattel servitude aimed at erasing this sense of self. Indeed, it systematically excluded black males from the very category of men" (101). Hence, black masculinity is closely tied with being human and reclaiming a self, as it is hard to articulate what makes one manly when one is barely human. Because of slavery, survival and fighting against dehumanization were the organizing impulses of African American culture. However, once African Americans are legally considered human (no longer property), black masculinity is always defined as deviant by white culture. I assert that in Himes' and Smith's novels, instead of being able to define what gender norms are for black male characters, black men are always on the defensive, defending their humanity and defending themselves against criminalization. Bob and Dawkins are only ever working toward more equality, not equality itself. Using W.E.B. Du Bois' concept of double consciousness and the veil, I illustrate that Bob and Dawkins have an uneasy relationship with America and white society because "African-American manhood is an unstable hybrid existing in a tension between integration and separatism" (Sussman 110). They desire to violently attack it as they have been attacked, but also want some "validation of this self-being by society." They ultimately decide

they are in a no-win situation. Instead, the trauma they experience because of racial oppression is, to borrow from Freud, manifested in their dreams, and, ultimately, those dreams reflect outcomes they cannot control because of the unequal power dynamic of white over black, which continuously pulls them away from establishing and demonstrating their black masculinity.

Black Men and White Women: If He Hollers Let Him Go *and Black/White Relationships in America*

If He Hollers Let Him Go tells the story of Robert "Bob" Jones, a black crew leader in a naval shipyard in Los Angeles, an occupation that has earned him an army deferment. Bob thinks he was promoted as a supervisor only to gain the cooperation of black workers in the war effort. He cannot escape the pressures of racism and is forced to deal with resentment from whites on the floor working the same job and the baiting of black workers by some white women. Jennifer C. James argues that Himes "has Bob vacillate between feeling as though he were at the complete mercy of the white world . . . yet experiencing surges of aggression that offer him momentary feelings of power" (191). His fear of powerlessness often invades his dreams, but he also contemplates fighting, killing, and raping as a way to overcome his resentment of white power.

Bob's dealings with his white coworkers illustrate how society is defined by racial supremacy, even as race, like gender, can be performed different ways. No two people perform their gender exactly the same, and no two people perform (or take advantage of) their race in the same way. Bob observes wryly that "the white folks had sure brought their white to work with them that morning" (15) and later wonders "how it was you could take two white guys from the same place—one would carry his whiteness like a loaded stick, ready to bop everybody in the

head with it; and the other would just simply be white as if he didn't have anything to do with it" (41). Stephanie Brown observes that these statements "neatly encapsulat[e] his view of whiteness as a series of behaviors rather than an essential quality. Although Himes implies that whites in a society defined by white race hegemony have the option of 'bringing their white with them' or ignoring it, in practice, Jones's experiences demonstrate that racial difference is an insuperable divide between individuals, dictating even benign interactions" (51). Even as Bob tries to find ways to express his masculinity, typically with outbursts of anger in an attempt to defend his own humanity or demonstrations of strength, he is continuously challenged by white society or his own fear of what will happen to him because he is black.

Many of the conflicts Bob encounters are because whites "carry their whiteness like a loaded stick," indicating their superior standing and lack of fear. Early on in the novel, Bob requires the assistance of a coworker and a white crew leader tells him to ask Madge, a white woman. She is hostile toward him and says she "ain't gonna work with no nigger!" (33). He immediately reacts, telling her, "Screw you then, you cracker bitch!" (33). Madge reports Bob to his supervisor, Mr. MacDougal ("Mac"), who berates Bob for cursing a woman. Itagaki notes that Madge is, "[c]ognizant of the racial, class, and gender forces at play, [and] manipulates the reactions of her white coworkers and supervisors by performing an approximation of feminine fear and outraged sensibility in being forced to interact with black workers" (75). When Bob informs Mac that Madge called him a nigger, Mac claims that those in authority need to learn to keep their temper. But as the narration continues, it seems clear that Mac's berating of Bob highlights the company's double standard: it is okay for a white woman to refuse to work with a black man and throw racial slurs at him, but it is not okay for a black man to retaliate or defend himself with similar language. Mac gets increasingly annoyed at Bob during their discussion,

and Bob recounts Mac's final words to him: "'I'm not going to have you or any other colored boy in this department who can't maintain a courteous and respectful manner toward the white men and women you have to work with.' His voice shook with anger. He unhooked his hands and shook his fist at me, 'I'm not going to have it, goddamnit, that's all!'" (36). Mac calls all the African American men "colored boys," illustrating that he sees them as less than men, returning to the idea that even if black men might be considered human, they are considered children; they are rarely allowed to be men. Mac, however, refers to white males as "men," showing that he has a higher esteem for whites—they are men simply because they are white. His outburst also shows that white bosses expected black workers to be subservient to white workers, an attitude leftover from the expectation of how black slaves were meant to act toward their white owners, and Mac demotes Bob. Bob's job as a crew leader had the possibility of allowing him an affordance of masculinity as it gives him some form of respect or prestige and enough money for him to be independent. However, his act of defending his own humanity (railing against being called "nigger") is seen as deviant, a threat to white society and superiority, and he loses his job and with it any attempt he could make at being seen as a man. His loss of position also results in him losing his army deferment. So not only is he not treated fairly at work and not seen as equal, he is also threatened with war and the possibility of dying at the hands have a country that does not consider him human.

How Bob is treated as a black man working with a white boss and white coworkers is a representation of how black Americans are treated as a whole by white Americans in the 1940s and the social climate of the time. Bob is angry, foulmouthed, and violent not only because he is discriminated against at work, but because he is discriminated against everywhere he goes. He uses his temper as a type of protection because, as revealed in some of his musings, what he

really feels is fear. To make matters worse after the incident with Madge, Bob's white coworkers accuse him of cheating at a dice game and refuse to pay him the money he has won. A fight arises and one of his white coworkers, John Stoddart, knocks Bob out. When Bob comes to, he grips his knife, searching for Stoddart and envisioning himself brutally attacking him: "stabbing him in the back, trying to get his heart," and "slashing him across the face, cutting out his eyes and slashing up his mouth" (42). Bob resolves not to do this at work, ultimately thinking, "It was then I decided to murder him cold-bloodedly, without giving him a chance. . . . I wanted to kill him so he'd know I was killing him and in such a way that he'd know he didn't have a chance. I wanted him to feel as scared and powerless and unprotected as I felt every goddamned morning I woke up" (43). Joseph Darda argues, "In light of his decision to kill a white coworker, Bob identifies with the war effort and thereby channels its violent form of militarized nationalism" (161). Bob's beef with Stoddart is not only that he accused him of cheating and knocked him out, but also that as a white man he does not have to live the life of fear and inferiority that Bob does. Bob's desire to kill Stoddart is one of personal retribution but also one of retribution on a larger scale—reacting to the inequality of the black/white hierarchy in which whites will always have the upper hand, and in which whites will never have to "prove" their humanity.

This inequality is often divulged to the reader through Bob's dreams, as Bob's dreams act as an entry into his subconscious and fear. Two of Bob's dreams at the beginning of chapter one are about confrontations between white and black men. In one dream Bob was "working in a war plant where a white fellow named Frankie Childs had been killed and the police were there trying to find out who did it" (1-2). The police say that they have to "find a big tall man with strong arms, big hands, and a crippled leg" and then proceed to call in the "colored fellows" for questioning (2). The wording here is telling. The perpetrator is described as a big man with a

crippled leg, but nowhere is it mentioned that he is a black man. Yet the (white) police assume that the guilty party must be a "colored fellow." Right after that, Bob dreams that he was asking two white men for a job who looked like they didn't want to give him the job but "didn't want to say so outright" (2). They ask him if he has his tools, and when he says he does not but can do the job anyway, "[t]hey began laughing at me, scornfully and derisively" (2). Bob thinks, "I didn't mind their not giving me the job, but their laughing at me hurt. I felt small and humiliated and desperate, looking at the two big white men laughing at me" (2). These dreams at the start of the novel reveal Bob's anxiety about the unequal distribution of power in relationships between whites and blacks. His anxieties are based in social realities, illustrating the world of racism that Bob inhabits, and "Bob is further haunted by the knowledge that white society will attack an entire ethnic enclave at the merest hint of potentially transgressive relations between the races" (Itagaki 69). White society continually makes Bob feel "small and humiliated and desperate," which in turn causes him to feel like he cannot demonstrate his masculinity. When Bob feels like this, it is because whites are behaving according to the infantilizing "colored boy" script. However, when Bob does attempt to demonstrate his masculinity (or humanity) by responding to Madge in linguistic kind to her racial slur in order to defend himself, Mac and Madge (and most likely the other white workers) see him as uppity, disrespectful, and dangerous because he is black. At any moment, a white person can flip the script of the interaction, and it is this ability to control the discourse that illustrates the unequal power dynamic.

The dreams that Bob has throughout the novel reveal the trauma he faces at the hand of racial oppression and his feelings of helplessness. Robert T. Carter notes that for people of color ongoing fear of racist encounters may lead to continuous watchfulness or even paranoia, which over time may result in traumatization or contribute to PTSD when a larger stressor later occurs

(23). Freud explains trauma is often manifested through dreams, stating that "the dreams of patients suffering from traumatic neuroses lead them back with…regularity to the situation in which the trauma occurred. . . . These dreams are endeavouring to master the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis" (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 26). In other words, individuals who have experienced trauma are doomed to repeat it subconsciously in dreams in an attempt to change it. However, trauma is inescapable, and the body ends up perpetuating its own trauma while attempting to break out of the cycle. The trauma of racial oppression is inescapable because racism is systemic, and one cannot break from the system. In discussing how the tendency to stay fixated on the trauma is biologically based, Freud states, "After severe shock … the dream life continually takes the patient back to the situation of his disaster from which he awakens with renewed terror…the patient has undergone a physical fixation to the trauma" (*Introduction* 207).

Bob experiences both physical violence and is continuously faced with blatant racial aggressions: Madge calling him a nigger, being demoted, being called a cheater. All of these things add up to the trauma of how he is treated as a black man in America, and he repeats that trauma through his dreams. For example, at the beginning of chapter nine, Bob dreams that he was being beaten with rubber hoses by two white men. He was sore and vomiting and kept trying to get up but could not. When the two white men would stop a "hard cultured voice said peremptorily, 'Continue! I will tell you when to stop' (82). The voice was that of the "president of the shipyard corporation dressed in the uniform of an Army general and he had a cigar in one side of his mouth and his eyes were calm and undisturbed" (82). When one of the white men said that he didn't think the "nigger" could take much more, the president replied, "Niggers can take it as long as you give it to them" (82). Bob looked around and saw two policemen nudging each

other and laughing. When the other white man said, "It ain't right to beat this nigger like that. What we beating this nigger for anyway?" the president merely shouted, "Continue! It's an order!" (82-83). This dream highlights the racial bigotry Bob faces both on the job and in connection with the U.S. military. Even though one of the white men who is beating him questions why, wondering what Bob has done, no clear answer is given. The president just states that it is an order. Obviously, Bob has done nothing wrong; he is being beaten because he is black, just as he was punished for cursing at Madge because he is black. The laughing police of the previous dream symbolize the corruption of the system as they stand by and do nothing to help, an accurate representation of the police at the time who often did not help people of color or were often themselves the culprits of violence against people of color[6]. The fact that the shipyard president is in an Army general's uniform symbolizes the discrimination and inequity that black men faced in the armed services. The U.S. military was still segregated, but black servicemen were most often led by white officers who looked down on them and did not treat them fairly. Prominent black leaders promoted the Double V campaign during World War II, because they realized that black Americans were not just fighting national enemies; they were also fighting for their own humanity, subjectivity, and agency. Bob fights a war against inequality and racism in America and on the job. In addition, black servicemen fought against inequality and segregation in the military while fighting a war against fascism and racism. The paradox is striking.

Repeatedly, whites take away or injure Bob's agency and pride because of his race. In a country known for its independence, individual independence is often touted as a marker of

[6] Karl E. Johnson notes, "African American conflicts with white law enforcement officials were a persistent problem throughout most of the 20th century, and in the post-World War II era volatile incidents involving African American residents and white police officers were common and often made newspaper headlines" (118). Indeed, white police brutality against African Americans has been a continuing problem into the 21st century as seen in recent shootings of Philandro Castile, Walter L. Scott, and many others by white officers.

manhood. However, Bob does not have that privilege because white society will not allow him independence. Similar instances would most likely not have happened if Bob were white; Madge would not have refused to work with him, and therefore Bob would not have felt the need to snap back at her, and white coworkers would probably not have accused him of cheating at dice. Or if they had accused him of cheating, the consensus would have been that he had every right to fight and defend himself. However, because Bob is black he does not have that right in white society. Bob wants to be seen as an equal human, but is most often dehumanized and demoralized by the reality of white power. His powerlessness leads to wanting to enact violence, in effect legitimizing the stereotypes that many whites had of violent, animalistic black men. And yet, Bob does not fit the stereotype because he never actually acts on his desires; he only imagines them. He gives up his plan to kill Stoddart, because he decides to focus his revenge on Madge instead. His white coworker, Don, gives Bob Madge's address so Bob can "cure her," a euphemism Don uses for rape (143). Bob thinks, "I wanted to tell him I didn't want to go to bed with her . . . but just the idea of her being a white woman stopped me. I felt flustered, caught, guilty. I couldn't realize what was happening to me, myself. It was funny in a way. I couldn't tell him I *didn't* want her because she was a white woman and he was a white man, and something somewhere way back in my mind said that would be an insult. And I couldn't tell him that I *did* want her, because the same thing said that would be an insult too," (144). Bob is angry at Madge, but does not actually want her sexually; rather, he longs to have control over her and make her be afraid in the same way he is afraid. However, as a black man he feels caught in a dilemma when a white man urges him to "teach her a lesson," or in other words, to sexually assault her. Staples asserts, "Sex role identity is crucial to a person's values, life-style and personality. Black men have always had to confront the contradiction between the normative expectations attached to

being male in this society and the proscriptions on their behavior. . . . [Black men are] subjected to societal opprobrium for failing to live up to standards of manhood on the one hand and for being super macho on the other. It is a classical case of 'be damned if you do and damned if you don't'" (2). This is precisely the quandary Bob is faced with, as Don expects him to live up to some sort of black macho stereotype, but living up to that stereotype puts him in grave danger. In contrast, the white men in the novel never express fear when it comes to sexual relationships; there is the idea that they can sleep with whoever they want.

Though Bob does not desire Madge sexually, what he does desire is to enact his anger against whiteness in general, because it is whiteness that causes him to feel powerless and less than human. He muses:

> So it wasn't that Madge was white; it was the way she used it. She had a sign up in front of her as big as Civic Center—KEEP AWAY, NIGGERS, I'M WHITE! And without having to say one word she could keep all the white men in the world feeling they had to protect her from black rapists. That made her doubly dangerous because she thought about Negro men. . . . She wanted them to run after her. She expected it, demanded it as her due. I could imagine her teasing them with her body, showing her bare thighs and breasts. Then having them lynched for looking.
>
> And that was what scared me. Luring me with her body and daring me with her color. It ate into me, made me want her for her color, not her body. . . . I felt castrated, snake-bellied, and cur-doggish. I felt like a nigger being horsewhipped in Georgia. Cheap, dirty, low. . . . The taste of white folks was in my mouth and I couldn't get it out. What I ought to do is rape her, I thought. That's what she wanted. (152-153)

Even though Bob does not want her body, he does want some form of power. Staples maintains, "Denied equal access to the prosaic symbols of manhood, [black men] manifest their masculinity in the most extreme form of sexual domination. When they have been unable to achieve status in the workplace, they have exercised the privilege of manliness and attempted to achieve it in the bedroom" (85). Bob has been denied, or rather stripped of, status in the workplace because of Madge; thus, he imagines that he can achieve a status of masculinity in her bedroom through sexual domination. Her body does not attract him, but what she represents as a white woman does. James notes that the "very crime through which Madge can exercise control over Bob's body by simply making an accusation, also becomes the means through which he can exert control over her body by destroying her sexual agency. The risk-reward factor in this particular desire to rape becomes then an act akin to going into battle, where the possibility of both killing and dying exists simultaneously; and within the context of war, either alternative translates into a glorious expression of masculinity" (194-195). Conceivably, because Bob is not allowed to demonstrate his masculinity through other avenues, he sees rape as a way to claim it. Facing the danger of being caught raping a white woman makes him manly in the same way facing the danger of a war battle does. Bob ends up going over to Madge's place because he comes to the "conclusion that to recover his masculinity he must rape [Madge]" (James 192). Once again, this decision is because of a personal vendetta (she reported him and got him demoted), but also as a way to get back at white America, as he sees her as a symbol of whiteness. Madge at first tells him to leave and threatens to call the police, but eventually allows Bob into her room. She taunts Bob, telling him, "That's all you niggers do. Lie up and get drunk and dream of having white women," and then opens her robe, showing him her naked body, and saying, "Ain't I beautiful. Pure white" (177). Madge's spoken jabs prove the depths to which stereotypes about black men

are engrained: that they are lazy drunkards whose sole longing is to have sex with white women. Madge uses her white naked body as a form of dominance over Bob; she knows that her word will be trusted over his because of her whiteness. She equates her "pure white" skin to beauty; however, what she is actually revealing is not her beauty but her power, and power is what Bob does consider beautiful and desirable.

Bob's yearning to have control over white society parallels his need to control Madge. Ultimately, his visit to Madge's place results in a power struggle, and when he eventually forces her to the ground, she stops struggling and baits him, saying, "I dare you to, nigger. Just go 'head. I'll get you lynched right here in California" (177). Instead of being afraid of Bob, Madge illustrates that she is the one in control of the situation because of their races. She tries to awkwardly seduce Bob, indicating that she wants him sexually, but when he acts on her advances, she responds, "All right, rape me then, nigger!" (179). James explains that through the construct of society, Madge "responds as though being raped" because she has been "informed that interracial sex between a black man and white woman can only be conceived of as assault" (195-196). Madge wants Bob sexually, which is something he could count as a marker of masculinity (a notch in his belt so to speak) that correlates with the heteronormative ideal of the time; however, as a white women she does not allow herself to express her longing. Despite the fact that she desires a black man, she feels the need to distance herself from him and elevate herself, because that is what society has deemed is appropriate. However, Bob "let her loose and bounced to [his] feet" (179). He thinks, "*Rape*—just the sound of the word scared me, took everything out of me, my desire, my determination, my whole build-up. I was taut, poised, ready to light out and run a crooked mile. The only thing she had to do to make me stop was just say the word" (179). Though Bob desires to have control over Madge, and in essence all white

America, he realizes that he cannot. The powerlessness he feels throughout the book at the inability to change his situation again rears its head in this instance with Madge. Even though he technically has physical control over her when he forces her to the ground, he realizes that she has the definitive control because she has the power to send him to jail or worse. Her ability to do so has the possibility of making him less than human because his is threatened with becoming either a criminal or a corpse. He leaves Madge's place without raping her, afraid at what would become of him if he did.

Madge's position as a white woman allows her to have control over Bob because he is a black man, and by extension she is able to limit how he performs his masculinity. The tension between Madge and Bob culminates on the job. Bob goes to scope out work that needs to be done and comes across Madge sleeping in one of the ship's cabins. Bob quickly realizes that he needs to get away from her, but she closes the door, trapping him. Bob tells Madge, "Look, baby, I don't want you. I don't want no part of you, that's final" (218). She retorts that he is a liar; she is put out that he, a black man, is refusing her, a white woman. When two men pass by the cabin wondering why it is locked, Madge and Bob seem panicked. They both realize that they are in a compromising position, being alone in a locked room. Bob decides to speak and tell the men that he will open the door, but Madge knocks him down and shouts, *"Help! Help! My God, help me! Some white man, help me! I'm being raped. . . . Stop, nigger! Don't, nigger! Nigger, don't! Oh, please don't kill me, nigger . . . ."* (219-220). Bob's earlier thought that all Madge would have to do is say one word and white men would come running to save her from black rapists has come true. Even though he considered raping Madge as a type of payback, as a way to assert his masculinity, he ultimately decides against it because he knows the consequences would be too great. However, Bob cannot seem to win in this situation with Madge. He does not want her

body, and therefore rejects her, not succumbing to the temptation to rape her as a way to rail against her whiteness. Yet because he refuses her, her pride is injured; as a white woman she has the power to accuse him even though he has not raped her. Itagaki points out that "Madge metaphorically separate[s] Bob from his 'manhood' as an insurmountable geographical barrier" (75). In essence, Madge strips Bob of his masculinity even further because she strips him of his agency.

Though Bob is innocent, no one believes him and he is subjected to the injustice of the American justice system. He is beaten by his white coworkers and then arrested. As he sits in jail he thinks about how when he was trapped in the room with Madge, he was

> scared of the mob; scared of the violence; just scared because I was black and she was white; a trapped, cornered, physical fear. But now I was scared in a different way. Not of the violence. Not of the mob. Not of physical hurt. But of America, of American justice. The jury and the judge. The people themselves. Of the inexorability of one conclusion—that I was guilty. In that one brief flash I could see myself trying to prove my innocence and nobody believing it. A white woman yelling, "Rape," and a Negro caught locked in the room. The whole structure of American thought was against me; American tradition had convicted me a hundred years before, and standing there in an American courtroom, through all the phony formality of an American trial, having to take it, knowing that I was innocent and that I didn't have a chance. (228-229)

Madge's accusation makes Bob what white America has always seen black men as, a rapacious beast. Not only is he further distanced from claiming his manhood, he now cannot even claim his humanity. Bob is aware of the inequality of the American justice system. He knows he will be found guilty even though he is innocent because of the systemic racism that has plagued America

from the very beginning. Though Bob is a "free man" he cannot be free of a system that sees only his skin color, and because of that skin color, his guilt. A few pages later in the novel, Bob has another dream, this time of an encounter with a white American marine who brags, "Hell, I've raped all kinda of women, white women, black women, yellow women, and the only reason I ain't raped no green women is 'cause I couldn't find none. I done killed all kinda sonabitches raped all kinda women – see these, the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, the Presidential Memorial Citation, even a Good Conduct Medal. I got these for killing a lot of sonabitches I ain't even seen until after they was dead" (243-244). Bob's dream indicates the juxtaposition between the discrimination that black men face even when they are innocent and the horrendous acts that white men (and the government run by white men) commit but are never punished for. The Marine's medals indicate that he is even praised for his acts. James notes that Bob "believes that if anyone is guilty of 'rape,' it is a nation that has historically practiced and rewarded violence as a matter of course" (190). It is of particular importance that the white man in Bob's dream is in military uniform as America is embroiled in WWII, illustrating how white men only have to fight in one war, the actual physical war in Europe and the Pacific, while black men have to face a double war of discrimination and injustice *and* the physical war.

Later, the judge offers Bob two options, jail or the army, an echoing of the same situation that occurred with young Japanese American men who were given the choice of enlisting or being put in prison. In fact, in the first pages of the novel, Bob explains that before the war he knew that "[r]ace was a handicap. . . . But hell, I didn't have to marry it" (3). Part of his fear stems from the Japanese Americans being sent away after Pearl Harbor, locked up "without a chance. Without a trial. Without a charge. Without even giving [them] a chance to say one word" (4). He muses, "I was the same color as the Japanese and I couldn't tell the difference. 'A yeller-

bellied Jap' coulda meant me too. I could always feel race trouble, serious, trouble, never more than two feet off. Nobody bothered me. Nobody said a word. But I was tensed every moment to spring" (4-5). Bob equates himself with Japanese Americans because he recognizes that people who are non-white in America will always be lumped together and considered below white society. This is evident during Bob's "trial" as well, because two Mexican American men are offered the same option, jail or the army. Darda explains, "The 'break' Judge Morgan offers Bob—and, it seems, the two Mexican Americans as well—reflects a telling continuity between incarceration and conscription. These are, for racialized subjects, zones of political exclusion in which rights can be withheld without a chance, trial, or charge" (170). Therefore, Bob's race, as well as the race of Japanese Americans and Mexican Americans, is a "handicap" in American society, but it also creates forms of interracial solidarity. However, Bob is most often alone and isolated. He does not have the same type of community that Japanese Americans have, and even the two Mexican Americans have each other. Bob is separated from everyone, again pointing to how, in this novel, there is not form of coalitional masculinity for black men.

When Bob hears his options from the judge, he realizes that authorities doubtless grilled Madge enough to learn the truth. However, despite knowing that Bob is innocent, the judge (and by extension all white society) will not let him go. Bob contemplates, "[The judge's] conscience bothered him too much for him to let me take a strictly bum rap, but he'd never come right out and say it; he'd cover for her till hell froze over and make himself believe that he was doing it for the best. But I didn't care how he played it—I was beat" (247). The white judge will protect the white woman because that is the status quo. Bob has not done anything wrong other than being black and showing his anger. However, if he were white no one would question him showing anger; it would be taken as a matter of course. Staples argues, "The racist fabric of white

America denies blacks a basic humanity, which permits the violation of their right to equal justice under the law. In America the right to justice is an inalienable right; but for blacks it is still a privilege to be granted at the caprice and goodwill of whites, who control the machinery of the legal system and the agents of social control" (40). This is exactly what is happening to Bob. Despite his innocence, he is dehumanized and treated as a black beast, so the white woman can save face, and it is only through the "goodwill" of the white judge is he offered two choices. The judge asks Bob, "If I let you join the armed forces—any branch you want—will you give me your word you'll stay away from white women and keep out of trouble?" (248). To this question Bob thinks, "I wanted to just break out and laugh like the Marine in my dream, laugh and keep on laughing. 'Cause all I ever wanted was just a little thing—just to be a man. But I kept a straight face, got the words through my oversized lips, 'Yes sir, I promise'" (248). At its core the novel is the story of a black man who wants to be seen as a man. But because of the social climate of America in the 1940s he cannot claim his masculinity. Instead he is belittled and humiliated at work and then wrongly convicted. Itagaki posits that "there is no safe place that will protect [Bob] from racial violence. Instead, isolated and criminalized, he is ultimately drafted into the American military, a rigid microcosm of American society in the extraterritorial, extranational space of war" (66). Bob attempts to fight against the war at home—the war of racism and inequality—but realizes that he cannot win that war. And because he cannot win the war at home, he is then forced to fight the war abroad, ironically a war against racism, for he is numbered just another black body in the throng of the American military machine.

Black Men and White Women: Last of the Conquerors *and Black/White Relationships in Post-war Germany*

William Gardner Smith's novel *Last of the Conquerors* is set in post-Nazi, U.S. military-

occupied Berlin and tells the "story of a troop of African American men who explore their attitudes about racism within one context, the American military, which is superimposed upon another—post-Nazi Germany" (James 201). The protagonist, Hayes Dawkins, and his fellow black soldiers enter into relationships with white German women and struggle against racist American Army officers and policies to sustain relationships that many white soldiers condemn. However, white Germans seem to not have a problem with the interracial couples and even offer to help them. Although the depiction of a post-Nazi Germany that is more racially tolerant than the United States may or may not be accurate, I argue that Smith is offering a critique of the rhetoric that claimed American society should be a model for the world, while African Americans still suffered from racism, segregation, and Jim Crow laws back home and in the military. In addition, I illustrate how the location of Germany and Dawkins' romantic relationship allows him to claim a manhood that is denied him in his own country.

Smith highlights and contrasts how the black soldiers are treated in the United States and how they are treated in post-war Berlin. Brown argues that Smith uses Berlin in a "deliberately utopian vision in which African Americans lead the way toward a future that is not 'raceless' but rather free of outmoded, reified notions of racial difference. . . . [Berlin] emerges not as a battlefield or even as a postwar zone but as a multicultural urban space with a vexed relationship with both its recent Nazi past and the rest of Germany" (104-105). Therefore, Berlin becomes a space of freedom and expression for the black soldiers in the novel. Several of the characters in the novel note that they do not wish to return to the U.S. after they are discharged from the military because they recognize that they will be returning to a far more hostile environment. One soldier, Murdock, breaks down the night before being sent home, stating, "I don't want to go home. . . . I can't leave this place. I can't. I don't want to go back there again. I swear I don't.

I don't never want to go back" (67). He originally claims to be from Chicago, a northern city that appears more racially equal. He later confesses that he is not actually from Chicago, but from Georgia where he lived in "white folks' country" and could only go back to digging ditches. He continues, "I like this goddamn country, you know that? That's right. I like the hell out of it. It's the first place I was ever treated like a goddamn man. . . . I know what it is to walk into any place, any place, without worrying about whether they serve colored. . . . You know what the hell I learned? That a nigger ain't no different from nobody else. I had to come over here and let the Nazis teach me that. They don't teach that stuff back in the land of the free" (67-68). Murdock does not want to return to "the land of the free" because, clearly, for him and other African Americans, it is not a free land. The racial codes of America still bind them. Murdock points out that he feels like a man for the first time in Germany, the implication being that in the States they are treated less than human. Keith Mitchell notes that Murdock's "dread of possibly having to return 'home' to the South is a damning indictment of American racial prejudice and its psychological effect on African Americans" (36). Murdock wants to be seen as a man, but cannot achieve a feeling of manhood while in the United States. Ironically, Murdock feels like a man for the first time in Germany, a country the U.S. fought against because of its racial cleansing.

Another character, Homo, decides to disappear into Berlin's Russian Zone before being shipped out, effectively cutting himself off from everything back home—his family, girlfriend, and citizenship. When another soldier, Randy, asks him what he will do for work, Homo replies that he can drive a truck, work on a farm, be a mechanic, or even dig ditches. Randy exclaims that Homo could do those things in the States, but Homo responds, "I know. But the feeling inside wouldn't be the same. Maybe I'm a queer guy. I don't know. I don't mind doing nothing

as long as I got the right feeling about it inside of me. See, if I dig ditches over here it'll mean that there just ain't no other jobs of my type open—for nobody, white or colored. It won't be because of my skin. And if I know that, I feel okay inside. Then I'm all right. That sounds crazy, don't it? But it's the way I am" (108). Homo's comments indicate that even though the work and economic prospects in post-war Germany are far from ideal, the racial relationships seem superior to him. He feels like an equal in Germany, or like a true human, a feeling he could not attain in the States because of the racial tensions and constructs that keep him down merely for his skin color. In the United States, they are only ever working towards more equality, not equality itself. The Professor makes a statement toward the end of the novel that summarizes the men's sentiment: "I'll always remember the irony of my going away to Germany to find democracy. That's bad" (257).

Much of the democracy and feelings of equality the African American soldiers encounter occurs in Berlin. The city is a type of haven, where for the first time the black soldiers feel they can roam about freely, without being stared at or questioned. Though their commanding officers are white, they treat the black soldiers fairly and impartially. Smith himself served in Germany from 1947-1948, and in an interview with the *New York Post* in 1959 acknowledged that the racial landscape in Germany after the war was much more complex than the one he had portrayed in *Last of the Conquerors*. He recalls that Germans were "no angels" and that "they were racist, but we were conquerors and the look in their eyes was respect." He goes on to explain why service in post-war Germany was such a transformative experience for black GIs: "Do you know what it's like for a Negro to be among the 'conquerors' instead of the defeated? We learned about it for the first time when we 'occupied' Germany and none of us ever got over it. We will never go back to the old way again. It was the first time we had even gotten out of the

social nightmare in the United States and were in a situation where we were equals, in fact more equal than the Germans" (qtd in Höhn 619-620). Because African American soldiers were part of the entity (the U.S. military) that defeated Germany, they were conquerors. Smith posits that they felt "more than equal." However, the idea of conquering is not parallel to equality for conquering means that someone is above someone else. The soldiers in the U.S military were the victors and, therefore, the ones with power and above German citizens in the social hierarchy. This included African American soldiers, and they were treated as victors by Germans. In fact, many Germans looked at American soldiers as saviors from the horrible treatment of the Russians. The Russians' treatment of German POWs during the war and of German citizens after the war was considered nothing short of barbaric. Therefore, black American soldiers were seen as part of a collective of soldiers that had "saved" Germans from Russian occupation. Yet this is weirdly at odds with their experience as U.S. citizens or with any of their other experiences in the military. This feeling of "being more than equal" allows black American soldiers in the novel to feel like humans and men because it was the first time they were afforded any sort of respect or deference. Though some Germans are not without prejudice, the fact that the black soldiers are part of the American army—the conquering and saving entity—allows them to be seen with respect.

It is also in Berlin that the black soldiers in the novel start relationships with white German women. Dawkins meets Ilse who is working at the army base, and one of their first conversations is about whether she likes Americans and if he likes Germans. When he responds that he does not know yet, because he has not known any Germans, she responds that there are Germans in America. Dawkins muses, "I could have told her that when Germans come to America they are no longer German but American, and, being American, and white, they would

be in one corner and I in another with a concrete wall in between" (31). Dawkins' thoughts highlight the disparity between blacks and whites in the U.S. Though he was born and raised in the United States, he still does not feel wholly American, while German immigrants become American because they are white. German Americans can escape the negative aspects of twoness because their race allows them to blend into the white backdrop of America. Dawkins, on the other hand, is forever confronted by his twoness because he is black, and white society will not allow him to coalesce his twoness (black and American) into something positive. After this conversation, Ilse and Dawkins head to the club together and when "the streetcar came, we got aboard and I looked about me at the Germans on the car, who did not seem to notice us" (32). Though it could be argued that the Germans on the streetcar are avoiding any contact with Dawkins or are hiding their disdain at the interracial couple, what Dawkins observes is their lack of interest. But also important is that he is not threatened with violence or arrest because he is with a white woman, again illustrating that the Germans see him as a conqueror—he is "more than equal." The fact that he is not bothered because he is a black man with a white woman is an experience wholly different from what would have happened in the U.S.

This ideal of a world without a color line in Germany made its way into the African-American press during the 1940s. Civil-rights activists who traveled to Germany between 1945 and 1950 helped craft a positive image of Germany. For example, Marcus Ray, a civilian aide to the Secretary of War, reported to President Truman in 1946 that he observed "no carry over of Nazi racial ideologies against the American Negro soldier" and that the "expected difficulties have not materialized" (qtd in Natly 217). *The Chicago Defender* reported on Ray's visit, writing, "Ray revealed that Negroes were accepted by the native populations on the same basis as whites and that there was no problem whatsoever, as far as the people themselves were

concerned" ("Ray defends GIs"). Walter White, then president of the NAACP, also wrote positively in 1946 about the treatment of black soldiers in Germany, noting that in a poll taken among black GIs, the soldiers were extended "more genuine friendship and democracy by the people but lately were the guinea pigs of Hitler's racial theories, than they get in the 'democracy' which had won the shooting war" (White). These historical perceptions of the treatment of black soldiers in Germany are reflected in Smith's characters, who feel the same way.

Yet, despite feeling more at ease in Germany, the black soldiers have complicated feelings toward their homeland. At the club, Randy, a black soldier who served in WWII and unequivocally states he hates Germans because of the atrocities they committed, gets in an argument with one of the German girls. She defends her countrymen who did not follow Hitler and tells Randy, "How can you talk? What about the white Americans? In your country you may not walk down the street with a white woman. The white Americans hang you from trees if you do . . . . You know it is true. It was in the German newspapers many times before the war and during the war. You fight for America but it is not your country. They do not want you there" (35). Though the black soldiers know that what she says is true, they do not like to hear it coming from her. Randy acts defensively and is belligerent toward the German girl, upset at the truth she speaks. Dawkins thinks, "It was strange. Randy and I had said the same things about the States that this girl had, only it was different. Something like a family life that was not so good: you might damn it to hell yourself, but you don't want any outsiders sticking their noses in" (37). Dawkins and the other black soldiers have an uneasy relationship with America. They know that their situation as African American citizens in the United States is precarious, but to hear an outsider state the same facts makes them chafe. They are upset that someone who has not suffered the same oppression is using it against them. Their reaction to the German girl's speech

depicts Du Bois' concept of double-consciousness and the veil. The African American soldiers are "always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body" (13). Du Bois explains that African Americans live in this world of two-ness because white Americans lack clarity to see blacks as true Americans (a veil that hangs between the races), and because black Americans lack the clarity to see themselves outside of how white America defines them. In this incident with the German girl, they feel their twoness even more acutely because she, an outsider, sees how white America defines them (as "Negros"), and even though they know what she says is true, they cannot help but feel defensive because they are also American. Mitchell argues that the relationship African Americans have with America "epitomizes the paradox of a perhaps misplaced loyalty to America that has always been a feature of African American psychology. African Americans generally see themselves as Americans, but are not always regarded quite so by the larger society" (35). This uneasy relationship the black soldiers in *Last of the Conquerors* have with America, feeling like they are American but not wanting to return to America, allows them to view Germany in a more favorable light. They experience freedom from the racial codes that bind them so tightly in the United States.

One reason for this feeling of freedom they enjoy in Berlin is because they are permitted to date and have love affairs with white women without being questioned or punished. In fact, it is often the white German women who pursue the black soldiers. However, Randy claims that the German women are making fools out of the black soldiers because the women "play you for all they can get while you're here and then as soon as you go they just get another soldier and

play him the same way. . . . I'll bet you give your girl all your cigarettes every week" (60). The relationships between the German women and black soldiers can be seen as problematic because it plays into the stereotype that black men's biggest desire is to have sex with white women and "that the black male is forever in search of his denied masculinity in the white female body" (James 207). The relationships also feed the stereotype of American soldiers "chasing dames," i.e. finding any way to have sex with women, and highlights the heteronormativity of the military. Additionally, James points out that these relationships are also complicated because the American occupation of Germany was as much about economic issues as it was political purposes. For instance, at one point in the novel Hayes describes two women who are already dating other men as "occupied chicks" (131). James posits, "The territorializing of German women's bodies inherent in this phrase places their relationship with black soldiers within a complex system of compliance and dependency fostered under American military governance" (204). In other words, German women defer to black soldiers because they are the "conquerors," the ones with power, authority, and financial stability. Additionally, German women also dated black American soldiers as a way to react against their parents' generation and right-wing ideology. They purposefully distanced themselves from previous Nazi doctrine that discriminated against many groups of people. All of these issues are perhaps true at the beginning of the novel—the black soldiers are subject to their carnal desires and pursue white German women for sex, because being with white women may be a novelty for them. White German women may pursue relationships with black soldiers for financial support because they live in war-torn and economically unstable Germany, which links back to Smith's acknowledgement that African American soldiers in post-war Germany felt "more than equal." And maybe Ilse and the other German women in the novel have relationships with black soldiers

as a way to react against right-wing ideology and show that they did not agree with Nazi doctrine and their parents' generation.

However, I argue that as the novel progresses, Dawkins learns to trust Ilse and her feelings for him, allowing him to feel wholly human, not because she is a white woman but because he feels as if someone loves him completely without question. In Germany, he experiences for the first time being able to claim humanity and lives without fear. He is, therefore, not afraid to enter into a romantic relationship. His skin color does not appear to affect their relationship. Early on in their relationship, it is clear that, for Dawkins, Ilse is merely someone to spend time with and sleep with. Although Ilse tells him that she loves him, he has a hard time believing or accepting it. This is a product of Dawkins not trusting women in general and not trusting that a white woman can truly love a black man. But when Dawkins is unexpectedly ordered to transfer to Bremburg, Ilse is beside herself and cries, not wanting to be separated from him. The night before he leaves, "Ilse lay in the bed alternately weeping and assuring both of us that we would see each other again" (Smith 115). Ilse demonstrates her sincere feelings for Dawkins in this scene. When Dawkins is first in Bremburg at a club with another soldier, McDonald, he meets Anna-Liza, who asks him about his girl in Berlin and whether she loves him. Dawkins replies, "I cannot know. She says so" (146). His answer illustrates that he still feels uncertain about their relationship, basically a byproduct of the uncertainty he feels as a black man in America. Ann-Liza assures him that if Ilse said she loves him then she does, telling him, "You know, that is the difference between the American woman and the German woman. You do not trust the German woman because you have been too long used to the American woman. But I will tell you something. When a German girl tells you, 'I love you,' then she means that. With all her heart. Many times the American girl says that only

with her mouth" (147). Anna-Liza's differentiation between American women and German women is a parallel to how America and Germany treat black soldiers (or black people in general)—America promised freedom and emancipation for blacks but those promises were never fulfilled (America only said those things with its mouth), while post-war Germany accepts and treats the black soldiers well (it says those things with actions).

Ilse's relationship with Dawkins is portrayed as genuine from the very start. She tells him she will teach him the German language and German culture, "rather than attempt to Americanize herself to suit his expectations" (Brown 116). If Ilse's main goal was to gain economic support from Dawkins, then she would have most likely catered to his tastes. Instead, they create an equal balance of interest and affection. After he is transferred to Bremburg, Dawkins wants to believe what Anna-Liza tells him. He thinks, "Ilse *should* be here. Anna-Liza was nice. Very friendly. I didn't like the kind you picked up off the street. Rather have nothing. Still, a man needed some sort of woman" (148). Dawkins begins to recognize his feelings for Ilse, but still feels the pressure to have any woman as a sign of manhood. However, Ilse keeps her word and comes to Dawkins, going through the Russian and British zones without a pass and walking for two days, before being able to take a train in the American zone. Brown notes that Ilse's actions illustrate her "strength, determination, candor, and pragmatism" (116). Dawkins is shocked that she has come, touched at her devotion, and tells her that she is wonderful. When Anna-Liza meets Ilse, she gives Dawkins an "I-told-you-so look" (169). Again, Ilse's love for and devotion toward Dawkins makes him feel valid; he is not something she has just tossed aside but a human being and a man she chooses to be with.

Ilse's love for and devotion toward Dawkins and the previous setting of Berlin is in direct contrast to how the white soldiers and officers treat him in Bremburg and disdain his relationship

with Ilse. One of the other black soldiers tells Dawkins that Bremburg is "Nigger hell" (126), their white commanding officer Polke is "a cracker" (129), and the black First Sergeant Brink is an "Uncle Tom" (130). Dawkins and the other soldiers new to the camp in Bremburg learn that the officers harshly punish any man who is diagnosed with VD and put the whole camp on two weeks' restriction. When they hear that there were three cases of VD in the last month in Bremburg, the Professor exclaims, "Three cases! In Berlin we're doing good if we have only three cases a *week*" (130). This small outburst does much to illustrate the vast differences between Berlin, where the black soldiers experienced freedom, and Bremburg, where they are strictly monitored and punished for any slight infraction. The soldiers further learn that if a soldier had VD in Bremburg they are sent to "Camp Casanova" (130) for thirty days. The Professor is appalled, stating that it is illegal to punish a man for contracting venereal disease, but the corporal replies, "In this battalion, there ain't nothin' illegal. They make their own laws around here" (130). Mitchell notes that the "law is not meant for the protection of the soldiers who are not infected; the law is enacted to discourage fraternization with white German women. . . . The camp represents a microcosm of the South . . ." (36-37). Berlin embodied something apart from the U.S., a place where the black soldiers experienced a type of agency, because they were conquerors and saviors, that they had not been able to experience before because they lived in Jim Crow America. On the other hand, Bremburg symbolizes a return to this type of Jim Crow America, not because of the Germans, but because of the white American commanding officers, their fellow countrymen, who continue to follow the racial codes of America outside of America and keep the black soldiers "in their place." Clearly, the white soldiers view the black soldiers' place as beneath any white man. For Germans, black soldiers are part of the defeating body that

governs them, but this is not true for white Americans. They see black soldiers as merely defeated.

This unfair treatment is enacted through policy. Steve, one of the soldiers Dawkins meets in Bremburg, explains, "They got a few other companies scattered here and there, but most of the Negroes are right around here. It's a slick system. Now when they want to make rules strictly for colored troops they just have the group commander give an order for all his troops. That way it affects only the Negroes but they don't have to mention the race. It's slick, all right" (138). Because Bremburg is acting as a symbol of the South, the black soldiers are then "subject to modified Jim Crow laws," chiefly to keep them away from white German women (Mitchell 37). Thomas Borstelmann explains that after the war in Europe, anti-miscegenation policies were officially implemented, intended to "protect" European women from African American men (33). Though white German woman in the novel seek out relationships with black men even when they could have just as easily dated white American soldiers, and Ilse in particular demonstrates her sincerity and love for Dawkins, the white American soldiers and officers cannot stomach the interracial relationships because of the racial codes that have been ingrained in them. To them, a black man sleeping with a white woman is an affront to white masculinity, especially when white men have continually attempted to withhold masculinity from black men (hence the "boy" references). Therefore, they attempt to segregate and isolate black soldiers as a way to strip them of their masculinity.

Dawkins and Ilse defy the rules to continue their relationship, but when they are out one night they are stopped by white MPs. Dawkins explains that he needs to get back for curfew, but undoubtedly the MPs want him to miss it. Because Dawkins talks back to the MPs, white military authorities, they take their anger out on Ilse and take her into custody for a VD check,

"[t]he implication, of course, is that she must be a prostitute if she is with a black man" (Mitchell 38). Though the MPs are not literally lynching Dawkins or Ilse, they are figuratively lynching them by taking away their authority and agency. Even though both of them choose to be in an interracial relationship, the white MPs see it as a choice they should not be able to make. This harkens back to the tradition in the South of lynching black men for supposedly raping or affiliating with white women, with the MPs publicly expressing their white male dominance. They do not take Ilse away from Dawkins in order to protect her; rather it is in an effort to "castrate" Dawkins (Hernton 112).

Dawkins is angered and frustrated, but can do nothing about the situation. That night he dreams:

> I killed the MP's many times. I smeared paint over their faces and pushed my fingers into their eyes. I killed them slowly, pushing their eyes out and then beating them and pouring gasoline over them and lighting the gasoline and then hanging the charred bodies to trees as had been done to many Negroes in the South. I had the desire, very strong, to do the same to them. Because I knew why they had taken Ilse. And it was not because they thought she had venereal disease. (192).

Dawkins fanaticizes about enacting violence against white men in the same way that "whites have historically dominated and violated blacks" (Harris 35). Dawkins wants to rail against the oppression and brutality that he suffers because he is black, and the only way he can is by envisioning himself using the same kind of brutality against white oppressors. Dawkins attempts to obtain Ilse's release, but is instead attacked by the MPs; he must fight back and then flee. Ilse is held for two weeks, and when she returns she tells Dawkins what the lieutenant said: "I must know that the colored man was not like everybody else, and that an American white woman

would never go out with one. He said that the colored man was dirty and very poor and had much sickness. . . . He said I could go, only I must promise not to go with the colored soldier any more" (195-196). The white officers attempt to draw Ilse and the other German women "into the American-made net of their white supremacist thinking," but the women reject such thinking (Gilroy 315). Ilse refused to promise, instead telling the lieutenant that she loved Dawkins very much, which resulted in her being imprisoned for two weeks. The MPs came many times, promising Ilse and the other women imprisoned for going out with black men that they could be released in exchange for sex. These white American MPs only see German women as prostitutes for sleeping with black men, because they cannot imagine why else white women would want to be with black men. When the German women refuse their offer, the MPs call them "nigger-lovers and said we should not again have a white man to love us" (196). Ilse's behavior is in stark contrast to Madge's. As a white American woman, Madge can only conceive of a sexual relationship with a black man as rape, despite the fact that she desires Bob, because those are the racial codes that the United States has engrained within her. She cannot, or chooses not, to see it in another light. On the other hand, Ilse sees her relationship with Dawkins as one of consensual love and refuses to stop seeing him even though it means she remains locked up. In *Last of the Conquerors*, Smith makes a stark distinction between the cruelty of the white American soldiers who are supposed to represent the land of the free, and the friendship/love of the German women who come from a previously fascist nation that preached Aryan purity, illustrating how people can choose to accept or reject ingrained racial codes.

Smith's novel portrays how black American men are subject to the racial codes that surround them. In the United States, racism, discrimination, and Jim Crow laws prevent black Americans from full citizenship; whites view blacks as less than human, and by extension, black

men cannot attain the feeling of masculinity that they inherently desire. In Berlin, the black soldiers in Smith's novel are able to reclaim their masculinity that has been suppressed by white Americans, because they are treated more fairly and equally than they ever have before. For the most part in Berlin, they are not discriminated against, nor are they questioned or stared at. And yes, some of their masculinity is regained through their contact with white female bodies, but it is also because of the love the German women have for the black soldiers. Gilroy notes that "the value of love and the possible significance of common humanity that sexual desire brings into focus" allows "these young black men . . . to reflect not just upon the meaning of their own blackness but, through the circuits of military travel, on the nature of democracy itself" (311). These soldiers' interracial relationships illuminate how humanity exists within individual people, but humanity as a whole is often neglected due to institutionalized racism.

Dawkins' and Ilse's experiences in Bremburg show how they are not permitted to make their own choices because Bremburg is a symbol of the American South and its societal rules. Toward the end of the novel, hordes of black soldiers are falsely accused of willful disobedience and dishonorably discharged from the military, and a white sergeant, in order to save face, threatens Dawkins with a court martial if he does not voluntarily resign and head back to the United States. Once again, this illustrates how white authorities unfairly rule over and manipulate black soldiers. Mitchell states, "The same organization, the American military, whose mission is to bring peace and order to a war-ravaged Germany, is the same organization that forms what is little more than a lynch mob in order to keep Dawkins [and the other black soldiers] in [their] place" (39). The American military in Bremburg is merely an extension of the racist American South. At the end of the novel, Dawkins swears that he will return to Germany and come for Ilse. Dawkins' desire to return to Germany illustrates that a black man cannot feel

like a human or a man in the United States because of the political and racial climate. It is only in Berlin and in the arms of Ilse that Dawkins feels complete. Though the Allies won the war against Nazism, black soldiers still could not win the war against racism and violence at home.

In the Words of Veterans

In this section, I analyze two memoirs by African American veterans of World War II—*Red Tail Captured, Red Tail Free: Memoirs of a Tuskegee Airman and POW* by Alexander Jefferson and *Blood on German Snow: An African American Artilleryman in World War II and Beyond* by Emiel W. Owens. These memoirs highlight much of the same racism and discrimination that black soldiers faced as do the two novels I previously discuss. However, these memoirs differ from the novels in that the endings are not as hopeless; one reason for this is the time period in which they were published. *If He Hollers* and *Last of the Conquerors* were published in the 1940s shortly after the end of the war when blacks still encountered segregation and inequality at every turn. The novels were published before the Civil Rights Acts were passed and before Jim Crow laws were dismantled. They act as protest novels, highlighting the racial oppression of African Americans in the United States, most likely in an attempt to bring about more awareness and change. On the other hand, the two memoirs were published in 2005 and 2006, respectively, which allow the authors to look back on their experiences in WWII after the passing of the Civil Rights acts and dismantling of Jim Crow laws and see what changes the nation has made. They can then view their experiences in a more hopeful light because they directly correlate their service with the changes that were forthcoming. Also, the differences in genre can also attest to these differences, as the novels are works of protest, while the memoirs

are works of life writing. Though Jefferson and Owens may want to illustrate the discrimination they faced and the changes over time, their main goal is to share their own experiences.

Where They Come From

One aspect that both these memoirs by African Americans share, and which differs from the memoirs by white soldiers I discuss in Chapter One, is that they start by providing background information about themselves: where they grew up, what their family was like, and what kind of education they had. For instance, Jefferson was raised in Detroit, lived in a Polish neighborhood, was part of the 28th Street Gang, and attended Clark College, while Owens grew up in Texas, worked with his dad in his trucking business, and attended Prairie View A&M College. In contrast, the white veterans' memoirs I discuss in Chapter One start with the action of the war—Murphy in the middle of Italy and Irgang on a boat bound for England. These differences illustrate two things. First, the white soldiers' memoirs were published shortly after the war, both in 1949, so the war was fresh in their memories and is the event that they choose to focus on. The war is still fresh in the public's memory as well, and is perhaps the one event that they want to read about. The memoirs by African American soldiers were published 60 years after the end of the war, which allows the authors to discuss their lives as a whole, including their childhood and their experiences leading up to the war. The publication dates also highlight the access that certain groups had to the publishing business, meaning publishers were far more likely to publish books by white veterans than by black veterans. The first published memoir by a black veteran I could find is *Better than Good: A Black Sailor's War, 1943-1945* by Adolf W. Newton (with Winston Eldridge), which was published in 1999. In contrast, memoirs by white veterans were published throughout the 1940s and 1950s, into the present. Second, this

difference in the memoirs indicates that white veterans did not feel compelled to prove themselves to their audience; they are authorities on the subject because they experienced the war and are, therefore, capable of writing about it. They are white, they are veterans, and so they can write a book—there is no need to list their educational pursuits or other background information, because as white men in America they are most likely not questioned about such things. Their race and gender allows them to rule the nation. On the other hand, the African American authors choose to present themselves as well-rounded and educated in order to establish themselves as authorities on what they are writing about. As black men in America, they are mostly likely used to having to "prove" themselves; hence, their experiences coupled with their educational backgrounds allow them to write a book.

Additionally, inequality in the nation leads to inequality in the publishing business. Owens titles his first chapter "A Typical African American and a U.S. Citizen." Why choose this title? What is a typical African American? Owens illustrates that a "typical African American" is just an American, but faced with hardships and inequality. For instance, he explains that in his town in Texas, white students went to school nine months out of the year for twelve years, while black students went eight months out of the year for eleven years. Therefore, white students had approximately two more years of school than black students when they graduated from high school. Owens notes, "There was no logical reason for such disparity in school other than giving white students advantages in a racist system. I think they were afraid of the competition if equal academic opportunities were offered to all children in the state of Texas" (18). He seems to say that the education of black children would be a threat to white superiority, much in the same way as white society viewing black masculinity as a threat to white masculinity. Owens also points out his citizenship in the title – why? I posit it is because during his childhood and when he

served in the war, African Americans were still not seen as equal citizens. Owens opts to stress that he was a U.S. citizen because it is an important part of his identity that many chose to ignore. He's a U.S. citizen, but still faces discrimination and inequality because of his skin color. Jefferson, too, points out "racial indignities" where he grew up in Detroit, noting that "certain clubs and most neighborhoods were not open to blacks," and "blacks were not allowed to ride the *Tasmoo*, which was the excursion boat on the Detroit River on which [his] high school class held its graduation party" (17). Jefferson's statements highlight segregation laws, which correlate back to white society preserving the inhumanity of African Americans, for if they kept them separate they could never be equal.

Both authors write about racism and discrimination with what seems a very calm and unperturbed voice. Unlike Bob in *If He Hollers* and Dawkins in *Last of the Conquerors* who respond to racism with imagined violence against whites, Jefferson and Owens merely reiterate it as part of growing up black in America. This difference again could be due to the time their memoirs were written, which allows them time to step back from the segregation and discrimination of their childhoods and military service and look at the progress that has been made. Genre also plays a part in this. In a novel, an author creates fictional characters that do not have to answer for their actions, but a memoir portrays oneself and because of that there can be backlash. Perhaps Jefferson and Owens did not want to feed the stereotype of the "angry black man." L.H.E. Kleinreesink and Joseph M.M.L. Soeters explain that today "autobiographies are seen as socially determined constructs providing a subjective, socially constructed truth, not an objective one" (376). Samuel Hynes, a U.S. military autobiography researcher, argues that although military autobiographies are true, they are not truthful, as personal narratives are different from history (16). Therefore, Jefferson and Owens are constructing their perceived truth

based on the experiences, but the concept of memory also needs to be addressed when considering the concept of truth. G. Thomas Couser explains that the autobiography's "narrative authority derives not from research but from personal experience, from memory and subjectivity – that is from self-identity" (73). However, memory is not perfect and can be unreliable. For example, psychologists Daniel Schacter and Donna Addis posit that "[m]emory is not a literal reproduction of the past, but rather is a constructive process in which bits and pieces of information from various sources are pulled together" (773). Therefore, "All this means is that human memory is an unreliable tool and that historical objective truth guarantees cannot be expected from the memoirs of soldier-authors. At most a subjective, socially constructed 'truth' or truthfulness – a presentation and an interpretation of self – can be found in their books" (Kleinreesink and Soeters 377). Perhaps it is this combination of a fallible memory and constructed truth that propels Jefferson and Owens to address incidents of discrimination and racial oppression with less emotion. Additionally, because they are real people writing about their own lives, they could also be censoring themselves from revealing past anger or if they too wished violence on whites such as Bob and Dawkins. This self-censorship may be to protect themselves, but is also part of soldier memoir writing in general, "as wars have traditionally been surrounded by censorship measures" (Kleinreesink and Soeters 377).

White Officers and Black Soldiers: The Reality of Black Soldiers in the U.S. Military during WWII

Though Jefferson and Owens touch on the inequality and discrimination they faced as they grew up, those experiences were compounded when they went into the armed forces. For example, Jefferson explains that when he got called to report to the Tuskegee Army Air Field he had to travel by train. He writes, "In Cincinnati I transferred to the Louisville Nashville Line,

which meant all blacks had to move to the first car behind the coal burning steam engine. The South's discriminatory travel arrangements were not new to me, but it was still hard to endure the soot and hard seats. There were also no food or lavatory facilities for blacks, and the odor of urine was disgusting. But this was the way black soldiers went to war, at least in the South" (25). He notes that all blacks traveled in such horrible circumstances, integrating himself with the rest of the black population. He states that it was terrible and difficult to bear but it was simply the way it was; he chooses to downplay the situation at the end.

Though many black men wanted to use the military as a way to assert their citizenship and manhood, they were often not allowed to because of white commanding officers and the racist policies of the U.S. government. For instance, Jefferson acknowledges several "racial indignities" that he suffered while training to be a pilot. He explains, "We cadets were all college graduates and highly motivated and aggressive. I look back now and realize to be black then and survive, you had to be that way" (26). He goes on to say that there were 90 cadets who started in his class but only twenty-five graduated. They discovered years later (due to the Freedom of Information Act), that this low pass rate was because "there had been a quota for how many blacks were allowed to graduate. The phrase used to wash guys out was 'eliminated while passing for the convenience of the government'" (26). In fact, three or four of the twenty-five that had passed pilot training were pulled aside the night before graduation and told that they were not going to graduate. Jefferson states, "It was a loss of their manhood, and it caused them a lot of psychological stress" (26). Jefferson's use of the word manhood here is telling, because it illustrates the idea that during WWII manhood was thought to be best represented through service to country and the ability to perform well in the military. However, these black cadets were "washed out" as if the white military complex was "cleansing" itself from African

American soldiers. Though they performed well in their course and should have been able to graduate and fly for their country, but because of the government's racist policies they were not permitted to claim that dominant, national version of manhood. Many black men felt the need to complete honorable military service, as most men in the U.S. were using military service in WWII as a marker of true manhood. Again, this was a double need, to show that black men were MEN and to prove their worthiness as soldiers and equal citizens. Melissa T. Brown notes that during WWII "African American men, in asserting a right to fight, were proclaiming their masculinity and their equality to white men" (31). Military service was acting as a device to take one step closer to equality. Yet, if they were not allowed to fight, it was difficult to proclaim their equality and masculinity.

Intersectionalities play a role within military hierarchy as well. Aaron Belkin explains, "Within any military organization, masculinities circulate along with a range of other hierarchies based on race, sex, rank, religion, service branch, occupational specialty, and other factors" (31). Though the Tuskegee cadets themselves and the other graduates knew how capable they were, they could not publicly demonstrate their manhood because they were not allowed to graduate or become pilots for the U.S. Air Force. Jefferson explains that Colonel Frederick Kimle, the first Tuskegee commander, "was much more interested in maintaining total segregation on base—including ordering white officers not to fraternize with their black cadets—than he was in training future pilots" (28). These racist policies and practices again highlight how white society was adamant about keeping black men beneath them. If too many black soldiers succeeded or if whites became too friendly with blacks then it looked bad for whites who could no longer claim superiority. Jefferson writes that their white commanding officers "were willing to jeopardize

our training and the war effort in order to maintain separate and second-class status for every African American under their command" (34).

Though black troops were segregated, they were usually led by white officers. In his book *The Employment of Negro Troops*, Ulysses Lee writes:

> World War I and earlier testimony had indicated that white officers were preferable to Negro officers. The white officers chosen should have some acquaintance with Negroes; therefore it was often assumed that, since few individuals from other parts of the country had come into frequent contact with Negroes, they should be Southerners. It was assumed, too, that Negro officers would have to be used, but that their numbers should be kept to a minimum. Since most commentators believed that few Negroes possessed potential combat leadership abilities, they held that Negro officers should be assigned primarily to overhead and service units. . . . The provision of officers for Negro units therefore revolved, from the beginning, about two conflicting ideas: that the best officers for Negro units should be white and that sufficient Negro officers must be supplied to satisfy the Negro public and enlisted men that race was not a barrier to advancement of Negro men in a wartime army. (180)

The U.S. military's desire to keep black man in lower ranks is reflected in the numbers of white and black officers. In August of 1942, the Army consisted of 3,500,000 men; of those 244,000 (or seven percent) were officers. There were 228,715 black men in the Army and only 817 (or 0.35 percent) were officers (Lee 211). A Ground Forces staff officer asserted, "The foregoing figures confirm our conclusion reached previously, i.e., the colored race cannot produce enough military leadership to officer the colored units" (qtd in Lee 211). However, the reality is *not* that there were not enough black soldiers to train as officers, but that white military leadership argued

that there were not enough black men capable of the task. Obviously, racial prejudice and discrimination played the largest part in these decisions. For example, Colonel Malvern-Hill Barnum, in a letter he sent to Colonel Allen J. Greer, states, "The greatest difficulty to be overcome [in World War I officer training] was the natural lack of aggressiveness on the part of the colored man. It could not for a moment be expected that a race which had for two hundred years, or more, been kept in a subordinate position would suddenly manifest aggressiveness such as was required in the desperate fighting which occurred during the last year or two to this war" (qtd in Lee 180). Again, whites flip the rhetoric in order to keep the status that is most advantageous to them. Though white society often accused black men of being rapacious beasts, in essence, the very definition of aggressive, Colonel Barnum asserts that they lack any form of aggressiveness. This lack of aggression then means that they make ineffective military officers, allowing for white men to step in and fill those officer positions, and by extension prove their masculinity, increase their rank, and receive accolades for their service. Black men are not allowed in the dominant white society to do any of those things.

Even those black men who were officers could not demonstrate their rank and masculinity in the same way that white officers could. At one point Jefferson and his fellow black airmen attempted to integrate an officers' club, which was meant for all officers. They were effectively put on post arrest because their commanding officer informed them that as long as he was in command there would be "no socialization between white and colored officers" (35). Jefferson explains that all these instances "reflected the reality of the times. . . . It was all part of coping, and we knew we had to deal with it. We tested the system, as best we could. It was a constant struggle, but our willingness to challenge the system helped us survive" (36). While the main characters in Smith's and Himes' novels react to the racial bigotry in American

society and the military by envisioning themselves enacting violence on whites, Jefferson never reveals similar desires. Instead, his manner remains calm as he reiterates that they learned how to cope and tested the system. Again, because Jefferson is looking back on his experiences sixty years later, his tone is more hopeful than the tone of the two novels. And as stated earlier, he is most likely self-censoring for multiple reasons, only being the genre he is writing in.

Owens also writes about the injustices he and his fellow black soldiers faced because of the color of their skin and their experience with white soldiers. He explains that "the lack of opportunity to become a commissioned field artillery officer became an issue" because even though black soldiers were often college educated and had ROTC training, they were only given noncommissioned officer positions (29). All of the officers of the 31st battalion were white except one. However, Owens' experience with white officers is quite different than Jefferson's. Owen states, "The white officers were respectful toward the majority [of] colored enlisted men, and they were rewarded for their efforts. The colored enlisted men supported their white officers. This accounted for the credit awarded the 31st Battalion among the most efficient field artillery units to come through the training cycle at Fort Sill" (30). While Jefferson's white commanding officers enforced segregation and looked down on black soldiers, Owens' white commanding officers seem to do the opposite, which he acknowledges for his battalion's success. In these memoirs, the differences in attitude toward and treatment of black soldiers by white commanding officers echoes the way Dawkins was treated in Berlin versus Bremburg in *Last of the Conquerors*. Owens' white commanding officers and the white officers in Berlin in Smith's novel appear to treat black soldiers without regard to racial difference, while the white officers in Bremburg and those Jefferson encountered adhere to ingrained racial codes and stereotypes. Yet despite the respect of Owens' white officers, and black and white soldiers being acquainted with

one another, "we had segregated facilities on the army base and did not socialize together" (33). Again, this illustrates the U.S. government's desire to keep blacks and whites separate in order to elevate the status of whites. And even though the white officers worked well with the black soldiers, the skewed number of white officers to black officers indicates the discriminatory practice of the U.S. military. Black soldiers were not given the same opportunity to excel in the military that white soldiers were, and therefore did not have the same opportunity to claim their manhood in association with the white dominant rhetoric.

Although some of their own white officers respected them, other whites in the military did not. Owens tells the story of when white American soldiers told English people that black soldiers had tails; therefore, the English people tried to get a glimpse of their tails when they were in the showers. However, this deception by the white American soldiers backfired because the "English people took a special liking to the African American soldiers, who they found caring and gentle. . . . We had military authority but treated all people with respect, and the Europeans responded to this. Our short stay in England was a pleasant one and a rich experience. In those few days, we had closer and warmer contact with white people in a social gathering for soldiers than we had ever experienced in our own country" (40-41). How they were treated in England is in stark contrast to how they are treated as soldiers in the service of their own country. This is mirrored in Smith's novel, where the black soldiers feel respected in Germany, but not in the U.S. Because they are able to essentially feel more like humans, they can then feel more like men.

Jefferson has a similar experience of being treated better abroad than in the U.S. On one of his flights he was shot down, taken prisoner, and sent to Stalag Luft III. Though he recounts being frightened when he was being transported to the POW camp, he also states, "I was treated

better as a POW than I was back home" (ix). Certainly, the German guards at the camps had to comply by international codes of conduct in association with the treatment of POWs, but it also highlights how unfairly African Americans were treated in their own country, one which they were fighting for. Jefferson also explains that when he arrived at the POW camp a representative from each room had to choose a new prisoner to bunk with them:

> A dyed-in-the-wool cracker with the deepest southern drawl imaginable walked up to me and said, "Ah think I'll take this boy." I was naturally very apprehensive, thinking that I had not come all the way from the USA to be with a bunch of rednecks. . . . What I found was a real hodgepodge of ethnicities: there were two or three southerners, a Jew, a couple of guys from Brooklyn, a couple more from God knows where, and Hal Erickson who was from Detroit. I was the only black. I soon discovered why they had chosen me. Their room happened to house escape materials, and they wanted to make sure they didn't get a German plant or an American turncoat. They later told me, "We knew we could trust you." I thought it then and have said it many times since, "Ain't that a bitch!" At home black soldiers caught hell from SOBs just like the guy who had selected me. Now, five thousand miles from home, they can trust a black man because they are scared to death of a strange white face. Ain't that a bitch! (64-65)

At Stalag Luft III, skin color did not lead to segregation and discrimination, but instead lead to trust and loyalty. This illuminates the unique nature of war, in which all kinds of people are thrown together and must survive together, even though the U.S. government still insisted on segregated units. Jefferson reiterates that he did not encounter overt racism as a POW, but "felt an undercurrent of hesitancy and a kind of guarded inquisitiveness" from white POWs because some had been prisoners for over two years and were unaware that blacks were now pilots and

officers in the Army Air Corps (76). He states that they were held in high esteem because they were Tuskegee Airmen, were a bit older and more mature, and were college graduates. When a B-17 crewmember arrived at Stalag Luft III he saw Jefferson and exclaimed, "You're a Red Tail! You goddamn Red Tails are the best damned unit! If the Red Tails had been with us, we'd have made it back home! You guys saved our asses so many times!" (76). Jefferson's performance as a pilot and reputation as a Red Tail wins him praise, and by association a sense of accomplishment and masculinity. He is literally able to demonstrate his masculinity in front of other men by flying planes.

One aspect of Owens' memoir that is similar to the two novels is the experience he and his fellow soldiers have with white women. Owens recounts that while they were on leave in San Francisco they were put in groups that were comprised of both black and white soldiers. He followed Sergeant Woods to a big Victorian house and quickly realized that it was a house of prostitution. Owens explains that "half of [the girls] were white and half were colored, about the same racial proportion as the soldiers present" (33). Soldiers would go up to a girl, dance with her, and then leave the room with her. Owens notes, "One pattern I quickly noticed was that the white soldiers were selecting colored girls and the colored soldiers were migrating more toward the white girls. This open selection process was a surprise to me, as I had never socialized with whites before. In general, I noticed there was a novelty appeal running both ways in the freelancing open environment" (33-34). Unlike Bob who wishes to rape Marge in order to get back at white society and assert his own masculinity, it seems that these black soldiers gravitated toward sleeping with white prostitutes because of the "novelty." In American society outside of prostitution, this practice would never be allowed, or if a black man did have a relationship with a white woman he would most likely be accused of rape and then sent to prison (or lynched). But

because they are paying for sexual services and therefore do not have the same fear of a white prostitute reporting them for rape, they choose to have this new experience of sleeping with a white women. Yet Owens does not write that sleeping with a white woman automatically makes them feel like more of a man or redeem their lack of masculinity, which was a commonly held belief about black male/white female relationships. In Owens' terms, it is merely a new experience. Staples states, "Black and white men are much more united in the meaning of sex than are black men and black women. Men of both races are similar in the very selfish, peer-oriented nature of their sexual behaviors" (80). He acknowledges that sex, for both races, is about control and is indeed a way to affirm masculinity. Indeed, the War Department declared, "Manhood—Sex is what makes a man a strong two-fisted fellow ("Sex Hygiene and Venereal Disease" 4). These government pamphlets indicate that having sex (with women of course) makes one a real man. Among the servicemen themselves, there was surely the feeling that sexual activity was part of being a "real" man and a "real" soldier. Interestingly, Owens does not sleep with a white prostitute, but spends the night with a young African American woman who had "light brown skin and beautiful brown eyes" (34). Owens' choice in a companion for the night illustrates that, for him, sleeping with a white woman would not reaffirm his lost masculinity because he is black. Instead, the whole experience is something new, and sex in general allows him to be part of this masculine tradition.

Returning Home and Looking Back

Despite their honorable service in the war and the hope that the double victory campaign would create freedom and equality in the U.S. for African Americans, Owens and Jefferson still faced discrimination and inequality upon returning home. Jefferson notes that when they docked

in New York and saw the Statue of Liberty, he had a "feeling of indescribable jubilation! But then, going down the gangplank, a short, smug, white buck private shouted, 'Whites to the right, niggers to the left.' It was very discouraging, upon returning to the United States, to find racism, segregation, and other social ills alive and well. I knew then I was back home" (107). Owens shares a similar view, stating, "All the ticker-tape parades down Broadway and the troops marching to receive glory from a grateful public were made up of white units. The U.S. public knew nothing about the heroism of the African American troops of the 969th Field Artillery, who helped stop the German attack in the Battle of the Bulge, where during the early phase of the battle many white troops deserted out of fear of the enemy. . ." (96). Owens explains that the U.S. army deactivated African American combat units overseas, so when they returned home the public knew nothing of their service and had no way to thank them as they did the white units that marched in parades. The American tradition of white supremacy was still strong after the war ended, and the U.S. government and military did what they could to diminish the accomplishments of black soldiers and units. These experiences that black soldiers encountered when returning home from war highlight "the double standards that allow the U.S. government to attack Nazi conduct while itself practicing a different but nonetheless brutally institutionalized form of racism" (Gilroy 310).

Both Owens and Jefferson became highly successful in their future professions. Owens earned a PhD in economics and became a professor of finance, but only after being rejected from graduate school in his home state of Texas because of his race. He found out that the state of Texas was "willing to pay part of my expenses to go to an out-of-state graduate program," so he ended up at the Ohio State University (108). Jefferson taught chemistry in a middle school, earned his masters' degree in 1954, and was promoted to assistant principal in 1969. However,

before his promotion he explains, "I had passed the written exam four times for assistant principal, each time with a mark of better than 95 percent, but when it came time for the oral interview, I received only 40 percent. I was never given a reason why I failed these oral interviews, but I assumed it was because I appeared too aggressive and confrontational" (113). The underlying assumption is that he did not receive the promotion earlier because of his race, or because he appeared too "uppity" for his race. His "aggressive and confrontational" manner was seen as deviant, whereas in a white man this same manner could be read as assertive and take charge. These authors' experiences illustrate that the double victory campaign was not immediately successful after the war ended, but was instead a jumping off point for the Civil Rights Movement. They ended their war in Europe, but had to continually fight in the war for equality at home.

Because these authors are writing sixty years after the end of WWII, they are able to look back with hope and view their service in a positive light. Owens claims that, aside from his marriage, his service with the armed forces "was the second most important event that impacted my life's course" because it "broadened my horizon of understanding of the world around me and presented me with an expanded vista through which to view the world and its people" (130). The financial support he received from the Veterans Administration also helped him earn his PhD, leading to his research and career and his service in establishing the Booker Washington Institute in Liberia and participating in economic development activities in the Soviet Union. Owens ends his memoir by saying, "I am optimistic in believing that I have contributed in making this world a better place. We do not have the opportunity to choose our own parts in life. The fact is that we have nothing to do with selecting those parts. Our simple duty is confined to playing them well. The span of life was lent for lofty duties, not for selfishness, not to while

away for aimless dreams, but to improve ourselves and serve humankind" (133). Owens' parting words are hopeful, but also nod toward the injustices of the past. He calls on all people to make the world a better place by bettering themselves and being selfless. His use of the word humankind shows how he wants all people to see each other as human, not just people of different races.

Jefferson writes in his postscript, "The Tuskegee Airmen were dedicated, determined young men who volunteered to become America's first black military airmen. As pioneers, we were determined to serve the United States of America proudly and to the best of our ability, even though many of our fellow citizens, fellow aviators, and commanding officers believed African Americans lacked intelligence, skill, courage, and patriotism" (119). He goes on to state that the Tuskegee Airmen proved themselves in the skies, serving bravely and honorably in the war. America was their country and they wanted to fight for it and protect it, but they also wanted it to treat African Americans the way they should be treated. Coleman Young, a fellow Tuskegee Airman stated, "We learned how to survive in the air, and when we hit the ground, while white pilots rested, we continued our struggle to preserve our dignity as human beings. All of us are better and stronger for the experience" (qtd in Jefferson 121). Most of these African American soldiers viewed their service as a training ground that helped them become stronger individuals, similar to the idea that a boy becomes a man in war. However, they also viewed their service as a way to earn the respect that they rightfully deserved, so that white society did not just see them as "boys" who were beneath them, but as men and by association as human beings worthy of fair treatment. Jefferson ends his memoir by saying that the Tuskegee Airmen "are very proud of the changes we helped bring about both within and outside the military. Above all, we want our fellow Americans to know that the civil rights we fought so hard for are not for

African Americans alone, but for all human beings" (121-122). Again, Jefferson is able to see how society has transformed over sixty years and connect his service to the positive changes he sees, which adds to the more hopeful tone of his memoir, a tone which the novels I discuss do not have because they were published before such positive changes occurred and acted as works of protest.

Conclusion

Though prominent black leaders in America during WWII urged black men to enlist in the war as a way to demonstrate their equality with white men and by extension their equal citizenship, the outcomes were not what they had hoped. As illustrated in Himes' and Smith's novels, as black men attempt to establish their masculinity and manhood in myriad ways—via occupation, war work on the home front, military service, sexual relationships, etc.—white society repeatedly pushes back against their attempts. This unequal power dynamic then causes the black protagonists to feel fear and powerlessness. They continuously face aggressions and violent attacks at the hands of whites, and this racial oppression causes their trauma to be revealed in dreams. It also propels them to fantasize about enacting violence on whites as a way of retribution and attempt to gain a sense of masculinity, as they are "denied equal access to the prosaic symbols of manhood" (Staples 85). Though both Bob and Dawkins decide not to violently attack whites because they feel that the consequences would be too great, they are still falsely accused and punished for it: Bob must decide between jail and the army, and Dawkins is forced to resign and leave Germany. Both these characters' outcomes illustrate the lack of agency black men have in the dominant white society of America and the U.S. military. Though Jefferson's and Owens' memoirs are written in a more hopeful tone, they too portray the racial

bigotry they encountered in the military, and as a matter of fact, their lack of agency as black men. Melissa T. Brown posits, "The military is an embodiment of state power—when the state projects military force, it is generally, in one way or another, literally projecting the bodies of its soldiers—a physical representative of the state *and* a symbolic representative of the people" (6). If this is the case, then during WWII that embodiment of state power translates into the power dynamic of the whole country—white men as the ruling class, black men as inferior subordinates. White men continuously find ways to "castrate" black men, to keep them second-rate, and destroy any attempts of equal masculinity and citizenship. These same issues can be seen in how Native Americans attempted to establish their citizenship and loyalty through service in the U.S. military during WWII, only to be seen in stereotypes, much like black men, and held to a double standard of American soldiers and Indian warriors.

Chapter IV

"You're Not a Full Citizen of the United States": Native American Soldiers, Warrior Traditions, and Silence

Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor coined two terms that are often used in discussing Native American literature: postindian and survivance. Vizenor explains that the term "Indian" has become a cultural construct according to the dominant group or colonial power, and there is no equivalent term in tribal language or culture. The word Indian portrays a stereotype and a homogenized group—one that is primitive, intuitive, and dark skinned as opposed to the colonial power, which represents itself as civilized, rational, and white. Therefore, Vizenor uses "postindian" to signify a survivor of the colonial power and one that represents real tribal values. The other term, survivance, can be seen as an amalgamation of the words survival and resistance; as native tribes both survive and resist the colonial power there is survivance. Vizenor also defines survivance as an antonym of victimry, in which colonists describes Native experience through tropes of victimization. Vizenor states, "Survivance is an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry. Survivance means the right of succession or reversion of an estate, and in that sense, the estate of native survivancy" (vii). Many critics illustrate how postindian and survivance are demonstrated throughout the works of Native American writers. In this chapter, I argue that in Chester Nez's *Code Talker*, N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* the characters' (all veterans of WWII) masculinity is formed, in part, around America's cultural standards of manhood during war and on the ideal of an Indian warrior. At the beginning of their stories they are pigeonholed into the colonial representation of "Indian." However, after physically surviving

war and returning home, they are often burdened by silence. It is then that they begin once again to connect to their tribal identities in order to claim "survivance" and move from Indian to "postindian."

Many literary critics have published on both *House Made of Dawn* and *Ceremony*. Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* is said to have kicked off the Native American literary renaissance when it was published in 1968, while Silko's *Ceremony* (1977) was her first novel and established her as writer. In critical analyses of *House Made of Dawn*, three major themes appear: native, tribal, or ethnic identity, the connection to land, and the novel's affiliation with modernism. For instance, in discussing disability and counterculture in the novel, Wilson Kaiser highlights how Abel heals through his connection to his homeland, arguing that Abel's identity is linked to the land and that he cannot overcome his disability (or sickness) until he comes "home." Robert M. Nelson also makes this connection to land, identity, and sickness, illustrating that the relationship between "the life of the individual and the life of the land is one of intimate and 'indivisible reciprocity: the land holds and is held by the people living there, and the people hold and are held by the land" (1). He posits that Abel's separation from his tribal life and land result in his spiritual sickness, and in order for Abel to be whole he "must be willing to be held by the land, which is to say 'possessed' by it as much as he would possess it" (2).

Critics such as Irem Seklem, Jane P. Hafen, and Susan Castillo discuss Abel's identity crisis, his ethnic and tribal identity, and his journey back to his native self, which again often correlates with him returning to his homeland. Hafen in particular points out that only when Abel returns to Jemez and to his tribal community does he feel a sense of identity and he "can be reconciled only through particular tribal traditions and through the assertion of specific tribal rites" (14). Jace Weaver argues that *House Made of Dawn* demonstrates how Indians survived,

while Paula Gunn Allen writes that the novel shows Natives as "[s]urrounded, engulfed, but not surrendered" (6). Weaver also makes the connection between personal and tribal identity, stating that the novel "deals with its hero's attempt to achieve personal integration and healing through tribal rituals and community" (26). According to Louis Owens, "With Momaday, American Indian literature becomes a kind of vision quest, with writing reflecting the journey of its author toward a rich self-recognition as Indian. . . . Momaday's writing illustrates a process of becoming" (10).

The connection between land and identity and belonging to the land is also a theme many critics discuss in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*. For example, Sharon Holm states that Silko sees a direct relationship between oral narrative forms and a "tribally specific geosacred relationship with the land or landscape" (243). Holm also explains that this importance and connection to land is often interpreted "as a particularly holistic and healing sense of place" (243), what Robert M. Nelson regards as the "spirit of place" (15). Nelson contends that a "'realistic' vision of the landscape is . . . a prerequisite to the acquisition of a verifiable cultural identity" (7). Holly E. Martin illustrates how Tayo becomes aware of his own hybridity (Laguna and white) through the landscape because the "land itself embodies hybrid characteristics, containing the histories of both conflicting cultural groups, and thereby, reflects the cultural conflict occurring within the character" (131). She goes on to explain that the land takes an active role in the narrative because it leads Tayo to reconcile the opposing cultural pulls warring within him.

Another area of analysis several critics focus on in *Ceremony* is trauma. In comparing *Ceremony* with Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Kristin Czarnecki asserts that "[p]lacing the novels alongside each other highlights the life-sustaining nature of feminine, matriarchal tenets and the

patriarchal constructs that undermine them," illustrating that the feminine characteristics and matriarchal nature of many Native American tribes, "prove more conducive than patriarchal tenets to the recovery from war trauma" (50). Michelle Satterlee describes how Tayo's trauma is a result of his experiences in war, the deaths of his cousin Rocky and Uncle Josiah, ethnic tensions between whites and Indians in the Southwest, and forces of "witchery." She states, "The novel demonstrates how traumatic events disrupt the protagonist's coherent sense of self, yet also offer the opportunity for a positive reformulation of identity" (73). Alexandra Ganser in discussing the connection between violence and trauma argues that the "violence Tayo has suffered is not only deeply inscribed in his mind, but also affects his physical being; the protagonist is forced to grapple with the many conflicting aspects of his hybrid ethnic body in order to return from his metaphorical state of suspended animation" (145). Though the ideas in *Ceremony* and *House Made of Dawn* also run throughout Nez's memoir, it has received no critical attention, up to this point.

In this chapter I interpret *House Made of Dawn*, *Ceremony*, and *Code Talker* through the lens of the performance of masculinity and the traditions of Indian warriors. Though the themes of war trauma, connectedness to land, and tribal and ethnic identities play a large part in my interpretations of the texts, I specifically focus on how warrior traditions within tribes affect the characters' sense of tribal identities and manhood. Because American Indians were marginalized as non-white during WWII, but also idealized as warriors, they formulated their own version of a soldier and performed masculinities in different ways than white soldiers did. As they were burdened with a double ideal (American soldier and Indian warrior), their version of a soldier was not only based on an Indian warrior, as many tribes claimed a history of warriorhood, but was also based on the dominant white rhetoric of masculinity. Interpreting *Code Talker*, *House*

Made of Dawn, and *Ceremony*, I argue that the characters' masculinity is formed around their tribal identities, the ideal of an Indian warrior, and America's cultural standards of manhood during war. However, that masculinity is challenged when they return home from the war and are oppressed by different kinds of silence.

The Tradition of the Indian Warrior

Before getting into the analysis of the texts, I offer a brief discussion on the history of Indian warriors to show how those traditions affect the characters. The history between whites and American Indians is fraught and complicated. Again and again, the U.S. government slaughtered Indians, forced them off their ancestral lands, or tried to assimilate them into white culture by kidnapping them and sending them to boarding schools. However, when the United States entered WWII, the people it had once tried to kill off they now saw as useful. Particularly, when the United States needed a code that the Japanese could not break, they turned to the Navajos to have them use their native language. This was ironic because American Indians were forced to use English at boarding schools, and matrons and teachers at the boarding schools would beat American Indian children for speaking their native languages. Therefore, Native American soldiers faced the difficulty of fighting for a country that had never protected them. Additionally, American Indians in the United States have been subjected to myriad stereotypes. Whites have called them primitive, savage and uncivilized, or they labeled them as the wise elder, the aggressive drunk, the squaw, or the Indian princess. These images and labels unfairly collapse the entirety of indigenous experience into one group. One of the most enduring stereotypes of American Indians, which stemmed from traditions present among many tribes, is that of the fierce warrior.

Stereotypical perceptions of the Indian warrior plague our popular culture. Shannon E. French, in her book *The Code of the Warrior: Exploring Warrior Values*, states, "In song and story and especially on film the 'Indian brave' has been alternately demonized and lionized as either a soulless savage who will impede the progress of civilization if not assimilated or destroyed or a noble innocent whose clear-eyed insights may contain civilization's only hope of salvation. Unsurprisingly, neither image does justice to reality" (139). These stereotypical representations of Indian warriors stem from a clash of cultures wherein Euro-Americans viewed Native Americans' actions as uncivilized without trying to understand the rules (or code as French calls it) of Native American societies. There are hundreds of Native American tribes, each with their own culture, traditions, beliefs, and history of warriorhood. For the sake of this chapter, I will examine three tribes specifically—Navajo, Kiowa, and Laguna—because these tribes are at the center of the literary texts discussed later on. Also, these tribes have similar concepts of warriorhood.

So what is a more realistic image of Indian warriors? Often, tribal warrior traditions derive from hunting cultures. In discussing Native American warriors of the Sacred Plains (which include the Kiowa tribe), French dubs the men hunter/warriors, explaining that "hunting was a male endeavor, and in most cases a man's value to his tribe (and therefore his status within the tribe) was determined by his capacity as a hunter. This is hardly surprising since, naturally, the survival of the tribe depended upon the maintenance of its food supply" (143). This is also true of the Navajo and Laguna tribes, where men were in charge of hunting and providing food for the tribe, while women were in charge of the home. Therefore, to claim their status in their tribes, men needed to be good hunters; they needed to be a good shot so to speak.

The evolution of hunters into warriors was due to warfare between tribes and later European settlers. There were three main reasons that these tribes went to war: to protect their tribal lands, to avenge the death of tribal members killed by enemies, and to raid for economic gain. First, the ability to provide for their tribes also led to the ability to protect their tribes. French notes that "an intimate connection was maintained between hunting and making war. The tribal warriors were responsible both to protect and to provide for their people" (145). If anyone threatened their territory, then tribal warriors fought to defend it, not only because it was where they lived but because they closely identified with the land they inhabited, seeing it as sacred and a place specifically given to them by the Creator. Therefore, when other tribes invaded and when white settlers forced them off their lands, they fought back.

Second, these tribes strived to protect their own, so when a member of their tribe was killed by an enemy, warriors chose to go on revenge attacks. In his book *The Navajo*, James F. Downs states that large "war parties were formed to avenge the death of a Navajo at the hands of some enemy. These raids were often composed of many men, but were entirely voluntary and inspired by individuals" (13). Downs also points out that the Navajo "never destroyed the economic base of their enemies by burning their homes or fields" (13). This highlights that a revenge attack was one of honor for the Navajos in order to make restitution for the loss of one of their tribe members, not just an excuse to completely destroy another tribe. Bernard Mishkin, in his book *Rank and Warfare among the Plains Indians*, explains that in the Kiowa tribe "revenge parties were organized when the whole tribe was assembled . . . . the avenger, who as leader of the expedition must be a prominent warrior though not necessarily a relative, began his preparations" (29). Revenge parties for the Kiowa tribe were also about pride and the "return of a successful revenge party was always marked by a triumphal entry into the camp" with the

warriors in full war dress "carrying scalps and other trophies flying from poles" (Mishkin 29-30). These revenge parties were cultural traditions for the Navajo and Kiowa, a matter of protection and honor of their tribes.

The third type of warfare activity the tribal warriors participated in was raiding expeditions. Down writes:

> Besides herding, weaving, hunting, and farming, the Navajo were also dependent on raiding for much of their economic well-being. . . . Raiding parties were always formed by a single man calling on his friends and neighbors to join him. A successful war leader had to undergo a prolonged apprenticeship under an older man who knew any one of the several complex war rituals thought necessary for successful operations. Once ordained, a war leader could then call on his friends to launch a raid against some enemy. The most frequent goal was to capture livestock, sheep, and horses in particular. (13)

Raiding parties were not taken lightly for the Navajo. Instead there was much thought, planning, and ritual that went in to each endeavor. This is also true of the Kiowas. The leader of a Kiowa raid party would try to interest his friends and relatives to join the party and "on the night before he intends to start, he sits alone in his tipi, having previously bent a long stick, like a hoop, around the fire hole; then he begins the Gua-dagya or travel song, beating time upon the hoop with another stick which he holds in his hand. When those who intend going with him hear the song, they come in one by one and join in it, beating time in the same way with sticks" (Mooney 312). Planning and ritual were vital parts of raid parties. These raid parties were also linked to protecting and providing for their tribe, as they were a means to increase their economic holdings, which in turn aided in the tribes' survival.

Though these reasons for warfare were valued and legitimized among American Indian tribes, European settlers did not see it that way. French posits, "Actions that are deemed appropriate by one warrior culture may be judged immoral and dishonorable by another. The warrior culture of the Plains Indians did not see anything dishonorable in stealth. They had high praise for the warrior who was able to catch his enemy unawares and dispatch him swiftly and silently"; however, the actions of raid parties "would have been considered despicable (cowardly murder and theft) by many European cultures of the same period. Such culturally-based differences in perception contributed to the European labeling of Native Americans as 'savages'" (161). European settlers did not attempt to understand Native American culture and traditions, including their warrior traditions. Instead they viewed them as uncivil, violent, and substandard. Gary Robinson and Phil Lucas explain, "During the 1700s and 1800s, the accepted view among Americans and Europeans was that Native Americans were inferior, war-loving savages. . . . early explorers purposefully created and disseminated this image of Indians to justify the wholesale displacement and genocide of indigenous peoples" (8-9).

As European explorers and later settlers came to the "New World," they claimed superiority over Native Americans because of their Christianity, technology, and education. Speaking of the disappearance of non-European white identities, Bonnett explains that:

> there existed cultural tradition in ancient and medieval Europe that valued the colour white as a symbol of purity, religiosity and nobility. The pale complexion attributed to aristocrats (according to pre-modern European legend, pale enough to see their veins, hence the expression 'blue blood') provided a physical marker of their noble descent. These traditions were woven with Christian representational tropes that privileged whiteness by associating it with chastity and godliness. . . . Europeans racialized, which

> is to say naturalized, the concept of whiteness, and entrusted it with the essence of their community. Europeans turned whiteness into a fetish object, a talisman of the natural whose power appeared to enable them to impose their will on the world. (1038, 1043)

Hence, as Europeans came to America and encountered Native Americans, they positioned themselves as above them because of their whiteness, a connection to their religious purity and nobility. They saw it as their duty to convert and assimilate Native Americans into Anglo culture. If Native Americans resisted, whites viewed them as uncivilized and violent. As more and more Europeans settled in the United States, the U.S. government pushed Native Americans off their lands. It is only natural that Native Americans fought back; however, their attempts to protect their homelands only furthered the white stereotype that they were "war-loving savages." White Americans further disseminated this stereotype as they pushed west, propelled on by what they considered their Manifest Destiny. Robert J. Miller claims there are three main themes to Manifest Destiny: "1. The special virtues of the American people and their institutions. 2. America's mission to redeem and remake the world in the image of America; and, 3. A divine destiny under God's direction to accomplish this wonderful task" (120). Obviously, the "American people" and "the image of America" in Manifest Destiny were white, and those that were not white or did not assimilate into white culture were seen as roadblocks to white American expansion. Manifest Destiny helped fuel western settlement, Native American removal, and war with Mexico.

Because whites killed off Native Americans and pushed them onto reservations, they came to see Native Americans as a type of endangered people and their culture on the brink of dying out. This thought of an endangered culture created a myth of what an "authentic" and "noble" Indian was. In his book *The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative*, Cherokee author

Thomas King explains how the "Indian was tailor-made" for American Romantic literature, because the "Romantics imagine their Indian as dying. But in that dying, in that passing away, in that disappearing from the stage of human progress, there was also a sense of nobility" (33). King also describes how Edward Sheriff Curtis started photographing Native Americans around 1900 because he was fascinated by "the idea of the North American Indian, obsessed with it. And he was determined to capture that idea, that image, before it vanished" (32). King's use of the word "idea" here is telling, because it highlights that Curtis was not necessarily fascinated by Native Americans themselves or as individuals, but by the idea or myth of them. This point is further proven when King states that "to make sure that [Curtis] would find what he wanted to find, he took along boxes of 'Indian' paraphernalia—wigs, blankets, painted backdrops, clothing—in case he ran into Indians who did not look as the Indian was supposed to look" (34). King himself had a similar experience when he worked aboard a German ship in the 1960s. He writes, "The cook, who could speak passable English, told me that he had read all of Karl May's novels and had a fair idea of what Indians were supposed to look like and that I wasn't what he had imagined. 'You're not the Indian I had in mind,' he told me" (48).

These myths or stereotypes of "authentic" and "noble" Indians trickle down into the warrior tradition, creating a myth of the Indian warrior. It is true that Native American tribes did have warriors, and they fought for honor. However, WWII introduced a whole new type of warfare, drastically different from the type of warfare Navajos, Kiowas, and Lagunas participated in for hundreds of years before. The warfare for these tribes was often about stealth and cunning; when warriors did have to kill another person it was face to face, they had to touch that person in order to kill them, and there were usually not mass amounts of casualties. With the advent of mechanized warfare, WWII was the complete opposite. With tanks, bombs, and long

distance rifles, soldiers could kill masses of people without ever seeing them; it was often a faceless war.

The Indian warrior then became an ideal that emerged from within a tribe but also a hegemonic narrative perpetuated by whites. For example, Russel Lawrence Barsh, in discussing how war reconfigured American Indian society, explains that when Americans entered WWI in 1917 "they had become intoxicated with the Indian Warrior ideal, both as a representation of the worthy adversary and as their own *alter ego*" (375). He goes on to state that as American Indians enlisted in WWI, they "suffered a peculiar and unique burden of cultural nostalgia: their grandfathers' stories" (377). Their grandfathers' stories of past tribal wars would have been completely different from the mechanized warfare of WWI, yet they carried those stories with them onto the battlefield in Europe. Even though white American society was propagating the narrative of "Indian warriors," Native Americans themselves subsumed the myth into their own identities. This goes back to Du Bois' concept of double consciousness, because Native Americans are viewing themselves through the lens of white America. The "Indian warrior" ideal carried over from WWI into WWII, particularly since the wars were not too distance in time from one another and the United States was fighting the same enemy (Germans). And just as the white ideal of masculinity during WWII was destructive to the individual, so too is the "Indian warrior" ideal destructive. However, the problem becomes double for Native Americans serving in WWII. The white ideal is damaging to everybody, especially to non-white soldiers, but replacing the hegemonic ideal with another ideal (even if it comes from within the marginalized group) still causes problems for the individual who always experiences life uniquely. The warrior stereotype specifically challenges American Indians to live up to a myth when they themselves go to modern war. Barsh argues that "those who must fight bear a double

burden of inflated expectations on their way to slaughter – and a profound silence when they return home shattered by the reality" (377).

Native American Involvement in World War II

After the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States declared war. Native American enlistment accelerated, and one observer noted that "if the entire population enlisted in the same proportion as Indians, there would be no need for selective service" (Townsend 61-62). However, Native Americans also willingly complied with draft registration. Kenneth William Townsend states:

> Pearl Harbor, it appeared to whites, ignited a latent 'warrior tradition' that still simmered among Native Americans. Determined to capture honor and glory in combat as their ancestors had achieved, Indians readily volunteered their service to America's armed forces. . . .Warrior societies had experienced a slow disintegration with each passing year since the cessation of Indian-white hostilities. In some Indian communities, ceremonies had vanished entirely. Combat duty, then, permitted Indians who historically maintained and valued warrior societies the opportunity to revitalize tribal culture and in the process gain personal prestige, respect, and honor in the manner of their ancestors. (78)

As mentioned earlier, the Indian warrior ideal was twofold, coming from both Native American tribes and white society. When whites saw how readily Native Americans enlisted in the war, they connected it to the past of their warrior customs, while Native Americans saw the war as a way to reclaim some of their lost ceremonies and traditions. Townsend also explains that the "image of a renewed warrior spirit" made for good stories for the news media. Newspapers printed stories about Indian war dances, purification rituals, Indian leaders making plans to form

scouting forces, and photographs of Indians with General Douglas McArthur. Townsend notes, "The mystic Indian warrior of an earlier time in the context of modern war captured the imagination of [newspaper] readers" (79). So even though the concept of the Indian Warrior comes from tribal tradition, during WWII, white society was fascinated by and perpetuated the label as Native Americans fought in the war. The Indian warrior ideal then comes from within white society, as whites have to tell a story they can understand and accept about non-whites before they can (conditionally) accept those non-whites as valuable assets to the U.S. military.

Native Americans also enlisted to fight in WWII as a way to break free of reservation oppression and open up doors that were previously closed to them. Of the 350,000 Native Americans, 44,000 of them saw military service during World War II, almost 13% of the native population ("The Role of Native Americans"). In contrast, about 9% of the total American population served in the war. Barsh argues, "The powerlessness and marginality of reservation life probably intensified men's feelings that going to war would *increase*, rather than reduce their personal significance. For the Indian soldier, as opposed to most of his white comrades, war service offered the possibility of becoming *more* than an anonymous statistic. It was very important to come home *a man* who had broken the shackles of Indian Office colonialism and gained individual power and competence" (380). Hence, perhaps it was not only the ideas of an Indian warrior that propelled Native Americans to enlist, but also the need to prove themselves as men, and a combination of the warrior tradition (both from within their tribes and from white society), feelings of duty, and seeing the war as a way to better oneself and prove oneself a man could have influenced Native Americans to enlist and fight during World War II.

The Warrior Tradition, Tribal Identity, and (In)Equality: Chester Nez's Code Talker

Chester Nez's memoir, *Code Talker* (2011), illustrates how his tribal identity, including tribal lands and language, were paramount in his development as a soldier and his desire to serve in the U.S. military. Nez notes that even before Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, the Navajo Tribal Council had passed a unanimous resolution in the spring of 1940 to defend the United States and its government. Part of the resolution reads:

> Now, Therefore, we resolve that the Navajo Indians stand ready as they did in 1918 to aid and defend our Government and its institutions against all subversive and armed conflict and pledge our loyalty to the system which recognizes minority rights and a way of life that has placed us among the great people of our race. (Nez 85)

Though this resolution does not speak to masculinity per se, it is significant in its discussion of patriotism. Though whites throughout history killed off Indians and forced them onto reservations, the Navajo Tribe feels a connection to their homeland. Nez states, "It might surprise non-Navajos to read this declaration of allegiance. No Navajo, however, would be surprised. We have always felt a deep allegiance to our motherland, our Navajo Nation, and our families. To this allegiance is linked a sincere desire to protect all three" (85). Though the Navajo Tribal council resolution pledges allegiance to the government of the United States, Nez's commentary on the resolution reveals that they feel more loyalty to their motherland, tribe, and families, indicating that their allegiance to the U.S. government is secondary to their ethnic, tribal, and familial identities. Though white soldiers also wished to protect their families, the idea of defending the United States as a whole, or the democratic ideal of the United States, seems more prevalent to them, whereas Nez's manhood is specifically linked to protecting the Navajo Nation. Nez illustrates that Navajos are willing to fight to protect their original homeland; they

want to stand up as men to protect their families just as their ancestors fought to protect their lands and tribe. Thus, Nez's perception of masculinity is rooted in his tribal identity and his willingness to uphold the tribal council's decree.

Nez and other Navajo young men saw the war as a way not only to protect their homelands and tribe, but also as a way to reclaim the Navajo warrior tradition. When Pearl Harbor was bombed, Nez told his roommate that he thought the military would want them because, "We are warriors" (87). Though Nez himself had never participated in any type of warfare, he feels as if the Navajo warrior tradition is in his blood. He had grown up hearing that the Navajos were warriors, and because he is Navajo he considers himself a warrior, even before he went to war. Joining the U.S. military in WWII did not mean he was seeking revenge for the death of a tribal member, nor was he raiding livestock for economic gain. Instead, he felt like he was protecting his tribal homeland on a larger scale, because the Japanese Empire had bombed Hawaii and there was the possibility that it would attack the U.S. mainland, which included Navajo land. Nez felt that participating in the war was a way to keep the dangers at bay. Additionally, when the Marines began to recruit Navajos for a special assignment, Nez thoughtfully considered joining. He remarks, "I wanted to see how people lived off the reservation. I was curious to learn about the possibilities and opportunities offered out there in the larger world. And, more than anything, I wanted to serve and defend my country. That was a man's responsibility" (88). The combination of Navajo warrior tradition to protect one's homeland, seeing the war as an opportunity to explore life outside the reservation, and feelings of duty (that were also part of the white ideal of masculinity) influenced Nez to join the Marines, and by extension allowed him to feel that he could prove himself as a man. Nez notes several times that he and his fellow Navajo Marine recruits were men now, "men who would fight for

our country" (90). Similar to the concept that the military allowed men to attain desirable masculinity, Nez too saw the war as a training ground to achieve manhood.

One aspect of tribal life that added to Nez's understanding of manly service was the Navajo language itself. The U.S. military needed a code that the Japanese could not break, so they turned to the Navajos and their language, recruiting them to create, implement, and then use the code in the Pacific theater. For many years, whites shipped American Indians off to boarding schools to teach them the "white way," while at the same time never believing Indians could ever reach the same intelligence and civilization as whites. This exemplifies Homi Bhabha's concept of colonial mimicry, which "is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (85). In other words, whites wanted to educate American Indians in order to assimilate them into their way of life, but still keep them at an inferior status. They perpetuated stereotypes of American Indians, claiming that they were stupid and lazy, because that was how they could keep their dominant power. Yet, the Navajo code talkers were able to use their own language and the language of colonial power, literally code switching between the two, in order to help the U.S. military and accomplish a task no other group of men could do. Vizenor explains, "The English language has been the linear tongue of colonial discoveries, racial cruelties, invented names, the simulation of tribal cultures, manifest manners, and the unheard literature of dominance in tribal communities; at the same time, this mother tongue of paracolonialism has been a language of invincible imagination and liberation for many tribal people in the postindian world" (105). Nez uses the English language to tell his story of his place in the postindian world, highlighting how the Navajo language becomes a part of his and his fellow code talkers' survivance, and by extension the survival of the United States.

No other group was able to create a code to defeat the Japanese, and so the Navajo code talkers become indispensable in the history of the Allied victory in the Second World War.

The Navajos who developed the code during WWII also directly disprove the stereotype of the lazy, stupid Indian, instead demonstrating their intelligence, quick thinking, and hardworking personalities. Nez states, "The new code was leagues more efficient than the 'Shackle' code used previously by combatants. Once they stopped being troubled by the foreign-sounding words, the generals were impressed" (113). Though talking is not generally seen as a gendered activity, the goal for the Navajo code (defeating Japan) was gendered as masculine, because it was men who were fighting the war. Hence, the Navajo language became a way for the Navajo soldiers to perform their masculinity. They proved that their tribal identities, and by extension their ethnic masculinity, was up to the task of assisting the U.S. military. Additionally, when Native Americans were so often silenced by boarding school matrons, by government policy, and by the colonial power in general, the war created a space for the Navajo code talkers to actually speak out using both their native language and the language of dominance, intersecting their identities. They were, in essence, men being heard.

Nez notes that in connection with the use of their language, tribal group mentality was essential for their success. He explains that when they first created the code they quizzed each other and helped each other learn it. He writes, "We knew that the strength of the group made us all sharp. And in combat, the code would only be as strong as both men using it—the one on the sending end and the one on the receiving end" (108). As Kimmel notes, men often prove their manhood by comparing themselves to other men, trying to demonstrate that their manhood is superior to others. For Nez and his fellow Navajo soldiers, this was not the case. Their connection to a tribal community, where they often worked together for survival, affected their

experience in the military. As French states, tribal warriors "were responsible both to protect and to provide for their people" (145). In order to protect and provide for the people in their tribe, warriors had to work as a team, whether that meant assembling a hunting party or facing an enemy. As American soldiers, the Navajo code talkers saw themselves as warriors protecting their homeland, and as it was each of their homelands, they did not attempt to prove their masculinity individually, which was often the case for white soldiers. This is similar to the community spirit that Japanese American soldiers embodied during the war. The Navajo soldiers were not trying to prove that they were smarter or could learn the code quicker than each other. Instead, they worked as a group to achieve an equal manhood because they realized that is how they would survive, and by extension protect their tribe.

Another aspect of most American Indian cultures that played a role in developing the code and allowing the Navajo soldiers to illustrate their masculinity was their oral traditions. Nez explains, 'Despite the efforts of boarding schools to repress it, Navajo oral tradition remained strong. Stories were still told around the campfires at home, memorized, and told again . . . and again. Memorization, for each of us, was second nature" (108). The code talkers had to memorize the code and know it flawlessly in order for it to work, and Nez clearly states that their oral tradition is what helped them succeed. Vizenor notes, "The natural world is a venture of sound and shadows, and the outcome of the oral traditions is not the silence of discoveries, dominance, and written narratives. The natural development of the oral traditions is not a written language. The notion, in the literature of dominance, that the oral advances to the written, is a colonial reduction of natural sound, heard stories, and the tease of shadows in tribal remembrance" (72). Though Nez's memoir is a written language, his oral traditions are not merely written down as part of the literature of dominance. Instead, he points out that oral

traditions remained strong in the Navajo tribe, despite boarding schools (i.e. the dominant power) attempting to silence that tradition. At the time of the war, the Navajo code was not written down for the soldiers to carry into the field; instead code talkers memorized the code perfectly and only held it in their memories. Again, this embodies Vizenor's concept of survivance because the code talkers resisted having their oral traditions and native language taken away from them, which led to the survival of these traditions, language, and tribal people. And by extension, their survival in the war was predicated on the success of their code that was based off of the survival of their native language and oral traditions. Hence, this combination of Navajo culture and Navajo tribal identity was another aspect that allowed the code talkers to demonstrate their masculinity during WWII, not merely through muscles and brute force but through language, intelligence, oral tradition, and teamwork.

Nevertheless, physical prowess also played a part in the Navajo soldiers' demonstration of masculinity. An aspect of military life that tested men was boot camp and physical training, and Nez comments that the physical challenges were something that Navajos were used to. Growing up as sheep herders, waking in the early morning, and being used to walking for miles had prepared them for the physical rigors of the Marines; "The exhaustion that conquered many Marine recruits did not beat us Navajos" (Nez 95). Kimmel explains that masculinity is mainly a homosocial performance because men define their masculinity in relation to each other, and they attempt to test and prove their manhood by demonstrating different masculine traits (1, 5). For centuries, strength and athleticism have been traits to measure masculinity against. Boot camp during WWII was an entirely homosocial space where soldiers could compete with each other physically to define their masculinity. For Nez and the other Navajo recruits, the ability to compare themselves in physical prowess to and find themselves superior to other white Marines

gave them a sense of pride. As a marginalized people who were often considered inferior in most respects to the white population, boot camp allowed them the space to invalidate such notions and prove their manhood. Not only were they men defending their country, but they were men who could withstand the physical hardships of the military and outperform whites who were held up as the ideal of American masculinity.

The Navajo recruits were recognized for their outstanding performance in boot camp, as we see in this passage Nez quotes from the May 16, 1942 edition of *Chevron*, the Marine Corps newspaper: "magnificent specimens of 'original American' manhood, they are already farther advanced than recruits usually are" (Nez 97). Even as the news article praises the Navajo recruits for their training and work ethic, it also others them. They are not simply symbols of American manhood, but "original American manhood," indicating the difference between them and white soldiers. And though their manhood seems to measure above others they trained with, it still seems like they are part of a marginalized masculinity. When the Navajo recruits completed their seven weeks of basic training, Colonel James L. Underhill praised them, stating:

> Yours has been one of the outstanding platoons in the history of this Recruit Depot and a letter has gone to Washington telling of your excellence. You obey orders like seasoned and disciplined soldiers. You have maintained rugged health. You have been anxious to learn your new duties, and you have learned quickly. As a group you have made one of the highest scores on the Rifle Range.
>
> The Marine Corps is proud to have you in its ranks, and I am proud to have been the Commanding Officer of the Base while you were here.
>
> When the time comes that you go to battle with the enemy, I know that you will fight like true Navajos, Americans and Marines. (Nez 99)

Although the Navajo recruits may have been othered, their performance in basic training could not be found wanting. As Kimmel states, "the idea of testing and proving one's manhood became one of the defining experiences in American men's lives" (1). For Navajo recruits, basic training was a place where they could test their masculinity, and also test their ability to participate in a previously whites-only institution (the U.S. Marines). Their results were visible in their rugged health, strong bodies, high rifle range scores, and willingness to obey.

Despite their impressive physical performances in boot camp and their skill in developing a code, Navajo soldiers faced the dilemma of cultural conflicts and hardships of assimilating into the white military structure. After World War II, Harvard sent its anthropology graduate students to the Navajo Reservation to study American Indian acculturation, and Barsh notes that "the Harvard studies presumed that the major 'trauma' experienced by Indian veterans had not been the war, but learning how to cope with the alien values and beliefs of their non-Indian comrades" (392). Though learning to cope with the different values and beliefs of non-Indians was not the only major trauma Native American soldiers faced during WWII, it was certainly one of their traumas. Nez acknowledges this, stating, "Soon we learned that the real challenges in the military were cultural, not physical" (95). He explains that in the Navajo culture looking someone in the eye was considered bad manners, but their military officers expected them to make eye contact; also, Navajos were taught to keep their voice modulated, but their boot camp instructors yelled at the top of their voices. Later Nez notes that seeing the ocean for the first time normally required a blessing, but when they were stationed in San Diego they "just came upon the ocean all of a sudden" because "things in the military were different" (108). Though they were both Navajo and American, the military required them to adapt more to white American culture. They held onto their sacred beliefs, but Nez points out that often during

wartime and training they had to comply with things that did not hold up to their beliefs. He writes, "There were times we men, accustomed to reservation life, felt like we'd arrived on a different planet" (96). Much like when the American government took Indian children from their homes and shipped them off to boarding school, the government was again taking Native Americans away from their home, this time to fight in a foreign war. Though most Native Americans saw it as a duty, as Nez did, to protect their homeland, and they enlisted and fought willingly, they would have been faced with this double trauma: adapting to white military society and the trauma of actual war.

Nez also describes the dichotomy between the equality he felt he experienced as an American soldier and the racism other non-soldier Native Americans faced. As a code talker, Nez and his fellow Navajo recruits created a code using their native language to transmit messages on the battlefield—one the Japanese could not break. Their job in war was vital for battle plans to be passed on to soldiers fighting in the field, and their code is credited with helping win the war in the Pacific. Throughout his memoir, Nez notes that the Navajos were treated well in the Marines, and that they all got along with their fellow soldiers. He writes, "Our skin color didn't work against us in the military" and "In a time when black and white soldiers, and even blood supplies, were segregated, the Marines put absolute trust in us Navajo men" (172, 185). Yet despite these statements, other experiences Nez describes illustrate racism toward American Indians. For example, when they were stationed in San Diego creating the code, they would go to bars wearing their Marine uniforms and were "served with no questions asked" (107). But American Indians who were not wearing uniforms were not served alcohol because "[t]he popular idea was that a drunk Indian was a bad Indian" (107). This discrimination points to the stereotype of the drunk Indian that assumes all Indians cannot control their appetites

for liquor, unless of course that Indian was serving in the military. Those Native Americans in the military were able to visually display to others their value to the U.S. and, by association, white society through the symbol of the Marine uniform. However, Native Americans not in uniform did not have the same opportunity because there was still a divide between "superior" whites and "inferior" Indians.

While Nez posits that he and the other code talkers were treated well and equally in the Marines, other experiences he describes indicate the underlying racism that they still encountered. When they began testing the code in California, illustrating the speed and accuracy of it, some officers had doubts. Nez recounts: "Some observers even thought the code was so accurate—word for word and punctuation mark for punctuation mark—that we must be cheating somehow. That bothered us. What point would there be in cheating? That wouldn't cut it in battle. We wanted our code to work as much as anyone else did. Maybe more. But we didn't let on how much that accusation insulted us" (113). The doubt some officers had of the Navajo code could stem from a couple of reasons. First, it could speak to the stereotype of the "lazy Indian." If the observers of the code thought the Navajos may have been cheating, it could address the idea that Indians are lazy, and the Navajos were just trying to get by with doing the least amount of work possible. Secondly, some possibly thought the Navajos were not intelligent enough to create a code that worked so efficiently and accurately. After all, American Indians were sent to boarding schools to learn the "white way," but were never truly seen as white or equal to whites, again reiterating Bhabha's concept of "almost the same, but not quite" (85). Or thirdly, perhaps their loyalty was being questioned and observers thought Navajos were trying to use the code to sabotage the U.S. military. No matter what the reason for the doubts, it indicates that American Indians in the military may not have been treated as well or as equally as Nez felt they were.

Another experience that illustrates how the Navajo Marines were othered was when the Navajo code was mistaken for Japanese and the Navajo soldiers were themselves mistaken for Japanese soldiers. When the code talkers were first testing the Navajo code in the Pacific, other U.S. soldiers believed that the enemy had gotten ahold of their radio lines and what they were hearing was the Japanese language. It caused a panic until it was clarified that it was part of the U.S. Marine code. At another time, Nez and his fellow code talker, Francis, were walking together, speaking Navajo, when two U.S. soldiers waylaid them. They pointed rifles at Nez and Francis and accused them of stealing U.S. Marine uniforms. The white soldier would not believe Nez when they said they were Marines too, and did not lower their weapons until an officer confirmed that they were indeed U.S. Marines. This happened again when another Navajo Marine brought in Japanese prisoners. A white solider exclaimed, "We thought he was a Jap bringing in his own men" (Nez 202). Nez continues:

> Like the Army men on Angaur who had detained me and Francis, some of the Marines thought we dark-haired, dark-skinned code talkers resembled the Japanese. At first, I couldn't understand it. In my opinion, the two races—Japanese and Navajo—looked nothing alike. But later, after staring eye to eye with that young Japanese prisoner on Guam, I understood. But I never did understand why so many American troops thought our Navajo transmissions were Japanese. I guess Navajo just sounded foreign to them. Our language and the language of the enemy sounded nothing alike. (203)

Although Nez seems to give leniency to white American soldiers for mistaking him for Japanese, these experiences indicate how one race or ethnicity often seems the same as another to those on the outside. Once again, this indicates that the Navajo soldiers are being defined by whites. Not only is there the white ideal of WWII era masculinity, but whites also get to define the ideals for

non-white soldiers. When the Navajos' behavior does not fit "the Indian I had in mind," trouble ensues (King). And despite the fact that America is a land of many races and ethnicities, being white was seen as being *truly* American during WWII. Other races, though they too were American, were not immediately recognized as Americans, and their citizenship and loyalty had to be confirmed by those in command. Nez points out that the Navajo language sounds nothing like "the language of the enemy"; this appears to be an effort to illustrate how truly American Navajos are by distancing Navajos from the Japanese. In this sentence the language is not just Japanese, but the language of the enemy, while Navajo is the language of patriotism.

Additionally, even though Nez repeatedly confirms that he was treated well and equally while he served in the military and that his service was praised and appreciated, when he returns from the war it is another story. To begin with, chapter 17 is titled "No Hero's Welcome," which is representative of the differences he encountered stateside. Nez explains, "I was still a private first class. I read later that the Marines had no protocol in place for promoting code talkers, since it was a new specialty" (213). Despite being indispensable as one of the Navajos who created the code and one of the first to use it in the field and having honorably served in the Marines for over three years, Nez received no promotions. The fact that the military did not know how to promote them because what they were doing in the war was new seems suspect. In *Bring Me Men: Military Masculinity and the Benign Façade of American Empire, 1898-2001,* Aaron Belkin explains, "Within any military organization, masculinities circulate along with a range of other hierarchies based on race, sex, rank, religion, service branch, occupational specialty, and other factors" (31). Other soldiers could have viewed this lack of promotion as a comment on Navajos' masculinity, thinking that their stationary status was a result of them not doing their job as men and perpetuating the stereotype of the "lazy Indian." Their occupational specialty, which was

based on their ethnicity, led to their inability for promotion. Hence, Navajos' ethnicity affects perception of their masculinity in the military. Couple this with the fact that the Navajo Code Talkers could not even talk about their wartime work for twenty-three years after the war because it was classified top secret, and it creates a cycle of misunderstood or misrepresented American Indian masculinity.

Writing about silence in American Indian communication, Patricia Covarrubias describes two kinds of silence: consumptive and generative. Consumptive silence signals a negative, an absence, or a deviance. Covarrubias states, "In consumptive silence, the self can be seen as unempowered as when silence is imposed for purposes of oppression" (268). Generative silence, on the other hand, is seen as a fertile communication activity where people affirm the self and each other. Covarrubias writes, "In generative silence, people are seen as dynamic, affirmed, strengthened, connected, acknowledged, and empowered" (268). Native American societies often perceive silence as generative silence, where individuals are seen as strong and learning from or gleaning power from silence. Interestingly during the war, the code talkers' job was to be anything but silent; they used language as their weapon. However, after the war, they were again silenced. The government forced the code talkers to remain silent about their wartime activities, resulting in consumptive silence. Even though the silence of the Navajo code talkers can be seen as generative for the government (as the code was top secret they could potentially use it again if needed), allowing the government to be strong and empowered in a military sense, it was consumptive for the Navajo soldiers because they were being suppressed and unempowered. The code talkers are now credited with having been instrumental in winning the war in the Pacific, but at the time they could receive no recognition for it. As Barsh states, the Navajos were

silenced culturally, but they were also silenced by the government, a haunting image of how the U.S. government attempted to permanently silence their ancestors by slaughtering them.

Nez received no hero's welcome because he could not reveal his work in the war, but also because white American citizens did not see him as a war hero. Nez recounts that after returning from the war he stopped in Gallup, New Mexico to get an identification card. He was dressed in his "spotless Marine uniform" and approached the desk with confidence: "From behind the desk, the man stared at me, the Navajo Marine, and his eyes narrowed. 'You're not a *full* citizen of the United States, you know.' Wielding the small power given to him by his position, the man pressed his lips together and raised his brows in a contemptuous expression. 'You can't even vote'" (217). The white civil servant could not see past the color of Nez's skin to recognize that he served his county. And if the white man did not see Nez as a citizen, then he certainly would not see Nez as a man either. Sadly, Native Americans were not granted the right to vote in New Mexico until 1948, three years after Nez had finished his service as a Navajo code talker in the Pacific War. Not being seen as a full American citizen would have affected how other men perceived Native American men, which then in turn would have affected how they viewed themselves as men. Nez's experiences highlight the unequal treatment of Native Americans and the unfairness of valuing one race over another and one form of masculinity over another. The realities Nez faced coming home from war also links back to the double trauma of war itself and adapting to white military life. Additionally, Native American soldiers faced a double re-acculturation when they came home from war. Not only did they have to go from soldier to citizen, but most of them went from having a so-called "white" status (they served with whites and were enlisted as white soldiers) to going back to reservations and no longer having the luxury of being seen as "white."

Though Nez's memoir is a story about his experiences in war, and in essence should break cultural silence, he still stays silent about difficult issues. He claims that he was treated well and fairly in the military even though he encountered racism and unfair treatment because of his ethnicity. In fact, it is as if Nez remains silent by toeing the company line, because the company line (i.e. patriotism, duty) is more important than voicing discontent. This is a revealing dichotomy because Nez's job in the war was talking, but it was talking for the sake of patriotism—he had a duty to fulfill and he fulfilled it. But in telling his own story he downplays his own feelings because they are less important than the collective story of the code talkers. And that downplaying of his feelings results in a type of consumptive silence.

The Warrior Tradition and Silence: N. Scott Momaday's House Made of Dawn

Though Nez's *Code Talker* is a memoir and Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* is a novel, they share several similarities. First, the protagonists in both texts are affected by the warrior tradition of their tribes (i.e. living up to their ancestors' expectations) and the imagined Indian warrior myth propagated by white society (i.e. fulfilling the noble Indian stereotype), which most likely influenced them to enlist and propelled them to prove themselves as men. Second, because both protagonists fought in the war, when they return home they find it difficult to demobilize and are unsure of their place. And third, both Nez and Able are affected by silence; however, that silence is demonstrated in different ways. While Nez remains silent on certain issues, Momaday breaks the code of Indian silence by writing silence. He points out the problems that Abel faces because he cannot voice his turmoil within. Therefore, silence in Momaday's text is seen as a crushing difficulty, whereas Nez basically brushes that difficulty aside. In Momaday's *House Made of the Dawn*, the protagonist Abel, a Kiowa Indian, returns home from World War II a

drunken mess, shattered by trauma and loss of identity. He bears the double burden that Barsh describes, trying to prove himself in battle as an American soldier and Indian warrior but is then unable to talk about it when he comes home. Because of his many experiences in war, Abel cannot seem to reconcile the different parts of his identity: soldier and Indian, American and Indian, and part of both the past and the present.

Although readers do not know much about Abel before he comes home from the war, I argue that he most likely would have been influenced in much the same way by ideas of duty and warriorhood as other American Indians were. In describing traditional status within the Kiowa tribe, Mishkin explains that the highest rank a tribal member could attain was *Óndeidɔ*, meaning "fine, distinguished, perfect, best" (35). In order for a man to achieve this rank, "He should be handsome on a horse. He should have property enough to validate his rank by distributing it when necessary. He should be generous. He must be aristocratic in his bearing and courteous. Above all else, he must have distinguished himself in war. This last overweighs the other four taken together" (Mishkin 36). Though this type of tribal ranking among Kiowas had disintegrated due to whites pushing Native Americans onto reservations, forcing them to assimilate and suppressing their culture, it is still a traditional memory. As hostilities between other tribes and white Americans were mostly a thing of the past by the 1940s, enlisting in WWII would offer Abel a way to distinguish himself in war and achieve a type of imagined high tribal ranking.

Warfare appears to be a way for Abel to feel connected to his Kiowa roots, but the reality of war further separates him from his culture. Abel bears an additional burden because his grandfather did not want him to go to the war. Momaday writes, "But the old man had not understood, would not understand, only wept, and Abel left him alone. It was time to go, and the

old man was away in the fields. There was no one to wish him well or tell him how it would be, and Abel put his hands in his pockets and waited" (21). Here Abel is pulled between going to war, conceivably what he considers his duty and a chance to move up in the world, and his grandfather's wishes and feelings. Though there is no clear indication why Abel has enlisted, he would have heard stories growing up of Kiowa warriors who had distinguished themselves in war and achieve the highest tribal rank. Yet, his grandfather pushes against that ideal. Abel is torn between wanting to honor his grandfather and wanting to go to war, and "suddenly [Abel] had the sense of being all alone, as if he were already miles and months away, gone long ago from the town and the valley and the hills, from everything he knew and had always known" (Momaday 21). These lines are a foreshadowing of how Abel will feel when he comes back from the war, caught in many worlds: the white world and the Indian world, the world of war and the world of "peace," and the world of non-tradition and the world of tradition. Already the brief separation from his grandfather (who is his connection to his home and Kiowa traditions) before he leaves makes him feel unfamiliar with the things he has always known, so the longer separation due to the war causes him to feel completely alien at home. Even though warfare was how Kiowa warriors distinguished themselves in the past, riding on horseback to avenge a death or participate in a raiding party, WWII was a much different kind of war. It was mechanized (not a lot of horseback riding), it was overseas away from Abel's homeland, and it was often considered "the white man's war." So even if Abel goes to war to feel a connection to his Kiowa culture, in reality he becomes even more divorced from it as he is surrounded by white men, violence, and destruction.

In flashbacks in the novel, readers get a glimpse into what war was like for Abel and how he behaved and reacted during the war. For example, in one flashback his fellow soldiers,

Corporal Rate and Bowker, describe what Abel did when an enemy tank was searching the field for survivors. At first he played dead and waited for the tank to pass. But then "he just all of a sudden got up and started jumping around and yelling at the goddam tank . . . He was giving it the finger and whooping it up and doing a goddam *war dance*, sir. . . . And he didn't have no weapon or helmet even" (Momaday 103). This passage is significant for two reasons. First, it highlights how Abel's fellow soldiers view him as an Other, describing him as "chief," explaining that he whooped and did a war dance (stereotypical representations of an Indian), saying that he gave it to the tank in "Sioux or Algonquin or something" (103). It is clear that they do not know Abel at all or even know what tribe he is from, again collapsing all non-whites into one group—he's an Indian, so to the white soldiers it does not really matter what tribe he is from, merely that he is not white. Second, it illustrates how Abel may have bought into the myth of the Indian warrior.

It could be argued that Abel's was a hysterical response to being one of the only survivors in battle, but I claim that his reaction shows how was he trying to recover a part of a lost past by demonstrating the fierceness of a Kiowa warrior. Instead of lying low to protect himself, he put himself in danger to show his bravery; in essence he was an Indian "brave." In "Reimaging Warriorhood," Taiaiake Alfred explains that the

> key defining characteristic of a warrior is someone who is putting his life at risk. . . . It's a spiritual sense, a spiritually defined role, as opposed to a more political or social role. . . . But I want to make a distinction between warrior soldiers or fighters, and having that warrior spirit in everything that you do as an Indigenous person. The essential characteristic is someone who is concerned, who is driven, by the need to satisfy that warrior ethic, and the demands of the warrior ethic, as opposed to someone who is living

> to satisfy the demands of a value system that is constructed out of capitalism, or Christianity, or anything else. (84-85)

Abel puts his life at risk in this scene, but unnecessarily so. He may have been attempting to satisfy a warrior ethic in the only way he could think of, because certainly standing up to the tank does not bring him any capital gain. Yet, he could have also been satisfying the demands of the masculine value system. He is, as Kimmel explains, demonstrating his masculinity to his fellow soldiers by showing his courage and placing himself in danger. Abel's behavior also illustrates what Barsh asserts when he says, "Goaded by stereotypical expectations, it is not surprising that Indians sought validation in a traditional ideal of warriorhood. Indian soldiers assumed risky assignments, such as scouting and walking point, because they felt that their individual skills and courage actually mattered, the way it had mattered for their grandfathers" (Barsh 379). Even though Abel is not taking a risky assignment from a superior in this scene, he is, nevertheless, taking a risk. Abel has internalized the white stereotype of the "Indian"—his survival (or survivance) is at stake because he cannot get past "Indian" into "postindian" (Vizenor). He views his individual effort of angering the tank and showing that he is not afraid as a worthy endeavor, one which is later praised by his fellow (white) soldiers.

Just as Abel had no one to wish him well when he left, no one to talk to, he feels that he cannot talk to anyone when he returns. As stated earlier, Covarrubias describes silence as either consumptive (negative and unempowered) or generative (positive and empowered) (268). Because Native American societies often recognize silence as generative, silence could then be seen as a traditional healing along with native ceremonies. However, in *House Made of Dawn*, the narrator explains, "[Abel] had tried in the days that followed to speak to his grandfather, but he could not say the things he wanted; he had tried to pray, to sing, to enter into the old rhythm

of the tongue, but he was no longer attuned to it" (Momaday 53). Though Abel desires to speak to his grandfather and to feel familiar with the old ways, he is separated from them. Abel is shattered by reality (of both war and of being home), but he is burdened by profound silence. Abel's silence is consumptive, rather than generative, because he wishes to speak, but cannot, and is therefore oppressed by that silence. Abel is caught in many worlds, but cannot seem to fit into any of them. In addition, he is unable to verbalize whatever is going on inside him.

As mentioned earlier, American Indians had to face the double trauma of war—adapting to white military society and the horrors of battle. Therefore, Abel, too has this double trauma, so when he comes home from war, he does not know how to cope and cannot come to grips with his identity. Is he a solider? An Indian? Does he belong on the reservation or in an urban area? Though Momaday writes about the binaries of identity, by doing so he highlights the problems of insisting that identity is either/or instead of both/and. Crenshaw argues that one cannot separate different aspects of identity, which is why embracing the intersectionality of identity becomes an important task for individuals. However, Abel lives in a time when the either/or concept of identity was the cultural norm, so Momaday writes Abel as stuck in the middle of such binaries, not being able to fit into either pole. Abel cannot seem to answer the questions of what/who he is and where he belongs, and so turns to alcohol as coping mechanism. Nicholas O. Warner asserts that Abel's drinking "separates him from the grandfather who had raised him, and who is closely associated with Indian rituals" (21). Though this is partially true, it is the war that initially separates him from his grandfather, home, and traditions. The trauma of war and a lost identity is what turns him to drinking, further separating him from his native self. Irem Seklem notes that during World War II, Abel voluntarily fought with his fellow soldiers for the good of their county. It is almost as if the soldiers in his regiment became his tribe; however, when he comes

home from the war "he is alone in his inner struggle, and there is no quick fix for him to accommodate himself to either his Native traditions or life outside the reservation" (Seklem 24-25). Abel is affected by the time period he lives in, in which white society has affected and influenced native culture and identity. He is also affected by his service in the war, by being further separated from his home and native identity, being surrounded by white soldiers and entrenched in white military life. Therefore, returning home for him is not as simple as returning to his family and where he grew up. He should be able to claim all parts of his identity—American, Indian, soldier, man—but it seems society will not allow him to do as such.

In addition to separating him from his tribal identity, the war also disrupts Abel's memory. Momaday writes, "This—everything in advance of his going—he could remember in detail. It was the recent past, the intervention of days and years without meaning, of awful calm and collision, time always immediate and confused, that he could not put together in his mind" (21). This confusion of memory then creates a confusion of identity in Abel. He does not know how to act or connect to his home. He remembers things before the war, but they do not seem real to him, and because they do not seem real he cannot grasp them. His former self (his Indian self) and his life on the reservation and with his grandfather are like an illusion that only haunts him. Perhaps in war, he felt he had a purpose. Though he was surrounded by violence and destruction, he still would have had a job to do; he would have been a soldier, surrounded by other (mostly white) soldiers fulfilling the same duty. But, as Seklem notes, when he returns he is alone; no one that is around him has had the same experiences he has. Abel's grandfather instilled in him a sense of native traditions and values, but the war (ironically something that should have brought him closer to his warrior traditions) has severed Abel's connections to that world of spiritual and physical wholeness and kinship to the land and its people.

Abel's disconnectedness with his home, his grandfather, and even his own identity leads him into mishaps. He gets a job chopping wood for Angela St. John, a rich white woman who is visiting the area to bathe in the mineral waters. To distract herself from her own unhappiness, Angela seduces Abel. She promises to help him leave the reservation and find better employment. Perhaps as a result of this affair, Abel recognizes that his return to the reservation has been unsuccessful; he is confused and no longer feels at home. His turmoil becomes clearer when he is beaten in a game of horsemanship by a local albino Indian named Juan Reyes, described as "the white man." No longer surrounded by the violence of war, Abel turns to a different kind of violence when he murders Reyes. Though Reyes is Indian, during the scene where Abel stabs him, his whiteness is referred to again and again: his white hands, his massive white arms, his great white body. Momaday writes, "One of the arms lay out from the body; it was there in the pale angle of the white man's death, that Abel knelt. . . . He knelt over the white man for a long time in the rain, looking down" (74). Reyes' whiteness is symbolic of "the white man" in general, which has confused Abel about who he should be. Participating in the horse race was perhaps Abel's last-ditch effort to connect to his Indian side, so losing to the albino means that he has lost to a "white man," and by extension has lost himself. Here, Abel cannot seem to connect to survivance, instead falling victim to the colonial power's custom of violence. Guillermo Bartelt suggests that the action of this murder becomes "symbolic of Abel's attempt to resolve the cultural identity crisis which had plagued him since adolescence" (473). This crisis of cultural identity is what hinders him from embracing survivance—he is not surviving as his Native self, nor is he resisting the colonial power. He has bought into the white cultural stereotype of the "Indian warrior" in which violence is the main characteristic rather than honor in providing food through the hunt or avenging a tribal member. Abel turns to violence, because

it is the one thing that makes sense to him and an attempt to come to terms with where he belongs.

However, the violence Abel enacts upon the albino does not help him in his quest to discover where he belongs. After he kills the albino, the novel picks up six years later. Abel has been released from prison and is now living in L.A. Because he felt that his return to the reservation was unsuccessful, he attempts to live in "the white man's world," but this also has been unsuccessful. In Part III of the novel, Ben Banally, a Navajo and Abel's friend and roommate, narrates what has happened to Abel in L.A. Ben explains that Abel was ridiculed by Reverend Tosamah for being a "longhair"; Abel gets drunk and stays drunk for several days, and then he loses his job. Ben notes, "He was a longhair, like Tosamah said. You know, you have to change. That's the only way you can live in a place like his. You have to forget about the way it was, how you grew up and all. Sometimes it's hard, but you have to do it" (131) Ben criticizes Abel as a "longhair," meaning that he is "too" Indian to adapt and survive in the white man's world. Ben claims that to make it in L.A an Indian needs to forget where he came from, his Indian roots, again illustrating that in this time period an individual is either/or and not both/and; there is not acceptance of intersectionality. But letting go of his roots or Indianness is not something Abel is able to do, and, therefore, he cannot seem to find harmony in L.A.

Ben also explains that when Abel came to L.A. the parole officer, welfare, and the Relocation people "kept coming around" and were always "after him about something" (139). They wanted to know if he was staying out of trouble, how he was doing, always warning him, and telling him he would end up back in prison if he did not stay out of trouble. Ben says, "And they can't help you because you don't know how to talk to them. They have a lot of *words*, and you know they mean something, but you don't know what, and your own words are no good

because they're not the same; they're different, and they're the only words you've got. Everything is different, and you don't know how to get used to it" (139). Abel is still caught in an in-between place. He does not feel like he belongs on the reservation after returning home from the war, yet he cannot accustom himself to life outside the reservation either. When Ben states that all the people asking him questions have a lot of words, but they are not Abel's words or words he can understand, it highlights the displacement Abel feels. It is like he is a foreigner in a foreign country, struggling to comprehend but just cannot. Though he may understand the meaning of the words on a surface level, he cannot understand them culturally. Ben's statement also refers back to the same kind of consumptive silence Able experienced with his grandfather. He wanted to talk to his grandfather after the war, to "enter into the old rhythm of the tongue, but he was no longer attuned to it" (53). He could not speak his native language because he was not connected with his Native self, and yet he is not attuned to English either because he is Native American. Silencing trumps speech in all aspects of Abel's life, and he consumed by it.

Though L.A. could have afforded Abel a fresh start, it cannot help Abel because he still does not know who he is after returning from war. Ben posits:

> Once you find your way around and get used to everything you wonder how you ever got along out there where you came from. There's nothing there, you know, just the land, and the land is empty and dead. Everything is here, everything you could ever want. You never have to be alone. You go downtown and there are a lot of people all around, and they're having a good time. You see how it is with them, how they get along and have money and nice things, radios and cars and clothes and big houses. And you want those things; you'd be crazy not to want them. And you can have them, too; they're so *easy* to have. (158)

In actuality, L.A. is what is empty and dead compared with the memories Abel has of the landscape of his homeland. He might never be alone in the physical sense of the word because L.A. is a big city and there are always people around, but he is alone spiritually. He has no real connection to anyone. Ben claims that it is so easy to have nice things, the things that make people happy, but these things still do not make one feel complete or like he belongs. Perhaps Ben has accustomed himself to living away from his homeland and people, but Abel cannot.

Perversely, it is when Abel is the victim of violence himself that he seems to be awakened to his native identity. It is almost as if acts of violence function as jolts of reality for Abel, instigating his coming and going between his home (the reservation and native identity) and white urban society (L.A.). After Abel is badly beaten, he lies on the ground and thinks: "Now, here, the world was open at his back. He had lost his place. He had been long ago at the center, had known where he was, had lost his way, had wandered to the end of the earth, was even now reeling on the edge of the void. The sea reached and leaned, licked after him and withdrew, falling off forever in the abyss" (92). Being the victim of violence makes him realize that he has lost his place and has been standing at the edge of an abyss. The physical pain makes him confront his spiritual pain. Ben performs the Night Way[7] for Abel as a way of healing, not only physically but spiritually. The performance of a Native ceremony reconnects Abel with his Native self, which then makes him want to reconnect with his homeland. Ben says, "He was going home, and he was going to be all right again" (128). Abel returns home to take care of his dying grandfather, and his grandfather tells him stories from his youth and stresses the importance of staying connected to his people's traditions. Abel's going home can be seen not only as a physical return to where he grew up, but also as a spiritual return to his Native identity.

[7] The Night Way is a healing ceremony that takes course over nine days. Each day the patient is cleansed through a varying number of exercises done to attract holiness or repel evil in the form of exorcisms, sweat baths, and sand painting ceremonies. On the final day the one who is sung over inhales the "breath of dawn" and is deemed cured ("Navajo Ceremonies").

This reconnection to his Native self then allows Abel to participate in survivance because he is now surviving as a Native American, embracing that part of his identity, and resisting the white man's cultural stereotypes of the drunken, useless Indian. Though the ending of the novel is left a bit ambiguous, it is also hopeful as Abel takes part in a ritual his grandfather told him about—the race of the dead. Momaday writes, "He was running, and under his breath he began to sing. There was no sound, and he had no voice; he had only the words of a song. And he went running on the rise of the song. *House made of pollen, house made of dawn. Qtsedaba*" (185). Here, even though Abel still has no voice, his silence can be seen as turning toward generative silence as he learns to accept all parts of his identity and embrace his intersectionality. He has physically survived war and being beaten almost to death, and because of this, attempts to embrace survivance. He is transiting from "Indian" to "postindian."

Warriors, Killers, and the Land: Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony

Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, much like *House Made of Dawn*, narrates the difficulties of a Native American WWII veteran as he tries to come to terms with the war and with himself after returning home. Tayo, the protagonist of the novel, is half Laguna and half white, which adds another layer of complication in his life as his aunt does not fully accept him because his half white side is a visible marker of his Laguna mother's shame of sleeping with white men, and he finds it challenging to connect to his native self. Like *House Made of Dawn*, *Ceremony* illustrates the concepts of the warrior tradition and its effects on Native American veterans as well as the effects of silence, and it also highlights the importance of man's connection to the natural world. Tayo, just like Abel, struggles with accepting the

intersectionality of his identity as he attempts to move away from stereotypical representations of "Indian" into the realm of "postindian" and survivance.

Because *Ceremony* takes place after the war, Tayo and the other Laguna veterans can be seen as war heroes, having returned home alive and victorious in the foreign war. In fact, early on in the novel when Tayo is talking to Harley, Harley states, "'We got it easy, huh? All the livestock down at Montano and nothing for us war heroes to do but lay around and sleep all day.' He reached over and poked Tayo gently in the ribs when he said 'war heroes'" (20). Harley's action of poking Tayo in the ribs when he says war heroes indicates that he does not seem to take the term seriously. It is a difficult label for Tayo to accept as well. Lydia R. Cooper, in her article "'The Sterility of Their Art': Masculinity and the Western in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*," posits, "While the role Tayo plays is that of a classically defined male hero (a decorated war veteran, a savior of his male ancestor's legacy, and so forth), he also struggles with those definitions of heroism—the martial and racialized definitions encoded in US cultural ideology—that would ordinarily restrict or preclude him entirely" (270). Because he struggles with these definitions, he also struggles with defining himself—he does not feel like he is a war hero or warrior. He suffers from "battle fatigue," or post-traumatic stress disorder, and is constantly sick. When the white doctors at the veterans' hospital cannot help him, his grandmother says, "That boy needs a medicine man" (30). His aunt replies, "Oh, I don't know Mama. You know how they are. You know what people will say if we ask for a medicine man to help him. Someone will say it's not right. They'll say, 'Don't do it. He's not full blood anyway'" (30). Not only does Tayo struggle inwardly to come to terms with the war and define himself, but he also has outside forces (mostly his aunt) that hinder his progression. His grandmother wins the argument, and they send for Ku'oosh the medicine man.

However, part of the struggle Tayo faces is the difference between traditional Laguna warfare and the type of war he faced in the Pacific during WWII. When Ku'oosh comes to help him and asks him if he understands the ceremony, Tayo thinks, "He didn't know how to explain what had happened. He did not know how to tell him that he had not killed any enemy or that he did not think that he had. But that he had done things far worse, and the effects were everywhere in the cloudless sky, on the dry brown hills, shrinking skin and hide taut over sharp bone" (33). Tayo is burdened by the war and what he has done in the war, in part because it is so drastically different from the type of Laguna warfare he heard stories about growing up. Even though Tayo does not think he killed anyone, he still asks Ku'oosh for help:

> But the old man shook his head slowly and made a low humming sound in his throat. In the old way of warfare, you couldn't kill another human being in battle without knowing it, without seeing the result, because even a wounded deer that got up and ran again left great clots of lung blood or spilled guts on the ground. That way the hunter knew it would die. Human beings were no different. But the old man would not have believed white warfare—killing across great distances without knowing who or how many had died. It was all too alien to comprehend the mortars and big guns; and even if he could have taken the old man to see the target areas, even if he could have led him through the fallen jungle trees and muddy craters of torn earth to show him the dead, the old man would not have believed anything so monstrous. (33)

Because of the nuclear bomb, Tayo feels guilty for killing thousands of people that he never even saw, despite not having killed a single enemy with his own hands. The traditional Laguna Scalp Ceremony does not seem to work for Tayo because, while it is designed to heal warriors who

have touched or killed an enemy, the style of warfare in WWII means that Tayo (and all WWII veterans) has killed enemies without ever touching them.

Though Tayo and his war buddies served in the war, were treated well during the war, and could be considered war heroes, the reality of how they are treated after the war illustrates Bhabha's concept of colonial mimicry. In one scene, Tayo is in the bar drinking with Harley and Emo, and "they wanted him to talk to them; they wanted him to tell stories with them" (37). Harley brags, "White women never looked at me until I put on that uniform, and then by God I was a U.S. Marine and they came crowding around. All during the war they'd say to me, 'Hey soldier, you sure are handsome. All that black thick hair'" (37). Even though Harley is boasting about his conquests, his first statement is telling because it demonstrates the discrimination he faced before putting on the uniform. It indicates that Indians are not seen as men in white women's eyes, but a U.S. soldier is. The uniform creates an illusion that feeds colonial mimicry. Tayo, hearing the other Laguna veterans brag about their conquests, becomes angry and fumes:

> One time there were these Indians, see. They put on uniforms, cut their hair. They went off to a big war. They had a real good time too. Bars served them booze, old white ladies on the street smiled at them. At Indians, remember that, because that's all they were. Indians. These Indians fucked white women, they had as much as they wanted too. They were MacArthur's boys; white whores took their money same as anyone. These Indians got treated the same as anyone: Wake Island, Iwo Jima. They got the same medals for bravery, the same flag over the coffin. . . . See these dumb Indians thought these good times would last. They didn't ever want to give up the cold beer and the blond cunt. Hell no! They were America the Beautiful too, this was the land of the free just like teachers said in school. They had the uniform and they didn't look different no more. They got

> respect. . . . First time you walked down the street in Gallup or Albuquerque, you knew. Don't lie. You knew right away. The war was over, the uniform was gone. All of a sudden that man at the store waits on you last, makes you wait until all the white people bought what they wanted. And the white lady at the bus depot she's real careful now not to touch your hand when she counts out your change. You watch it slide across the counter at you, and you know. Goddam it! You stupid sonofabitches! You know! (38-39)

Tayo's rant links with Chester Nez's own experiences after the war. Native Americans were useful during the war and therefore recruited and treated well. But after the Allies win the war and Native Americans return home, they are relegated to second class citizens. Tayo's rant also supports Bhabha's discussion of the colonial Other being "almost the same, but not quite" or "almost the same, but not white" (85). The soldiers' uniforms blur the line of difference between white and Native American (Harley even states that one time a white woman assumes he is Italian). But as soon as the uniform comes off, they can no longer claim sameness or equality. This point in reiterated later in the novel when Helen Jean, a young Native American woman who briefly accompanies Harley, Leroy, and Tayo on a drinking binge, "looked at these Laguna guys. They had been treated first class once, with their uniforms. As long as there had been a war and the white people were afraid of the Japs and Hitler. But these Indians got fooled when they thought it would last. She was tired of pretending with them, tired of making believe it had lasted" (153). When the U.S. was fighting Japan and Germany, the Japanese and Germans became the Others to fear and hate, and the Native Americans, though still not completely white, became slightly less Othered because they were fighting with the U.S. However, once the Allies win the war and the fear of "the Japs and Hitler" disappear, Native Americans once again become a definable Other to fear and hate. Silko's repetition of this theme highlights not only

the discrimination that Native Americans face, but also the difficulty Tayo faces in the multiple dichotomies that he encounters. He's a liminal character caught between multiple liminal spaces: he is a "half breed," he is between tradition and modernity, and he is a war veteran but a second-class citizen.

Another opposition that Tayo faces is between seeing himself as a warrior or a killer, and Silko demonstrates the difference by comparing Tayo and Emo. Emo is violent and sadistic. He brags about the violent atrocities he committed during the war, stating, "We were the best. U.S. Army. We butchered every Jap we found. No Jap bastard was fit to take prisoner. We had all kinds of ways to get information out of them before they died. Cut off this, cut off these. . . . Make them talk fast, die slow" (56). Harley and Leroy seem to treat Emo with wary respect, but Tayo cannot stand him. Silko writes, "Tayo could hear it in his voice when he talked about the killing—how Emo grew from each killing. Emo fed off each man he killed, and the higher the rank of the dead man, the higher it made Emo. . . . He was the best, they told him; some men didn't like to feel the quiver of the man they were killing; some men got sick when they smelled the blood. But he was the best; he was one of them. The best, United States Army" (56-57). In comparison, Tayo did not kill even one man with his own hands, yet mourns for the thousands killed by the entity he was part of. While Emo takes pleasure in the violence he inflicted, Tayo yearns for a ceremony that can cleanse him from the lives he took. Emo is racist, refers to the enemy as "Jap bastards," and desires to be accepted into white culture, while Tayo feels empathy for the Japanese soldiers who captured him, perhaps seeing both the Japanese and Native Americans as victims of white racism, oppression, and warfare.

In essence, Emo is a representation of the "witchery" Tayo must face. Betonie, the Navajo medicine man Tayo goes to visit, tells Tayo a story about how Indian witchery, or evil,

invented white people, and the evil brought by white people unleashes massacre, disease, drought, and atomic war. Though the novel portrays white culture as the source of society's greatest evils, Emo (a Native American) is still the main villain. This makes sense because he embodies the terrible outcome of racial oppression. White culture teaches Emo and other Native Americans to feel ashamed of their own identity and to long for what white people have. Emo succumbs to the white stereotype of "Indian," not moving past it to "postindian." He is the result of anger, self-loathing and envy, and he is given an outlet in a culture of violence. Emo *does not* embody Vizenor's concept of survivance because, even though he survived the war, he does not resist colonial power, instead falling victim to it. Tayo views Emo as the epitome of witchery and for that reason attacks him and is tempted to kill him. However, when he has the perfect opportunity to kill Emo, he holds back. Edith Swan claims, "During the night of his trial by witchcraft, Tayo consciously refrains from acting out his desire to kill Emo. This decision determines his victory over the witchery practiced by his war buddies. Thereby, Tayo negates the 'death' imagery and symbolism associated with his roles as warrior and hunter, destructive aspects of his manhood which might be subject to control by manipulators of witchcraft" (54). Though Laguna warriors were honored in past society, the violence of WWII created a different kind of warrior. Silko uses Emo to illustrate the destructive forces of oppression and violence, indicating how Emo has bought into them and becomes a killer, while Tayo resists the same destructive forces and avoids becoming a killer. Tayo *does* embody survivance and postindian because he survives *and* he resists the violence of colonial oppression. He does not fall to the "destructive aspects of his manhood," which later allows him to reclaim his identity and his masculinity.

One of the ways that Tayo resists the destructive forces of violence and witchery is through transformation and connection to the land. Because Ku'oosh's ceremony could not help Tayo, he sends Tayo to Betonie, the Navajo medicine man, to guide him through his healing. Betonie tells Tayo:

> The people nowadays have an idea about the ceremonies. They think the ceremonies must be performed exactly as they have always been done, maybe because one slip-up or mistake and the whole ceremony must be stopped and the sand painting destroyed. That much is true. They think that if a singer tampers with any part of the ritual, great harm can be done, great power unleashed. . . . At one time, the ceremonies as they had been performed were enough for the way the world was then. But after the white people came, elements in this world began to shift; and it became necessary to create new ceremonies. I have made changes in the rituals. The people mistrust this greatly, but only this growth keeps the ceremonies strong. (116)

Betonie recognizes that the world has changed, and so ceremonies must change with it in order to work in the contemporary world. Others find him eccentric and mistrust him because of his views and his altered ceremonies, but he knows that things cannot remain stagnant; he is a good example of both postindian and survivance. The Night Swan also expresses this need for change, telling Tayo, "They are afraid, Tayo. They feel something happening, they can see something happening around them, and it scares them, Indians or Mexicans or whites—most people are afraid of change. They think that if their children have the same color of skin, the same color of eyes, that nothing is changing. They are fools. They blame us, the ones who look different. That way they don't have to think about what has happened inside themselves" (92). These comments

on change both condemn white racism and tell Lagunas that they need to acknowledge the racial changes affecting their community.

The only way Tayo can heal is if he allows himself to change and transform. Part of his transformation comes from reconnecting with the land. Tayo notices when he first meets Betonie, that Betonie lives surrounded by junk in what seems like a run-down area. Betonie says that people often ask him why he lives there, and he tells Tayo, "'They don't understand. We know these hills, and we are comfortable here.' There was something about the way the old man said the word 'comfortable.' It had a different meaning—not the comfort of big houses or rich food or even clean streets, but the comfort of belonging with the land, and the peace of being with these hills" (108). This idea of a connection to the land is a traditional belief among many Native Americans, and Betonie uses this traditional belief in conjunction with his adapted ceremonies to help Tayo. Cooper explains, "Tayo is caught between his desire to remain isolated in the natural world and the needs of his society. Tayo exemplifies those traits most characteristic of cowboy heroes; his strength is linked to the natural world; he is laconic and self-isolating; and his role as a hero—he is the one tasked with bringing order to chaos and rectifying unjust behavior—derives from his gendered roles, that is his military background and his training in herding and raising cattle" (275). Tayo's healing comes not only from a reconnection with the land, but in balancing his responsibilities to both the land and society. He must move away from his self-isolation (the self-destruction he causes by living in his own head) in order to overcome his sickness. Swan notes that "Tayo's development as 'the taker of life' and 'shedder of blood' is essential for establishing his identity as warrior/hunter is paralleled by another cycle, growing into the opposite side of this duality. To wit: becoming a provider, the planter of seeds, and a

caretaker, the keeper of animals. In short, a man connected to life, nurturance and stewardship of the land" (54).

Tayo's gender role plays an important part in his transformation. As a young man during WWII, he puts on a uniform and becomes a warrior and a soldier, a cultural marker of manhood during the time. However, when he returns home the burden he bears due to the uniform (killing people), causes him to become disconnected from himself. In essence, his gender role of being a soldier somewhat causes his illness. But his other gender role, that of herding and raising cattle, helps him reconnect to the land, and he becomes a steward of the land, as Swan mentions. He learns that there is a different way to express his manhood, aside from the violent portrayals represented by Emo and white culture. Tayo's transformation is one of balance between his Laguna side and his white side as he learns to accept his interracial identity while at the same time becoming more connected to nature, Native American tradition, and his Laguna community. He is merging "his double self into a better and truer self" (Du Bois 9). His transformation is really him transitioning into postindianness and adopting survivance as his own.

Tayo's transformation also demonstrates how his silence throughout the novel moves from consumptive to generative. At the beginning of the novel, Tayo is silent because he does not know how to voice what is going on inside him; silence trumps speech. His consumptive silence is physically demonstrated through his illness. He is often dizzy and nauseated. He frequently throws up, as if the words he cannot express are vomited out of him in an unhealthy and unhelpful mess. In conjunction with his silence he also feels invisible. He thinks, "the longer he walked the more his legs felt as though they might become invisible again . . . sounds were becoming outlines again, vague and hollow in his ears, and he knew he was going to become

invisible right there" (15). Not only is Tayo silent himself, but even the sounds around him become vague and unintelligible; there is no part of him that is not lost. However, as he goes through Betonie's ritual in order to heal, the silence changes as he overcomes the witchery. The silence that once oppressed him becomes a way for him to view the natural world, and he starts hearing all his stories merge. Silko writes, "He cried the relief he felt at finally seeing the pattern, the way all the stories fit together—the old stories, the war stories, their stories—to become the story that was still being told. He was not crazy; he had never been crazy. He had only seen and heard the world as it always was; no boundaries, only transitions through all distances and time" (229). The ceremony has helped Tayo realize that everything must combine. He is not just a Native American, or just a veteran; he is many things combined, and the combining of his stories helps him defeat his sickness. He embraces his intersectionality, which includes his Native self, his white self, and his new understanding of his masculinity. It is not a masculinity based on the violence of war or the violence of white culture. Instead, it is a masculinity grounded in his stewardship of the land. Cooper notes that "isolation and silence no longer signify the same helplessness or sickness. Instead, Tayo's silence becomes a physical manifestation of his ability to exist at peace with himself and his external world" (282). The silence that was once consumptive (it literally consumed Tayo internally and made him ill), transforms into generative silence as he is at peace with who he is and where he belongs in the world and embraces his postindianness and survivance.

Conclusion

Code Talker, *House Made of Dawn*, and *Ceremony* convey multiple meanings of manhood in Native American literature. One aspect they all have in common is that they

illustrate how Native American soldiers during the Second World War were often treated well during the war, but relegated to second classed citizens after the war. The U.S. military uniform acts as a white skin that allows Native American soldiers to serve with white soldiers and be treated the same as whites. However, once the war ends and the Native American soldiers must remove the uniform, there is no longer the illusion of whiteness—they were almost white, but not quite (Bhabha). This phenomenon highlights the differences between white soldiers' and Native American soldiers' experiences. White soldiers also removed their uniforms after the war, but their whiteness still allows them to claim privilege even though they are no longer in the military; they are veterans, which is still a place of honor. Native American soldiers can only claim privilege during the war, and their veteran status after the war does not protect them from discrimination as they have been stripped of their "white skin."

These three texts also use silence, both consumptive and generative, to demonstrate the acceptance of identity. Nez's story provides an interesting dichotomy between soldiers who spoke as their job in the war, but then could not speak about their job after the war. The government silenced their work as top secret. Though Nez never blatantly writes about silence, he is silent about some difficult issues such as discrimination and trauma he faced after the war. On the other hand, Momaday and Silko use the transition from consumptive silence to generative silence for their characters. Both Abel and Tayo come home from the war unable to express or speak about the trauma they face. Only by connecting with their Native selves, participating in traditional ceremonies, and once again being connected with their homelands do they embrace their intersectional identities and communicate through generative silence. Though it appears as if Nez remains silent on difficult issues, I surmise that is in part because he already feels connected to his Native self and homeland when he comes home from the war, participating in

traditional ceremonies with his family and tribe. He never expresses a difficulty in feeling connected to this ethnic identity. This could be in part because Nez is full Navajo, while Abel and Tayo are multiracial and must struggle with an additional part of their intersectional identity. The transition from consumptive to generative silence also links to Vizenor's concept of survivance and a move to postindian. Nez illustrates how they kept their native language and oral traditions alive, surviving and resisting the colonial power that attempted to wipe out these things, which aided the code talkers in memorizing the war code and being successful in the war. Momaday writes Abel as at first succumbing to white cultural power (drinking and violence), but then transforming and adopting survivance by returning to his Native self and homeland. And Silko illustrates the difference between Emo who succumbs to the violence of white culture and Tayo who exhibits survivance by resisting that same violence. These protagonists' transitions signal a move from trying to live up to "Indian" and into living a postindian reality.

Chapter V

Where Do We Go From Here?: Teaching Intersectionality and Context in the Ethnic American Literature Classroom

Though Native American, African American, and Japanese American soldiers experienced World War II uniquely, what these ethnic groups do have in common is the discrimination and challenges they faced as soldiers of color. They did not fit into the prescribed role of the white, well-muscled American soldier that was painted on recruiting posters and politically advertised during the war. Leading up to and during the war, white Americans created and propagated stereotypes about people of color, claiming that they were lazy, stupid, untrainable, disloyal, effeminate, and savage. Because of these stereotypes, soldiers of color had to construct their own inroads into the body politic of the American nation, demonstrating their masculinity apart from the white ideal and showcasing their loyalty, intelligence, ingenuity, courage, and talent as soldiers. Many participated in the war as a way to lay claim to their full rights as citizens, even as white society resisted and continued to discriminate against them.

Despite the discrimination, leaders of ethnic communities, such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Walter White, and Mike Masaoka encouraged people of color to join the war effort because they regarded participation in the war as a pathway to subsequent racial uplift, and soldiers of color often volunteered willingly for a chance to demonstrate their Americanness. Robert S. Change explains, "War, perhaps more than anything else, forces a nation's subjects to renegotiate their relationship with the nation. When the United States engages in war, it also engages in a process of deepening the Americanization of its citizens. It does this by calling upon its citizens to collectively band together to do their patriotic duty against a common enemy. By performing patriotic gestures, its citizens feel a comradeship that consolidates this imagined community that is America" (352). During the Second World War, many soldiers of color desired to be included

into the comradeship of the American community and illustrate to white society that they too were fully American citizens by serving their country. They offered their blood to attain Americanness, not only for themselves, but also for their families and future generations as that "is the bargain this is sometimes offered to disfavored minorities trying to gain acceptance from the American majority" (Chang 356). By serving in the military and demonstrating their loyalty and manhood, they hoped that they would achieve a sense of belonging and acceptance.

However, as evidenced by the continued discrimination and struggles of ethnic and racial minorities after World War II, that hope was not truly realized. Even when the U.S. military desegregated in 1948, the American South remained segregated for decades, and African Americans continue to be confronted with stereotypes and violence. It was not until 1988 that President Reagan signed the Civil Liberties act to compensate more than 100,000 people of Japanese descent who were incarcerated in internment camps during the war. The legislation offered a formal apology and paid out $20,000 in compensation to each surviving victim. However, the law only won congressional approval after a decade-long campaign by the Japanese American community. And many Native American tribes still suffer from discrimination and poverty, in large part because Indian lands are owned and managed by the federal government, nearly every aspect of economic development is controlled by federal agencies, and the federal government has repeatedly mismanaged Indian assets.

In the famous WWII photograph of the American flag being raised on Mount Suribachi in Iwo Jima, one of the six men raising the flag is Private Ira Hayes, a Pima Indian (Fig. 23). The photograph became the model for the National Marine Monument in Washington, DC, and Chang notes, "In a close inspection of the photograph—and now permanently sculpted in bronze—a raised hand from the back of the group of Marines can be seen reaching for the flag

pole. That hand belongs to Ira Hayes, and remains frozen, perhaps, fittingly, forever reaching for but never quite grasping that symbol of American freedom" (368). This image of a Pima Indian, an ethnic Other, reaching for freedom, and with it acceptance and Americanness, symbolizes the challenges Japanese American, Native American, and African American soldiers faced as they all tried to grasp the promises of America. Despite their best efforts to demonstrate their loyalty, courage, and intelligence by serving in the military during the war, power remained in the hands of white society. That is why it is vital to read these World War II texts by soldiers of color because they are often overlooked or silenced. They need to be included in the body politic of the American nation, for they served valiantly and demonstrated their manhood and Americanness even as they were "victim[s] of state-sponsored neglect, discrimination, and terror" (Chang 352).

Figure 23: Joe Rosenthal's "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima"

The texts under analysis in this dissertation, and many others by and about soldiers of color, complicate and help complete our understanding of history and American literature. By viewing history through multiple lenses of actors in that history, we can see the picture more fully. What I hope these novels and memoirs do is allow readers (and particularly students) to see soldiers of color in the moment of action and the process of writing and more fully comprehend the formation of identity and the construction of culture. Reading war texts adds another layer to the concept of intersectionality, as young men were faced with fighting and violence on top of the intersections of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, and language. Additionally, these texts help us look both backward and forward, viewing the ways in which American society has changed and the ways it has remained the same.

Studying the history, background, politics, laws, and tensions of the time periods that surround the texts under examination in this dissertation is essential in understanding the characters' conflicts, inner turmoil, and performance of gender. All these outside factors add to the theory of intersectionality, because just as one cannot separate facets of oneself, such as race, religion, and gender, one also cannot separate oneself from the cultural context that surrounds and affects them. Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge note that "when it comes to the questions of identity, intersectionality has long emphasized a combination of structural and cultural analyses" (124). It is this combination of cultural analysis and identity that is important to foreground when examining literary texts. My time at Idaho State University gave me the opportunity to test out incorporating these ideas into a course focusing on ethnicity in American literature (English 3356). I argue that for multiethnic literature in particular it is vital to include the historical and cultural context of a work as well as highlighting how intersectionality plays a

role in the development of a character's identity because people of color cannot escape the pressure of multiplicity that white identity so often can.

In order to highlight the theory of intersectionality in English 3356, I assigned readings in ethnic pairs, i.e. two texts from different authors from the same ethnic group, so that students would not make generalizations about ethnic groups based on a single reading. Ben Railton argues that reading in pairs allows students to "analyze them not only individually (which certainly remains the primary and central goal) but also in complex conversations with and relationship to one another . . . the students look more closely at specific passages, formal elements, and themes in the individual texts than they might otherwise" (250). As we read the pairs, we stressed the relationships between the texts but also the individual themes and elements that were prevalent in each text. Though two texts from an ethnic group is a small sample size, it allowed the class to read works by people from multiple ethnic groups while at the same time steering students away from making generalizations. Even as American literature anthologies have transitioned away from incorporating mostly white authors and now include a wide selection of work by writers of color, most university English departments offer some sort of ethnic American literature course because they are often limited by the time constraints of a semester, which consequently limits the amount of reading that goes into an American literature syllabus. Therefore, having a separate ethnic American literature course allows students the opportunity to broaden their knowledge of writers of color, particularly those seen as perhaps "outside" the canon. Dedicating an entire semester to writers of color can be beneficial to students, as it allows them to slow down, take their time reading, and digest the works of many authors. Students can connect how the literary contributions of writers of color fit into the larger scope of American literature in an ethnic American literature course.

A semester long ethnic American literature course also helps students to focus on the course goals specifically targeted at works of writers of color. In the Idaho State University Undergraduate Catalog, the English Program lists several goals and learning outcomes for students. One of these goals states, "To understand literature and other cultural artifacts as important sources of knowledge about the diversity of human experience, insight about history and culture, and wisdom about what it means to be human" (103). This goal aligned well with the goals of English 3356, as the course focused on the literature and diversity of American authors, which allowed students to learn about the diversity of the human experience and what it means to be human. The course description for English 3356, explained that the course could never cover all ethnicities in the U.S., nor could readers expect writers from ethnic groups to represent their entire groups. Instead, students should come to understand that the very title of the course—Ethnicity in American Literature—works against the idea that ethnic categories are natural or stable, showing instead how American categories of ethnicity are constructed and negotiated throughout time. I explained that to trace the ways that the construction of ethnicity is not only a contemporary phenomenon but instead has been negotiated for centuries, the class would read a sampling of texts written in and about North America from the 16th century to the 21st century. Organizing the texts in ethnic pairs encouraged students to question why certain authors jumped at what times to weigh in on the "who is American" debate and discuss how authors from the same ethnic group respond to situations differently. As students read the course texts, I encouraged them to theorize the definitions, functions, and flexibility of American ethnic identities and also attend to the intersections of ethnicity, race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and language to understand that a person's identity is never based solely on one factor.

Teaching the Intersections of Identity in Multiethnic American Literature

The concept of intersectionality is necessary to include in a course dedicated to multiethnic literature, as it affords students a basis around which to build their interpretation about identity and the cultural constructs of race and ethnicity. Collins and Bilge argue, "Using intersectionality as an analytic tool can foster a better understanding of growing global inequality. . . . Rather than seeing people as a homogeneous, undifferentiated mass, intersectionality provides a framework for explaining how social divisions of race, gender, age, and citizenship status, among others, positions people differently in the world, especially in relation to global social inequality" (15). Intersectionality played a large role in developing the English 3356 course and in class discussions about the texts. As mentioned throughout this dissertation, intersectionality is the idea that it is impossible for anyone to separate facets of identity, such as race, ethnicity, religion, class, gender, and language, because of the way they interact with one another. One is not only female, or only black, or only Christian, but all of those things combined, which affects concepts of self and relationships with others and society as a whole. With this concept in mind, we chose readings from both male and female writers that covered various time periods and multiple ethnic groups. At the beginning of the course, we read selections regarding Americanness from the 16th to 18th century, including "The Relation" by Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, "A Key into the Language of America" by Roger Williams, "Letter III: What is an American?" by J. Hector St. John De Crevecoeur, "The Declaration of Independence" by Thomas Jefferson, and selected poems by Phillis Wheatley. These readings gave students a base understanding of the concept of America as it was becoming a nation and what individuals from different ethnic groups had to say about Americanness early on. From there we began our readings of the paired texts. The reading pairs were as follows: *The Squatter*

and the Don (1885) by Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton and *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* (1991) by Julia Alvarez (Latina American); *My Ántonia* (1918) by Willa Cather and *Main Street* (1920) by Sinclair Lewis (Immigrant/European American); *No-No Boy* (1957) by John Okada and *When the Emperor was Divine* (2003) by Julie Otsuka (Japanese American); *Incognegro* (2009) by Mat Johnson and *Paradise* (1998) by Toni Morrison (African American); *Sundown* (1934) by John Joseph Matthews and *She Had Some Horses* (1983) by Joy Harjo (American Indian). Also, to supplement our class discussions, students were required to post six original reading responses throughout the semester about the texts we were discussing in class. These responses could take the form of questions, comments, lines of observation, or analysis as they thought critically about the week's readings, and we encouraged the students to incorporate theories and concepts that we had discussed in class into their reading responses.

The concept of intersectionality aided students in digging deeper into the identities of characters, not merely viewing them as people of color but as complex individuals. We often brought up intersectionality in class discussions to compare and contrast how different characters were treated or reacted to situations. For example, in *My Ántonia* we discussed how the immigrants' acceptance into a community was not only based on their ethnic background or skin color (Bohemian, Russian, Norwegian, etc.), but also on their socioeconomic standing, their language, and their assimilation into American culture. Those who spoke English well, adopted WASP practices, and became well off were looked at more highly than those immigrants who spoke with thick accents and broken English and remained poor farmers. Students also noticed how gender affected the characters' reputations. Young men had the luxury of working hard on the farm and not being judged for it, but when Ántonia did the same in order to help her family she was seen as unladylike. This judgment was passed onto other immigrant girls, labeled as

"The Hired Girls," because they moved into town and worked at places like the boarding house, the seamstress shop, and the café to send money back to their families. The "fully" American families in the town noted that they would never hire their daughters out, a clear indication that to be thought a truly respectable young woman, one did not work. In a reader response post about *My Ántonia*, one student notes the themes of class distinction, stating:

> While the men are attracted to their healthy, muscular bodies and fun personalities, the hired girls are considered to be unrefined and inferior by the townsfolk. While in their homelands, the fathers of the hired girls were more cultured and educated than the citizens of Black Hawk, this does nothing to improve their social status. . . . Also disturbing is that the country girls are considered loose just because they are immigrants. When Ántonia slaps the hand of a young man who walks her home and forces his affections on her, the young man goes on his way and it is Ántonia who suffers the consequences. Even though the hired girls are white and come from Scandinavian countries, they are still marginalized. Their language, economic, and cultural differences are seen as evidence of their inferiority to the WASP population in Black Hawk. The girls are considered to be less because they have not yet assimilated into American culture, yet the other citizens of Black Hawk were immigrants in the not so distant past. What does it take to be American? How many generations must pass before one is no longer an immigrant? These are questions that are just as important today as they were when Cather wrote her novel.

This student's post incorporates our class discussion of intersectionality. Although she does not directly state the theory, she includes aspects of it by writing about the hired girls' socioeconomic standing, language, and culture and how those aspects affect their identity. She

asks what it takes to be American and connects that to the present, all signs of a deeper interpretation of the text. In class we noted that the men in the novel do not face this same kind of discrimination, which clearly indicates how intersectionality affects not only identity but how others treat the characters and their standings within society.

Not only the connections between ethnicity and gender are important when teaching and analyzing a text, but also the link between and historical events. Age, gender, and ethnicity play a significant role in identity formation when a large cultural event such as war impacts characters. For example, in class we discussed how in *No-No Boy*, Ichiro struggled with his decision to refuse service in the U.S. military during WWII, and he is envious of his younger brother who was too young to enlist. Students pointed out that because Ichiro was male and old enough to join the service at the time of the war, but refused to enlist in deference to his mother's loyalty to Japan, that affects how he views his identity as Japanese and American. Clearly his ethnicity plays a role in his decision to refuse service—if he were not Japanese American, his loyalty would never be called into question, nor would he have felt pressure to bow to his mother's wishes as she would not claim loyalty to Japan. His age and gender also play a large role in how he views himself after the war. Because Ichiro was of age and male, he was required to make the decision to serve or not serve. His decision to not serve then affects his perception of self, as he sees himself as partly Japanese and partly American, but never quite whole. His brother, who was too young to serve during the war, does not face the same difficulty of having to choose and in essence can claim being wholly American, while his mother, as a woman (and an immigrant who was not born in the United States), was never expected to serve because of her gender and citizenship and can therefore claim being wholly Japanese. In discussing the benefits of teaching intersectionality in the classroom, Abby L. Ferber and Andrea O'Reilly Herrera

posit, "Rather than asking us to examine everyone and everything, an intersectional approach encourages us to consider whatever issue or category we are treating in a deeper, more inclusive manner. Sometimes, intersectionality may be implemented to provide a wider perspective, while other times it encourages us to go deeper. . . . [A]n intersectional approach does not have to distract attention away from race, but can instead provide more profound insights into its operations" (97). The example of Ichiro and the intersections of his age and gender during WWII allowed students these profound insights into the operations of his race and how he felt about his ethnicity and societal belonging. One student, in a reader response post, writes, "The thing I find most interesting in *No-No Boy* is the two layers of isolation that Ichiro faces. As this is a course in ethnicity, we expect that characters will be separated from the WASP culture treated as the primary culture. Ichiro is, of course, isolated from the central culture as a Japanese-American in the wake of WWII. He is also isolated from the cultural subgroup to which he belongs. His mother's stringent and disconnected understanding of what it means to be Japanese leaves him feeling neither Japanese nor American." What this student's comments get at is the understanding that intersectionality, not only facets of identity but the outside forces of war and cultural belonging, are what separate Ichiro from being either Japanese or American. Intersectionality then allows students to delve into characters' psyche and the themes within texts as a whole.

The pairs of texts also worked well to highlight intersectionality, as students could determine how different genders experienced and reacted to situations and how different texts do not "represent" an ethnic group, but instead illustrate different experiences within an ethnic group. Railton explains, "One of the most significant and frustrating obstacles that confronts teachers of ethnic American Literature is the ease with which students can move, in both

communal and individual work, from discussions of specific texts and individuals to generalizations about entire ethnic or racial identities and communities" (248). An instructor needs to be able to steer students away from such generalizations and help students investigate individual works without lumping them into the idea that the work is representative of a whole group. By pairing two works by authors from the same ethnic group, students were able to see the differences of experiences, which helped them move away from generalizations. José L. Torres-Padilla posits, "As multiethnic literature scholars and teachers, we have always worked with the understanding that a principal goal of dismantling the field could very well be supplanting the Originary Narrative, which, in turn, would contribute to the wider objective of re-conceptualizing 'national identity and culture' from within a more inclusive, multicultural perspective" (16). Unfortunately, there is often a narrow view of what an American is, and because the dominant power structure in the United States is white then a "true" American is typically seen as white.

Therefore, one of the goals of an ethnic American literature course would be to open up the view of what it means to be American, and as Torres-Padilla states, re-conceptualize national identity. By pairing texts together, students were able to analyze and discuss different types of national identity and different types of ethnic experience. For example, when teaching *Incognegro* by Matt Johnson, a graphic novel that focuses on a black male journalist (Zane) who can pass for white and reports on lynchings in the South, I have students work with partners to note what kind of dangers and violence Zane faces. I ask them to find specific examples from the text that we then discuss as a class. Allowing students time to delve back into the text with a specific task helps them analyze specific parts that aid in interpreting the whole. Carnegie Mellon University explains that collaborative work such as this encourages students to share

diverse perspectives and pool their knowledge ("What are the Benefits"). Being able to work with partners helps them not only remember where certain incidents occurred within the text, but also permits them to bounce ideas off of each other. During this partner work, students noted that Zane's job puts him in danger, but as a man his experiences are different from that of a black woman. They pointed out that he is subject to white violence in the form beatings and being put in a cage, whereas the female characters are subject to this same type of violence *as well as* sexual violence. One female character is even shot in the face. We paired *Incognegro* with Toni Morrison's *Paradise*, in which the characters inhabit a highly patriarchal, all-black town in Oklahoma called Ruby. Even though the members of this black community have separated themselves from white society in order to feel freedom and equality, the black women are still not equal because of the constraints of patriarchy. In class discussions, students compared and contrasted *Paradise* with *Incognegro*, observing how the women in *Paradise* are doubly marginalized – marginalized because they are black and marginalized because they are women. Students come to understand how race is a social construct that benefits those in power. Both novels contain violence; in *Incognegro* it is the whites committing the violence against blacks and against other whites, whereas in *Paradise* it is the black men committing violence against the women in the "Convent" because they are outsiders. Classroom work and discussion such as this lead some students to write about how the intersections of identity, namely race and gender in this example, act upon individuals

Discussing the concept of intersectionality during class helped students analyze texts more deeply and highlight the complexities of identity that characters face. This concept is something that should be consistently used in ethnic American literature courses, because it is a way for students to move beyond surface investigations and generalization about texts by writers

of color and focus on analysis of characters and identity. I would even suggest explicitly returning to it for each text taught, more so than I did initially in this course. Instructors could write intersectionality on the board as a header and ask students to list what aspects they view the characters are facing in relation to it, including race, gender, age, language, and profession. These aspects could then be used as a guiding force for the class discussion and as the students finish reading the text. In this way they are not reading merely for plot points but for what the text is examining about identity.

Though teaching texts in ethnic pairs to highlight intersectionality worked well for this semester of English 3356, organizing texts around themes would also be beneficial. For example, a course could be organized around themes such as early multiethnic literature, multiethnic soldiers in literature, multiethnic women in literature, and religion in multiethnic literature. In this way students are still exposed to groups of texts so they steer clear of making generalizations, but they could also focus in on a specific aspect of a text (i.e. war, religion) and how that aspect works with other factors of intersectionality. More specifically, for the theme of multiethnic soldiers in literature a class could read Silko's *Ceremony*, Himes' *If He Hollers Let Him Go*, and Okada's *No-No Boy* to see how the addition of war affects the characters' other facets of identity. Brian Hanely explains that he has students read the literature of war "if only to help them come to terms with the fact that war is, at heart, the most intense form of social interaction and not merely a technical or managerial puzzle" (16). This sentiment is heightened in texts about soldiers of color because their social interactions are not only with fellow soldiers of color, but also with white soldiers and commanding officers who often demean and belittle them. In using this specific theme, students would be able to see how different soldiers of color

experience war uniquely because of their ethnicities and what kinds of similar discrimination and challenges they face as they are all labeled as Other.

Teaching the Historical and Cultural Contexts of Multiethnic American Literature

One teaching tool that I have used in other literature courses and continued to use in English 3356 is providing historical and cultural context that surrounds the course texts. Providing this context is even more important in an ethnic American literature course, as many students may not be familiar with historical events in relation to peoples of color as the dominant white culture often glosses over them. Or if they have heard about them, it was only briefly in a passing history class. Several scholars have also argued that teaching context helps students better understand the text itself. For instance, in the introduction of *Multiethnic American Literature: Essays for Teaching Context and Culture*, Helane Adams Androne contends, "Teaching culture and context in American literatures means we attempt to legitimize and complicate the existential questions that our students struggle to engage typically through texts written by Americans 'of color'" (3), while John R. Maitino and David R. Peck, in the introduction of *Teaching American Ethnic Literatures*, maintain that "American ethnic literature is fundamentally unique in the American canon because the cultural and historical context is so strong . . . which is why it is so important to get behind the words of the literature to the historical assumptions that nourish the work" (6). So much of identity is influenced by what happens to and occurs around an individual. Therefore, introducing students to cultural context allows them to try to understand characters in conjunction with those historical assumptions and view how different characters react to their experiences and the world around them. Maitino and

Peck posit that students "will begin to recognize how individuals and ethnic groups struggle with, and define themselves against, the values of the dominant cultural group" (13).

For each text that I taught in English 3356, I provided historical and cultural context that surrounded that text, usually in PowerPoint form. Ferber and Herrera explain that "our experiences of privilege and oppression shift according to where we are physically located at any given time and in any given, social, political, or historical context" (88). Therefore, providing students with social, political, and historical contexts aids them in understanding how literary characters are experiencing privilege or oppression. The PowerPoint presentations for the class provided visual information that intertwined with the setting of the novels, including text, images, maps, and theory and allowed me to not only give lectures about aspects the students were not familiar with, but also ask them questions and open up class discussion about the historical and cultural background. For example, when I taught *My Ántonia* I gave a lecture on European immigration into the United States and who got to be white when. The novel, which is set in Nebraska, has many immigrants from places like Bohemia, Norway, Sweden, and Russia. As an historical example, I used the wave of Irish immigrants who came to the U.S. between 1840 and 1860, explaining that because they were poor and Catholic, they did not fit into the WASP hierarchy in America and were not seen as "white". I asked the students how they thought the Irish "became white," and some answers included that they converted to Protestantism or they stepped up on the socioeconomic ladder. I returned to the PowerPoint and noted that Irish immigrants and African Americans had a lot in common and a lot of contact as they lived side by side and shared work spaces; in the early years of immigration the poor Irish and African Americans were thrown together, very much part of the same class competing for

the same jobs. It was only when the Irish immigrants secured better jobs and distanced themselves from African Americans, were they able to be seen as white.

Including historical documents and texts of the time period is also crucial for students to fully grasp the ideals, cultural standards, and prejudices that characters are faced with. For this reason, during the introduction to *My Ántonia*, I split the students up into three groups, giving each group a quotation about immigration from the era. The papers I gave to each group read:

1. Around 1845, a Catholic priest in Philadelphia said to the Irish people in that city, "You are all poor, and chiefly laborers, the blacks are poor laborers; many of the native whites are laborers; now, if you wish to succeed, you must do everything that they do, no matter how degrading, and do it for less than they can afford to do it for" (qtd in Art McDonald).
2. In 1911, Henry Pratt Fairchild, an influential American sociologist, said about new immigrants, "If he proves himself a man, and … acquires wealth and cleans himself up — very well, we might receive him in a generation or two. But at present he is far beneath us, and the burden of proof rests with him" (qtd in Starkey).
3. Economist Robert F. Forester wrote in 1924, "in a country where the distinction between white man and black is intended as a distinction of value … it is no compliment to the Italian to deny him his whiteness, but that actually happens with considerable frequency" (qtd in Starkey).

I asked students to contemplate and discuss what these quotations say about power and whiteness and how those themes connected with the novel. The groups shared that these quotations illustrate how immigrants lived in a state of in-betweeness, almost like they were placed in a racial pecking order below whites but above people of color. They compared this with *My*

Ántonia, indicating that the Bohemian immigrants in the novel were never quite equal to the "true Americans" but were not as stereotyped and looked down upon as the one African American man in the novel, Blind d'Arnault. I included this lecture and group work on European immigration to the United States because it was vital for the students to understand how ethnicity is culturally constructed. Students were surprised to learn that not all immigrants from Europe were initially considered white, and we connected this context to how different immigrant families and characters are treated in the novel. We noted that most European immigrants' ethnicity was not stable but changed over time (from non-white to white), which linked to the idea that ethnicity is negotiated and constructed by society over time and is, therefore, not a natural state of being.

In order for students to comprehend the duality of identity that Ichiro is confronted with in *No-No Boy*, it was vital for them to know the conflicts, trials, and discrimination that Japanese Americans faced during WWII. To this end, I gave a lecture about Asian immigration into the U.S., the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Japanese American internment, and the loyalty questionnaire given to internees. The information about Asian immigration helped students link Ichiro's confusion about his national identity (Japanese or American) because he was born in the U.S. but his parents (particularly his mother) are still completely Japanese. The historical context of Japanese American internment is particularly rich for teaching at ISU as the Minidoka camp is only a couple of hours from campus, and is the same camp that Ichiro and his family and the author, John Okada, were interned at. They could make a physical, geographical connection with the characters. Also, teaching them about the loyalty questionnaire and the two questions that Ichiro answered no to—questions 27 asked "if Nisei men were willing to serve in combat duty wherever order" and question 28 asked "if individuals would swear unqualified allegiance to the

United States and foreswear any form of allegiance to the Emperor of Japan" (Lyon, "Questions" para. 2)—helped students not only understand the title of the novel but delve into Ichiro's inner conflict. In a reading response post, one student states, "Before we began this book, I was somewhat annoyed about the title because I didn't understand what it meant. But after learning the meaning of what No-No boy meant, the title has such a deeper meaning to me. I love the title now and . . . it grasps a significant theme of the novel. Another way I looked at the title is in the context of how Ichiro feels about his identity. He repeatedly talks about how he is not American but he is not Japanese either. He is a no-no boy." Knowing of the loyalty questionnaire and the historical context of what no-no boy meant, helped this student understand the meaning of the novel's title and also apply that meaning to the broader theme of Ichiro's displacement. You can see an example of this PowerPoint in the Appendix of this chapter. I also provided students historical documents to read, including the full loyalty questionnaire, the Japanese Internment Order, and an article from the December 22, 1941 *Life Magazine* titled "How to Tell the Japs from the Chinese." We used these historical texts to analyze how each character in *No-No Boy* was reacting to them and affected by them.

I chose to lecture about and provide some historical documents for cultural context, largely due to time constraints. This course was not a history course, but a literature course. Therefore, the bulk of class time was dedicated to discussion, partner work, and analysis of the literary texts we were reading for the semester. However, cultural context was a necessity to analyze the text fully and to comprehend the societal construction of ethnicity and formation of identity. I spent a large portion of my prep time for class instruction researching the historical/cultural context of the novels. It was time consuming, but worth it because it expanded my own knowledge. I could then determine which aspects of the historical background to include

in class discussion, because I knew what aligned with the novel and played a part for the characters. Maitino and Peck recommend that instructors who teach ethnic American literatures "may need to gain a fresh cultural intelligence, in order to understand the history, the myths and the legends, the racial and ethnic experience behind those works [that they teach]" (12). I found this to be true in my own study and lesson preparation, and our discussions helped ground students in the time periods and conflicts. Once they are familiar with the context of the novel, they can better analyze how characters in the novel are reacting to that context. In her article "Text, Context, and Teaching Literature by African American Women," Sandra Jamieson states:

> This complex relationship between the interpretive communities established by the texts and the contextual knowledge required to understand them can serve many functions as we teach literature by African American Women. While we may wish that our students would come to literature with the requisite historical and cultural knowledge, their lack of it necessitates that we teach them to carefully attend to each text in order to discover what they must learn before they can interpret its tensions. Such a pedagogy allows us to integrate our teaching of text and context without removing our focus from literature. But perhaps a greater benefit is that it encourages the students to take a more interactive approach to reading and engaging in cultural studies because their own reading both reveals what they need to learn and provides a purpose for learning it. (150-151)

Though Jamieson is writing specifically about African American Women writers, what she says applies to teaching all kinds of ethnic American literature. For the most part, I provided and lectured about the historical/cultural context of our readings because I was aware that many students would not have that knowledge. For instance, several students in the course were unfamiliar with all the details of Japanese American interment during WWII and did not know

about Minidoka. That background knowledge is central in grasping Ichiro's inner conflicts in *No-No Boy*. I wanted to provide this background information for them as a way to guide their reading and our class discussions.

However, allowing students to investigate a text so they recognize what they do not know about the context surrounding it would also be beneficial. In future courses, I would assign students a novel and have them be responsible for presenting on the historical and cultural context of it. I would do the context presentation for the first novel we read for the class, modeling for them how to incorporate history and visuals that go along with the text. Students would sign up for the novel's context presentation at the beginning of the semester, and I would provide a list of important details for each novel that they would need to cover. For example, for the student/s presenting on *The Squatter and the Don* I would instruct them that they needed to address some of the early history of California (including the establishment of Spanish Missions and the transition from Spanish to Mexican rule), Manifest Destiny, the Mexican-American War, and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Students would be required to have a PowerPoint presentation with text, maps, and images that support the historical background and upload it to the course's online forum so that the rest of the class would have access to it. They would also need to prepare discussion questions about their presentation and be responsible for presenting and leading the class discussion for at least twenty minutes. This assignment would be worth approximately five percent of their final grade. If there were more students than course texts, they would be put into pairs to do the presentation. This would allow students to investigate in depth one course text and illustrate for them how they can do context research for future readings and writing, and could act as a springboard for their final research paper. Victor N. Shaw explains that if students write a paper on the same topic as their presentation, the feedback

students receive during the presentation tends to improve the quality of their final papers. Class presentations such as this have many benefits for students because it allows them to practice their oral communications skills, which then improves their higher-order thinking skills. Instead of me lecturing about every novel's context, students would be teaching other students and broadening their own knowledge. As the instructor, I would be ready to fill in any gaps that needed to be addressed and also facilitate questions and conversation about the context presentation. Julia Hayden Galindo explains, "Instructors may assign presentations for a variety of reason, including to strengthen students' oral communication skills, to give the students a role in carrying out some of the teaching, to formally diversify the voices who are participating in classroom discourse, and as a method of evaluating students' learning that goes beyond traditional exams and essays" (para. 1). Not only does the student who is presenting benefit by learning new skills, but also the other students benefit by hearing diverse perspectives and ways of presenting..

Moving Away from Emotional Response and Facilitating Literary Analysis

One struggle I encountered in this course was having students explain how they themselves would react to a situation and comparing it to the characters in the novel. Of course, every student comes to the text with different experiences, so allowing their voices to be heard is crucial, and for the most part, students were engaged and insightful with their comments. However, on some occasions student comments steered away from the text and focused on personal feelings. For example, it was apparent that several students did not like *The Squatter and the Don* and were quite vocal about how ridiculous they thought some of the circumstances were. Some of their disgust hinged on the fact that Ruiz de Burton focused on the strife of the Californios and brushed aside any hardships the Native Americans faced. I had previously

addressed the erasure of Native Americans in the novel, and we had discussed how Ruiz de Burton chose to focus on the Californios because those were her people. Nonetheless, one student in particular was adamant about how she hated the novel because Ruiz de Burton was a hypocrite—the white settlers were doing to the Californios exactly what the Californios had done to the Native Americans. Marci L. Carrasquillo notes, "when students find themselves reading literature that not only does not reflect their experiences as American citizens or their understanding of what an American is, can, or should be, but that also requires them to examine . . . unequal ethno-racial, class, gender and linguistic dynamics . . . some simply refuse to participate in discussions, while others assume an antagonistic presence in the classroom" (71). This student, though not necessarily antagonistic, was very adamant in her dislike of the novel and the unequal dynamics highlighted within it. At one point, after reading a section where one of the characters becomes ill because she is forbidden to marry the man she loves, this student said, "I would be sad if I lost my love, but I wouldn't get ill. People don't just get typhoid because they're heartbroken." Louise M. Rosenblatt argues, "The reading of a particular work at a particular moment by a particular reader will be a highly complex process. Personal factors will inevitably affect the equation represented by book plus reader. His past experience and present preoccupations may actively condition his primary spontaneous response. In some cases these things will conduce to a full and balanced reaction to the work. In other cases they will limit or distort" (75).This student's reaction to the text was, unfortunately, limiting and distorting her analysis of it and its characters. Instead of contemplating why the protagonist of the novel would fall ill and what intersections of identity and historical/cultural context came into play, she merely judged the character. When students made comments such as these, I brought the discussion back to the text and characters themselves, reminding students that 1) the time periods

of the novels were often quite drastically different from our current time period, so we could not judge the characters based solely on our own experiences, and 2) that these were fictional characters that the author chose to write in a certain way for a purpose. I also stressed that it was not necessary for them to like every text we read for the class, but to understand why we had chosen it for an ethnicity in American literature course and to learn something from it.

One of the reasons students did not like *The Squatter and the Don* was because of its style; it was published in 1885 and is a sentimental novel. As a way to help them through the tough style and mitigate further comments of disgust about it, I introduced the features of the sentimental and domestic novel to illustrate for them how women in the 19th century wrote in this style as a way into the publication field. In the PowerPoint presentation, I quoted Shirley Samuels who states, "During the 19th century, women writers in the United States coupled the anti-Enlightenment emphasis on emotion with domestic plots that spoke to the power of feelings to effect right action. . . . Literature that evoked a sentimental response to a particular injustice became identified with women co-opting sentimental conventions to shine light on social problems" (para. 1). We discussed these themes in *The Squatter and the Don*, highlighting how Ruiz de Burton was trying to "shine light on [the] social problem" of the unfair treatment of the Californios and land squatting. I wanted them to get out of the comfort zone of simply personally reacting to the text and delve deeper into the exploration of character. Rosenblatt writes, "Once the student has responded freely, a process of growth can be initiated. He needs to learn to handle with intelligence and discrimination the personal factors that enter into his reaction to books. Through a critical scrutiny of his response to literary works, he can come to understand his personal attitudes and gain the perspective needed for a fuller and sounder response to literature" (102). After our discussion of sentimental fiction, students better understood why Ruiz

de Burton wrote the way she did, and the lecture aided them in grounding their analysis in the text, though certain students still felt that some of the events that occurred in the novel were over the top. As instructors we can never expect students to like all of the course readings we assign; however, we can help them learn to investigate the characters and text based on context and the steps of literary analysis.

Perhaps several students in the class were using personal experience and emotional response as a form of analysis because they were not familiar with other forms of literary analysis or how to close read. Though Ethnicity in American Literature is a junior-level course, some students had not yet taken the sophomore-level literary analysis course. Hence, they were reverting back to what they knew: personal experience and emotional reaction – explaining how they felt about the text. Many English majors choose the major because they love to read, not fully understanding that literary analysis is much different than reading for pleasure. New English majors may love to read but do not have experience in close reading. Understanding how to critically analyze a literary text can be foreign for students and can often seem daunting. Discussing this difficulty, Jarrell D. Wright posits:

> There is nothing mystical about what critics do when they analyze texts—rather than being issued magic goggles that enable them to see things in a text that are invisible to others, critics actually engage in a process that anyone can learn. This is an important point to convey because students often approach close reading as if it were a kind of hocus-pocus, leading them into other common mistakes, like making things up that merely sound good rather than actually observing and explaining textual details. (para. 6)

He goes on to explain that he uses three steps—understanding, noticing, and explaining—to instruct students on how to close read. I stressed grounding comments in the text and encouraged

students to see details as a way of understanding characters. In an ideal world, students in a junior-level class should already be familiar, and hopefully comfortable with, close reading and literary analysis. However, not all students are on the same level and sometimes the most vocal students are those who are merely reacting to the text on a personal level or "making things up" instead of analyzing the text. Though Wright's article is focused more on freshman-level students, his steps apply to all levels of English majors.

It is helpful to reemphasize in every literature class how to close read and how to use literary analysis correctly. In this course I emphasized that close reading is a process and that, while reading, students should track character and theme development, as well as the author's craft and purpose. We discussed that we should consider why an author makes the choices she does and what she is trying to express to readers. On Moodle, I posted a summary of areas that help with close reading. This list included: 1) Big moments in the plot, 2) References to the title, 3) Recurring ideas, words or phrases, images, symbols, or motifs, 4) Character development 5) Thematic development, 6) Conflict: developing, continuing or resolving, 7) Author's craft: how does the author use diction, figurative language, voice, style, and structure of the text, and 8) How all the previous work together. One of the most helpful tools for literary analysis is demonstrating how it is done. Early in the semester, we read a passage aloud in class, and I modeled for them how I interpreted that section of the text, showing them the assertions I would make. Throughout the semester, we read passages aloud and I asked specific questions to get the students to voice their own interpretations and assertions. Additionally, I had them read a document titled "An Introduction to Literary Analysis" as part of their homework. This document breaks down the steps of reading for comprehension, developing an arguable, specific, clear thesis (one that is not based on personal reaction to the text), reading for evidence,

organizing evidence, and writing the analysis. This combination of reading assignments, instructor modeling, and class discussion deepened students' understanding of literary analysis, and their final research papers demonstrated this. Their papers were insightful interpretations of texts we had read for the course and included textual evidence and outside theory and scholarship that supported their claims.

Conclusion

An ethnic American literature course should trace the construction of ethnicity as it has been negotiated throughout the centuries to understand how a character's identity is formed. For students to more deeply understand the nuances of a characters' identity, teaching intersectionality is key. Ferber and Herrera suggest, "An intersectional approach acknowledges that individuals and groups are multidimensional and multiply constituted and that their experiences and concerns are not mutually exclusive" (83). Any course in multiethnic literature should endeavor to illustrate the multidimensionality of individuals' and groups' experiences and concerns. Therefore, instructors should teach the concept of intersectionality early in the course and refer to it with each course reading. In this way, students learn to analyze how aspects of a character such as ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic standing, religion, and language affect their perceptions of self as well as their relationships with society as a whole. Teaching texts in pairs or themes allows students the opportunity to view the differences within an ethnic group as well as how different authors address the ideas of intersectionality. Teaching text pairs and themes also helps students move away from generalizations of ethnic groups, as they can see how authors within the same ethnic group react to and portray situations differently. Teaching the historical and cultural context that surround and influence course readings is also vital so students have a better understanding of how characters are reacting to such contexts. So

much of identity is influenced by what happens to and occurs around an individual so it is "important to get behind the words of the literature to the historical assumptions that nourish the work" (Maitino and Peck 6). Knowledge of these historical assumptions aids students in more accurately analyzing the text. While some students may always make assumptions about ethnic groups, generalize characteristics of an ethnic group, or consider a text representative of an ethnic group, it is an instructor's responsibility to try to combat these tendencies. Making sure students ground their interpretations in the actual source text through close reading, in conjunction with teaching context and intersectionality, will better equip students to analyze texts and individuals without resorting to generalizations.

Appendix: *No-No Boy* Context PowerPoint Presentation

Asian Immigration, Japanese-American Internment, and *No-No Boy*

Chinese Immigration to the U.S.

- Asian immigration to the United States began with the Chinese in the mid-19th century, who came over as laborers, particularly for the transcontinental railroad and the mining industry.

- In the Gentleman's Agreement of 1907, Japan agreed not to issue passports for Japanese citizens wishing to work in the United States. In exchange, the U.S. agreed to accept the presence of Japanese immigrants already residing in the U.S. and to permit the immigration of wives, children, and parents.
- With the influx of Japanese women immigrants, anti-Japanese groups became agitated, and the Immigration Act of 1924 stopped Japanese immigration entirely.

- While industrial employers were eager to gain new, cheap labor, the white public was stirred to anger by the presence of this "yellow peril."
- The opposition was so hostile that in 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited immigration from China for the next ten years.
- Congress later extended exclusion in 1892, 1902 and made it indefinite in 1904.

Japanese Immigration to the U.S.

- The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 allowed for the immigration of Japanese, because industries were still looking for cheap labor.
- Japanese immigrants also faced exclusion much like the Chinese, but the U.S. government did so in stages out of respect to the national sensibilities of Japan, which was a rising military power.

Jobs and Labor

- "Due to their noncitizen status, the closed labor market, and the shortage of women, Asian immigrant men, first Chinese and later Japanese, substituted to some extent for female labor in the American West" (Espiritu, 36).
- Many Chinese men, and later Japanese men, entered into domestic service in rooming houses, hotels, and private homes at the beginning of the 20th century, and subsequently opened up businesses as laundrymen.

19th century drawing of a Chinese laundry in San Francisco.

Moving from Domestic Labor to Agricultural Labor

- Most Issei (first generation Japanese immigrants) moved on to agricultural and city trades, because of the 1907 Gentlemen's Agreement that allowed them to bring over wives and families.
- Women and children provided unpaid labor.

- With unpaid household labor, Issei could successfully compete with white farmers and acquire a principal share of the produce market.

December 7, 1941

- Japan bombs Pearl Harbor

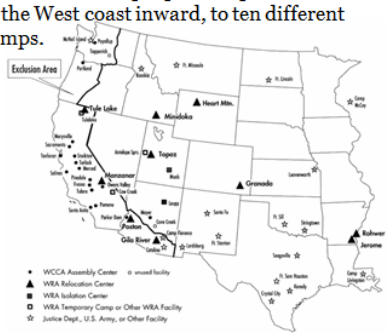
- Before Pearl Harbor, Japanese Americans were "invisible" (or unimportant), which meant that although they were not always treated equally, they could at least proceed with their daily lives mostly undisturbed.
- However, after the attack on Pearl Harbor Japanese Americans went from being invisible to hyper-visible because they looked like the enemy, what David L. Eng refers to as "enemies of whiteness" (119).

Executive Order 9066

- In February of 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066.
- This order authorized the Secretary of War to prescribe certain areas as military zones.
- The order ultimately led to the forced relocation and incarceration of approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans in what the government called War Relocation Authority Camps.

Japanese Interment Camps

- The U.S. government moved people of Japanese ancestry from the West coast inward, to ten different internment camps.



WRA Relocation Centers			
Name	State	Opened	Max. Pop'n
Manzanar	California	March 1942	10,046
Tule Lake	California	May 1942	18,789
Poston	Arizona	May 1942	17,814
Gila River	Arizona	July 1942	13,348
Granada	Colorado	August 1942	7,318
Heart Mountain	Wyoming	August 1942	10,767
Minidoka	Idaho	August 1942	9,397
Topaz	Utah	September 1942	8,130
Rohwer	Arkansas	September 1942	8,475
Jerome	Arkansas	October 1942	8,497

Minidoka, Idaho
Internment Camp


Residents of Block 21 (*Minidoka Interlude* 1943)

- In 1943 the War Department and the War Relocation Authority teamed up to form a bureaucratic method of assessing the loyalty of Issei and Nisei who were in internment camps.
- All adults were required to fill out a form that became informally known as the loyalty questionnaire.
- The form asked internees questions about relatives living in the U.S. and Japan, education, foreign travel and investments, employment, religion, known languages, the types of newspapers and magazines they subscribed to and read, whether they had been convicted of a crime, etc.

Questions 27 and 28

- Question 27 asked, "Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?"
- Question 28 asked, "Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese Emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization?"

- Japanese immigrants were disqualified from becoming U.S. citizens due to racial exclusion, so renouncing their only citizenship would be problematic.
- Young Nisei men struggled with the idea of answering yes to question 27, technically volunteering for service, when their country has stripped them of their rights as citizens.
- Those who answered no to questions 27 and 28 were colloquially called no-no boys.

John Okada

- Born in 1923 in Seattle, WA.
- He and his family were interned at Minidoka.
- He enlisted in the United States Army Air Force.
- He served as a Japanese translator, flying over Japanese held islands in the Pacific and translating intercepted Japanese communications.

- After the war, Okada earned a bachelor's degree in English and a second bachelor's degree in library science from the University of Washington, as well as a master's degree in English from Columbia University.
- *No-No Boy* was published in 1956.
- It was the first novel ever published by a U.S.-born Japanese American.

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