

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: **“YOU CAN’T GET A MAN WITH A GUN”  
AND OTHER LIFE LESSONS:  
BIOGRAPHY IN THE AMERICAN  
MUSICAL THEATRE**

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This dissertation compares the versions of Annie Oakley’s persona that have been presented in American popular culture from 1885 to 1999 and analyzes the startling similarity to the state of womanhood in America across the same period. It also examines musical theatre’s ideological potential, gender problems that emerge at particular historical moments, and the reciprocal relationship between audience and cultural context. *Annie Get Your Gun* and its revivals function as a case study that reveals the complicity of musical theatre in advancing certain agendas. Because the creators and producers molded the biography of Annie Oakley for different ideological purposes that suited different audiences, the various versions are particularly useful for comparative analysis and they offer insights into the way the present shapes and reshapes the past. This investigation aims to identify what each production teaches us about American cultural life and to reveal and describe the ideological operations of musical theatre in order to establish its significance in the larger landscape of American popular culture.

In its many reincarnations, *Annie Get Your Gun's* ideological agendas primarily address American female spectators, millions of whom have watched it, largely uncritically. It is my contention that over the course of the late-nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, several artists, from Oakley and Buffalo Bill, to Irving Berlin and Dorothy Fields, to Graciella Danielle and Peter Stone, have used the life story of Annie Oakley in order to convey specific ideological content and to reflect the moral views and behavior of women in the audience. In 1946, the musical collaborators took Oakley's story and crafted a message that would resonate with post-World War II female spectators. Through this investigation, I have identified changes that have been made to Oakley's biography and to the original *Annie Get Your Gun* script and read them in light of their cultural moment in order to offer possible reasons why these changes appealed to particular audiences; essentially, why spectators forgive and even applaud the factual omissions and changes that occur. A non-redacted version of this dissertation with the images is available in the University of Maryland library.

“YOU CAN’T GET A MAN WITH A GUN” AND OTHER LIFE LESSONS:  
BIOGRAPHY IN THE AMERICAN MUSICAL THEATRE

By

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the  
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## DEDICATION

*for Ellie Joyce*

*thank you for teaching me how*

*to read*

*to write*

*to learn*

*to teach*

*to be a wife*

*to be a mother*

*to be a woman.*

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for the best writing shack ever. Thank you, Mom, for the million big and little tasks that seem to go unnoticed.

This began as a look at the musical theatre. It has become a dissertation about being a working wife and mother and learning to negotiate the joys and perils of that combination. Parris, thank you for the on-the-job training and for being my research partner. You defy gender-role logic. Thank you for the love, patience, and support that has seen me through and for giving me the best cheering section a girl could ask for. Keegan and Ciara, I love you. You really *are* the sun in the morning and the moon at night. All of my time away studying and writing brings only this wisdom: Do something that you love to do and don't ever settle for being second best.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	v
INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER 1	
YOU CAN'T GET A MAN WITH A GUN—BUT YOU CAN GET AN AUDIENCE: MARKETING ANNIE OAKLEY FOR <i>Buffalo Bill's Wild West</i> (1885-1903) .....	20
CHAPTER 2	
ANNIE, SURRENDER YOUR GUN!: THE CULTURAL MOMENT (1942-1946).....	61
CHAPTER 3	
<i>Annie Get Your Gun</i> : BROADWAY (1946) .....	109
CHAPTER 4	
WHAT COMES NATUR'LLY?: CASTING THE "IDEAL" WOMAN IN <i>Annie Get Your Gun</i> (1947-1957) .....	183
CHAPTER 5	
ANYTHING YOU CAN DO, I CAN DO...EQUALLY: BROADWAY REVIVAL AND REVISICAL (1966 & 1999) .....	259
APPENDICES & FIGURES .....	308

## INTRODUCTION

“One easily forgets that human education proceeds along highly theatrical lines. In a quite theatrical manner the child is taught how to behave....The human being copies gestures, miming, tones of voice....Their education never finishes....Think this over and you will realize how important the theatre is for the forming of character. You will see what it means that thousands should act to hundreds of thousands. One just can't shrug off so many people's concern with art.”

--*Bertolt Brecht* “Two Essays on Unprofessional Acting” (c.1940)

“A theatre is a business that sells evening entertainment.”

--*Bertolt Brecht* “Emphasis on Sport” (1926)

“With a Gu-uun, With a Gu-uun, No you can't get a man with a gun.” This line haunted me. It followed me everywhere...into the shower, at the store, in the car...perfect for belting and maniacally repetitive. It was the spring of 2001, I was choreographing *Annie Get Your Gun*, and that lyric had insidiously conquered my subconscious. One month later, after a successful run and the catchy tune long forgotten, in researching another project I ran across an article, “Annie Oakley and her Ideal Husband of No Importance,” in which historian Tracy C. Davis observes that *Annie Get Your Gun*, written by Irving Berlin, Dorothy Fields, and Herbert Fields in 1946, was “a timely lesson for wives of returning veterans.”<sup>1</sup> A light bulb switched on in my mind and thus began my dissertation research.

In that moment, I began to recognize the awesome potential of musical theatre as a means of indoctrination into dominant ideology. I sang that song a thousand times without *once* questioning its possible ideological content. This, I realize, reveals that I did not approach musicals with much critical distance. But if nothing

else, as I sat in my seat opening night, I was a perfect reflection of the average audience member for musical theatre. With my guard down, I sat there eagerly anticipating the music, the dancing, and the romance. Surely, I would find no *substance* behind this flash. Unwittingly, I was an empty plate in line at an ideological buffet.

Certainly, I am not the first to suggest a connection between a piece of popular culture and its historical context. But, because of the perception of traditional musicals as “fluff,” there is a dearth of critical research regarding the musical theatre as an artistic form with significant ideological force. Musical are often seen as theatre’s equivalent of “chick flicks.”<sup>2</sup> Whether buying tickets to a chick flick or musical, most spectators assume that the entertainment ahead will be frivolous and far from thought-provoking. However, the musical is a popular art form that is ideologically coercive in ways people do not imagine. The musical’s insidious power results from the way its form and content work together under the very guise of seemingly disinterested “fluff.” The musical, then, becomes all the more coercive because it is persuading a willing audience. It is my hypothesis that when this mesmerizing presentational style is combined with the real life story of a legendary figure, the product is particularly persuasive.

Legends are at once the historian’s dream and nightmare. They tell history as it “ought to be” with larger-than-life characters and tidy morals at the end. Moreover, legends are flexible. They can be re-shaped by changing the facts in order to fit the needs of a contemporary audience. Fictional characters are added or events are deleted and the biography still bears the convincing “stamp of history.”<sup>3</sup> This

misrepresentation can result from many different sources, for example, the biographer could deliberately distort the facts for ideological purposes, or the subject could hide the truth for personal motives. The danger in the creation of a legend is, of course, that the fiction ultimately obscures the fact, and “meaning” is assigned to events or characters that in reality never existed.

Such a phenomenon, I argue, is doubly dangerous when centered on the legend of a powerful woman. In the creation of a legendary woman’s tale, the fictions often take on their own life and the lessons become the motivation for a story that masquerades as history. In fact, a legend’s source of power is the perception that it *is* history. This dissertation focuses on the larger-than-life figure of Annie Oakley (1860-1926) as she has been portrayed in popular culture. Her performance and publicity as part of *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show* in the 1880s and 1890s incorporated a great deal of her life history, but researchers have contested much of the portrayal. This disagreement illuminates the formulaic construction of legends in popular culture and the ways in which legendary status reframes and ultimately reduces a famous woman until, as philosopher Drucilla Cornell argues, she cannot be separated from the many interpretations of “the fiction in which she is represented and through which she portrays herself.”<sup>4</sup>

When a piece of popular culture is based on the real story of a woman’s life, the natural expectation is for an element of truth-telling and accuracy in the depiction. Unfortunately, this is not usually the case in theatricalized representations of powerful women. More often than not, biographical portrayals, and in this case musical biographies, become vehicles for social commentary and cautionary tales for

contemporary times utilizing the interesting adventures of a woman's life encased in a catchy tune and a predictable plot twist that never really gets to the heart of the woman or her life's work. Musical theatre, America's most enduring art form and purveyor of popular culture, is complicit in this process.

The "biographical" musical *Annie Get Your Gun* is a particularly instructive example. The musical claims to tell the real-life story of Annie Oakley, but the real-life story is difficult to discern because of the mythologizing by the *Wild West*. Two important differences separate a biographical musical from those centered on completely fictionalized characters: first, the fact that biographical musicals make truth claims that are not present with fictional characters; second, it is intriguing that this woman was famous enough to be familiar, but not famous enough to require a strictly factual interpretation. The novelty of this research is that the biography of Oakley is available to read against the musical versions. And although the biographical information available may often be factually uncertain or may even further the misperceptions about her, the creators of *Annie Get Your Gun* used these same primary and secondary sources as their source material. They painted a new picture and eventually cut up that canvas to create an even newer version of her life story as the musical was revived and revised again and again over a period of five decades.

Although there is a vast body of research available on Oakley, there is no thorough investigation directly connecting this legendary woman to the musical that bears her name and purports to tell her story. Tracy Davis has written extensively on Annie Oakley and she and other authors have noted the not-so-subtle messages for

women embedded in the musical.<sup>5</sup> A great deal has also been published about musical theatre as a genre. These works, however, are mainly general histories or focus on the work of specific composers.<sup>6</sup> There is also a growing body of scholarly discourse, which includes Stacy Wolf's book *A Problem Like Maria* (in which she examines two of the women I discuss in this study, Ethel Merman and Mary Martin), John Bush Jones' *Our Musicals, Ourselves*, and Andrea Most's *Making Americans*, that reads a work of musical theatre as a window into its broader social and cultural context. My work is intended to contribute to this dialogue on the cultural production of the American Musical and to assess the larger field of musicals across the twentieth century.

*Annie Get Your Gun* and its revivals and revisions function as a case study that reveals the complicity of musical theatre in advancing certain agendas. Because the authors, lyricists, directors, and producers molded the biography of Annie Oakley for different ideological purposes that suited different times in our cultural history, the various versions are particularly useful for comparative analysis and they offer insights into the way the present shapes and reshapes the past. In the following chapters, I examine the ideological work of musicals, problems of gender that emerge at particular historical moments, and the reciprocal relationship between audience and cultural context.

Musicals not only function as windows to a composer's society but also help to produce social memory. In this dissertation, I explore what a musical produced by a particular historical moment reveals about the relationship between American audiences and culture and what the social, cultural, and aesthetic environment of the

piece reveals about the theatre. Ultimately, I have attempted to expose what these patterns, in both the form and content of these productions, reveal about the illusive and oppressive nature of popular entertainment. This investigation aims to identify what each production teaches us about American cultural life at particular historical moments in the twentieth century and to reveal and describe the ideological operations of musical theatre in order to establish its significance in the larger landscape of American popular culture.

Since musicals are largely formulaic and usually structured around gender roles and gender relationships, another significant aspect of this investigation has been the expectations that this genre sets up with regard to gender and class, particularly in the area of female spectatorship. In its many reincarnations, *Annie Get Your Gun's* ideological agendas primarily address American female spectators, millions of whom have watched it, largely uncritically.<sup>7</sup> This dissertation examines the various meanings of femininity that *Annie Get your Gun* embodied before, during, and after the second wave of feminism, as well as the way the musical form conveys these expectations and meanings, and how over time the content changes in response to shifts in American social and cultural life. It is my contention that over the course of the late-nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, several artists, from Oakley and Buffalo Bill, to Irving Berlin and Dorothy Fields, to Graciella Danielle and Peter Stone, have used the life story of Annie Oakley in order to convey specific ideological content and to reflect the moral views and behavior of women in the audience. In the 1946 musical, the collaborators took the story of a legendary nineteenth-century sharpshooter and crafted a message that would resonate with post-

World War II female spectators. Through this investigation, I have identified changes that have been made to Oakley's biography and to the original *Annie Get Your Gun* script and read them in light of their cultural moment in order to offer possible reasons why these changes appealed to particular audiences; essentially, why spectators forgive and even applaud the factual omissions and changes that occur. To begin this examination, my first question concerned the nature of this genre and its effect on female spectators at a particular historical moment. In essence, I asked: How did *Annie Get Your Gun* work to advance or subvert hegemonic ideologies of gender in the post-war and cold war periods and how did its ideological function change in American culture at the end of the twentieth century?

Several subsidiary questions also emerged: What is the reciprocal relationship between a musical dealing with a legendary figure and the musical's social environment? What choices do the creators of the musical (in its various versions) make? When have they included or excluded particular facts? How do images selected by the musical's creators reflect their own social environments and advance—or subvert—hegemonic ideologies? How do these images reveal the creators' implied spectators? What ideological agendas does the musical offer to American women in the twentieth century? How does the musical establish expectations of women and their proper role in the social environment for the male members of the audience? How does the musical fit into the broader context of twentieth-century American culture?

My project, then, includes both close textual reading and materialist analysis of this musical in an effort to suggest answers to broader questions about the way

musicals work. These questions include: How, through a seductive combination of form and content, does musical theatre coerce spectators into particular ideological positions? How do textual and visual clues reveal to whom the musical is addressed? How does the casting of a musical (particularly of the lead role) affect the ideological potential of the piece? How does celebrity or star persona impact content? How is gender (or class or sexuality) implicated in this process? Are characters and storylines developed that reflect the ever-changing notion of woman and her proper sphere of influence?

The scope of this dissertation, at its broadest point, examines American performances of Annie Oakley's biography between 1885 and 1999. It is, however, limited to three specific periods within that expanse: the end of the nineteenth century, the post-World War II and Cold War period, and the end of the twentieth century. I argue that Annie Oakley's persona, in combination with the musical star's persona in any given production, appealed to the American public and effectively embodied the notions Americans had about the ideal woman for their specific era. I use six versions of Annie Oakley's biography as case studies and utilize a number of methodological frameworks, including comparative content analysis, cultural production, audience analysis, and materialist feminism in order to explicate them.

My analysis of the material for each incarnation, Oakley's performance of her persona, the 1946 Broadway run and its 1947 national tour, the 1950 M-G-M film version, the 1957 television version, the 1966 Broadway revival, and the 1999 revival, all follow the same process. I first establish the political, cultural, and social milieu of the audience, with a particular focus on the pertinent ideological agendas

offered to American women at this historical moment. I also establish the notion of the “ideal” beauty in each period in order to read the depiction of Oakley against that ideal.

When considering the musical version of the biography, I first consider the casting of the Ethel Merman and the ways in which her star persona, including her physical and vocal traits, made her the perfect Annie to appeal to the post-war audience. I then highlight choices made by the collaborators in the interpretation of Oakley’s life story and the impact of those choices. Next I consider how the images that are selected in both the visual text and the promotional materials help the production reach out to its audience among the millions of American popular culture consumers. Finally, I consider the advertisements surrounding the production and the reviews of the production in order to assess the audience composition and the critical reception of the piece.

Musical theatre icons Mary Martin, Judy Garland, and Bernadette Peters have all played the girlish Oakley either on Broadway, on film, or on television. In ensuing chapters, I address the changes in stars, scripts, and advertising that reflect major shifts in ideological content or the attitudes of the intended audience. These very different stars have appealed to different audiences and may have altered, either consciously or unconsciously, meanings while performing the same lyrics and dialogue. I examine the casting of Annie in each version in order to determine the ways in which the physical and vocal requirements changed in response to ideological shifts over time. I use published reviews of each production to determine the reception and possible effects on the audiences. Ultimately, I suggest, the casting of

the musical underscores the continuing challenge of framing women's creative abilities as non-threatening, and that its cultural production reveals the changing notions of women's appropriate contributions to American society.

This dissertation begins with an examination of Oakley's public image during and after her time with *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, from 1885-1926. At this time, the gender norms of Victorian America were under siege and the long-held ideals of domesticity, femininity, ladylike behavior were changing as swiftly as workers were moving from the farms to the cities. With the rise of wage labor for women and the intermixing of the genders in office spaces, soon public entertainment venues also became fair game for both sexes.<sup>8</sup> Fortunately for Buffalo Bill, Annie Oakley's persona drew the attention of both men and women. She was at once a skilled and seemingly independent woman who appealed to the "college educated, frequently unmarried, and self-supporting 'New Woman',"<sup>9</sup> and also the girlish entertainer who brought her husband and dog on-stage and comforted men caught up in the gender upheaval of the time. Establishing Oakley's original appeal as a performer during this transitional period provides a foundation for the five versions of the musical comedy produced in the twentieth century.

The newspaper reports, historical documents, and biographers' interpretations available on Oakley contain more contradictions than agreements. There are, however, facts of Oakley's life upon which most biographers and historians concur. Her Quaker parents, Susan and Jacob Moses, moved from Pennsylvania to Darke County, Ohio in 1855 with their three daughters Mary Jane, Lydia, and Elizabeth.

They christened their fifth daughter Phoebe Ann Moses, soon to be nicknamed “Annie.” There are no birth records for Phoebe Ann Moses, but both family records and her death certificate place her birth on August 13, 1860. Despite their poverty, her father tried to “make his living from the land.”<sup>10</sup> He died in 1866, and Susan subsequently sent little “Annie” to live in several different foster homes.<sup>11</sup>

For a few years, around 1871, Annie was with a family that physically abused her, whom she called “The Wolves.” These were terrible times for the little girl, and she rarely referred to them in her later life.<sup>12</sup> Annie returned home to her mother at age fifteen and began supporting the family by shooting wild game for them to eat and sell. At sixteen, Annie’s sharp-shooting skills enabled her to pay off the lien on her mother’s home.<sup>13</sup> Though there are few historical records available, biographers believe that Annie Moses led a quiet backwoods existence with her family throughout the late 1870s, selling game and gaining a reputation among shopkeepers and county folk for her accurate shooting. This reputation resulted in a shooting match that would change her life and begin her professional career as a sharp shooter around 1881.

Chapter 1 examines Annie Oakley’s legendary status and the ways in which she consciously created a feminine image to appeal to her audience. The term *legend* evokes the sense of a mythic, larger-than-life persona, and stories surrounding a legendary figure are often more fiction than fact. Indeed, with enough repetition and retelling, fiction becomes fact in the minds of a popular audience. Often, the fictionalized aspect of a legend concerns the character’s accomplishments or skills. This is not the case with Annie Oakley, for historians do not contest her

marksmanship. Neither was she the “first,” “only,” or “best” woman to perform as a professional markswoman. In fact, Oakley biographers Shirl Kasper and Courtney Riley Cooper note that in the early 1880s, Oakley joined more than a dozen other fancy shooters in the public shooting arena.<sup>14</sup> Yet her legend endures, while time and popular culture have forgotten the others. In this instance, the invented element of the Annie Oakley legend is the aura of femininity that separated her from her competitors and triggered her rise to fame and fortune.

As a result of the popularity of photography in the late 1800s, there are hundreds of photographic images of Annie Oakley. Chapter 1 analyzes these publicity photos, in which she is always carefully posed mixing the masculine trappings of her career with a distinctly feminine style. An interviewer quotes Oakley in 1888 as having stated, “To be considered a lady has always been my highest ambition.”<sup>15</sup> Her charm and modesty separated her from her competitors and *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West* marketed its star as having carved her niche in the West with her talent, while fastidiously maintaining her personal convictions regarding her role as a woman. Most important, the rivalry with her husband (which serves as the central plot focus for the musical), Frank Butler, did not exist.

Produced over a one-hundred-year span, the performances in this study reflect tremendous changes in American women’s place in society and in the manner of their representation over the twentieth century. In chapter 2, using a blend of Louis Althusser’s theory of cultural production and Theodor Adorno’s analysis of mass culture, I begin my discussion of ideology and popular culture by underscoring the social and historical context of musicals and discussing propaganda aimed at women

and propagated by popular entertainment.<sup>16</sup> According to Althusserian film scholar Michael Renov in *Hollywood's Wartime Woman: Representation and Ideology*, “currents of belief” and the controlling structure of those beliefs must be “examined alongside the contours of history.”<sup>17</sup> This chapter considers the historical context of America from 1942 to 1946 and the propaganda in both mass and popular culture particularly aimed at women concerning their place in the “grid work of social hierarchies.”<sup>18</sup> This examination establishes the cultural moment and the mindset of the audience for the initial production of *Annie Get Your Gun*.

Chapter 2 then focuses on the American popular culture that may have affected the composers and lyricists as they were creating their version of the musical. Adorno claims the culture industry is interesting for its “potentialities for promoting or blocking ‘integral freedom’...by removing the thought that there is any alternative to the status quo.”<sup>19</sup> The power of the media and popular culture, and particularly its effect on women in America after World War II, is well documented in scholarly histories, print ads from magazines, television programs, and government pamphlets containing propaganda designed to persuade women into their prescribed roles in the 1940s.<sup>20</sup> During this period, the theatre also entered into its Golden Age, which began with Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Oklahoma* in 1943 and ended with *Fiddler on the Roof* in 1964, a transition that had a great effect on Dorothy and Herbert Fields and Irving Berlin.

Using the creators’ biographies and autobiographies, critical reviews of their work, recorded interviews, and their other works, I attempt to determine the personal experiences, viewpoints, and biases, especially concerning women and the political

climate of their times, that may have influenced the creators' interpretation of Oakley's experience.<sup>21</sup> In this analysis, I also include other artists who made significant conceptual contributions to the work, such as producers Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, who had considerable influence on the productions of *Annie Get Your Gun*.

Dorothy Fields conceived *Annie Get Your Gun* as a vehicle for Ethel Merman and, in 1946, and the creators tailored the role to her image and performance style. In chapter 3, I analyze the casting of Ethel Merman and her star persona. According to Stacy Wolf,

The star persona is a conglomeration of words, pictures, and sounds and because the success of the star persona hinges on the sense that we feel we know the star intimately, her body and her personality become blurred. Her physical traits seem to correlate directly with her personality, while her personality is evident in her body. A star is a person who is a representation of herself.<sup>22</sup>

Across this study, the notion of the star persona plays a large role in the casting and reception of the musical. For example, Fields used Merman's name as part of her one line pitch to Richard Rodgers and got instant approval for the idea. In this chapter, I analyze the appeal of the persona Merman offers as a performer and particularly in that role. I argue that Merman's physical attributes constantly oppose the girlish descriptions and references in the script that was (ostensibly) written with her in mind, embedding in her performance the more "womanly" roles of wife and mother.

In chapter 3, I also examine the ways in which the original production of *Annie Get Your Gun* in 1946 underscores the post-war challenge of framing women's creative abilities as non-threatening and how its cultural production reveals changing notions about the proper contributions of women to American society. My primary

framework for this study is a comparative content analysis. When asked to “nutshell” my research, I usually say that I examine the life of Annie Oakley and compare the “real life” events with the story told in the “biographical” musical. I note that I have found that the two plotlines have little to do with one another and then assert that the writer’s ideological agenda, usually aimed at women, is revealed by the discrepancies. Using the lyrics and book from the musical as well as biographical materials (both primary and secondary), I compare the facts and fictions about Oakley. An examination of lyrics and dialogue from *Annie Get Your Gun* shows a fascinating relationship of text to context. My study builds on Althusser’s concept of interpellation, or “hailing,” and the ways in which popular entertainment enabled women to identify with and unconsciously consume the prevailing ideology of domesticity. I examine how the musical hails the female spectator “as subject from among the throng of spectators in the darkened hall.”<sup>23</sup>

The visual text of a musical plays a significant part in the overall reception of a production, and one of the main determinants in audience reception is the casting of the lead role. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, in her essay “The Discursive Performance of Femininity: Hating Hillary,” states, “the body, itself a cultural construction, is ‘a mere *instrument* or *medium*’ through which cultural meanings are expressed...[and] is a compulsory practice, a forcible production... disciplined by cultural approval or censure.”<sup>24</sup> I analyze the promotional photographs from this production that feature Ethel Merman as a means of establishing the ways in which the producers tried to reach their audience and also to provide a standard against which the other Annie’s will be considered.

Chapter 3 also begins the formal analysis of the audience for this performance. Because the Broadway musical is a primarily commercial genre, popular taste and an implied spectator influence musicals more than other genres of theatre. Though there are large gaps in the extant empirical data, my research attempts to establish an understanding of the authors' intended or implied audience by establishing the makeup of the Broadway audience in the twentieth century, especially its class and gender. Through a thorough analysis of the advertisements in the Broadway *Playbill*, I have been able to theorize the musicals' intended audience.

Chapter 4 focuses on the musical *Annie Get Your Gun* on stage, film, and television, specifically: the 1947 national tour starring Mary Martin; the 1950 film version, starring first Judy Garland and then Betty Hutton; and the televised production starring Martin in 1957. These three versions are grouped together for two reasons. First they all sought a "national" audience, rather than a Broadway audience, and second, they were produced during the post-World War II and Cold War period in America, from 1947-1957, which encompasses two important trends in American culture. The first is the beginning of a major developmental phase of the women's movement. Tracing the versions of this musical chronologically from the end of World War II through the happy housewife syndrome of the early 1950s to the burgeoning domestic discontent in the late 1950s illustrates the musical's changing capacity for social commentary. This is the second trend that weaves through the popular culture of this period. The Golden Age of musicals, according to Ethan Mordden, reached its heights in the 1950s as the musical form "entered its most revolutionary phase, brashly redefining itself and forging a new kind of storytelling."

With the rise of integrated musicals, structural conventions appeared and controversial subject matter could be addressed.<sup>25</sup> This development expanded the musical's ability to discuss controversial subject matter and its ability to highlight the enormous changes in women's roles in society and at home.

Original scripts, final rehearsal scripts, and prompt books for the different versions of the musical have provided concrete evidence of the changes that occurred between the original version of the play and the eventual revisions and revival scripts. After identifying significant discrepancies between the texts, I consider the behavior of the musical heroine in the context of images and propaganda put out by contemporary popular media regarding the role of women in society, including the new medium of television. I investigate the ways in which the requirements for the physical and vocal embodiment of Annie change with the changing audience. Following this, I identify what gets "heard" in each era as I describe the agenda behind the infectious melodies and catchy lyrics by examining the ideologies of the historical moments and the ways these particular ideologies exert influence over the audience's interpretation of the musical.<sup>26</sup> In each case I also examine the advertising around the production, in both the promotional materials and the ads aimed at the consumers in the audience.

In chapter 5, I continue this examination by focusing on the changes made to the form and content of *Annie Get Your Gun* over the course of the late-twentieth century in both the 1966 Broadway revival and the 1999 Broadway "revisical." The changes, which in some cases were subtle and some cases were complete revisions, were intended to attract and appeal to new audiences and different social moments.

The 1966 revival added songs and lyrics, allowing for a new version of Oakley's persona that fit the needs and desires of the modern audience experiencing the beginnings of women's liberation. The interesting aspect of this revival is its lack of change from the original. After a decade of cuts, tweaks, and revisions made to suit the audience or the star performer, the strict adherence to the original text and the recasting of the original star highlight the similarities between the 1946 and 1966 social contexts, rather than the progressive nature of the form or content.

Finally, I turn to the 1999 revival of the musical, directed by Graciella Danielle, for which Peter Stone made substantial revisions to both the book and lyrics in order to preserve the "simple and naïve qualities of the original" while appealing to a contemporary audience.<sup>27</sup> Though reviewers called the production "creaky" and "misconceived,"<sup>28</sup> documentary filmmaker Michael Kantor, in *Broadway: The American Musical*, argues that Broadway audiences at the end of the twentieth century craved exactly what this revival of *Annie Get Your Gun* offered: "a period setting, a movie pedigree, and a known property."<sup>29</sup> Starring petite and pretty Bernadette Peters, this version offered a starkly different portrayal of both Oakley and her relationship with Butler. Danielle saw the lovers as "equals—and locked in the universal struggle, the war of the sexes...an ideal contemporary couple."<sup>30</sup> This depiction of gender equality appealed to men and women of the late-twentieth century, as can be seen in the promotional materials and the advertisements in the *Broadway Playbill*.

After examining the many different versions of Oakley's persona that have been presented from 1885 to 1999, the comparisons show a startling similarity to the

state of womanhood in America across the same period. According to the 2000 census and contemporary gender analysts alike, the force of the feminist movement has abated in the late-twentieth century. Women have achieved approximate equality, but true equity remains elusive. In many ways, the casting of Peters for the 1999 audience echoes the original appeal of Oakley in the *Wild West* show, most prominently in her performance of femininity. However, the fact that her Annie Oakley remains “second best” at the end of the musical illuminates the wide gender gap that still exists for the men and women of the twenty-first century who have seen women’s liberation, survived the backlash, and are now staring at one another through the glass ceiling.

**CHAPTER 1**  
**YOU CAN'T GET A MAN WITH A GUN—BUT YOU CAN GET AN AUDIENCE:  
MARKETING ANNIE OAKLEY FOR *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* (1885-1903)**

“There is no play and no theatrical performance which does not in some way or other affect the dispositions and conceptions of the audience. Art is never without consequences, and indeed that says something for it.”

--*Bertolt Brecht* “Two Essays on Unprofessional Acting” (c.1940)

“It leads to a lot of confusion when people hope to put across certain truths by wrapping them up and coating them with sugar.”

--*Bertolt Brecht* “A Little Private Tuition for My Friend Max Gorelik” (1944)

Legendary sharpshooter Annie Oakley was the first female star of *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show* and beloved by the public.<sup>1</sup> Oakley played the coquettish cowgirl in Cody's arena from 1885 to 1902, spanning almost two decades of turbulent societal change as Victorian America progressed into the Modern era. Martha Burr, in her study of American cowgirl iconography, “The American Cowgirl: History and Iconography, 1860-Present,” argues that the “icon” of the American cowgirl reflects the transformation of gender norms during this period, challenging “the hegemony of nineteenth-century domesticity” and establishing a “cultural niche” for female counterparts in the typically “male sphere of the West.”<sup>1</sup> The wildly popular persona of Annie Oakley embodied this gender role transition. She was a Victorian anomaly. She was charming, feminine, and famous for skills that were, particularly in that era, considered strictly masculine.

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<sup>1</sup> Portions of this chapter were published earlier as “You Can't Get a Man With a Gun—But You Can Get an Audience: Marketing Annie Oakley,” in *Journal of American Drama and Theatre* (Spring 2006) 18:2, 41-69.

Oakley's unique combination of deft marksmanship with girlish looks and ladylike manners separated her from her female competitors and made an otherwise uncomfortable performance of gender acceptable and even entertaining for the American public. Her attractiveness was a certain kind of femininity that appealed to an audience in search of a youthful, white, American heroine. Her act, particularly when set against the rough riders and Indian scalplings, appealed to both the men and women in the *Wild West* audience because, as Oakley biographer Damaine Vonada notes, "she was provocative, appealing and reassuring, all at once."<sup>2</sup> It is this same combination that has made her persona an ideal subject for musicals, films, and fiction for the past century.

Buffalo Bill's publicity machine capitalized on this unusually appealing mix and presented Oakley as having carved her niche in the West with her talent while fastidiously maintaining her personal convictions regarding her role as a woman. She was a major box-office draw and her image was predominantly featured in the *Wild West* posters and advertisements. In her publicity photos, she is always carefully posed, mixing the masculine trappings of her career with a distinctly feminine flair. The emphasis on Oakley's feminine image is evident upon examination of these photos, since great care was taken with every detail (the style of her hair, the fit of her costume, the presence or absence of jewelry, props and background scenery, and the direction of her gaze) in order to evoke the desired effect. However, the identity of the controlling hand behind the style choices remains a mystery.

Though many scholars have investigated Oakley's biography, especially in connection to its various theatrical incarnations, few have focused on her *visual*

representation. Yet, I argue that by exploring the ways in which Oakley deftly combined masculine and feminine imagery in the hundreds of photos taken of her, scholars may gain insight into the ways Oakley manipulated her image to present the ideal Victorian woman engaged in a very *unwomanly* pastime.<sup>3</sup> In fact, her visual representation was an *integral* part of her performance, and subsequent theatrical interpretations of her life have either incorporated or disregarded these images at the potential peril of misrepresenting Oakley's own performance of her identity. The persona Oakley created appealed to her late-nineteenth century audiences and was very lucrative for her family and colleagues. This persona continued to appeal to audiences throughout the twentieth century as various authors, biographers, and actresses adapted and altered her persona to make their own profit. Examining the visual representation of Oakley during her lifetime – especially in contrast to later visual images created by subsequent generations of artists or scholars, suggests how vital the visual was in establishing Oakley's persona among her contemporary audiences.

In this chapter, I analyze the marketing of Annie Oakley in the *Wild West Show* by examining photographs of Annie throughout her life. Questions I will consider include: Did Oakley's public persona convey her personal convictions and conservative beliefs or was her carefully orchestrated image created in order to appeal to a society in gender crisis? Was Oakley's marketing geared to appeal to males or females, or both? Did Oakley and the *Wild West* marketing team stage her publicity pictures in a way that feminizes her, hoping to simultaneously generate the image of the American West and appeal to the Victorian culture and its expectations? Finally,

is the legendary Annie Oakley famous for her sharp-shooting skills or a product of the reassuring public persona and corresponding images that glorified the feminization of a pretty, young, white American that created a product that sold millions of tickets for *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*? In order to investigate these questions, I offer comparative photos of other sharp shooting females who toured as part of Wild West shows, to delineate the differences among images that were designed to appeal to the audience of the *Wild West*.

Oakley captured the imagination of the American and European public, and her audiences embraced her feminized image so enthusiastically that it has become an inseparable part of her legend. After Oakley's employment in the *Wild West* ended, there is a discernable change in the representation of her femininity, which suggests that her publicity team did, in fact, construct her feminine image for publicity purposes. Though it is impossible to define the extent to which Oakley had a hand in her representation, the consistency of her presentation and participation in this image makes it probable that she was at least a willing accomplice, if not one of the masterminds behind her persona. For this project, Oakley's agency in her depiction has little impact on the various interpretations of her legend throughout the twentieth century and their cultural influence. The issue does, however, evoke the way her male and female musical biographers manipulate Oakley's persona, and as this point is the genesis of the manipulation, whether she is simply complicit or in fact an architect of her own legend brings to the fore the questions surrounding a masculine or feminine controlling force, the different goals for each, and the results of each depiction.

## DOIN' WHAT COMES NATUR'LLY

As a young woman of twenty-one, Annie Moses was “pretty and petite, five feet tall and under a hundred pounds” reports Vonada. This girl with “attractive blue eyes” and “perfect white teeth” startled marksman Frank Butler at their initial meeting in the spring of 1881.<sup>4</sup> He later recalled, “I almost dropped dead when a little slim girl in short dresses stepped out to the mark with me.”<sup>5</sup> This impression, of a “girl” with the remarkable skills of a man, followed Annie throughout her career and into her old age.<sup>6</sup>

Shirl Kasper, in her authoritative biography, *Annie Oakley*, places Frank Butler at about twenty-four-years old when he met Annie Moses. Kasper takes much of her information from the book *Missie*, a biography written by Oakley's niece, Annie Fern Swartwout.<sup>7</sup> Frank, who was touring as part of a trick-shooting act, is described as “nice looking” and “slightly below average in height,” with a “good sense of humor.” He had emigrated from Ireland as a boy, worked odd jobs in New York City, and gotten married and had two children at a very young age.<sup>8</sup> This first marriage had, for all intents and purposes, ended by the time Frank met Annie, though it is unclear when his divorce was actually final.

Frank continued to tour throughout their one year courtship, sending poetry and gifts from the road.<sup>9</sup> It is a “mystery,” even to family members, as to when and where Annie Moses married Frank Butler. Throughout their lives, the couple avoided discussing the date, possibly to protect Annie's reputation and avoid scandal. For, according to Kasper, it is possible that Annie left Darke County and began her life on the road before marrying Frank, as a marriage certificate that Annie produced late in

life establishes that they were married in Windsor, Canada, on June 20, 1882.<sup>10</sup> This certificate was given to her niece Bonnie Patterson Blakeley, for safekeeping. The Butlers were always concerned with their public image, and this measure was taken in case questions arose after her death regarding the validity of their marriage. Blakeley's husband explained, "There's lots of misinformation. [Biographers] claim she married when she was sixteen, but she was about twenty-two."<sup>11</sup> The newlywed couple continued touring on the variety circuit and Annie eventually joined her husband's act and adopted the stage name Oakley.<sup>12</sup>

In her book, *The Life and Legacy of Annie Oakley*, biographer Glenda Riley relates the tale of Annie's first break in show business. One night, in 1882, Frank brought Annie onto the stage to help complete his act when his partner, John Graham, became ill. It is unclear whether this was Frank's idea or her own, but Riley indicates that Annie had some agency in her stage debut, quoting her later recollections, "I went on with Mr. B to hold the objects as he shot, he thought. But I rebelled." To the audience's roaring approval, she insisted on taking every other shot.<sup>13</sup> Frank, knowing a good thing when he saw it, soon split with his partner and stepped into the managerial role with Annie Oakley as the focus of a new act.

Scholar Tracy C. Davis points out that nineteenth-century entertainments and their audiences "thrived on the exploitation of Caucasian femininity."<sup>14</sup> The age of burlesque and its scantily clad women had fully engulfed American entertainment by the 1880s and vaudeville was on the rise. Both Frank, who espoused traditional values, and Annie, a Quaker,<sup>15</sup> preferred employment in more respectable venues, such as variety theatres and vaudeville houses like Tony Pastor's in New York.

Pastor, who would eventually hire Oakley in 1888 during a break from the *Wild West*, gained fame and fortune by expanding his audience to include women after eliminating liquor, smoking, and overt sexual content from his productions, and audiences flocked to his family-friendly theatre.<sup>16</sup> The vaudeville atmosphere suited Butler and Oakley because, even in the earliest days of their partnership, Annie's singular character charmed audiences. The couple recognized Annie's appeal and Riley, in her essay, "Peerless Lady Wingshot," relates how the couple built Annie Oakley's persona, including her stunts, her name, and her appearance, around their own "solid family values."<sup>17</sup> Together they carefully constructed the image of Annie Oakley, an extremely modest woman who wanted her audience to consider her a "lady."<sup>18</sup>

According to Riley's biography of Oakley, even while onstage wielding a gun, Annie remained true to her Quaker ideals, refusing to "use tricks to enhance her shooting."<sup>19</sup> Frank taught her the stunts that he knew and all about the art of performing in a theatre.<sup>20</sup> Also, Butler and Oakley were not just a twosome; they traveled and performed with their dog, George. Annie shot apples off of George's head and cigarettes out of Frank's mouth.<sup>21</sup> This kind of trust added to the familial impression of the performance. As importantly, or perhaps more importantly, Frank also helped Annie learn how to read and write. Annie's youth had provided little opportunity for education since her family's financial situation was continually dire, and the literacy skills she had managed to acquire during that time were primitive at best.<sup>22</sup> Society considered education as requisite for a refined lady, and Butler and Oakley hoped to project this image, she was even photographed reading outside of

her *Wild West* tent. The importance of these basic skills and the notion of an honest, educated, married woman cannot be underestimated in their construction of the persona of Annie Oakley. Neither can the uncanny appeal of her chosen stage name.

There are various stories as to why and how Annie chose the name Oakley. It is impossible, as Kasper emphasizes, to discern the truth with complete accuracy.<sup>23</sup> The bottom-line, however, is that the persona Frank and Annie hoped to create began with this ingenious name. It embodied the very paradox that attracted audiences to Annie. “Annie” received her nickname from her sisters in her youth.<sup>24</sup> By choosing to retain this diminutive as a professional performer, she bolstered the perception of girlishness. The word “Oak” connotes an image that is hard and strong, like the guns Annie used. Yet an oak is a part of nature, it provides wood for homes and for fires, it protects from the rain. Providing and protecting are two commendable functions that guns perform. Finally, the addition of “ley,” included Annie’s stature, as a petite woman, furthering the sense of a “good,” non-threatening image. Furthermore, audiences would probably perceive the name Oakley as Anglo. It is more than likely that Frank Butler, the Irish immigrant, recognized this important detail in the late 1800s. They chose a perfect appellation for the future American heroine, because even without a picture, we immediately imagine “Annie Oakley” as a youthful, white, Anglo-American.

Oakley’s conservative appearance on stage, including her costumes, hair, and makeup, also reflects her family’s Quaker values.<sup>25</sup> Throughout her career she sewed her own costumes, designed not for their appeal but primarily for their functionality. When she appeared on stage, in contrast to the burlesque performers and “nude

women” in other theatrical venues and the coarse cowgirls performing for Buffalo Bill and in other arenas, Kasper argues that Annie’s “dark dress with a starched white collar and pretty cuffs at the sleeve” conveyed both a concern for physical modesty and her demure confidence that her shooting ability was the real attraction.<sup>26</sup> However, the subconscious connections between her plain costumes and the traditional details of Quaker dress, according to Suzanne Keen in “Quaker Dress, Sexuality, and the Domestication of Reform in the Victorian Novel,” also expressed a “promise of spirited sexuality” in that period. Keen argues that feminine Quaker clothing “signified an instantly recognizable middle-class piety and demureness that was simultaneously coded as sexually attractive. The neat, form-fitting, relatively unadorned garb figured forth not sexlessness, but marriageability, and not classlessness, but respectability.”<sup>27</sup> Therefore, in costuming herself in this way, Oakley is not simply retiring from the low-brow contest of physical appeal. Instead, she is actually competing in another way altogether.

Oakley rose to popularity as the Victorian era was waning. The Victorian ideal of femininity had “demanded less of cosmetics,” according to Fenja Gunn in *The Artificial Face*, than the Regency period before or the Edwardian period that followed. Gunn summarizes from Victorian fashion plates and novels that the perfect Victorian woman, “possessed the innocent face of a china doll, with a rosebud mouth, dimpled cheeks and small neat features framed by a demure hairstyle of ringlets.”<sup>28</sup>

As the century and the reign of Victoria came to an end,

Women began to liberate themselves from the mental confines of a restrictive outlook and the woman of personality emerged to replace the demure innocent....The bevy of attractive and talented actresses

who delighted London audiences at this time helped to create this different image of feminine beauty.”<sup>29</sup>

Sarah Bernhardt, Ellen Terry, and Lillie Langtry became some of the arbiters of fashion and beauty, with their popularity reaching the shores of America as they toured the States. In imitation of these stage beauties, fashionable women of the period on both continents wore cosmetics and their hair up.<sup>30</sup>

The liberal acceptance of makeup on women in the late 1880s did not extend, however to young or, particularly, unmarried girls. They “were expected to rely on the natural attributes of an unpainted complexion” and reflected the more child-like and untouched image of femininity popular in the early part of Victoria’s reign.<sup>31</sup> Throughout her career, Oakley refused to wear makeup and left her long chestnut brown hair down around her shoulders. These differences from the standard female fashions of the period underscored the childish image she hoped to project.

Both Kasper and Riley argue that the contradiction of a “sweet little girl,” who appeared “innocent and above reproach” and yet skilled beyond compare appealed to all audiences, “young or old, male or female, conservative minded or progressive.”<sup>32</sup> Annie’s natural appeal brought the new team recognition as a touring act, but they were poor. Frank managed their finances well, though, and any extra money always went toward bolstering Annie’s feminine image. She recalled once in a newspaper interview Frank telling her, “Well, Annie, we have enough this week to buy you a pretty hat.”<sup>33</sup> With all of this attention to the details of her performance, her name, and her appearance, they successfully constructed the modest, ladylike image of Annie Oakley.

After several years of touring on their own, financial worries overwhelmed them and they decided to join up with a larger show. The duo began touring with the Sells Brothers Circus in 1884. The famous Indian chief Sitting Bull saw Oakley's performance during the Sells Brother's stop in St. Paul, Minnesota. She so impressed him with her skill that he decided to adopt her, giving her the Indian name "Watanya Cecila" that, loosely translated, means "Little Sure Shot."<sup>34</sup> In his study of Sitting Bull, historian Louis Pfaller writes, "It was said that when [Sitting Bull] became moody and irritable -- which was often -- Annie could get him to smile by skipping through the steps of the dance she performed after her act."<sup>35</sup> Riley indicates that Frank saw this alliance with Sitting Bull as an opportunity to promote Annie's connection to the "Old West." He realized that Annie's ability to convey the spirit of independence and aggression associated with Western women while retaining the essence of the wife and "civilizer" would greatly appeal to the audiences in the East and Midwest nostalgic for the rapidly fading frontier.<sup>36</sup> He shrewdly took out an advertisement in the *New York Clipper* proclaiming little Annie's new friendship with this formidable Indian, establishing her as the "Girl of the Western plains."<sup>37</sup> This instinct of Frank's, to construct Annie's image to appeal to the emotions of a society undergoing change, would prove successful and profitable for years to come.

The next season, in 1885, Annie Oakley and Frank Butler joined Buffalo Bill Cody's *Wild West*. Buffalo Bill, already a legendary hero himself, had organized an enormous outdoor tour of trick shooters, steer ropers, and Indians who attacked mercilessly before being beaten by the White man. The success of *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* rested mainly in the cultural identity it sold to a late-nineteenth-century

American public hungry for novelty. Cody's extravaganza glorified the Old West and in its travels spread a lasting impression upon those in the east and Europe by educating his audience as to the historical significance of the events in the West. He did so with an authority that was believable, as historian Jonathan Martin observes, because of its "sense of realism." The *Wild West* appeared to the audience to be "a series of original, genuine and instructive object lessons," played out by real heroes of the western plains, as if the segments were in no way fictional.<sup>38</sup> According to one biographer, Cody "succeeded in molding the archetypal cowboy as the archetypal American."<sup>39</sup> Buffalo Bill used this authority and prominence to create the image of the ideal American cowgirl in Annie Oakley.

Butler and Oakley had already shaped Annie's persona when she met Cody, but it is the coincidence of their meeting and the wild growth in the popularity of the *Wild West Show* that has permanently linked these two characters. Dexter Fellow's, the *Wild West* press agent for nine years, credits Cody and the *Wild West* promotion team with Oakley's legendary status since, he reveals, "it was generally admitted among the performers that Johnny Baker, who learned about guns from Cody, his foster-father, was the more skillful. Because Annie was a woman and therefore a great drawing card, the public was never let in on the secret. We allowed the audience to think that they were rivals, but the 'woman at arms' and the Cowboy Kid never staged a match."<sup>40</sup> Baker, however, denies that he was the better shot claiming,

There was never a day when I didn't try to beat her. But it just couldn't be done. You know, the ordinary person has nerves. They'll bob up on him in spite of everything; he'll notice some little thing that distracts his attention, or gets fussed by the way a ball travels through the air. Or a bit of light will get on the sights, or seem to get there, and throw him off. I wasn't any different from the average person, but

Annie was. The minute she picked up a rifle or a shotgun, it seemed that she made a machine of herself-every action went like clockwork. How was a fellow to beat anybody like that? To tell the truth...it would have made a better show if I could have beat her every few performances. But it couldn't be done.<sup>41</sup>

There is no disputing that Oakley was a great shot, with more than two decades worth of shooting matches to prove her prowess, but Fellows' claim, that Oakley's appeal was "the contrast she presented to the rest of the personnel,"<sup>42</sup> also has merit.

Ultimately, Buffalo Bill did not mold her into the rugged role of "cowgirl." Glenda Riley claims that Annie Moses Butler instead "chose to characterize the cowgirl as a lady...a strong woman with whom female viewers could identify."<sup>43</sup> This suggests that Oakley had by this time so firmly established her persona for herself that she refused to re-package herself for the new show. Buffalo Bill could hardly argue with the kind of response she received from male and female fans alike. In fact, one male admirer wrote, "It was not altogether your skill that attracted me, but your personality, your grace, your gentle bearing and your sweet face with your expressive eyes that look out from under that broad-brimmed hat so becomingly worn."<sup>44</sup> Clearly, the Annie Oakley persona Butler and Oakley had created appealed to the Victorian audience and Buffalo Bill capitalized on this recognizable and profitable product.

### **SOCIETY IN GENDER CRISIS**

Annie Oakley's meteoric rise to fame in the *Wild West* can, of course, be attributed to her skill with a gun, but it must also be attributed to her packaging. Upon seeing an exhibition of her shooting, Nate Salsbury, the *Wild West* business

manager, greeted Oakley for the first time with these words, “Fine! Wonderful! Have you got some photographs with your gun?”<sup>45</sup> From that moment on, the advertisements for the *Wild West* (and many other shows she appeared in) prominently featured the innocent and childlike image of Annie Oakley.

Photographs of Oakley with her gun were staged very carefully throughout her career. I would argue that Annie’s poses were meant to appeal to the Victorian men in the audience by presenting a woman who did not threaten their masculinity. This appeal was crucial in this time of social, economic, and industrial change. The make-up of the nation’s work force was swiftly changing from farming, carpentry, and other traditional manual labor to office or machine work. For many men, this change caused a “crisis of masculinity...a worry that the work they did was softening, effeminizing and devoid of opportunities to prove heroic manliness.”<sup>46</sup> Buffalo Bill, as a producer, was well aware of these societal concerns and played to them.

Nineteenth-century masculinity abounded in *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West*, with real cowboys saving poor white folk from Indian attack or shooting guns and roping buffalo. Audience members were swept away by the heroic scenes presented before them, but before they bought their tickets, they were attracted by the colorful imagery and exciting descriptions on the show’s marketing billboards and posters. The *Wild West* publicity featured Buffalo Bill as a legendary hero among rough cowboys, frightening Indians, and bucking broncos. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to analyzing the feminization of Annie Oakley in an effort to distinguish her from the profusion of masculinity and to improve her marketability for the *Wild West* show.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines an attribute as “masculine” when it is “deemed to be of the male sex on the basis of some quality, such as strength or activity” or “befitting or regarded as appropriate to the male sex; vigorous, powerful, virile or courageous.” The dictionary defines the characteristics of “feminine” as those of a woman, or, gentleness, softness, delicacy, fearfulness, and tenderness.<sup>47</sup> Utilizing such specific definitions or sexual stereotypes for a study such as mine can be difficult, as the descriptors are always contingent upon one another and perceptions of what is acceptable, desirable, or even attributable behavior in a particular sex is constantly shifting. However, Mary P. Ryan, in *Womanhood in America*, asserts that specific “sexual stereotypes” and “role divisions” became “firmly imprinted on the American mind” in the mid-1800s. She attributed much of this to the popularity of *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, which glorified the “soft and soothing” nature of Queen Victoria as the “archetype of femininity.”<sup>48</sup> One of *Godey’s* writers attributed “purity of mind, simplicity and frankness of heart, benevolence...forbearance and self-denial” as the characteristic endowments of women.<sup>49</sup> These proscribed gender roles are met with exceptions in every age and while bearing in mind both of the above definitions and the problems inherent in this kind of binary simplification, I have assigned the categories of “masculine” or “feminine” in the analysis of the photographs in this study and will attempt to expand and ameliorate these categories.

I will first analyze two studio photos of Buffalo Bill, the model of masculinity, to offer a basis for determining “masculine” and “feminine” traits. I will then evaluate the photos of Oakley and her female peers to determine the extent to

which costuming and pose played a role in affecting the desired public image of Annie Oakley. I base my analysis of Oakley's visual image on a broader survey of photographs, renderings, and writings of the late Victorian period, specifically 1870-1894. Analyzing these images helped categorize the particularly gendered traits in the photographs. I use the comparative binary of strong or bold traits (masculine) versus traits signaling a weak, gentle, and delicate nature (feminine). Physical position of the subject, costume, the position of the gun, and subject's grasp of the gun all offer the viewer cues as to the subject's gender and nature.

There were five specific aspects I evaluated under the heading of physical position: the body, the mood conveyed by the pose, and the placement of the subject's feet, hands, and gaze. I attributed poses conveying strength (standing, confident, feet apart, both hands on gun, direct gaze) as masculine, and I determined that the poses portraying a gentle or delicate disposition (seated, upright posture, feet together, one hand on gun, profile pose or indirect gaze) to be feminine. Similarly, I analyzed the subject's relationship to the gun. If the subject had a firm grasp of the gun or held the gun in a manner that would indicate firing the gun (aimed), comfort with the gun (slung over shoulder), or in some cases a phallic representation of the gun (erect), I considered these poses as masculine. If, on the contrary, the gun was handled in a delicate manner (in lap or cradled in arms), aimed awkwardly, or was absent, I suggest this connotes femininity.

I also categorized the costumes in each photo. In 1878, Mary Eliza Haweis best summarized the importance of costume, in her work *The Art of Beauty*:

In nothing are character and perception so insensibly but inevitably displayed as in dress, and in taste in dress. Dress is the second self, a

dumb self, yet a most eloquent expositor of the person. Dress bears the same relation to the body as speech does to the brain; and therefore dress may be called the speech of the body.<sup>50</sup>

For the women's costumes, the fit of the clothing offers the best clues to how a woman presented her femininity. In the late nineteenth century, women still generally wore corsets. As E. Butterick & Co.'s *Summer Catalogue of 1882* states, "Beautiful women are more frequently known as such by an elegant figure than a pretty face."<sup>51</sup> But, in the male-dominated western arena, performers of both genders generally wore looser clothes in order to perform the tricks and stunts on horseback or bicycle, so elegance of figure was often more difficult to discern.

Other choices involving costumes and accessories are a bit more intricate, as are the messages each piece conveys. For example, wearing gloves, in this context, is a masculine not a feminine trait (unlike what a twentieth-century viewer might imagine). The gloves in the photographs are heavy and leather. In the nineteenth century, needing these gloves would denote using a gun, as the shooter would wear gloves to protect his hands from gunpowder. Likewise, a sash or scarf accessory is not inherently male. However, a sash or scarf of this nature would not have been worn by Victorian ladies as daily street wear; it is clearly a theatrical piece suggesting the western frontier and the cavalry. The women in the western arena did, however, feminize their costumes with trim and ribbons, as well as jewelry and medals, if they had them.

I assessed the style of the subject's hair and the gender it signifies by social standards of the day as well. According to a study of Victorian fashion, women's hair was generally "dressed in plaits or a twist low at the back, with a fringe, usually

curled on the forehead.” Men’s hair was “worn uncurled and usually parted down the middle.” The moustache was popular, as was the Vandyke beard, which Buffalo Bill wore throughout his career.<sup>52</sup>

In his large hat, leather pants, buffalo skin coat, and flowing hair, Martin labels Cody the “paragon of American manhood,” in his study of the *Wild West*. The program for the *Wild West* describes the star:

Young, sturdy, a remarkable specimen of manly beauty, with the brain to conceive and the nerve to execute, Buffalo Bill *par excellence* is the exemplar of the strong and unique traits that characterize *a true American frontiersman*.<sup>53</sup>

In figure 1, Buffalo Bill displays many inherently masculine traits. Despite his seated position, his pose is casual and confident and he is gazing directly into the camera. He is wearing gloves, his over-jacket is loose, and his hat and belt buckle are very large, all of which are indicative of the work and confidence of a Western cowboy.

Throughout his long career, Cody cultivated the Romantic image of the dashing cowboy, despite the fact that he never worked as a cowboy, but as a rider for the Pony Express. He was first and foremost a showman, and his long and flowing hair became his distinguishing attribute, which was not typical of men’s fashion of the time or of cowboy grooming, but was distinctly in line with the Eastern image of what a Western cowboy looked like. In fact, by the late 1890s Cody claimed, “I do hate long hair...But people have come to identify me with long hair, so I won’t cut it. Long hair is business and not art with me.”<sup>54</sup> The positioning of the gun, erect between his legs, affirms Tracy Davis’ assertion in her essay “Shotgun Wedlock: Annie Oakley’s Power Politics in the Wild West,” that “Cody corroborated the gun’s phallic surrogacy with the power invested in masculinized chivalric characteristics

such as strength, honor, and violence in a ‘moral’ cause.”<sup>55</sup> Finally, the gun’s presence, along with the whip in his left hand, invites a reading of confident masculinity.

In figure 2, Buffalo Bill radiates manliness later in life, as he stands, confidently, feet apart, gazing directly into the camera. Both of his hands firmly grasp the gun that is placed casually over his shoulder. Once again he has on gloves for shooting and his hair is down, his jacket hanging loosely around his frame. Amy Leslie, when reviewing the *Wild West* show in 1893 for the *Chicago Tribune*, called Cody “the most imposing man in appearance that America ever grew.”<sup>56</sup> If this paragon of masculinity was the archetypal cowboy, how did *cowgirls* fit into the western scene?

While *cowgirls* may not have fit easily into the visual world of the western frontier, they were a natural draw for show business, where novelty sells. After realizing that a female act was an excellent way to draw in audiences, Buffalo Bill added real *cowgirls* to his lineup starting in 1887. Buffalo Bill’s main competitor Pawnee Bill capitalized on Cody’s idea for his own *Historical Wild West Show* and “catered to the public taste for beautiful but daring ladies.”<sup>57</sup> Pawnee Bill’s wife May Lillie became one of Annie Oakley’s contemporaries and “developed into a gold medal sharpshooter.”<sup>58</sup> Lillie and Oakley both performed in Pawnee Bill’s *Historical Wild West* in 1888, and Oakley biographer Riley notes that while May Lillie

Wore costumes remarkably like Annie’s, the two women had no difficulties, perhaps because Pawnee Bill gave Annie top billing and otherwise treated Annie with the respect she and Frank felt she deserved. Although Pawnee Bill... referred to May as the ‘World’s Champion Woman Rifle Shot,’ his posters proudly announced ‘There

is but one Annie Oakley—and she is with us...fresh from her London triumph with Buffalo Bill.’<sup>59</sup>

These women could play in the same arena because despite their similarities in gender and ability, their marketing was completely different. Figure 3, below, is one of May Lillie’s most famous publicity photos. Though one would never guess it from this photograph, May Lillie was educated at Smith College and was, like Oakley, a product of a Quaker upbringing.<sup>60</sup> This imposing image is typical of the American cowgirl as she was presented in the Victorian age, but viewing this image in the context of Lillie’s education and cultural background further underscores that this persona must have been entirely a performance. She has chosen, in contrast to Oakley, to perform as the more hostile and, therefore, more masculine cowgirl. The traits of masculinity are hard to miss, as Lillie stands glaring into the camera, confident and aggressive. Her firm grip on the pistol highlights her utilitarian gloves. Her precariously perched hat and loose-fitting blouse also indicate masculinity in their ill-fit and yet, her other hand planted on her waist is sexually provocative.

Figure 4 represents another “aggressive” cowgirl, Lillian Smith, the “California Huntress.” Smith joined the *Wild West* in 1886. At fifteen years of age, she was Oakley’s first direct competition and, by all accounts, the relationship was not a friendly one. Audiences and critics never regarded Smith as highly as Oakley and she only lasted a few years in the show. Walter Havighurst, one of Annie Oakley’s earliest biographers, described Smith as “a rawboned girl without a trace of grace or magnetism.”<sup>61</sup> This studio photograph of Smith exhibits many of the masculine traits in common with the cowboy image of Buffalo Bill, including the

confident stance and grasp of the weapon. However, in this publicity photo for *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, there are some feminine traits that become apparent.

Lillian Smith, a petite girl, aims the gun away from the camera so that she is in profile (thereby feminine, not threatening the viewer). Her hair is down and she has on a masculine scarf, but her dress is fitted with decorative roping down the front and she is not wearing gloves. This photo, taken during her tenure with the show, displays the early style of publicity for cowgirls in *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, focused mainly on the western theme of skill and prowess, effectively ignoring Smith's femininity (except for the direction of her gaze). When Annie Oakley joined the *Wild West* in 1885, it could be argued that Buffalo Bill did not yet realize her potential marketability. Her first photos with the troupe are much like the previous photo of Lillian Smith, as evidenced in figure 5.

This photograph (figure 5) displays many of the masculine traits found in the previous photos of western stars, including Oakley's confident posture while aiming the gun from her shoulder using both gloved hands and her loose fitting dress with a western sash around her hips. The stark background and stacked granite around Oakley also contribute to the harsh, masculine imagery. Finally, the several guns standing up in this photo further the phallic imagery so popular with her producer Buffalo Bill.

In this photo, however, the reader notes elements of femininity bleeding into the aura of Western masculinity. When she appeared on stage and in photographs, Oakley wore her long chestnut brown hair down around her shoulders. She is twenty-five years old in this photograph, but her long hair conveys a more youthful image.

As indicated by Vonada, Oakley's hairstyle defied Victorian conventions of feminine propriety, as "respectable women were never seen in public with their hair down in those days."<sup>62</sup> This reading of Oakley's hairstyle allows for two possibilities, either she is not respectable or she is not yet a woman. With Annie's constant attention to ladylike respectability, it is unlikely that she was aiming to be sexually provocative. However, the combination of the sweet, young, girlish image and her skill with a powerful phallic symbol most likely had an inherent sex appeal that was not missed by Cody and his publicity team. While it is certainly possible that her hairstyle could be read as erotic (and probably was by some in the crowd), this defiance of convention, while eschewing womanhood, more likely underscored the childish image she hoped to project. Oakley's nicknames that were often used in print ("Little Missie," Buffalo Bill's name for her and "Little Sure-Shot," from Chief Sitting Bull) reinforced this contradiction. Finally, in figure 5, Oakley aims the gun away from the camera and shows off her medals displayed on her chest like jewelry. While these feminine touches do much to soften Oakley's appearance, the masculine elements at play in the photograph override these concessions to femininity.

Another view, figure 6 (arguably from the same shoot), has Oakley again standing confidently, feet apart, arm behind her back, with a firm gloved grip on an erect gun: all masculine traits. Her gaze is indirect and soft, adding a touch of femininity, but her body is positioned to the camera and, again, her long hair cascades over her shoulders. Her costume mixes masculine and feminine values; while it is loose fitting, and characteristically masculine, it is decorated with feminine touches such as velvet and pleating and again, her medals are displayed like jewelry. Though

guns surround her, the fact that they come up to her waist highlights Oakley's petite build.

In the late 1880s, Oakley "characterized the best of the West," according to Riley. Her "humble beginnings," and "modesty" only served to enhance her reception as a skilled horsewoman and a sure shot; and unlike May Lillie and Lillian Smith, she was congenial, slender, and pretty.<sup>63</sup> Soon, with box office numbers soaring, Buffalo Bill realized that Oakley's persona of a talented, yet clean and ladylike sharp shooter attracted all types of audience members. Once they began to capitalize on the appeal of Oakley's Caucasian femininity, Cody, Butler, and Oakley entered into the heyday of *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*.

#### THE HEGEMONY OF DOMESTICITY

The changing tides of gender constructions during the transition from the Victorian to the Modern age swept up men and women alike. Many shows, including *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, crossed the country vying for a piece of the American consumer pie. The key to the market was publicity, and Buffalo Bill had the best marketing team in "Arizona" John Burke and Dexter Fellows.<sup>64</sup> According to Jonathan Martin, this trio "helped to lay the groundwork for the consumer-commodity culture" by marrying sex, violence, and wish fulfillment into a fast-paced entertaining package.<sup>65</sup>

By its very nature, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* attracted mainly male viewers, leaving women as a largely untapped market. Enterprising businessmen and entertainers throughout the late 1800s struggled to attract a female audience, but Tony

Pastor led the way in 1865 with his Vaudeville house in Patterson, New Jersey. Pastor created a “family friendly” environment and drew throngs of women and children to his shows by banning smoking, drinking, and vulgarity.<sup>66</sup> Vaudeville houses all over the country followed this model, as did Cody and his staff. In an inspired marketing maneuver reinforcing the hegemonic relationships of the era, Burke and Fellows realized that Annie Oakley’s career began as a popular act on the Vaudeville circuit and by feminizing Annie Oakley’s image as an American sharpshooter they would specifically attract female audience members. Photos of Oakley began playing up Victorian ideals, portraying grace and femininity.

The photograph of Oakley in figure 7 dates from the late 1880s. Though the costume is the same, the tone is affected by both obvious and subtle changes. She is seated, as if for a formal portrait. Her very proper pose extends all the way down to her pointed toes, giving her an air of refinement. This pose also serves to highlight the pearl buttons she sewed onto her velvet leggings, which she proudly claimed she cut and fit herself.<sup>67</sup> Her gun is draped across her lap and her hands are delicately placed on the gun. Her body and gaze are directed away from the camera. She appears to have no connection to the gun; it is just a prop, like a book or a piece of knitting.

In figure 7, Oakley is not wearing gloves, so her delicate hands, the velvet trim at her wrist, as well as the bracelet she is wearing are in plain view. Oakley is also wearing earrings, her medals have been moved to the side far away from the camera, and a ribbon has been placed at her neckline. Though her hair is down, it is more dramatically placed around her shoulders. In addition, the scenery has been changed to a scene in nature instead of hard rocks, and the other weapons are absent.

Publicity photos of Oakley became increasingly feminine over time, and in both her performance and her personal life, she strove to create the image of the ideal Victorian lady. Since the very presence of her gun hampered this effort, she relied on three mainstays of Victorian culture to bolster this image: her marriage, her behavior (both on and off-stage), and her clothing.

Annie Oakley and Frank Butler had forty-five happy years together, until her death in 1926. Davis notes that the Butlers were the “only members of the troupe widely known as spouses,”<sup>68</sup> and Oakley’s act, as Frank Butler had planned it out in the early 1880s, continued to promote family values, often including Butler and their dog. She was the breadwinner, a typically masculine role, and he fulfilled the feminine role as the assistant. According to Davis’s essay, “Annie Oakley and Her Ideal Husband of No Importance,” Butler’s role in the marriage “suggests suffragist wish fulfillment,” for he appears to become feminized “by sacrificing his ego for love.”<sup>69</sup> However, he controlled the money and Oakley’s publicity, augmenting his more traditional position as the man of the family.

During the act, Butler’s prepared his wife’s guns and tossed the targets for her to shoot. His presence served to counterbalance any of Oakley’s tricks that might make her appear more masculine. In the course of her act, Annie performed astonishing stunts, and although she performed in a skirt, her athleticism went well beyond the normal scope of a Victorian woman’s exertions. In one stunt she

Laid a shotgun in the dirt about ten feet on the far side of her gun table. She hurried back around to the other side of the table and waited for Frank to spring a clay bird. As he released it from the trap, she ran forward, hurdled the table, picked up her shotgun, and broke the bird before it landed.<sup>70</sup>

The Dallas *Morning News* reported, “She grabbed a glass ball and threw it up herself, surprising anyone who thought that women couldn’t throw...Annie picked up her gun, fired and hit it in midair. Then she tossed up two balls at a time, smashed the first, twirled completely around, and smashed the other before it hit the ground.”<sup>71</sup> Oakley also regularly performed stunts that imperiled her husband and their dogs, shooting apples off of the dog’s head and a cigarette out of Butler’s mouth. Although he remained in the background, Davis argues that the audiences knew that he was her husband and his presence was “dynamically very important.”<sup>72</sup>

Using her marriage as an important part of the act allied Annie Oakley with the women in the audience. As Davis points out, she aimed the gun at her own husband, conveying a sense of “danger but not violence, and skill at arms but not combat,” all of which created an atmosphere of excitement, and perhaps even envy, without discomfort.<sup>73</sup> Oakley biographer Vonada reports that at the end of the performance Butler, “stood on the sidelines while the woman he called his ‘little girl’ curtsied to the crowds.”<sup>74</sup> Their roles may have been reversed, but the marriage appeared to be very strong.

One of the reasons the marriage worked was that as the star, “she allowed her husband to manage her career, her finances and her image of ladylike propriety.”<sup>75</sup> Oakley had star billing and earned the highest salary in the *Wild West*, while Butler received no billing. Reports say at times she earned “as much as \$1000 per week, which was slightly more than the President of the United States was making.”<sup>76</sup> Frank’s role as manager placed him in control of Annie’s activities and he was very protective of her reputation. They were always in search of more financial security, so

they competed in shooting matches outside of the *Wild West* arena. Frank is reported to have stated that, “No women with a shady past or doubtful reputation can ever enter into a contest with Annie Oakley while I am managing her, as she values her personal reputation far more than her shooting one.”<sup>77</sup> He also continued to compete in trap shoots outside of the *Wild West* arena, allowing his own masculinity to flourish, without ever directly competing with his wife. This competitive element to Frank’s persona, in addition to Annie’s increasingly public image of femininity, helped “normalize” the marriage in the eyes of Victorian American society.<sup>78</sup>

Annie Oakley’s behavior in and out of the *Wild West* arena also played a large role in creating the ladylike image that appealed to women in the audience. Her sharp shooting act involved several well-chosen stunts, seemingly reflective of Annie’s conservative beliefs. For example, she always rode sidesaddle while shooting in a time when cowgirls in other shows, and even in the *Wild West*, rode astride horses. Riley describes “a contraption with a flat seat, upon which the rider sat sideways, and a thick, leather covered hook, which the rider used to anchor herself by her leg to the horse’s back,” with which Oakley was capable of shooting while lying prone on horseback, as well as while hanging upside down while draped over the horse.<sup>79</sup>

Oakley’s abilities exceeded the shooting she did in the arena, but many times modesty prevented her from performing the most difficult tricks because they would involve showing her undergarments in public, which was “not proper for a lady.” She could match the cowboys’ trick shooting, but chose to leave these stunts, like shooting clay pigeons while standing on her head, to cowboys like Johnny Baker, the Cowboy Kid. Her press clippings reveal that she would display these skills “in

private” or for “a few intimate friends,” but only after insuring her modesty by buckling her skirts around her ankles with a belt.<sup>80</sup> Of course, it is impossible to determine who actually made these choices, whether it was Frank, Buffalo Bill, or Annie, but Annie’s enthusiastic participation can only be seen as in support of the image she presented.

Several Oakley biographers suggest that in the arena Annie played the “little girl” for the audience. Not only was she diminutive in stature, but also she behaved like a child, dancing, pouting, and flirting. Vonada picks up on details of her act including cartwheels, handsprings, and tricks while pedaling a bicycle,<sup>81</sup> and both Riley and Fellows describe how Oakley skipped into the arena:

There never was a question, however, that she deserved her position as star performer. She was a consummate actress, with a personality that made itself felt as soon as she entered the arena....The sight of this frail girl among the rough plainsmen seldom failed to inspire enthusiastic plaudits. Her entrance was always a very pretty one. She never walked. She tripped in, bowing, waving, and wafting kisses.<sup>82</sup>

Fellows’ recognition of Oakley as the “consummate actress” further underscores the conscious nature of her created identity, as does the consistent performance of her many childish behaviors in the arena. If she missed a shot (as she occasionally did on purpose just to show how difficult her tricks were), she threw a small tantrum, stamping her foot for the benefit of the crowd. The *New York Sun* reported, “She evidently thinks a good deal of her pout, because she turns to the audience to show it off.”<sup>83</sup> When Oakley was successful, she always “gave a satisfied little kick.” As she finished her ten-minute act, she would blow kisses to the audience, and throughout her career she always exited the stage or arena with a “distinctive jumpkick.”<sup>84</sup>

This girlish behavior went over wildly with the crowds, which her publicity photos highlighted often including the word “Little.” Dexter Fellows and Riley also report that Cody moved Oakley’s act from the middle of the program to the second spot in the *Wild West* bill, in order to “help women relax during the frequent bursts of gunfire.” Fellows recalled, “Her first few shots brought forth a few screams of fright from the women, but they were soon lost in round after round of applause. It was she who set the audience at ease and prepared it for the continuous crack of firearms which followed.”<sup>85</sup> As stated by publicist “Arizona” John Burke, “women and children see a harmless woman there, and they do not get worried.”<sup>86</sup> Again, it is difficult to assert whether Oakley, Butler, or Cody determined her exact behavior in the show, but from the consistent accounts of her performances and the reports of her consummate professionalism from everyone who worked with her, the careful selection of “tricks” that would highlight her skills while maintaining her modesty and the soothing persona of a little girl who was not afraid of the big gun noises cannot be accidental.

Off-stage, Annie Oakley presented herself as a model of domesticity for fans and interviewers, despite the fact that she spent most of her time living in hotel rooms and dressing in tents. Oakley is quoted in 1888 as having stated, “To be considered a lady has always been my highest ambition.” She asserted that the Bible was her favorite book, simultaneously demonstrating both her literacy and her piety, and she claimed that embroidery was her favorite pastime and, fittingly, destitute children were her favorite charity.<sup>87</sup> A caregiver at the Darke County Infirmary had taught Annie how to knit and embroider,<sup>88</sup> and reporters noted that she took a sewing

machine along on tour and used it to make her costumes and curtains.<sup>89</sup> When out of the arena, her publicists claimed that she could be found gardening outside her tent in the camp, or entertaining guests “with punch, tea, cakes and ices.”<sup>90</sup> Apparently, a good deal of time was spent in the tent area of the *Wild West Show* entertaining tourists and guests, as there are many photographs of Annie posed with guests outside of her tent or on the camp grounds.

Oakley furnished her tent with “a Brussels carpet, a rocking chair, and a parlor table...with her guns lining the walls.”<sup>91</sup> Riley argues that Oakley’s choice of décor and handiwork signaled to female audience members and the public at large that “although independent and perhaps employed, [women] could still be domestic.”<sup>92</sup> The photograph in figure 8 was taken in 1893 as Oakley sat outside of her tent, reading. Reading was one of her proudest accomplishments, a skill Butler had taught her early in their marriage along with a battery of other performance “tricks.” The image of a lady leisurely reading fit right into the persona the couple wanted to convey.

In keeping with this domesticated image, all signs of masculinity have vanished in figure 8. Oakley is seated almost completely in profile, in a rocking chair, wearing a Victorian confection, including corset, full length skirt and ruffles. Her hair is down, as it always is, but in this pose it is beautifully combed back and held with a bow. This subtle change enhances her Caucasian femininity and her youthful appearance. In 1893, Annie Oakley would have been thirty-three years old, but in this photo, she appears to be in her late teens. Her gaze is lowered, intent upon her reading, and she is surrounded by her garden and all of the comforts of home. The

trappings of garden and book and the “moment of leisure” she embodies convey a sense of class consciousness as well. This is one of the only photos of Oakley where she is not directly in contact with a gun; in fact, her guns are placed *almost* out of sight with another part of her act, her bicycle. Vonada reports, “From her fancy parasol to her high button shoes, Mrs. Frank Butler” strove to portray “the model of propriety.”<sup>93</sup> Her guests found her to be a charming hostess. Her performance clothing echoes this same attention to feminine detail.

Annie Oakley’s costumes in the *Wild West* helped complete the feminized image of the western girl that appealed to American men and women. In the arena, she could not wear everyday Victorian clothing (as she does in figure 8), but, as the years went by, her costumes became more fitted and flattering. Publicists boasted that the domestic, feminine Annie designed and made her own costumes (usually out of durable tan fabric).<sup>94</sup> As Davis states, Oakley’s clothes announced that she was “feminine yet serious,” and “a disciple of western pragmatism and pioneer work ethics,” all the while “perpetuating show business traditions.”<sup>95</sup> These show business traditions were reflected in the fancy embroidery that covered her costumes and the fringe that accented her every movement.

Annie Oakley’s insistence on wearing skirts exemplified her femininity even if, according to Kasper, “it meant some inconvenience.”<sup>96</sup> In her early years of performing, Oakley’s skirts were much shorter than the conservative Victorian norm. Her biographer Vonada refers to them as a “risqué” knee-length in order to allow Oakley to run and jump tables.<sup>97</sup> Though Victorian clothing styles and expectations were changing in the 1890s, Oakley hated bloomers and refused to wear more

fashionable pants or split skirts,<sup>98</sup> so she designed a “five piece costume” that could accommodate her new passion, cycling.<sup>99</sup>

On her legs, she laced gaiters about six inches above the knees. She then added a pair of knickerbockers (short, loose trousers gathered at the knee), a skirt extending halfway below the knee, a loose-fitting bodice of white silk, and Eton style jacket....She sewed an eyelet to each gaiter and a corresponding elastic with a hook on the underside of the skirt. When mounting her bike, she gracefully hooked her skirt to the gaiters. While she rode, the elastic provided sufficient room for movement of the skirt but prevented it from rising above Annie’s knees.<sup>100</sup>

To compensate for this athletic deviation, and more than likely because she was now in her thirties and well-established as a star, Oakley began to design and be photographed in clothes that were more fitted and flattering, even incorporating bodices with boning, creating a very Victorian silhouette—note the stark changes in tone of the costume in figure 9.

In figure 9, Oakley’s pose is proper with her arms gently cradling the gun, like a baby or a bouquet. Her stance is passive, rather than aggressive, her gaze is indirect, and once again she has almost no connection to the gun. The dress she is wearing has a minimized version of the Victorian “leg-o-mutton” sleeve and the cinched waistline echoes the late-Victorian hourglass silhouette. Her dark gloves fade into her skirt, and her hair, though down, is once again arranged upon her shoulders to soften her look. There is ribbon trim and a brooch at her neckline, and she is wearing earrings. In this particular shot, there is a good view of the accessory that was part of her every costume, the silver star on her hat. This, in the words of Kasper, was a “mark of her showmanship,” a part of the very appealing package.<sup>101</sup>

Many other cowgirls tried to emulate Annie Oakley's image with varying degrees of success. One in particular, Lucille Mulhall, who was remarkably similar to Oakley in appearance and dress, "attracted numerous fans, garnered favorable reviews, and received hundreds of gifts."<sup>102</sup> The *New York World* lauded "Little Miss Mulhall" as the ideal cowgirl, who

Weighs only 90 pounds, can break a bronco, lasso and brand a steer and shoot a coyote at 500 yards. She can also play Chopin, quote Browning, construe Virgil, and make mayonnaise dressing.<sup>103</sup>

The *New York World's* description encompasses all the traditional female accomplishments and by listing them last, seems to give them greater significance than Mulhall's other talents; they "compensate" for her other attributes.

According to Riley, Annie Oakley's domesticated image "fit in well with Cody's purposes," which were to "reassure female viewers and calm their fears," and ultimately to sell more tickets. Cody proudly boasted that "ladies and children can attend my exhibition with perfect safety and comfort."<sup>104</sup> Although there are no records available accounting for audience composition, Martin infers that a large percentage of the audience was female by 1895, as more than half of the advertisements in the *Wild West's* programs at this time "were directed exclusively at women."<sup>105</sup>

Other entertainers took note of Buffalo Bill's successful marketing as well, particularly the "aficionado of variety entertainment," Thomas Edison.<sup>106</sup> While developing his kinetoscope in the early 1890s, Edison shot kinetograph films of variety performers to introduce the technology to the American public. The first of these films "were of men, by men, and principally for men." But according to film

historian Charles Musser in *Before the Nickelodeon*, the subjects of the films quickly changed over to provocative female dancers and contortionists who “were meant to appeal to male voyeurs who would soon be peeping into Edison’s latest novelty.”<sup>107</sup> Musser notes that these and other more brutal and athletic films “functioned within the homosocial amusement world,” primarily because by depicting masculine activities, interests and male dominated spaces the films would appeal to the customers in the “all-male environments [that] would frequently support nickel-in-the-slot kinetoscopes in the years ahead.”<sup>108</sup> When the first kinetoscope parlor opened in April 1894 in midtown Manhattan, however, it drew a middle class audience of males and females, leading to films that were “appropriately desexualized” for this mixed audience.<sup>109</sup> Interestingly, the customers did not favor these “tame” films over the male inspired fare. Musser observes,

The kinetoscope gave women a more enticing opportunity: to glimpse the half-hidden male oriented world of cock fights and risqué women from which they were ordinarily excluded. It encouraged a distinctly feminine voyeurism (in some instances complicated by a narcissistic identification with the women on display), a counterpoint to that motivated by masculine desire. Yet despite the various possible subject positions, every film drew from the world of popular entertainment. Sex or violence was at the core of almost every image.<sup>110</sup>

Edison continued to film variety performers, as they began to realize that the kinetoscope functioned as an excellent marketing resource for their show. In November 1894, Annie Oakley displayed her sharp shooting at Edison’s laboratory. The film became one of the most popular in the kinetoscope repertoire, precisely because it blended elements of the sex and violence of the masculine series, but was

certainly appropriate for ladies' eyes, a perfect depiction of Oakley's performance persona.

### **PRESERVING THE IMAGE**

The careful transformation of Annie Oakley's image from rough and tumble sharpshooter to charming American wingshot was financially lucrative for Buffalo Bill and for the Butlers. They were able to assess the needs of the culture and subtly transform Oakley's persona to serve these needs. But what ultimately is the most interesting aspect of this inquiry is the question of Annie Oakley's agency in this transformation. In her pamphlet, *Powders I Have Used*, Oakley reveals the pressures related to her role as the star of the show and her awareness of the importance of her publicity stating, "I was very anxious to do good shooting...for it not only meant success for myself, but for the *Wild West* Company; as I was advertised very strongly and much was expected of me."<sup>111</sup> Photographic and factual evidence from her later years with the *Wild West* and from her retirement suggest that the real Annie Oakley was not as feminized as her popular image. She was, in the end, a savvy businesswoman who understood why her image was important and how it appealed to her audience. For these reasons, Oakley and Butler purposely perpetuated many misperceptions and contradictions to protect that marketable image.

Biographers have discovered several facts that shed light on the great lengths to which Oakley and Butler went to preserve her youthful feminine image. Butler and Oakley often discarded or hid facts that did not fit into her image. At least two incidents confirm that the couple lied outright to preserve Oakley's image. The first

happened in 1886, around the time of her rising popularity, and the same season that fifteen-year-old Lillian Frances Smith, “The California Huntress” (see figure 4, above) joined *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West*. Smith boasted about her prowess to the rest of the troupe, implying she would replace Oakley as the star of the show. Oakley, then twenty-six, began to lie about her date of birth, subtracting six years from her real age.<sup>112</sup> She maintained a youthful appearance well into her forties and this lie has confused many of the “biographical” accounts of her life, as she stuck to this fabrication even under oath in court.<sup>113</sup> The lie became so ingrained in her persona that on her tombstone there is no date of birth.<sup>114</sup>

The second incident that biographers have contested was the tall tale Butler offered to explain Oakley’s suddenly white hair and the subsequent end of her career in the *Wild West*. On October 29, 1901, there was a terrible train collision, which killed five stock cars of animals from the show. Press reports of the incident reported that no person from the show was injured. Butler, however, later reported that Annie Oakley was so traumatized by the accident and the deaths of the animals in the wreck that her hair turned white within seventeen hours.<sup>115</sup>

This story was not true. Annie’s hair “turned” white later in the year during a visit to an Arkansas Hot Springs resort. She was around forty years old. Kasper argues that an undated clipping of an article from the *Chicago Daily News* in Annie’s scrapbooks reveals that Annie’s attendant forgot her, and after about forty minutes, she fainted in her hot bath. The article states, “When released, [her] bonny, imperishable brown hair had turned white clear to her crown, her face and hands were speckled with dark brown patches and one side of her back was blistered.”<sup>116</sup> This

report suggests that Oakley had been dyeing her hair in order to maintain her youthful image and this deception was discovered as a result of the dye washing out and staining her skin. The lie about the train accident is now widely accepted as an attempt to protect Oakley's "modesty" in light of her embarrassment at the hot spring incident. The idea of her feeling the animals' pain so acutely must have also appealed to her feminine image.<sup>117</sup> Annie Oakley never again performed with the *Wild West*. The revelation of her white hair meant she had lost a key ingredient to her appeal, her youthful appearance.

Delving into her later life, there is also photographic evidence to indicate that Oakley's image was really a carefully arranged construction of ladylike Victorian ideals rather than an accurate representation of Oakley's beliefs. In the hundreds of photographs taken during Oakley's employment in the *Wild West*, it is rare to find her in an intimidating or even masculine pose. Her studio photographs rarely show her holding the gun as if she knew how to use it, for example, figures 10 and 11 are staged photos of her famous "trick shots." In figure 10, she is on her bike; in figure 11 she is seen with her back to the camera, aiming by looking into a mirror. In both of these photos she is using the gun, but the audience perceives this skillful shooting as entertainment, as compared to the threatening image of May Lillie in her publicity photo.

In another recently discovered studio photograph, figure 12, Oakley strikes a commanding pose, unlike any of her poses in her promotional materials. She is in clothing characteristic of the late 1880s, wearing her traditional tight, dark bodice with a simple swagged skirt that has some trim at the hem. She is wearing leather

boots, her trademark hat with the star pin, and short dark gloves. Her bodice has several small buttons down the center front and the collar is covered by a large medal. Her hair is long and loose and the setting around her is uncharacteristically soft, consisting of a brocade curtain, a fur rug, a glass table, and two large plants. The most unusual aspect of this photo is the absence of a gun and the presence of a riding crop. Oakley holds the crop across her hips and bends it in a deliberate display of power and control, as she looks off to her right with shoulders squared and her chin held high. Interestingly, another female in the *Wild West*, Georgia Duffy, had an almost identical photo taken circa 1887. Duffy was billed in the *Wild West* as a “Rough Rider from Wyoming.”<sup>118</sup> This style of pose was clearly in vogue for the publicists of the *Wild West* during this time. However, the Oakley image and its display of dominance and potential sexuality are so out of line with her many other feminine images that it is no mystery as to why this photo was never publicly released.<sup>119</sup>

The *Wild West's* advertisements and lithograph posters also play on her gentle, feminine image. Many ads consisted of smaller images of Oakley using her guns with her back to the audience or shooting something delicate like glass balls that have been thrown in the air. Most often these images are behind a larger image of Oakley posing prettily with her medals or nimbly leaping over a table (and in the process showing a bit of ankle). There are candid photos of Oakley from this period practicing her tricks in the arena or performing. But these photos were not taken for advertising purposes and are often taken from a distance. When considering the hundreds of photographs taken of Annie Oakley during her seventeen years starring

in the *Wild West Show*, the predominance of a feminine image in her publicity cannot be mistaken as accidental; this image sold tickets.

In contrast, photographs of Oakley taken and released after 1902, when she had left the *Wild West*, primarily show her in action, displaying perceivably masculine traits. Oakley continued to shoot in exhibitions and competitions and had a thriving business as a ladies' shooting teacher after leaving Cody's show. At this point in her career, her marketability rested on her skills rather than her novelty as a female shooter, and the photographs from this period corroborate this difference. In figures 13 and 14, Annie Oakley's characteristic nods to femininity are absent. Figure 13 was likely a publicity or souvenir shot, but masculine details have now emerged. Her clothing is loose, her hair is swept up under the hat, and she is riding astride the horse, something she had adamantly refused to do in the show. Similar masculine traits can be seen in figure 14, where Oakley, in a long, dark, plain dress, aims the gun just over the camera, as if in action. From these photos, it can be concluded that she no longer had to mask her own spirit for the profitability of her feminine image.<sup>120</sup>

However, residents of Dorchester, Maryland, the town in which Oakley and Butler resided from 1912 to 1917, recall Oakley's ladylike demeanor as well as her remarkable abilities with a gun. According to her close friend Nannie Waddell, Annie "was so awfully nice to me and my Girl Scouts." Oakley amazed the girls with a shooting exhibition at her home and, "to really top it all, she served pink lemonade afterward," bringing the troop the ambiance of the *Wild West* and, in the words of Waddell, "illustrat[ing] the spirit of showmanship that was constantly with Annie

Oakley.”<sup>121</sup> For, in the end, Oakley’s skill with a gun by itself or her femininity alone would not have made her the legend she is. Rather, it is the combination of these attributes with her sense of the theatrical that thrust her persona into the limelight of the Victorian stage and still beckons reinvention.

“Annie Oakley was not pretty,”<sup>122</sup> exclaimed one disappointed newspaper reporter, upon meeting Oakley late in her career. He had imagined the famous sharp shooter, who, for decades, had been presented as “wholesome” and “the essence of femininity” entirely differently.<sup>123</sup> Her attractiveness was a certain kind of femininity that appealed to an audience in search of a youthful, white American heroine. Audiences knew her as the pretty girl who could handle a “potent symbol of manhood,” while leading a domesticated life “as prim and circumspect as that of any middle-class housewife.” To her audience, “she was provocative, appealing and reassuring, all at once.”<sup>124</sup> Annie Oakley’s fans must have echoed that exclamation of disappointment often in her later years, when the carefully managed image could finally be dropped.

The argument presented in this chapter is not offered in an effort to prove that Annie Oakley was not a lady. Indeed, it is entirely likely that she was in every way a lady, and she truly may have had many of the feminine impulses and interests that the press and her colleagues attributed to her over the course of her career. Over time, the fictions and facts of Oakley’s life story have become entangled and the hybrid is the legend that remains. This legend of a strong, skilled woman with ladylike refinement has inspired millions of young women to reach beyond their prescribed roles in life.

Today, trailers for television specials, dust jackets for biographies, and websites detailing Oakley's life and legacy tout her as a "good role model" and a "trailblazer" for women in entertainment and sports.<sup>125</sup> These claims are accurate, but they are not the entirety of her legacy. She and her husband worked diligently to construct a unique character that appealed to a society in gender crisis. She could shoot better than most men, and to counteract that intimidating feature of her act, her publicity images created a purely feminine product that sold millions of tickets for *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* and paid Oakley and Butler very well. This is the legend of Annie Oakley: a public persona and corresponding images that glorified the feminization of a pretty, young, white American whose abilities did not fit the mold of the ideal Victorian lady. I argue that it is Oakley's legendary aura of femininity that appealed to the creators of the musical *Annie Get Your Gun* in 1946 during the turbulent transition of the post-World War II years. The following chapters will examine the ways in which the fictions Oakley marketed during her lifetime transform into the facts of the musical biography and served the post-war cultural need to feminize the pretty, young, white war workers who had gained new skills and no longer fit into the mold of the ideal American wife and mother.

## CHAPTER 2

### ANNIE, SURRENDER YOUR GUN!: THE CULTURAL MOMENT (1942-1946)

“When most authors write for the theatre, when most people go to the theatre for an evening’s diversion, they do not realize that they are participating in an ageless rite.”  
--Brooks Atkinson

“An artist...is unlikely to produce anything without some wind in his sails. And this wind has to be the wind prevailing in his own period, and not some future wind.”  
--Bertolt Brecht “Emphasis on Sport,” (1926)

Annie Oakley’s determined efforts in concert with the *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West* publicity machine resulted in the public persona of a happily married girl who spent her time off-stage reading and sewing in domestic Victorian bliss. Audiences never perceived the diminutive sharpshooter as a coarse and vulgar cowgirl, but rather, as her posters touted, as a “peerless lady wingshot.”<sup>1</sup> Oakley’s spunky, feminine persona continued to fascinate Americans long after her retirement in 1903 and her death in 1926. Throughout the early twentieth century, writers of dime novels, historical anecdotes, and biographies, such as *Annie Oakley: Woman at Arms* (1927), *Little Sure Shot* (1937), and *Little Annie Oakley and Other Rugged People* (1948), perpetuated the mythology of Oakley’s adventures around the world while simultaneously cultivating her reputation as a ladylike sharp shooter. RKO Radio Pictures released the first biographical film about Annie Oakley in 1935,<sup>2</sup> and she remained prominent enough in the American cultural imagination to have a World War II Liberty Ship named for her in 1943.

Oakley's persona again enchanted audiences when the Broadway musical *Annie Get Your Gun* opened on May 16, 1946, at the Imperial Theatre. Broadway veteran Dorothy Fields conceived the idea for the musical in 1945. In Fields' biography, *On the Sunny Side of the Street*, Deborah Winer claims that Fields recalled:

During the war, my late husband did volunteer work down at Penn Station for Traveler's Aid...One of the ladies told him one night about a kid who'd just come in, a young soldier. Very drunk, he'd been to Coney Island and had kewpie dolls and lamps and every piece of junk you could possibly win. How come? Across his chest he had a row of sharpshooter's medals. And as if out of the sky, from heaven, comes this idea...Annie Oakley, the *sharpshooter*! With Ethel Merman to play her!...It was the only time in my life an idea came absolutely from God.<sup>3</sup>

She wrote the book with her brother Herbert Fields, which composer and lyricist Irving Berlin then set to music. The audience watched Annie transition from a rough, uneducated girl who "Can't Get A Man with A Gun," into a radiant woman who has "The Sun in the Morning and the Moon at Night" because she traded in her own chest-full of medals for the love of her man.

Scholars assert that the Fields' and Berlin version of the Oakley story is a parable that reflects the ideals of the 1940s. As America shifted from wartime into peacetime, many contentious social issues arose surrounding women's domesticity and their role in the traditionally male workplace. The musical celebrates the life of this legend by idealizing Annie Oakley's popularly feminized Victorian persona, in order to provide a model for the working women in the transitional post-war period in America. A half-century after Oakley's heyday, the musical theatre Annie falls in love with Frank Butler, competes with Frank Butler, and finally becomes Butler's ideal "pink and white lady" who wisely chooses to have her man instead of her gun.

As Tracy Davis points out, at the climax of the musical, “Oakley’s skill takes a holiday when she has...[a] shooting contest with a man -- a timely lesson for wives of returning veterans.”<sup>4</sup> It is important to note two significant details about the plot twists of *Annie Get Your Gun*: first, the chronicle of their courtship and the competitive tension between Oakley and Butler is (as far as scholars have been able to determine) purely fictional, and second, and historically more significant, Oakley does not enter a shooting contest with just *any* man, she is competing with her lover, who had the job before she did, who essentially taught her what she knows about the job, and who needs the job more than she does in order to assuage his bruised ego and to fulfill the role that society expects of him.

This chapter asserts that the original 1946 production of *Annie Get Your Gun* was a cultural product of the return to peace at the end of World War II and the need to drive women from their wartime factory jobs back into the domestic sphere.<sup>5</sup> There are major “gaps” between the facts of Oakley’s life and Fields’ and Berlin’s interpretation of her story, and highlighting these gaps reveals the post-war society’s attempt to channel women’s creativity into a more manageable, non-threatening, and “feminine” configuration (just as the photographs of Oakley discussed in chapter 1 rechanneled her potentially threatening masculine traits into a model of Victorian femininity). The most important gap, or the most glaring change in the face of Oakley’s biography, is that Frank Butler and Annie Oakley never performed as rivals, either onstage or in their publicity materials. As the better shot, Oakley claimed the starring role from the first moments of their relationship and together they forged a palatable persona of a skilled Victorian woman in a man’s arena.

“Annie, Surrender Your Gun!” sets up the twentieth-century threads of the argument that will weave throughout the rest of this study; American popular culture, the feminist movement, the way iconic women, real or imagined, have been used to embody the conservative answer to the feminist movement, and the musical biographers of *Annie Get Your Gun*, who have been complicit in this process. Chapter 2 examines American popular culture during World War II and specifically looks at the way the Office of War Information controlled and produced all of the wartime and reconversion propaganda through advertising, the iconic figure of Rosie the Riveter, and entertainment sources, and the way the Broadway theatre fit into this process. Before examining the lyrics and dialogue of *Annie Get Your Gun* (in order to show how musicals can embody political content by transmogrifying Oakley’s feminine persona to communicate specific values to its audience), I will establish the cultural and social backgrounds that influenced the members of the transitional post-war society that produced this musical. In writing *Annie Get Your Gun*, the creative team of Berlin, Fields, Fields, and producers Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, chose which elements of Annie Oakley’s biography to include, exclude, or change outright to fit the story they intended to tell their audience.

Oakley’s complicated performance of femininity, combining her masculine sharpshooting prowess with her determined domesticity in dress and conduct, inspired the musical version of her life story precisely because her persona challenged traditional gender roles. However, her biography did not conform to the familiar tropes of romantic musical comedy in which the heroine must make a *choice* between romance and career, farm, solitude, etc. Interestingly, theatre audiences of 1946,

many of whom must have had at least a passing knowledge of Oakley's career, ultimately deemed the fictional images included in the musical more acceptable or entertaining than her "real" story. Audiences embraced the highly fictionalized tale for 1,147 performances, making it the most popular musical since the groundbreaking *Oklahoma!* in 1943.<sup>6</sup> In the end, *Annie Get Your Gun* sold more tickets than any other show throughout the post-war years and added another layer to the already murky details of the biography of Annie Oakley.

### **THE IDEOLOGY MACHINE: THE OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION**

The World War II cultural milieu seems both distant and romantic to most twenty-first-century audiences. The post-war push to send women back home from the factories they had entered during the war years is often obscured in the events of the Cold War, the explosion of consumer culture, and the baby boom of that decade. However, I would argue that in order to understand the complicated, gender-coded rhetoric of *Annie Get Your Gun*, is crucial to analyze the intense ideological battle the American society waged against women on the cultural battlefield of the early 1940s, principally through the ubiquitous images of wartime heroine Rosie the Riveter.

In the early years of America's involvement in World War II, with the men overseas, American popular culture began to focus intensely on its female audience. In 1942, the government mobilized in order to handle the new demands of the war, establishing Boards and Commissions for every aspect of labor in America, including the Office of War Information (OWI). Scholar Melissa Dabakis assesses the power

of the OWI in her essay, “Gendered Labor: Norman Rockwell’s *Rosie the Riveter* and the Discourses of Wartime Womanhood:”

By far the most influential department was the Office of War Information, formed in the summer of 1942. This commission exerted influence over private industries that discriminated in hiring and orchestrated an outpouring of home-front propaganda. To accomplish these ends, the OWI entered into an alliance with business and advertisers. Advertising agencies, in need of work because consumer industries had converted to wartime production, created slick messages for the government. In ad campaigns for business, agencies promoted individual companies as patriotic and committed to the war effort. To support this alliance, the Treasury Department announced that advertising in “reasonable” amounts constituted a legitimate wartime business expense and was tax deductible.<sup>7</sup>

The OWI and the War Manpower Commission (WMC) were closely connected in the web of government bureaucracy. The WMC assessed the labor needs of the wartime industry and the OWI recruited the workers.

The government and the industrial sector used advertisements to encourage women to take on traditionally male roles and to lure the desperately needed women into the factories. Before the war, single women had been accepted into the ranks of the work force, because employers viewed them as temporary workers (the assumption being that they would inevitably marry and leave work), and widows gained acceptance because employers understood and pitied women who had been left without husbands or reliable incomes. By 1943, as *Fortune Magazine* announced, “There are practically no unmarried women left to draw upon,” leaving the WMC and the OWI with no choice but to tap the only remaining untapped resource: the married housewife.<sup>8</sup> However, the American government carefully represented World War II to the citizens at home as a “crisis” or a “special time.” Throughout the “duration,” the government agencies handling labor filled the deluge

of advertising and instructional materials aimed at women with the reminder that these changes were only temporary.<sup>9</sup>

In her article “‘Rosie the Riveter’: Women and War Work during World War II,” historian Sara Evans recounts, “Once the War Manpower Commission decided to recruit female workers, including married women...the Office of War Information generated recruitment posters and pamphlets and established guidelines for fiction, features, and advertising in the mass media.”<sup>10</sup> Dabakis labels the wartime culture a “unique moment in the history of representational forms in America,” since the OWI joined forces with the advertising machine of the nation to produce a blending of “ad copy and journalistic reportage” simultaneously supporting the war and industry and “producing an apparently seamless set of ideologically gendered images.”<sup>11</sup> Dabakis, Evans, and historian Nancy Wolloch all acknowledge the OWI’s heavy-handed involvement in the programming and content of the media from 1942 to 1945. Using pamphlets, radio, print, and film, the OWI waged a very effective campaign with propaganda that besieged American women, particularly middle-aged married women, calling first for their support of the war effort and later for their withdrawal from the labor force.<sup>12</sup>

Most often, the government reached the public directly with pamphlets that aimed to redirect “the energies and productive capacities” of its citizens and their “resources.”<sup>13</sup> These pamphlets were explicit and the most didactic of the propaganda that the OWI distributed. Radio’s popularity and accessibility also made it a potent vehicle for the government’s political messages during the war. The gendered content of the government material was more easily assimilated into the

programming on radio due to the medium's broad coverage of fact and fiction, which included everything from news and statistics to wartime etiquette to dramatic programs. Magazines and films offered a useful synthesis of the power of the pamphlet with its imagery and textual content, plus the radio's aural stimulation and dramatic style.

Magazines such as *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *Life* offered the people at home a diversion from the drudgery of the war, while embedding the ideological messages of the OWI in the images and text of their pages.

Michael Renov, in *Hollywood's Wartime Women*, states:

*Life* magazine in particular occupie[d] a unique position within the field of popular culture...as a weekly periodical specializing in up-to-the-minute photojournalism [with] its eye upon both the warfronts and the Hollywood back lots. During these years *Life* was a vehicle of entertainment—through its human-interest stories and detailed coverage of stage and screen—and a mode of instruction for its readership through its suggestions of the new fashion trends growing out of altered lifestyles.<sup>14</sup>

Despite their popularity, magazines, by their very nature as a passive information source, were limited in their ideological potential.<sup>15</sup> Magazines are not necessarily read in a linear fashion and the articles, while they are usually grouped around a theme such as family or fashion, do not require prolonged focus or contemplation, which is why advertisements, with their iconic figures and bold, short statements, were the most potent forms of gendered war propaganda in this format.

Through the early years of the war, the massive OWI recruitment broke down the social and ideological barriers that had excluded women from certain employment categories, successfully filling the factories with female riveters, welders, and machinists. However, the OWI remained unsure of how long the war would last or

how long these women workers would be needed, so its advertisements tempered the hard-sell recruitment by including or endorsing “traditional convictions about a woman’s place.”<sup>16</sup> In order to accomplish this complex and subtle campaign that began and ended in three short years, advertisers and illustrators blended masculine and feminine imagery to create visual and textual messages that simultaneously encouraged participation and rejected permanency. They did this by highlighting the temporary nature of the war, by emphasizing the importance of peacetime feminine interests, by making the war worker seem as glamorous as a movie star and, finally, by sexualizing war work.

In early World War II recruitment campaigns, the OWI made certain to promote factory work as “temporary,” because women rightfully belonged in the home. The concept of temporality permeated every sector of society—not only in official statements, but also in the text and images used in advertising and in popular entertainment.<sup>17</sup> In 1943, *The Saturday Evening Post* ran an ad for Eureka vacuums which read:

Right here at Eureka we have a constant reminder of the good fight you’re making...But when victory is final and complete, you—and we—will return to our peacetime jobs.<sup>18</sup> (fig. 15)

This ad highlights the most important message the government agencies hoped to convey, that at the end of the crisis, there would be “no permanent effects on either the work force or women’s status.”<sup>19</sup> Despite these hopes, the government and the American people quickly began to sense the potential for a massive change in women’s employment once the genie was “out of the bottle” and thus the OWI began to use other sources of popular culture to

actively promote the preservation of femininity among the women war workers.

The newsreel *Glamour Girls of '43*, which played in wide-release across the country, offers one such example of the government's attempt to utilize the popular culture. The film conveys the ideal of femininity by blending masculine and feminine images, by feminizing women's activities on the job, and by creating analogies to housework in a transparent attempt to link work with peacetime activity. The announcer proclaims:

Instead of cutting the line of a dress, this woman cuts the pattern of aircraft parts. Instead of baking a cake, this woman is cooking gears to reduce the tension in the gears after use.<sup>20</sup>

Through these images and the accompanying dialogue, the ideology in this newsreel promoted the safety and ease of these jobs while normalizing the idea that they remained "extraordinary" and ultimately "men's jobs."<sup>21</sup> As Wolloch notes, "By portraying the woman war worker as an attractive wife and mother who sacrificed home life to patriotism, wartime propaganda minimized the war worker's challenge to traditional roles. Changes in behavior, propaganda suggested, reflected only the 'emergency,' not any basic change in attitudes."<sup>22</sup> As the women labored in the factories, advertisements and slogans aimed at the women "building bombers and tanks by day and tend[ing] their victory gardens by night" began to rely heavily on glamour to reassure them that they remained sexual and attractive while working in these jobs.<sup>23</sup> As the duration wore on, the safeguarding of one's femininity became one of the many responsibilities heaped onto American women.<sup>24</sup>

The flood of propaganda in 1943 and 1944 suggested that any job could be conceived of as feminine as long as it featured a glamorous workingwoman in stylish work clothes in the ad. This notion re-assured both the boys away from home and the intrepid female worker. Dabakis discusses the glamorous image of the working woman as an assurance of “traditional femininity.” She considers another 1943 *Saturday Evening Post* ad that opens:

She’s 5 feet 1 from her 4A slippers to her sun-gold hair. She loves flower-hats, veils, smooth orchestras—and being kissed by a boy who’s now in North Africa. *But, man, oh man, how she can handle her huge and heavy press!* [emphasis in original].<sup>25</sup> (fig. 16)

This OWI propaganda “championed women’s virtues as workers within carefully articulated limits of femininity.”<sup>26</sup> Often these virtues are colored, as in the ads above and below, with subtly, and sometimes overtly, sexualized descriptions of women’s factory work. A 1943 article in *Automotive War Production*, a magazine produced by the Public Relations Department of the Automotive Council for War Production (ACWP) for the employees of the automotive industry (which included male and female workers), describes a female worker’s “womanpower”:

A pretty young inspector in blue slacks pushed a gauge—a cylindrical plug with a diamond-pointed push-button on its side—through the shaft’s hollow chamber.”<sup>27</sup> (fig. 17)

This description carefully establishes the woman’s authority as a glamorous inspector, however, there is a disconnect between the text and the depiction that suggests a standardization of the descriptions of these war workers. From a twenty-first-century vantage point, the words “pretty” and “young,” and the images of fashion and sex are the last descriptors that would spring to mind when viewing figure 17.<sup>28</sup> In the picture, the worker is powerful and in command of the tool, a

typically masculine position. The caption quickly eliminates the worker's power by portraying her work in a highly sexualized manner. Despite the fact that she is in the phallic position, wielding the gauge and pushing it through the "hollow chamber," her contribution and competence are negated by the sexualized portrayal.

This particular article is like many others over the four year tenure of *Automotive War Production* and provides a good example of OWI propaganda. The typical article describes the ways in which women are particularly suited to specific work, such as "delicate" or "repetitive" jobs, and how women are boosting the economy and the war effort. These articles are always accompanied by large photos of pretty young women on the job, but every caption and description within the articles slant consistently toward the preservation of femininity. The OWI held fast to the principles of temporality, femininity, and glamour for its content and images, but the most prominent example of the popular culture's involvement in the War effort is the creation of "Rosie the Riveter," the woman who could do a man's job while maintaining her femininity.

### **ROSIE THE RIVETER: IDEOLOGY AT WORK IN POPULAR CULTURE**

Rosie the Riveter, despite her independent façade, played an intrinsic part in the effort to promote femininity in the wartime female worker. According to Dabakis, "Rosie the Riveter was a new construction, a mythic regime, which attempted to control and direct the changing possibilities that the home-front presented to women. It formed part of a discourse, a constellation of beliefs, images, and representations, which did not simply reproduce the experience of women but

sought to shape that experience.”<sup>29</sup> The female labor force consisted of women of all ages, of African-American, Latina, and Anglo races, and of all levels of education and income. Despite this fact, Dabakis asserts, “Federal policy makers, industry leaders, and war contractors deliberately formulated a middle-class identity for the war worker.... attempt[ing] to construct a monolithic category of woman, essentially middle-class and inherently domestic.”<sup>30</sup> This construction underscored the temporary nature of the work, as middle-class domestic women did not necessarily “need” income from a job and could be easily removed at the end of the war.

Rosie, as an “everywoman” character for reporters, advertisers, and illustrators, embodied elements of both the single woman and the married woman and crossed class lines as well. Although Rosie was white and clearly middle-class, she served as the advertising “norm” for other races and classes by default. In constructing the image in this way, the OWI effectively amalgamated all female workers into the “temporary” worker category.<sup>31</sup> Without the aid of any text, wartime artists found that Rosie could embody a multiplicity of readings through physical positioning, dress, and facial expression, and the image could simultaneously invite and impede, enlist and reject, or encourage and intimidate all of America’s female workers. An assortment of “Rosies,” all blending masculine and feminine qualities in a variety of ways, represented the same notion: a patriotic woman supporting her country and her man. In wartime songs, articles, ads, posters, and movies, Rosie the Riveter was always, in some way, connected to the government push for a female labor force.

Although the timeline of Rosie the Riveter's image remains unclear, she definitely emerged in 1942. During that year, Redd Evans and John Jacob Loeb copyrighted a song by that title that reached American audiences in early 1943. Some of the lyrics follow:

All the day long, whether rain or shine,  
She's a part of the assembly line,  
She's making history working for victory  
Rosie *Brrr* [*Ukelele imitate noise of riveting machine*] the Riveter.

Keeps a sharp lookout for sabotage,  
Sitting up there on the fuselage,  
That little frail can do more than a male can do,  
Rosie *Brrr* [*Ukelele imitate noise of riveting machine*] the Riveter.<sup>32</sup>

Rosie is a single girl with “national defense” on her mind who knows that her boyfriend, Charlie the Marine, will not mind that she’s “smeared full of oil and grease,” since she’s “protecting” him by being “true” and “red, white, and blue.”<sup>33</sup> The romantic notion of Rosie in this song instantly became a cultural touchstone, which led many photographers and artists to create an image to accompany the idea.

The differences in the many images of Rosie the Riveter mirror the underlying tensions of the American culture during the war regarding women's place in the traditionally male work force. American nostalgia has embraced two Rosie the Riveter images, J. Howard Miller's “We Can Do It!” image (fig. 18), which endures in the twenty-first century as the more popular, and Norman Rockwell's cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* (fig. 19), which is considered the iconic image. The following analysis of the masculine and feminine qualities in these two images of Rosie the Riveter is similar to the reading of the Annie Oakley photographs in chapter 1 and

will attempt to illuminate the ways in which American popular culture reveals and processes the country's angst.

Miller produced the first image, "We Can Do It!" in 1942 for the Westinghouse Company. Miller was an artist hired "to create a series of posters...sponsored by the company's War Production Co-ordinating Committee, one of the hundreds of labor-management committees organized under the supervision of the national War Production Board."<sup>34</sup> This image for the government's "We Can Do It!" campaign only shows the upper half of a woman who is dressed in utilitarian work clothing and flexing her arm to show her "muscle." Overall, the male and female qualities are evenly blended in this illustration. There are, however, many feminine touches that influence the reception of the image. First the woman's hair, which she has taken time to curl, is bound up in a pretty red, polka-dotted handkerchief. Her face is slender and her features are delicate. They have also benefited from a full application of make-up, particularly eyeliner, eye brow pencil, and mascara to soften her challenging glance directly at the viewer. There are no buttons or medals but a single decorative pin at the collar, and while her arms are muscle-bound, her fingers are slender and manicured.

This image offers an excellent example of what can be considered "typical" of OWI art and advertising in 1942, with its even blending of masculine and feminine traits and the careful preservation of femininity. It is interesting to note that Miller's image is the most familiar image of Rosie the Riveter among twenty-first-century scholars and audiences, though the National Archive records claim that "during the war it was just one of many in Miller's series. The poster itself was not widely known

on the home front because it was shown only at Westinghouse, and because it was posted for only two weeks.”<sup>35</sup> The endurance and contemporary popularity of this once somewhat obscure image provides intriguing insights into how twenty-first-century Americans have chosen to remember the women who were the actual Rosie the Riveters. While the original image was intended to reassure women that their entry into the workplace would not entail a sacrifice in femininity, the twenty-first-century appropriations of the image have transformed it into a symbol of women’s *power*.

This is not the case for the second image of Rosie the Riveter, Norman Rockwell’s legendary cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* from May 29, 1943. Rockwell’s image of Rosie the Riveter is in many ways a classic fusion of the masculine and feminine roles from World War II. The illustration appeared on the Memorial Day issue of the *Post* when Rockwell, known for his ability to combine “playful, slightly irreverent humor” with “serious patriotic content,” was at the height of his popularity.<sup>36</sup> Dabakis, who has studied and written about the image extensively, asserts that the timing of this cover was in no way coincidental. On a day set aside to honor fallen soldiers, this image “linked women’s war efforts with the war dead and provided a not-so-subtle reminder of women’s responsibilities on the home front.”<sup>37</sup> In Dabakis’ close reading of the image, she discusses the ways Rockwell uses religious imagery, class, and gender to “conflate the rhetoric of femininity espoused by the OWI.”<sup>38</sup> The following analysis borrows extensively from her research and delineates how Rockwell’s construction of Rosie mirrors the constructed image of Annie Oakley’s photographs.

Michelangelo's work in the Sistine Chapel inspired Rockwell's composition of his illustration. Dabakis concludes that Rockwell "resists traditional conventions of representation that signaled the feminine" by replicating Michelangelo's androgynous characters in his positioning and physical representation of Rosie.<sup>39</sup>

The posture of Rockwell's *Rosie* is nearly identical with that of the *Prophet Isaiah*. Both are seated frontally, with head turned to the right, left arms raised, right arms reaching across their bodies, and ankles crossed. The *Cumean Sibyl*, a female figure also from the Sistine Chapel, revealed a similar massive (masculinized) body type, particularly apparent in the exaggerated size of the arms. Rockwell imbued his image of "Rosie" with a monumentality and power characteristic of Michelangelo's androgynous figures, utilizing (whether consciously or unconsciously) such famous "masterworks" as precedents to legitimate the instability in gender construction that his image demonstrated.<sup>40</sup>

Dabakis continues her analysis of Rockwell's fusion of masculine and feminine traits, describing his use of "the potentially subversive signs of cross-dressing" in her clothing and accessories.<sup>41</sup>

"Rosie's" swelling muscles, denim work clothes, and phallic riveting tool across her lap marked the masculine order into which she transgressed. Such characteristics of heroic masculinity (which signified resistance and empowerment) were rivaled by and existed in an uneasy collusion with attributed of femininity (which signified submission and containment)—the necklace of merit buttons and industrial identification tags across her denim bodice, the halo-like ring formed by the upturned face shield, the lipstick and rouge which adorned her face, and finally her lace hanky and compact peeking from her overalls pocket.<sup>42</sup>

The above passage, in particular, recalls the early Oakley photos in which she held her gun across her lap, garbed in her simple canvas dress adorned with her medals and velvet ribbon trim. Dabakis' reading of the obviously phallic riveting gun concurs with the earlier reading of Buffalo Bill and Oakley's placement of their guns in photographs:

Although Rockwell portrays his figure at the workplace, “Rosie” is at rest, not riveting. She sits poised with a very large automatic riveting hammer sprawled across her lap. Positioned in the exact center of the image, the machine demands the viewer’s attention. Its size, shape, and position make the association with the phallus unmistakable. However, it lies unattended; “Rosie” does not handle it and thus reveals no agency. In this representation, Rockwell has neutralized the power that women potentially wield in the work force.<sup>43</sup>

Additionally, although Oakley’s pictures always framed her as a sharpshooter (either at rest or in action), Rockwell further feminizes Rosie, according to Dabakis, by her inactivity. She is “relaxing over lunch,” a stance which indicates a lack of urgency and therefore lessens the sense of emergency. By adding the visual association with food,

The domestic replaces the industrial as the focus of her attention....Her left hand holds a ham sandwich directed toward her face and her right hand rests protectively upon her lunchbox, inscribed in white letters with her name. Within this image, woman, food, and nurturance form a signifying chain which posits “Rosie’s” world firmly in the orbit of traditional femininity.<sup>44</sup>

As with Oakley, domesticity is inevitably linked with femininity. Rockwell feminizes Rosie through food just as effectively as Oakley feminized her persona by offering her guests lemonade.

The issue of domesticity, however, is distinctly middle-class, as was the readership of the *Saturday Evening Post* during World War II, but Dabakis points out that Rockwell’s image of Rosie manages to blur the lines between the middle and working-class women who joined the work force by inscribing class on her physicality.<sup>45</sup>

In the configuration of “Rosie’s” body, Rockwell departs from the images of middle-class war workers that dominate OWI propaganda and any other wartime representation. Through her name and prominent Irish facial features (red cheeks, turned-up nose, prominent jaw), “Rosie” is identified as ethnic and working class. Her strong and powerful arms are also important signifiers

of class in their exaggerated size and dominant position within the image. She is presented as a worker rather than as a middle-class housewife working “for the duration.” “Rosie” wears no wedding ring but sports a large leather band around her wrist which supports her muscles in heavy labor, protecting her arm from the harsh jolts of the riveting gun. Thus labor is made visible in the sign of the arm.<sup>46</sup>

Rosie’s size and particularly her muscular arms play a large part in the reception and interpretation of this classic image.

As stated above, Rockwell’s work often reflected his “slightly irreverent humor” while conveying “serious patriotic content” and this image was no exception.<sup>47</sup> Part of honoring the sacrifice of these women on Memorial Day included tackling the taboo masculinity that is an unavoidable reality of factory work and is ignored by most other images of Rosie. Therefore, he knew as he painted her that Rosie had to be an imposing, masculinized image and size was part of that construction. Art critics have described Rosie as “monumental,” “massive,” and “substantial,” but interestingly, Rockwell’s model, nineteen-year-old Mary Keefe, was a “slight, trim and curvy” telephone operator from Arlington, Vermont.<sup>48</sup> Rockwell later apologized in a letter to Keefe for the liberties he took when transforming her into Rosie, noting:

I know you took a lot of ribbing when I painted the picture....The kidding you took about the picture was all my fault because I really thought you were the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen, but then I did have to make you into a sort of a giant.<sup>49</sup>

By traversing class and gender lines with this giantess, Rockwell embraced the *Post’s* readership and also “empowered women whose lives were defined by labor outside the home rather than by domesticity.”<sup>50</sup> Through the use of cross-dressing, androgyny, and crossing class lines, Rockwell presents a more masculine Rosie than

is seen in other OWI advertising, and in the process, he also exposes the greatest concern among many Americans during the wartime years: How to de-throne Rosie once she and her millions of co-workers got comfortable.

As transparent as the Rosie the Riveter images and wartime ads may seem in retrospect, the staggering number of women who took jobs for the first time during World War II illustrates their success. Local papers found many “real life” Rosie’s among the new workers to use in the propaganda effort. In June of 1943 Rose Hickler of the Eastern Aircraft Company in Tarrytown New York, “drove a record number of rivets into a wing of a Grumman ‘Avenger’ Bomber” with her partner and she “became an instant media success” appearing in newspaper articles across the country.<sup>51</sup> Home-front human interest stories abounded to support the hiring effort and reporters promoted the trend, dubbing other workers “Wanda the Welder.” According to Nancy A. Nichols, in *Reach for the Top: Women and the Changing Facts of Work Life*, the Rosie the Riveter images symbolized “wartime courage and patriotism” and inspired “countless women” to join a work force that welcomed them throughout the duration.<sup>52</sup>

According to Woloch, “six million women joined the work force, increasing their numbers by 57 percent. In 1940, women comprised fewer than 25 percent of the labor force; by July 1944, 35 percent,” prompting influential First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt to declare that women were “an indispensable part of the life of the country.”<sup>53</sup> Roosevelt’s statement, however, does not delineate among the race, class, or marital status of the women workers. During the massive wartime recruitment, “the number of married women holding jobs doubled, [and] the age of the female

labor force rose” so that in 1945, “the average woman worker was, for the first time, married and thirty-five or over.”<sup>54</sup> Since working class women had traditionally been involved in the workforce, this recruitment focused on upper- and upper-middle class white women. Formerly a mere housewife, Rosie “emerged from the kitchen” and went to work forging the tools needed to win the war.<sup>55</sup> Married women’s continuing employment became a major source of contention after the war since this phenomenon threatened the typical American model of marriage.

As the end of the “duration” approached, the architects of the “We Can Do It” campaign anticipated that the new women workers would resist when it came time to “gracefully withdraw from their ‘men’s jobs’ when...the rightful owners returned.” The tenacious perception that the men “owned” the jobs that the women were “filling” and the growing argument for merit-based employment played into the underlying fears of role reversal and permanent social change the OWI had been trying to manage throughout the war recruitment.<sup>56</sup> With her penny loafers, ruddy face, confident expression, and grimy overalls, Rockwell’s Rosie highlights the distinctly masculine characteristics of the female worker and she in turn becomes more intimidating to her audience. Nancy Wolloch compares the image to that of a soldier, “Here a muscle-bound Rosie the Riveter, wearing her propaganda buttons like medals and her mask tilted back like aviator glasses, is armed with a pneumatic riveting machine.” Wolloch continues, this “proud, self-contained and self-satisfied young Amazon appears immovable, especially from her well-paid wartime job.”<sup>57</sup> Rockwell’s more masculine Rosie, according to Dabakis, “conveyed double-edged messages of resistance as well as submission, empowerment as well as

containment.”<sup>58</sup> As the war raged on into 1944, the reality behind images like Rockwell’s spurred the OWI to shift its ideological messages in an attempt to avoid opening the Pandora’s Box of post-war possibilities.

### **ROSIE THE RIVETER--REVIEWED AND REVISED**

The Office of War Information had accomplished its mission to recruit women into the labor force with amazing results. By the summer of 1944, the “high-water mark” of women’s wartime employment, there were over nineteen million women employed in America.<sup>59</sup> However, the OWI’s carefully planned advertising that praised femininity and glamour while underscoring the temporary nature of the employment, backfired in a significant way. During the duration, working women unexpectedly found a new place to “belong,” and polls showed that 85 percent of them planned to continue working after the veterans returned.<sup>60</sup> Former housewives like Edith Speert wrote to her husband overseas:

Sweetie, I want to make sure I make myself clear about how I’ve changed. I want you to know *now* that you are not married to a girl that’s interested solely in a home—I shall definitely have to work all my life—I get emotional satisfaction out of working; and I don’t doubt that many a night you will cook the supper while I’m at a meeting. Also dearest—I shall never wash and iron—there are laundries for that! Do you think you’ll be able to bear living with me?....I love you, Edith.<sup>61</sup>

Apparently, Rosie the Riveter had succeeded in defending her country and now, as Rockwell’s illustration predicted, remained armed and ready to defend her personal freedom and her job security.

With the country’s attention focused on the war and not on the home front, the growing trend of women workers blurred the lines defining gender roles in America.

Fears of permanent role-reversal and catastrophic social change, coupled with the female workers' refusal to accept less money or graciously exit their position, spurred a new ideological assault "extolling the virtues of traditional roles."<sup>62</sup> In her book *Rosie the Riveter Revisited*, Sherna Berger Gluck claims that with the end of the war in sight, the government began to pressure working women to leave their positions of employment.<sup>63</sup> Renov notes an ideological shift from "a positive brand of advocacy," which espoused the Rosie the Riveter campaign's theme of active participation, "to an increasingly negative pole of endorsed behavior."<sup>64</sup> Soon, both government literature and popular entertainment began producing content replete with the current government ideology. In the course of four short years, the American government that had used the rhetoric of patriotism to recruit women by asserting that they *must* join the work force or their sons, husbands, and fathers would die, began to tout the ideals of devotion and duty to usher the women out of their wartime jobs.

A barrage of propaganda reminding women to be feminine, demure, and, most importantly, attentive to their menfolk assailed working women in 1944 and 1945, as the powerful OWI began to implement their plans to "get these women back where they belong, amid the environment of home life."<sup>65</sup> The message in this movement was not as palatable as the recruitment campaign's notion of saving lives and fulfilling patriotic duty, so the reconversion campaign's content and images were somewhat less didactic, subtly reminding women of their rightful place by putting emphasis on marriage, sex, and gender-appropriate behavior. In line with the revised goals of the OWI campaign, bold posters promoted images that shifted away from Rosie the Riveter's independent capability and the content of magazine articles and

advice columns began a more understated war on the woman's psyche, encouraging a renewal of familial duty.

Recognizing the changes in American women's attitude toward work, the OWI began the campaign to remove the married war worker by reintroducing male figures into the images and content of its propaganda. Through the reassertion of the male figure, the architects of the campaign illustrated the struggle taking place in American culture in the mid-1940s. As stated above, American industry tolerated the single female worker, whether unmarried or widowed, before the war. In post-war America, as the soldiers returned expecting their jobs back, she remained an acceptable alternative for blue collar work. Married female workers, however, met the brunt of the post-war employment opposition. Woloch quotes a leaflet of a workers' local union declaring, "Let's keep the single girl on the job and put the married woman back in the kitchen,"<sup>66</sup> that reflects the unconcealed discrimination against married women. Working women with families now faced accusations of neglect and the threat of displeasing and losing their husbands.

In figure 20, a 1944 war poster for the War Manpower Commission, created by John Newton Howitt, features a woman dressed in fitted work overalls and a pretty head scarf with a full application of makeup standing in front of her husband. She declares, "I'm proud...my husband wants me to do my part." Her husband, dressed in a handsome business suit, looks down at her proudly as she stares dutifully into the distance. His hands hold her shoulders as if actually steering her into the employment office.

There are several underlying issues the husband's presence brings to this image that off-set the superficial "pro-employment" stance of this poster. First, he is clearly behind her decision to be employed, his influence is evident in both her phrasing and in his physical connection to her body. The connection between her emotional well-being and his opinion of her employment is also apparent through their facial expressions and her statement. Second, his attire is unusual for wartime posters and advertisements. When men are present in the typical OWI image, they are almost always servicemen in uniform or laborers at work in support of the war effort. This man is clearly a businessman, a reminder of the ongoing business of America and the eventual return of the middleclass husband/soldier. Finally, with the addition of the male figure, the machinery the wife uses for work is oddly absent from the image. She stands as if holding a riveting gun, with her two hands raised with fists clenched, but the gun itself is missing, accenting the impossibility of the presence of both a husband and work in this woman's life.<sup>67</sup>

As the war ended, the public no longer considered the married middle-class working woman "a symbol of patriotic ardor" but, according to Woloch, "a threat to social and economic security."<sup>68</sup> Woloch points out that

One issue that illustrated the government's attachment to traditional ideas about woman's role was its resistance to creating child-care centers for women employed in defense work, despite an absentee problem among working women with young children at home.... "A mother's primary duty is to her home and her children," The Children's Bureau said. "This duty is one she cannot lay aside, no matter what the emergency."...By 1946 federal funding for the centers had ended.<sup>69</sup>

Shortly after the military ordered the last aircraft, the married woman's time for playing in the man's world expired and, despite her surprising success in industry, the

government, the returning soldiers, and the public at large expected her to return home to produce dinners and babies.

The women who attempted to stay in the work force faced many difficulties, including employers who barred them from the high paying industrial jobs they had filled successfully throughout the duration. By default, women's post-war employment opportunities remained limited to lower paying, "women's jobs," in the teaching, clerical, and service fields. This poster from 1944 (figure 21) helped to establish the theme of the division of labor along gender lines. Featuring both a male and female worker seated on a bench at lunch break, the illustrator places both subjects in equal physical positions on the poster. They are dressed almost identically, however, the more subtle elements of their body language delineate between the weaker and more powerful sex. For example, the man's open posture and frontal head positioning mimics Buffalo Bill's confident, relaxed mastery of his surroundings in the photograph from chapter 1. The woman's legs, in contrast, are clamped together in a traditionally feminine manner—quite unlike Rosie's relaxed lunchtime pose in Rockwell's image. Her face, turned in profile, is slightly blurry as she listens to him with rapt attention. The caption reads, "Good Work, Sister: We never figured you could do a man-size job! America's women have met the test!" This image, from the "Victory Builders" Division of Bressler Editorial Cartoons, uses the past tense, as if the test is now over and the women workers can go home with warm congratulations as their reward. Finally, defining this female worker's job for the past four years as "man-sized" further solidifies the message that gender matters—and her job belongs to the male worker.<sup>70</sup>

The unusual pairing of both genders in figure 21 asserts the growing presence of the soldier who wants his job back and the changing idea of appropriate “women’s” work in 1944. Woloch points out that Frieda Miller, the head of the government’s Women’s Bureau, in the same year stated, “Women workers do not want to get ahead at the expense of the veterans....In fact, they have never regarded their own work as a substitute for that of men.”<sup>71</sup> As noted above, women’s work in previously “male” jobs were sexualized in an attempt to clearly define gender roles. In the posters created late in the war supporting the female war effort, previously coy illusions to sexuality became much more obvious in anticipation of the return of the male soldiers. Hollywood sex symbols Rita Hayworth, Betty Grable, and former war worker Marilyn Monroe had served “as an inspiration to the fighting men” through widely disseminated “pin-up” posters.<sup>72</sup> New characterizations of the feminine working girl emerged that were inspired by their sexy poses and facial expressions.

One such poster from 1944 titled, “Their Real Pin-Up Girl,” (fig. 22) reveals the ways in which illustrators sexualized women war workers, thereby negating them as a valuable commodity in the workforce. The ad shows three servicemen in the foreground of the image and a female war worker in profile from the waist up on a poster above and behind them. The placement and number of the men establishes the image’s male-centered focus. The goal of the image shifts from addressing the middle class woman in an inclusive and personal way, as the “We Can Do It!” poster did, to relegating the woman to the object of “Their” desire. The central figure’s similarities to Rita Hayworth’s famous bedroom pose (fig. 22a) are striking. Her eyes, lips, hair color and facial shape are Hayworth’s and, although this woman is

fully clothed in overalls and a head scarf, her figure, with her large bosom at center, is clearly the focus of the image. Rather than a symbol of patriotism, she is now a sex symbol, looking, as Hayworth did in her pin-up, over her shoulder with a comely smile as the men grin out to the viewer with a mixture of gratitude and lasciviousness. Aside from her clothing, there is no indication of work or what kind of labor this worker does. There are no tools present and she is not participating in any kind of work activity or even relaxing on a lunch break. She is simply labeled “War Worker.”

The title, “Their Real Pin-Up Girl,” plays on the latent fears of American working women. By connecting the lonely soldiers’ fantasies about sexy pin-up girls with the image of the glamorous war worker, the illustrator leads the viewer to the natural next step—what if the war worker is *not* glamorous or has become masculinized like the “beefy” Rosie of Rockwell’s painting? The heroic worker, therefore, only remains of sexual interest if she retains her femininity. Also, the illustrator does not provide the war worker with any words of her own. Without the ability to encourage or enlist the war workers, or even to address or praise the servicemen, the pin-up girl has no agency in the transaction. Obviously, the poster addresses women and intends to commend the woman worker, but the prominence of the soldiers, the objectification of the worker, and the text only serve to highlight the male desire for the ultra-feminized war worker and eliminate any power she might have gained from her employment.<sup>73</sup> These posters served as a subtle, but effective part of the aggressive campaign to remove the women from the work force which resulted over the course of 1945 in a decline in the employment of women by about

two million workers.<sup>74</sup> In addition to these proven strategies, during the war, film and theatre's popularity and influence had grown exponentially and themes of love, marriage, and the traditional family paradigm flourished in the movies and on stage in the mid-1940s.

### **THE POPULAR CULTURE MACHINE: FILM AND THEATRE**

The end of the war also meant a change in the dominant narrative structure for male/female relationships in American popular culture. Stories depicted in magazines and films shifted from the urgency and romance of the war years to a more settled vision of domesticity and contentment. The increasing importance of film in the post-war culture made it an excellent medium for the new genre of the domestic comedy. Film began its reign as the sovereign of popular culture in the 1940s because, as a medium, it provided more entertainment value for less effort on the part of the consumer. The audience was not required to read, or find time and a place to be alone and focused, and the movies required less imagination than a book, magazine, or radio program. Women could relax, socialize, and be entertained at the movies. For this reason, according to Renov, film became the perfect ideological vehicle. He notes,

Movies were perceived as entertainment, as rewards of laughter and tears, their ability to transmit and legitimize social attitudes, sex roles and behavioral patterns was all the more powerful, given ideology's basis in the "imaginary."<sup>75</sup>

The film industry, working under the same OWI guidelines as the magazines, industries, and advertising agencies, had produced countless examples of war propaganda in news reels and motion pictures. Some focused directly on the female

war worker, promoting the same glamorous image found in the ads and posters in the discussion above. These movies, like *Swing Shift Maisie* (1943), *Meet the People* (1944), and *Since You Went Away* (1944), starred big names as pretty women war workers, including Lucille Ball, Claudette Colbert, and Lana Turner.<sup>76</sup> Although these movies, like the other media examined above, glorified the war worker, the films also produced similar mixed messages late in the war.

In 1944, Republic Pictures released the musical film *Rosie the Riveter*, with lyrics by Jule Styne, starring the beautiful and popular star Jane Frazee. On the advertising poster for this film, Frazee is posed kneeling next to a plane holding a gun (figure 23). She is wearing heavy work gloves with her chorus girl outfit of a red-and-white striped bra top and very short shorts that show off her shapely legs. To complete her work look, she wears strappy red heels, a full face of makeup, earrings, and a small black hat on top of her beautifully coiffed blond hair. Behind her are music notes and a chorus line of scantily dressed, busty women dancing with guns as if they are prop canes. It is interesting to note here that, in spite of the predominance of bare skin, the chorus girls' hats, long flowing hair, form-fitting clothing, gloves, and guns, share an eerie connection in style and content to Oakley's publicity photos from the 1880s. According to the Internet Movie Database, this "breezy" musical, also known as *In Rosie's Room*, dealt humorously with the woes of the wartime worker, particularly finding housing. According to one reviewer, Frazee is,

As usual...a delight to watch and listen to....Rosie and her pal squabble with two guys over the only remaining boardinghouse room in town and Rosie, after "working overtime on a B-19" down at the plane factory, eventually warms up to Frank Albertson (not your typical young juvenile lead, this was wartime after all) and everything works out for the big finale sung at the work site.<sup>77</sup>

The narrative of this film falls in line with the themes of the reconversion propaganda analyzed above, full of glamour, femininity, and traditional gender relationships.

In addition to the films about war workers, there were hundreds of films during the war about women coping with the war. Michael Renov, in his study of World War II filmic depiction of women, identifies “moral tales for women” as a popular narrative form, which offers a “markedly proscriptive function with regard to female behavior.”<sup>78</sup> Renov defines the romantic moral tales as those that:

Offer resolutions, primarily via the marital bond, which heartily endorse certain forms of coquetry, humility or traditionally feminine virtue. Female protagonists are most frequently embroiled in a discourse of charged didacticism—some lesson is learned, some taboo is enforced.<sup>79</sup>

As the “wholesome girl next door” replaced the independent heroines of the 1930s,<sup>80</sup> this instructive type of storyline enjoyed a great popularity in film both during and immediately after the war. Not surprisingly, Broadway’s theatrical activities had also transformed during the war to support the American cause, following the same developmental lines film had wrought. While film provided an extremely effective medium for reaching national middle and working class audiences, the question of how to reach upper-class, well-educated populations that might not attend such films as *Rosie the Riveter* remained. Theatre, a medium that had traditionally attracted a much more cosmopolitan audience than film, offered an obvious solution for artists and ideologues seeking another venue to disseminate the post-war image of the re-domesticated woman. The end of the war and the beginning of prosperity brought a new demand for plays and musicals that reflected the nation’s post-war ideals.

Theatre is comparable to film as a purveyor of ideology, in that the audience identifies with the two genres similarly through setting and ideological mechanism. Since, as Renov notes, they both have “a heightened dramatic effect for the spectator, created by processes of identification and voyeuristic fetishism,”<sup>81</sup> they accomplish the same legitimization of hegemonic social mores. Renov’s assertion builds on Brecht’s theories of spectatorship. In his essay, “Emphasis on Sport,” Brecht recognizes that the dramatic theatre makes its profit by inviting its audience to leave their “splendid isolation” in order to “feel sympathetically, to fuse with the hero and seem significant and indestructible as he watches himself in two simultaneous versions.”<sup>82</sup> To parallel these theories, the Broadway apparatus constructs a subjective position for the viewer through the “unity of the narrative,” while also indoctrinating that audience member into its system of meaning.<sup>83</sup>

Although the genres of film and theatre share similarities in form and setting, there are some significant differences in the reception of the product. One important difference between the two is the audience composition. Film audiences tend to be middle-class, while the theatre’s audience is traditionally middle and upper-class and highly educated. Ticket price is another considerable difference between the two genres but, like the film industry, the Broadway theatre also experienced a spike in attendance during the war.<sup>84</sup> The theatre in the 1940s, and particularly the Broadway musical, adopted the mechanism of the popular culture media machines and contributed in its own way to the cultural milieu. Before delving into *Annie Get Your Gun* and its part in the OWI campaign, it may be useful to briefly examine the way the Broadway musical is perceived and its ideological potential.

## **MORE THAN MERELY A MUSICAL: PART OF THE MACHINE**

Scholars, practitioners, advocates, and critics of the “serious” or “dramatic” theatre have often viewed the Broadway musical as merely lighthearted fluff for two simple, but very important, reasons: content and audience. Historically, the American musical content developed as a hybrid of vaudeville, extravaganza, and operetta. Musicals typically follow the boy-meets-girl, boy-loses-girl, boy-gets-girl formula of the romantic theatre tradition, with librettos mainly focusing on love stories that usually promote traditional gender role expectations and relationships. However, before the 1940s and Rodgers and Hammerstein, librettos usually commanded little attention in the production process and were often “pleasant, wacky, slapped together, largely forgettable vehicles” for composers or stars “designed purely to show audiences a good time.”<sup>85</sup> Rodgers and Hammerstein revolutionized the genre with the “integrated” musical, a musical that achieves “a homogeneous synthesis of dramatic, theatrical, and performance components.”<sup>86</sup> Even after this revolution, many offerings – even today – relied on old gags, tired plot twists, and star power to enhance the central love story. Most musical audience members buy tickets expecting little more than a conventionally entertaining evening of song, dance, and romance. Certainly, the popular audience’s tepid response to marginally unorthodox and critically acclaimed musicals such as *West Side Story*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Avenue Q*, and *Spring Awakening*, which include the elements of song, dance, and romance but confound traditional race, sexuality, and gender expectations, attests to the Broadway musical’s solid foundation in mainstream American culture.

However, as musical theatre historian Philip Furia notes, these same critics must admit that musicals are “practically synonymous with Broadway” and they are “counted upon to attract far larger audiences than straight dramatic plays. Yet, the very audience they [attract], known as the ‘tired businessman,’ [seem] to relegate musicals to the most superficial level of theatrical art.”<sup>87</sup> Audience composition will be a critical factor in this study, as the “tired businessman” and his middle-class wife, whether working or a homemaker, indicate specific class and gender ideals. Producers and directors shape their musicals specifically to appeal to those ideals, after which advertisers devise effective marketing campaigns to attract those particular audience members. If all goes well with the advertising, after working all day, the (tired) businessman treats his wife to a Broadway show. They buy tickets with certain expectations and arrive in their seats at curtain eager to enjoy the next two hours. With the combination of a willing audience, light content, and razzle-dazzle song and dance, the musical is an art form with significant, and often underestimated, potential as a vehicle for ideology aimed at the middle class. Thus, the Broadway musical, with its wide appeal and decidedly educated, middle and upper-class audience, became a powerful tool in the OWI reconversion campaign. Although production of Broadway musicals decreased during the war years, their ideological transmission, as with the other media considered above, increased, and it all began in early 1943 with the integrated musical that opened the Golden Age of the Broadway musical, *Oklahoma!*

The musical *Oklahoma!* is significant for this study for two reasons, first because it appealed so strongly to the wartime audiences and particularly soldiers,

and second because it was an enormous critical and financial success written by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, who would (in two short years) produce *Annie Get Your Gun*. In *Broadway: The American Musical*, musical theatre historian Laurence Maslon recounts, “In violation of the fire code, visiting servicemen who couldn’t get a ticket to *Oklahoma!* were smuggled into the St. James to watch the show from the wings.”<sup>88</sup> One of the original performers recalls:

The war was very immediate, very present. So many people since then have said, “You know, it was the last show I saw before I went over seas and it made me prouder to be an American than I had been, because it really talked about the unselfconscious courage of the people who settled the West.” And then people would say, “It was the first show I saw when I came back and I brought my girl and it gave me the courage to ask her to marry me and she said ‘yes’ and we’ve never been sorry.”<sup>89</sup>

Maslon also notes that the timing of the opening of *Oklahoma!*, during those swiftly changing wartime years, was critical. The patriotic ideology embedded in the musical narrative appealed directly to the audience who “after a year of combat losses and a complete retrenchment of daily domestic life, needed to be reminded of what they were fighting for—*something* about the land.”<sup>90</sup> It is likely that this musical would have failed before or after this point, because the nation’s popular culture continued to shift rapidly in response to the changes in the war, the changing needs of the country, and the changing face of its audience. Rodgers and Hammerstein noted the importance of opening a musical at just the right moment and in just the right political climate.<sup>91</sup> Over the next two decades, they capitalized on similarly crucial timing for many successful openings of their own and of musicals they produced.

In August 1945, while *Oklahoma!* continued to play each night to sold-out houses, Broadway veterans Dorothy and Herbert Fields approached Rodgers and

Hammerstein to produce a musical they had conceived for Ethel Merman about the sharpshooter Annie Oakley. The brother and sister team had produced several wartime hits, including *Let's Face it* (1941), *Something For the Boys* (1943) and *Mexican Hayride* (1944), all lighter fare and, at this point in their career, they were ready to write a solid book musical in the *Oklahoma!* model. Dorothy Fields, who had a reputation for holding her own in the male-dominated world of musical lyricists, took the lead on this project and really carried the weight of librettist for the production.<sup>92</sup> Rodgers and Hammerstein, foreseeing great box office potential, agreed to the appealing story and the bankable star immediately and hired Jerome Kern as composer. Kern's untimely death brought a new composer and lyricist on board, Irving Berlin, who had a knack for mapping the cultural zeitgeist.

By 1945, the war in Europe was over and, with the bombing of Japan signaling the close of the war in Asia, soldiers returned in droves to a changed America. The initially subtle propaganda combating the "potential" social upheaval became increasingly didactic as the war drew to a close and the female workers stuck to their guns. As the popular culture's messages turned from patriotism to domesticity, Dorothy Fields' personal experiences working as a woman in a man's field and Irving Berlin's ability to strike a familiar chord among American audiences set the stage for *Annie Get Your Gun*, a popular musical comedy that ultimately participated in the OWI's reconversion of the American woman.

## **ANOTHER PEERLESS LADY AND A PATRIOTIC MAN**

As members of the wartime society, Dorothy Fields and Irving Berlin would certainly have been aware of many Americans' attitude toward women workers and the changing tide of support for the middle-class housewife who had taken on war work. As two of the leading Broadway hitmakers in the late 1930s and early 1940s, Fields and Berlin also understood the musical theatre's popularity and community-building potential, if not its viability as an ideological machine. Beyond that, each of them had a personal and professional background that lent itself to the story of Annie Oakley and its position in the OWI's cultural battle in 1946.

On July 15, 1905, famous vaudevillian Lew Fields and his wife, Rose, welcomed their fourth child, Dorothy.<sup>93</sup> With her older sister Frances and her brothers Herbert and Joseph, Dorothy Fields grew up around show business, in her father's New York theatres, on trains with his traveling shows, and in their own home. Fields, in her reminiscences for the Oral History Research Project at Columbia University, confesses that the theatre was not a very "honorable" profession at the time. And although neither parent wanted the children to "take up the stage," Lew did include his children in his work by encouraging them to think up bits, gags, and lines of business for his act with Joe Weber.<sup>94</sup> Eventually Herbert and Joseph took up the family trade, and started writing lyrics and librettos for musicals. Dorothy's mother, however, was determined to see her daughters brought up as "young ladies" and sent them to finishing school in Manhattan.<sup>95</sup> According to Fields' biographer Deborah Winer, Rose realized her dream for a domestic daughter in Frances, who "was sweet, placid, and so sheltered in her upbringing...as to be

somewhat unworldly. For Frances, husband, home, and family were what mattered.”<sup>96</sup> For Dorothy, however, the appeal of home and hearth paled in comparison to the lure of show business and particularly the musical theatre.

With no support from her father, who could have called upon his connections in every theatre in New York and throughout the country, Dorothy Fields began her song-writing career with Mills Music, on New York’s famed Tin Pan Alley. A popular song publishing company, Mills Music “was the kind of firm that when Valentino died, the next day they produced the song, ‘There’s a New Star in Heaven Since Valentino passed away.’”<sup>97</sup> In this position, she learned the opportunities of cashing in on current events, a skill she later capitalized on as a lyricist in the musical theatre. She also learned to navigate successfully the treacherous waters of a male-dominated industry through a determined mix of refined insouciance. According to Furia,

In a profession that required shoulder-to-shoulder collaboration with cigar-smoking men, most of whom thought a woman’s place was in front of the footlights, Dorothy Fields was equally adept at turning a simple slang catchphrase to passionate ends or spinning a list of metaphors laced with flippant rhymes.<sup>98</sup>

Fields developed her lyrical style after “the colloquial, urbane style of Hart, Gershwin, and Porter, always giving it her coolly sensuous twist.”<sup>99</sup> Winer asserts that Fields’ “coming of age in the flapper era” resulted in her determination in following her chosen career and the sensuality that she brought to the songs she wrote:

[She] was a direct product of the freedom women had won for themselves in rebelling against the Victorian ideas of where they belonged. Chaste, idealized womanhood was out, liberated “moderns” were in—active

participants in the world around them, meeting men on their own turf, be it speakeasies or sex.<sup>100</sup>

As Furia notes, Fields was “clearly aware of her anomalous position as a woman on Tin Pan Alley,” but her “insouciant” style soon elevated her beyond the previous limitations of her gender.<sup>101</sup>

In the mid-1920s, Dorothy Fields teamed with Jimmy McHugh, who asked her to write lyrics for songs at the Cotton Club in Harlem. This idea horrified her family, and Winer notes that Lew Fields “admonished that ladies didn’t write lyrics, to which she responded, in a send-up of his own Weber and Fields gag, ‘I’m not a lady, I’m your daughter.’”<sup>102</sup> Although a humorous jab at her father, her retort highlights the duality of her career as a lyricist. In her personal life, she was in every way a lady,<sup>103</sup> but in her professional life, she was the legendary Lew Fields’ daughter and she could perform and compete at the highest professional level. Dorothy Fields, like Annie Oakley in the *Wild West* arena, was a peerless lady among the men of the musical theatre in the 1930s and 1940s.

Fields’ experience at the Cotton Club, as the only woman in a room full of men, proved to be typical of her career. Fields recalled her domesticating effect on these men:

I must say all the boys—and they were the gangsters of that day—were simply wonderful. No one was allowed to say “darn” in front of me. In the afternoons when we had rehearsals, they’d go into the kitchen and bring out the cookies and tea, and they were really just wonderful. I was “the little sister;” they were being careful not to say anything wrong in front of me.<sup>104</sup>

Her talent is always acknowledged by biographers and scholars, even touted above other women and men in the field, but her domesticity consistently plays a part in the descriptions of her life in the theatre. Winer’s summary of Dorothy Fields’

respectability, particularly the way her sensual lyrics never cross the line into sexual lyrics, echoes the sentiments of many of Annie Oakley's newspaper reviews:

In an age when women never broke through the confines of home, family and society's dictates of "appropriateness," Dorothy was a hybrid, independent as a professional in a man's field, given credence at the same time by her "respectability"—attractive, feminine, wife and mother—her views not dismissible as "demimonde morals."<sup>105</sup>

Even Winer's detailed descriptions of Fields' lifestyle and work ethic mirror Oakley's own somewhat rigid maintenance of her personal domestic convictions:

She was mainstream...Conventional in lifestyle and her embrace of the establishment...She was never a youthful rebel, rather one of the successful Broadway party crowd. She wasn't a communist, she was a Republican. She didn't toil through the night caught up with the divine muse, she began work punctually every morning at eight o'clock with a yellow pad and pencil. Though she enjoyed the company of men, she didn't flaunt affairs and shack up with composers or bullfighters; she was married once to a doctor, and when that failed, to a businessman, to whom she stayed married some twenty years, until his death, having two children and a house in Brewster, New York; and newspapers didn't report her wild escapades, but her charity work with the Girl Scouts of America.<sup>106</sup>

Throughout her career, Fields' femininity defined her. Interviewing Fields in the 1970s, musical theatre biographer Max Wilk remarks,

She's an attractive woman, so soft-spoken and essentially female (her maid apologized on the phone that Miss Fields couldn't answer—she was having a pedicure) that it's almost impossible to realize that this charming lady has been a successful survivor in an essentially masculine jungle, the music business, for more than forty years.<sup>107</sup>

Fields usually navigated the "masculine jungle" by partnering with a man whose style suited hers. Over the years she paired with legendary composers Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, and Cy Coleman, but her brother Herbert worked most closely with her, particularly through the 1930s and 1940s when her reputation as a Broadway librettist took off.

After Oscar Hammerstein II's success with the libretto for *Show Boat* in 1927, book writing began to develop in earnest as a vital part of the American musical. The Fields siblings worked in the business during this time and developed their skills along with the genre. Separately and together, they had a string of successful shows all of which were "fun," but with each new book the pair hoped to produce a story that critics did not feel "got in the way of the evening's entertainment."<sup>108</sup> In their librettos, they often profited by drawing on current events, particularly with *Something for the Boys* (1943), which according to musical theatre historian Thomas Hischak, "was a product of its day (wartime prosperity, escapist shows, brassy stars) and was very successful."<sup>109</sup> Also, five of their successes starred Ethel Merman, so it is not surprising that Dorothy Fields conceived of the idea for *Annie Get Your Gun* specifically for Merman. As was mentioned above, Fields claimed the idea for a musical about Merman as Annie Oakley "came directly from God,"<sup>110</sup> but with all of the evidence of her own experiences as a peerless lady in a man's world and the similarities in their domestic convictions, surely Fields had some strong insight into the character she created for *Annie Get Your Gun*.

After gaining Rodgers and Hammerstein's enthusiastic approval, Dorothy and Herbert Fields began to craft their libretto. The two researched their subjects thoroughly. Sometimes if searching for an idea they would go *The New York Times* morgue and plow through old editions, or if they had a specific star in mind, they would research historical figures for inspiration.<sup>111</sup> In the case of Annie Oakley, Dorothy Fields claimed, "We did a lot of research on Annie Oakley and Frank Butler and both of them apparently were about the dullest people in the world. Annie

Oakley in real life used to sit in her tent and *knit*, for God's sake."<sup>112</sup> Also, although she never acknowledged this connection, she had strong family ties to the story of Annie Oakley through her father and her brother, Joseph Fields.

In the late 1800s, both Lew Fields and Annie Oakley worked the vaudeville circuit. Though the vast circuit employed hundreds of performers, it is likely that Fields, a shrewd producer, knew of Oakley's act and reputation.<sup>113</sup> The close-knit Fields family had been sharing ideas and fodder for scripts since the children were young and it is likely that this connection between Lew Fields and Oakley began the children's fascination with the persona of Annie Oakley.<sup>114</sup> The intermediary step between Lew Fields' first-hand experience with Oakley and *Annie Get Your Gun*, is Joseph Fields' biographical treatment of Oakley's life for the 1935 RKO Radio Pictures film *Annie Oakley*. Though the screenplay is credited to Joel Sayre and John Trust, it is based on a story by Joseph A. Fields and Ewart Adamson.

At thirty years old, Dorothy Fields certainly would have seen her brother's work in a major motion picture, possibly even at one of the premieres.<sup>115</sup> The domestic themes in the film continued to resonate during the cultural crisis in America in the mid-1940s, and whether consciously or not, Fields most likely remembered lines, such as Buffalo Bill's realization, "What this outfit really needs is an uplifting influence, and what could be more uplifting than the presence among us of a fine, high-minded little woman?" as well as the character representing publicist Arizona John Burke's declaration, "There's gold in this domestic crisis...male against female, a titanic battle of the sexes!"<sup>116</sup> Dorothy and Herbert Fields were poised to take their crack at the Oakley story, but after Kern's death, they needed a new

composer. Luckily, their “brilliant and astute” producers Rodgers and Hammerstein suggested Irving Berlin, a man who had built his musical reputation through two world wars by voicing the American soldier’s thoughts and tapping into the nation’s emotional state.<sup>117</sup>

Born Israel Baline in Temun Russia on May 11, 1888, Berlin emigrated with his parents in his youth.<sup>118</sup> Once in America, Berlin faced many common struggles of turn-of-the-century immigrants and eventually found work performing and playing the piano in bars and clubs. By the time Dorothy Fields was two years old, Berlin had composed his first hit song. In his early professional career, he worked on Tin Pan Alley creating popular music, although he could only play the piano in one key and not very well. From the beginning, Berlin showed a knack for creating catchy tunes and, as Jerome Kern once observed, “honestly absorb[ing] the vibrations emanating from the people, manners, and life of his time, and, in turn, giv[ing] these impressions back to the world—simplified, clarified, glorified.”<sup>119</sup> His infectious melodies and simple lyrics, when paired with his ability to elevate contemporary themes and dialogue into “working-class poetry,”<sup>120</sup> made Berlin a popular composer and gave his music powerful ideological force.

There are as many descriptions of Berlin’s lyrics and melodies as there are Berlin songs, but the impact of his early work is best summarized in Max Wilk’s description of the 1911 hit, “Alexander’s Ragtime Band” which

Has to be considered the keystone work of a whole new trend in American music. Those infectious lyrics which announced the arrival of jazz were not only spread across our entire continent, but were rapidly exported across the Atlantic, to let all of Europe in on what was happening.<sup>121</sup>

When Berlin moved into composing for musicals, the December 9, 1914 *New York Times* review declared that his “mad melodies, nearly all of them the tickling sort, [were] born to be caught up and whistled at every street corner.”<sup>122</sup> Berlin continued his prolific production of popular music and theatrical scores as World War I broke out in Europe. Eventually, in 1918, Berlin was drafted into the United States Army after America joined the fight. While in basic training at Camp Yaphank (later known as Camp Upton), Berlin came up with an idea to raise the soldiers’ spirits and keep him from having to get up at 5 a.m. According to his musical transcriber and friend Harry Ruby, he approached the General and said,

Do you know how many people who are in this Army who are from show business? The camp is full of them. Fine actors, vaudeville headliners like Dan Healy, acrobats, singers—you never saw anything like it. Why don’t we do a show with all these people? We could even play it on Broadway in one of the theatre—boost morale, help recruiting, everything!”<sup>123</sup>

Berlin volunteered to write the show in exchange for sleeping in, and *Yip, Yip, Yaphank* was born.

The songs in *Yip, Yip, Yaphank* are a great example of Berlin’s ability to, as musical theatre scholar Ethan Mordden notes, “articulate what most people felt but couldn’t say.”<sup>124</sup> He took the everyday activities and the feelings of the soldiers and made them into glitzy, entertaining numbers called “Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning,” “Poor Little Me, I’m on KP,” “What a Difference a Uniform Will Make,” and “Dream on Little Soldier Boy.” Berlin’s dream of opening the show on Broadway came to fruition on September 22, 1918, running for thirty-two performances and raising over \$150,000 for the United States Army charities.<sup>125</sup> He found the experience rewarding (beyond getting to star on Broadway and sleep in),

and would continue to produce patriotic material that spoke to the country's cultural moment throughout his career.

After his release from the Army, Berlin composed music for the *Ziegfeld Follies* and his own *Music Box Revues*. Berlin's theatrical career before *Annie Get Your Gun* consisted only of revues, shows that had little or no book to support a story. Musical theatre scholar Gerald Mast asserts that the lack of libretto resulted in Berlin writing "primarily to fit the personality of the performer and the temper of the times."<sup>126</sup> No matter who he wrote for, however, his style prevailed. His lyrics "reflect the colloquial, everyday speech patterns of casual American conversation,"<sup>127</sup> and his songs respected his audience's working-class status. According to Berlin biographer Michael Freedland, Berlin strove in all of his work to "embody the feelings of the mob" by producing songs that "reflect those feelings."<sup>128</sup> His finely tuned sense of the "mob's" tone served him well in 1938, as he once again met the needs of the county.

In an interview in the *New York Journal American* in September 1938, Berlin stated, "Music is so important. It changes thinking, it influences everybody, whether they know it or not."<sup>129</sup> He had seen the way his music affected people for over thirty years at this point, and knew his instincts about "voicing the thoughts of [the] nation" served him well.<sup>130</sup> He decided that 1938 was the right time to release "God Bless America," which would eventually become one of America's most beloved patriotic songs. Berlin originally composed the song in 1918 for *Yip, Yip, Yaphank*, but he decided to keep it "in his trunk" after his transcriber Harry Ruby exclaimed, "Geez, another one?" in response to the flood of patriotic music in the market at the time.

Ruby later mused, “You see, he’d figured, by 1938, with all the trouble in Europe and those dictatorships—Hitler and Mussolini—that the mood of the country was changing, and that we could use a little patriotism. He was so right.”<sup>131</sup> His genuine patriotism and sense of service brought him more success as America entered World War II.

In 1942, Irving Berlin re-vamped his successful World War I show into *This Is the Army*, using songs from *Yip, Yip, Yaphank* as well as new hits like “I Left My Heart at the Stage Door.” The show opened on Broadway on July 4, 1942 and ran for one hundred and thirteen performances. This show, like *Yip, Yip, Yaphank*, was produced by “Uncle Sam” and again the proceeds supported military charities.<sup>132</sup> Berlin toured *This is the Army* for eighteen months overseas, performing for the soldiers themselves and doing as many as “three full shows and three hospital shows a day.” When he arrived home, he called the tour, “one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. No one can describe the feeling you get from playing before audiences of as many as 17,000 young men, and seeing and hearing their enthusiasm. It’s just overwhelming.” Berlin was so moved by the soldiers and their sacrifices that he also conceived “a post-war musical show to employ ex-soldiers.” He abandoned the notion as an “ill-timed” idea, but this admission provides insight into Berlin’s frame of mind when Rodgers and Hammerstein approached him in 1945 to write *Annie Get Your Gun*.<sup>133</sup>

Irving Berlin’s catalog of patriotic material over the course of his career reveals both his love of his adopted country and that he recognized the power of the popular culture. He also clearly understood the power of the audience, as he told

interviewer Max Wilk, “I write a song to please the *public*—and if the public doesn’t like it in New Haven, I *change it!*”<sup>134</sup> As a result, his music is dichotomous in that his songs are firmly rooted in their cultural moment, and yet they endure as if they are timeless. Furia, who has written extensively on Berlin, believes that more than any other composer, “His words and music capture what it felt like to be alive for much of the twentieth century: the emergence of the new rhythms of life, new voices and new values.”<sup>135</sup> As Jerome Kern declared in the 1920s, “Irving Berlin *is* American music.”<sup>136</sup>

However, Berlin’s work does more than *reflect* life in the twentieth century; it also *influenced* life in the twentieth century. His lyrics, according to Mordden, “Had the novelty slant, the cliché poeticized, the contemporaneity: when he said, ‘Everybody’s doing it now,’ everybody began to.”<sup>137</sup> His power lay in the simplicity of his approach. Americans recognized themselves in his language and dialect, in the conversational nature of his storytelling. His daughter, Mary Ellin Barrett, tried to capture the Berlin’s appeal for American audiences:

I can’t explain my father’s ear, his gift for melody and words. Irving Berlin had some kind of inner radar that picked up the moods, the feelings in the air. Whatever it was, love, or loss, or feelings about this country, he was able to capture it. A person who heard one of his songs would immediately identify with it.<sup>138</sup>

It was the very process of identification that Barrett describes, the recognition of strong the patriotic sentiments of the immigrant Israel Baline that rang true in all Americans after World War II, that Rodgers and Hammerstein hoped to capitalize on in their production of *Annie Get Your Gun*. Despite the popular perception of the musical theatre as a genre of pure entertainment in the 1940s, when the ideals and

experience of Dorothy Fields are matched with the patriotism and popular appeal of Irving Berlin, supported by the money and acumen of Rodgers and Hammerstein, and guided by Joshua Logan, a director fresh out of the army with a long list of pre-war credits, *Annie Get Your Gun* begins with enormous potential for subversive ideological indoctrination. And that is before Ethel Merman even opens her mouth.

### CHAPTER 3

#### *Annie Get Your Gun: BROADWAY (1946)*

“A good deal of attention has been paid to the theatre’s—even the supposedly unpolitical theatre’s—political influence: its effect on the formation of political judgments, on political moods and emotions....It matters how love, marriage, work and death are treated on the stage, what kind of ideals are set up and propagated for lovers, for men struggling for their existence, and so on. In this exceedingly serious sphere the stage is virtually functioning as a fashion show, parading not only the latest dresses but the latest ways of behaving: not only what is being worn but what is being done.”

--*Bertolt Brecht* “Two Essays on Unprofessional Acting” (c.1940)

“The dramatic theatre’s spectator says: Yes, I have felt like that too—Just like me—It’s only natural—It’ll never change—That’s great art; it all seems the most obvious thing in the world— I weep when they weep, I laugh when they laugh.”

--*Bertolt Brecht* “Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction” (c.1935)

In the late-nineteenth century, Annie Oakley, Frank Butler, Buffalo Bill, and the publicity staff of the *Wild West Show* successfully feminized Oakley’s image to appeal to audiences facing a crisis of masculinity in a time of social, economic, and industrial change.<sup>1</sup> The Victorian ideology of domesticity, which prescribed certain gender roles and occupational spheres for men and women, served as a balm for the bruised egos of these men in transition. Unlike other female sharpshooters, Oakley appealed to Victorian men precisely because she did not threaten their masculinity. Once *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West’s* advertising began to emphasize Oakley’s domestic traits, the show experienced its greatest popularity and financial success.

Dorothy Fields and Irving Berlin could only hope for similar popular and critical success as they began to write their version of Oakley’s life story in 1945. As World War II ended, America was, once again, experiencing a change in the

composition of the labor force, and, once again, the national consciousness turned toward the comforting concept of domesticity to stabilize the gender imbalance. Massive publicity campaigns introducing the consumer culture that would sweep America into the next decade surfaced even before the end of the war. By late 1944, ads promoting all-electric kitchens for the “after-victory” homes filled women’s magazines. These advertisements served a dual purpose: they suggested how wartime savings could be spent and they served to remind women of their proper domestic role.<sup>2</sup> Whether or not Fields and Berlin recognized the obvious similarities in their cultural situations, they chose the perfect iconic figure to promote domestic bliss and exemplify the gender issues confounding the American public as World War II ended and the reconversion began.

Fields and Berlin, whose hit lists featured songs that tapped into current events and social trends, understood that financial gain went hand-in-hand with audience appeal. Berlin, a producer, theatre owner, and composer knew that songs reflecting “shifts in the national sensibility” proved particularly lucrative. Fields and Berlin sensed the post-war societal shift and wanted to write a musical that would appeal to the American public that craved, once again, the balm of domesticity. Philip Furia, a musical theatre scholar and Berlin biographer, notes that, as World War II ended, Berlin’s work “turned away from the world of skyscrapers and cocktail shakers to America’s regions, to rural life, to hearth and home.”<sup>3</sup> When Berlin collaborated with Fields on *Annie Get Your Gun*, the team joined the late-1940s popular culture trend that promoted domestic roles for women by modeling how

awkward and independent Annie learns that competition with handsome bachelor Frank Butler will not bring her happiness or marriage.

This chapter explores how audiences of the 1940s would come to understand the Annie Oakley story as re-framed not only by the composers of *Annie Get Your Gun*, but by the larger events of World War II and subsequent transformations of post-war American culture. The relationship between Annie Oakley and Frank Butler in *Annie Get Your Gun* fits neatly into the popular 1940s romance model, in which the “wholesome girl next door” appeals to the hero with her “coquetry, humility, or traditionally feminine virtue” and their problems are all resolved through their happy-ending marriage.<sup>4</sup>

*Annie Get Your Gun*'s romantic plotline focuses on the idea that to keep a man, a woman must allow him to be the breadwinner of the family, even if she is more skilled than he is working outside the home. The moral of the story truly is: “You can't get a man with a gun.” The musical's message, encased in an upbeat romantic fantasy, effectively conveyed a lesson for women, strongly underlining the end of the “experiment” and urging them to relinquish their jobs to the returning soldiers. For this particular lesson, the collaborators found a popular figure who exemplified traditional feminine virtues,<sup>5</sup> but in order to moralize, they needed to rearrange large portions of Oakley's biography. While this practice is not unusual, this chapter will examine the ways in which Fields and Berlin carefully constructed the musical biography to extol the domestic ideology of the late 1940s.

The collaborators began by embedding ideological content in the fictionalized historical events of Oakley's life and by casting Ethel Merman as Annie. Chapter 3

focuses first on these important steps and then on the lyrics and dialogue of *Annie Get Your Gun*. The significant deviations from Oakley's biography highlight the gendered content available for the World War II audience and a detailed examination of promotional material for the original production suggests the ways in which the play and its publicity were directed at very specific audience groups. This chapter also includes an analysis of the ads in the production's *Playbill* which explores the particular resonances that the play might have had among this targeted (and largely female) community. Finally, the reviews of the first production illuminate how Merman's brash persona transformed the image of Oakley in the public imagination, suggesting that her interpretation of the character supported the authors' social agenda.

### **THE SECRET TO SUCCESS: FICTIONALIZE, HISTORICIZE, MERMANIZE**

Dorothy Fields and Irving Berlin based *Annie Get Your Gun* on Annie Oakley's life story and through liberal re-interpretation showed how Annie came to realize the importance of placing her relationship before her career. Fields chose Oakley as her heroine despite the fact that she found Oakley and Butler to be somewhat dull. It was not the story of the Butler's romance that intrigued her, but Oakley's star quality. Oakley's legendary persona embodied the virtues of femininity, hospitality, and marital bliss and was a perfect choice to glorify the post-war message of domesticity. However, for the musical to achieve real success, the audience must see the process by which Annie acquires her understanding of her role in the marital relationship so that they might leave the theatre and enact change in

their own lives. The creators, at this point, begin to play an active role in not only reflecting but also constructing social consciousness. *Annie Get Your Gun* succeeded in this task as a result of its subtle didacticism. As Gerald Bordman asserts in *American Musical Theatre*, the musical “set out solely to entertain. It entertained so well because it was far more artful than some of its more aggressively noble competitors.”<sup>6</sup> Fields and Berlin accomplished this by fictionalizing the events of Oakley’s life, by capitalizing on the nostalgia of the historical setting, and by casting Ethel Merman.

In order to extol the virtues of marriage and domesticity, *Annie Get Your Gun*’s creative team fictionalized the competitive nature of Oakley and Butler’s relationship. The crux of the musical is the competition between backwoods Annie and overly proud Frank that constantly thwarts their developing romance as they travel with the show. As noted above, the “real life” Annie Oakley and Frank Butler competed only once, in their initial meeting, and they began a harmonious marriage before joining *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West*. They spent forty-five happy years together, until her death in 1926. While the musical accurately catalogs their first shooting contest, their travels with Buffalo Bill, and Sitting Bull’s “adoption” of Annie, the creators took a good deal of creative license with the timeline and depiction of these events to suit the story they hoped to tell.

The significance of this fictionalization is not simply the fact that Fields and Berlin changed or elided some of the incidents in Oakley’s life, but that they cloaked their tale, and therefore their agenda, in a musical that purports to be “history” or “biography.” By capitalizing on Oakley’s fame, *Annie Get Your Gun* bears the

“stamp of history” and thus seems to show not only a precedent,<sup>7</sup> but an endorsement of Annie’s domestic virtues, and by framing the fictional romance in a biographical format, the authors validate their version of Oakley’s life story. There is an inherent, if somewhat naïve, agreement between author and audience when a real person’s story is recounted as entertainment. Certainly audiences expect dramatization, because it is understood that drama makes a better story, but by using the real person, as opposed to a completely fictional one, there remains the element of non-fiction. For example, if Fields and Berlin had wanted to write a blatantly didactic play to teach the women of the time to leave their jobs in favor of their domestic life, they could have just as easily framed a musical around the imaginary but familiar character Rosie the Riveter. Rosie, from the backwoods of Michigan, is skilled in a man’s field but comes to realize that she wants her man more than her gun. *Annie Get Your Gun* is inherently different than a completely fictionalized “Rosie Get Your Gun.” The difference is the aura of truth found in the biographical nature of the material and the setting of the musical; thus, Berlin and Fields’ musical offers a model for behavior and a solution to the domestic situation facing both Annie Oakley and the women workers of 1946. The women in the audience could easily discern this example because of the distance between their own environment and the Old West setting of the musical.

Authors set many 1940s musicals in Victorian America, such as *Oklahoma!*, *Bloomer Girls*, *Up in Central Park* (also by Dorothy and Herbert Fields), and *Carousel*. However, in *Annie Get Your Gun*, the musical biographers capitalized on the mores of the historical setting in order to pursue their present-day agenda. By

enacting a romance in 1885, the authors distanced the audience from their own post-war lives and experiences. This method, known as “historicization of the incidents,” in Brechtian theory, induces alienation in the audience. Although Fields and Berlin had no overt connection to Marxist or Brechtian ideology, their innate understanding of dramatic narrative and structure led them to set their story in a recently past era, thereby inducing audience alienation, which seeks to make the world appear “capable of transformation” by making a particular circumstance seem “historic.”<sup>8</sup> Victorian America was a politically potent setting for musical authors in the 1940s, and in *Annie Get Your Gun*, Fields and Berlin intuitively tap into the intrinsic human trait that people believe they can clearly diagnose what went wrong in their parents’ era.

A female audience member of post-war 1946, dressed up for a night at the theatre, might not immediately connect her household predicament to scruffy nineteenth-century Annie’s conundrum, for reasons beyond the historicized setting. As she appears in the musical, Annie looked and sounded nothing like these women. She was naïve, childlike, uneducated, unabashedly proud, inexperienced and awkward around men, and in no way domesticated. She embodied everything that these women were taught *not* to be. According to feminist theorist Janelle Reinelt, by “historicizing the incidents of the narrative” the spectator becomes aware of “certain habitual perceptions, which have been established by the historical tradition and therefore partially determine the present.”<sup>9</sup> Brecht’s technique of historicizing incidents, Reinelt explains, involves:

Re-examining a concrete historical situation and its customary interpretation to see what is missing, or what new insights emerge if hidden aspects are thrown into relief. It may also involve making

explicit the relationship between past and present, in order to show that human history is an open horizon, subject to constant change.<sup>10</sup>

In the case of *Annie Get Your Gun*, Fields and Berlin throw into relief fictionalized events in order to contrive new insights from the historicized setting and, in the process, provide an entertaining model for change by connecting the past and present. For the musical to inspire change in real life, however, the audience must not merely see the process by which Annie acquires these domestic virtues. They must also see her in the decisive moment, against the backdrop that made her famous, the sharp-shooting contest, and most importantly they must be able to applaud her choice to salvage her relationship. In any production of *Annie Get Your Gun*, the actress cast as Annie Oakley functions as the central catalyst for the fictionalization, historicization, music, lyrics, and plotline. In order for the musical to fulfill its persuasive potential, the woman in the role must be both accessible to the female audience members and convincing in her transformation.

As noted in chapter 2, Dorothy Fields conceived *Annie Get Your Gun* as a vehicle for thirty-six-year-old Ethel Merman, the star of four previous musicals written by the Fieldses. By 1945, Ethel Merman had become equally famous for her “exuberant singing, magnetic stage presence, and comic timing” and for her reputed “tough, direct, and even grouchy” behavior off-stage.<sup>11</sup> Based on her personal experience, the roles Merman had played in the past decade, and the reviews she had garnered up to that point, Fields recognized that Merman’s persona would appeal to the post-war audience and that she would give a compelling performance as Annie Oakley. Before ever writing a word of the script, Fields used Merman’s name as part of a pitch to Mike Todd who had produced the Merman vehicle *Something for the*

*Boys* in 1943. He responded, “A show about a dame who knows from nothing but guns? I wouldn’t touch it!”<sup>12</sup> Fields used the same one line pitch to Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein and got instant approval for a production based on the idea. Rodgers and Hammerstein, who had built a career on socially conscious and innovative musicals of their own, were “hands-on” producers and involved in every meeting and decision. Unlike Todd, they had the vision to see beyond the basic plotline to the potential audience appeal with Merman in the role of Oakley.

Casting Ethel Merman as nineteenth-century Annie was crucial to the post-war story the creators hoped to tell. According to Fields scholar Dwight Blocker Bowers, Fields “tailored everything [she wrote] for a performer,”<sup>13</sup> and her vision of Ethel Merman as Annie perfectly suited this moral tale for the late 1940s. Fields’ instincts had led her to another woman who was extremely skilled and naturally combined masculine and feminine qualities in her personal and professional life for, as *New York Times* reporter Elliot Norton noted, “The difference between Annie Oakley in fact and Ethel Merman in the show is not, perhaps, so great as history might indicate.”<sup>14</sup> Merman was by this time a bankable star and her persona made her not only popular in pre-war musicals, but also the perfect model for the thousands of Rosie the Riveters coming to the theatre.

Before Ethel Merman stepped on stage as Annie Oakley, her star persona already aligned her with Oakley, Fields, and Rosie the Riveter, in that her most famous traits, her physicality, personality, and voice, were considered masculine in nature. Born and raised in Astoria, former stenographer Ethel Merman debuted on Broadway in 1930 in *Girl Crazy*. At five feet, five inches tall and one hundred and

thirty pounds, with “slim, firm legs,” a “rounded, voluptuous figure,” Merman physically embodied neither the traditional heroine nor the typical chorine. Her figure, though curvy, resisted sexualization due to its evident strength, its “top-heavy” nature and its pairing with what Merman biographer Maurice Zolotow called, “a large strangely shaped face with sensuous lips, and big brown eyes that gleam wickedly.”<sup>15</sup> Zolotow’s is one of the very few specific descriptions of Merman’s body available from press clippings or biographies. This absence is, as scholar Stacy Wolf asserts in *A Problem like Maria*, “no doubt because she wasn’t conventionally beautiful.”<sup>16</sup> Merman, as fortune would have it, did not easily blend into the crowd and producers soon cast her in featured roles in which she could physically and vocally stand alone. Although the masculine nature of her personality and vocal ability equaled that of her physicality, reviews of these attributes dominated descriptions of Merman because of their positive audience appeal.

In *A Problem like Maria* Wolf asserts that Merman’s personality “confounds stereotypical notions of feminine behavior,” which include obedience, modesty, and meekness.<sup>17</sup> From the very beginning of her career, press, promotional, and biographical descriptions have focused on Merman’s self-described “matter-of-fact” personality, often highlighting her confidence, coarseness, and her lack of sophistication, the more masculine aspects of her nature.<sup>18</sup> She often intimidated co-workers with her work ethic and intolerance for unprofessional behavior, and her confidence in her own abilities is legendary. It is widely reported that she never got nervous before a show, often quoted as saying, “Why should I be nervous? I know my lines....Let the people who’ve paid \$4.40 for their seats worry.”<sup>19</sup> Usually, this

story is accompanied by a detailed account of her heavy pre-show meal of starches and sauces and topped off by a description of her gnawing her way through a thick, juicy steak. This unpretentious quality, paired with her sly sense of humor and earthiness, endeared her to fans.

In pre- and immediately post-war descriptions, Merman is often described as “earthy,” a euphemism for both her coarser sense of humor and her lack of sophistication. In a 1955 interview she reflected on her fondness for “earthy” humor saying, “Sometimes I shock people with a thigh-slapping, locker-room type joke and sometimes I startle them with what they think is my prudery.”<sup>20</sup> Merman’s star persona leans consistently toward, as Wolf describes, “Someone who gets what she wants and takes care of getting what she wants herself.”<sup>21</sup> Her masculinized personal image is cemented by the fact that she continually played women who also exude this aura. Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse are credited with modeling Merman’s onstage persona after her own personality in 1934 when they doctored the script for *Anything Goes*, making Reno Sweeney “a brassy woman, ever ready with a wisecrack, ever vulnerable to heartbreak.”<sup>22</sup> Soon writers and lyricists began to tailor Merman’s roles to this persona.

In his *New York Times* review of 1939’s *DuBarry Was a Lady*, Brooks Atkinson used all masculine terms to herald Merman as “the perfect musical comedy minstrel. She is practically the master of the band, beating the rhythm as she sings it and strutting the tune.” He claimed that she reveled in “a rougish bit of bawdiness” with Bert Lahr, salvaging the Herbert Fields and B.G. DeSylva book that “struck a dead level of Broadway obscenity.”<sup>23</sup> In 1940, Atkinson celebrates that “culture has

made no impression on her yet” in an article about Merman in *Panama Hattie*,<sup>24</sup> and he continues in his *New York Times* review that “La Merman” knows how to play “a coarse-timbred entertainer with a heart of gold...She rolls through it with the greatest gusto, giving it a shake and a gleam and plenty of syncopation.”<sup>25</sup> In her final performance before *Annie Get Your Gun*, Lewis Nichols heralded Merman’s “roll of the eye” and “wave of the hand to suggest friendly ribaldries,” as one of the finer points of her performance in 1943’s *Something For the Boys*. However, Nichols believes, “It is one of Mr. Porter’s lines that sums [Merman] up pretty well; she is ‘the missing link between Lily Pons and Mae West’.”<sup>26</sup> By 1945, her on-stage persona had indeed become one that could place her directly in line between one of the great American opera singers and the bawdiest of comediennes.

A large part of Merman’s persona came directly from the vocal qualities that made her famous, qualities that were almost always described in a blending of masculine and feminine terms. One of the most articulate descriptions of the androgynous nature of her voice came from famed conductor Arturo Toscanini, who saw her in *Anything Goes*. Maurice Zolotow relates his reaction:

As he listened to her vocal qualities he got more and more excited and at the end of the first act when [asked] what he thought of her voice, Toscanini cried, “*Castrato! Castrato!*” To his sensitive ears, her voice had the characteristics of that of those famous Italian male singers who had been castrated in childhood...in order to give their voices the lightness and color of the soprano combined with the power and depth of the male voice. Apparently, Merman’s larynx can produce tones exactly like those.<sup>27</sup>

Although Merman’s limited range is widely acknowledged, the power behind the notes she hit outweighed her somewhat lacking virtuosity and became central to any description of her performance. In Atkinson’s review of *Panama Hattie* he compared

Ethel Merman's "bellowing" to "a compression engine," and Nichols observed, "Ethel Merman in good voice is a raucous overtone to the trumpets of a band" in his review of *Something for the Boys*.<sup>28</sup> Nichols also stated, "For she is truly immense" in that role, conflating the voice, the persona, and the woman into one giant masculinized performer. Certainly one could not imagine the same description being written of other female Broadway stars of the period that would not be construed as derogatory, yet for Merman the term "immense" is not only apt, but complimentary. It was, in fact, the masculine power behind her physicality, her personality, and her vocal ability that made her not only sympathetic to Annie Oakley's persona, but also the perfect role model for the post-war female audience, because she had managed, over the course of her career and personal life, to feminize her persona in order to increase her audience appeal.

**'COURSE SHE LOOKS LOUSY NOW, BUT WE'LL DRESS HER UP!:  
FEMINIZING 'LA MERM'**

As Lois Banner points out in *American Beauty*, movie stars dictated the ideals of female beauty from the time of film's "initial popularity in the 1910s." By the 1930s, Katharine Hepburn and Joan Crawford were the "mature" and "competent" female physical ideals and, during the war years, Rosalind Russell appealed "with her extreme man-tailored suits and her deep masculine voice."<sup>29</sup> Theatre, as a visual medium, followed these ideals in a similar fashion, though the scrutiny of the lens demands a physical representation much closer to the ideal than distance between the last row of the balcony and the Broadway stage. As the ideal female beauty evolved during the war to reflect the pin-up girls of the soldiers' dreams, the romantic heroine

became more feminine as well. Although she would always embody a more masculine stage presence, Merman, like Oakley, had learned ways to feminize and soften her physical appearance and, by this time, had moved away from a purely masculine effect, seeming rather, as Stacy Wolf asserts, to “cross perform.”<sup>30</sup> Merman evolved along with the feminine ideal in the 1940s by finding new ways to embody romance on the stage, entering into motherhood, and appealing to the audience’s pre-war sentimentality.

After her success in 1934’s *Anything Goes*, Ethan Mordden notes in *Broadway Babies*, “Merman was too big not to carry a show; therefore she had to become a romantic lead.” Though directors found it easy to push Merman downstage and center for her songs, having her carry the show presented a challenge because her persona’s masculine leanings meant that her physicality, personality, and vocal qualities brought, what Mordden delicately labels, “new information to romance.”<sup>31</sup> As argued above, Merman’s physicality did not fit into the stereotypical ideals of femininity in the 1930s and 1940s,<sup>32</sup> and producers rarely cast her for her looks, because (as one polite biographer put it) her “amazing self-confidence” always over-shadowed them.<sup>33</sup> Merman did, however, find ways to feminize her appearance both onstage and off. According to Zolotow, she always “wore very high heels” and her hair in an upsweep in order “to give herself more height on the stage.”<sup>34</sup> She also applied heavy makeup for public appearances and the stage, as was the custom for women of the 1940s, including beading the midnight blue mascara on her eye lashes over a candle in her dressing room.<sup>35</sup> In her personal life, Merman was famous for collecting extravagant jewelry, including a custom made “gold cigarette case with

the initials 'ELM' and a portrait of herself as Panama Hattie done in platinum, diamonds, and a ruby."<sup>36</sup> Despite these feminine touches, Merman remained a face only the theatre could love and was desperately disappointed as most of her starring roles went to other, more traditionally feminine, stars for the film versions of her musicals.

Merman's physical appearance, then, was not what audiences lined up for. Therefore, her onstage persona and vocal ability must have held the secret to her dramatic audience appeal. As noted earlier, Merman's "earthy" quality dominated her performance persona. While the "locker-room" aspect of this attribute seems to masculinize her, one biographer argues that this quality actually feminized Merman's work, as the characters she inhabited "elicited sympathy because she was instantly recognizable for her earthy humanity."<sup>37</sup> Just as Lindsay and Crouse tailored Reno Sweeney to Merman's personality in *Anything Goes*, other writers followed suit, highlighting Merman's "earthy" quality in as feminine a manner as possible. Composers also wrote in this fashion and, as Ethan Mordden notes, "even her songs were Mermanized."<sup>38</sup> "Mermanized," in this instance, implies not only that composers wrote specifically for her range, but also that they arranged the songs to flatter her voice, thereby giving the song, voice, and character more audience appeal. For example, when composing "Let's Be Buddies" for *Panama Hattie*, Cole Porter explained, "I put in an A natural for Ethel because, while all her notes are extraordinarily good...A natural is her best and the C above is a good finish for her."<sup>39</sup> *Panama Hattie* represented a positive turning point for Merman after the bawdiness of *DuBarry Was a Lady*. The "new information" she brought to romantic

storylines would include the Merman masculinity blended with a more appealingly feminine stage persona.

As the romantic lead in *Panama Hattie*, Merman capitalized on all the creators wrote for her, and she scored as a sleazy woman who is transformed by love. Brooks Atkinson notes that she sings “triumphantly” and marches with “bouncing vitality” through the “tawdry part” of the leading “trollop” in *Panama Hattie*. Though the descriptors “triumphant” and “vital” are clearly masculine and “tawdry” and “trollop” aver the worst in feminine nature, as Atkinson continues to rave, he turns these qualities into the positive and feminine characteristics of cleanliness and honor, stating, “No one else could do it with so much forthright vigor and at the same time keep it sanitary. Miss Merman is an honest ballad singer who plays no tricks on the customers and does not truckle for guffaws. She can make a song seem like a spontaneous expression of her personality.” Atkinson continues to focus on her “honesty” as a performer, which allows Merman to “surrender her worldly and brassy personality...without cloying sweetness.” Finally, Atkinson reveals his own resistance to her persona as he concludes his review in glowing feminine terms by confiding, “The warmth and simplicity of [her] sentimental scenes confirm an old suspicion that the Merman is a good egg.”<sup>40</sup> Through her more feminine traits Merman is able to transcend her “baser” masculine qualities and endear herself to the reviewers and audience.

A few weeks after *Annie Get Your Gun* opened, Ethel Merman confessed to a reporter that (next to Annie) Panama Hattie was her favorite role.<sup>41</sup> Though she does not divulge why, this partiality is understandable since she received her first solo star

billing for the show and the role highlighted her acting abilities. Also, for the first time she played a mother figure, albeit it an unusual image of the mother, to great acclaim. Hattie, who wears garish clothes, has no social graces, and sings in a club for sailors in the Canal Zone, is courted by a man with wealth and class who has an eight-year-old daughter from a previous marriage. She “figures she isn’t good enough for the man and certainly isn’t respectable enough to be a proper mother to the little girl.” Once again, Merman’s character bears a striking resemblance to her own persona and it could not have escaped her notice that Hattie’s “efforts to improve her grammar and tone down her gaudy dresses not only made for a lot of belly laughs, but also created a genuine emotion.”<sup>42</sup> The interesting turn, however, is that although the character is turned around by love, it is not the love of a man, but the love of his daughter that registered with the early-1940s audiences. The mother-daughter relationship softened and feminized Merman in a way that nothing else had, and she won rave reviews as the “temptress” who sang with the “tot” in the most highly praised number of the show, “Let’s Be Buddies.”<sup>43</sup> In a striking example of art-imitating-life-imitating-art, reporters and biographers found Merman’s own childbearing and childrearing similarly feminizing and a great deal of focus turned to her status as a mother when she left the run of *Panama Hattie* in 1942, already three months pregnant.<sup>44</sup>

Merman gave birth to Ethel Jr. on July 20, 1942 and Robert Jr. on August 11, 1945, both with her second husband Robert Leavitt. After this time, anything written about her personal life or off-stage persona revolved almost completely around her domestic abilities and particularly her role as mother, re-framing aspects of her

personality that had formerly been perceived as masculine or negative as feminine and positive. For example, biographer Maurice Zolotow re-interpreted her calm and confident attitude toward performance and her own star power in his 1950s book, *No People like Show People*, stating:

The explanation of her sane attitude toward what are ordinarily considered theatrical cataclysms (like an out-of-town tryout) seems to me to be that she is a woman first, and a Broadway star secondly. The basic things in living—her relationship with her husband and her children—come first with her, thousands of miles ahead of whether an audience will applaud her and Brooks Atkinson will give her a nice review in the *New York Times*....Ethel Merman is the only Broadway star who refuses to tour after the Broadway run of a show has ended. She thinks it's more important to stay in New York with her family.<sup>45</sup>

Zolotow clearly approves of this order, “woman first...star second,” as did other writers in the post-war period, who turned from focusing on her coarser nature to celebrating her domestic side. While it is impossible to say if Merman designed this turn to motherhood as the central focus of her press in an attempt to feminize and soften her persona, she certainly played the part to its fullest. During the interviews surrounding the opening of *Annie Get Your Gun*, Merman invited one *New York Times* reporter, S. J. Woolf, to her home in order to “see Ethel Merman in her natural habitat.” The reporter divulged,

Miss Merman in her home is indeed a very different person. When I went to see her in her terraced apartment on Central Park West I discovered that she was more interested in the care and feeding of infants than in telling me about her theatrical career...[and] although she was pleased by the favorable notices she had received in her new part, she did not seem half as proud of them as she was of her apartment, its furnishings and the view from her windows.<sup>46</sup>

Woolf continues to marvel at Merman's at-home alter-ego, peppering his article with descriptions of her coddling her son and cooing baby talk and even quoting Merman, who jumped up as soon as her nine-month-old son squealed, telling him, “Wait a

minute. That's little Bob, God bless him, calling 'Mama.' I must go to him."<sup>47</sup> By presenting herself in this domestic fashion, Merman almost completely eradicated her previously masculinized image of the tawdry trollop with the mouth of a truck driver.

Even Merman's long-time acquaintances turned formerly masculine descriptions to a more positive spin after she became a mother. Early in her career, librettists and lyricists easily manipulated Merman's lack of sophistication into roles like Reno Sweeney and DuBarry, but librettist Howard Lindsay later candidly admired the honest and open way she played with her daughter, calling her "basically unsophisticated" in the most affirmative sense.<sup>48</sup> Zolotow also praised her simpler approach to stardom revealing,

She has no secretary and keeps track of all her domestic and professional affairs—contracts, correspondence, bills—herself...She [is smart, shrewd, orderly and attentive to details]...quite unlike the usual happy-go-lucky geniuses rampant around Broadway. Miss Merman plans the dinner menus, orders the food, and usually eats at home because she'd rather eat with her children than decipher French formulas on the Colony menu. She rarely accepts cocktail party invitations because she wants to be around when her children go to sleep.<sup>49</sup>

The image of Merman as a calmly confident mother who uses phrases like "God Bless him" and oversees the domestic duties of her home created an entirely new off-stage persona for Merman and, although the above examples were published after Merman's opening in *Annie Get Your Gun*, her fans were certainly aware of the changes in her life as they occurred. The public eye kept a close watch on Merman, who had been a popular Broadway and screen star for over a decade, noting with interest her shift into matrimonial and parental roles. The press made the most of her newfound motherhood, as evidenced by the tiny notice for her appearance in the September 1942 Army Emergency Relief Show that used the space allotted to herald,

“Her first public appearance since the birth of her baby.”<sup>50</sup> With motherhood as a major boost and *Panama Hattie*’s critical success, Merman successfully feminized her persona for increased audience appeal in the early 1940s, also increasing her suitability for playing Annie Oakley.

Between *Panama Hattie* and *Annie Get Your Gun*, Ethel Merman starred in the lighthearted *Something for the Boys*, in 1943. The script, by Dorothy and Herbert Fields and originally titled, *Jenny Get Your Gun*,<sup>51</sup> had little (if any) political content and featured Merman “as a defense worker who could receive wartime radio messages through the fillings in her teeth.”<sup>52</sup> In this role, she made clear her ability reach an audience with more than a wisecrack and a blaring vibrato. Authors and critics now realized that her on-stage persona could unify an audience and pacify viewers into a state of readiness to receive political content. As stated above, the reviews praised her voice and her comic timing in a mixture of masculine and feminine terms, but in a profile article titled, “Merman for the Boys,” *Times* reviewer Lewis Nichols explored Merman’s performance, in what was apparently a particularly lamentable wartime theatre season. He effuses, “The Merman eye rolls, the Merman head shakes, the Merman voice goes up to soothe the rafters, making everything all right again and improving to no end the state of musical comedy.”<sup>53</sup> Nichols asserted that, due to her undisputed skill and a certain amount of pre-war sentimentality, the “Queen” of musical comedy’s appeal crossed class lines to soothe audiences in their hour of need.

Focusing on Merman’s expertise with lyrics, Nichols notes, “She is aware that the words are not there because some frantic lyricist insisted on writing them.”

Beyond her intellectual connection to the work, he admires the power with which “she sends them clearly and distinctly to the top of the highest balcony, where people paid also, but too often hear nothing but the blare of the brasses and an indistinct mumble that can make no sense beyond the \$4.40 seats. She pulls an audience together, making it a single unit, not dividing it into castes separated by the several distances from enchantment.”<sup>54</sup> By unifying her audiences through her intellect and power, Merman both widens her appeal and creates a structure in which the lower classes (or cheaper seats) are no longer marginalized and are therefore included in any transmission of ideology.

Though *Something for the Boys* provides very little political content, the fact that Merman’s voice could bring together the entire audience into one group presented great possibilities for the performance medium. Merman’s pre-war career and onstage persona also made her an effective medium for the transmission of ideology. For men and women caught in the throws of World War II, Merman specifically represented the “earthy” humor and Broadway fun of happier times. In reference to this romanitized connection, Nichols writes,

*Something for the Boys* got underway, and right there at the very beginning of the prologue was Cole Porter warming up with a flock of dainty notes strung together under the title of “Announcement of Inheritance.” Since that inheritance included Ethel Merman, it was obvious that everything was to be all right again. The audience relaxed into the soft, purring mood that is like a cat before the fireplace and a musical comedy audience before Miss Merman and Mr. Porter.<sup>55</sup>

The audience’s pre-war sentimentality elevated Merman’s status beyond her vocal ability and comic timing and, once they were unified and soothed to the point of purring, this sentimentality only increased their readiness for indoctrination. The

post-war audience required new heroines who blended masculine and feminine traits in a way that had become familiar during the war. Having previously established herself as a feminine heroine and a mother figure, Nichols' exploration of Merman's wartime appeal supports why Fields imagined that she would be the perfect choice to play Annie Oakley in their post-war musical. In the case of *Annie Get Your Gun*, the complex combination of Merman's physicality, voice, and star persona perfectly suited the equally complex character of Annie Oakley.<sup>56</sup>

### **ALL 'HAIL' BREAKS LOOSE: LYRICS AND DIALOGUE**

The following section will analyze the lyrics and dialogue of the original production of *Annie Get Your Gun*. Throughout this analysis, the way Ethel Merman's star persona informed her portrayal of Annie will be examined in context of the original script. Reading her performance against the original text illustrates the way her celebrity intersects with the character and the layered interpretation she brought to the role. I argue that Merman's presence as Annie Oakley distanced the audience from the dramatic plot and ultimately supported the underlying message of the musical. Another goal of this section is to identify specific passages in the musical that underwent significant revisions over the course of the musical's production history. These scenes and songs receive intense scrutiny because they had the most gendered content and provided the best platform for the instruction of gender ideals.

In crafting lyrics and dialogue that directly mirrored contemporary social debates and in creating a character that epitomized the feminine ideals of the moment,

Dorothy Fields and Irving Berlin cleverly embedded the prevailing 1940s ideology of domesticity in Oakley's legend. The musical comedy version of Annie Oakley embodies the archetypal American "Golden Girl," an "energetic, cheerful, apparently independent, vivacious and 'natural'" character type first created by turn-of-the-century director David Belasco. Leslie Ferris, in *Acting Women*, describes the Golden Girl as a fusion of two established theatrical images, "the reality of the pioneer women" and the "the innocent girl-child of traditional melodrama." These characters played to the Victorian domestic ideals of 'the cult of true womanhood,' which championed purity and submissiveness.<sup>57</sup> This archetype initially inspired the construction of Oakley's *Wild West* image and later played a part in the development of the heroines of the late 1940s, including Fields' adaptation of Oakley's persona and Berlin's song lyrics.

As a popular late-nineteenth-century character, the Golden Girl was, by 1945, a familiar, engaging character that effectively distanced the audience from their own period, which was a key to the message the writers hoped to convey in order to promote the post-war ideals of femininity and the prevailing aura of domesticity. In order for *Annie Get Your Gun* to be effective as a teaching tool or moral lesson, the writers must allow the audience to see the critical transition from a natural, uneducated, innocently sexual girl to refined and educated lady such as Oakley. More importantly, the audience must be able to clearly assess the benefits of such a transition. The Fields' model for this project had certainly made this same transition effectively. Dorothy and Herbert Fields created a classic Golden Girl in the character of Annie Oakley. As the musical's heroine, she begins as a gawky, dirty, but fearless

pioneer girl. The audience first hears her hollering loudly offstage, as she shoots a bird from the hat of a “lady,” who then calls her a “nasty ragamuffin.” Annie confidently strides from the wings to meet her quarry onstage, proud of her shooting abilities but otherwise unworldly and awkward. She has an amusing exchange with hotel owner Mr. Wilson in which he expresses surprise that Annie and her siblings can neither read or write, establishing the character as uneducated. The transition she will make from “ragamuffin” to lady follows the quintessential arc of the Golden Girl storyline.<sup>58</sup>

Belasco’s concept of the Golden Girl relies on the girl’s precarious position in a male dominated setting. In his play, *The Girl of the Golden West*, Belasco establishes that the girl is “independent” and “shrewd,” with a moral status that elevates her since “her utter frankness takes away all suggestion of vice—showing her to be unsmirched, happy, careless, untouched by the life about her.” However, Leslie Ferris, in her analysis of the Golden Girl, states that the male-dominated setting “constantly undermines any autonomy” the girl might have gained through her independence and capability.<sup>59</sup> *Annie Get Your Gun*’s opening musical moments establish *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West* as inherently masculine, as Berlin’s bright march “Colonel Buffalo Bill” escorts the show into town.

In this briskly military number, Berlin introduces the male leads and encourages the nostalgic connection to the historicized setting by highlighting the romantic notions of the vast frontier and the men who have settled the wild country and vanquished the Indians. *Wild West* manager Charlie Davenport publicizes the “wild” and “thrilling” showman Buffalo Bill, who “pleases every woman, man, and

child.”<sup>60</sup> Buffalo Bill’s extravaganza features a masculine lineup of cowboys, marksmen, and Indians, with a ratio of “five hundred Indians to fifty squaws.” The Colonel is revered as the manliest man of all. Davenport describes his entrance “on a big white horse” to save some innocent victims from “very notable, cut your throat-able Indians.” The song concludes that Buffalo Bill’s show is “better than all of vaudeville,” as Davenport encourages the enraptured crowd chanting “Colonel Buffalo, Colonel Buffalo...” to march right into the line for tickets.<sup>61</sup>

The masculine environment necessary for the emergence of the Golden Girl pervades the first scene as Davenport instructs Mac, the cowboys, and some stagehands to place all of the show’s equipment on the front lawn of a Cincinnati hotel. At this point, another male enters into the fray, hotel-owner Foster Wilson. Mr. Wilson highlights an additional aspect of the masculine nature of the *Wild West Show*, the potent sexual atmosphere between the men of the show and the women in each town, as he declares, “I don’t want no actors! I just had Pawnee Bill and his Far East Show here. They chased women up and down the stairs on horseback!” Undaunted, Davenport offers one hundred dollars for the rental, which Wilson refuses. He presses on in his best Vaudevillian manner, offering first fifty dollars and two squaws and then fifty squaws and two dollars. Wilson also rejects fancy shooter and *Wild West* star Frank Butler’s charming appeals, so Butler instructs his assistant Dolly, “Go inside and see what you can do. He’s a bachelor. Maybe he’s lonesome.” Dolly, who is a “traditional vaudeville assistant” and the only adult female foil to Annie in the play, enthusiastically accepts her assignment. The dialogue in the first moments of *Annie Get Your Gun* establishes that in the masculine environment of the

*Wild West*, white women are sexual objects, or prey as Wilson describes it, and Indian women are at best a tradable commodity.

A gaggle of admiring girls follows the “high spirited” Frank Butler as he enters the first scene. Frank Butler’s first song reveals women’s agency in their sexual liaisons with traveling showmen. These “bad women” with loose morals are a typical foil to the Golden Girl character; their presence specifies the girl’s *kind* of independence. Although Belasco notes that the Golden Girl has a “thorough knowledge” of man’s baser instincts, she remains untainted.<sup>62</sup> She is, therefore, able to fall under the romantic spell of the wayward man and he instantly recognizes her distinctive purity. After the admiring girls take the initiative and approach him, Frank warns them immediately that he is “A Bad, Bad Man.” As Philip Furia asserts, this “‘I Am’ song, in which a character defines himself to the audience” is common in the “new integrated musical” of the post-*Oklahoma!* period.<sup>63</sup> In short, Frank Butler tells the ladies on stage and the audience, “I am” hard to get and proud of it. He begins by feigning concern for their well-being, singing, “I like your attention, But this I have to mention, You’re playing with fire and you’re apt to get burned.” He then catalogues the women whose reputations he has destroyed and the shot-gun toting men who would like to find him in every town the show has visited. A jovial Butler paints himself as the heroic “man in white,” but seductively ends every phrase with, “I’m a Bad, Bad Man.” The most interesting part of this song is the girls’ chorus that asserts their willingness and sexual experience:

You are making too much fuss,  
For we don’t give a tinker’s cuss,  
We’ve been out, yes each of us,  
With a bad, bad, man.

We've been chasing up and down,  
The other show has just left town.  
And the one who played the clown,  
Was a bad, bad man.

These are the coarse kinds of women Frank Butler encounters in each town. He ends the song coyly telling them, "I'm enlightened, but frightened. Though my int'rest you've heightened." And although he suggests they may be too much for him, he lets them know that he'll be in his tent and then dances with them for nine pages of music after the last chorus. This male-dominated territory of the *Wild West Show*, in which women are objects and lothario Frank Butler is king, establishes the perfect setting for the entrance of Golden Girl Annie Oakley.

As I noted in chapter 1, the real-life Annie Oakley was sexually conservative. She worked hard to become educated and, though she was married, remained an independent star performer who played a considerable part in the creation and dissemination of her public persona. Her refined presence feminized the roughly masculine environment of the *Wild West* in the 1800s, made her ideal material for post-war visions of American femininity. However, Fields and Berlin must have struggled with how to make their "dull" subject's transformation dramatic yet plausible. Her flaws would have to be largely superficial, concealing her true "womanly" and domestic nature beneath. Arranging Oakley's biography to fit into the Golden Girl mold provided the perfect vehicle for their moral message.

Based on the script provided by Fieldses, Berlin became nervous about creating the style of language for a "hillbilly" Oakley. Veteran lyricist and producer Hammerstein advised him that "Broadway's idea of hillbilly comprised of dropping the *g* in *-ing* words,"<sup>64</sup> but according to Furia, "Berlin went beyond that simple

formula and had Annie define—and defend—her entire ‘hillbilly’ culture” in Annie’s first song, “Doin’ What Comes Natur’lly.”<sup>65</sup> Fields and Berlin accentuated Annie’s “pre-domestic” characteristics by exaggerating Oakley’s unrefined persona at the beginning of the musical and infusing her first scene and song with the themes of wish-fulfillment and motherhood by linking the ideas of sex and education, an essential connection for the audience of 1946 to make in order to understand that domesticity plays a large role in marital happiness.

“Doin’ What Comes Natur’lly” is Annie’s “I am” song, and in it she acknowledges her upbringing and its surprising advantages. Sex, according to Annie, is what comes “natur’lly” for men and women and is the best way to get what you want. She begins, “Folks are dumb where I come from, they ain’t had any learnin’.” She then continues to list her many uneducated relatives and the way they have excelled in life by capitalizing on their natural (and in most cases baser) instincts. This song establishes Annie as a cheerful, vivacious, and, most importantly, natural and innocently sexual Golden Girl. And Berlin’s bouncy version of “hillbilly music” expertly conveys Annie’s station in life and lack of education. Annie argues that education does not help with male-female relationships, which are paramount in her worldview. Berlin devised many comical euphemisms for this Golden Girl that were at once innocent and mischievous, such as:

You don’t have to know how to read or write,  
When you’re out with a fella’ in the pale moonlight.  
You don’t have to look in a book to find,  
What he thinks of the moon and what is on his mind.  
That comes natur’lly.

Annie asserts that by “doin’ what comes natur’lly,” her “Maw and Paw” raised a family, her ninety-three year grandpa entertains his new wife, her impoverished sister Lou gets her stockings for free, her illiterate cousin Nell got through school with honors, her sister Rose “does fine” with her beaux behind the tree, and her even her “tiny baby brother whose never read a book knows one sex from the other” just by looking. Dorothy Fields approved wholeheartedly of Berlin’s interpretation of the character, asserting in her oral history, “I’m sure that Kern and I could never have approached [Berlin’s score and lyrics], because he had just the right lusty flavor for that show.”<sup>66</sup> His “lusty” flavor certainly suited the content of “Doin’ What Comes Natur’lly” and the vivacious nature of both the character Annie and Ethel Merman’s persona, though it was a departure from the modest and conservative nature the real Annie Oakley cultivated in her publicity in order to be perceived as a refined lady.

Education signified refinement for the real-life Annie Oakley and was also a key factor in the persuasive argument at the root of *Annie Get Your Gun*. The historical Oakley was basically uneducated until she met Frank Butler. After she began her career as an entertainer, her publicity strongly linked her status as a lady to the fact that she was literate and enjoyed reading. This emphasis came from the Victorian notion of the “cult of true womanhood,” which Leslie Ferris describes below:

The historical and social reality of the pioneer woman was formed at the same time as the bourgeois Victorian lady developed into a dependent, ornamental and inactive female. A particularly American notion about women developed from the 1830s until it matured and became firmly and gloriously established in the 1860s, namely ‘the cult of true womanhood.’ The rise of this ‘cult’ shows a determined effort to stabilize the ‘domestic sphere’ by instilling feminine ideals such as ‘piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity’, through sermons, etiquette books, women’s novels, child-rearing books, and

ladies' magazines which, for the first time, were widely available to the general public.<sup>67</sup>

Firmly established by the end of the century, the cult of true womanhood promoted literacy (during the same time that education for women in women's colleges was becoming increasingly available).

Education signified refinement for post-World War II women as well. "Doin' What Comes Natur'lly" is intended to show the audience how rough Annie is at the start of the play and to set her on the road to refinement. Though the middle-class women in the audience were probably unlike Annie in their social or educational backgrounds, they could still appreciate that "doin' what comes natur'lly" was not the way to get married and stay married, and that education signified a ladylike femininity that could cut across class lines. Female theatre audiences were likely to be educated, but because of the Depression and the war effort they were no longer dependent, ornamental, or inactive as Victorian ladies had been. These women now faced hard decisions about what they wanted in their marital relationships and their work. These decisions were often complicated by their roles as mothers and their fundamental ambivalence about their role in the workforce, and popular culture took full advantage of the emotional vulnerability of these already exhausted women. The dramatic shift of women into the workplace during the war had destabilized the traditional domestic structure of American society. As scholars have noted, the post-war push to send women back into the home produced an explosion of domestically-oriented propaganda, designed to persuade women that their duty lay in surrendering authority to their male counterparts and returning the care of their families. In this context, their "education" became important as both a domestic adornment *and* as an

attribute that would qualify them to raise a new generation of (male) leaders. Thus, when discussing sex and education, post-war American writers and artists invoked the ideals of purity, submissiveness, and domesticity in order to provide guidance for these women who wanted to become wives and mothers.

However, in the case of *Annie Get Your Gun*, Annie's characterization as natural and innocent is complicated by Merman's presence in the role, since her persona promoted her as a woman who embraced her sexuality, who regularly got what she wanted and, by 1946, exuded her enthusiasm for motherhood. The Fieldses, as noted previously, were certainly well-acquainted with Merman's persona when Dorothy envisioned the role for her. Merman was both the "foremost lady clown of her time" and a palpably sexual woman, able to make "her body talk and her stride talk back; raising an oak of a laugh out of an acorn of a joke."<sup>68</sup> The Fieldses knew instinctively that Merman's sexuality would serve both the underlying message of the play and the financial bottom line, but they also knew that becoming a mother had changed Merman in subtle, but important ways.

Thirty-six year old Merman appears in the first scene of the play with her *much* younger brothers and sisters. The children act as a back-up chorus, angelically chanting "Doin' What Comes Natur'lly" after each verse. No mother is ever present in the musical, establishing Annie as the mother figure among them despite her supposed youth.<sup>69</sup> By the middle of the song she sends them off to the kitchen. This establishes the dichotomy of motherhood versus girlish independence, which is explored throughout the plot by the presence and absence of Annie's siblings. The notion of Annie as the mother figure mirrors one of the main issues facing the

working women of the post-war era, whether to stay home to nurture their children or to work. Annie's connection to motherhood is underscored by Merman's age and her status as a mother. Merman's forthright delivery and star persona also serve to disengage the spectator from the dramatic plotline, further connecting the audience to the underlying message.

Throughout "Doin' What Comes Natur'lly," Berlin connects sex and education to wish-fulfillment by listing the ways Annie's sisters and cousins get the things they most want. Her simple, natural femininity, however, is a novelty, especially when compared to the desperate and abrasive Dolly Tate, Frank's former assistant, and the other women in town. The post-war audience learns from Annie that having no education is no impediment to having wishes fulfilled, but the required payment is lusty and unladylike. It is significant that sex, education, and wish-fulfillment are the themes of Annie's "I am" song. Traditionally, the "I am" establishes the character and sets up her "I want" song. While at first glance uneducated Annie does not face the same issues as the post-war women, she soon reveals that her greatest wish is to get a man, a desire that was not unfamiliar to her female audience. After she meets Frank Butler, Annie soon realizes that her natural skills alone will not get her the man she wants ("You Can't Get a Man with a Gun"). In order to get and keep him, she will have to become his ideal woman.

Despite Annie's implied sexuality in "Doin' What Comes Naturally," her Golden Girl behavior distinguishes her from the other flirtatious women in the play. When Frank Butler first encounters Annie, she is in the process of cleaning her rifle, and does not notice him. This makes a striking contrast to the hordes of women who

follow Frank around the stage in the earlier scene. Annie may know the facts of life, but they have not yet applied to her own life and she is fundamentally innocent. Butler reinforces her seeming lack of familiarity with the man/woman game and his perception of her youth with his first line, “What’s that you got there, girl?” He flees the aggressive village women earlier in the play. Now with Annie, he becomes the instigator. It is worth noting that throughout the musical, Annie never loses the status of a *girl*, despite the fact that Fields wrote the part for the thirty-six year old Merman. According to Furia and Merman biographer Bob Thomas, director Josh Logan struggled throughout the rehearsal process with “the problem of Ethel Merman’s stage persona.” Logan stated that her “brassy, big-city dame, wise to all guys” nature presented a particular problem in the first moment that Annie sees Frank, which required a weakness that Merman did not have in her repertoire. In the script, Annie answers Frank’s greeting tartly, until she looks up to see him and falls instantly in love. Logan recalled:

I felt the only way I could show such an abrupt change was to have her collapse inwardly and outwardly as if she were a puppet whose strings had been cut quickly....She tried it. Her mouth dropped open, her shoulders sank, her legs opened wide at the knees, her diaphragm caved in....Later we dubbed it the ‘goon look.’”<sup>70</sup>

The “goon look” effectively conveyed that Annie’s confidence had gone, and she swoons and simply nods when he addresses her as he might a child: “Honey, you know you shouldn’t be fooling around with an old piece of junk like this...Now you give this back to your pappy and get yourself a couple of knitting needles.” Before Butler leaves, Annie tries to flirt with him, and he tells her, “I like you just fine, but you’re not enough woman for me. I like the dainty kind—the kind that faints when

she sees a mouse.” Annie sadly responds, “meanin’, I suppose, when I see a mouse, the mouse faints!”

Berlin craftily composed a mesmerizing waltz-time lullaby for this crucial moment in the musical. The hustle and bustle of the *Wild West Show* has subsided, the audience members are settled in their seats anxiously awaiting the first song between the hero and heroine. As the orchestra swells, he says, “I like ‘em dimpled and rosy,” and begins to sing the hypnotic melody “The Girl That I Marry.”

The girl that I marry will have to be,  
As soft and as pink as a nursery.  
The girl I call my own,  
Will wear satins and laces and smell of cologne.  
Her nails will be polished and in her hair,  
She’ll wear a gardenia and I’ll be there.  
‘Steady flittin’, he’ll be sittin’  
Next to her and she’ll purr like a kitten.  
A doll I can carry the girl that I marry must be.

Just as the Golden Girl character recalls the turn-of-the-century romantic female ideals, Berlin’s use of a waltz, popular in the 1880s and 1890s evokes an historical nostalgia in the audience. Though musical historian Gerald Mast argues that Berlin is commenting on the sexism of the past and the “parallel progress of American musical taste and social values,” I would argue that these lyrics establish for both Annie and the women in the audience a clear sketch of the “ideal mate” and a way to achieve their greatest desires and is in no way satirical.<sup>71</sup> In fact, as Furia points out, American culture embraced the ideals in the “folksy waltz” which soon crossed over into mainstream ideology as it became “independently popular as a straight paean to conventional matrimony.”<sup>72</sup> Even Berlin’s daughter, Mary Ellin Barrett, states in her memoir that she defended the song as intentionally ironic, though she confessed, “I’m

not sure it didn't define my father's own male feelings more accurately than I, who was not pink and white and did not purr, liked to think."<sup>73</sup> Whether Berlin intended the lyrics to be as blatantly didactic as they now appear can be debated, however, the effect on Annie as she listens, spellbound in her "goon" pose, cannot. It becomes immediately apparent to Annie that she is certainly not the type of girl the handsome Frank Butler would marry, and she resolves to change in order to become his ideal woman.

Berlin transitions immediately into the next song, contrasting the ideal domestic vision that Frank has conjured with the now somewhat pitiful spectacle that Annie presents. After Frank leaves her alone on stage, Annie launches into the most blatantly didactic (and longest) song in the show, "You Can't Get A Man With A Gun." She realizes that her one gift, her one asset, is useless in achieving her new goal. Her lyrics in the first chorus echo the sentiments of many female war workers:

I'm quick on the trigger,  
With targets not much bigger  
Than a pinpoint, I'm number one.  
But my score with a feller  
Is lower than a cellar  
Oh you can't get a man with a gun.

Throughout the song Annie lists the ways in which the gun makes her feel positive when she is alone. With her pistol she is feminine as she "sparkles like a crystal," she is skillful as she "shines like the morning sun" and she is a "cool, brave, and daring" hero as she faces down anything in her path. Annie then, however, laments that around men she becomes nervous and loses her "luster" because "a man never trifles with gals who carry rifles." Annie repeatedly addresses the title phrase to the audience at the end of each verse and refrain as she reaffirms that capturing a man is

not the way to keep him, in one chorus going so far as to describe a “feller” who had been shot as “turning yellor,” a transparent indication of that man’s cowardice and weakness. To that end, the song also incorporates many masculine inferences and specific war references, including “if I went to battle” and “I’m cool, brave and daring” associating Annie’s prowess with a rifle with masculinity, all working up to the big finish where Annie dolefully sings:

A man’s love is mighty,  
He’ll even buy a nightie  
For a gal that he thinks is fun,  
But they don’t buy pajamas,  
For pistol packin’ mamas.  
And you can’t get a hug  
From a mug with a slug.  
Oh you can’t get a man with a gun.<sup>74</sup>

Furia asserts that this song “maintains Annie’s pugnacity but also reveals a new vulnerability in her as she longs for the traditional feminine role she outwardly scorns.”<sup>75</sup> Indeed, Berlin reveals that the character craves domestic bliss, but he also skillfully connects the character to his female audience through topical references and indispensable advice.

The hearty presence of Merman as Annie supports this underlying connection to the women in the audience during this particular song. As I noted above, Merman had cultivated a very specific performance style by this time and she instinctively knew how to work an audience. Lewis Nichols, in his May 17, 1946 *New York Times* review of the musical noted, “By now, Miss Merman is regarded as heaven’s gift to the musical show.”<sup>76</sup> For a solo number, Merman would move down center stage and directly address the audience, breaking all sense of illusion and therefore communicating as both the character and the actress, once again inserting the present

day and her own persona as a mother and a brassy woman into the reception of the piece. Because of this direct connection to the audience she is more accessible as the woman rather than as the character. Her age and her strong star persona, in some ways, made her more plausible as someone facing a genuine dilemma and these factors allowed the other strong, middle-aged mothers in the audience to sympathize with her in a way they might not with an ingénue.

In addition to her stage presence, Merman's voice added to the rough edge the character needed at the start of the play. Unlike a typical Rodgers and Hammerstein heroine soprano, Merman's first solo, according to Ward Morehouse in the *Sun*, featured her as "her own hearty, brassy, noisy self."<sup>77</sup> Other reviewers, like Vernon Rice in the *Post* described Merman's performance as "strident," "lusty," "forthright and energetic," and Louis Kronenberger in *PM* calls her, "tough, rowdy, [and] gutsy, outstaring and outshooting anybody who gets in her way"<sup>78</sup> All of these terms could as easily have been applied to Rosie the Riveter, and the ideology embedded in this short song may be intended to remind the young women workers in the audience not only of their own dirty hands, covered hair, and durable work clothes, but also about the man who is "flittin' stead of sittin'." Popular culture had encouraged these women to identify with Rosie the Riveter and they now began to realize the possible perils of such masculinization.

These very perils quickly come to the fore in the musical. While still in the first scene, Annie and Frank square off in their first sharp-shooting contest. Annie wins and she innocently asks him, "You ain't mad at me, are you?" He replies, "'course I'm not. Anybody can miss a shot." Annie boasts, "I can't!" Without

realizing her mistake, she is puzzled as Frank storms away, his ego wounded. Annie sits, as the stage directions suggest, “*surrounded by the kids, her moment of triumph having passed.*” Once again, the writers masterfully combine elements of contemporary life in the ensuing scene in an attempt to connect with their audience. Annie is now the preeminent sharpshooter, after surpassing the former champion, and the presence of her siblings once again evokes the issue of motherhood. The children’s possible confusion at seeing the male figure displaced from his traditional role as leader could underscore for women in the audience the questions *their* children might face at seeing gender role reversals within their own households

The subsequent argument that arises between Frank, Buffalo Bill, and Charlie also echoes the post-war employment challenges men and women faced. Charlie and Buffalo Bill suggest that Annie become Frank’s partner, since her skill is a novelty and will help them financially, but as Frank rages against this idea, they reduce her position down to his assistant. Frank does not believe any woman could accept this compromise, replying, “But she wouldn’t be willing to join us just to hand me things.” Annie smartens up and quickly accepts a position as his assistant in Buffalo Bill’s show gushing, “I’ll hand ye things, Mr. Butler. I’ll do anythin’ jest so’s I ken be with you.” Interestingly, this scenario completely reverses the real-life Butler/Oakley working relationship. As I noted in chapter 1, Butler often served as Oakley’s assistant, handing her items or allowing her to use him as a human target. The role reversal in the play version of the story suggests that such an arrangement had become untenable for 1940s American society.

The reduction of Annie's role to Frank's assistant echoes the post-war practice of forcing married women into "to poorly paid, secondary jobs that would not jeopardize their primary allegiance to family."<sup>79</sup> Though she quickly sends the children off-stage, so that she can once again be the independent Golden Girl and sing "No Business Like Show Business" with Frank, Annie is, in theory, attempting to establish a relationship and eventually a family with Frank Butler as she agrees to travel with the show. In this scenario, Annie moves from directly providing for her family by shooting game for food and for profit into the world of *domestic role-playing*. By abdicating her position as provider and channeling her energies into a socially acceptable display of her skill, she assuages Frank's ego while earning money (by assisting with the job she formerly mastered) and still pursuing her love interest.

Frank and Annie's new employment structure directly reflects the common solution to the complex post-war employment issues American men and women faced. Interestingly, the song's composition and the 1946 cast vocal recording also reflect this compromised dynamic as well. According to musical theatre composer Jule Styne, Berlin originally intended "No Business Like Show Business" for Buffalo Bill and Charlie to sing as a duet, however, when Richard Rodgers heard the song he insisted, "That's so good you have to let Merman do it."<sup>80</sup> And although "commentators have exhausted the thesaurus in their attempts to describe the Merman voice, basically a rich contralto of unique timbre and focus [and] her clarion sound was often likened to a trumpet" the vocal blend on the cast recording uncharacteristically covers Merman's voice.<sup>81</sup> This is the only song in the entire

show that Merman takes part in and does not lead vocally and, though she sings strongly in her solo lines, in the choruses she can hardly be discerned. It is no coincidence that this subordinate vocal blend occurs at this moment in the plays, as it supports Annie's position in the structure of the *Wild West* and in her relationship to Butler.

Having settled on a dramatic structure for the 1940s musical that positioned Annie firmly as the subordinate, the *Wild West* tour begins and Buffalo Bill's focus turns to Annie's physical appearance. In scene 1, marketing-savvy Charlie begins feminizing her right away, saying, "Course she looks lousy now. But we'll dress her up." Again, the somewhat uncouth characterization of Oakley was supported by the casting of Ethel Merman who, by this point in her career had, "Developed into a rowdy clown, dragging the guffaws out of the audience's boots," according to Brooks Robinson of the *New York Times*. In his September 29, 1946 review of the musical, Atkinson states,

"[Merman] has always been a vastly enjoyable music-hall performer—acting in a forthright, swagger style, singing like a persistent trombone player and doin' what comes naturally. In the place of conventional stage beauty she has always substituted an amazing self-confidence. By the time she has finished with either a song or a part she possesses it completely, and very nearly possesses all the other performers and has, at least, a lien on the scenery....In [this role] she adds a sense of low comedy that is blunt and tremendously entertaining. Although, according to tradition, performers are not supposed to act in musical comedies any more than librettists are supposed to write intelligent books, doesn't La Merman make a coherent low comedy character out of backwoods Annie?"<sup>82</sup>

Merman's presence in the role, then, promotes a disconnect between the audience and the dramatic plot. Lewis Nichols contends in his May 26, 1946 *New York Times* review, that the script, lyrics, and vocal arrangements were "made to order" for

Merman.<sup>83</sup> Dorothy Fields, when writing the character, made certain to take advantage of all Merman's persona offered. In her Oral History at Columbia University, Fields notes that when blessed with a star like Merman, "You write everything that Merman can do, in that script."<sup>84</sup> She specifically described the love interest between Oakley and Butler as "built around [Merman's] personality."<sup>85</sup> With her intimate knowledge of both Oakley's and Merman's stage personas, Fields was able to concoct a subtle portrait of a skilled woman in a man's world that was not, as Bordman described, "nobly aggressive" with its didacticism. The libretto describes an innocently feminine Golden Girl, but Merman's frankness and deft handling of the comedy supply the spectators with other, non-textual information that only compounds the impact of her transformation when she eagerly submits to becoming the pink and white lady of Frank's dreams.

In the musical, Annie becomes a commodity to help sell the very masculine *Wild West* show to a wider audience and she simultaneously begins her quest to become the ideal woman. She quickly establishes her Golden Girl ability to "change the male society around her for the better" as she embarks on the show train.<sup>86</sup> Over a short period of time, she learns to emulate the same kind of Victorian propriety that Oakley had mastered in real life. Annie (the character) and Oakley (the woman) served as perfect role models for the women of the late 1940s who struggled with choosing independence and employment or domesticity. Annie's feminine presence on the train is an important force, which eventually civilizes not only Frank and the porters, but the wild Indians as well!

In the next scene of the musical, the character of Annie appears cleaned up and diligently working on proper lady-like decorum. She dresses fashionably, and the character's transformation mirrors the process Buffalo Bill's real publicity team undertook to feminize Annie Oakley for the nineteenth-century audiences. Though, as chapter 1 argued, it is difficult to establish who controlled Oakley's public image, but her photographs were very carefully staged with her gun throughout her career in order to give just the right feminine message and it is most likely that Oakley had a hand in that representation. In the musical, Annie's character has some input in her transformation as well, proudly displaying to Frank her new clothes, hairstyle, and reading ability -- many of the trappings of domesticity. In addition to the physical changes in Annie's appearance on the *Wild West* train, the musical's creators surround her with her siblings, reinforcing her mother figure image. Their relationship reflects another aspect of the Golden Girl image: that of the teacher.<sup>87</sup> Annie, who is still illiterate, *pretends* to teach her youngest brother, Little Jake, to read while in fact he secretly he teaches Annie to read so that she can impress Frank.

As the tour progresses, Annie assists Frank and he begins to teach her the business of sharp-shooting for entertainment. Quickly, she grows in confidence and popularity and Frank sees that he must gain control of her talent, because it threatens his place in the spotlight. In a scene that ultimately received many revisions over the course of the musical's production history, Frank carefully tells her, "People are beginning to notice you, Annie. The other day I talked Charlie into putting your name someplace on the billboard...And I told him I was gonna let you shoot the egg off the poodle's head!" When her enthusiasm bubbles over, he gently keeps her in

check cautioning, “That’s fine. I like you to be ambitious. I want you to improve, but it’ll take time.” In many ways, this exchange is reminiscent of the extra on-the-job training and schooling required of the women war workers in order to get the positions equally qualified men had been hired for before the war. Also, Frank’s admiration for her enthusiasm and implication that her personal success will come in time echoes the posters late in the war effort examined in chapter 2 that congratulated the female workers on a job well done, as if their contribution were complete and under the men’s control.

Annie’s character, however, does not seem to notice or mind this treatment. She responds, “All I wanna be is a pink and white woman like the kind ye said ye liked.” Happily, he tells her “You’re getting’ pinker and whiter every day.” He then makes a very important offer of partnership. He tells her, “Never wanted a partner before, but now maybe I might....Butler and Oakley.” This man, who in the opening sequence dances with chorus girls, regaling them with tales of his conquests, has apparently been so tamed by Annie’s pink and whiteness and her ability to be his faithful assistant, that he indicates he may now be ready to make the great transition from playboy to married man. The secret to getting a man to make this great leap is, of course, an age old mystery, one that was particularly of interest to the writers’ contemporary society. However, when Annie innocently (as stated in the script) rearranges the names to “Oakley and Butler,” Frank quickly corrects her.

Taking advantage of her momentary confusion over the difference, Frank distracts her by asking, “Annie, have you ever loved anybody?” Here he reasserts his agenda, their partnership, while gently moving her beyond the conflict over top-

billing. She responds that she has never loved someone who also returned that feeling, a very telling response since she has also never been a pink and white lady and nor has she allowed a man to take care of her or her family. Apparently, she *has* loved a man before, but that clearly did not come to fruition, presumably because she was found unworthy due to her scruffy appearance or her independence. Annie, who is pink and white and ready this time, has arrived at her moment of wish-fulfillment. Caught up in the hopeful optimism of what requited love might be like, Annie begins to sing “They Say It’s Wonderful,” the lovers’ first duet.

As they finish this brief duet, Frank senses that the relationship between them has become serious and excuses himself for the evening. Annie follows, subtly offering to walk him home to his sleeping car, a bold move for such a naturally innocent girl and an important offer in light of her status as the Golden Girl among the whores and Indians of the *Wild West*. It is important to note here that sexually experienced Frank declines her offer of physical love, ostensibly in the hopes of fulfilling their romantic potential. Her new status as a pink and white lady earns her his respect and the possibility of a relationship based on more than sex and ultimately the probability of a domestic union.

While the audience is left to imagine all of the possibilities of a partnership between the lovers, Charlie coerces Annie to surprise Frank by performing a very difficult trick in the show that night. Charlie hopes to gain a larger audience than the rival show in town with a novelty act featuring “a woman who can shoot and [still?] look like a lady.” But this trick would outshine Frank and Annie bristles at this breach of etiquette. Charlie persuades her with the fairy-tale notion that this trick will

“dazzle” Frank and “drive him crazy” enough to propose marriage. She is naïve enough to believe that Frank will be “so proud of [her] that he’ll bust out in that cold sweat” and Charlie confirms, “[you’ll] do this trick on the motor-bike, save the show, and marry Frank!”

Charlie’s fairy-tale mirrors the initial OWI push to get American women out of their domestic roles and into wartime jobs. The wartime women, like Annie, were called on to fill an economic need while the men were on the frontlines. The OWI claimed that men’s reaction to their skilled performance would be pride and gratitude, though this was not, in actuality, the case. By agreeing to out-perform Frank, the audience, Charlie, and Buffalo Bill can see that she will not convince him to marry her and will, in fact, lose his love. In this decisive moment, where the intersection of the world on stage and the contemporary culture is so strong, the writers reinforce the perils of losing Annie’s long wished-for domestic dream by ushering in the children and aligning Annie once again with motherhood.

As night falls, Annie makes certain the children have brushed their teeth and, as they say their prayers, she sings them a beautiful song, “Moonshine Lullaby.” The lyrics of “Moonshine Lullaby” do nothing to further the plot of the musical. Rather, they emphasize Annie’s domestic responsibilities and introduce the idea of a father who is absent, but who will eventually come home. Despite the fact that Annie’s parents are not a part of the musical in any way, in the song she encourages the children to stop crying because the day will soon dawn that their father will be coming home and suggests that they should instead “dream of Pappy, very happy.” Annie also repeatedly identifies herself as the children’s Mother, singing, “So count

your sheep, Mama's singin' you to sleep, with a Moonshine Lullaby." Although Annie, who has just been promised the way to "get her man with her gun," is dreaming of her own future husband and her own children, the song's musical style and lyrics clearly evoke the audience members' situations rather than the domestic situation of the Oakley family on stage.<sup>88</sup>

The style of the song is completely out of context in the 1880s milieu that Berlin had set up thus far in the musical, with waltzes, marches, and operetta style duets. However, as Ethan Mordden points out, "Moonshine Lullaby" ingeniously evokes Berlin's contemporary period through its:

Beat, harmonies, and riffs of swing—even unto a back-up black trio....Nothing could be more forties; the look and sound of it reminds one of countless moments in Fox and Universal musicals. Nothing could be less hillbilly, less aligned with *Annie's* period setting. But, in context, the number not only works well but does truly affect a country flavor. Again, Berlin can be ecumenical and timely at once, heedless of pastiche yet in the precise groove.<sup>89</sup>

Once again reality and fantasy intermingle because of Merman's motherly presence in the role and, as unlikely as it seems, given the many descriptions of her strident voice, she sings this sweetly comforting song with complete sincerity.<sup>90</sup> If the insertion of the contemporary musical style and subject matter were not enough to remind the audience of the complexities of being a mother and a skilled worker during wartime, Annie has one final gesture that connects the two seemingly disparate worlds. As a final note to the scene and the song, she tucks the children in and after the final chorus reaches for her rifle and shoots out the remaining train light.

As the next scene begins, it is the day of Annie's big surprise for Frank and Charlie's predictions about Frank's reaction to Annie's promotion prove to be only

partially accurate. When Frank sees that Annie's picture overshadows his on the show posters he rages at Charlie about the disparity. Charlie, who knew exactly how Frank would react but is acting in the best interest of the show asks, "I don't understand. She's the girl you're stuck on, isn't she?" Frank retorts, "Sure I'm stuck on her and I want to stay stuck on her. But she's my project—I'm gonna be the boss." Interestingly, Frank's words resonate on many levels for the audience. First, they accurately reflect the managerial relationship between the real Oakley and Butler, but the stage interpretation behind them is completely inaccurate. Frank Butler, as noted above, never competed with Annie and in fact happily stood on the sidelines for much of her career.<sup>91</sup> This congenial gender role reversal was unusual in Butler and Oakley's turn-of-the-century period and would not work in the 1940s musical, since it is in direct opposition to the moral lesson the writers were hoping to teach. Furthermore, the word "project" directly evokes the business or factory setting so familiar to female war workers. After his initial outburst about their billing, Frank drives home the image of the dominant male role in the relationship and further justifies his point saying, "Any man would feel the same." He threatens to quit the show if Charlie and Buffalo Bill refuse to relegate Annie to her former status.

Annie, however, is caught up in her rise to fame as she appears dressed for her big surprise finale and sees her own image on the large advertisement. Not coincidentally, she enters the scene with two of her siblings who are also awestruck by the poster. Minnie, her youngest sister, shrewdly observes, "Ain't it excitin'! Yesterday you was polishing Frank Butler's guns, and today they got a big picture of ya outside the tent!" Annie sends the kids off to prepare for the finale, and she

expresses her own excitement as she reprises a few verses of “No Business Like Show Business.” It is important to note here that Annie’s excitement is driven by several factors, including the approval of the cheering crowds, her pride in her accomplishments, and her anticipation of Frank’s approval and ensuing proposal. The music, however, is much slower in tempo than in the first scene when Frank, Buffalo Bill and Charlie sang in order to convince her to join the troupe. In this instance, the song is a slow solo, and Merman’s is the only voice present, no longer overshadowed by the three male voices. The song’s tempo enhances the contemplative nature of the moment, as she is about to reach the climax of her innocent and uncomplicated love for her man and her work. Through a determined effort, she has not only become the pink and white lady of Frank’s dreams, but she is also confident, appreciated, and proud. She finishes singing, “Getting’ paid for doin’ what comes natur’lly, Let’s go on with the show,” just as Frank enters. The scene that follows is another that receives attention from producers in future revivals as an optimal point for the discussion of gender.

Annie proudly points out her poster and Frank quickly responds, “Hope you don’t get to like it, honey, ‘cause it ain’t gonna be there next week.” By identifying with Annie, any female audience member faced with losing her job because of the returning veterans would be able to perceive the underlying message in Frank’s response to Annie’s pride and amazement at her new fame. Frank voices the central conflict between working women and the returning male workforce in his next lines as he reminds her, “I gave you a few extra tricks to do but they don’t rate star billing. Even I don’t get that.” His comment serves to remind Annie, and the women in the

audience, that the “show” is a collective effort, not an individual one. He is warning Annie that there are no real “stars” because everyone is expected to do their part and not seek individual glory.

The skills that the Rosie the Riveters had mastered during the war counted for very little when the veterans returned and needed their jobs back and their pride in those skills were seen as a threat. Both the OWI and industrial management had anticipated these issues of seniority and even job retention in the face of the influx of returning male workers, hence the change in advertising in the later years of the war highlighted in chapter 2. However, these agencies could not have foreseen the enthusiasm of the female work force and the complex relationship issues that resulted from their employment. Frank makes it clear to Annie, and thus to the female audience members, that he will love her as long as she remains in his shadow. He echoes the efforts of many industries as they tried to move the female post-war work force into secondary and support positions as he attempts to smooth over this deliberate suppression of her ambitions by telling her, “You see, I want you to grow kinda gradual. You don’t mind, honey?” Of course, the ideal 1940s heroine does *not* mind, which leads directly to Frank’s decision to propose that night, completing Renov’s construction of the moral: If you want a man, here is how to get him. Annie tells him, “I’ll send the kids away and ye kin ast me slow like,” and Frank responds by pulling her close and kissing her for the first time.<sup>92</sup>

After Annie leaves, Frank reflects upon their impending marriage in the song “My Defenses Are Down.” Berlin utilized his prior military and entertainment experience to fill this number with both subtle and overt references to national

defense, cautioning the audience about the dangers of trusting a woman and the emasculation that results in surrender. Lyrics throughout the song allude to battles, such as, “I went into the fight like a lion, but I came out like a lamb,” and “she’s got me where she wants me and I can’t escape no how.” These references to warlike situations only further the post-war audience’s connection to the timely message of the musical. The men and women of the audience listen as Franks describes the many ways he has been weakened, including comparisons to “a toothless clawless tiger,” “an organ grinder’s bear,” “a knight without his armor,” and finally, and most strikingly, he bellows, “like Samson, without his hair.” The verse builds up to and highlights this association with Samson, which incorporates the themes of betrayal by a woman who is trusted by the man and a lover whose loyalty could be bought. Also, Berlin ingeniously directs this number at the males in the audience by adding a male chorus for the only time in the show. After the flirtatious young women leave the soon-to-be-married Frank alone, the boy chorus sings with Frank, echoing the negative phrases of the song and ending with, “You might as well surrender, for the battle can’t be won.” Berlin sets this portion of the message in an upbeat song that has a good deal of camaraderie and hero worship among the men onstage and, though they do not dance, they all sing together at the end when Frank reveals, “I must confess that I like,” to which they respond, “Being mis’rable is gonna be fun!” As they amble offstage, the audience is left believing that Frank has found a way to compromise his romantic feelings for Annie with his resentment of her developing skills, since she has agreed to not challenge his dominance in the *Wild West* arena.

Alas, as in any good Golden Girl storyline, a little rain must fall. In this case, it pours. For her big trick, Annie rides a motorcycle as she shoots at targets. The description follows:

We see Annie on the back of a speeding motorcycle. She steers with her feet which are clamped to the handle bars. Her head is pillowed on the seat. She is shooting one by one lighted candles attached to a wheel which is the main tent pole.

Annie's performance that evening brings down the house, prompting Frank not only to quit, but to call off their "partnership" as well. Once again, he rages at Charlie,

I'm the biggest sucker in the world. I was crazy over that girl—damn near married her! Her eyes were clear and bright and her face was...I thought she was sweet...simple too—that's a hot one! *Simple!* In two weeks I'd wind up bein' *her* assistant—cookin' fer her too, more'n likely.<sup>93</sup>

This tirade contrasts Frank's vision of domestic "servitude" in the song above, in which he imagines that he'll have to "pretend" to submit to Annie, versus the reality of the situation. He continues the domesticity lesson for the women in the audience and the comment about cooking for her would ring loudly in the ears of any man in the audience weak enough to allow his wife to work as he stayed home, unemployed. Annie enters the scene unaware of Frank's anger and expecting a proposal of marriage.

Annie, however, is distracted by Chief Sitting Bull, who has been so impressed by her shooting skills that he intends to adopt her into the Sioux tribe of Indians. Sitting Bull does not recognize Frank when Annie introduces him as the star of the show, he tells her that she is the "best," prompting Frank's abrupt departure. For this moment in the play, Berlin writes a very long "tribal" adoption ceremony with unintelligible chanting and the song, "I'm An Indian, Too," presumably to give

Frank enough time to pack up and leave and also to provide Annie with one more opportunity to express her domestic fantasies. This time, Annie imagines herself as a domestic Indian with a husband, house, and children singing, “I’ll have totem poles, tomahawks, small papoose, which will go to prove, I’m an Indian too.” She continues:

With my chief in his tepee  
We’ll raise an Indian family  
And I’ll be busy night and day  
Looking like a flour sack  
With two papooses on my back  
And three papooses on the way.

Despite fact that the Sioux nation has chosen to lionize Annie for her skills, similar in many ways to the way America glorified Rosie the Riveter, Annie steadfastly maintains her interest in the domestic fantasy that eludes her.

After the ceremony, Frank sends Annie a letter telling her, “You put over the greatest trick I ever saw. You’re a smart girl Annie—too smart for me. Good luck to you and good-bye.” Education is once again inserted into the gambit for love. Annie has worked diligently throughout the first act to learn to read. She is now called “smart,” which reads here as clever and sneaky. The ideal woman must learn to walk the fine line between illiterate and smart. The irony and pathos in this moment hinge on the fact that Annie is still unable to read the letter and must have Sitting Bull read it to her. The distinction between doing what comes naturally and acting according to a refined sense of judgment is an important one for the women and men of the post-war audience, given the premium placed upon education in the development of a ladylike persona. In her moment of glory, Annie abandons her domesticity and naively embraces the fame and recognition that she craves, but she also inadvertently

betrays Frank in his moment of greatest weakness, driving him away to Pawnee Bill's *Wild West* troupe with his former assistant, Dolly.

The man's departure is a common twist in moral tales for women in the post-war era. Renov observes, "when [her] fame catches up with her...[his] manhood cannot endure the assault of his presumed dominance; he stalks out to try to forget her."<sup>94</sup> In the first scene of the musical, Berlin set up this moment, giving Frank the phrase, "'stead of flittin', I'll be sittin'/ next to her and she'll purr like a kitten," when he describes his dream woman in "The Girl That I Marry." Annie realizes that she has cheated herself out of her man and because of her overt display of skillful shooting. As a result, she will not "get" her man or her husband, and she angrily tears the letter in half and then reconsiders saying, "No, I'm gonna keep it. Someday I'll be able to read it." With this statement, she tells the audience that she has not surrendered and that she still intends to become the educated lady that Frank would not leave, reassuring them that change is possible. As Sitting Bull tries to comfort her saying, "Never mind Annie, you best shot in whole world," she has no recourse but to sorrowfully reprise a verse of "You Can't Get a Man With a Gun" to end the act.

The second act opens months later with Buffalo Bill's troupe, minus Frank and Dolly, returning from their European tour on a cattle boat and waiting to sneak back into New York so that the competition does not discover the company is bankrupt. Through her only real monologue, Annie reveals that she is furious with Frank for believing she betrayed him and for leaving, but that given the opportunity she would forgive him. Soon, Pawnee Bill sends a message to Buffalo Bill and Annie quickly takes the note and reads it aloud, signaling to the audience that in the time

that has passed she has become an educated lady. Pawnee Bill suggests a party to celebrate the troupe's return, which Buffalo Bill and Charlie see as an opportunity to save the show. Annie also agrees to the meeting, after hearing about the debutantes that have been getting Frank Butler's attention. While anticipating her reunion with Frank, she reflects on their troubled past and sings the slow ballad "I Got Lost in His Arms."

In "I Got Lost in His Arms," Annie recalls falling in love with Frank but expresses regret that she foolishly "lost her way." The lyrics convey a sense that Frank is a comforting force for Annie and that without his presence in her life she has realized the importance their love plays in her happiness. She sings, "From the dark came a voice and it seemed to say, 'There you go, There you go.'" Here, Berlin cleverly utilizes the company as a chorus in this song despite the fact that they have not been a part of the troupe on the cattle boat thus far and she is completely alone onstage. After a musical interlude, in which Annie pieces together the torn letter she vowed to one day be able to read, from offstage the company repeats, "There you go, There you go," broadening the specific context of the song from the romance of Frank and Annie to the universal difficulties that husbands and wives in the audience were experiencing in their own marital relationships.<sup>95</sup> After she finishes silently reading the letter, Annie concludes, "I got lost, but look what I found." Through both the lyric and the act of reading Annie signifies that she has finally become the pink and white lady Frank desires and she is determined to make the relationship work.

The action moves along swiftly with rising tension in a New York ballroom, the site of Frank and Annie's reunion. Both Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill each plan

to convince the other to join the shows together as one extravaganza to save both shows. When both parties realize they are equally poor, they call the merger off. Annie panics at the thought of losing Frank to the rich women of New York and turns to her confidant, "Papa" Sitting Bull. He advises her to sell the medals she won in Europe to bankroll the show. When she resists losing the material symbols of her skills he responds, "No sell medals, no money for merger. Nobody merge!" Through the stereotypical Native American style of dialogue, the Fields' could clearly state the underlying message of the musical. Sitting Bull, the wise old Indian who has become her father figure, makes plain that Annie's decision to hold onto her pride in her accomplishments means she will lose Frank. Annie sees the truth in this statement and decides to sell all of her bejeweled medals, which will leave her penniless, but in partnership with Frank. She assures Charlie of her confidence in her decision, singing "I Got the Sun in the Morning," a song thick with meaning for women leaving the post-war work force.

In the many verses and the reprise of "I Got the Sun in the Morning," Annie calls herself "lucky," "satisfied" and "happy" with the wealth she had before she joined the show, because in addition to returning to the simple connection to nature, she now has the love of her man. In essence, by agreeing to sell her medals, she has made the connection she dreamed about in "You Can't Get a Man With a Gun." She has come to realize, and is of course compelled to sing about, the fact that the trappings of financial success, such as diamonds, pearls, a mansion, and a yacht, have not brought her true happiness. After her union with Frank, she is certain that he will provide for her on a simpler level and that will give her "the Milky Way." She sings:

Got no butler, got no maid,  
Still I think I've been overpaid—  
I've got the sun in the morning and the moon at night.  
Got no silver, got no gold,  
What I've got can't be bought or sold—  
I've got the sun in the morning and the moon at night.

Once again, Berlin utilized the full chorus in order to highlight the most important ideas in the song, as they chant behind Annie's solo line, "We're happy with what we've got, So happy with what we've got. We're so happy and we're all right, so happy and we're all right." Frank helps her reprise the number as they embrace and sing "We're all right." This encounter is another lyrical and physical signifier for the audience members hoping to learn how to get a man and keep him, however, agreeing to give up the material rewards of a profession and giving up the actual work are two very different promises, as Annie and Frank soon discover.

As they embrace, Frank first responds to Annie's cologne, "Powerful, ain't it?" She replies with a grin, "Better'n that gunpowder!" She holds out her hands for his inspection, "Look—clean, and with polish!" She has become his ideal woman, and he proclaims his love for her, offering her three of the "*modest*" medals from his chest. At the same moment, she reveals all of the medals she won on tour in Europe. The stage directions state, "*She can't resist letting her chest swell [and] his face falls*" in the face of her pride. These medals are a tangible reminder of her surpassing skill and the fact that he must rely on Annie to save their shows. He suddenly turns bitter and sarcastic and then proudly reads out the inscription on the back of his medal, "To Frank Butler, the champion sharpshooter of the world!" Annie's jeering response, "*What* world? The old one or the new world?" places their argument once again into a context that is familiar to the post-World War II audience. Her reference to the old

world alludes to the European theatre of war from which many of the veterans were returning and the new world that Annie clearly lives in is the completely changed American social landscape that these soldiers encountered upon their return. Frank's testy reply, "The *whole* world," sends Annie into a competitive frenzy that is unlike anything the character has displayed thus far in the musical.

The lovers call off the merger and instead arrange a shooting match to determine the greatest shot in the world. When Charlie asks if it will be a love match, Frank directly links love with domesticity as he responds, "Hell, no, there's no love in a shootin' woman! What a wife she'd make! Buckshot and cream for breakfast, clay pigeons for lunch and gun butts and cabbage for supper." Frank tells her, "That dress sure had me fooled. I thought for a minute you was getting' to be a lady." He reaffirms the fact that for him, it is not enough to simply look the part of a lady as he reprises "The Girl That I Marry." In a blatantly didactic moment, Fields and Berlin have the "Ladies" of the chorus surround Frank as he sings, "The girl I call my own, will wear satins and laces and smell of cologne." He teaches Annie, and through Annie the audience, that there are plenty of women available to him if she is not able to play by his rules. He crosses away from Annie with the women as she exits with *Sitting Bull*.

Having finally asserted herself, Annie goes on to sing the duet "Anything You Can Do (I Can Do Better)" with Frank as they stand on equal ground before the big match. Berlin wrote this challenge song mainly to provide the two leads with one more song in order to balance out the act. It is not filled with the subtle nuances that hail the female or male audience members as many of the other songs in the score do.

It does, however, heighten the stakes between the two lovers, confirming for the audience that the challenge between them is of the ultimate importance and that each party's determination to be the best could not lead to a position of compromise. After the song, the shooting match begins.

Unbeknownst to Annie, Charlie and her surrogate father Chief Sitting Bull have "fixed" her rifle to misfire, knowing that she will only win Frank's love by losing both the match and her medals to him. Annie misses, and Frank's smug satisfaction in hitting all of his targets prompts Annie to get a different gun, at which point Papa Bull pulls her aside. He hints to her that she might have better luck with her "fixed" gun. At first, Annie does not understand Papa Bull's meaning. Once again in his "broken" English, he points out very clearly to her the solution to her problems stating, "You do fine. Keep missing—you win. Be second best Annie... Remember in big tent? You say, 'You can't get a man with a gun.'...You get a man with *this* gun." This is the defining moment of the musical in which Sitting Bull teaches Annie and the female audience members how to win by losing.

Interestingly, the director of the musical, Joshua Logan insisted on ending the show with Annie deliberately losing the contest. He believed that this action would "give Annie some needed character growth."<sup>96</sup> Over the course of the musical Annie has developed into an Everywoman for the post-war American female audience and she finally must make a choice that will determine the course of her life. It is important to note that until this point in the story, Annie never urgently needs to "get" her gun. She never saves a life or performs brilliantly under pressure; she simply does what comes naturally. The title of the musical clearly leads to this very moment

of decision in which Annie must get her own gun, the “fixed” gun that will serve her best, bringing the happiness and love she desires. Any audience member identifying with Annie at this point receives the message loud and clear. The stage directions dictate, “A great light dawns on Annie” as she exclaims, “Why didn’t I think of that?” Renov notes that in the moral tale the woman is “always smart enough to know when to surrender herself to the man she desires even if she is brighter or wealthier [or more skilled] than he.”<sup>97</sup> Annie loses the battle but wins the war, and in doing so, she shows all of the women in the audience the way to feminine fulfillment and marital bliss.

Annie enthusiastically loses the match, throwing her rifle down dramatically and declaring, “I concede this match to Frank Butler—the greatest sharpshooter in the world!” She mournfully proclaims, “I’m jest second best...I’m no good...an’ I don’t know what’s gonna become of me.” Annie now happily faces the same future so many women war workers faced with reluctance, a future of no work other than housework and a life of financial dependence. This message in is line with Betty Friedan’s recollection of the late 1940s in *The Feminine Mystique*. She recalled, “nobody had to tell a woman that she wanted a man, but the message certainly began bombarding us from all sides; domestic bliss had suddenly become chic, sophisticated...It almost didn’t matter who the man was who became the instrument of your feminine fulfillment.” As Nancy Wolloch notes, “Injunctions to reject masculine values and standards and to find fulfillment as wives, mothers, and homemakers also provided certain advantages” to the women of the post-war audience. “The feminine mystique,” said Friedan, “made it easier for a woman to

retire smugly, avoiding conformity and competition as men could not.”<sup>98</sup> Annie certainly provides a clear example of this kind of retirement, relying on Frank’s heroic manliness to pick up the pieces of her shattered career and the livelihood of her family.

Gallantly, the winner of the contest with his medals on his chest assures Annie, “Don’t worry honey, I’ll take care of you. From now on we’re gonna be partners.” Annie concedes, “Butler and Oakley...in alphabetical order!” Then she addresses the amazed crowd, “What’s everybody starin’ at? He won the match! Give him the medals, Little Jake.” With this Annie returns Frank to his former status, much like the women war workers in Vancouver wrote in their industry newsletter the *Bo’s’n’s Whistle* on May 11, 1945.

Brothers, the tin hat and welder’s torch will be yours! We the women will give them back to you with best regards. In the post-war future we will probably be able to give you many little tips on their proper care and use, but when the war finally is won the thing we want to do is take off these unfeminine garments and button ourselves into something starched and pretty.<sup>99</sup>

Frank refuses the honor, “Oh no Annie. These belong to you honey.” Already the good partner, Annie insists, “No, you won ‘em and you keep ‘em.” They save the show and everyone wins, completing the story of the Golden Girl, as the once independent girl returns “to a conventional ending where [the] heroine finds fulfillment entirely in the man she loves.”<sup>100</sup> Leslie Ferris, in *Acting Women* concludes that

Importantly, this theatrical image of the girl ends on the golden threshold to a new, married life...[it is] essential to freeze her in our dramatic memory as forever ‘Annie,’ a heroine who has the capacity to make choices, to control her own fate, but whose girlish lack of maturity ultimately undermines and trivializes her sense of autonomy.

Thus...the reality of the pioneer women [is transformed] into the innocent girl, a 'child of nature,' and in so doing makes her enjoyably safe to the male [viewer]. For in the end, despite her openness, spontaneity and self-reliance, it is [her] unworldliness, her 'girlishness,' that wins the support and enthusiasm of the [male viewer].<sup>101</sup>

The last image of the play follows the two lovers as they walk off into the sunset and the "legend" of Annie Oakley becomes a morality play for the post-war audience.

As hillbilly Annie shoots and snorts her way on stage in the first scene, she is not the glamorous heroine any typical middleclass housewife hopes to emulate. Annie's oft-repeated phrase, "You can't get a man with a gun," might seem empty, even silly, due to its context and upbeat underscoring, but long after the curtain falls, the words resonated in a real way for these working women. Similarly, a war veteran in the audience might miss the subtle connection between the medals on Frank's chest and those on his own. However, all who attended the musical *would* see two lovers in competition for the same starring position and would understand the sacrifices that one or both must make in order to live "happily ever after" and walk off into the sunset.

This musical's subtle didacticism is easily overlooked when placed in the contemporary popular culture that surrounded these women with proclamations of the idyllic life of domesticity. Even outside of the realm of traditional women's reading material of the time, a 1944 edition of *Nation's Business* extolled, "The veritable promised land [that] the majority of our present sixteen million women workers want involves falling in love, getting married, making homes and raising babies."<sup>102</sup> Watching heroine Annie Oakley, the greatest star in a man's arena, retire graciously

to a life of domesticity to save her love's ego, taught a timely and persuasive lesson for these women.

## **DO YOU HAVE ANY PHOTOS WITH YOUR GUN?: FINDING AN AUDIENCE**

It is important to now assess the ways in which the producers reached their audience through promotional materials. The visual text of *Annie Get Your Gun* plays a significant part in its overall reception and particularly in the advertising materials released to entice audience members into the theatre seats. This section analyzes the physical position, facial expression, and costuming of Ethel Merman in the promotional images for the original Broadway production. As with Oakley's photographs, the presence and positioning of Annie's gun remains the most potent source of gendered information in the images. The poses in this analysis are often copied by future productions and will provide a standard against which the other Annie's will be considered.

The cover of the Broadway *Playbill* shows Merman posing in front of the *Wild West* "show" poster when she first becomes a star (figure 24). In the image, Merman is standing with her body turned one-quarter away from the viewer, characteristic hand on hip, open stance, face directly toward the viewer but eyes averted with a hesitant smile. She wears for the first time her "show" costume, which is a white fringed skirt and jacket with extensive embroidery. The style of the clothing is (as will be seen throughout this study), indicative of post-war fashions rather than of Oakley's own era, which ultimately encourages the female viewer to

subconsciously connect to the character through the clothing. Her skirt hangs slightly below the knee and the wide belt brings in her waist, while the jacket's large shoulder pads evoke a 1940s silhouette. Merman's hat is large and decorative. She holds her gun erect, with the butt planted on the floor and the tip in her hand, indicating both Annie's ease with and mastery of the gun as well as Merman's own personal ease and mastery of her craft. Interestingly, Merman's confident pose evokes the photos of Buffalo Bill in chapter 1 much more than any of the publicity photos of Oakley, reflecting the radically different audience to whom she appeals. This "show" poster pose, as it will be referred to throughout this study, is the iconic image of Merman as Annie and is the most-often imitated throughout the post-war revivals.

Another iconic image from the original production is the "motorcycle" shot (figure 25). This image is from the "trick" Annie does to impress Frank at the end of the first act, sending him into a rage and canceling their impending engagement. As noted above, Merman apparently steered the motorcycle with her feet, which were "clamped to the handle bars," during the performance. Although Merman is not, in fact, prone on the motorcycle in the promotional photos, the description of her hurtling along, unable to free herself, as she lies as if in bed (the seat is even described as a pillow), shooting with a large phallic symbol, is sexually charged to say the least.

In the photograph, Merman sits upright with her legs stretched out and slightly bent, shown at their best angle. Her torso is turned toward the audience and her bright smiling face looks triumphant. Merman wears a black corset that ends in long fringe which covers the top of her thigh, fishnet stockings, cowboy boots and white

shooting gloves. She holds the gun over her head, which draws the viewer's eye up to her bare chest, shoulders, and arms. The sex appeal in this photo is out of context with the rest of the production and certainly with Oakley's own performative appeal. It is also interesting to note that Merman wears this costume for mere moments in the show, during a very dark scene, but the image is one that appeared in newspapers to promote the musical across the country. Although the "trick" evolves throughout the production history, the inclusion of a sexually charged "motorcycle" shot accompanies most productions' promotional materials.

As asserted earlier, Merman's physicality was in some ways reminiscent of the Rosie the Riveter images prevalent throughout the war work campaign. This connection is further supported, as can be seen in figure 26, by Merman's first costume, a simple, ragged dress and a face smudged with dirt. In this image, Merman stands, as Wolf notes in her extensive analysis of the physically masculine qualities present in Merman's stage persona, as she stood "in almost every publicity picture from every musical in which she starred, she looks the same: wide-eyed; open-mouthed; and, as many writers noted, standing ramrod straight."<sup>103</sup> With her hand on her hip, she holds her gun up in a commanding gesture. Merman's powerful performance most likely helped female workers in the audience identify with Annie (and Ethel as Annie), who sees herself not as a "gal" who might be dainty and sexy enough to receive a nightie, but as a "mama" who is masculinized by the presence of her gun and is thereby undesirable.

Finally, two promotional photos featuring Merman and Ray Middleton, who played Frank, show the lovers during "Anything You Can Do." Merman is slightly

downstage of her “equal” in figure 27 and slightly upstage of him in figure 28. Her facial expressions in both pictures indicate the argument that plays out through the plot and in both images she retains the viewer’s focus in an all white dress and enormous hat that, once again, evokes 1940s fashions. The gun is only present in figure 28, but she holds it above her head in a way that is out of context with the confrontational nature of the pose and its masculine power is lost. The absence of the gun in figure 27 and the negation of its power in figure 28 are likely in an effort to neutralize Merman’s presence, since she shares the spotlight with Middleton and romance is the selling point for a musical comedy.

The images analyzed above were intended to appeal to the upper and upper-middle class Broadway theatre audiences of the 1940s by evoking similarities to the female war workers through Merman’s physical stance, her costumes, and her sex appeal. The audience that came to see *Annie Get Your Gun* in 1946 would have been well-versed in post-war rhetoric from many different media sources and particularly familiar with the rapidly proliferating “moral tales” for women.<sup>104</sup> The next section attempts to establish the class and gender of the authors’ intended audience through a thorough analysis of the advertisements in the Broadway *Playbill*. A high percentage of the ticket holders for the initial run of *Annie Get Your Gun* likely included both working women filled with self-doubt and unemployed men who wanted their jobs back. The ideology of domesticity espoused by the show directly addressed these women awash in this stormy sea of conflicting rhetoric and the productions’ advertisers took advantage of their position as a captive audience and their idle time at intermission.

**WHERE COULD YOU GET MONEY THAT YOU DON'T GIVE BACK?:  
*PLAYBILL ADS***

Ohio advertising man Frank Vance Strauss founded *Playbill* in the late 1800s, and since that time it has consistently offered high quality advertisements and provided “pleasure to theatergoers by combining magazine features with a theatre program, offering a rich memento of the show they have seen.”<sup>105</sup> The following is an analysis of the advertisements in the original Broadway *Playbill* program for *Annie Get Your Gun*, dated Monday, June 10, 1946, from the Imperial Theatre.<sup>106</sup> These ads establish not only the assumed audience for the Broadway musical theatre in the 1940s, but the specific target audience for the social messages available in *Annie Get Your Gun*.<sup>107</sup> A visual assessment of the fifty-five advertisements in the *Playbill* establishes that middle-aged, upper and upper-middle class men and women were the presumed audience for *Annie Get Your Gun*, as the ads are primarily for luxury items and are entirely populated by good-looking, well-groomed, and well-dressed men and women in their thirties and forties (see Appendix 1).<sup>108</sup> Advertisers label this audience with the psychographic profile of “Achievers.” Achievers, as a group, value power and physical wealth, with the goal of attracting the opposite sex or approval within their peers and they are always “looking to become more and to make more.”<sup>109</sup> One ad in the program specifically defines the audience for *Annie Get Your Gun* as follows:

You appeal to CREATIVE WEALTH [sic] when you advertise in The Playbill. The people who make the wheels go ‘round, representing the management of the many and varied enterprises of this country, are theatergoers. It is their favorite relaxation. They make up a very large percentage of the theatre audiences and go quite often. If you want to reach

them The Playbill is the one medium that gets to them all.

This ad not only establishes that the audience consists of Achievers and appeals to these Achievers to sell their products to other Achievers, but it also denotes the selling power that the unassuming *Playbill* possesses, further emphasizing the incontrovertible connection between popular culture and advertising.

This analysis utilizes gender as its main binary, since the other important demographic indicators, age and class, are entirely consistent among the ads. The Achievers attending the Broadway theatre in the 1940s were predominantly upper and upper-middle class businessmen and their female companions. This investigation specifically examines gender in the context of the overall content of the ads in *Playbill*, the images used to support the products, and the persuasive devices used by advertisers to reach their target audience. The selection of visual imagery used in advertising is one of the most painstaking and important aspects of marketing a product. Images contain a vast interpretive potential for the audience and play a crucial symbolic role as signifiers for both the product and the brand. According to cultural studies scholar Daniel Chandler, the message available in the advertisement is interpreted semiotically as the “primary signified concept.” Chandler notes that it is important that the images selected to represent the brand are “in line with the ideology of the text in which it appears.” The signifiers in this case are both the images and their environment, the *Playbill*, which “forge a relationship” or an “effective and unified message” that is available to all readers but particularly useful for and aimed at a target audience.<sup>110</sup> In the *Playbill* ads, images that are used to sell the identity of the brand also consistently support the overall ideology of the musical

the *Playbill* has been created for. Therefore, when analyzing the layers of meaning in advertisements with multiple facets, known as compound advertisements,<sup>111</sup> the style, font, and clarity of the image must be given equal consideration to the content of the image itself. From the information gleaned in this study, it seems clear that upper and upper-middle class women were in fact the target audience for *Annie Get Your Gun*'s initial run.

The overall content, size, and placement of the *Playbill* advertisements were the first factors considered in this analysis. The phrase "overall content" considers the main thrust of the ad in terms of gender and separates as follows: female, male, female=male, and female/male or male/female (if the ad addresses both genders, but unequally). The ads come in quarter, half, and full page sizes and the placement of each ad also plays a considerable part in the assessment of the advertiser's goals in terms of financial commitment and target audience. These factors, content, size, and placement, helped determine the aim of each ad and eventually developed the four main categories used to analyze the 1946 ads which are, in descending order of size; ads for leisure activities, ads for women's products, ads for gift items, ads for men's products. Each of these categories has several subcategories that further define the advertiser's goals, but uniformly they are all geared specifically toward selling to the Achievers sitting in the audience of *Annie Get Your Gun*.

Advertisements for Leisure Activities, such as drinking, dining, smoking, or dancing, occupied by far the largest segment of the advertising space in the *Playbill*, comprising forty-four percent (44%) of the total ad space. This category included ads for Whiskey and Liquor (15%), Hotels and After-Theatre Entertainment (11%), Beer

(6%), Cigarettes (6%), Other Beverages (4%), Other Theatre Productions (1%), and Pepto-Bismol (1%).<sup>112</sup> These ads were also the least gender-specific in their overall content, often consisting of product logo or basic description and gender-neutral images, though ultimately they certainly favored the male audience member (see Appendix 2). Six of the eight Whiskey and Liquor ads were strongly masculine in content and conspicuously placed, while the other two were also male-centered, but had the potential to reach some female viewers by including images that are coded as “feminine” that will be discussed below.

The Three Feathers Whiskey ad inside the front cover of the *Playbill* provides a good example of the blend of masculine appeal with inclusion of a feminine signifier (figure 29). Print ads created to appeal to men often consist of a “simple iconic image and an iconic image of the subject” that visually links the product with the subject, but leaves the viewer with the task of envisioning his own experience with the product.<sup>113</sup> The Three Feathers ad features the bottle of whiskey on a silver tray in a luxurious setting that denotes the theatre, with a stage curtain in view. The text reads, “First ‘ACT’ *after* the theatre...” The absence of a male figure in the ad allows men to form their own personal and “emotional” associations with the brand, which are “complicit with the gender of the subject,” the perceived “masculinity” of the surrounding event.<sup>114</sup> This ad links the theatre with the act of consuming the whiskey through its imagery and its text, but strengthens the gendered context with the accompanying images.

Actual photographs of men in ads were not common in the 1940s. Often, when males were present in ads, they were either rendered as a pen and ink sketch or

as a cartoon. In this ad there are three “male” figures on the pages of an open book. The figures relate to the theatre world, one is a “Mr. Moneybags” who brings money to back the play, and the other is a dog dressed as a “Barker” who “attracts box office customers” by pointing to an image of a circus strongman who is bare-chested and lifting a barbell. Whether actual or drawn, men in advertising are most often presented as “active” or in action.<sup>115</sup> All of these figures actively connect the masculine gender to the theatre through themes of finance, images of strength, and through fine men’s clothing. The target audience is the Achiever male who wants the “First among fine whiskies.” However, on the tray with the whiskey are two drinks that complicate the gendered appeal of the ad. One drink is “on the rocks” in a highball glass, which typically reads as masculine and the other is a Manhattan. Though the cocktail could also be a man’s drink, in this setting the drinks are clearly for the typical Achiever couple to end their evening out. Finally, the caption beneath the ad reads “Blended Whiskey at its Pre-War Best,” a nice connection to the nostalgia engendered by the musical’s plot and setting.

Similarly, the Cigarette ads in the Luxury category appealed mainly to male audience members, though the largest and most prominently placed ad, the Chesterfield ad on the coveted back cover, strongly aligned its character to the show with his cowboy costume and horse and had qualities that appealed to both genders. Finally, the other categories, including the many small hotel ads and the three full-page Beer ads, split evenly between the genders. Although more than half of the Leisure ads are gender-neutral, none of the ads appeal solely to a female audience, so

it can be assumed from the above break-down that the leisure activities were decided on by both parties, but generally financed by the male counterpart.

After leisure activities, the next largest portion of the advertising in the *Playbill* included the twenty-nine percent (29%) of the ads aimed directly at female audience members. The subcategories in this group are Cosmetics (9%), Lingerie or Hosiery (9%), Clothing (8%), Shoes (1%), and Suncare (1%). Mainly smaller and less expensive items, advertisers consider these “upkeep” items to be products that women would buy for themselves, including stockings, face powder, nail polish, and shoes. In general these ads are smaller than the Leisure ads, with the exception of larger brands such as Chanel or Revlon and particularly pertinent ads like Germaine Monteil’s full-page ad for summer suncare products.

The full-page ad for Sam Landau’s Tula gown in figure 30 provides an excellent example of strategies advertisers use to appeal to women. Most often, the imagery in women’s advertising features photographs of women and/or high quality icons or the product. Usually in relaxed poses, these women serve as role models for the sexuality and class associated with the brand or product.<sup>116</sup> They typically combine an “iconic image of the product to identify it, copy to reconfirm its name, and a human subject to lend the product personality.” In order to read these ads, one must consider the imagery as well as the way the imagery produces the “appropriate” or desired “emotional overtones.”<sup>117</sup> The Tula image features a photograph of a beautiful woman wearing the gown with text that reads, “For the bride in every woman.” This textual implication, in contrast to men’s advertising, instructs the woman about their specific post-war connection to the product. Through the

construction of the ad, the female viewer is rendered powerless in the reception of the image and the development of a personal and emotional attachment to the brand. The predominance of this category and the consistent reference to luxury and high quality strongly suggests that *Annie Get Your Gun's* advertisers expected the audience to be filled with women who preferred expensive personal care items and had money to spend, whether their own or their husband's.

Another twenty-three percent (23%) of the advertisements in *Playbill* were gender-neutral and marketed gift items. The label "gender-neutral" is used here because the ads in this group are making very strong appeals to each gender in two specific ways. With the exception of two products, these ads sell items exclusively for women and the ads are meant to create a desire or need in the female audience members. However, the ads are equally geared to the eye of the male viewers, as they will ultimately be the purchaser of the products. The gift items include Perfume (14%), Chocolates (4%), Jewelry (2%), Shaving Cream (2%), and Luggage (1%). Perfumes are by far the largest advertising category in the *Playbill*. There are eight full or half-page ads that sell perfume, all prominently placed in the first half of the program. While at first glance these ads seem to appeal solely to women, the images and language used in the ads are also intended to gain the attention of the male audience member, not in order to "sell" to him, but rather to create an awareness of the product so that there will be product recall when a purchase is contemplated. When viewed in this way these ads are gender-neutral. However, when considering the overall content of the ads and the purposes of the various products, enticing the

upper and upper-middle class female audience members must be seen as the advertiser's primary goal.

Finally, advertisers dedicated a paltry four percent (4%) of the total advertising space in *Playbill* to ads appealing solely to men. Of the four main categories used to analyze the ads, this group was significantly smaller than the others. These ads include the above detailed advertisement for "Creative Wealth" (1%) promoting advertising in *Playbill*, one ad for Finchley (2%), a men's clothing store, and an ad requesting monetary donations to UNRRA (1%).<sup>118</sup> The latter both appear in the back of the program and, as opposed to the ads for leisure or feminine products, consist of plain text and simple iconic images. The fact that these ads compose a total of only one of the forty-two pages and are visually uninteresting, bolsters the argument that despite the prevalent goal of selling to the Achievers sitting in the audience, the female segment of the audience is the target audience for *Annie Get Your Gun*.

Fowles argues that a piece of popular culture "gains texture and meaning from the recognition of its talented participants. These human heroes lend familiarity and weight to the production, which may gain accretions of meaning from the associations that viewers have with those names."<sup>119</sup> This was certainly the case with *Annie Get Your Gun* and Ethel Merman.<sup>120</sup> Merman's mix of femininity and masculinity in her voice, physicality, and persona helped to form and inform the reception of the political content available in the musical for the thousands of viewers that watched her during her initial three year run.<sup>121</sup>

## MY DEFENSES ARE DOWN: THE RECEPTION

According to musical theatre historian Ethan Mordden, “Merman credits *Annie Get Your Gun* as the show that renovated her persona, cut away the ribald big-city crust to reveal a more vulnerable heroine.”<sup>122</sup> She physically and vocally embodied the tough, brassy qualities of the female workers of 1946 yet, Fields and Berlin filled script and lyrics with descriptions of girlish and awkward behavior. Merman’s physical attributes and brash stage presence constantly oppose the abundant domestic images, and yet the character who had been tailored to both the masculine and feminine sides of her persona willingly accepted feminization. The creators needed exactly this kind of dichotomy to communicate their story, embedding in her performance the more “womanly” roles of wife and mother. Ultimately, the musical’s message, rooted in the political and cultural moment of 1946, resides in the fact that if Merman’s “nervy and candid” persona could be tamed so could the war workers.<sup>123</sup>

After the opening, Merman stated, “I am just myself and if I am any good it is because I’m Doing What Comes Naturally.”<sup>124</sup> What happens, however, when the cultural moment changes, when another star tries to fit into a character so customized to Merman’s persona? Chapters 4 and 5 will examine the way the lyrics and dialogue of *Annie Get Your Gun* change over time to embody new political content that responds to the shifting tides of prescribed gender roles in America over the last half of the twentieth century.

**CHAPTER 4**  
**WHAT COMES NATUR'LLY?:**  
**CASTING THE “IDEAL” WOMAN IN *Annie Get Your Gun* (1947-1957)**

“Hollywood’s and Broadway’s methods of manufacturing certain excitements and emotions may possibly be artistic, but their only use is to offset the fearful boredom induced in any audience by the endless repetition of falsehoods and stupidities. This technique was developed and is used in order to stimulate interest in things and ideas that are not in the interest of the audience.”

--*Bertolt Brecht* “A Little Private Tuition for My Friend Max Gorelik” (1944)

“For the spectator wants to be put in possession of quite definite sensations....The one important point for the spectators in these houses is that they should be able to swap a contradictory world for a consistent one, one that they scarcely know for one of which they can dream.”

--*Bertolt Brecht* “A Short Organum for the Theatre” (1948)

In the decade between 1947 and 1957, *Annie Get Your Gun* found an even wider national audience as producers Rodgers and Hammerstein launched a national tour, sold the film rights to M-G-M, and licensed a television special. This chapter considers the ways mid-twentieth-century productions transformed the dialogue, lyrics, plotlines, and musical numbers in *Annie Get Your Gun* in order to make this already popular comedy even more appealing to the American public. The chapter also examines the ideological agendas offered to the women of America from the late-1940s to the late-1950s and the ways in which this context affected the casting of the various productions of *Annie* that circulated during this ten-year period. The script changes and the choice of actresses to embody the new “ideal” image of American womanhood reflect the myriad social issues facing American women in the post-World War II years. These revised editions of the musical, when read in the

context of their historical moment, provide helpful insights into the development of the popular musical theatre during Broadway's Golden Age.

Between 1947 and 1957 three musical theatre icons Mary Martin, Judy Garland, and Betty Hutton were cast as the girlish Annie Oakley in major productions of *Annie Get Your Gun*. These women were obviously diverse performers, in age, voice, and physicality. Martin, who played Annie in the 1947 national tour, had the flirtatious, yet wholesome quality that had served her so well in her previous Broadway ventures. Garland, cast in the film version in 1948, had the vocal power of a Merman, but with a less brash and more traditionally juvenile persona. And Hutton, who replaced Garland in 1949, had the bubbly, pin-up girl sexuality that was enticing without being threatening. Each star appealed to the political and economic ideology of her culture by physically and vocally embodying the reigning ideology surrounding women's role in society. It is important to note that producers cast these women precisely for their strong appeal to their particular audiences. Each had a loyal following who expected to see the stars play the kinds of roles that had made them so beloved in the first place. Thus, Mary Martin could not simply play Annie Oakley – she had to play “Mary Martin *as* Annie Oakley” – a subtle distinction perhaps, but one that speaks to the public's unwillingness to see their female icons subsumed into the “actual” history of a woman like Oakley who defied traditional gender roles and who enjoyed a successful professional career for more than twenty years. Garland and Hutton's performances would demand similar alterations. In each instance, not only were their performances and their personas carefully tailored to meet popular expectations, producers successfully used these three actresses and the

qualities they embodied to script codes of conduct for their middle- and upper-class female audiences.

The resulting productions on stage, film, and television extolled American femininity, while simultaneously articulating new social messages about women's role in American society – particularly in the home. Martin, Garland, and Hutton's interpretations of Annie each played a specific and important role in the endeavor to channel women's creativity into a more manageable and "feminine" configuration. These subsequent productions transformed the musical in order to reflect the changing notion of the "ideal" woman throughout the post-war years. Yet although text and songs were added and changed, one overall message always remained the same. *Annie Get Your Gun's* lasting impression was always that the love of a good man can temper a strong, independent woman's wild nature.<sup>1</sup> The following analysis will examine the Martin, Garland, and Hutton productions in order to highlight the often subtle but significant changes as the musical evolved. Each section will offer an overview of the general situation for American women during that particular historical moment, both in the American culture at large and in the home. This summary will also include a survey of popular culture and the contemporary definition of the "ideal" woman in American cultural history. Then each production's Annie will be introduced in two ways, through a brief biography and an assessment of the star's physical, vocal, and personal appeal to her specific audience. This evaluation will help address the question: what made producers choose *this* woman to appeal to *this* audience? Next, changes to the script or score will be examined in order to assess the ways in which the producers shaped the show in order to appeal to

their target audience. The promotional material for the productions will be analyzed in order to suggest the ways in which the producers molded their star in order to reach, find, and appeal to their audience. I will also analyze the advertisements used to sell to the audiences once they have committed to viewing the musical in order to more accurately assess audience composition. Finally, I include the reviews of each particular production to help evaluate the general response to the production. An important part of each section focuses on a comparison to the original production and Ethel Merman's performance, not only because hers is the seminal work, but also because Merman's imprint on the role has shaped critic's and audience member's responses to the musical throughout its production history.

### **TRAV'LING THROUGH THE COUNTRY IS SO THRILLING: 1947 BROADWAY NATIONAL TOUR**

When the government pushed American women into the workforce during World War II they thought only of the urgent labor crisis that faced the nation, and little of the post-war challenge of re-integrating women back into the home. Noted historian Sara Evans observes, in "Rosie the Riveter": Women and War Work During World War II," "The political focus of wartime activity only had one purpose—victory...[and] women's duty was to simply respond, to do what was necessary 'for the duration,' and to maintain the family as the essential foundation of for democracy."<sup>2</sup> As chapter 2 argued, the OWI's effective recruitment campaign brought millions of older, married women into the workforce. In fact, by 1945 twenty-five percent of married women worked, sixty percent of the new work force "were former housewives over thirty-five," and thirty-three percent of new women

workers “had children under fourteen at home.”<sup>3</sup> And, despite a brief post-war drop in the female labor force, the overall increase in married women’s employment brought a host of issues to the fore concerning traditional gender roles. Women who had been lauded for their willingness to work outside the home during the war effort were now accused of neglecting their children, disregarding their household duties, and behaving promiscuously. The American government and society responded to these post-recruitment concerns with an equally fierce ideological campaign promoting domesticity. This effort, fortified by the absence of a forceful women’s movement in the late 1940s, helped shape the country’s domestic “values and behaviors in the post-war era’.”<sup>4</sup>

Because no one had expected that the female wartime workers would remain in their jobs after the end of the crisis, Evans notes that the female work force “had neither structural nor ideological support for continuation after the war.”<sup>5</sup> The immediate post-war transition (1945-47) to get women out of the factories occurred in two ways. First, the industries that produced war planes and other supplies shut down after the military no longer required their products. These industries laid off the women workers they had employed throughout the war, despite the fact that according to one poll eighty percent of the women “preferred to keep their jobs.”<sup>6</sup> As the reconversion began, these factories changed over to producing the new machines and cars that would sweep America into the consumer economy of the post-war age. When managers eventually began to rehire, they returned to the “pre-war sex-typing of jobs” and mostly “refused to rehire women regardless of their skills or seniority rights.” For example, Evans notes that “in the Detroit auto industry after the war, the

proportion of women in the work force fell from 25 to 7.5 percent and women's share of the work in durable goods industries throughout the nation dropped 50 percent."<sup>7</sup> Throughout 1946, men were hired, both because they were viewed as the "rightful" owners of the jobs and as part of the nationwide effort to support the returning veterans' assimilation into the culture, until "the proportion of women who worked plummeted from 36 percent at the war's end to 28 percent in 1947."<sup>8</sup> As I noted in chapter 2, although women's entry into the workforce had come out of an immediate crisis, the OWI had gradually recognized that a post-war transition would have to be imagined and stage-managed at some point. Thus, as I have observed, in the waning years of the war the OWI shifted its rhetoric regarding women's employment to help smooth what could have been a very abrupt domestic transition from wartime into peacetime in the late 1940s. However, this effort was not the only force implementing the hegemony of domesticity in America.

The soldiers' return not only meant the loss of jobs for female employees, it also meant an increase in available, unmarried men. This resurgence also affected the prominence of domesticity in the culture since, during the war, women had outnumbered men by two to one in the twenty to twenty-four age bracket. However, as scholar Nancy Woloch notes in *Women and the American Experience*, "scarcity of men appeared to increase male value rather than female autonomy." After the veterans returned, the urgency of marriage replaced the urgency of war work for many women.<sup>9</sup> The simultaneous push to remove the women from the work force and the skyrocketing marriage rate quickly and effectively shifted women's focus from the factory to the home. Evans maintains that the "reinvigorated economy and

pent-up consumer demand” for material goods that had been unavailable during the war and particularly the growing popularity of single homes in the suburbs, which ushered in a “dramatically new level of isolation within the family,” only intensified this focus on home life.<sup>10</sup> And, while the new standard of living required more money, in the immediate post-war years a woman’s role remained tied to the domestic pressures of the home and family, rather than on earning an income to support a more luxurious lifestyle.

However, the demand for consumer goods and appliances created many new jobs, and by 1947 women began to reemerge in the workplace (hoping to earn money in order to buy more consumer goods for their homes). Woloch asserts that the thirty-one percent increase in working women between 1947 and 1950, most of whom were married, older, and middle-class, “quickly made up the losses of the immediate post-war slump.” This rapid re-entry of married middle-class women into the workforce did not have the same cohesive quality as the wartime employment campaign. As William Chafe points out, “inflation, not ‘individualism’ spurred the married wage earner” in the post-war era, and this cause was not as glamorous or as popular as the war effort had been.<sup>11</sup> First, the jobs that the women now filled differed radically from their wartime occupations. Woloch notes, “Women no longer entered heavy industry, where they had made inroads during the war, nor did they surge into the professions. Rather, they took jobs in the traditional ‘women’s fields’—office work, sales, and services—which rapidly expanded.”<sup>12</sup> The salaries for the “women’s fields” were lower than the salaries the women had earned for the “men’s” jobs they had filled during the war, so the motivation for working was proportionally lower.

Also, the cultural attitude toward working married women had changed radically from the approval they had received during wartime. The American viewpoint now shifted back to the pre-war suspicion and resentment of working married women, characteristic of the Depression era. Woloch observes, “Indeed, since traditional attitudes about gender roles were sustained throughout the war, some historians contend continuity to be a more important theme than change.”<sup>13</sup> The dilemma over the wage-earning married women that had been so prevalent early in the war once again became a dominant theme in the culture and the media in the late 1940s and this time women were ready and willing to buy into the theme of domestication.

As it had during the war years, American popular culture promoted domesticity through advice columns and advertisements in magazines and by molding the image of the “ideal” American woman through the medium of film. In magazines, a new phenomenon had taken hold in the late 1940s, the popularity of advice from “experts.”<sup>14</sup> Sex experts and baby experts doled out simple solutions to everyday problems, and psychiatrists, who had gained great stature in American culture during the war, now weighed in on women’s role in society. In 1947, the *Annals of Social and Political Science* produced a special issue concerning “Women’s Opportunities and Responsibilities.” In this issue, psychoanalyst Marynia Farnham observes that the “Conflict between the home and career...could lead a woman into psychological purgatory. She might want a career as ‘a source of prestige,’ but this required ‘a great deal of drive, self-assertion, competition, and aggression,’ while fulfillment of her biological function through marriage and childbearing called for qualities ‘that can best be classified as protective or nurturing,

passive and receptive’.”<sup>15</sup> While this analysis appeared in a scholarly journal, Farnham’s views hit the mass market that same year, when she and sociologist Ferdinand Lundberg published the best-seller *Modern Women: The Lost Sex*.

The media also supported the cause of domesticity by championing passivity and submissive behavior. Magazines aimed at women, such as *Redbook*, *McCall’s*, and *Ladies’ Home Journal*, were filled with domestic rhetoric throughout the late 1940s in the forms of advice columns and romantic fiction. Post-war “advice literature” recommended that women “assume feminine roles” in order to fulfill the expectations of their veteran husbands. The image of the ideal woman changed from the “tough, gritty girls” of wartime to the girls the men had dreamed of during their absence. The new ideal female body reflected the soft-focus of its dreamlike origin, featuring rounder curves and a softer, more feminine sexuality. In her study of post-war gender roles, *Homeward Bound*, women’s historian Elaine Tyler May notes that popular magazines, such as the film fan magazine *Photoplay*, promoted this softer ideal as the “Romantic Look,” with advice such as:

Will you be like the ideal the boys carried in their hearts when they were overseas, a girl softly feminine, wistful and gay?...Listen to your laughter...let it come easily, especially if you’re with boys who have had little to laugh at for too long. Laugh at the silly things you used to do together....And if you hear your laugh sound hysterical, giddy or loud, tone it down,...Serenity is the wellspring of the romantic look...This Christmas, with our men home, surely we should know serenity. So let us look happy and contented and starry-eyed.<sup>16</sup>

Magazines like *Photoplay* connected the average female to the movie stars, who “governed the definition of ideal beauty in the United States.”<sup>17</sup> By ingesting the information in the fan magazines and watching the new heroines in the movies of the

late 1940s, women quickly adjusted their own images to mimic their favorite star's style.

May asserts that the new feminine heroines in films of the post-war period were either aggressively sexual or insipidly subordinate and ultimately offered "less positive images of women" than the "independent" and "emancipated" heroines of the war years that they replaced. As young women watched stars like Jane Russell, Ava Gardner, and Marilyn Monroe they learned that female sexuality "was a positive force only if it led to an exciting marriage; otherwise it was dangerous."<sup>18</sup> Throughout this chapter, Monroe will serve as the primary example of sexuality during this period, not only because she had been discovered and marketed as a pin-up girl during the war, thereby influencing the image of the "dream girls" the young soldiers would come home to, but also because during the course of her brief career her film persona changed radically to reflect shifting ideals of femininity. Monroe experienced her greatest popularity in the 1950s, but she began her career after the war "in *film noir* movies that portrayed her sexuality as a destructive force."<sup>19</sup> May's analysis of post-war media links women's identities with their sexuality. Women in control of their own sexuality were often shown as evil in post-war films and soon, she observes, it became clear that "subordination made the difference between good or bad female sexuality" and the distinction between a desirable and undesirable wife.<sup>20</sup> Woloch notes that "the post-war campaign" to promote domesticity and femininity "was soon as strong and as well organized as if it had been run by the Office of War Information."<sup>21</sup> This campaign was particularly effective for the segment of the population I identified earlier, the twenty to twenty-four year old

women, who were now focused cultivating a feminine image and actively pursuing marriage and home life.

The prolonged idealization of femininity can also be attributed to the absence of the women's movement in the post-war era. The combination of women in low-status, low-paying jobs, plus the effective media campaign that spotlighted domesticated female sexuality effectively squelched any proto-feminist movement that might have taken hold in the immediate post-war period.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, scholars such as Farnham and Lundberg pathologized women's activism, denouncing feminism as a "lethal sickness" in the widely read *Modern Women: The Lost Sex*, urging women to "find mental health in domestic roles." In Woloch's analysis of their work, she observes that feminism was regarded as "a neurotic reaction to natural male dominance [which makes] women reject their instincts and try to become men." This dreaded masculinization manifests through the rejection of motherhood and unchecked aggressive behavior and the authors suggest that the "true woman" distinguishes herself by her "self-acceptance, dependence on men, and passive fulfillment in sex and motherhood."<sup>23</sup> This prescription so closely parallels the storyline of *Annie Get Your Gun* that it is no surprise that the musical continued to appeal to audiences on Broadway throughout the 1940s and '50s.

### **MARY, GET YOUR GUN**

Producers Rodgers and Hammerstein, hoping to capitalize on the musical's timely post-war theme in order to on augment their Broadway box-office success, launched a national tour, starring Mary Martin during 1947. Martin's star persona

was significantly different from Merman's (who continued to play the role on Broadway until February 1949), but her appeal, as I suggest below, perfectly suited the audiences for whom she would perform across the country. Martin's femininity would serve the domestic themes available in the text in a different way than Merman's persona had, but her audience had a fairly different set of needs. These audiences, as opposed to the strictly upper and upper-middle class Achievers of the Broadway audience, would be filled with far more middle-class husbands and wives actively engaged in the post-war dilemmas over domesticity and married women's employment.

Musical theatre historian Ethan Mordden asserts that Mary Martin, a native of Texas, landed on Broadway in the late 1930s "most conventionally." She was "the cutie with a song to sing and, presumably, a Hollywood contract to sign."<sup>24</sup> Alternately sexy and cute, sweet and direct, she was considered to be "destined for traditional heroine parts." However, as Wolf notes, she was also "too unusual to play traditional heroines."<sup>25</sup> In her 1938 Broadway debut, in Cole Porter's *Leave it to Me*, she made a lasting impression with her coy strip-tease to the sentimental song "My Heart Belongs to Daddy." A newspaper article described Martin in the role as "half-sprite, half-siren,"<sup>26</sup> a description echoed many times over her career. Martin is almost always portrayed as composed of two diametrically opposed entities, whether a sprite/siren or a hoyden/goddess.<sup>27</sup> According to biographer Stacy Wolf, this very dichotomy accounted for her success in *Leave It to Me* since, "Martin's sexiness got her noticed, but her innocence made her a Broadway star."<sup>28</sup> Her performance gained the attention of Hollywood producers, who cast her in ten films in the next four

years.<sup>29</sup> In one film, *Kiss the Boys Goodbye*, she gained good reviews for her performance of a “naughty ditty,” but despite this success, she never gained real Hollywood fame.<sup>30</sup>

Martin “tired of being typed in sweet, slushy parts” and returned to the stage in 1943,<sup>31</sup> starring in the successful *One Touch of Venus*. In his opening night review for the *New York Times*, Lewis Nichols notes, “She is a lady of high charm, an engaging quality and the ability to toss a song over the footlights.”<sup>32</sup> His later comments, including his observation that her “lightness of touch” and “cheerful manner” contributed to the “faintly unreal earthiness” of *Venus*, illustrate the typical combination of oppositional characteristics reviewers used to describe Martin.<sup>33</sup> She is at once delicate, ethereal, and earthy. Next, Martin appeared in *Lute Song* in 1946, “which Sydney Howard and Will Irwin prepared especially for her.”<sup>34</sup> Neither the show nor Martin received particularly good reviews, as the story was what Lewis Nichols called, “far removed from the product of Broadway’s usual loom.”<sup>35</sup> *Lute Song* closed early, leaving Martin available to do the national tour of *Annie Get Your Gun*.

It is easy to understand Richard Rodgers’ desire to cast Martin in the touring company of *Annie Get Your Gun*. The show had been a box office hit in New York but on tour it would have to draw audiences filled with veterans and their wives who were dealing with post-war joblessness and housing shortages. By October 1947, when the tour began, over thirteen million former soldiers had returned to civilian life. According to May, “during one month in 1947, close to eight million unemployment claims were filled with the Veterans Administration. By the end of

1947, the government had paid nearly \$2.5 billion to unemployed veterans.”<sup>36</sup> They needed entertainments that would both distract them from the challenge of the post-war culture and simultaneously reinforce the values they had fought to defend. Oakley’s story, with its combination of nostalgia for the American West, larger-than-life heroes, and its affirmation of traditional gender roles, presented the ideal combination.

Physically and vocally Martin was perfect for the role of Annie Oakley and her broad appeal made her popular in towns like Chicago, Cincinnati, and Austin.<sup>37</sup> Martin’s looks were rarely commented on in her biographies or reviews, but she had a simple feminine beauty that, in combination with her direct nature, was appealing. In Hollywood, she had been made up to look like the other glamorous film stars with long hair in waves and heavy make-up, but she never fit the 1940s Hollywood ideal of beauty. In fact, her hair in *One Touch of Venus* was a pile of red curls, “in defiance of Hollywood experts, who insisted her neck and face were too thin to support an upsweep.”<sup>38</sup> Martin revealed her own insecurities about her beauty to *New York Times* reporter Lucy Greenbaum in an interview promoting *One Touch of Venus*. Greenbaum recounts,

Miss Martin just could not visualize herself as the beautiful Venus....Then one day she hauled off for the Metropolitan Museum of Art. There she found, to her amazement, that di Milo had no corner on the market; that there were dozens of naked Venuses. She looked long and hard at a fatuous plump version, turned to her husband, literary agent Richard Halliday. “I’m prettier than that,” she announced. “By damn I’ll do the play.”<sup>39</sup>

Ultimately, Martin’s physical appearance was only a small part of her overall appeal, which really relied on the combination of her vocal ability and personality.

Martin's voice was a combination of disparate attributes, in many ways similar to the descriptions of her persona. Her voice was, according to reviewers, at once powerful and sweet, with "a medley of possibilities from earthy song-plugging to high coloratura."<sup>40</sup> She could not belt the way Merman could, but she found more nuance in the music on the whole. The same was said for her interpretation of the role of Annie. As musical theatre biographer McGovern states, "Mary Martin was as different as one could possibly be from the brash, game-girl image Merman projected. Ethel was raucous and liked a good time; Mary was a lady....The image she projected to her public was that of a lady—sweet, gentle, and feminine."<sup>41</sup> Ethan Mordden adds, "Martin was sweet, even coy."<sup>42</sup> The combination of her many-faceted her personality and her vocal ability made her, as Wolf states, "America's Everygirl."<sup>43</sup> Her simple, cheerful persona highlighted the more feminine aspects of Annie's character and her natural innocence appealed to the audiences she played to across the nation, particularly in her home state of Texas where the tour began.

The tour's producers, the Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization, knew that Martin's appeal would be critical to the success of the tour. In order to find their audience in each town, promotional images of Martin were necessary.<sup>44</sup> In the photographs for the 1947-1948 national tour of *Annie Get Your Gun*, Martin's personality shines through as she strikes the same poses that Merman had for the Broadway production, yet manages to convey a very different interpretation of the character.<sup>45</sup> The subtle contrast in Martin's press photo in front of the Wild West "show" poster is apparent in the body and head position as well as the hands and gun placement. In her photo, figure 31, Martin wears an identical costume to Merman,

though with a considerably smaller hat, and her eyes and smile are also tentative. Martin's body is squared to the viewer and her gaze is aimed up and away from the viewer, highlighting a star-struck, dreamy quality that is never available in Merman's personality, but was an important part of both Oakley's and Martin's personas. Finally, Martin's handling of the gun, holding it straight across her hips and gripping it with two hands as if it were a cane or dance prop, indicates her more feminine characteristics.

The main cover image of the Chicago *Stagebill*, figure 32, was a close-up shot of Martin.<sup>46</sup> In this picture, her body is turned to the side and her face is turned over her shoulder with her gaze averted. Martin holds the gun erect but behind her body so that it is the least prominent part of the picture. She does, however, give off a sense of feistiness unavailable in the other photos by gripping the gun with one hand and tossing an arch look over her shoulder. The images inside the program for the touring company show Martin in various poses, both from the show and in "movie star" photos that are glamorous and have little to do with the character of Annie. The inside cover is a full page close-up image of Martin in a ball gown (figure 33). The photo is clearly a celebrity photo rather than a show photo, as she stares directly into the camera with her heavily made-up eyes, chin over her bare shoulder and a pretty and subtly sexy look on her face. On the opposite page, in figure 34, she is posed as Annie in the first act with a long, fringed skirt that is cinched in at the waist as modern skirts would have been in 1947 and a dainty sheer top with puffed sleeves, equally characteristic of the late 1940s. Martin, in this photo, is seated on a ladder

with her legs gracefully crossed and her cheek leaning on her fist, seemingly lost and vulnerable; a look Merman never introduced into her repertoire.

Two other images in the national tour's program warrant review in this section, because of their departure from the Merman standard. Martin appears twice in the program in her Act I "motorcycle" costume, a black corset and fringed tap pants. For the back cover image, figure 35, Martin's photo is posed the same as Merman's iconic image, but she is seated on a table rather than a motorcycle. While this may have been due to practical reasons (such as timing or financial issues), the resulting picture is markedly less sexual than the Merman image astride the motorcycle. Martin holds the gun aloft as Merman did, highlighting her breasts, bare shoulders, and fishnet covered legs, but in contrast to Merman's lusty and exuberant pose, Martin's legs are tightly pressed together, her gaze is averted and her smile is forced, creating a prim and ultimately non-sexual posture.

Inside the program, one page from the centerfold with the cast and musical numbers, Martin is posed in the same costume (figure 36), this time with one leg draped over the table and touching the floor and one leg bent. In this picture, Martin's gun is absent and she is considerably more relaxed, resting her arm on her bent knee and leaning back to show her legs and breasts at their best angle. She faces the viewer directly and she smiles gently, though her eyes remain averted. This shot is an image promoting the star's sexual appeal and has little connection to the show, other than the costume. It is important to note here Martin (or the producers) shunned the "lusty" nature of the motorcycle shot and replaced it with an image that conveys a much more demure sexuality and, significantly, does not include the gun at all. The

producers go great lengths to include both the requisite motorcycle image, in which Martin is clearly uncomfortable, and the passive image that combines Oakley's feminine appeal with Martin's own sexuality. The producers certainly chose this combination to appeal to the nationwide audiences in the transitional post-war moment of 1947.

The last image from the national tour program, figure 37, is captioned "Moonshine Lullaby" and captures Martin lounging with both feet up on a large, rounded, floral couch, unlike anything one might find on a train in the 1880s (and much more like a sofa found in the homes of Martin's average audience member). If this pose and setting were not incongruous enough, Martin looks directly at the camera with a doubtful look and seems to be chewing on her thumb. The inclusion of this image is completely baffling, as there is nothing of Annie Oakley in any part of the scene but the fringe on her skirt. The photo projects a feeling of insecurity and smallness and the look on Martin's face suggests that this was probably a candid shot that somehow projected the image the producers hoped to convey about both Annie and Martin for the tour. This submissive image suggests a new fusion of Martin and the character of Annie intended to supersede Merman's Oakley and appeal to the newly domesticated middle-class audience members coming to see the tour in parts of America with sprawling suburbs and homes full of appliances.

The upper- and upper-middle class women who were *Annie Get Your Gun's* target audience on Broadway were also the target audience for the tour. However, as the tour moved across the Midwest the audience's level of affluence was significantly lower than the patrons on Broadway. While theatre and other intellectual

entertainments still drew a markedly upper-class audience, as can be observed in the analysis of the advertisements in the *Chicago Stagebill* for Martin's tour, the overall economic demographic was wider than that of the Broadway audience. Following the model I outlined in chapter 3, the analysis of the ads in the playbill breaks the ads in categories according to overall content and goals.

Once again, advertisements for Leisure Activities occupied by far the largest segment of the advertising space in the *Chicago Stagebill*, comprising seventy-five percent (75%) of the total ad space. This category included ads for Hotels and After-Theatre Entertainment (30%), Other Theatre Productions (13%), Whiskey and Liquor (10%), Luxury Cars (3%), Cigarettes (3%), Books (3%), Ticket Agencies (3%), Records (3%), Other Beverages (3%), and, somewhat incongruously, Hormel Onion Soup (3%).<sup>47</sup> These ads were the least gender-specific in their overall content, often consisting of product logo or basic description and gender-neutral images. Although the Leisure ads are almost all gender-neutral (one ad for Lord Calvert Whiskey pictures a wealthy man and his dog and none of the ads appeal solely to a female audience), it can be assumed that the leisure activities were chosen by both parties, but generally financed by the male counterpart.

After leisure activities, the specifically gendered ads took up only nine percent (9%) of all advertising space. The two ads aimed at females were for Shoes (3%) and Furs (3%), both high quality items. The absence of the many ads for expensive personal care items found in the *Broadway Playbill* and the promotion of luxury products strongly suggests that *Annie Get Your Gun's* advertisers expected the audience to be filled with women who preferred high-end clothing or shoes (items

that might be worn for several years), but would not have personal money to spend on expensive upkeep items (such as perfume or makeup). The advertisers in the *Stagebill* aimed only one ad at men, which sold Hats (3%). This ad contained plain text and the simple cartoon image of a man trying on a hat. In addition to the gendered category, there are five more ads considered here. These are all ads for the *Stagebill* (16%), promoting its yearbook or calling for subscriptions. While this could be construed as appealing to men as advertisers, the ads read more as space-fillers than as any call to action for men or women.

Martin, with her movie star background, her enigmatic combination of sex appeal and innocence, and her enormous vocal and acting talent, filled the seats in auditoriums around the country while Merman kept packing them in on Broadway. Martin was successful on the road because she projected an innate femininity. She was not the gritty, tough woman who needed to be tamed, she was the feminine girl who easily let her man know she wanted him to be in charge. In fact, as Ethan Mordden notes, while playing Annie for those two years Martin developed a “rough-hewn quality” that eventually led to her star-making roles in *South Pacific* and *Peter Pan* and ultimately to a very different Annie a decade later.<sup>48</sup>

**THERE’S NO PEOPLE LIKE SHOW PEOPLE, THEY SMILE WHEN THEY  
ARE LOW:  
1950 MAJOR MOTION PICTURE**

By 1950, the United States was experiencing the post-war Baby Boom, a period that saw a nineteen percent increase in population growth that reached its height in 1957 with 4,308,000 American births.<sup>49</sup> The pre-war gender norms had been firmly re-established and the home had once again become women’s domain, as

men returned from the war effort and women shifted from masculinized war worker to feminized housewife and mother to this new crop of young Americans. One of these young mothers, Betty Friedan, who looked back at this time a decade later in her influential work, *The Feminine Mystique*, recalls 1949 as “the year the feminine mystique really hit us.”<sup>50</sup> Although this problem remained unacknowledged for another decade, the audience members of both the Broadway production and the national tour of *Annie Get Your Gun* were certainly aware of a significant gender divide.

The themes in *Annie Get Your Gun* continued to mirror the social issues of the moment and the producers at M-G-M saw enormous money-making potential in a show that had demonstrated it could draw both a Broadway and a national audience. M-G-M’s musical theatre unit began working on a screenplay for a major motion picture treatment of *Annie Get Your Gun* so that filming might begin in 1949. However, they needed a woman to portray an Annie who would appeal to the increasingly feminine and domesticated American women and to the men who would take them to the movies for date night. Not surprisingly they passed over the almost middle-aged Ethel Merman and cast 26-year-old Judy Garland, the perennial marrying girl who had gained fame as the bright eyed, Broadway-bound girl-next-door.

Garland, born Frances Gumm in 1922,<sup>51</sup> came of age in front of American film audiences and combined enormous vocal talent with what director George Cukor called “quick intelligence, captivating humor, [and] brilliant creativity.”<sup>52</sup> Her all-American appeal fit the transitional nature of the ideal woman of the late 1940s-early

1950s. Her image was in many ways like Martin's, she was also distinctly more feminine than Merman's brassy persona and her performance style was dazzling, yet never overbearing. Physically, though, Garland did not fit into the typical M-G-M ideal, like the beautiful Lana Turner, her idol. At five feet tall, she "had a stubby neck that blended into her shoulders, a plump short-waisted torso, [and] long arms and legs. [L.B.] Mayer often referred to her as 'my little hunchback' because she had a stooped posture."<sup>53</sup> Her physical shortcomings were, however, far outweighed by her vocal ability and the winning persona she developed early in her career.

From the mid-1930s to the early 1940s, Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney teamed up for many box-office hits including the Andy Hardy series and the "backyard musical" films. Garland played girl-next-door Betsy Booth in the Andy Hardy films, which film historian Jane Ellen Wayne notes were "Mayer's idea of the all-American family, a series that was very close to his heart."<sup>54</sup> Mayer recognized Garland's critical role in the all-American nature of the films and once she gained popularity her physical appearance underwent great scrutiny. Image and beauty were of crucial importance for movie stars in the 1930s and '40s. Mickey Rooney once confessed, "If I had not been tainted with the same phony Hollywood notions about who was beautiful and who was not, I would have fallen in love with her myself."<sup>55</sup> Judy's weight, in particular, received special attention. Wayne's research reveals that "in the M-G-M canteen she was served only chicken soup with matzoh balls, a recipe handed down by Mayer's mother. Orders to serve her nothing else were strictly obeyed....[Garland] would, however, go on binges that prompted [her overbearing mother] Ethel to give her Benzedrine pills to curb her appetite."<sup>56</sup> Despite the fact

that her body and face did not fit the M-G-M ideal, Garland's all-American persona continued to appeal to audiences until 1939, when M-G-M cast her in the role that defined her career, Dorothy in the *Wizard of Oz*.

Even in the role of her life, Garland's physical appearance had to be altered to fit into the youthful feminine ideals of the late 1930s. She was given a blond wig and forced to wear a corset while filming in order to "flatten her bosom and plump curves." When George Cukor took over the filming of *Wizard of Oz*, "he was appalled that Judy, as the little girl from a Kansas farm, was made up to look like an over-rouged Shirley Temple."<sup>57</sup> Temple was the "most popular" film star of the 1930s, but according to Banner in *American Beauty*, "she was never presented as anything more than...an uncorrupted child who, because of her lack of sophistication, could solve family and social problems that baffled adults."<sup>58</sup> Cukor realized that Judy's persona could not be so obviously molded into that image, so he "removed most of her make-up, eliminated the blond wig and put Judy's brown hair in pigtails."<sup>59</sup> Garland won her only Oscar, as well as popular and critical acclaim, for the role and went on "to make the list of top moneymaking stars of 1940." She occupied the list with Mickey Rooney, so M-G-M capitalized on this by casting them opposite one another and presenting them to America as perpetual teenagers.<sup>60</sup>

By 1940, Garland was one of Hollywood's most popular young actresses, and the newspapers avidly covered her romance and elopement with composer David Rose in 1941. At the age of twenty, Garland became pregnant, a pregnancy she was excited about even though she was already "bored" with her marriage. Her mother, however, was convinced that Garland's image would suffer permanent damage if "M-

G-M's little girl" had a baby. It was decided that Garland's pregnancy should be terminated and in January 1943 her marriage ended as well.<sup>61</sup> Garland's youthful image was preserved and over the next six years, Garland experienced some of her greatest triumphs and her deepest depressions.

On the personal front, Garland married director Vincente Minnelli and joined the baby boom, bearing her daughter Liza in 1946. Professionally, she broke box-office records and won critical raves with *The Harvey Girls*, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *Till the Clouds Roll By*, and *Easter Parade*. In January 1946, *Liberty* magazine stated in a review of *The Harvey Girls*, "It's a certainty that if Judy gets any more talented, she'll probably explode." In January 1947, the *Hollywood Review* called Garland "the high point in an entertainment unbelievably full of highpoints. *Till the Clouds Roll By* is the greatest work she has every done. She is radiantly beautiful, winsomely appealing, [and] for twenty minutes, the picture is all hers." In June 1948 the *Hollywood Reporter* stated, "*Easter Parade*...firmly establishes Judy as the screen's first lady of tempo and tunes." The *New York Sun* wrote, "Judy is at her youthful best again." However, during this time she also began to permanently lose her battle with her addiction to pills and alcohol.

In 1948, M-G-M cast an already ill Garland as Annie in *Annie Get Your Gun*. The producers had passed over Merman in favor of the physically softer and smaller Garland and cast six foot-four Howard Keel as her leading man.<sup>62</sup> Screenwriter Sidney Sheldon and producer Arthur Freed had worked for several months adapting the play into a screenplay that would suit their leading players and M-G-M's national audience. Freed recognized the differences between the mediums of stage and

screen, observing, “A movie is a story told by the camera, an entertainment medium much more realistic than those from which it often borrows its basic material. It’s harder work and takes a little more courage to reject an obvious, literal translation—and not have too much reverence for the story’s original form—although the producer must also be careful that he doesn’t ‘improve’ it into a failure.”<sup>63</sup> Freed had specific ideas about the way that the *Annie Get Your Gun* script should be adapted and worked closely with Sheldon.

In *M-G-M’s Greatest Musicals: The Arthur Freed Unit*, film historian Hugh Fordin observes that, in the case of *Annie Get Your Gun*, “Freed stayed very close to the original book. He opened it up—broadening its physical layout, taking advantage of the potential of the camera.”<sup>64</sup> He realized, however, that the major differences between film and theatre were the breadth of its audience, both in number and in class, and the way government agencies scrutinized moral and ideological content in films to protect American viewers. On March 23, 1949, Freed received a memo from M-G-M production associate Robert Vogel which stated,

The Breen Office reiterates to me that the Secretary of the Interior has gotten very Indian-minded and will raise hell about our showing the Indians lousing up the train in *Annie Get Your Gun*. It doesn’t come within the Production Code scope, but they are trying to protect us in a matter which they feel sure is going to get us into trouble. I asked them how the stage play could keep running for three years, and they replied these outfits frequently let plays go by and raise the devil about pictures, because the former reaches a smaller audience than the latter.<sup>65</sup>

This intense scrutiny and the sexually repressed post-war culture also necessitated some changes in the musical’s content and bawdy lyrics.

One major change in the plotline of M-G-M’s *Annie Get Your Gun* was the excision of the interracial romantic couple, Tommy, an Indian in the show, and

Winnie, Dolly Tate's daughter. The show was rewritten so that their songs and scenes are not noticeably absent and this change is almost certainly a result of the concern over the promotion of such unions to a national audience. The two numbers that received the most attention from the Breen Office were "Doin' What Comes Natur'lly" and "You Can't Get a Man With a Gun." The sexually explicit verses,

Still they raised a family  
Doin' what comes natur'lly

Knows one sex from the other  
All he had to do was look.

There he is at ninety-three  
Doin' what comes natur'lly

She gets all her stockings free  
Doin' what comes natur'lly

were easily replaced with a "modified 'radio lyric' version" that Berlin had written for use on the Columbia Broadcasting System.<sup>66</sup> The lyrics "nightie" and "pajamas" were ordered cut from "You Can't Get a Man With a Gun," because they were too closely "associated with the bedroom."<sup>67</sup> In the end, M-G-M simply cut that verse from the already long Berlin song.

In February 1949, Garland reported for duty to begin filming *Annie Get Your Gun*. She had been suffering from exhaustion, complicated by her habitual drug use, and had asked to be released from several pictures over the past few years. She was, however, in serious debt so she decided to go on with her contract for *Annie*.<sup>68</sup> According to Fordin, her and physical and mental health were only a part of the problem early in the filming process. He notes, "Judy was unsure about what to do with the part. It was the first time in her career that she was not doing a 'Judy

Garland picture’.”<sup>69</sup> Garland’s persona had become so inextricably mixed with her own personality that taking on a biographical role presented difficulties she had not encountered before. Ironically, the domesticity cultivated by Oakley in her performances in the *Wild West* was in many ways similar to Garland’s image of the all-American marrying girl, but the intervening interpretations of the character, with Merman’s stamp securely fixed on the role, and with Martin following a close second, complicated Garland’s uncertainty.

Filming proceeded for a few weeks, but very early on the production team knew that the film was in trouble. When Garland’s trusted friend and director Charles Walters looked at the footage, he claimed, “My God—it was horrible! Judy was at her worst. She couldn’t decide whether she was Ethel Merman, Mary Martin, Martha Raye or herself.”<sup>70</sup> After a few weeks of shooting the film, Garland viewed the dailies. Fordin describes this turning point in the production:

During the running of the film she slid down lower and lower in her club chair and, while the room was still dark, got up, walked over to the water container, threw a handful of Benzedrines in her mouth and washed them down. In all her years Judy never fell for the ‘ahs’ and ‘ohs’ of her entourage—nor of anybody’s, for that matter. She always knew. She was the first one to see that not only was [Busby Berkeley’s] direction dreadful, but that she was totally wrong for the part.<sup>71</sup>

After that, Garland’s behavior became more erratic and she was unable to perform for any amount of time, sometimes needing to be held up by members of the chorus because “she was not able to stand on her feet. She was completely intoxicated with drugs and unable to work without them.”<sup>72</sup> In the end, she was too fragile both physically and mentally at this point in her career and, by May 1949, had to be replaced by the studio. M-G-M realized that they needed to replace Garland with

just the right woman and eventually went outside of their stable of stars and chose Paramount's twenty-seven-year-old Betty Hutton.

### **JUDY, GIVE BETTY THE GUN**

After appearing on Broadway early in her career, twenty-one year old Betty Hutton had been signed by Paramount Studios and she made her debut in the 1942 musical film *The Fleet's In*. Hutton's reviews for the film "were better than expected with critics giving her good comments" and she went on to film three more musicals over the next two years. In 1944, Hutton attempted a non-musical role in *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek*, for which she also received good reviews.<sup>73</sup> Freed thought Hutton was right for the part of Oakley based on her vocal work, comic timing, and the acting ability she displayed in *The Perils of Pauline*, made by Paramount. Hutton was enthusiastic about the prospect of playing Oakley in the film, having seen Merman play the role on Broadway, and on June 21, 1949, Paramount agreed to loan Hutton to M-G-M for \$150,000.<sup>74</sup>

It is interesting to note that although Garland had been the beloved American ideal of the late 1940s and M-G-M had done everything up to this point to mold the production to her image, they went to such great lengths to secure a woman who seemed opposite to Garland in almost every way. According to Lois Banner in *American Beauty*, at the beginning of the 1950s audiences idolized two types of beauty, "one was adolescent and childlike, the other voluptuous and earthy."<sup>75</sup> Garland's popularity was a holdover from her adolescent roles of the 1940s and, even as she aged, her fragility helped her maintain the childlike persona. Hutton's looks

fell in line with the new ideal. The voluptuous and earthy woman was “huge-bosomed” and often “of indeterminate, lower-class origin.”<sup>76</sup> Although these descriptions might also apply to Merman, Hutton’s energy is focused on attracting male attention and her persona and youth resisted Merman’s image of matronly self-sufficiency.

Nicknamed the “the brazen blond bombshell” because of her energy, her exuberance, and her light blonde hair, Hutton was a step closer to what would become the iconographic 1950s woman. Her long blond locks, in contrast to Garland’s dark shag cut, gave her an even softer, more feminine look than Garland, Martin, or Merman. Hutton’s hair matched the color popularized by Monroe’s platinum locks that, according to Banner, “invoked traditional images of angels and virtuous women, reflected the light locks of the era’s adolescent film stars, and both legitimized and heightened sensuality.”<sup>77</sup>

Hutton evoked much of Merman’s earthy humor and she bore some resemblance to Merman’s sturdy frame. Charles Walters, the director of the film at that point, thought, “It’s a nice challenge, trying to make Betty Hutton legit for once. You know, cutting down that chewing-up-the-scenery and tearing-down-the-curtains routine of hers.”<sup>78</sup> Her broad musical style was, apparently, a real concern, since George Sidney, who ultimately became the director of the movie, openly told Hutton, “You have to be directed in this picture; you are playing a character. You are not playing the girl from Vincent Lopez’s band. You understand that?”<sup>79</sup> In order to play to her strengths, the production team made changes to the script, “stressing comedy instead of dance numbers [and the music directors were instructed to] transpose the

orchestrations in order to accommodate her range.”<sup>80</sup> Ultimately, Hutton’s Annie was very different than Garland’s would have been, incorporating Merman’s broadly physical comedy but fusing her bawdier sexuality with the subordinate femininity of the sex-kitten type Monroe would become famous for just a few years later.

Hutton’s combination of broad physical comedy and submissive sexuality served Sheldon’s final script well. Although some of the changes from the original script were to take advantage of the film medium,<sup>81</sup> most of the cuts and additions to the screenplay served to more closely align the discussion of gender to the tone of the day. In fact, there are nine specific moments in the original script that are edited and re-drafted throughout the production history of *Annie Get Your Gun*, all of which directly address their conflicting notions of gender roles and the pivotal nature of their romance based on the nuances of dialogue in these scenes. The following is an analysis of the changes that Sheldon, Freed, and M-G-M made in order to craft their Annie to appeal to their national audience.

The action in the first scenes of the play, even when rearranged and expanded for film, tend to follow the original exactly, setting up the rivalry and the romance between Oakley and Butler. The first scene that allows for the discussion of gender occurs on the train after Oakley has joined the show. In this scene Frank reads an article that praises Annie’s abilities and (as I described in chapter 3) he acknowledges that people are beginning to recognize that she has talent and he claims that he asked Charlie to “put her name someplace on the billboard.”<sup>82</sup> In the original she asks, “On the program too?” The screenplay cuts this line, effectively erasing any sense of Annie’s own ambitions. While this may seem like a subtle change that is hardly

worth mentioning, it is also a short line, hardly worth cutting. It will become evident that it is in the most subtle and inconspicuous ways that the producers effectively contrive gender roles.

The next scene that renegotiates gender roles occurs while still on the train. In the original stage production, Annie interacts with her brothers and sisters, checking that they have brushed their teeth, singing “Moonshine Lullaby,” and generally establishing her more motherly characteristics. The film cuts this song completely and, in fact, deletes the children from almost all of the second half of the film. By eliminating Annie’s relationship with Tommy and Winnie, whom she advises on several occasions in the original script, and by greatly reducing her onscreen time with the kids, the producers make Annie more youthful and less-threatening to Frank. Hutton, at twenty-seven, was already much more youthful than Merman or Martin had been, but this move probably also reflected the drastically lowered marriage age in 1950.

The scenes surrounding Annie’s “show” poster are some of the most interesting to examine for the subtle changes in dialogue that reveal inherent attitudes regarding gender in each cultural moment. The first scene occurs between Charlie Davenport and Frank after he sees the poster for the first time. In the original stage production this poster prompts Frank to call himself the “boss” and Annie his “project.” In the 1950 film, Frank is enraged by the poster and cuts off the discussion by storming off. The second scene occurs soon after, when Annie sees the poster and Frank re-enters. In the original stage production he compliments her show outfit, telling her she looks “elegant.” In the film, however, Howard Keel enters with a

much angrier and aggressive, “Annie!” She admires her poster and claims that she’s “grewed” to which Keel sneers in response, “Shot up like a rag-weed.” The following is a comparison of the ensuing dialogue between the lovers from the play and the film:

1946 Stage Version

Annie: Beats hell, don’t it.

Frank: Hope you don’t like it honey, ‘cause it ain’t gonna be there next week.

Annie: Why ain’t it?

Frank: Well, that’s show business. I gave you a few extra tricks to do but they don’t rate star billing. Even I don’t get that. You see, I want you to grow kinda gradual... You don’t mind honey?

Annie: Shucks no.

1950 Film Version:

Annie: I cain’t believe it.

Frank: Don’t try to hard honey, ‘cause it ain’t gonna be there next week.

Annie: Why ain’t it?

Frank: Well, that’s show business. I gave you a few extra tricks to do but they don’t rate star billing. Even I don’t get that. Someday maybe, honey, but it’s gonna be gradual.

Annie: If that’s the way you want it.

Frank: That’s the way I want it.

Annie: Ya ain’t sore are ya?

Frank: No. I’m not sore honey.

Not only are the words different, but the tone and their power positions have significantly shifted in the 1950 version. Frank’s aggressive anger bleeds through into what was a kind, if patronizing, explanation in the original. He is no longer sure that he wants her to grow, though he grudgingly admits that it may happen anyway. His declarative statement, “it’s gonna be gradual,” paired with the elimination of his seeking her approval, makes it clear that her growth will be on his terms. By having Annie acquiesce so readily, the producers further enforce their inequality, but Hutton’s performance in this scene does the most to highlight the power disparity.

She looks truly concerned and steps closer to him as she meekly asks if he is angry, and it is only at this moment that his anger finally abates.

The final two scenes in act one that allow for the gender commentary are the result of Annie's performance in the Wild West finale. In the original script Annie performs lying prone on a motorcycle. In the film, Hutton is first seen standing on a saddle on top of a galloping white horse. She wears an embroidered red dress, almost identical to the white one she had on in the previous scene. As she enters the ring, she drops down in order to lay prone in the saddle, hanging off the back of the horse. The scene is shot from high above, so that Annie's face is a blur, but her skirt has flown up in the wind revealing most of her thighs as she bounces around the arena. She then manages to climb forward in order to be astride the horse, at which time the camera comes in for a close-up on Hutton. Ultimately, the changes to this scene seem to be more about the medium of film than any articulation of gender roles. The trick is much more dangerous and surrounded by what seems like a "real" Wild West arena, and although her costume is not as obviously sexy as Merman's corset, the red color and the glimpse of her thighs make up for the lost ground there.

In the end, the horseback trick produced the same result as the motorcycle trick, as Frank in the film raged that he has been double-crossed. In the original, Frank complains to Charlie and Buffalo Bill that had he eventually married Annie he would have ended up as "her assistant...cookin' fer her too more'n likely." The reference to cooking is cut in the film, but the producers add the following exchange:

Charlie: Look who's talking! I've watched you push her around for months now. Handing you your guns. Grateful for any crumb the great Frank Butler would deign to drop. Why you're so conceited if you fell in love with anybody else it'd be a triangle.

*Frank punches him in the face.*

Buffalo Bill: Maybe you'd like to hit me, too. Charlie here's speaking for both of us.

Their disapproval of Frank's treatment of Annie is completely out of character with the gendered nature of the original script and the film, but this scene is set up to be a turning point for Frank that happens outside of his interactions with Annie. Charlie and Buffalo Bill implicitly praise Annie for being so submissive to him. In their estimation, Frank's fault lies in not appreciating Annie for what she has been doing. Their acknowledgment of Frank's arbitrary behavior signifies to the possibly disapproving audience that he has the potential for change, and therefore can remain the romantic hero. This is, perhaps, a lesson for the men in the audience to appreciate the women who have been trying to support them, but the scene ultimately conveys the message that Annie, by stepping out of her submissive role, has lost her opportunity to marry Frank.

When Frank leaves, his letter tells Annie that because of her "trick," he now realizes that she is "too smart" for him. Annie's response to this news is significantly different in the film:

1946

Annie: What's he mean—too smart fer—Are you sure you can read? (*Tears*)

No, I'm gonna keep it—Someday I'll be able to read it.

Sitting Bull: Never mind Annie, you best shot in whole world.

Annie: Yeh! (*Picks up song "You Can't Get a Man With a Gun"*)

1950

Annie: What's he mean—too smart fer? It must be some sorta joke. It was gonna be Butler and Oakley...Are you sure you can read? Papa Bull, we was gonna be married tonight, me and Frank. I was gonna be a lady fer him and everything. (*Angry at herself now*) If I wasn't tryin' so hard!

Sitting Bull: You great lady, Annie, you best shot in whole world.

Annie: I wish I'd never seen a gun! (*Fade to black*)

In chapter 3, I suggested that the original lines were read as an assurance for Annie that change was possible. Change is still possible in the film version, but it no longer has to do with reading. Instead of vowing to become like the educated, upper-class women who gain Frank's attention, Annie now openly blames her actions for his departure. The added lines highlight the dangers of being "smart" when hunting for a husband. Clearly planning to be a lady and being a lady are two separate things, particularly for a skilled shooter. As the scene ends, Annie no longer consoles herself with a reprise of her earlier song celebrating her skills; instead she rejects the gun completely.

Across the many revisions of the *Annie Get Your Gun* script, the first scene in act two is often the site of some restructuring that illuminates each production's discussion of gender. Though the plot never changes, the *Wild West* has been in Europe for several months without Frank and Annie has learned to read, the subtle changes in dialogue and in song selection communicate the current ideals of femininity far beyond the basic plot twists. The film capitalizes on Hutton's comedic ability by having Annie reprise Frank's song, "The Girl that I Marry" instead of singing the vocal showcase "Lost in his Arms." As she begins, she burlesques his deep voice and manly delivery of the song, but she then turns sorrowful as she imagines him with the New York debutantes:

Her nails will be polished and in her hair,  
She'll wear a gardenia and he'll be there.  
'Stead of flittin' he'll be sittin'  
Next to her and she'll purr like a kitten.  
A doll he can carry,  
The girl that he'll marry...(breaks off in tears).

As she cries, the camera reinforces her domestic dilemma as it pans to a show poster of Annie with the title “World’s Foremost Lady Sharpshooter.”

Finally, across the production history of the musical, the radical changes to the end of the play most clearly illuminate the cultural context and are the site of the most pointed gender commentary. In each version, Frank’s jealousy causes him to reject Annie after she reveals her medals. In the film, he tosses off different domestic slights than in the original, such as “Steady tendin’ the house she’d be tendin’ her guns” and “steady stayin’ home sewin’ she’d be out hittin’ targets.” Though they are only slightly changed from his cooking references in the original, they provide a more specific definition of the woman’s role in the domestic realm. Also, instead of allowing Frank to reprise “The Girl That I Marry,” which Hutton reprised on the cattle boat, the action flows right into their challenge song, “Anything You Can Do.”

The contest and its outcome remains the same, but the final lines are altered. Rather than allowing Annie to declare “Butler and Oakley...in alphabetical order!*[sic]*” the producers gave the line to Howard Keel, who asks, “Butler and Oakley?” with a look on his face that assures Annie that a challenge at this point would sink the deal. He is, in effect, checking to see if she had finally learned her lesson. She assures him that she has, replying, “In alphabetical order.” The camera then cuts to the entire chorus singing “There’s No Business Like Show Business.” By ending this way, the film cuts out the few lines left in the original script. This may seem insignificant, but these lines are the most indicative of the post-war gender tensions regarding women’s war work and the returning veterans. The original script ends with:

Annie: What's everybody starin' at? He won the match! Give him the medals, Little Jake.

Frank: Oh, no Annie. These belong to you, honey.

Annie: No, you won 'em, and you keep 'em.

Frank: Bill...we're gonna combine the shows, and this'll start 'em off.

Annie: Oh, Frank, I love ye fer that. That's the nicest think ye ever done...but if'n ye hadn't done it, I'd a shot ye right in the belly button!

In retrospect, these lines written just five years earlier seem to illustrate some of the respect women had earned during the war. When Frank refused the medals and the children gathered around as they planned the new show, these actions reinforced the hopeful outlook American families had in the immediate post-war years. And when Annie threatened to use her skills to keep him in line, she reveals the true power women realized they possessed after serving their country so well. By cutting these lines, the 1950 film ends with Hutton gazing up at Keel and capitulating once again and the audience leaves content in the notion that Annie has chosen second best and is happy to stay in that position.

Three aspects of Hutton's performance as Annie, her physical humor, her voice, and her appearance, distinguish her from Merman and Martin and made her perfect for the wider film audience. As Charles Waters suggested, Hutton liked to "chew up the scenery" and "tear down the curtains." Although she was a movie star, her performance mode seemed to belong more to the histrionic nineteenth-century stage than to a medium focused enough to pick up every arched eyebrow. She plays up her tendency to overact in the beginning of the film in order to make Annie's transformation into a "lady" more drastic, with expressions and choreography in "You Can't Get a Man with a Gun" that are reminiscent of Donald O'Connor's

comedy numbers. Her enthusiasm is evident in her face and voice throughout the film, which understandably attracted her movie audience.

Hutton used two different voices for Annie, neither of which measures up to Merman, Martin, or Garland's voice. Her hillbilly twang is appropriately comic and supports her portrayal of gawky, uneducated Annie in "Doin' What comes Natur'lly." Her more romantic voice in her ballad duets with Keel is thin and reedy (and a real disappointment when compared to Garland's). The weakness in her voice is most noticeable when she launches into "They Say it's Wonderful," but she is at her best when belting "No Business Like Show Business" or "I've Got The Sun in the Morning." With all of the stars at M-G-M's disposal, it must be assumed that they settled for personality over vocal talent in order to save the film after the disastrous beginning with Garland.

Hutton's physical appearance, however, did appeal to movie-going audiences. Aside from her blond hair, petite figure, and pretty face, the costumes were the most interesting aspect of Hutton's appearance in the film. After her transformation on the train, Hutton's costumes became very reminiscent of late-1940s women's fashions. Just as Merman's were in the original production, Hutton's clothes are "historical" in a way that reflects the fashions of her own period, and thus subliminally evokes contemporary images, rather than the Wild West. On the train she wore a long A-line skirt with a wide belt at the waist. Her traveling suit jacket had large shoulder pads with a cinched waist and a small peplum and was worn over a long full skirt. As was the vogue in the late-1940s, she also wore gloves and a hat over hair that was styled in big rolling curls. Through the 1940s fashion details in the costumes, women

audience members could visually identify with the clothing and thus the character, thereby increasing the appeal to the nationwide audience. The way the producers crafted the film's advertising images signals that the audience they sought differed vastly from the theatre audiences. The M-G-M producers needed to appeal to a wide cross-section of the country and they did so by marketing the musical aspect of the film and by sexualizing their star.

There are three main images used to advertise the 1950 film version of the musical. All three feature Betty Hutton dressed as Annie and two are similar in pose to Merman's main advertising shots, Annie with her gun and Annie in front of her "show" poster. The most prominent image, from the film poster,<sup>83</sup> is unlike any of the press poses for the other versions of the musical and features Hutton as Annie with no gun. This image, figure 38, has Hutton in an embroidered bright red dress and matching boots. Her body is fully facing front, her gaze is directed to the viewer and her mouth is open as if she is smiling or singing. Her legs are spread slightly and her arms are overhead, reaching up and out as in the last moment of a musical finale. The backdrop seems to be wood paneling and she is surrounded by small cartoon images of the various moments of the show. The significant facet of this image is, of course, the absence of the gun, suggesting that this image was meant to show that this film was a musical and not an ideological piece.

The second image used for advertising the musical has Hutton shot from below eye level, an angle that is unique among the various press images of other Annies (figure 39). This perspective gives the effect of Hutton's very long legs spread wide with her short fringed skirt opening in the front to reveal more skin. It

also minimizes her waist and gives the impression that her gaze is averted while she shoots music notes through a target that is only slightly off-center from the viewer. This image shares space on the advertising poster with the title and credits and her name is carefully superimposed over the slit in her skirt. This image was used on advertising billboards across the country, making Hutton's physical attributes, which were in some cases several stories tall, the focus of the campaign. Though this image is far more sexualized than any other used to appeal to audiences, it also evokes some of the characteristics of the May Lillie and Lillian Smith photos I described in chapter 1. Her stance is confident and able and she actually uses the gun. The intimidating aspect of her skill with the gun is softened by the fact that she aims away from the viewer and also by the musical note bullets, but in contrast to the Martin images, she is clearly in control of the situation and her sexuality, attributes that were common among popular stars like Marilyn Monroe in the early 1950s.

The final advertising image of Hutton, figure 40, is shared by most of the productions, the shot of Annie in front of her Wild West "show" poster. For this shot, Hutton is dressed in an embroidered white dress that matches the image behind her. On the poster she is turned a quarter and is holding the gun at her waist as if she were ready to use it, though it is not aimed at anything. Her gaze is slightly averted and she smiles gently. In front of the poster, Hutton stands facing the viewer, legs spread wide, with a direct gaze and her mouth open. Her arms are in a "musical" pose with one above her head and one out to the side, with open hands. Once again she does not have a gun, stepping even further away from the confident Merman image than Martin did by holding the gun as if it were a prop. The conspicuous absence of the

gun in this image, in addition to the use of the gun in other highly sexualized images in the promotional material for the M-G-M film are indicative of film's wider audience than theatre. As I noted in chapter 2, theatre audiences tend to be upper and upper-middle class who are seeking an intellectual form of entertainment, whereas film and particularly movie musicals reach mass audiences that are generally middle-to-lower-class and seeking escape or entertainment. By removing the gun from Hutton's hands or having her use it in a way she never does in the film, the producers are releasing her persona from any plot or character constraints and simply appealing to audiences with Hutton's physical attributes and comedic exuberance because they believed that would be what would generate box office sales.

M-G-M released the film on May 23, 1950, and Hutton won "unanimous raves" from critics, but her appeal for the audience can best be assessed by the popularity of the film, which became one of M-G-M's highest grossing films and brought in over 8 million dollars.<sup>84</sup> In a fascinating anecdote, Fordin relates an exchange between M-G-M Studio Head Schary and producer Arthur Freed:

After the preview, Schary tells Freed how great the picture is. 'However, Arthur,' he says, 'the shooting match has to be cut'...naturally everybody thought it was a joke. But he was serious.' After the meeting the consensus of opinion was that Schary perhaps didn't realize that the central point of the story *was* the shooting match; or that, he just didn't understand musicals.<sup>85</sup>

Indeed, Schary may not have understood musicals, but he did understand his audience. The central point of Fields' original story may have been the shooting match, but the central point of the film was romance and entertainment. Schary instinctively realized that the themes of competition and graceful retirement were no longer as relevant to the 1950s audiences and, as I will argue in the next section, in

the decade following the war, the reigning ideologies of domesticity and femininity shaped audiences and in turn shaped the popular culture.

### **AS SOFT AND AS PINK AS A NURSERY: 1957 NBC TELEVISION SPECIAL**

During the 1950s, the nation and the world's political climates were turbulent. The Cold War dominated the American mindset with intermingled notions of power, prosperity, patriotism, and ever-present danger. Elaine Tyler May asserts in *Homeward Bound*:

The values of the white middle class...shaped the dominant political and economic institutions that affected all Americans [in the 1950s]. Those who did not conform were likely to be marginalized, stigmatized, and disadvantaged as a result....These [cultural] norms represented the ideal toward which upwardly mobile Americans strove, and reflected the standard against which nonconforming individuals were judged....During the post-war years, there were no groups in the United States for whom these norms were irrelevant.<sup>86</sup>

As the nuclear age dawned, Americans yearned for security after the Depression's economic distress and the war's disruption and devastation of family life. The defining principle in both government and domestic activities during this decade was containment because, as May notes, "Containment was the key to security." The political ideology of containment infiltrated the popular culture and the homes of Americans through Cold War rhetoric, the strict division of gender roles at home and at work, and the threat of marginalization or stigmatization for non-conformity.<sup>87</sup>

At this time, American culture turned, as it had many times before, to the image of the American woman in order to get its bearings. By idealizing the notions of femininity that the OWI's campaign had promoted late in the war, post-war American popular culture had created a phenomenon that Betty Friedan labeled the

“feminine mystique,” which posited that “the highest value and the only commitment for women is the fulfillment of their own femininity.”<sup>88</sup> American society, anxious about pending changes in the American way of life, had seized upon the concept of exaggerated femininity as a means of reasserting control over some aspect of everyday life and, by the mid-1950s, text and images touting feminine activities, behaviors, and fashion pervaded advertising and entertainment in magazines, films, and the new medium of television. As a result, the decade after World War II brought a tremendous change in women’s place in society and in the manner of their representation.

For a while, it seemed as if American women were buying into the ideology of femininity by abandoning higher education and becoming housewives at a faster rate than ever. The proportion of women attending college in comparison with men dropped from 47 percent in 1920 to 35 percent in 1958 and, by the end of the 1950s, women’s average marriage age dropped into the teens.<sup>89</sup> Friedan notes that the pervasiveness of the feminine mystique led the millions of new American housewives to believe they should be completely fulfilled, as “their only dream was to be perfect wives and mothers; their highest ambition was to have five children and a beautiful house, their only fight to get and keep their husbands.”<sup>90</sup> These former war workers were also becoming mothers at an alarming rate since it was believed that “an essential ingredient in winning the cold war was presumably the rearing of strong and able offspring.”<sup>91</sup> The post-war baby boom continued to swell throughout the 1950s.<sup>92</sup>

Issues surrounding married women's employment also continued along post-war trends by polarizing along gender lines. As I suggested earlier in the chapter, the ideal feminine job became the role of "consumer." May defines consumerism as "not an end in itself, [but] the means for achieving individuality, leisure, and upward mobility."<sup>93</sup> According to scholar Lori Landay in, "Millions 'Love Lucy': Commodification and the Lucy Phenomenon," the idealization of "material acquisition, [and] attaining a successful, white, middle-class lifestyle" dominated the mindset of American married couples and the wife's main role was to transform "the husband's income into commodities."<sup>94</sup> American women now filled the important position of "head of purchasing" in their new suburban homes. They were in charge of buying the appliances for the new homes, buying the food to cook on the new stove and store in the new fridge and freezer, as well as buying the clothing that would be worn by the new children and cleaned in the new washer. This focus, May notes, led to a rise in consumer spending of "sixty percent in the five years after World War II" and an increase of two-hundred and forty percent in "spending on household furnishings and appliances."<sup>95</sup> One appliance in particular, the television, burst into the mass market in the 1950s and had almost saturated the market with thirty-seven million televisions in American homes by 1956.<sup>96</sup>

Television served as the perfect medium for the ideology of the feminine mystique since its content and advertising inextricably combined the paradigm of marriage and the consumerist ethos, ultimately affecting the very manner in which women were represented. Television is the consumer item that sells other consumer items to the family by showing model families in everyday life.<sup>97</sup> Television had

both the self-reflexive qualities of the theatre and the mass market potential of film. For these reasons, the commentary on television regarding gender roles became all the more powerful. On *I Love Lucy*, one of the most popular programs in the early 1950s, neighbor Fred Mertz quipped, ‘When it comes to money, there are two kinds of people; the earners and the spenders. Or as they are more popularly known, husbands and wives.’” Landay notes, “[Mertz’s] joke recognizes a key facet of post-war ideology, a cluster of ideals and expectations at the crossroads of mainstream representations of gender roles, marriage, domesticity, and consumerism. ‘People’ are divided into two types, each defined by their relationship to the mass consumer culture, and that division of labor is sexual.”<sup>98</sup>

Ironically, the consumer culture that was meant to cement women’s lives in domesticity soon led to a blurring of these strictly divided gender roles, bringing more married women into the work force than had been employed during the war. This challenge to “the gendered separation of the ‘earners and spenders’” passed quietly in the early 1950s due to the part-time nature of their work, the still latent feminist movement, and the overriding fears of marginalization in society. However, the potential danger of millions of mothers returning to the full-time work force in turn increased the intense focus on femininity, motherhood, and domesticity.<sup>99</sup> With fulfilling work outside of the home denied to them, American women transitioned quickly from domestic goddesses to isolated and discontented suburban housewives seeking liberation.

The seeds of discontent were beginning to blossom among housewives, and although it was merely an undercurrent, American culture felt this shift in attitude on

many levels. By the late 1950s, the safety and security of the home guarded by the housewife became paramount in both the media and the minds of Americans.<sup>100</sup> Fear drove American society, with increasing apprehension regarding the nuclear bomb, Communism, and losing the “American way of life.”<sup>101</sup> Historian Brett Harvey asserts, “Everyone understood very well that women’s independence threatened the very heart of American society, the family.”<sup>102</sup> In response to this threat, the ideal image of the American woman became even softer and sweeter, ushering in a different kind of heroine.

By the mid-1950s, film icon Marilyn Monroe had traded in the dangerous and aggressive sexuality of her post-war *film noir* characters and began to play the “harmless ‘sex kitten,’ whose childlike innocence and sexual allure contribute to men’s power and enjoyment, without threatening them.”<sup>103</sup> In *American Beauty*, Lois Banner notes that Monroe’s “light lispng voice,” “soft curvaceous body,” and “seriousness about life” combined to project “an intense femininity and inner vulnerability.” Many young women imitated Monroe during these years, dyeing their hair blond and adopting an equally vacuous and sexualized image of femininity.

However, by the mid 1950s, “innocence had reasserted itself” and stars who evoked the image of the American housewife had gained popularity.<sup>104</sup> The image these women cultivated was a new kind of femininity that did not rely on sexuality in the traditional physical sense, because in their very role as “housewife” they symbolized containment. Banner argues that, in film,

This repressive view of women was embodied in the two principal models of beauty. As portrayed by Debbie Reynolds or Sondra Dee, the adolescent beauty was immature and intent primarily on securing a husband. Adult versions of adolescent actresses, portrayed by June Allyson or Doris Day were

as insipid and subordinate to men as the younger film actresses, whom they resembled in physical type. Housewives were now glorified; career women were pictured as dangerous or neurotic.<sup>105</sup>

On television Donna Reed and Harriet Nelson, the now iconic 1950s moms, embodied this heroine. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, popular television programs like *I Love Lucy* (1951-1957), *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* (1952-1966), *Father Knows Best* (1954-1960), and *Leave it to Beaver* (1957-1963) promoted the perception that American families were living an idealized life and helped firmly entrench the housewife/mother as the American feminine ideal, prompting one historian to call the 1950s, “the peak in American self-deception.”<sup>106</sup>

While television inculcated millions into the happy housewife syndrome, it also reflected domestic crises in its programming. One housewife on television, the comically imperfect and significantly red-headed Lucille Ball who played Lucy Ricardo on *I Love Lucy*, dealt with the conflicting desires of needing to work for what she wanted and the confines of feminine domesticity. According to Landay, Lucy was forced into trickery that “oscillated between ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ social roles, spaces, and practices and metaphors” as a result of her status as a married woman and the “limitations of the feminine mystique of post-war domesticity.” Lucy often had to rely on her “feminine wiles” in order to get what she wanted from husband Ricky Ricardo. When Ricky denied Lucy’s wishes, she adopted the “masculine” role and figured out a way to achieve her goal, frequently landing herself in hot water. By the end of each episode, everything righted itself and traditional gender roles prevailed, but Landay observes, “In a rapidly changing post-war society when the gap between the ideology of polarized gender roles clashed so powerfully

with the social experience of American men and women, Lucy's inability to reconcile her ambitions and her social position articulated increasing tensions about gender."<sup>107</sup> *I Love Lucy* could address these tensions because of the comic nature of the show and Lucy's already marginalized status as the wife of a Latin man, played by her real-life husband Desi Arnez. However, the impression that Lucy's trickery masculinized her illustrated the dangers of this kind of independent behavior to the millions of viewers who made the show number one in the ratings for most of the 1950s.

The themes that Landay highlights in housewife Lucy Ricardo's 1950s television reality that resonated strongly with American viewers are also present in Annie Oakley's conflict with Frank Butler in *Annie Get Your Gun*. Oakley is also masculinized by her skill and independence although she eventually learns to use her feminine wiles instead of her gun to get her man. For Mary Martin, the star of the 1940s national tour, the story's affirmation of traditional gender roles still held great potential in 1957. As I noted earlier in this chapter, Martin returned to the role of Annie Oakley a decade after her first national tour in the part as a very different performer. Over the 1950s, Martin had become a bona fide star and powerful producer and the next section will pick up the thread of Martin's biography in order to establish why she needed *Annie Get Your Gun* to help feminize her star persona for an American public obsessed with conformity.

### **TOMBOY GET YOUR GUN!**

While Martin toured as Annie Oakley from 1947-1948, Rodgers and Hammerstein kept her in mind as they created "cockeyed optimist" Nellie Forbush for

1949's smash hit *South Pacific*. The role of Nellie was a departure for Martin from the would-be glamour-girl roles that Hollywood had tried to force her into. Nellie was a "cornfed" and "immature and incurably green" heroine and she would be the first of three roles that would solidify Martin's place in the history of musical theatre; the others were Peter Pan and Maria in *The Sound of Music*. In each of these roles, Martin continued to display widely divergent aspects of her personality that combined to form a persona that pleased audiences yet confounded reviewers' descriptive abilities. Each of these characters also mark a serious departure from the culturally ideal 1950s woman and the softer and sweeter heroines of the time. As Stacy Wolf observes in *A Problem Like Maria*, the parts that have been written for Martin "are known, in part, for their innocence and apparent lack of conventional sexiness."<sup>108</sup> Martin's physical appearance and star persona changed significantly with the role of Nellie Forbush. In her extraordinarily detailed account of Martin's career, Wolf argues that Martin's enduring star persona can be identified as "tomboy" and her performances can be read as lesbian.<sup>109</sup> While the aim of this study is not to locate Martin's sexuality as lesbian, many facets of Wolf's argument, specifically Martin's identity as the "tomboy," help to illuminate the impact of Martin's television appearance as Annie Oakley in 1957.

Despite the fact that Martin was thirty-five years old when she began playing Nellie Forbush, she is consistently described by viewers in youthful terms, either as a "girl" or "tomboyish." Still "Broadway's sweetheart" after "My Heart Belongs to Daddy" and 1943's *One Touch of Venus*, Martin received rave reviews in 1949 as the perky nurse with short cropped hair. She cut her hair for a scene in the musical, in

which she had to wash her hair, but the style quickly became her most identifiable feature and she kept it short throughout the rest of her career. Wolf links Martin's hairstyle to her "ambiguous performance of femininity" and notes that Martin's tomboyish look was "in sharp contrast to other prevalent images of women and women stars in the films, television, and theatre of the 1950s-- Elizabeth Taylor's glamour girl, Marilyn Monroe's sex kitten, Irene Dunn's wife, Donna Reed's mother, [and] Debbie Reynolds' ingénue."<sup>110</sup>

Brooks Atkinson's description of her *South Pacific* performance as "full of quicksilver, pertness and delight" underlines the "unconventional" femininity that both Ethan Mordden and Stacy Wolf describe.<sup>111</sup> He was also sure to note:

There seems to be a little of Annie Oakley, the gun-girl, left in Miss Merman's attack on a song, and perhaps this should be exorcised by slow degrees. For the Navy nurse is a few cuts above Annie socially. Miss Martin is the girl who can make her captivating without deluging her in charm.<sup>112</sup>

Atkinson's sensitivity to Oakley's rough, tomboy nature and his certainty that youthful Martin possesses the feminine allure necessary to soften Nellie is indicative of the new expectations for 1950s heroines. Despite the fact that he had not perceived this softness on stage that evening, he instinctively knew that her more "boyish" qualities, as Wolf asserts, were not "threatening" but instead simply suggested that she lacked the more negative feminine traits of insincerity and "coyness."<sup>113</sup> During her four year run in *South Pacific*, Martin worked hard to mold her star persona to appeal to the swiftly changing audience ideals by drawing attention to her girlish nature and her off-stage role as wife and mother.

The appearance of youthful vitality was one of the keys to the girlish allure audiences desired and, since Martin was not traditionally beautiful, she highlighted

this appealing aspect of her personality in several personal *New York Times* articles chronicling her time as Nellie. In these articles, she directly addressed her audience in a conversational tone, detailing her days and her vacation plans as any housewife might over coffee. Martin highlights her girlishness in her first correspondence by describing herself as “like a bobby-soxer” when meeting someone she admired backstage and recalling, “my happiest period was probably that in high school when I was 15-16, and played the leads in our school plays back home. I had just as much fun then as I am having now, without the pressure.”<sup>114</sup> Martin was famous for her perky presence and for genuinely loving her work, a combination that bolsters her girlish aura. Other young wives and mothers in her audience could certainly relate to her youthful presence, as well as the romantic nature of her widely publicized marriage to Richard Halliday.

Martin had married Richard Halliday on May 5, 1940. It was her second marriage, after a brief marriage to a high-school sweetheart. In one article from 1943, Martin and Halliday’s courtship is briefly detailed (he was apparently appalled by her strip-tease to “My Heart Belongs to Daddy”), but newspaper articles did not focus on her role as a wife until the early 1950s. Martin shared with her *New York Times* audience the importance of her home and family life when she described her pre-show routine in 1950:

First I keep my mind so occupied with other things that singing, dancing, romping through the show becomes relaxation. I’ve done this by reading in my dressing room. I’ve read *The Life of Ghandi* then Tolstoy’s *The Kingdom of God is Within You* from which Ghandi got much of his inspiration....Lately, reading has begun to tire me, and now I am making a rug in needle point and petit point. It was designed by my husband. It will illustrate our home life and depict our house in the country, our children, our

flowers, our animals and so on. It's a big job that will take a lot of concentrated work.<sup>115</sup>

Her sentiments reflect the lives of the many college educated American housewives who had given up on education in favor of marriage and family. Martin's admission that reading "tires" her and that she is much more excited about her needlepoint project illuminates the words of the blonde, pony-tailed college student from the 1950s that Freidan wrote about in *The Feminine Mystique*. The college senior sadly confessed, "You can say you're going to keep on reading and be interested in the community. But that's not the same. You won't really go on. It's a disappointment to know you're going to stop now, and not go on and use [your education]."<sup>116</sup> In both May and Friedan's studies of college women in the 1950s, the young women fully hoped to "graduate with diamond rings on their fingers" and to devote their lives to helping their husbands get ahead and raising their children.<sup>117</sup> While Martin had certainly not given up her career, but her marriage has been called by one biographer, "one of the great love stories of the twentieth-century stage."<sup>118</sup>

Unfortunately for Martin's image, she was the more successful mate in her marital relationship so she had a disadvantage as the housewife heroine. There were, Wolf asserts, also indications that the marriage was not the heterosexual norm but, rather, a "passing marriage."<sup>119</sup> Wolf convincingly argues that both Martin and Halliday's private (off stage) personas were "life-performances" that were "self-consciously constructed and acted."<sup>120</sup> She asserts that they "reversed stereotypical gender roles" with his "penchant for food and flowers" and her disinterest "in cooking, decorating [and] other domestic activities." In what can only be described as a series of striking similarities to Annie Oakley and Frank Butler's relationship,

Halliday responded to this awkward dynamic by quitting his successful career as an executive at Paramount Pictures in order to manage Martin's career and act as what Joshua Logan later called her "mentor." In another parallel to Oakley and Butler's relationship, the press and biographers "downplayed the unusual division of labor in their marriage and emphasized the management aspect of Halliday's activities."<sup>121</sup> Halliday's refined presence also polished Martin's sometimes too "direct" Texas persona, in the same way that "worldly" Frank Butler guided backwoods Annie Moses through the process of becoming Annie Oakley. Wolf argues:

Halliday's gayness gets rewritten as "class," his (hetero) masculinity also evoked through implications that he gave Martin "class." Although this is patently untrue, as she grew up in a very comfortable middle-class home, but by characterizing Martin as a simple, downhome, rural, lower-class, country girl, this narrative effectively masculinizes Halliday through class and sustains Martin's performance—while she lives in an Upper East Side penthouse—as a simple-at-heart.<sup>122</sup>

Halliday ran the business end of his wife's career, but Martin stressed that one of his primary jobs was to "see to it that I've some time left for my home and children."<sup>123</sup> The role of mother to her young daughter and older son from her previous marriage took up a good deal of her attention, at least in the press.

Although Martin gave birth to her son, Larry Hagman, as a married girl at age eighteen, he played only a very minor role in her life after she left Texas in the 1930s.

In fact, as Stacy Wolf points out:

Martin's first marriage wasn't publicly revealed until she married Halliday...When Martin did disclose her first marriage and the existence of her child, the press did not express dismay at Martin's secrecy but rather recuperated those events into a narrative in which Martin had been a child herself, simple and unknowing. The publicity around Martin never shows her as a bad mother who left her child; she is only characterized as innocently, properly feminine.<sup>124</sup>

News reports throughout her career reference Hagman's New York visits while on leave from the military academy or trips to see her in London while training in the Air Force. In her second installment to the *New York Times* during her run of *South Pacific*, Martin displays a good deal of motherly concern for her son, who was now eligible for the Korean War draft. She describes with fervor three young soldiers who came to her dressing room just before shipping out: "They came. They were the real thing, like your boys and mine. The best we have."<sup>125</sup>

In contrast to the somewhat forced performance of motherly attention to Hagman, starting in 1943 newspaper articles are filled with descriptions of Martin's relationship with her daughter Mary Heller Halliday. "Heller" was born in 1941 and always traveled with her parents, even playing in the touring cast of *Annie Get Your Gun* with her mother at age five. Even while in London, Martin continued to highlight her role as mother in accordance with American ideals. Martin brought Heller for her year of *South Pacific* at Drury Lane and proudly described eleven-year-old Heller's progress at Sadler's Wells ballet school in her final installment to the *New York Times* in 1952.<sup>126</sup> In the same article, she also reinforced her American audience's image of her girlish nature as she got ready to leave Nellie Forbush behind, writing, "As every mother's daughter in the world will understand, I'm going to let my hair grow—my red badge, not of courage, but of freedom."<sup>127</sup> Martin's focus on a more feminine physical appearance in conjunction with her position as a "daughter" underscores the importance of her feminine image to her star persona.

Martin played "good-natured" ensign Nellie until 1953, during the American musical theatre's Golden Age. Rodgers and Hammerstein had renovated the form in

the mid-1940s and by the 1950s many composers and writers had followed their lead and were producing artistically integrated musical comedies that were playing to packed houses. Ethan Mordden recounts that as a result of the genre's status in the popular culture, both Martin and Merman were big stars in the 1950s. They were sought after for Broadway shows and television guest appearances because, as Mordden notes:

They were unique specialists whose specialties became norms for youngsters to aim for. And when, on June 15, 1953, these two women appeared in public for the first time as a pair, on television, in a marathon duet of old standards, such a furore[sic] arose that, for a moment, musical comedy seemed like the nation's most cherished art, the diversion it had first been and the stimulation it had become, at once. It was perhaps the last time that the country turned as a unit to the Broadway musical.<sup>128</sup>

However, Halliday ensured that it was not the last time television would turn to Martin.

In 1954, *McCall's* magazine, then the most popular women's magazine, reported that "the defining characteristic of the ideal family was 'togetherness,' a 'new and warmer way of life' in which women and men sought to achieve fulfillment 'not as women alone or men alone, isolated from one another, but as a family sharing a common experience'." Sociologists Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg in *Domestic Revolutions* note that in the mid-1950s, "Family togetherness quickly became a national ideal, seized upon by advertisers, ministers, and newspaper editors."<sup>129</sup> Once again, Martin, who had experienced the perils of not appealing to mainstream America during her film career, used her family ties to claim her place in the prevailing cultural norm.

Beyond *South Pacific*, Halliday, in his role as manager/husband, continued to figure prominently in Martin's press coverage and in her employment. One reporter even commented on their indivisible nature during his interview promoting her 1954 play, *Kind Sir*. He stated:

"I" is a pronoun that rarely creeps into the conversation of Miss Martin and Halliday—both almost always say "we." "We thought." "We felt." "We hoped." "We decided." A question directed to Miss Martin is frequently answered by Halliday, with Miss Martin merely adding agreement to her husband's words.<sup>130</sup>

It was also clear that her husband was the man running her career as Martin happily recalled in the same interview:

On the last night of *South Pacific*...Richard called me and said, "Josh just phoned from New York. You're going to do *Kind Sir*." "I'm going to do what?" I said. At that moment I was so tired physically and mentally I didn't want to do anything...It was really all settled by Richard and Josh. I was just so tired I was happy I didn't have to make up my own mind; it was made up for me.<sup>131</sup>

Martin seemed quite content with her marital and managerial relationship, as it only supported her position as the housewife heroine and Halliday likely recognized the career importance of Martin's role in *Kind Sir*. Martin's physical appearance in the role of Jane Kimball, "a sophisticated older woman with long hair and six Mainbocher gowns and shoes that [had] been specially designed and redesigned" strengthened her connection to the femininity of the 1950s ideal woman and effectively erased Nellie Forbush's "immature and incurably green" tomboy image. When a reporter asked Martin what "gave her that quality that seems to light up a stage," she avoided any reference to her own talent or love of the stage, but rather turned to thoughts of her family, invoking the "togetherness" so in vogue at the moment by simply replying, "I think we've had an awfully nice life."<sup>132</sup>

By 1954, Martin and Halliday had invested a good deal of energy into the image of their romantic heterosexual marriage and, despite her role as the breadwinner in the family, Martin's connection to Heller Halliday only bolstered the popular wife/mother image. In order to fully understand the impact of Martin's portrayal of Annie Oakley in the 1957 televersion of *Annie Get Your Gun*, it is important to first recognize 1950s attitudes toward homosexuality in conjunction with Martin's next role as Peter Pan.

Martin began her wildly successful run of *Peter Pan* in 1954, which she toured and reprised until 1960. Again the musical was a family affair, as Halliday helped produce the show and Martin took great joy in the fact that Heller Halliday co-starred as the dancing maid Liza. The tour began in San Francisco and later moved to Broadway for a short run and many of the articles and press shots surrounding *Peter Pan* featured this familial connection, showing mother and daughter dancing together or rehearsing. Martin's role as the happy wife and doting mother was crucial at this time in order to offset the marriage's "reversed gender roles" in the face of American society's obsession with sexual containment in the mid-1950s.

Elaine Tyler May, in *Homeward Bound*, states that during the Cold War many members of the American government "believed wholeheartedly that there was a direct connection between communism and sexual depravity." She explains the logic behind the cultural war on homosexuality in this way:

National strength depended upon the ability of strong, manly men to stand up against communist threats.... According to the common wisdom of the time, "normal" heterosexual behavior culminating in marriage represented "maturity" and "responsibility;" therefore those who were "deviant" were, by definition, irresponsible, immature and weak [and therefore easy prey for communist tactics].<sup>133</sup>

The continuing investigation into un-American activities that had begun in the late 1940s and ravaged the entertainment industry focused heavily on sexual perversion and relied on rumor. For these reasons alone, it is understandable that, if Wolf's assertions are correct, Halliday and Martin would strive to "maintain a stable marriage."<sup>134</sup> However, given the overt homosexual connections to James M. Barrie's original text, Martin's physical appearance as Peter, and *Peter Pan's* phenomenal reception on television, "passing" as a heterosexual couple in a happy "normal" marriage became increasingly important during this time.

Mary Martin pursued the role of Peter Pan for several years before finally commissioning Moose Charlap and Carolyn Leigh to compose the musical in the early 1950s. Charlap and Leigh based the musical on James M. Barrie's Victorian play which scholars have often analyzed as a biographical fantasy that illuminates Barrie's own "latent homosexuality and sometimes-repressed pedophilia." The role of Peter, the boy who "won't grow up," is often read, as Wolf notes, "as an expression of [Barrie's] own adult and heterosexual refusals" and, therefore, the play itself becomes "an explicit rejection of heterosexuality."<sup>135</sup> Martin claimed, "I cannot even remember a day when I didn't want to be Peter," and Wolf asserts that "Martin's real and/or rhetorical overidentification with the role of Peter Pan underlines a sense of her identity of nonheteronormative—that is, not heterosexual in a socially conventional way."<sup>136</sup> She was passionately invested in the role calling, it "the most important thing she had ever done in the theatre."<sup>137</sup>

In 1954, at forty-one years old, Martin had been married for thirteen years and had a thirteen-year-old daughter and a twenty-three-year-old son. She had played

glamour girls on film and on stage as well as tomboys like Oakley and Forbush and she now launched herself into the role of her life, a young boy. Martin cut her hair to an extremely short “butch” style to play Peter, a “breeches role” by definition, and began to learn Jerome Robbins’ athletic choreography that Wolf argues coded the performance as both masculine and lesbian.<sup>138</sup> Reviewers once again responded to Martin’s performance with a mixture of positive adjectives that remained, for the most part, sexually neutral. Walter Kerr remarked in his *Herald Tribune* review on October 21, 1954, “I don’t know what all the fuss is about. I always knew Mary Martin could fly. She’s always bounced along as though the earth were made of innerspring mattresses, and that piping, rollicking voice of hers would carry anyone aloft, wires or no wires, any old time.”<sup>139</sup> And Brooks Atkinson, in the *New York Times*, described Martin as “looking trim and happy,” calling her “the liveliest Peter Pan in the record book.”<sup>140</sup> His other articles on the production echo these sentiments, describing her performance as “daring,” “tender,” and full of “gusto.”<sup>141</sup> As far as the audience’s reception of Martin as tomboy or lesbian or sexually ambivalent, Atkinson’s review offers one of the most telling comments that conflates the above examined issues of class and gender in an attempt to “own” or “contain” Martin’s character. He concludes, “A lot of the exuberance of Texas has stolen into the legend now. Peter Pan may have been a proper Victorian original. He is a healthy, fun-loving American now.”<sup>142</sup> The popularity of this touring production and Broadway run led to three overwhelmingly popular television broadcasts of *Peter Pan* in 1955, 1956, and 1960.

Historian William H. Chafe explains, “Television altered the shape of the culture, bringing people from the most disparate backgrounds together in a common experience.”<sup>143</sup> As noted above, television quickly became the favorite purveyor of popular culture in the 1950s when markets expanded across the country and color programming began. Soon producers and advertisers began to recognize that the “great power of broadcasting lies, without question, in its ability to capture and hold the imagination of an entire country—on occasion literally to grab the country by its collective lapel.”<sup>144</sup> Programming reflected and even celebrated the cultural norms of the day and shows like *Ozzie and Harriet* and *Father Knows Best* “reassured Americans that traditional male authority and female subservience offered the only true way to happiness.”<sup>145</sup> By 1955, three out of every four American homes had a television set, with many more color sets purchased each year.

Capitalizing on the phenomenon of television, the National Broadcasting System (NBC) financed Mary Martin’s flight into living rooms across the country on March 7, 1955 and January 9, 1956. As one Martin biographer notes, “millions of children grew up with Mary Martin forever etched in their minds, and in their hearts as Peter Pan.”<sup>146</sup> This was no exaggeration, as Richard A. Pinkham the Vice President of NBC acknowledged the broadcast in an address to television advertisers in October 1956 as one of the moments that television held all of America under its spell. An estimated fifty-five to sixty million people watched as the tomboy who refused to grow up dueled with Captain Hook and led the rag-tag bunch of Lost Boys around their own private island.

The television reviewers found Martin's performance to be delightful, but similarly struggled with descriptors to encapsulate Martin's persona and the role, describing her Peter as a "believable youthful sprite—boyish, piquant and lovable."<sup>147</sup> And after the January 9, 1956 airing of *Peter Pan*, Jack Gould exclaimed in the *New York Times*, "Prior to last night's performance there were some printed reports that Miss Martin might not do future performances of *Peter Pan* on television because of the exhausting demands of the role. Miss Martin grow old? Never, never."<sup>148</sup> The fervent response to *Peter Pan* was possibly both a blessing and a curse for Martin in the mid-1950s, because while the extraordinary popularity of the musical made Martin a household name and a very rich woman, it also embedded her tomboy image in the minds of millions more audience members than she could have reached on the stage or on film. Her most beloved role effectively erased her years of carefully performed heterosexuality and threatened to marginalize her as a performer and as a woman. In response to this potential danger, Halliday and Martin actively pursued the last role she had played before signing on as tomboy Nellie Forbush.<sup>149</sup>

Annie Oakley's legendary image combined the appeal of feminine charm with the potential for power, and her status as a single woman, which allowed for romance, made her a perfect vehicle for the ideology of the feminine mystique that controlled America in the 1950s. Annie was a perfect fit for 44-year-old Martin and Martin a perfect fit for the audience of 1957, because as a performer she embodied American women's turbulent search for a feminine identity while straining against the constrictions of 1950s society. However, television's role in shaping the popular culture necessitated that it reassure Americans, rather than escalate the fears of that

women were discontented with their roles in life. This likely explains Martin and Halliday's attraction to *Annie Get Your Gun* after *Peter Pan*. Ethan Mordden, who does not read Martin as a lesbian, asserts that Martin's feminine persona "inspires romance."<sup>150</sup> This femininity, naturally, was the facet of her persona that the couple hoped to highlight in their televised version of the musical. They realized that with a bit of fine tuning, Dorothy Fields' script and Irving Berlin's music could clearly communicate her feminized persona across the medium of television, effectively distancing her from her more famous tomboy roles, *Peter Pan* and *Nellie Forbush*.

Martin's persona had always appealed to viewers of both sexes, as costumer Edith Head pointed out, "First she doesn't antagonize women. They regard her as wholesome, friendly, warm. Any housewife can vicariously live the role Mary enacts...Second, men like her because she is peppy and stimulating without making them feel inferior."<sup>151</sup> Watching Martin's *Annie Oakley* submit to Frank Butler would allow for a multitude of meanings for American audiences. The plot would reify the ideological message of the feminine mystique as middle-class American women would recognize similarities between Annie's biography and their own lives and marital experiences. It would also fortify the idea that, in the end, true romance lies in marriage. Furthermore, American men, women, and children would also see Martin in a role that begins as a tomboy—with physical prowess, aggressiveness and bravado—but ends as a subservient wife. Wolf reiterates that the tomboy character "presents a double threat of gender and sexuality: first, that she will become an adult tomboy—that is a butch or masculine woman; and second, that she will not transfer her affection from girls, horses, and dogs to men but will become a lesbian."<sup>152</sup> As

Annie, Martin's tomboy masculinity, and the danger of further sexual perversion, is resolved as she strives to grow out of her tomboy "phase" and is taught to be a "pink and white lady." Beyond relieving any doubts regarding Martin's sexuality, watching this conversion through the powerful medium of television served to support the theory that sexual identities were transformable, particularly through love and marriage. In order to accomplish these goals, Martin made some changes to her well-known persona while Halliday's production team made some cuts and revisions to the script.

Martin combined her tomboy look of the 1950s, short hair and simple unisex clothing such as crew neck shirts, shorts, and tights with the look she had when she originally played Annie. In 1947, Martin had been a long-haired brunette Annie with arched eyebrows, so to transform herself from Peter Pan, Martin dyed her hair blond and grew it out long enough for a short ponytail at the back of her head. Martin's costumes were also designed with a softer, more feminine flair. Her white gunnysack dress in the opening scenes was boxy on her petite frame, but had slits in the side to allow her complete freedom of movement as well as to show off her legs. Her Victorian train outfit and performance dress in many ways echoed the 1950s cinched-waist dresses and the look of the television housewife heroine. Elaine Tyler May asserts that 1950s women's fashions were symbols of sexual containment as,

Quasi-Victorian long wide skirts, crinolines and frills were back, along with exaggerated bust lines and curves that created the aura of untouchable eroticism. Female sexuality was, once again, contained in stays and girdles that pinched waists and padded brassieres that made women appear to have large breasts. But the body itself was protected in a fortress of undergarments, warding off sexual contact but promising erotic excitement in the marital bed.<sup>153</sup>

This connection was most clearly defined by Martin's dress on the cattle boat. As she sings "Lost in His Arms" in a very mature voice, she twirls as she imagines waltzing with Frank and her full skirt swirls out around her like a bobby-soxer's might. Martin's appearance in feminine clothing that evoked the current period could only ally her more closely with the viewing audience.

Finally, Martin altered her voice to play a more feminine Oakley for television. She commented several times in her *South Pacific* articles that the tour of *Annie Get Your Gun* had lowered her range by several notes, particularly belting out "You Can't Get a Man With a Gun" for a year, and she had taken voice lessons from an opera coach for the year she played *South Pacific* in London. In the televised version, Martin, like Hutton before her, adopted a goofy hillbilly voice for the first scenes. Unlike Hutton, Martin's voice came across as a nasal, almost "baby" voice. She did not sound like the Martin in *South Pacific* or on the 1953 Ford's Anniversary Special, or in later television interviews. The voice sounded a bit like Peter Pan's, which Wolf calls "babyish" or "childlike," but that character's voice is more aptly characterized as strident.<sup>154</sup> The hillbilly sound Martin created for Annie had a lilting pattern and a slower cadence that softened the sound in order to evoke both her lack of good breeding and her lack of confidence. She adeptly shifted back to this voice after her transformation to highlight Annie's more insecure or feminine moments, particularly when meeting the debutantes at the ball and during "Anything You Can Do" when she tries to be "sweeter" than Frank.

The script for the November 27, 1957, televised *Annie Get Your Gun*, which Vincent Donohue directed, remained remarkably true to the original Broadway

version, with a few revisions for language and sexual content that were deemed too racy for family viewing and with a few minor characters and storylines cut for time and continuity.<sup>155</sup> In many cases, the discussion of gender is difficult to recognize, mainly because the lines that contain references to gender relations were, for the most part, cut. For example, on the train Frank originally told Annie, “I like you to be ambitious,” and Charlie comments, “Now a woman who can shoot and look something like a lady is a novelty.” In this version, both of these lines are cut with no other lines inserted. Also, Charlie’s comparison of her romance with Frank to a fairy tale is cut since in it he asks, “has he ever asked you to marry him?” and she replies, “Not yit, he ain’t broke out in a cold sweat enough to ask me that. I gotta git him Charlie...How kin I git him.” The acknowledgment that men might resist marriage and the image of the aggressive woman were no longer as acceptable as they had been immediately after the war. The appeal of the controlling man has also apparently changed over the decade between the two productions. In the scene in front of Annie’s “show” poster, analyzed above and in chapter 3, there are subtle cuts that strengthen Frank’s image while mitigating the obvious need for control as the man in the relationship. The following are the original and the cut versions of the dialogue after Frank realizes Annie is getting “star” publicity:

1946 Stage Version

Frank: Sure I’m stuck on her and I want to stay stuck on her. But she’s my project...I’m gonna be the boss...Any man would feel the same Charlie.

Charlie: I thought you’d be tickled. Your own little Annie bigger than life and fifty more like that going up all over town.

Frank: In this town. Not the next. Either that paper goes back the way it was or I quit.

### 1957 Television Version

Frank: Sure I'm stuck on her and I want to stay stuck on her. I'm gonna be the boss. Either that paper goes back the way it was or I quit.

By cutting right to the ultimatum, Frank appears stronger and more decisive in the 1957 version of the script, because he does not explain himself by aligning his attitude with other men or allow for a discussion of his feelings. However, the dialogue that is lost is also conveniently the dialogue that most explicitly shows that Frank has consciously decided that he controls Annie's future. While stating "I'm going to be the boss" echoes the popular 1950s sentiment "I wear the pants in the family," the adapters must have decided that calling her his "project" goes a bit too far.

Beyond the many cuts that would be impossible for the audience to recognize during the broadcast, the adaptation also inserts subtle changes in order to balance the gender power in the play. For example, in the ballroom scene when Frank and Annie first see one another after their long separation, they reprise "They Say it's Wonderful." In the 1957 version, it is Frank instead of Annie who closes the song by picking her up as if crossing the threshold and singing, "To hold a girl in your arms is wonderful, wonderful in every way." Annie then joins with "So they say." Before she makes the great sacrifice at the end of the play, Martin and the character are already giving over power in the form of lyrics and spotlight to her male co-star. When Frank tells her, "I want to give you something," Martin coyly looks away and puts out her ring finger. This patented move, practiced by millions of young women hoping to "graduate with a diamond ring on their finger," serves to underscore Martin's real distress when he offers her his medals instead. She squirms as she

foresees the ensuing argument and plainly conveys that she is torn between wanting to show off and wanting to catch a husband. These subtle revisions in the script and the character portrayals, however, pale in comparison to the three major changes made for the television broadcast: Annie's big trick, the cattle boat scene, and the final moment of the musical.

One of the striking changes in the 1957 version of *Annie Get Your Gun* comes toward the end of the first act. Annie has been preparing to surprise Frank with a new trick in the show and when she performs it he quits the show. In the original Broadway production, as described in chapter 3, Merman wore a black corset and rode on a motorcycle in order to do the stunt. In the televised version, Martin performs in a long sleeve, full-skirted white dress while riding a horse at a full gallop (on a treadmill that is visible in the shot) until the camera fades to black for a commercial. As noted earlier, the pose astride the motorcycle is Annie's most sexually potent moment and has become one of the iconic images of Merman in the role.

Martin had first shied away from this lusty image in her publicity for the 1947 tour, appearing instead on a table. Despite the lack of the motorcycle and the allusion to sexual bondage, Martin's photos from 1947 could still be considered demurely sexy. However, Martin eliminates sexuality completely from the equation in the televised scene (unless one counts the lesbian/horse connection) by remaining in her fancy riding dress and athletically charging about on the horse. It is in this moment that Martin struggles mightily with her tomboy image. The choices in this scene could be an attempt to "launder" the intentionally sexual scene for the broader

viewing public; however, there were many other choices available to Martin that would have supported a more heterosexual display of femininity. Instead, Martin attempts to exude femininity by staring intently ahead of the horse and aiming her gun randomly at spots in the arena, as if she has no sharp-shooting skill whatsoever. After Annie's display in the arena, Frank, in the original script explodes, "I am the biggest sucker in the world. I was crazy over that girl...damn near married her! Her eyes were bright...her face was..." The 1957 producers apparently thought that these lines were too critical of feminine wiles and the perils of marrying quickly, so they instead pick up with his next lines, "I thought she was sweet...simple too... that's a hot one! SIMPLE! In two weeks I'd wound up bein' her assistant...cookin' fer her too more'n likely." Soon after, just as in the original, Frank lets tomboy Annie know that her actions have caused him to leave the show. She recognizes her mistake and lets that audience know that "you can't get a man with a gun."

Unfortunately, the producers also missed an opportunity for Martin to display heterosexual feminine romantic weakness when they chopped up the scene on the cattle boat. There are many plausible reasons for cutting Annie's heartbreaking speech about missing and loving Frank as the Wild West Show approaches New York on a cattle boat; perhaps it was cut for time constraints or perhaps the scene was rearranged to give Martin, who carried the live show, a longer intermission. Whatever the reason, by cutting Annie's only monologue in the show, in which she moves from jilted anger to petulance to exultant love to throwing herself into Frank's arms, the producers effectively maintained Martin's coolly innocent and awkwardly feminine interpretation of Annie. Since the scene was cut, it neither increased nor

decreased the audience's reception of her heterosexuality, but certainly the opportunity for a more sharply defined character was lost.

The final cut that made a major impact in the 1957 production's discussion of gender came after Annie has thrown the sharp-shooting contest. Annie claims the "second best" position and, as in the original script, Frank gallantly tells her, "Don't worry honey, I'll take care of you. From now on we're gonna be partners." In the original stage version Annie proclaims, "Butler and Oakley...in alphabetical order!" However, the television producers decided to cut the remaining lines as M-G-M did in the film version and the camera jumps to the chorus singing "There's No Business Like Show Business." Once again, by cutting these lines, the 1957 production ends with the notion that Annie has chosen second best and is happy to stay in that position. Annie's joy apparently extends beyond her own relationship as a cast full of happy couples serenely glide by the camera until it rests on Annie and Frank on a white horse, as they literally ride off into the sunset; a fitting coda for the ideological message of the piece.

The promotional materials for the NBC production strongly reflect the same ideals of togetherness and heterosexual marital bliss that Martin and Halliday hoped to convey to their national audience. In most of the images, rather than posing alone as Merman and Hutton had, and as she had for her national tour photos, Mary Martin appears consistently with John Raitt, whose very presence feminizes Martin. In the main press shot that became the cover for the cast recording (figure 41), Mary Martin and John Raitt are side by side, both facing the same direction, smiling, and aiming their guns directly at the viewer. They are posed identically, although he crosses the

center of the image, as he takes up proportionally more space in the frame. The two are dressed similarly, but he is in black and she is in white. He is considerably larger than she is, and his dark costume reinforces his dominating presence. The overall impression this picture offers is one of equality, with their striking similarities, but as a result of Raitt's physical dominance Martin is read as markedly feminine.

Three other promotional images that deserve some discussion are all intimate shots of Martin and Raitt without guns. In the first, figure 42, they are wearing their formal attire from the ballroom scene. The shot is of the lovers seated very close to one another, he is turned in profile, almost whispering in her ear, and she faces the "audience" with wide eyes and puckered lips in a feigned expression of surprise. Her satin ballgown is off-the-shoulder, drawing attention to her bare skin and revealing a hint of cleavage. Again, he is clothed in dark colors and she in light, but this time she wears a large tuft of sheer tulle as a choker around her neck and showgirl feathers standing straight up out of her hair. It is important to note that this "moment" never occurs in the production, it is completely staged for audience reception of the relationship. And, although Martin physically dominates this picture, the softening touches, the satin, tulle, feathers, and her expression, serve to feminize her reception.

The other two images show Martin and Raitt in their finale costumes. His is a grey cutaway with black and pink accessories and hers is a white dress with red and pink accents and they both wear white hats. In both images the two are close together, though in one they are rivals and the other they are partners. The rivals image, figure 43, is much like the main press shot described above, the only difference is that they now make eye contact with one another. The partners image,

figure 44, is posed like the ballroom image, but Martin's full attention is now on Raitt. He has his arm around her and she coyly pulls at his string tie. In this photo, Martin uses her "feminine wiles" from her subordinate position as he looks off into the distance, presumably envisioning their happy future as "Butler and Oakley."

In the final promotional shot under analysis, Martin is pictured alone with her gun (figure 45). She is seated and the gun is held erect between her legs. This image, however, does not evoke the masculine phallic imagery of Buffalo Bill's press shots from the Wild West because of Martin's positioning in relation to the gun. The gun is about one foot in front of her and she slouches so that it appears enormous beside her. She curves her body toward the gun and rests her head against it as if it were a man.

Despite the absence of Raitt in this image, Martin remains feminized by her gun. Her hillbilly dress is strikingly feminine compared to the other productions, in its white color and frilled sleeves, and her facial expression serves to bolster the impression of her subservience. Since the tour and the television special were planned together it is likely that these shots served as promotional materials for both, despite the fact that their audiences would be significantly different.

As noted above, the television audience in the mid-1950s had grown exponentially along with the consumer economy. Producers and particularly advertisers took note of this growth and realized that television had virtually unlimited advertising potential that cut across class lines. The president of NBC underscored to advertisers in 1956 the opportunities offered by a television special, exhorting them to "Think of it! More than one third of the total man, woman, and child population of the richest country in the world simultaneously riveting its

attention on a single performance and on the [animated and vocal] sales message which accompanies it.”<sup>156</sup> The potential windfall for Pontiac and Pepsi-Cola, the sponsors of Martin’s *Annie Get Your Gun* was even greater, since the program aired the evening before Thanksgiving, a night most families spend relaxing at home and getting ready for the holiday. The reviewer for *Variety* exclaimed, “Whatever the cost, and it was plenty even by today’s high-cost-of-tv standards, they got themselves the buy of the season.”<sup>157</sup>

As popular culture scholar William Boddy notes, “The [television] viewer watches commercials in the same way that he watches programs—in fact he looks for the same things in commercials that he seeks in programming. He does *not* think of commercials as something different and apart from programs.”<sup>158</sup> Each company produced three special commercials for the two-hour event, capitalizing on the musical nature of the context and the impending family holiday. Pontiac’s “slick” choreographed productions attempted, in fact, to create continuity between the show’s segments by utilizing three of Berlin’s songs from the show, “Buffalo Bill,” “My Defenses are Down,” and “I’ve the Sun in the Morning.”<sup>159</sup> In general, Pontiac geared its advertisements toward the male segment of the audience, which is in line with the previous discussions of purchasing power and luxury items in chapter 3. Performed live in New York, the first two commercials feature a man singing new lyrics to these tunes that either glorify the Pontiac or convey his love for his Pontiac. The following verse illustrates the ways in which the Pontiac advertisers drew on the immediate nature of the musical and particularly on Frank’s weakest moment, as the man sings:

I looked around at many new cars,  
Most of them in the pack...  
I thought I'd pass up any new car  
I had to change my tack...  
I met the Pontiac!  
My defenses are down  
The Pontiac has got me and I'm  
Pleased as I can be....  
From the minute I walked in the showroom...  
It was Pontiac for me....<sup>160</sup>

The advertisers, by using the song in which Frank confesses his love for his girl and his plans to make the commitment of marriage, equate the car with a girl and signing the lease with marriage. In this case, however, the man singing is not “in an awful jam” the way Frank describes his predicament, rather he’s “pleased” as he can be. He looks into the camera and asks the millions of American men watching at home, “Can you blame a guy?” Indeed they could not; they were too busy humming along.

Pepsi’s commercials were taped before the production and utilized “personality pitches” from stars like Harpo Marx and Joan Crawford. Their ads were aimed at the family, and specifically targeted housewives, the ultimate “consumer of commodities as well as images.”<sup>161</sup> The second commercial that aired that evening continued the trend that Pontiac began, but utilized direct address in order to “step into” the viewers’ homes. As the camera opens on a “long shot of a couple watching television in their home [presumably the television is “looking” at them]...the man smiles at the wife” and gets up for a snack. Just then the voice over announcer says, “Just a minute sir. You wouldn’t leave while I’m talking would you?” The man reacts and proceeds to lead the “announcer” around his “lovely” home, to see his “cute” sleeping kids and pet his “cute” dog, until they reach the well-stocked refrigerator. Finally, they are both refreshed by sipping a Pepsi, and as the husband

leaves, the announcer cautions, “Don’t forget your wife!” The husband nods and grabs a second Pepsi.

The self-reflexive nature of this commercial is enough to align it with the nationwide audience, but the details reveal that Pepsi’s target audience is the middle-class husband and housewife. The couple’s home is comfortable (he checks the thermostat to make sure they are warm enough), there are several children who are snuggled in bed for the evening, a dog, a television set, and plenty of food. This commercial is a window into the American Dream of the 1950s, and although the wife will do the purchasing, the husband is the consumer. The announcer’s last reminder serves to further highlight that the Pepsi-Cola Company understands traditional gender dynamics.

Movie star and Pepsi wife Joan Crawford appeared in the last commercial of the evening, with two of her children and her husband in the background.<sup>162</sup> As can be seen in the following excerpt, her pitch for Pepsi invokes the sanctity of family and country, and encourages gratitude among Americans:

Good evening. Tomorrow is a day that we Americans have treasured for more than a century. I think it has a very special place in all our hearts because it reminds us of the things past which make our country strong and the things present which should make us feel more grateful.

But in a larger sense, Thanksgiving is most special to all of us in America because it means our family. Nothing is closer to all of our hearts, for the family is the true strength and greatness of our country.....We the families of the Pepsi-Cola Company and the townsmen who bottle and serve you Pepsi-Cola—thank you.

After the finale, Mary Martin returned to the screen to thank the sponsors and closed the evening with these words that echoed Crawford’s sentiments, “And let us all be

thankful on this Thanksgiving Eve that we have the sun in the morning and the moon at night.”

Martin’s suggestion that Americans be grateful for the sun and the moon reiterates Annie’s choice to give up her worldly goods for the love of her man. In light of the consumer culture and the growing population of working wives, this seems particularly pointed advice. But the visual content of her message runs counter to this allusion. It is significant that the two powerful female stars, Martin and Crawford, are alone as they present their Thanksgiving wishes. Their male counterparts are available, but are in no way sharing the spotlight with their “wives.” This independent dynamic, after all of the work Martin and Halliday put into this show that glorifies “togetherness” and submissive femininity, testifies to women’s struggle within the rigid gender roles of the late-1950s. Martin, particularly, struggled with her tomboy persona in many moments during the production and this effort did not escape the eyes of the reviewers.

Ultimately, reviewers were not as enthusiastic about Martin’s overtly feminine Annie as they had been about her tomboyish Peter Pan. Martin’s efforts toward feminizing her persona were recognized, but some felt that this endeavor only detracted from her performance. In the *Chicago American* Roger Dettmer described her in the same kind of oppositional terms that reviewers had always struggled with, but he was sure to end by praising her femininity, calling her “the elegant gamin, the child-like adult, the superwoman who is, however, all woman first and foremost.”<sup>163</sup> Jack Gould, for the *New York Times* also praised her as a “delicate vision” in the “romantic moments,” but he found that her overall performance paled in comparison

to Merman's "deceptive and authoritative zest." He particularly felt that her "fragility" could not carry the humor required to "disguise the structural weakness" in the plot. "It is to be feared" he noted, "that Miss Martin did not project the quality of brassy insouciance that Annie must have. Instead of being the boisterous hick from the sticks she was more the genteel elf."<sup>164</sup> And the reviewer for *Variety* navigated the treacherous waters between these two divergent points by stating:

Miss Martin, within the framework of her own interpretation, brought to it qualities equally as beguiling....Her voice, her timing, her charm, her sense of comedy values—granted they were on a much more subdued and fragile-like key than Miss Merman's—were a delight to behold. It was as though the entire ensemble took its collective cue from the star's own exuberance and translated the whole into the gay frolic that it was.<sup>165</sup>

It is evident, in both Martin's strenuous attempt to perform within the proscribed limits of femininity and in the reviewers' desire to praise her efforts, that this production tapped into the underlying fears that American society held locked out of sight, contained within its bomb shelters, its fashions, and its strictly defined gender roles. The country instinctively knew that the feminine mystique could not last forever and that the housewife heroine's days were numbered. In only a few years, more than ten million wives would be employed and soon they would demand equality.<sup>166</sup>

**CHAPTER 5**  
**ANYTHING YOU CAN DO, I CAN DO...EQUALLY:**  
**BROADWAY REVIVAL AND REVISICAL (1966 & 1999)**

“Good or bad, a play always includes an image of the world. Good or bad, the actors show how people behave under given circumstances....The spectator is always encouraged to draw certain conclusions about how the world works....He is brought to share certain feelings of the persons appearing on the stage and thereby to approve them as universally human feelings, only natural, to be taken for granted.”

--*Bertolt Brecht* “Two Essays on Unprofessional Acting” (c.1940)

“This audience hangs its brains up in the cloakroom along with its coat.”

--*Bertolt Brecht* “A Dialogue about Acting” (1929)

Marital problems had become more and more visible in the later years of the 1950s, with almost every women’s magazine offering unhappy housewives advice articles on how to sustain their marriages.<sup>1</sup> Often this misery was attributed to the educated housewife who felt her skills were not fully utilized and American society began to notice a shift from the contented domesticity of the immediate postwar years.<sup>2</sup> The reigning ideology of femininity waned and, as America entered the 1960s, middle-class women sought adventure and equality and formerly contented housewives began to openly desire a change both in their domestic situation and in the culture at large. This chapter continues the examination of the revised editions of *Annie Get Your Gun* when the musical returns to the Broadway stage. It particularly examines the ways in which the gendered content of the dialogue and lyrics appeal to women through the late-twentieth century, during and beyond the second wave of feminism in America.

In 1960, excited by the prospect of a change from the Eisenhower years, Americans elected John F. Kennedy. According to Elaine Tyler May, “Kennedy represented cold war militance and masculine authority that was in tune with the American establishment. With his stylish wife at his side and his two small children, he seemed to embody the virtues of the American domestic ideal par excellence: the tough cold warrior who was also a warm family man.”<sup>3</sup> Together with their youthful and energetic new President, the country turned to face the “new frontier” of space and science, but, as William H. Chafe notes, “Kennedy devoted not a word of his Inaugural Address to [the] domestic issues” of race and poverty, two issues that would capture the attention of the unfulfilled American housewives and would eventually galvanize the second wave of the feminist movement.<sup>4</sup>

In his first year in office, President Kennedy established the President’s Commission on the Status of Women, which would spend two years examining women’s place in the rapidly shifting American culture. More than anything else, the changes in the economic status of middle-class white Americans necessitated this survey and its insights into women’s role in the new society. In the post-war years, couples who had experienced the depression and the war had married and, by and large, produced several children. These couples had, according to Mintz and Kellogg, “formed relatively modest material aspirations” and worked hard to make their suburban homes the American dream home by being avid consumers. By the early 1960s, the mothers of the first baby boomers found themselves with little to do as their children went off to school each day and they sought out employment in order to maintain their status in the consumer culture. Chafe notes, soon “employment for

middle-class white and married women [became] the norm rather than the exception.”<sup>5</sup> As a result, the median American family income tripled over the next two decades and white middle-class America experienced “an era of unprecedented affluence” in the 1960s.

Mintz and Kellogg assert that this change deeply affected both mothers and children, since “increased affluence increased opportunities for education, travel, leisure, all of which helped to heighten expectations for their own material and emotional well-being.”<sup>6</sup> During this time, enlightened American women became both a visible and vocal part of the labor force and more politically active. Most of the women who had taken jobs in the late 1950s and early 1960s were employed doing part-time “women’s work” which was “sex segregated and offer[ed] little opportunity for individual advancement or promotion.” Chafe explains that until this time,

Given the absence of a sanctioned feminist alternative and the economic and social circumstances that prevailed, women—and men—tended to perceive the expansion of the female labor force within traditional definitions of sex roles. The wife who held a job was playing a supportive role, not striking out on her own as an ‘independent’ woman. The fact that women were thought to be only “helping out” made it possible for their efforts to receive social sanction as a fulfillment of the traditional family role.<sup>7</sup>

However, as the 1960s wore on, women began to gain a sense of their potential power as they fought for peace, civil rights, and eventually, equal pay. In the face of increasingly threatening Cold War rhetoric and the Freedom Ride skirmishes in the South, fifty-thousand housewives joined together as Women Strike for Peace and on November 1, 1961, “walked out of their homes and jobs in a massive protest.” According to May, “within a year their numbers grew to several hundred thousand.”<sup>8</sup> By 1963, when the Presidential Commission released its report, titled *American*

*Women*, the Civil Rights movement had “helped to crystallize and formulate a new sense of grievance among women...because the civil rights movement also emphasized the extent to which groups of people were oppressed on the basis of cultural and physical characteristics.”<sup>9</sup> In that same year, the new wave of feminism gained momentum with the publication of *The Feminine Mystique*.

As noted above, Betty Friedan’s 1963 study of women in the 1950s and early 1960s helped an entire generation discover “that what had previously been perceived as only an individual problem was in fact a *woman* problem, shared by others and rooted in a set of social attitudes that required change if a better life was to be achieved.”<sup>10</sup> *The Feminine Mystique* gave a voice and a language to the many American housewives tormented by boredom at home, problems with sex, and guilt for working. As May notes, “It was as if someone was finally willing to say that the emperor had no clothes; soon a chorus joined in support.”<sup>11</sup> The newfound sense of community among women energized the development of a formalized feminist movement based on the idea that “the personal is the political and the political is personal” and that in order to “achieve equality in the world at large” women must stop allowing their personal lives to “replicate patterns of male domination and gender role segregation.”<sup>12</sup> As Chafe states, “In the end, no movement would prove a greater threat to the perpetuation of the traditional American way of life.”<sup>13</sup>

The Feminist movement certainly affected many aspects of family and domestic life including marriage, birth, and divorce rates. The demographic trend in all three of these categories began to dramatically shift in conjunction with the changes in American society in the early 1960s. The marriage age “began to rise

after decades of decline” and the rate of marriage began to decline as the marriage imperative relaxed and co-habitation increased.<sup>14</sup> Because of this trend, anti-feminist groups attacked the movement as promoting the “moral decay” of the American family.<sup>15</sup> Also, the birthrate “began to dwindle as the first baby boomers reached childbearing age” and the availability of oral contraceptives increased. In her essay “Women Against Feminism,” historian Rebecca Klatch argues that fearful Americans saw Feminism as a direct threat to America because the movement works to expand women’s roles beyond that of wife and mother, therefore eliminating the primacy of feminine domesticity. She surmises, “If *everyone* pursues their own interest, no one is left to look out for the larger good, that is, to be altruistic, to be the nurturer, the caretaker, the mother. In short the underlying fear...is the fear of a total masculinization of the world.”<sup>16</sup> Ironically, as the Feminist movement was busy masculinizing the country, it was simultaneously accused of “homosexualizing” the country as it contributed to the rise in the divorce rate in the early sixties.<sup>17</sup> Pat Robertson, speaking at the Family Forum asserted, “Divorces mean children are losing their role models, they’re not identifying with the proper spouse of the proper sex. You have a rise in homosexuality.”<sup>18</sup> When all of these demographic trends are viewed in combination with the moral degeneracy of America’s youth that resulted when the American housewife went to work outside the home, it is easy to see that the mid-1960s marked a turning point for women’s roles in American society and in the American family.

Naturally, the popular culture of the period documented this transition. The “collapse of the nuclear family norm” can clearly be seen in the television industry as

programs like *The Donna Reed Show*, *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, and *Leave it to Beaver* ended their long runs in the mid-1960s. These shows gave way to new programs that more accurately reflected the fractured family dynamics of the era including *Bewitched* (1964-1972), *Family Affair* (1966-1971), *One Day at a Time* (1975-1984), and *Three's Company* (1977-1984).<sup>19</sup> With the disappearance of the housewife heroine, American culture embraced a new ideal beauty in the form of Jacqueline Kennedy, the First Lady. At twenty-seven when she took up residence in the White House, her “celebrity status was unparalleled.” As Lois Banner notes, Jacqueline Kennedy’s “intelligence and formality countered the mindless voluptuousness and domesticity of the 1950s ideal woman.”<sup>20</sup> Her refined upper-class persona sparkled from the glittery confines of Camelot as she redecorated and played hostess, perfectly representing the conservative 1960s ideals of the woman/wife/mother.<sup>21</sup> The new heroines of mainstream film and theatre attempted to emulate the First Lady’s style, class, and position in regard to the patriarchy.

### **GRANNY GET YOUR GUN!: 1966 BROADWAY REVIVAL**

Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein had already introduced an intelligent and refined heroine in 1959 when they created Maria in *The Sound of Music*. The musical starred Mary Martin on Broadway and became a phenomenally popular film, starring Julie Andrews, in 1965.<sup>22</sup> *The Sound of Music* can be seen, according to film historian Anne McLeer in her article “Practical Perfection,” “as an oppositional response to feminism” and the popular culture’s attempt to support the establishment of “family or private stability, defined by the secure positioning of the

patriarch as the basis of national and public stability.”<sup>23</sup> McLeer makes a compelling argument that the *Sound of Music* attempted to avert the explosion of the feminist movement by trying “to piece together previously held ideals about the family and gender roles” and she reads the filmic text as a “coded appeal to women to return to the private sphere and reorganize their families’ lives there.”<sup>24</sup> She claims that the film accomplished this goal mainly through the development of the new ideal heroine who exhibited the ideal qualities modeled by Jacqueline Kennedy. Maria is “attractive but not glamorous, nurturing but not afraid to get her hands dirty, fun but not frivolous, and resourceful but not independent.”<sup>25</sup> She is also the wife/mother ideal, as she transforms from a chaste and virginal nun to a dignified wife and mother to seven children. After the success of the Broadway run and the film, Rodgers must have realized that the time was ripe for the first Broadway revival of another transformative tale.

Although chic and sophisticated Jacqueline Kennedy and hillbilly Annie Oakley were diametrically opposed characters, Oakley’s eventual transition into the conservative wife/mother role was the appealing aspect of the story for Rodgers in 1966. Certainly, Annie deals with several issues in the musical that also faced the women of the 1960s, including career choices and independence, but the reason Rodgers knew he could get an audience for the show had more to do with the way the strengthening feminist movement in 1966 mirrored the cultural moment of 1946. Indeed, in the 1966 Broadway revival Berlin embraced the independent spirit of the women’s movement by giving Annie a new number and the freedom to state that she does not want an “Old Fashioned Wedding” and actually might not want to get

married at all. But, the noteworthy aspect of this production is the incongruous casting of a much older Ethel Merman which fundamentally affected the audience's reception of the "new" Annie.

Merman, who had, by this point, already played the much reviled Momma Rose in *Gypsy*, still brought the essence of "wife" and "mother" to the role she had created twenty years before, although reviewer Vincent Canby described her as "mellower," in both attitude and volume.<sup>26</sup> Stacy Wolf, in *A Problem Like Maria*, identifies Merman's star persona as "someone who gets what she wants and takes care of getting what she wants herself."<sup>27</sup> Throughout the 1950s, Merman continued to seek out parts like the unusual heroines she had created in the 1930s and 1940s. In the intervening years between her turns as Annie Oakley, Merman starred on Broadway in Irving Berlin's *Call Me Madam* (1950) and the mildly successful *Happy Hunting* (1956). She admitted in one interview that, because she did not fit the physical image of the ideal 1950s woman and because writers found it difficult to contain her unwieldy persona, it was difficult to find great roles. She acknowledged that the perfect role had "to be built to emphasize the brassy side with lots of oomph—something with guts, and sock songs—not sweetness and light."<sup>28</sup> For these reasons, she had been essentially rejected by the film industry, but appeared frequently on television in the variety format or in made-for-TV specials, such as NBC's *Anything Goes* in 1954 with Frank Sinatra. However, the stage remained the venue that best suited her. According to one biographer, "her artistry required the vastness of the theatre and the immediacy of an audience to achieve its full effect."<sup>29</sup> Fortunately, for Merman and for the American musical theatre, Arthur Laurents was

able to see her as the embodiment of Gypsy Rose Lee's domineering mother, Rose and a new era of musical theatre began in 1959 with *Gypsy*.

Although the Golden Age of American musical theatre did not come to a close until the late 1960s, *Gypsy* served as a harbinger of changes that were to come in the ensuing years. Extreme changes in structure and content (in musicals like Sondheim's concept musicals and *Hair*) would wait almost an entire decade, but *Gypsy* marked the pinnacle of the Golden Age musical as it married perfected structure with a stark innovation of the female lead character. In *Broadway Babies Say Goodnight*, musical theatre historian Mark Steyn claims that *Gypsy* is "the most Broadway of Broadway musicals, fusing the two strains of American musical theatre, seizing the principles of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical play and setting them to gorgeous, vulgar rhythms of musical comedy—the dramatic ambitions of the former, the sass of the latter."<sup>30</sup> Ethan Mordden asserts that Laurents' conception of Momma Rose led the way to a more honest, confrontational art form by "present[ing] an evil woman and...not redeem[ing] her."<sup>31</sup> This uncomfortable presentation was furthered, Wolf notes, by "Merman's typically grounded gestures and deep voice...[and] her butch style, which she does nothing to soften."<sup>32</sup> In Rose, Merman finally found the breadth and depth of character that allowed her to move from what Mordden calls, "a career of self-resembling caricatures drilled rigid into a performance of unreserved involvement literally during *Gypsy's* rehearsals."<sup>33</sup>

Both the show and Merman's work as Rose drew enthusiastic reviews from the critics. John Chapman's review of *Gypsy* in the *Daily News* declared, "What this town has needed is Ethel Merman. What Miss Merman has needed is a good show.

We got her and she got it last evening, when *Gypsy* opened at the Broadway Theatre.”<sup>34</sup> In the *New York Times*, Brooks Atkinson raved, “The explosion in Forty-Fourth Street last evening was nothing to be alarmed by. It was merely Ethel Merman returning to the New York theatre.”<sup>35</sup> However, despite *Gypsy*’s perfect form, Laurents’ bold new characterizations, and Merman’s wildly positive reception, the Tony award for best actress in a musical went to Mary Martin that year for her role as Maria in *The Sound of Music*. As had been the case over the past two decades, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein had their finger firmly on the pulse of “mainstream cultural values” and Awards committee’s decision, notes Wolf, highlighted the disparity between the two characters “by rewarding a nun-turned-wife over a relentlessly ambitious stage mother.”<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, American audience “adored” Merman as Rose and embraced the bold new characterization of motherhood. As Wolf observes,

While the musical tells the audience to distance themselves from Rose, Merman does the opposite—she draws them close and seduces them...No one had ever seen a woman like Rose on the Broadway musical stage. In the context of Cold War America, Merman’s performance resonated with anxieties about gender, about motherhood, and about the nuclear family.<sup>37</sup>

The fact that this accomplishment came in the form of such an unsympathetic character makes Merman’s success all the more remarkable and her appeal as Annie Oakley that much greater.

In May 1966, Richard Rodgers revived *Annie Get Your Gun* on Broadway at the New York State Theatre at Lincoln Center with its original star Ethel Merman. Though it is debatable whether or not this was a conscientious response to the need of the cultural moment, Rodgers’ bold move, casting fifty-seven-year-old Merman as the

youthful Oakley, reflects Wolf's observation that "As meanings of 'woman' and appropriate modes of femininity shifted and changed...Merman seemed to stay the same."<sup>38</sup> Although she could hardly claim any "girlish" attributes in the 1946 production, Merman by this time had ripened into a commanding Broadway icon who embraced both her womanly and manly attributes. Her longtime friend and co-star Benay Venuta confided, "She liked being called 'Miss Merman,' and she liked being respected" as both a woman and a star.<sup>39</sup> Jerry Orbach, who played Charlie Davenport in the 1966 revival, recalled that her more masculine attributes were often equally respected because, "She was tough, but in a way she had to be. She could look at a row of balcony lights in a dress rehearsal and tell you the third one on the right should be pink and not yellow—and the guy would say, 'Oh shit, you're right!' A lot of women in the theatre couldn't do that'."<sup>40</sup> Wolf asserts that this gender paradox made Merman "eminently available for American fame by way of the Broadway stage. Her directness undercuts anti-theatrical suspicion. Her down-to-earth quality contradicts fears of the elite Broadway. Her masculinity gives muscle to the terrifyingly effeminate theatre." In fact it is precisely *because* of these contradictions that "Merman seems to make the Broadway musical available to all Americans" in this turbulent era.<sup>41</sup> It was this older, wiser, and direct-as-ever persona that Rodgers instinctively knew would appeal to his audience in Annie Oakley's image and storyline. Amid the changes of the women's liberation movement, the rising fears of women abandoning motherhood, and the destruction of the American family, as well as the inevitable battles for equality in the workplace, *Annie Get Your Gun* with Ethel Merman as Annie seemed like a museum piece. Rodgers fully

understood the seductive power of nostalgia. The revival evoked fond memories of a happier time, the bright hopeful year of the early post-war era. The star, returning to perform in her star-making role, never had a chance of actually connecting romantically younger with her co-star and never had a chance of being perceived as girlish because, in both cases, her maturity reads as motherly. Merman was exactly what conservative Americans desired in the ideal woman; intelligent, self-possessed and motherly.

Of all of the scripts under analysis in this study, the 1966 revival's script is the closest to the original. There are subtle changes that reflect the racial tensions in America, deleting stereotypical ethnic references as well as the elimination of the interracial relationship between Winnie and Tommy. As a result of this cut, Dolly's role is enhanced in other ways including more vocal parts and some added scene work. Overall, the cast and plot are streamlined while some of the spectacle elements, including the Indian adoption ceremony, the sharpshooting matches, and the parade fantasies, are heightened. Most importantly, the sections of the musical with the greatest potential for gender commentary that had received so much revision in the 1950 and 1957 productions remain significantly unchanged.<sup>42</sup> The major change in the script, twenty years after its initial run, was the addition of one song for the scene in which the estranged lovers reunite.

Irving Berlin's new song, "Old Fashioned Wedding,"<sup>43</sup> although short by Berlin standards, effectively supported Merman's strong, confident portrayal of Annie, while incorporating the commodity culture and the society's swiftly changing notions regarding marriage in his lyrics, images, tempo, and melody line. In two

short verses that each character repeats several times, first separately and then in counterpoint, Berlin manages to cast Frank in the Kennedy image of the traditionally masculine decision-maker. By contrast, he represents Annie as a part of the liberated “Me” generation, which Berlin clearly sees as self-centered and narcissistic. Frank envisions their wedding and tells Annie what he has decided it will be like without consulting her. He sings, “We’ll have an old fashioned wedding,” assuming both his dominance in the situation and that she’ll want what he wants. In contrast, Annie pipes up, “I wanna a wedding in a big church with bridesmaids and flower girls.” By beginning Annie’s lyrics with “I wanna,” Berlin reinforces her more childish and selfish qualities, rendering her a petulant child in the face of Frank’s strong patriarchal decision-making. Frank continues including them both in his plans as he tells her, “I’ll vow to love you forever, You’ll vow to love and honor and obey.” Annie, however, balks at this inequality and flaunts her liberated viewpoint by countering, “Love and honor, yes, but not obey.” Frank, finally, identifies the two of them as “an old fashioned bride and groom,” while Annie’s more modern approach is evident in her slang reference to “tying the knot” with its inferences toward the restrictions married status places on women.

Berlin’s lyrics also convey many contradictory images that follow traditional romantic tropes, including spirituality, nature, and fantasy, that serve to highlight the disparity between Frank and Annie’s conception of marriage. Frank evokes the serious religious nature of marriage, a traditional viewpoint that feminists challenged during the 1960s. He vows that their “simple” union will be “blessed” in a “little chapel.” Annie, however, disregards the religious aspects of the ceremony

completely, rather focusing on the fashions and the celebrity aspect of the event as she sings, “a lot of ushers in tailcoats, reporters and photographers.” She even insists that no one less than a “Bishop” could marry them, comparing the status of her wedding to that of a Vanderbilt. Frank also uses images from nature to paint the picture of their wedding day. In rather soft focus, he sees orange blossoms blooming around them as they wed. But Annie counters with hard images that reflect the materialistic needs of the consumer culture as she tells Frank, “I wanna wedding ring surrounded by diamonds and platinum.” Finally, Frank’s dreamlike state as he imagines their wedding day, “somewhere” and “someday” is in sharp contrast to Annie’s very specific requirements of, “A big reception at the Waldorf, with champagne and caviar.”

Berlin’s tempo and melody line also serve to reinforce the characteristics he established in his lyrics and images. Although they are both thirty-two measures, Frank and Annie’s verses are sung at greatly different tempos. Frank begins the song with a silky legato that suits his bass voice. The tempo and his long, held notes set up that he is confident and loving, as well as firm in his decision. Annie’s verse is in stark contrast to this calming pace. She begins on the upbeat and in rapid-fire succession lists her demands with more than twice as many words in the same amount of music. This pace continues throughout the song and in many ways reflects the trajectory of gender relations in the 1950s and 1960s. While women were mobilizing and beginning to aggressively claim their place in society, men, for the most part, were digging in and clinging to a more placid time in America.

The song's melody line, particularly when the two characters sing in counterpoint, also reflects the mounting gender tensions and the conservative society's opinion of the growing feminist movement. Frank's line begins rather low and climbs in a steady step pattern up the scale. This step pattern supports all of the solid and confident images Berlin provided in the lyrics. Annie's staccato line, however, evokes a childish tantrum.<sup>44</sup> As she states *over* Frank's lyrics exactly what she wants for her wedding, how she wants it, and that if she does not get it her way, she does not want it at all, she remains on the same note until she jumps to a shrill and discordant note that mimics a whine. Berlin's construction of the wide melody range for Annie's portion of the song supports his negative opinion of her liberated behavior and, in effect, subverts her power by making her sound immature and ill-tempered. While the counterpoint serves both the humor and the tension of the situation, Berlin also cleverly puts the main gender issues in relief as Annie is left to sing "Love and honor, yes, but not obey" and "I don't wanna get married at all" after Frank has completed his lyric.

Ultimately, "Old Fashioned Wedding" would never have fit the original incarnation of Annie in the musical, but it served the 1966 revival well. For, if the musical's original intent was to show that a strong, independent woman could be tamed by love and marriage, this song only served to redouble the creator's efforts in the face of the new wave of feminism. By leaving the original plotline in place and not altering the moments that spoke directly to the gender divide, the producers retained the same dynamic between the lovers. But this time, they showed that even a liberated woman of the "Me" generation could learn to win by losing and walk off

into the sunset with her man. Ethel Merman's presence in the role, once again, serves the subversive nature of *Annie Get Your Gun*. As argued in chapter 3, the music, singing, and choreography that surround the discussion of gender in this musical coat the somewhat didactic message with "a spoonful of sugar." Merman's age and her celebrity disrupt the viewer's reception of the message by distancing the audience from the plotline. Undoubtedly, audience members bought tickets to the show primarily to see Merman in one of her greatest roles. Since she never connects romantically with the hero, the audience never invests in the controversial nature of the gender commentary, allowing it instead to wash over them in waves of nostalgia.

In order to attract this new audience of upper and upper-middle class patrons, the producers commissioned new promotional materials featuring Merman. The image on the cover of the Broadway *Playbill*, and on those of the tour to Detroit, Washington DC, and Philadelphia, are all Al Hirschfeld caricatures of Merman as Annie.<sup>45</sup> On the Broadway cover, figure 46, Merman wears the "backwoods" Annie costume and carries her gun with both hands. The gun is much more prominent in this drawing, as it cuts diagonally all the way across the image, but she holds it to her heart as if it were something dear to her. The curves of Merman's body are flattering and only her face and hair reveal the 1960s influence, featuring Merman's distinctive beaded eyelashes and her new shorter but fuller hairstyle. The other covers feature the gun, again cutting horizontally across the center of the page, held overhead by another much smaller caricature of the modern Merman (figure 47).

The poster art that became the cast album cover features a full length painted image of Merman as Annie in costumes that resemble the original production style

with a tight waist and Victorian sleeves (figure 48). Merman stands exactly as she did for the original playbill cover, hand on hip, gun erect on the floor and a big smile. The important aspect of all of these images is that they are drawn or painted. In contrast to traditionally sharp-focus production photos, these images are once removed from Merman's actual physical being and the rendering softened the lines of her body and increased the nostalgic reception of her image in comparison to her more traditional press photos.<sup>46</sup>

One actual press photo for the 1966 tour had Merman posed for the iconic "motorcycle" shot. In the picture, figure 49, her costume is similar to the 1940s version, still short, black, and sparkly, but a flashy tuxedo front and collar provides more modesty than the earlier corset. This time, Merman is perched on an identical motor-bicycle with her legs gently bent, rather than astride it, but she still holds the gun overhead and smiles the same high-spirited smile from twenty years earlier.

Two other photos from the 1966 production feature Merman with Yarnell. In both images he is turned in to center and looks at her and she, with her shoulders squared to the audience as always, looks away from him and off into the distance (figure 50). In one picture, figure 51, she is wearing the hillbilly costume, which was a buckskin vest and skirt with a plaid top and in the other she is wearing her demure train costume. In both images, her serene facial expressions and the placement of her hands gently folded in her lap are identical. She is heavily made up and her hair is identical in each picture. Evidently, by this point, the great physical transformation between hillbilly Annie and feminine Annie was not as important as it had been.

Many elements within these three photographic images lend support to the argument that Merman's presence in the role distanced audience from the gender commentary while ultimately reinforcing the overall message. The maintenance of her appearance, and therefore her star persona, through Annie's physical transition into femininity and her unwillingness to connect with her co-star in their photos together hint at the disconnect she would ultimately engender between the content and the audience. However, Merman's more modest costuming, her "mellow" facial expressions, and her gentler physicality align her Annie closely with the ideal wife/mother of the mid-1960s. Also, the fact that the photos are staged almost identically to her 1946 photos effectively links original production's celebration of traditional gender roles with the viewer's perception of the revival's content and the star's characterization of Annie. As the advertisements in the 1966 Broadway *Playbill* show, these promotional materials ultimately attracted the upper and upper-middle class patrons who, while living in a very different economic and social culture, were very similar to the Achiever audiences of 1946.

Advertisements for Leisure Activities once again occupied the largest segment of the advertising space in the *Playbill*, comprising fifty percent (50%) of the total ad space. This category included ads for Whiskey and Liquor (17%), Hotels and After-Theatre Entertainment (9%), Broadway Cast Recordings (5%), Other Theatre or Exhibits (4%), Cigarettes (3%), and Other Beverages (2%). The significant addition to this category was advertisements for Travel- Related Services (10%) such as airlines, cruises, rental cars, and Las Vegas hotels. These ads, as had been the case in 1946, were the least gender-specific in their overall content, but the changes,

including the absence of ads for beer, which was now perceived as strictly a working class pleasure, and the expansion of expensive leisure pursuits indicated by the travel ads, signal the considerable affluence of the patrons.

After leisure activities, the next largest portion of the advertising in the *Playbill* included the twenty-eight percent (28%) of the ads aimed directly at female audience members. The subcategories in this group are Perfume (9%), Cosmetics (7%), Lingerie or Hosiery (3%), Clothing (6%), and Hair care (3%). Perfumes are again a large part of this advertising in the *Playbill*. However, in the 1946 the images and language used in the ads were intended to attract the attention of the male audience member for “brand recognition.” When viewed in this way these ads were considered gender-neutral. However the images and language in the 1966 *Playbill* perfume ads were distinctly aimed toward female consumers. In fact, all of the ads aimed at the independent, affluent, upper and upper-middle class women in this *Playbill* addressed their target audience more directly, as can be seen in the ads for Hanes hosiery and Revlon.

Both Hanes and Revlon bought two full pages of ad space in the 1966 *Playbill*, and each ad featured a modern woman on a bed. The Hanes ad, figure 52, is a pen and ink sketch that sprawls across two pages. On the left side a woman with a “modern” hairstyle is propped up in her ornate single bed, sipping tea as quartet of men play string instruments and a flute. The bed is not in a bedroom, but set in a forest where disproportionately large flowers, birds, and a Cheshire cat complete the dreamlike scene. The woman’s face is calm and her free hand brushes back her hair. On the opposing page the text reads:

It was such a nice dream, you slept through the alarm.  
The meeting began at 9:30 without you.  
And today you were going to ask for a raise.  
Quick, the Hanes!

Five years ago, you would have arrived—breathless—with news that the cat died or the sink flooded. But surely, you’re too old and too rich to go through *that* again. No—if you’ve got to be late, it’s time you start looking like a girl worth waiting for.

So go put your eyelashes on. And that designer dress. And wear your Hanes stockings. To the Office?!! Why not? Just think. You won’t have to worry about baggy knees. Or wrinkly ankles. You can flash your legs unabashedly in the conference room.

This ad directly addresses its target audience, working women who are “older,” wealthy, and unmarried. Although “old” is a relative term, it is interesting to note that these women are much like Ethel Merman at this point in her career. They have both been through the difficulties of working and both are capable of being a “girl worth waiting for.” The fact that this ad is a sketch allows, as it did in Merman’s images, for more latitude in the perception of age. The image and text illuminate the issues of gender politics within the workplace as she realizes that she is worth more than she is being paid, but calmly sips tea and revels in the dream in which she was surrounded by men who were working for her. But luckily, she has the freedom to caper about in the conference room with her legs a-flashing because she has Hanes.

The Revlon ad, figure 53, also features a perfectly coifed wealthy woman who has passed the “age of innocence.” This photographic image is of a beautiful youthful woman in designer clothing and jewels by Van Cleef and Arpels, sitting perched on the edge of her luxurious bed. She faces the opposing page where the text reads, “When a woman’s good looks reach the precarious stage, can any other face cream do what Revlon Eterna 27 could do? We honestly think not.” While the target

audience remains upper and upper-middle class women, the issue of work is replaced in this ad by the issue of beauty; fading beauty, to be specific. Once again this ad allies the audience with the star, as the model features heavy makeup, the same short hair style and the text begins by suggesting there are ways to fight signs of aging. It also, however, harkens to the ideal beauty of the youthful and affluent Jacqueline Kennedy.

The size of the Hanes and Revlon ads and the predominance of the ads aimed at women illustrate that they were the advertisers' main focus. However, ads for Men's Clothing and Accessories (7%), Men's Fragrance (3%), Charitable Donations (3%) jumped to thirteen percent (13%) in this *Playbill*. This change in ads dedicated to appealing solely to men signifies that affluent men were becoming more active consumers during the 1960s, but also that they in no way challenged women's dominance as consumers. Another seven percent (7%) of the advertisements in *Playbill* were gender-neutral and marketed Luxury items such as Cars (5%) and Oil Paintings (2%) and, finally, two percent (2%) advertised *Playbill* related items. In the end, it seems that there was more gender equality among the Achievers in *Annie Get Your Gun's* 1966 audience and that the female target audience shared many of the characteristics of Ethel Merman's star persona.

While most reviewers recognized that the point of this revival was to see a Broadway icon in one of her best roles, they were still forced to acknowledge the incongruity of Merman's physical appearance and star persona, as well as the wide gap between the leads' ages. Some, like Jerry Gaghan in the *Philadelphia Daily News*, politely alluded to her weight while offsetting the remark with praise, "Miss

Merman perhaps cuts not quite the same girlish figure she did in the original; but her zest is timeless.”<sup>47</sup> Others boldly admitted, “A gawky teenager she’s not.”<sup>48</sup> However, many reviewers believed that with innocence no longer an option, Merman brought new dimensions to the roll. Schier admired her “appealing guile,”<sup>49</sup> but one reviewer went so far as to call the production an “embellished revivification,” noting that Merman’s star persona had developed to the point that her “Annie Oakley of 1966 may be a bit more sardonic than the ingenuous Annie of two decades back, but...aren’t we all?”<sup>50</sup> Similarly, reviewers also struggled with the ridiculous romantic pairing of Merman with Yarnell. For the most part the consensus was, as Canby stated, “After a certain initial shock, who cares?”<sup>51</sup> However, Schier felt compelled to point out that Yarnell “was ten years old when the original ‘Annie’ opened,” and Robert J. Williams grudgingly admitted that “once Ethel starts belting, you forget about this incongruity. Almost.”<sup>52</sup>

Despite the above comments, reviewers across the country embraced the opportunity to see the “dauntless” Miss Merman reprise the role she created, regardless of her age. The reviewer’s commentary focused on the positive changes in Merman’s voice and persona, with “mellow” as the overriding descriptor. Vincent Canby in the *New York Times* stated, “The pipes sound as true, if not quite so loud, as they ever did. And that implacable, straightforward thrust towards a comic situation can’t be stopped by anything.”<sup>53</sup> In the *Detroit News*, Jay Carr noted, “Ethel Merman still can’t get a man with a gun, but she can still get her audience with the ammunition she carries around in her throat... When Merman sings a lyric, we can hear the commas.”<sup>54</sup> And Ernst Schier declared in Philadelphia’s *Evening Bulletin*,

“Time has been good to the indestructible Ethel. She no longer sounds like a brass section complete with timpani. The familiar stridency is gone....she sounds more like a tamed but persuasive trombone...If she seems subdued compared to the Ethel we know best, her singing serves the music as well as ever and ever more effectively in that delightful, atypical Berlin song, ‘Moonshine Lullaby.’<sup>55</sup>

Schier’s language, contrasting Merman’s former “stridency” with her now “tamed” and “subdued” voice, as well as his choice to underscore Merman’s performance of “Moonshine Lullaby,” the song in which she is most clearly identified as the mother figure, emphasizes the ways in which Merman’s portrayal of the role resonated with viewers.

The other aspect of the production that received the most attention was Berlin’s addition of “Old Fashioned Wedding.” Many reviewers described the way the song stopped the show “cold” with the audience demanding “repeated encores, even though there are no extra verses to be sung.” Jay Carr, who viewed the tour in Detroit, was so taken with the song and Merman’s performance that he described her actions in detail: “At the second reprise she hammered her cute little fists on the chest of her leading man like an airplane propeller trying to make takeoff speed.<sup>56</sup> “Cute” and “little” are words that are never associated with Merman, particularly by this point in her career. These descriptors serve to illuminate the effective combination of Berlin’s lyrics and music that successfully turned the inimitable Merman into a petulant child, if only for those fleeting, but important, moments.

Finally, though, the issues of age and the addition of the new song were incidentals when placing this revival into the larger scope of *Annie Get Your Gun’s* production history. In the end it is Merman’s enduring stamp on the character and the

production's message that reverberates through time. As Richard L. Coe, writing for the *Washington Post* asserted:

Annie Oakley has become Ethel Merman and Miss Merman has become Annie Oakley. The urban brashness suits the hillbilly sureshot in today's terms....Unless you've seen Miss Merman as Annie, you don't know anything about American musical comedy nor, for that matter, about the spunky, optimistic essential of the American character."<sup>57</sup>

Coe's conflation of Merman, the musical theater, and the American character indicates the nostalgia her performance engendered in her audiences. Rodgers' unerring instincts placed her back in the role in the right moment. Audience members enjoyed this musical that belonged to "another era" and reviewers called it a "period piece bristling with humor that needs no updating."<sup>58</sup> But one reviewer inadvertently captured the subversive work of *Annie Get Your Gun* and the potential for the musical theatre at large by assuring his Detroit readers.

That is the theme after all—fun. There is no message. No problems greater than boy-girl problems or who should be the most famous sharpshooter, the husband or the wife?...It is a show to relax with, a slippers-by-the fireplace sort of thing where nobody is going to get hurt.<sup>59</sup>

### **ANNIE GET YOUR MAKEOVER: 1999 BROADWAY REVISICAL**

It was thirty years until Broadway saw another revival of *Annie Get Your Gun*. In 1999, producers Fran and Barry Weissler built a "revisical" around Bernadette Peters, one of the reigning stars of Broadway. Revisicals, which are musicals from the Golden Age that are completely revised to appeal to a modern audience,<sup>60</sup> were in vogue on Broadway in the late 1990s as a result of the fundamental changes that had occurred over the late-twentieth century, both in the Broadway musical and in the culture at large. While women's "place" in society at the end of the twentieth century is still hard to assess, given the lack of critical distance eight years provides, there are

some statistics available that can at least partially illuminate women's status in American society as the millennium ended.

Throughout this study, the factors examined in relation to women in society have been marriage and divorce, education, birth, and labor. The results of the 2000 census shed light on several trends within these categories that began in the 1960s and came to fruition in the 1990s. Three statistics dealing with marriage and divorce indicate that the marriage imperative of the mid-twentieth century has certainly eased. From 1966 to 1999, women's median age for first marriages rose from 20.5 to 25.5. Also, men's median age for first marriages rose from 22.8 in 1966 to 27.1 in 1996.<sup>61</sup> This is a stark change from the postwar years when the marriage age had dipped into the teens for women. Furthermore, in 2000 divorced women outnumbered divorced men almost 3 to 2. The overall percentage of the population who have divorced also drastically rose during the last three decades of the twentieth century. Within the male population, the change was from 1.8% in 1960 to 8.4% in 1999, and in the female population from 2.6% in 1960 to 10.1% in 1999. Finally, the percentage of people over fifteen years of age who have never married during this time has also risen, for men an increase from 25.3% to 31.3% and for women, an increase from 19% to 25%.<sup>62</sup> Although these statistics are the result of many contributing factors, primary among them education and the economy, they definitively show that both men and women are waiting longer to marry and are divorcing more readily than in previous generations.

The results of the marriage survey also indicate that women and men have more opportunity to develop independent interests and work lives, since they are

marrying later. One principal factor in the change in the “never married” category is the increase in educational attainment over the course of the twentieth century for both men and women. The statistics show that in 1960, 14.4% of men between the ages of twenty-five and twenty nine had earned a Bachelor’s degree or higher and only 7.8% of women had done the same. By 2000, men’s attainment rate had increased to 24.7%, while women in their late twenties had almost quadrupled their rate to 29.7%.<sup>63</sup> The rise in the “never married” category also seems to indicate that there is a cultural circumspection regarding the permanence and sanctity of marriage that may be a result of the overall deterioration of family life during this time.

There are a myriad of factors that ultimately contributed to the deterioration of family life from the 1970s to 2000, but this study will focus on two sets of statistical data, family size and birth rate and married women’s labor statistics. These surveys illustrate the decisions that were made regarding family and childbirth in a time of increased availability of birth control and legal abortions. Beginning in the late-1960s, family size began a sharp decline. As Elaine Tyler May suggests in *Homeward Bound*, the “typical” white, middle-to-upper class American family in the 1950s had two parents and four children. The number of families of six or more reached its height in 1967 and has steadily decreased. The average family size in 1960 was 3.33 people. This number dropped to 2.61 in 1999. Additionally, the birth rate in America dropped by forty percent (40%), from 23.7 to 14.5, over the last three decades of the twentieth century.<sup>64</sup> This figure, however, does not tell the whole story, for there was some fluctuation in the rate along the way. As I noted in chapter 4, the birth rate hit its peak in 1957, at 25.3, and then began a steady decline. This

decline reached its lowest point in 1975, at 14.8, and then began a modest increase throughout the 1980s that peaked in 1990 at 16.7. After taking fifteen years to gain two points, the birth rate rapidly declined the same amount in the first six years of the 1990s.<sup>65</sup> These figures serve to highlight the impact of the increased delay in marriage in the 1990s. Women were marrying later, becoming further entrenched in the labor force, having their children later in life and controlling the size of their families.<sup>66</sup> Although many factors have contributed to the perceived deterioration of family life since the 1960s, the factor that has received the most attention is the increase in double-income families and the resulting increase in “latch-key” children.

According to the decennial census in 2000, more married couples are in the work force than in previous decades, mothers are remaining in the workforce, and there are interesting changes in the work patterns of single-income families. Across the last decade of the twentieth century, the percentage of women who had children who stayed in the workforce rose from 52.8% in 1990 to 58.7% in 1998. These women are also staying at work longer before taking maternity leave and returning from leave earlier than in previous generations. Also, 68.2% of women with a college education, regardless of motherhood or marital status, stayed in the labor force across the decade, a stark change from the years of the feminine mystique.<sup>67</sup> One factor that has made this change possible is the revolutionized perception of childcare, and particularly fathers caring for their children at home, or “daddy daycare.” The census also examines the work patterns within single-income families and the statistics reveal significant changes within that paradigm as well. Over the course of the 1990s, the census shows that when only one partner works there has

been an increase in instances of only the wife working and a decrease in occurrences of only the husband working.<sup>68</sup> Additionally, the number of stay-at-home fathers is increasing, though the numbers certainly remain unbalanced with 4,731,000 stay-at-home moms compared to 71,000 stay-at-home dads in 1999.<sup>69</sup> However unbalanced, these figures signal a cultural shift in the acceptance of the female “breadwinner” and of “Mr. Mom.”

When taking into account all of the changes the statistics show from the 1960s to the 1990s, such as increased educational attainment, later marriages, later babies, fewer babies, and more daycare options, it would seem that women could have moved into a place of equality with men in the workplace by the end of the millennium. However, as sociologist Michael Kimmel states,

Typically, we think we can create gender equality through “gender neutral” policies—policies that do not consider gender in hiring, salary or promotion. But such gender neutral policies fail to take into account the ways in which the very criteria by which people are evaluated are also gendered; the ways that the assumptions about what constitutes effective performance, leadership, or initiative are gendered. Stated most simply, *gender neutral policies aren’t gender neutral*. They are in fact deeply gendered. We need *gender equal* policies, not gender neutral policies.<sup>70</sup>

While there is certainly more attention paid to equity in hiring and equal treatment within the workplace, as far as wages and division of labor, American industries still have a ways to go to eliminate the “glass ceiling” most women eventually bump into. The census reports show that in 2000, “even after controlling for work experience, education, and occupation...women earned, on average, eighty percent (80%) of what men earned” in comparable settings.<sup>71</sup> For example,

The starkest illustration is to compare the median earnings of men and women in the highest paid occupation for men and women—*Physicians and surgeons*—for those aged 35 to 54 with the highest level of education, and in

one of the lowest paid occupations for each—*Dishwashers*—for those aged 35 to 54 with the lowest level of education. Overall, female year-round, full-time workers have median earnings of \$28,000, 74 percent of comparable male median earnings [\$38,000]. For *Physician and Surgeons*...this ratio is 69 percent; for *Dishwashers*...this ratio is 87 percent.<sup>72</sup>

Although the discrepancies between male and female earnings remain largely unexplained by the census, the report offers some insights into the contributing factors, one of which is “free choice.”

In the decades after the battles over the Equal Pay Act and the Equal Rights Amendment, after earning higher education degrees and rightful promotions at work, it seems that American women found themselves with choices women did not have in the 1940s, 1950s, or 1960s. The feminine mystique had lifted and women no longer faced the cultural expectations of gracefully retiring into the shadows of home life. Women began to have had husbands and bosses who supported their efforts and had equal or higher expectations for them than they had for themselves. Women’s liberation had freed them and they had earned approximate equality. As the millennium approached, American women faced a new set of choices located around the question: what do *I* want?

As has been the case throughout this study, the popular culture was once again at the ready in 1999 to help these independent wives and mothers with their freedom of choice. The Broadway stage was particularly ready to be helpful, since it had suffered miserably through the 1970s and 1980s, during what many musical theatre historians consider the nadir of the genre. The 1970s saw the rise of the “concept” musical and the ensemble musical which renovated the form but damaged the marketability of the genre. Betty Buckley, one of the few “stars” of the era notes,

It was Michael Bennett who, in *A Chorus Line* [1975], conceived the ensemble musical where everyone was recastable....People like Patti LuPone, Bernadette Peters, and myself are really blessed in that we have made our own stamp in this day of the ensemble musical.<sup>73</sup>

Throughout the 1980s, the physical and moral deterioration of the Broadway area of New York City, combined with the absence of star power in the musical theatre, seemed to herald the end of the Broadway musical entirely. However, in 1994, Disney revitalized the area and the genre with *Beauty and the Beast*, ushering in what Alex Witchell in the *New York Times* called the “era of big-budget Broadway spectacles, which celebrate scenery and animals.”<sup>74</sup>

After Disney brought the audiences back to New York, an ersatz nostalgia swept through Broadway producing the Golden Age revisicals that bolstered ticket sales and star power once again. The script revisions often centered around major cultural changes, such as positions on race and gender. For example, in 1994 Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Carousel* found great success featuring an up-and-coming Audra MacDonal and, in 1995, film star Matthew Broderick led a successful revival of *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* that modified much of the sexist workplace attitudes regarding bosses and secretaries. Also, Kander and Ebb, two other Golden Age collaborators, saw wildly successful revisals of their work during the late-1990s. Sam Mendes’ grittily gender-bending *Cabaret* worked new magic at the infamous Studio 54 and Ann Reinking’s revision of Bob Fosse’s *Chicago* permanently changed the notion of reviving a musical. In 1999, reporter Peter Marks exclaimed in the *New York Times*:

The days of the revival-as-museum piece, thankfully, have receded; one has only to compare the gigantic yawn that greeted Harold Prince's stultifying 1987 remounting of his original production of *Cabaret*, with the euphoria

surrounding Sam Mendes's current down-and-dirty *Cabaret* at Studio 54, to understand that an immense shift has occurred in what the public responds to....When today's audiences pay to gaze at the past, they want a lot more than golden memories; they want to feel as if a tried-and-true form speaks to the contemporary world.<sup>75</sup>

Fran and Barry Weissler produced the very profitable and Tony award-winning revival of *Chicago* and quickly found another Golden Age musical to invest in. They hired choreographer Graciela Daniele to remount *Annie Get Your Gun* for the modern audience. Marks' commentary is interesting in that it highlights a major difference between the 1966 revival and the 1999 revisical. In 1966, audiences bought tickets in anticipation of seeing Merman in her star-making role because it was a nostalgic look at how the love of a good man can tame a wild girl. In 1999, audiences bought much more expensive tickets because a bona fide "star" was in the role and the "good-old-reliable" script had received a much heralded makeover. This time wild-child Annie bumped into her own glass ceiling and got to choose whether or not she wants to be tamed by the love of a good man. This, as the Weisslers knew, would not only "speak to the contemporary world" but could help guide the many women facing the same choices in their audience.

The Weisslers cast 51-year-old veteran Bernadette Peters, who combines the quintessential female form with an oversized child-like voice, as the more liberated equal of Frank Butler. A working actress since age three, Peters had won awards and critical acclaim for three decades before taking on the role of Annie.<sup>76</sup> As one of the modern queens of Broadway, her interpretation of Annie was almost as different from Merman's, as is her physical appearance. At 5-foot-2 with a "Kewpie doll" face,

“wasp-like waist,” and “distracting bosom,”<sup>77</sup> Peters recalled in an interview that her wild red hair and curvy figure did not fit the image of the ideal beauty of the 1960s:

When you're a teen-ager and are supposed to look like Twiggy and you don't, you feel everything is wrong about you. When I was a teen-ager, Twiggy was it -- straight hair, really skinny, no breasts. I was trying desperately to blend in and be normal, but that doesn't allow creativity to come out. Finally, one summer I was fighting my hair going curly, I was hot, I thought, 'The hell with it.' And it was then I started working. Once I accepted that about myself, it allowed me to come forward....Even now, some directors say to me, 'What can we do with your hair?'<sup>78</sup>

Ironically, in the mid-1990s the ideal beauty had once again become “waif-like,” this time in the form of Calvin Klein model Kate Moss. Moss’ fragile, anorexic frame usually looked too weak to support her wide eyes, but her youth and visible bone structure was mirrored perfectly in the heroine-chic chorus of *Cabaret*. Peters’ age and curves defied that part of the waif image.

Although her physical features prevented her from blending into the chorus as a teenager and her figure continued to challenge conventional image norms, modern reviews and articles tended to focus on Peters’ fragile, child-like quality that was most in line with the contemporary model of femininity.<sup>79</sup> Alex Witchell notes in the *New York Times*,

At 51, Ms. Peters is a remarkable-looking woman. Her trademark pale skin is without lines, her waist is still tiny and this day, at least, her wild hair is at peace. She seems to retain the untouched quality of a child, a tranquility.<sup>80</sup>

Peters’ physical appeal rests in the fact that she has the potential to be so many things that Americans denote as negative and yet she does not meet this potential. Instead, she seems to challenge vice and Father Time at every turn. She could be a hoyden or a sexually liberated woman, but Witchell describes her in virginal terms as being as white as she can be and an “untouched” child, even though she is fifty-one years old.

She could show her age but, since she is a remarkable woman, she has smooth skin. She could be fat, but her waist is *still* tiny. Even her physical appearance betrays the fact that she has the ability to be wild, as evidenced by her legendary uncontrollable hair; however, she has tamed it into a peaceful, tranquil style. Despite the fact that her figure does not fit into the modern concept of the ideal beauty, the fact that she has learned to control the passage of time in order to remain child-like held enormous appeal for late-twentieth-century audiences.<sup>81</sup> This kind of physical appeal in combination with her unparalleled vocal ability made Peters a bankable star in the role of Annie Oakley.

Steven Winn of the *San Francisco Chronicle* observes that after hearing Peters “melt her way through” Berlin’s ballads, there is no mystery as to why the Weisslers would “long to build a revival of *Annie Get Your Gun*” around her. She has, Winn asserts, “Broadway’s great golden voice and an insouciant stage presence to go with it.”<sup>82</sup> For decades, Peters’ voice has been described by critics as “high and husky” and her persona as “sulky” and “sweet.”<sup>83</sup> In many ways, the descriptions of her voice and her persona are remarkably like the combinations of oppositional terms that reviewers found to describe Mary Martin. However, with Peters the quandary surrounds not her sexuality but her size and maturity. Without fail she is described in terms that capture both her diminutive physical stature and her forceful voice and presence. Often these terms lean toward describing her not simply as youthful, but as a “little girl,” once again highlighting her emotional and innocent qualities, and therefore her romantic availability. In the 1980s, Stephen Holden noted in the *New York Times*,

Miss Peters has always oozed a cuddlesome Shirley-Temple-like sweetness and vulnerability. This quality, which used to seem more like an adorable child-star affectation than a deep-seated [*sic*] trait, has proved to be an essential ingredient of Miss Peters's personality. A delivery that once seemed coy and cutesy has deepened and ripened into an honesty and compassion that pours out in singing that is childlike but also resilient.<sup>84</sup>

Fifteen years later, when cast as Annie, Peters had certainly moved beyond the Shirley Temple range. And yet, reviewers retained the depiction of her "oversize little-girl voice" and the way its "collective embrace" allows access to her innermost feelings. Ben Brantley gushed in his *New York Times* review, "Even the silliest seeming ditties can become affectingly sincere confessions when delivered by Ms. Peters. She is an enduring and essential reminder of the emotional vitality of a genre that in recent years has lost its way."<sup>85</sup> Brantley's almost palpable nostalgia and its connection to her voice helps to explain Peters' popularity in the role, despite the many problems critics had with her portrayal of Annie.

Peters' modern day Annie matched her own star persona and was softer and sweeter than Merman's both to look at and to listen to. Instead of Merman's "Mack truck approach" that was "irony-proof and prurience-proof," Peters had "spunk."<sup>86</sup> As Brantley acknowledges, when Merman played the role, "There was clearly never any danger of her turning into the docile child wife of Frank Butler's fantasies." Peters' Annie, however, started out much closer to the pink and white lady Butler desires, and she portrayed Annie with "an emotional delicacy" that producers hoped would engender the respect and equality that modern audiences expect.<sup>87</sup> In order to support this equality, the Weisslers engaged the services of veteran lyricist Peter Stone for an almost complete re-write of the script. Bernard Holland, in the *New York Times*, called the original script a "revivalist's minefield," noting that slicker

staging techniques and shorter attention spans were not the only issues Stone faced when trying to update the show.<sup>88</sup>

Stone began to address the many issues by placing the “story” of Annie Oakley and Frank Butler’s romance in a show within the production. Buffalo Bill enters through the audience and tells them in the first few lines that they are about to see “my own personal version of the tempestuous and romantic story of Annie Oakley and Frank Butler.”<sup>89</sup> With this opening, as Buffalo Bill physically lifts the curtain to begin the action, the story effectively becomes *his* show. As Holland notes, this perspective is “second hand” it is presented as “a historical artifact: theatre not as it is now but as Buffalo Bill Cody’s *Wild West Show* knew it a century ago” and Brantley contends, “there is a firm suggestion that we are not to take it too seriously.”<sup>90</sup> Throughout the show, Charlie Davenport enters to rally the chorus to change the set, moments that are intended to reinforce the self-reflexive nature of the new script and to highlight the dazzlingly fast scenery changes.

The two main issues Stone would have to reconfigure to fit the modern audience’s sensibilities were the stereotyping of race in the Indian scenes and of gender in the interactions between Frank and Annie.<sup>91</sup> In order to “reshape the script to eliminate any cause for political embarrassment,” Stone eliminated the song “I’m an Indian Too” and reinserted the Tommy/Winnie mixed race marriage subplot that every major production since the original Broadway run had excised.<sup>92</sup> Also, Stone, through his dialogue, and Daniele, through her direction, changed the tone of the many smaller moments in the show featuring interaction between the “whites” and the “Indians.” These changes played up the vaudeville roots of the ethnic humor so

that the production pointed at the punchline and in effect mocked the original libretto's politically incorrect stance. Actor Gregory Zaragoza's youthful interpretation of Chief Sitting Bull as a "wry entrepreneur" also aided this effort.<sup>93</sup> As Marks asserted, "Now it's a deliberate put-on when Sitting Bull sound 'em like this."<sup>94</sup>

In order to address the "antifeminist" sentiments available in the original libretto,<sup>95</sup> Stone approached the plot as bald-faced "set-ups for songs" that Fields had concocted. He made subtle changes in every scene in an attempt to make the dynamic between Frank and Annie more gender neutral. In order to proceed, the term gender neutral, as it will be used throughout this production analysis, must first be defined. In the script changes, the costumes, the press photos and the advertising, a theme of "gender neutrality" appears. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines gender neutral as "not specifying gender."<sup>96</sup> This production specifies gender, but in lieu of actual equality, attempts to convey gender equality by neutralizing Frank's masculinity and Annie's femininity by adding characteristics of the opposite gender to the mix; much as a chemist might try to neutralize an acid by adding a base. Therefore, in this analysis, the term gender neutral denotes the neutralized state that Stone, the designers, the producers, and the advertisers attempt to achieve in order to counteract the traditional reception of gendered actions, clothing, and dialogue.

Stone's script changes gave Annie the more masculine features of agency in her sexuality as well as more confidence in her sharpshooting skills and in her superior position. For example, in the train scene, Annie's desire to walk Frank to his car had always been a subtle hint toward beginning a physical relationship. In the

Peters revival, Annie now clearly wants to have sex with Frank when she offers to “mosey on back” with him. Also, at the end of the act, when Papa Bull tells her that she is the best shot, she responds, “Yeah, right.” Peters interprets this moment as if realizing that she is the best actually comforts her. This is a stark change from the M-G-M film and Betty Hutton’s exhortation that she wished she had never seen a gun.

A consistent change that did not get any notice in the reviews of the revival is the shift in Frank Butler’s attitude toward Annie. Tom Wopat, who played Butler opposite Peters and on the national tour, brought a nuanced portrayal to the role that furthered Stone’s script revisions and reflects Kimmel’s assessment of masculinity in the late-twentieth century. Kimmel notes:

What’s been happening with men while women’s lives have so completely transformed? Not very much...This is, I think, the reason that so many men seem so confused about the meaning of masculinity these days...Men have done very little to prepare for this completely different world. What has not changed are the ideas we have about what it means to be a man. The ideology of masculinity has remained relatively intact for the past three generations. That’s where men are these days: our lives have changed dramatically, but the notions we have about what it means to be a man remain locked in a pattern set decades ago, when the world looked very different.<sup>97</sup>

Wopat’s Frank visibly struggles throughout the show to keep up with the liberated Annie, while still carrying the mantle of traditional masculinity. In the scene in front of the “show” poster, Frank’s lines are almost identical to the original script. After stating, “I gave you a few tricks but they don’t add up to star billing.” Stone adds, “It took me years to get that.” This change, suggesting that she has the potential to eventually match him, undoubtedly nods toward the increasing equality of opportunity in the contemporary workplace, but it also clearly defines the glass ceiling that Annie has come up against. Wopat’s work in this scene, however, reveals

the inner workings of his more modern Frank Butler. His approach is completely different than Keel's in the M-G-M film. There is no anger in his delivery of the news. He seems to recognize the disappointment that Peters plays after he crushes her hopes and he physically holds his breath while she decides whether or not to accept his declaration. With her back to him, he heaves a big sigh as she acquiesces and they move quickly into "They Say It's Wonderful," which has clearly been moved to this moment in the show in order to gloss over the gender imbalance that must exist in order to further the plot.

In the second act, Wopat and Peters playfully fight throughout "Old Fashioned Wedding." She imitates begging like a dog and he polishes her boots and then mimes shooting himself in the head. The light tone of their choreography, like the broad Indian jokes, once again points up the moments in the show where the gendered lyrics do not exactly fit with the times, but the song is so good that it cannot be cut. However, the real discussion of modern femininity and masculinity occurs a few moments later after Annie has called off the merger because Frank still refuses to acknowledge that she is the world's greatest shot. He shouts after her, "That dress sure fooled me. I thought for a minute it was wrapped around a lady." Stone provides Annie with a new line, "If'n by 'lady' you mean some lily-livered rag doll who jes' lies down so's you kin stomp all over her, that sure as hell ain't me!" She storms off and Frank launches into the reprise of "The Girl That I Marry" that has been present in all of the other productions but the M-G-M film. However, while Wopat sings, "Stead of flittin' I'd be sittin' next to her and she'd purr—" he breaks off and cries.<sup>98</sup> After this brief display of emotion, Frank regains his composure and

finishes the line, “A doll I can carry, the girl that I—” Here he breaks off again and reasserts his traditional masculinity saying, “Ahh, to hell with it!” The overwhelming and real emotion in this scene is only momentary, but significant to say the least. In effect, Wopat’s projection of emotion, which can be interpreted as feminization, works toward neutralizing their gender dynamic. Both of the scenes in which Wopat expresses his internal conflict with his treatment of Annie and the emotional toll it takes on him set up the completely revised final scene of the 1999 production.

Stone’s changes to the details of the final shooting match made a significant impact on the story, leaving Annie and Frank in a tie and thereby making Annie’s eventual capitulation more palatable to a modern audience because, in theory, she chooses to be second best.<sup>99</sup> During the match, Annie begins to lose due to the “fixed” guns and Frank offers his gun “for luck.” In newly added lines, he generously tells her, “What do you say we start over? Those first couple of misses—I know what you were trying to do. You were giving me a handicap. But I don’t need it.” She replies, ringing the bell for gender equality in the workplace, “An’ I don’t need no favors.” Frank acknowledges this by trying to neutralize the playing ground saying, “Everyone needs a favor—sometime. Go on, honey, start over.” After tying the score, Annie realizes, as her predecessors have, that she still must lose in order to win. Peters plays this moment with much more depth than in previous productions, weighing the options carefully and then very obviously misfiring her gun. Once she begins to throw the match, Frank realizes her plan and tells her, “I don’t want no tainted victory. I got my reputation to protect.” He then misses as badly as she had, ending the contest in a tie, the very definition of neutrality.

The Weisslers, who were naturally after the upper and upper-middle-class white audience who have traditionally patronized Broadway houses, used images that were similarly neutralized to signal to potential audience members that this revival would showcase a modern fable of sexual equality. The cover of the Broadway playbill features a close-up of Peters as Annie as if she were the center of a bull's eye (figure 54). Her body is turned one quarter away from the viewer, but she faces directly to the camera, cocks her head and smiles genuinely. She is dressed in an extremely tight-fitting western style blouse that accentuates her breasts and small waist and she holds up two small pistols, one in each hand. The interesting aspect of this depiction is that none of the gendered elements are ever used in the show. She never wears the large cowboy hat or a ribbon in her hair, her clothing is never western wear (which is as much *cowboy* as *cowgirl*), and she never uses pistols. Her carefree expression and the way she holds the guns give an overall impression of feisty cowgirl fun to be had by anyone coming to the theatre, echoing the reviewer's sentiments from 1966, "a fun show to relax with...where nobody's going to get hurt." Since the revisical eliminates the motorcycle finale in favor of a trapeze finale, there is no photo of Peters in the traditionally skimpy outfit on a motorcycle. In fact, for the most part her costumes in the show keep her well-covered. Another press shot, figure 55, shows her in her hillbilly costume, an oversized buckskin men's jacket and huge pants that dwarf her petite frame. The sleeves are long and the cut is boxy. She wears a men's blue plaid shirt under the jacket and a large, ill-fitting hat with a bent up brim. Interestingly, the costume designer, William Ivey Long, makes a concerted effort throughout the show to reference gender neutrality in the women's clothing by

using menswear inspired cuts and pieces. The female siblings arrive for “Doin’ What Comes Natur’lly” dressed like Annie in oversized overalls and men’s coats, and the female chorus members wear corsets with Bermuda length shorts with fringe and cowboy boots. This design concept backfires in the same way that Kimmel asserts gender neutral policies fail, by ultimately revealing themselves as deeply gendered. After she begins to be a “lady” Peters wears demure, finely tailored Victorian dresses, complete with bustles, reminiscent of her costumes in *Sunday in the Park with George*. It is only at this time, as Steve Winn observes, that “Peters seems more at home.”<sup>100</sup>

Another press shot, figure 56, brings out more of the gender neutral aspect of the production and shows a very focused Peters, once again from the chest up, aiming her pistol. She uses her other arm to steady the gun, which in turn blocks any view of her chest and her vibrant curly hair spills out from under her large cowboy hat. She wears the same clothing from the *Playbill* cover, but this time the mood of the shot has changed completely. Her eyes are averted from the viewer, as she watches her mark intently. This image exudes confidence and skillfulness, two qualities meant to signal to audiences that this modern Annie Oakley was the equal to Frank Butler.

It is interesting to note that three of the four press photos examined here have Peters using a pistol, a gun she never uses in the show. These images are reminiscent of Martin’s pictures for the 1957 television special. Martin, as I argued above, used these smaller weapons in order to feminize her image, but Peters’ handling of the weapon seems to effect the opposite impression. Peters appears in control of the gun, and also more determined than Martin in her photos. However, in contrast to Martin,

there are no pictures of Peters with the large rifle she actually shoots with in the show. The large gun, as noted in chapter 4, feminized Martin because of her physical relationship to the gun. During “You Can’t Get a Man With a Gun,” Peters is clearly uncomfortable with the gun as she tries to twirl it as if she were part of a military unit.<sup>101</sup> In the show, Peters is feminized by her inability to handle the gun with confidence, but she is never depicted that way in any promotional photos.

Finally, the press image of Peters and Wopat, figure 57, poses the two lovers back-to-back. This image shares many similarities with the images that feature both Frank and Annie from Merman’s and Martin’s productions, particularly in the juxtaposition of dark and light costuming that draws the viewer’s eye to Annie. In this case, Peters is in her final costume, a brown corset with white lace around the bosom and buckskin chaps, and Wopat is in a black jacket and cowboy hat. They lean against one another and both look serious while gazing directly at the camera and both hold pistols, though each handles it differently. Wopat holds his up to the brim of his hat, as if tipping his hat in greeting. Peters also holds her pistol erect, but only up to her mouth and she purses her lips as if blowing off the smoke after a shot. Their costumes, physical proximity, and actions in the shot effectively convey the two main themes of the show throughout its production history, sex and rivalry. These aspects also highlight the characteristic attempts at gender equality that fall short in the 1999 revival and its promotional materials.

The costumes and pose in this ad clearly illuminate the ways in which the 1999 production’s focus on Peters’ sexuality ultimately undermines a sense of equality, landing instead on gender neutrality. In contrast to both Merman and

Martin, who wore white costumes for the final scene and in their promotional shots with Frank, only the lace around Peters' bosom is white. The "light" detail that draws the viewer's eye in this case is the peaches and cream skin of her bare arms and neck, which are set off against the black of his jacket. Also, Peters and Wopat are physically set up to be "equals" in the image. They are almost, but not quite, the same size in the photo, and although they both wear serious expressions, his comes off as darkly piercing but not entirely unfriendly, while her pursed lips and arched eyebrow can be read as a come-on. In this image, Wopat appeals to both sexes. He is physically attractive to women and his star persona, forever linked with his *Dukes of Hazzard* character "Luke Duke," reassures men. He is a man's man, a good-old-boy who likes women and fast cars.

Peters' appeal in this image is more complex. Merman and Martin, in the same pose with their respective Franks, come off as equals because they do not convey even a hint of sexuality. However, Peters' face and actions evoke an unmistakable sexual connotation. By presenting Peters in this manner, the producers follow the "beautiful women" line of appeal which asserts, "Men *and* women like looking at beautiful [and I would argue sexualized] women, so the thinking goes: men admire women, women admire what makes the men admire them."<sup>102</sup> If Peters' Annie had been presented as Frank's equal, without a trace of sexuality (as Merman and Martin played it), the target audience would presumably have been women. Instead, the overtly provocative aspects of this image appeal to both men *and* women, another seemingly equally gendered appeal. However, I suggest that this advertisement aimed more directly at female audience members because, in this case,

Peters appeals to women in her sexualized state, with her arched eyebrow and direct gaze, because she appears to be in control of her sexuality. The multiplicity of readings available in this ad reflects the complicated negotiation of gender in the 1999 revival. In the musical, Annie is presented as an equal, but chooses in the end to remain subservient. Peters appeals to women in this image because she appears to control her own sexuality, but her lack of clothing, her facial expression, and her highly sexualized connection to the gun ultimately subvert her power and negate any equality their pose may have established.<sup>103</sup>

As Kimmel noted above, women's lives have completely changed in the last three decades while men's lives have remained relatively the same. The enormous effort on the part of the producers and writers to bring *Annie Get Your Gun* into the twenty-first century indicates that females still rank as the number one consumer for musicals, as is evident in the *Playbill* advertising for the 1999 revival.<sup>104</sup> The breakdown of the advertising is similar in nature to the previous Broadway productions, but in this case the individual ads present as gender neutral, while actually aiming for the female audience member.

Advertisements for Leisure Activities once again occupied the largest segment of the advertising space in the *Playbill*, comprising sixty percent (60%) of the total ad space. This category included ads for Travel (10%), Other Arts and Entertainment (10%), Credit Card Companies (5%), Liquor (5%), and Cigarettes (2.5%). A new separate area designated for Hotels and After-Theatre Entertainment (27.5%) in the back of the program is a significant change for this category. The Leisure Activities ads, as had been the case in 1946, 1947, and 1966, were the least gender-specific in

their overall content, though in this case they included more male and female imagery. For example the cigarette ad featured a man and a woman at approximately equal positions on the page in equally revealing swimwear (figure 58). The ad was, in fact, aimed at women, as the woman was smoking the cigarette and had turned to look at the male approaching her from her left, mirroring the viewpoint of the audience. Ultimately, his toned, tanned body becomes the focal point of the ad. In another leisure ad, figure 59 promoting the movie *The Out-of-Towners*, Steve Martin and Goldie Hawn are at equal positions at center, but in the background a cross-dressed John Cleese runs by in heels, a mink coat, and a long-stemmed rose in his mouth.

After leisure activities, the next largest portion of the advertising in the *Playbill* included the seventeen-and-a-half percent (17.5%) of the ads aimed directly at female audience members. The subcategories in this group are Clothing (7.5%), Services (5%), Perfume (2.5%), and Cosmetics (2.5%). Perfumes are no longer a large part of female advertising in the 1999 *Playbill*, but they remain a female product as they had been in 1966. The interesting change in this ad is the subtle movement toward a more traditionally masculine type of advertising with a disproportionately large perfume bottle and the strong image of a woman with no immediate connection to the bottle. Cosmetics also play a much smaller role in the advertising in the *Playbill*, and it is notable that the text on the two-page Lancôme ad reflects the modern working mother's life, using the word "stress" five times (figure 60).

For the first time, the Clothing category, which in this case includes several department stores, supersedes the other female advertisements. Target, a store selling

fashion and housewares, bought the back cover of the opening night *Playbill*. As has been evident in the other *Playbills*, the back cover image is usually linked to the cover image of the star playing Annie. In this case, the ad features a middle-aged woman in a plain dark dress in front of a plain dark background (figure 61). Essentially, her figure is imperceptible except for her well-toned bare arms which end with her hands on her hips. She is facing in the same direction as Peters on the cover and her eyebrows and lips are similarly defined. However, instead of holding the kind of hardware Peters carries in her hands, the Target model has actual hardware around her neck, in the form of nine crescent wrenches hanging elegantly from a choker. Apparently, Target prepared this glamorous woman for a night out on Broadway or a leaky faucet. Anything he can do, she can do to.

The final seven ads fell into the Luxury and Male categories. Another twelve-and-a-half percent (12.5%) of the advertising space in *Playbill* was gender-neutral and marketed Cars, a Luxury item. Even the Chrysler ad in this section featured two cars facing off with one another, a “masculine” sports sedan and a “feminine” convertible. The only ads that did not engage female viewers at all were the ads aimed at men, which dropped to five percent (5%) in the 1999 *Playbill*. These ads were for Investments (2.5%) and an Erectile Dysfunction drug featuring former Presidential candidate Bob Dole (2.5%). Overall, the ads denote that the revival’s audience was filled with women who fell into the demographics discussed earlier, women who had become educated, women who were mothers, women who worked and became stressed, women who had achieved approximate equality in their careers and wanted to see a modernized musical about a woman who strikes a balance

between work life and home life with the help of her man. These women got that fable in this Annie and in this *Annie Get Your Gun*. As one reviewer noted, “When she quietly reprises 'You Can't Get a Man with a Gun' at the end of the first act, it seems unlikely that anyone who ever struggled between career and love could find the dilemma dated.”<sup>105</sup>

Despite the above commendation, most reviewers tended to agree with the *New York Times*' Ben Brantley who found the revival to be a “misconceived” production that “lacked conviction” and “seemed to both pander to and patronize the audience.”<sup>106</sup> Many found the politically correct Indian humor “abrasive” and the gender revisions “campy.”<sup>107</sup> Peters was widely praised for her interpretation of the Berlin standards, but as Steven Winn remarked, “her sulky sophistication doesn't fit Annie Oakley's rough contours and cornpone coyness...[and] the backwoods accent turns to mush in her mouth.”<sup>108</sup> *New York Times* opera critic Bernard Holland notes:

Current audiences pay a lot of money for sex and velocity, so rump-wiggling choristers, tight costumes and a frenetic choreographic pace are inserted. What results is two shows playing simultaneously and against each other. The 1999 show is meant to carry the 1946 original into the present, but it only widens the gap between the present and the past. Glitz and speed surround a simpler, less hurried work.... It sidesteps the total update: the wholesale translation of people, places and things to a contemporary setting...This *Annie Get Your Gun* falters because it has examined all the ways of bringing a simpler show into a more complex world and tried them all.<sup>109</sup>

These sentiments echo the earlier assertions about gender neutrality. In trying so diligently to update and equalize a story that “takes the idea of hiding your light under a bushel to new extremes,”<sup>110</sup> the producers simply layered on conflicting notions of gender in the hopes of distracting the modern viewer until it is too late. After the shooting match ends in a tie, everyone onstage is delighted and Frank offers the long-

awaited partnership to Annie, to which she replies, “Partners—got a nice ring to it. ‘Oakley and Butler.’” He asserts, “‘Butler and Oakley.’ Alphabetical order, remember? Butler comes before Oakley.” She grins back at him with one last shot, “Right. Alphabetical order—Annie comes before Frank.” As he starts to protest, she relents, “I’m jes’ foolin’, Frank—‘Butler an’ Oakley’ sounds jes’ fine t’ me.” Stone allows her to hand over the medals in order to bankroll the show and then she and Frank gather her siblings around as the chorus sings “They Say it’s Wonderful.”

Peters asserts that the revised nature of the script appealed to her. In a *New York Times* interview she recalled thinking:

Here comes a show in these strange times we live in that are so negative that it might be nice to do something looking up, positive. Maybe it's time to give people a lift. Revivals used to be a walk down memory lane instead of a new show unfolding in front of you. But since revivals are approached that way now, this one piqued my interest.<sup>111</sup>

Peters’ notion that the revised ending of the musical provided a “lift” for audiences, despite the fact that she still chooses to be second best, illuminates the most effective change in the 1999 production, the show-within-a-show concept. During the finale, Buffalo Bill halts the action and announces, “And that’s the story I promised you—how Annie Oakley and Frank Butler lived scrappily ever after. And now there’s nothing left to do but walk off into the sunset.” As the action resumes, Frank, Annie, and her three siblings walk hand-in-hand upstage into a dark silhouette of family bliss against a bright orange sunset. The addition of this framing device serves as the required distance between reality and nostalgia, allowing the Broadway audience to believe that they have seen a “modernized” vision of an old story, when they are really swallowing the same old line.<sup>112</sup>

## CODA

This dissertation's discussion of the ways musical biographers have molded the legendary Annie Oakley's image to suit the changing ideological agendas of the twentieth century is intended to further articulate the way the musical theatre works in the larger field of popular culture. Ultimately, I argue that the traditionally "light" musical form, when combined with political content and the right star persona, seductively coerces willing spectators into hegemonic ideologies. *Annie Get Your Gun* aims its discussion of the ever-changing notion of a woman's proper sphere of influence at primarily white, upper and upper-middle class female *and* male audience members through songs that "settle in your mind and refuse to leave" sung by stars who embody the characteristics of the culture's ideal woman.<sup>113</sup>

A 1999 review called *Annie Get Your Gun* a "glorious bridge between the old era and the new."<sup>114</sup> This is an appealing image; the musical's plotline, lyrics, and dialogue form a solid structure that spans across the American cultural and social landscape of the twentieth century. The shifting tides of gender roles ebb and flow beneath the bridge, and the shores that seemed solid in one generation slowly erode over time. But, despite many subtle changes, the audience's journey is unswerving. In *Annie Get Your Gun*, terra firma is the married woman's place in the labor force. And, whether the discussion takes place in 1946 or over the bridge in 1999, the result remains that her rightful place is "second best." Hopefully, twenty-first-century audiences will demand (and be ready to accept) an Annie who competes to her fullest potential and a Frank who retires gracefully. Only then will spectators finally see Annie Oakley and Frank Butler's truly forward-thinking gender relationship.

## APPENDICES & FIGURES

### Appendix 1.

#### Audience Analysis from 1946 Broadway *Playbill* advertisements for *Annie Get Your Gun*

##### Ads aimed at women:

Clothing	4/55 or 8%
Tula (F)	
Babywear by Yolande (F)	
Rogers Peet (F/M)	
Fownes Gloves (F/M)	
Lingerie or Hosiery	5/55 or 9%
Bra Beautiful by Flexees	
Gotham Gold Stripe Hosiery	
Mojud Hosiery	
Artcraft Stockings	
Kayser Hosiery/Lingerie	
Cosmetics	5/55 or 9%
Chanel	
Charles of the Ritz	
Revlon	
Rex	
LaCross	
Shoes	1/55 or 1%
Ansonia DeLuxe	
Suncare	1/55 or 2%
Germaine Monteil	

**Ads aimed at women comprise 29% of all advertising**

##### Ads for Gift Items – gender neutral (for women, aimed at men)

Perfume	7/55 or 14%
Lentherics (F/M)	
Elizabeth Arden (F/M)	
Helena Rubinstein (F/M)	
Worth (F/M)	
Charbert's (F/M)	
Corday (F/M)	
10 West Henri Bendel (F/M)	
Chocolates	2/55 or 4%
Huyler's	
Louis Sherry	
Jewelry	1/55 or 2%
Georg Jensen	
Shaving	1/55 or 2%
Seaforth (F=M)	
Luggage	1/55 or 1%
Dale 5 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	

**Ads for Gift Items – gender neutral (for women, aimed at men) comprise 23% of all advertising**

**Ads for Leisure activities – gender neutral**

Whiskey/ Liquor	8/55 or 15%
Three Feathers (M)	
Mount Vernon (M)	
Ron Merito Rum (M)	
Bellows Rum (M)	
Carstairs (M)	
Lord Calvert (M)	
PM Whiskey (M/F)	
Seagrams (M/F)	
Beer	3/55 or 6%
Ballantine Ale (M=F)	
Shaefer (F/M)	
Ruppert (M)	
Other Beverages	2/55 or 4%
Canada Dry (M=F)	
Cook's Champagne (M)	
Cigarettes	3/55 or 6%
Chesterfield (M/F)	
Philip Morris (M)	
Old Gold (M)	
Hotels	6/55 or 11%
Hotel Astor	
Waldorf Astoria	
St. Regis	
Hotel Lexington	
St. Regis	
Hotel New Yorker	
Theatre Guild	1/55 or 1%
Carousel and Oklahoma	
Pepto-Bismol (F/M)	1/55 or 1%

**Ads for Leisure activities – gender neutral (aimed at M & F) comprise 44% of all advertising****Ads aimed at Men**

Clothing	1/55 or 2%
Finchley (M)	
Playbill	1/55 or 1%
Creative Wealth advertising	
UNRRA Food Drive	1/55 or 1%

**Ads aimed at Men comprise 4% of all advertising**

**Appendix 2.**  
**Comparison of ads from five productions.**

	Leisure	Female	Luxury	Male	Other	Total				
1946	44	29	23	4	0	100				
1947	71	6	5	3	15	100				
1957	50	0	50	0	0	100				
1966	50	28	16	13	2	109				
1999	60	17.5	12.5	5	5	100				
Leisure	Liquor	Hotels/ Rest.	Beer	Cig.	Other Bev.	Other	Arts	Travel	Total	Leisure
1946	15	11	6	6	4	1	1	0	44	1946
1947	9.5	31	0	3	3	12	12.5	0	71	1947
1957	0	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	50	1957
1966	17	9	0	3	2	5	4	10	50	1966
1999	5	27.5	0	2.5	0	5	10	10	60	1999
Female	Cosmetics	Hosiery/ Lingerie	Clothing	Shoes	Suncare	Perfume	Hair	Serv.	Total	Female
1946	10	9	8	1	1	0	0	0	29	1946
1947	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	6	1947
1957	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1957
1966	7	3	6	0	0	9	3	0	28	1966
1999	2.5	0	7.5	0	0	2.5	0	5	17.5	1999
Luxury	Perfume	Gifts	Cars	Other					Total	Luxury
1946	14	9	0	0					23	1946
1947	0	0	5	0					5	1947
1957	0	0	50	0					50	1957
1966	0	0	5	2					7	1966
1999	0	0	12.5	0					12.5	1999
Male	Clothing	Other	Donations	Access.	Fragrance	Services			Total	Male
1946	2	1	1	0	0	0			4	1946
1947	0	0	0	3	0	0			3	1947
1957	0	0	0	0	0	0			0	1957
1966	5	0	3	2	3	0			13	1966
1999	0	2.5	0	0	0	2.5			5	1999
Other	Playbill								Total	Other
1946	0								0	1946
1947	15								15	1947
1957	0								0	1957
1966	2								2	1966
1999	5								5	1999

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## NOTES FOR INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup> Tracy C. Davis, "Annie Oakley and her Ideal Husband of No Importance," in *Critical Theory and Performance* edited by Janelle Reinelt and Joseph Roach, (Ann Arbor, MI: The Michigan Press, 1992), 300.

<sup>2</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the chick flick as "a film perceived, or marketed, as appealing particularly to women, typically featuring strong female characters and themes of romance, personal relationships, and female solidarity." *Oxford English Dictionary* [online database] (accessed March 12, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Michael Renov, *Hollywood's Wartime Woman: Representation and Ideology* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1988), 228. Much of this present analysis is indebted to this research and analysis of the filmic representation of women in the World War II years, and particularly to its Althusserian framework.

<sup>4</sup> Drucilla Cornell, *Transformations* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 88.

<sup>5</sup> In addition, there are several Master's Theses on images of women in musical theatre, such as Karen G. Klebe, "Babes on Broadway: The Treatment of Women in American Musical Theatre." M.A. Thesis, Fairfield University, 1977, and Michelle L. Harsche, "The Female Gaze Shines on Three Selected Female Characters Found in Musical Theatre." M.A. Thesis, University of North Dakota, 1995, but neither of these works deal with Oakley, nor were they published. Also, several recent dissertations deal with ideology and gender in musical theatre including, David Mark D'Andre, "The Theatre Guild, *Carousel*, and the Cultural Field of American Musical Theatre." Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2000, Abigail M. Feder-Kane, "'Anything you can do, I can do better': Transgressive Gender Role Performance in Musical Theatre and Film, 1930-1950." Ph. D., diss., Northwestern University, 1999, Alisa C. Roost, "The Other Musical Theatre : Political Satire in Broadway musicals : from *Strike up the band* (1927) to *Anyone can whistle* (1964)." Ph. D. diss., City University of New York, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> See Stanley Green's *The World of Musical Comedy*, Gerald Bordman's *American Musical Theatre*, Kurt Gänzl's *The Musical: A Concise History*, Denny Martin Flinn's *Musical! A Grand Tour* and Martin Gottfried's *Broadway Musicals*. PBS has also released a six-hour documentary on the American Musical Theatre with a companion tome. Lawrence Thelen's book, *The Show Makers: Great Directors of the American Musical Theatre*, and John Anthony Gilvey's *Before the Parade Passes By* both deal with directors who were involved with restaging or reviving *Annie Get Your Gun*.

<sup>7</sup> Musical theatre scholar John Bush Jones argues that "socially relevant shows have mirrored the concerns and lifestyles of middle Americans, their primary audience. The reality of commercial theatre dictates that, no matter how brilliant or artistic, if a show doesn't interest or entertain its audiences, it won't run long enough to make back its investment...[and he] judge[s] the success of musicals on audience appeal alone, usually indicated by the length of their runs." John Bush Jones, *Our Musicals, Ourselves* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2003), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 160.

<sup>9</sup> Evans, 147.

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<sup>10</sup> Shirl Kasper, *Annie Oakley* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 3-4. There are no birth records for Oakley but both family records and her death certificate place her birth on August 13, 1860.

<sup>11</sup> Kasper, 6; Carolyn Gage, "Why Annie Got Her Gun: Annie Oakley Trusted Bullets More than Ballots." *On the Issues: The Progressive Woman's Quarterly* 5 no. 2 (April 30, 1996), 30.

<sup>12</sup> Kasper, 6; Gage, 30.

<sup>13</sup> Kasper, 6 and 9. By sixteen, Annie abilities as a sharpshooter allowed her to even pay off the lien on her mother's home.

<sup>14</sup> Kasper, 12. Kasper's authoritative biography relies on detailed research and does much to remove itself from the mythology of Oakley, though in my recent discussions with Oakley's grand-niece Bess Edwards, Edwards contests many of the "facts" presented by Kasper and presents her own version of the "truth." See also, Courtney Riley Cooper, *Annie Oakley: Woman At Arms* (New York: Duffield, 1920), 128-29.

<sup>15</sup> Damaine Vonanda, "Annie Oakley was More Than 'A Crackshot in Petticoats'," *Smithsonian* 21, (September 1990), 132. Fittingly, she also claimed that embroidery was her favorite pastime, destitute children were her favorite charity, and the Bible was her favorite book.

<sup>16</sup> Renov, 1.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* Useful secondary sources on the American context include: John Grafton's *America: A History of the First 500 Years*, John Blum's *V was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II*, Geoffrey Perrett's *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People 1939-1945*, and Eric F. Goldman's *The Crucial Decade: America, 1945-1955*. As for general literature regarding women's experience during the period, I use Linda Kerber and Jane DeHart's *Women's America: Refocusing the Past*, Mary P. Ryan's *Womanhood in America and Women and the American Experience: Volume Two: From 1860*, by Nancy Woloch, Sara M. Evans' *Born for Liberty*, Susan H. Armitage's *The Women's West, The Fifties: A Women's Oral History*, by Brett Harvey, Hoyt Gimlin's *The Women's Movement: Achievements and Effects*, and finally, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* by Ruth Rosen.

<sup>19</sup> Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry* (London: Routledge, 1991), 2 & 9.

<sup>20</sup> See also Thomas Doherty's *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II*, Victoria De Grazia's *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, Grant McCracken's *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities*, Jennifer Scanlon's *Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies' Home Journal, Gender, and the Promises of Consumer Culture*, and *Women's Magazines 1940-1960: Gender Roles and the Popular Press*, edited by Nancy Walker.

<sup>21</sup> Many of these biographies and critical reviews are widely available, the New York Public Library houses audio recordings of Berlin and Columbia University's Oral Histories project has interviews with Dorothy Fields, Joshua Logan and producer Richard Rodgers. The Library of Congress also holds the Joshua Logan Papers.

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<sup>22</sup> Stacy Wolf, *A Problem Like Maria: Gender and Sexuality in the American Musical* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), 52.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>24</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Discursive Performance of Femininity: Hating Hillary," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 1 (1998), 2.

<sup>25</sup> Ethan Mordden, *Coming up Roses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 252-3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>27</sup> Souvenir Brochure of *Annie Get Your Gun* (Tour 2001) (New York: Deweynters in the USA, 2000), 5.

<sup>28</sup> Ben Brantley, "Everything The Traffic Will Allow," *New York Times*, March 5, 1999, Late Edition, sec E, pt. 1, p. 1; Bernard Holland, "Forever Bel is the Canto, Dated or Not" *New York Times*, May 9, 1999, Late Edition, sec. 2, p. 45.

<sup>29</sup> Michael Kantor and Laurence Maslon, *Broadway: The American Musical* (New York: Bullfinch Press, 2004), 377.

<sup>30</sup> Souvenir Brochure of *Annie Get Your Gun* (Tour 2001) (New York: Deweynters in the USA, 2000), 6.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 1

<sup>1</sup> Martha Burr, "The American Cowgirl: History and Iconography, 1860-Present," (Ph.D. Diss. NYU August, 1997), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Damaine Vonada, "Annie Oakley was More than 'A Crack Shot in Petticoats,'" *Smithsonian* 21, (September 1990), 145.

<sup>3</sup> Historians have contested much of the information available about Oakley's life. Oakley wrote a few articles and an unpublished autobiography in the early 1900s, but several biographers question whether these perpetuated her own myth. The hundreds of photographs that were taken during and after her career with the *Wild West* are the closest an historian can come to facts in the case of Annie Oakley.

<sup>4</sup> Vonada, 134. Despite great debate about this issue, most sources state that their first meeting was in a shooting match in the spring of 1881, which she won. The root of the debate is twofold, in that Annie widely misrepresented her age during her career, and also it is unclear as to whether Frank Butler and his first wife had in fact divorced by 1882, an unseemly discussion for the Victorian age. See Kasper, *Annie Oakley*, 13 and 20 or [www.ormiston.com/annieoakley/tales.html](http://www.ormiston.com/annieoakley/tales.html), the Annie Oakley Foundation website, [accessed online April 5, 2001 at 6:30 p.m.] which is run by Bess Edwards, Oakley's grand-niece. The article titled "Tall Tales" has since been removed and The Annie Oakley Foundation's new web address is [[www.annieoakleyfoundation.org](http://www.annieoakleyfoundation.org)].

<sup>5</sup> Vonada, 139.

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<sup>6</sup> I use “Annie” here to save confusion because she has not yet taken the name Oakley. Most Oakley biographies refer to her familiarly as “Annie.”

<sup>7</sup> Annie Fern Swartwout, according to Paul Fees, curator of the Annie Oakley Museum in Greenville OH, was not a particularly reliable source, as she was seeking her own fame on the tails of Oakley’s, but there is evidence of her accompanying Oakley on tour with the *Wild West* show, so there is some basis for fact. From discussions with Don Blakeley, Oakley’s nephew, the family members and his father in particular resented Fern’s attempt to capitalize on Oakley’s fame by sensationalizing her relationship with her aunt.

<sup>8</sup> Annie Fern Swartwout, *Missie: An Historical Biography of Annie Oakley* (Blanchester, OH: Brown, 1947), 61-3.

<sup>9</sup> Kasper, 17.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 20; and [www.ormiston.com/annieoakley/tales.html](http://www.ormiston.com/annieoakley/tales.html) now available at [www.annieoakleyfoundation.org](http://www.annieoakleyfoundation.org)

<sup>11</sup> Rush Blakeley interview at 321 Chippewa Street, Greenville, Ohio, May 13, 1981 by Shirl Kasper, quoted in *Annie Oakley*, 20.

<sup>12</sup> Kasper, 23.

<sup>13</sup> Glenda Riley, *The Life and Legacy of Annie Oakley* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 20; Kasper, 22. The story in these two very thorough biographies are slightly reversed, in Kasper’s version the *crowd* insisted Annie take every other shot, bringing into question the agency Annie had in her showbiz breakthrough.

<sup>14</sup> Tracy C. Davis, “Shotgun Wedlock: Annie Oakley’s Power Politics in the Wild West,” in *Gender in Performance: The Presentation of Difference in the Performing Arts*, edited by Lawrence Selenick (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1992), 145.

<sup>15</sup> Oakley descendant Don Blakeley notes that though the family’s religious background was Quaker he did not recall any Quaker beliefs or particular religious behavior on the part of Annie or the family.

<sup>16</sup> Robert C. Allen, *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 179, and Riley, *Life and Legacy*, 22-23.

<sup>17</sup> Glenda Riley, “Annie Oakley: Peerless Lady Wingshot” in *By Grit & Grace*, edited by Richard W. Etulain and Glenda Riley (Golden CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1997), 98. Which is ironic, since there is some question as to when and where they married, but there is a good deal of evidence that they were living together before his divorce was final and the marriage occurred.

<sup>18</sup> Vonada, 132.

<sup>19</sup> Riley, *Life and Legacy*, 21-22. Discussions with Oakley descendants Bess Edwards and Don Blakeley suggest that Oakley’s “un-Quaker-like” behavior, shooting wildlife for food, was acceptable to Oakley’s mother because it was the only way to support the family. Blakely did, however, say that some of the family had a problem with her career, “but she didn’t stay with them!” Also, *The Old Discipline* of the Quaker heritage admonishes all Quakers from attending the theatre in 1880 because of the “danger and injury to spiritual growth” that the diversion of the theatre poses. It is

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hard to confirm her religious beliefs, but as a performer in Vaudeville, it is probably safe to presume that she followed, at best, the spirit of the Discipline rather than the letter. *The Old Discipline: Nineteenth-Century Friends; Disciplines in America* (Glenside, PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 1999), 250.

<sup>20</sup> Vonada, 139, and Kasper, 23-24.

<sup>21</sup> Davis, "Shotgun Wedlock," 146.

<sup>22</sup> Riley, *The Life and Legacy*, 3-21.

<sup>23</sup> Kasper, 23. Some of the suggestions have been that she picked it out of a hat, that it was an old family name, or that she chose the name of the Cincinnati neighborhood of Oakley. It has also been asserted that she hated the name Moses so much that she had the spelling changed to "Moze" in the family Bible and on the tombstones of some family members.

<sup>24</sup> Kasper, 4.

<sup>25</sup> Riley, *Life and Legacy*, 21-22.

<sup>26</sup> Kasper, 22.

<sup>27</sup> Suzanne Keen, "Quaker Dress, Sexuality, and the Domestication of Reform in the Victorian Novel," *Victorian Literature and Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 211.

<sup>28</sup> Fenja Gunn, *The Artificial Face* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1973), 131.

<sup>29</sup> Gunn, 138-139.

<sup>30</sup> Rosemarie Swinfield, *Period Makeup for the Stage* (Cincinnati, OH: Betterway Books, 1997), 63.

<sup>31</sup> Gunn, 142.

<sup>32</sup> Riley, "Peerless Lady Wingshot," 98; Kasper, 22.

<sup>33</sup> Newark (N.J.) *Sunday News*, May 11, 1902, quoted in Kasper, 24.

<sup>34</sup> Riley, "Peerless Lady Wingshot," 99-100.

<sup>35</sup> Louis Pfaller, "Enemies in '76, Friends in '85: Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill," *Prologue: Journal of National Archives* 1 no. 2 (1969), 22.

<sup>36</sup> Pfaller, 99; Riley, *Life and Legacy*, 146.

<sup>37</sup> Pfaller, 99.

<sup>38</sup> Jonathan D. Martin, "'The Grandest and Most Cosmopolitan Object Teacher': Buffalo Bill's Wild West and the Politics of American Identity, 1883-1899," *Radical History Review* 66 (1996), 93-94.

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- <sup>39</sup> Albert Stern, "True West," *Americana* 14 (September/October 1986), 64.
- <sup>40</sup> Dexter Fellows, *This Way to the Big Show* (New York: The Viking Press), 73.
- <sup>41</sup> Caroline Kim-Brown, "'Little Sure Shot' The Saga of Annie Oakley," *Humanities* vol. 27 no 3 (May/June 2006) 14-17. Available at [www.neh.gov/news/humanities/2006-05/annieoakley.html](http://www.neh.gov/news/humanities/2006-05/annieoakley.html) [accessed January 1, 2007].
- <sup>42</sup> Fellows, 74.
- <sup>43</sup> Riley, *Grit and Grace*, 103.
- <sup>44</sup> Letter quoted in Becky Winner, "History of Annie Oakley comes to Life in Museum," *Tri-State Trader* (OH), Oct 25, 1968.
- <sup>45</sup> Annie Oakley, *The Story of My Life* (n.p.: NEA Service 1926); ch. 6, quoted in Kasper, *Annie Oakley*, 38.
- <sup>46</sup> Martin, 100-01.
- <sup>47</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, search terms: "feminine," "womanly," "masculine," and "manly," [online database] (accessed March 12, 2004).
- <sup>48</sup> Mary P. Ryan, *Womanhood in America* (New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1983), 113-14.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.
- <sup>50</sup> Mary Eliza Haweis, *The Art of Beauty* (London, 1878), n.p., quoted in Alison Gernsheim, *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion: A Photographic Survey*, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1981), 66.
- <sup>51</sup> Nancy Villa Bryk, ed., *E. Butterick & Co. Summer Catalogue in American Dress Pattern Catalogues 1873-1909* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1988), 182 & 38.
- <sup>52</sup> Gernsheim, 75-77.
- <sup>53</sup> *Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World*, 1893 Program, 6-8, (in Townshend Walsh Collection, Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library), as cited in Martin, 101.
- <sup>54</sup> Kasper, 148.
- <sup>55</sup> Davis, "Shotgun Wedlock," 142.
- <sup>56</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, May 1, 1893, as cited in Joy S. Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 99-101; Kasper, *Annie Oakley*, 36.
- <sup>57</sup> Teresa Jordan, *Cowgirls: Women of the American West* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1982), 189.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

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- <sup>59</sup> Riley, *The Life and Legacy*, 45.
- <sup>60</sup> Davis, "Shotgun Wedlock," 144.
- <sup>61</sup> Walter Havighurst, *Annie Oakley of the Wild West* (New York: Macmillan, 1954), 71.
- <sup>62</sup> Vonada, 145.
- <sup>63</sup> Riley, "Peerless Lady Wingshot," 93.
- <sup>64</sup> Vonada, 140.
- <sup>65</sup> Martin, 120.
- <sup>66</sup> Richard Kislán, *The Musical: A Look at the American Musical Theatre* (New York: Applause, 1995), 42.
- <sup>67</sup> Kasper, 42.
- <sup>68</sup> Davis, "Annie Oakley and Her Ideal Husband of No Importance," 305.
- <sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 301.
- <sup>70</sup> Kasper, 43.
- <sup>71</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, October 12, 1900, quoted in Kasper, 43.
- <sup>72</sup> Davis, "Shotgun Wedlock," 146.
- <sup>73</sup> Davis, "Ideal Husband of No Importance," 307.
- <sup>74</sup> Vonada, 140.
- <sup>75</sup> Gage, 30.
- <sup>76</sup> Vonada, 143.
- <sup>77</sup> Riley, "Peerless Lady Wingshot," 105.
- <sup>78</sup> Davis, "Ideal Husband," 307.
- <sup>79</sup> Riley, "Peerless Lady Wingshot," 104. See also, sketches on display at the Annie Oakley Museum in Greenville, OH.
- <sup>80</sup> Riley, *The Life and Legacy*, 112 and Kasper, 49.
- <sup>81</sup> Vonada, 132.
- <sup>82</sup> Dexter Fellows, 73.

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<sup>83</sup> *New York Sun*, May 20, 1894, quoted in Kasper, 45.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 22; Riley, "Peerless Lady Wingshot," 103-104.

<sup>85</sup> Fellows, 73.

<sup>86</sup> *New York Times*, April 7, 1901, quoted in Riley, "Peerless Lady Wingshot," 103; Kasper, 41. See also, Fellows, *This Way to the Big Show*, for a sample program from 1895, 76-77.

<sup>87</sup> Vonada, 144.

<sup>88</sup> Riley, "By Grit and Grace," 95.

<sup>89</sup> Vonada, 132.

<sup>90</sup> Riley, "Peerless Lady Wingshot," 105.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Vonada, 144. It is interesting to note the use of Oakley's married name in the description of this domestic setting. Biographers and scholars (including Vonada) most often refer to Oakley as simply "Annie," automatically relegating her to the diminutive. She is almost never referred to as "Mrs. Frank Butler," as Vonada does in this statement, but apparently when she is spruced up she gets a title bump as well.

<sup>94</sup> Riley, "Peerless Lady Wingshot," 103.

<sup>95</sup> Davis, "Shotgun Wedlock," 142.

<sup>96</sup> Kasper, 49.

<sup>97</sup> Vonada, 145.

<sup>98</sup> Riley, "Peerless Lady Wingshot," 103.

<sup>99</sup> Gage, 30; Riley, *Life and Legacy*, 139.

<sup>100</sup> Riley, *Life and Legacy*, 139.

<sup>101</sup> Kasper, 45.

<sup>102</sup> Riley, "Peerless Lady Wingshot," 105.

<sup>103</sup> *New York World*, July 7, 1900, quoted in Davis, "Shotgun Wedlock," 145.

<sup>104</sup> Riley, "Peerless Lady Wingshot," 103.

<sup>105</sup> Martin, 114.

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<sup>106</sup> Charles Musser, *Before the Nickelodeon: Edwin S. Porter and the Edison Manufacturing Company* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 40.

<sup>107</sup> Musser, 41.

<sup>108</sup> Musser, 42-43.

<sup>109</sup> Musser, 44.

<sup>110</sup> Musser, 45.

<sup>111</sup> Annie Oakley, *Powders I Have Known and Used* (Wilmington, DE: E.I. DuPont Nemours Powder Co., 1941), 5.

<sup>112</sup> Kasper, 61. This claim was also addressed on the Annie Oakley Foundation website [www.ormiston.com/annieoakley/tales.html] which is run by Bess Edwards, Oakley's grand-niece. The article titled "Tall Tales" was accessed April 5, 2001 at 6:30 p.m., but the article has since been removed and The Annie Oakley Foundation new web address is [www.annieoakleyfoundation.org].

<sup>113</sup> Phil Reisman, "Annie Oakley Libel Case Revisited," *Editor & Publisher* v. 124 no. 23 (June 8, 1991), 120. The libelous statements had indicated that Oakley was "not lawful or pure...and that she was unfeminine." She won the suit against 44 out of 46 newspapers, winning judgments ranging from \$500 to \$27,500. According to Tracy Davis, the win was important, "not only for her pride and dignity or the reputation of her marriage, but also for the personification she gave to feminized power." See also, Davis, "Shotgun Wedlock," 154.

<sup>114</sup> Kasper, 61.

<sup>115</sup> Kasper, 165-166. The number of hours varies in different reports.

<sup>116</sup> See "Annie Oakley's Hot Bath," *Sporting Life*, quoting Amy Leslie, n.d., *Annie Oakley Scrapbooks 1896-1901*; and Amy Leslie, "Plays and Players," *Chicago Daily News*, n.d., *Annie Oakley Scrapbooks 1902-8*, quoted in Kasper, *Annie Oakley*, 167; www.ormiston.com/annieoakley/tales.html. The article titled "Tall Tales" was accessed April 5, 2001 at 6:30 p.m., but the article has since been removed and The Annie Oakley Foundation new web address is [www.annieoakleyfoundation.org].

<sup>117</sup> Kasper., 168.

<sup>118</sup> Sarah Wood-Clark, *Beautiful Daring Western Girls: Women of the Wild West Shows* (Cody WY: Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 1984), 14.

<sup>119</sup> This picture was hanging in the home of Oakley descendant Daniel Hunt in Greenville, OH. He was kind enough to take it to the Garst Museum who scanned it for me for use in this dissertation.

<sup>120</sup> Of the 56 photos on the Annie Oakley Foundation's website (taken between 1875 and 1926), 47 feature feminine traits whereas only 9 display primarily masculine traits. One of the greatest determinants in the gendered meaning of the picture is the presence or absence of a gun. An interesting note is that four of the five photographs of Oakley aiming the gun, as if in action, were taken after her

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employment in Buffalo Bill's Wild West. This confirms the assertion that Annie's image was intentionally feminized to appeal to the Wild West audience.

<sup>121</sup> Bonnie Brooks, "Annie Oakley as We Knew Her," *The Dorchester News*, May 9, 1973, p. 2A.

<sup>122</sup> Bert Laub, "Wild West Show," *American Heritage* 47 (September 1996), 30.

<sup>123</sup> Vonada, 145.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> PBS and A&E ran specials on Oakley's life in 2006. Oakley biographies appear on the Annie Oakley Foundation website [[www.AnnieOakleyFoundation.org](http://www.AnnieOakleyFoundation.org)], the Darke County, OH website [[www.visitdarkecounty.org](http://www.visitdarkecounty.org)], the Garst Museum website [[www.garstmuseum.org](http://www.garstmuseum.org)], as well as the Buffalo Bill Historical Center's website [[www.bbhc.org](http://www.bbhc.org)].

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 2

<sup>1</sup> "Peerless Lady Wingshot" was a common advertising phrase for Oakley, prominent in many of her *Wild West* posters.

<sup>2</sup> Deborah Winer, *On the Sunny Side of the Street* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997), 149. With a screenplay by Joseph Fields, son of Lew Fields and brother to Dorothy Fields.

<sup>3</sup> Winer, *On the Sunny Side of the Street*, 144; also quoted in Max Wilk's *They're Playing our Song* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), 288-289.

<sup>4</sup> Davis, "Annie Oakley and her Ideal Husband of No Importance," 300.

<sup>5</sup> Renov, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Stanley Green, *The World of Musical Comedy* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1980), 406.

<sup>7</sup> Melissa Dabakis, "Gendered Labor: Norman Rockwell's 'Rosie the Riveter' and the discourses of wartime womanhood," in *Gender and American History Since 1890*, edited by Barbara Melosh (New York: Routledge, 1993), 187.

<sup>8</sup> Evans, 443.

<sup>9</sup> Renov, 11. The 'duration' was a common term used to describe the time the men were away at war, i.e. the length of time they would have to endure the war and the work and hardship it would bring.

<sup>10</sup> Evans, 444.

<sup>11</sup> Dabakis, 188.

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<sup>12</sup> Harold D. Lasswell, the first American social scientist to study propaganda systematically, proposed the following definition: Propaganda is the deliberate attempt to influence mass attitudes on controversial subjects by the use of symbols rather than force. While ideology-in-general serves a practical-instrumental function in orienting people towards the dominant beliefs and practices and is generally experienced as unintentional, even unconscious, propaganda displays a more focused attention to “mass” effectivity. See Bruce Lannes Smith, Harold D. Lasswell, and Ralph D. Casey, *Propaganda, Communication & Public Opinion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), 1.

<sup>13</sup> Renov, 81.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>15</sup> A magazine brings stories to the reader, but the reader has agency in her reception of the information, depending greatly on her surroundings when she reads the magazine, the amount of attention and imagination she is able to lend to the process, and the material she chooses to read. For example, a mother of two could glance through the magazine while watching her children play, or a single woman could read the magazine at the beauty parlor while simultaneously chatting with friends, it is likely that neither woman would be able to take in the full ideological content of the text. A woman would have to choose to dedicate time and thought to the magazine to really ingest the ideology or even the government propaganda available in the text of magazines. A magazine brings stories to the reader, but the reader has agency in her reception of the information, depending greatly on her surroundings when she reads the magazine, the amount of attention and imagination she is able to lend to the process, and the material she chooses to read. For example, a mother of two could glance through the magazine while watching her children play, or a single woman could read the magazine at the beauty parlor while simultaneously chatting with friends, it is likely that neither woman would be able to take in the full ideological content of the text. A woman would have to choose to dedicate time and thought to the magazine to really ingest the ideology or even the government propaganda available in the text of magazines.

<sup>16</sup> Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience: Volume Two: From 1860* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994), 464.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 464-6. Woloch describes the OWI as one of the government agencies that provided “guidelines and suggestions” for the mass media to promote the impression of the temporary nature of this work.

<sup>18</sup> Dabakis, 188.

<sup>19</sup> Woloch, 466.

<sup>20</sup> *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*, dir. Connie Field, Los Angeles, CA: Direct Cinema, Ltd., 1987, [videocassette].

<sup>21</sup> Dabakis, 182.

<sup>22</sup> Wolloch, 465. *Annie Get Your Gun*, as will be seen in chapter three, transforms Oakley’s “real” career, which was not framed by these same boundaries or driven by these same necessities, into a model for these working war women as a model for peacetime reconversion.

<sup>23</sup> Nancy A. Nichols, *Reach for the Top: Women and the Changing Facts of Work Life* (A Harvard Business Review Book, 1997), 4; Wolloch, 464-6.

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<sup>24</sup> Whether the issue of glamour was actually more important or if popular magazines made glamour *seem* more important is a bit of the “chicken or the egg” question, but in view of the cultural belief in the duration, as something to be endured for a while and then a return to normalcy, it stands to reason that the maintenance of femininity among the new factory workers became increasingly important over the course of the duration.

<sup>25</sup> Dabakis, 190.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> “Engineers of Womanpower,” *Automotive War Production* 2 (October 1943), 4.

<sup>28</sup> Can you image an ad for Ford Motor Co. featuring a female worker today with the same caption?

<sup>29</sup> Dabakis, 185.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 186. In major war production centers, such as New York, Los Angeles, and Detroit, the proportion of minority women in the female work force increased from 10 per cent to 19 per cent. In posters and advertisements, however, women of color were invisible

<sup>32</sup> Redd Evans and John Jacob Loeb, *Rosie The Riveter* (New York: Paramount Music Corporation, 1942). Available at [www.loc.gov/rr/program/journey/rose-transcript.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/journey/rose-transcript.html) (accessed August 19, 2005).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> There is very little scholarly work on J. Howard Miller. This material comes from three sources, Sheridan Harvey, “Rosie the Riveter: Real Women Workers in World War II,” [webcast transcript] from the Library of Congress webpage available at [www.loc.gov/rr/program/journey/rosie-transcript.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/journey/rosie-transcript.html) (accessed June 11, 2007); Dean Lucas, “We Can Do It!” *Famous Pictures Magazine* available at [www.famouspictures.org/mag/index.php?title=We\\_Can\\_Do\\_It%21](http://www.famouspictures.org/mag/index.php?title=We_Can_Do_It%21) (accessed June 11, 2007); and wikipedia article on J. Howard Miller, available at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J.\\_Howard\\_Miller](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._Howard_Miller) (accessed June 11, 2007). A recent (2007) Doctoral Dissertation by Hannah W. Wong from the University of Maryland is intended to shed more light on the genesis of this image.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> “Rockwell's Rosie the Riveter Painting Auctioned.” Available at [www.rosietheriveter.org/paintings.html](http://www.rosietheriveter.org/paintings.html)  
[http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/at0071.2s.jpg&imgrefurl=http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosie\\_the\\_Riveter&h=769&w=640&sz=104&hl=en&start=2&tbnid=GwG9taSEqtCr4M:&tbnh=142&tbnw=118&prev=/images%3Fq%3DRosie%2Bthe%2BRiveter%26gbv%3D2%26svnum%3D10%26hl%3Den](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/at0071.2s.jpg&imgrefurl=http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosie_the_Riveter&h=769&w=640&sz=104&hl=en&start=2&tbnid=GwG9taSEqtCr4M:&tbnh=142&tbnw=118&prev=/images%3Fq%3DRosie%2Bthe%2BRiveter%26gbv%3D2%26svnum%3D10%26hl%3Den) (accessed June 11, 2007).

<sup>37</sup> Dabakis, 190.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 193.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 193 & 196.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 196-199.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 196-198.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>47</sup> “Rockwell’s Rosie the Riveter Painting Auctioned.”

<sup>48</sup> “Rockwell’s Rosie the Riveter Painting Auctioned;” Gary Dennis, “Nashua woman was model for Rockwell classic,” *New Hampshire Union Leader*, May 22, 2002. Available at [www.rosietheriveter.org/paintings.html](http://www.rosietheriveter.org/paintings.html) (accessed June 11, 2007).

<sup>49</sup> Dennis, “Nashua woman was model for Rockwell classic.”

<sup>50</sup> Dabakis, 185

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>52</sup> Nichols, 3.

<sup>53</sup> Woloch, 460. From 1940 to 1945, the number of female workers rose by 50 percent, from 12 million to 18 million. In 1940, women constituted 8 percent of total workers employed in the production of durable goods. By 1945, this number increased to 25 percent. U.S. Department of Transportation website available at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/wit/rosie.htm> (accessed January 19, 2007).

<sup>54</sup> Renov, 40 and Linda Kerber and Jane DeHart, *Women’s America: Refocusing the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 450.

<sup>55</sup> Nichols, 3.

<sup>56</sup> Kerber and DeHart, 449.

<sup>57</sup> Woloch, 464.

<sup>58</sup> Dabakis, 193.

<sup>59</sup> Renov, 47

<sup>60</sup> Kerber and DeHart, 446.

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<sup>61</sup> Elaine Tyler May, "Ambivalent Dreams: Women and the Home After World War II," *Journal of Women's History* 13 #3 (Autumn, 2001), 151-152. Edith Speert to Victor Speert, Cleveland, Ohio, 9 November 1945, in *Since You Went Away: World War II Letters from American Women on the Home Front*, ed. Judy Barrett Litoff and David C. Smith (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 157.

<sup>62</sup> Woloch, 468.

<sup>63</sup> Sherna Berger Gluck, *Rosie the Riveter Revisited: Women, The War, and Social Change* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), 15.

<sup>64</sup> Renov, 154.

<sup>65</sup> Woloch, 467.

<sup>66</sup> Woloch, 467.

<sup>67</sup> "I'm Proud...My Husband Wants Me to do my part," Available at [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?pp/ils:@filreq\(@field\(NUMBER+3g05603\)+@field\(COLLID+cph\)\):displayType=1:m856sd=fsac:m856sf](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?pp/ils:@filreq(@field(NUMBER+3g05603)+@field(COLLID+cph)):displayType=1:m856sd=fsac:m856sf) (accessed October 12, 2007)

<sup>68</sup> Woloch, 468.

<sup>69</sup> Woloch, 463-464.

<sup>70</sup> "Good Work Sister!" Available at [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?pp/ils:@filreq\(@field\(NUMBER+3g05597\)+@field\(COLLID+cph\)\):displayType=1:m856sd=fsac:m856sf](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?pp/ils:@filreq(@field(NUMBER+3g05597)+@field(COLLID+cph)):displayType=1:m856sd=fsac:m856sf) (accessed October 12, 2007)

<sup>71</sup> Woloch, 467.

<sup>72</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1962), 62-63 and 110. "The term bombshell first emerged during the 1930s, with the increasing recognition of female sexuality as powerful and explosive....A photograph of Rita Hayworth was actually attached to the hydrogen bomb dropped on the Bikini Islands."

<sup>73</sup> "Their Real Pin-up Girl," Available at [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?pp/ils:@filreq\(@field\(NUMBER+3g05601\)+@field\(COLLID+cph\)\):displayType=1:m856sd=fsac:m856sf](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?pp/ils:@filreq(@field(NUMBER+3g05601)+@field(COLLID+cph)):displayType=1:m856sd=fsac:m856sf) (accessed October 12, 2007)

<sup>74</sup> Renov, 47.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>76</sup> Woloch, 466; Dabakis, 188.

<sup>77</sup> "Rosie The Riveter" search term in *Internet Movie Database* [online database]. Available at <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0037235/#comment> (accessed June 23, 2007).

<sup>78</sup> Renov, 153.

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<sup>79</sup> Renov, 153.

<sup>80</sup> Gluck, 16.

<sup>81</sup> Renov, 80.

<sup>82</sup> John Willett, *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 9

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>84</sup> William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen, *Performing Arts-The Economic Dilemma: A Study of Problems common to Theatre, Opera, Music and Dance* (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1966), 57 & 437.

<sup>85</sup> Winer, *On the Sunny Side of the Street*, 126.

<sup>86</sup> Kislán, 147. "Integration implies more than synthesis, however; it implies the successfully coordinated ability of all elements of a musical show to push the story forward out of proportion to the individual weight of each element. Not only does every element fit perfectly into an integrated show, each functions dramatically to propel the book forward."

<sup>87</sup> Philip Furia, *Irving Berlin: A Life in Song* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), 215.

<sup>88</sup> Kantor and Maslon, 202.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Laurence Bergreen, *As Thousands Cheer: The Life of Irving Berlin* (New York: Viking, 1990), 446.

<sup>92</sup> Dwight Blocker Bowers, interview by the author, tape recording, Washington, DC, 5 January 2007. "She basically supported...Herbert, by this time, by Annie being written, was lapsing very much into alcoholism. Most of the work for Annie was really done by Dorothy Fields. I think probably the last shows where he was compus menace[?] were the early shows in the 40s for Merman, like Panama Hattie and Something for the Boys. But he was basically pulling away as she was revving up."

<sup>93</sup> Gerald Bordman, *The American Musical Theatre: A Chronicle*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 1992), 438.

<sup>94</sup> *Reminiscences of Dorothy Fields*, (November 1958), Part I, 2-3, in the Oral History Collection of Columbia University; Winer, *On the Sunny Side of the Street*, 21.

<sup>95</sup> Winer, *On the Sunny Side of the Street*, 15.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> Wilk, 42.

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<sup>98</sup> Philip Furia, *The Poets of Tin Pan Alley: A History of America's Greatest Lyricists*. (New York, Oxford University Press, 1990), 215.

<sup>99</sup> Furia, *The Poets of Tin Pan Alley*, 215.

<sup>100</sup> Winer, *On the Sunny Side of the Street*, xvii.

<sup>101</sup> Furia, *The Poets of Tin Pan Alley*, 215.

<sup>102</sup> Winer, *On the Sunny Side of the Street*, 27.

<sup>103</sup> Winer, *On the Sunny Side of the Street*, 122. "Dorothy lived like a princess....she had one large closet just for nightgowns."

<sup>104</sup> *Reminiscences of Dorothy Fields*, Part I, 4.

<sup>105</sup> Winer, *On the Sunny Side of the Street*, xviii.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Wilk, 40.

<sup>108</sup> Dorothy Fields and Herbert Fields, "Confessions of an Authors Team" unidentified newspaper clipping, Free Library of Philadelphia, Theatre Collection; also reprinted in the 1946 Broadway program.

<sup>109</sup> Thomas Hischak, *Boy Loses Girl* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Pub Inc., 2002), 93

<sup>110</sup> Winer, *On the Sunny Side of the Street*, 144.; Wilk, 288-289.

<sup>111</sup> *Reminiscences of Dorothy Fields*, Part II, 12 & 16.

<sup>112</sup> Winer, *On the Sunny Side of the Street*, 149.

<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, according to Oakley's great grand-niece, Bess Edwards, Lew Fields saw Oakley perform at a Friar's Club charity event in the early 1900s. In Edwards' estimation, Fields sensed the electricity in the crowd when the little sharpshooter performed and her ability to move the audience impressed him.

<sup>114</sup> Bess Edwards, telephone interview conducted by the author, June 4, 2003.

<sup>115</sup> Bowers, interview. "Obviously Joe would have had whatever he did on [it], although the screenplay is not credited to him, the story is, Joe Fields. And...there was no repository where you could go to screen old films and it's not like they would call up Republic and say 'I want to see this.' So obviously they were aware of each other but maybe that was only an awareness of each, of that the brother had worked on the film and a memory of being at one of the premieres, but not as a point of reference. In fact I doubt very seriously...He would have had copies of his scenario and his treatment, but that was later translated into a screenplay by two other writers. I don't know. Fields never makes any mention of it."

<sup>116</sup> *Annie Oakley*, Republic Pictures, 1935.

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- <sup>117</sup> Dorothy Fields and Herbert Fields, "Confessions of an Authors Team."
- <sup>118</sup> Bordman, 302.
- <sup>119</sup> Alexander Woolcott, 215 quoted in Furia, *Irving Berlin: A Life in Song*, 4.
- <sup>120</sup> Ethan Mordden, *Broadway Babies: The People Who Made the American Musical* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 101.
- <sup>121</sup> Wilk, 272.
- <sup>122</sup> Charles Hamm, *Irving Berlin: Songs from the Melting Pot: The Formative Years, 1907-1914* (New York: Oxford Press, 1997), 173; "'Watch Your Step' is Hilarious Fun," *New York Times*, 9 December 1914, p. 13.
- <sup>123</sup> Wilk, 275.
- <sup>124</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 88.
- <sup>125</sup> Green, 404.
- <sup>126</sup> Gerald Mast, *Can't Help Singin': The American Musical on Stage and Screen*. (New York: The Overlook Press, 1987), 42.
- <sup>127</sup> Mast, 41.
- <sup>128</sup> Michael Freedland, *Irving Berlin* (New York: Stein and Day, 1974), 152
- <sup>129</sup> Furia, *Irving Berlin*, 191.
- <sup>130</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 88.
- <sup>131</sup> Wilk, 276-277.
- <sup>132</sup> Green, 404.
- <sup>133</sup> Elliot Norton, "Berlin to Broadway" *New York Times*, April 21, 1946 sec 2, p X.
- <sup>134</sup> Wilk, 263.
- <sup>135</sup> Furia, *Irving Berlin*, 4.
- <sup>136</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 82.
- <sup>137</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 81.
- <sup>138</sup> Myrna Katz Frommer and Harvey Frommer, *It Happened on Broadway: An Oral History of the Great White Way* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998), 92.

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### NOTES FOR CHAPTER 3

<sup>1</sup> Martin, 100-101.

<sup>2</sup> Gluck, 16. The ideology of domesticity reappeared during the Depression when “wage-earning women seemed to threaten ‘breadwinners.’”

<sup>3</sup> Furia, *Irving Berlin*, 198.

<sup>4</sup> Renov, 153.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Bordman, 552.

<sup>7</sup> Renov, 228. Much of this present analysis is indebted to this research and analysis of the filmic representation of women in the World War II years, and particularly to its Althusserian framework.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Toss, *Brecht for Beginners* (New York: Writers and Readers Publishing, Inc., 1999), 135.

<sup>9</sup> Janelle Reinelt, “Beyond Brecht: Britain’s New Feminist Drama,” in *Feminist Theatre and Theory* edited by Helene Keyssar (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 42. In order to “remove the works from political or social literalness, with its danger of turning them into topical dramas,” Gilman observes that Brecht set many of his plays in “remote and generally exotic places, or at distant historical periods.” This serves to alienate the viewer, by not allowing them to directly identify with a time or place. There is rarely a specific attempt to describe the setting outside of the atmosphere it provides for the tale. Similarly, his exotic locales are “in no sense made up of physical observations,” as he had rarely been to the places he described. Richard Gilman, *Making of Modern Drama* (New York: Da Capo, 1987), 212.

<sup>10</sup> Reinelt, 42.

<sup>11</sup> Alice M. Robinson, Vera Mowry Roberts, and Milly S. Barranger, *Notable Women in the American Theatre* (New York: Greenwood Press), 632; Ethan Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 115.

<sup>12</sup> Bob Thomas, *I Got Rhythm! The Ethel Merman Story* (New York: G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1985), 93.

<sup>13</sup> Bowers, interview.

<sup>14</sup> Elliot Norton, “Berlin to Broadway,” *New York Times*, April 21, 1946, sec 2, p X.

<sup>15</sup> Maurice Zolotow, *No People Like Show People* (New York: Random House, 1951), 289 & 297; Thomas, 100.

<sup>16</sup> Wolf, 92.

<sup>17</sup> Wolf, 99.

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- <sup>18</sup> S. J. Woolf “Sharpshooting Singer From Astoria,” *New York Times*, Jun 2, 1946, p. SM 12.
- <sup>19</sup> Woolf ,12; also quoted in Thomas, 96; Zolotow, 293,
- <sup>20</sup> Pete Martin, “That’s the Kind of Dame I Am, Part One,” *Saturday Evening Post*, February 12, 1955, p. 94.
- <sup>21</sup> Wolf, 89.
- <sup>22</sup> Robinson, Roberts, Barranger, 633.
- <sup>23</sup> Brooks Atkinson, “The Play,” *New York Times*, December 7, 1939, p. 34.
- <sup>24</sup> Brooks Atkinson, “Hot Time in the Old Town,” *New York Times*, Nov. 10, 1940, p. 149.
- <sup>25</sup> Atkinson, “The Play,” 28.
- <sup>26</sup> Lewis Nichols, “The Play” *New York Times*, January 8, 1943, p. 24.
- <sup>27</sup> Zolotow, 302-303.
- <sup>28</sup> Atkinson, “The Play,” 28; Lewis Nichols, “The Play,” 24.
- <sup>29</sup> Lois Banner, *American Beauty* (New York:Knopf, 1983), 282-283.
- <sup>30</sup> Wolf, 97. Cross-perform as opposed to cross-dress.
- <sup>31</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 114.
- <sup>32</sup> Or the 1960s, 1970s or 1980s for that matter.
- <sup>33</sup> Brooks Atkinson, “Annie Get Your Gun,” *The New York Times*, September 29, 1946 sec. II, p.1.
- <sup>34</sup> Zolotow, 297.
- <sup>35</sup> Dennis McGovern and Deborah Grace Winer, *Sing Out, Louise!* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1993), 153.
- <sup>36</sup> Thomas, 99; Zolotow, 295.
- <sup>37</sup> Robinson, Roberts, Barranger, 633.
- <sup>38</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 115.
- <sup>39</sup> Ira Wolfert, “Song Hits--and Misses,” *New York Times*, Jan. 19, 1941, p. SM11.
- <sup>40</sup> Atkinson, “Hot Time in the Old Town,” 149.
- <sup>41</sup> Woolf, 12.

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<sup>42</sup> Zolotow, 303-304.

<sup>43</sup> Atkinson, "The Play," 28.

<sup>44</sup> Ethel Merman, born January 16, 1908. *Panama Hattie* (Oct 30, 1940- January 3, 1942), Ethel Jr., born July 20, 1942. *Something For the Boys* (January 7, 1943- January 8, 1944). Robert Jr., born August 11, 1945. [ibdb.com](http://ibdb.com) and [pbs.com](http://pbs.com)

<sup>45</sup> Zolotow, 294.

<sup>46</sup> Woolf, 12.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Zolotow, 296. "Neither composers or directors ever tell her how to handle a song. And she never criticizes a lyric or a melody. For all her vital temperament, she is as respectful as a little girl toward her director and her composer." (Zolotow, 301).

<sup>49</sup> Zolotow, 295-296.

<sup>50</sup> "Ethel Merman to Aid Show," *New York Times*, August 31, 1942, p. 13.

<sup>51</sup> Green, 155.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Lewis Nichols, "Merman for the Boys," *New York Times*, January 17, 1943, p. XI.

<sup>54</sup> Nichols, "Merman for the Boys," XI.

<sup>55</sup> Nichols, "Merman for the Boys," XI.

<sup>56</sup> As established in chapter 2, a new theatre audience had developed during World War II, due to the opening of *Oklahoma!*, the changing economy of the war, and the resulting theatre landscape. In his end-of-the-year retrospective, Lewis Nichols noted, "For 1943 saw a public anxious to go to the theatre, a public such as the playhouses had not welcomed in a number of years...a public so eager to attend the theatre that for a time it would attend almost anything playing in a theatre."<sup>56</sup> War workers, current and former soldiers, and working housewives' interest in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* had "helped interest in the theatre enormously" through the early 1940s,<sup>56</sup> and in late 1943 this constituency's scope of influence expanded when the City Center for Music and Drama opened, which brought "art, culture, and entertainment...at reasonable prices" to "people whose way of life [did] not include regular playgoing at Broadway prices."<sup>56</sup> The hope that this Center would act as a "training ground for playgoers who may some day come farther downtown and spend money" came to fruition as the war ended and the post-war economic boom began. The playgoers who now had money to spend were middle class men and women who had lived through the Rosie the Riveter campaign, invested in war bonds, and daily faced the gender battles of reconversion. As a result of these changes in audience makeup, writers, composers, and producers scrambled to find the right formula to appeal to their new customers.

<sup>57</sup> Leslie Ferris, *Acting Women: Images of Women in Theatre* (New York: New York University Press, 1989), 133-136. The historical and social reality of the pioneer woman was formed at

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the same time as the bourgeois Victorian lady developed into a dependent, ornamental and inactive female. A particularly American notion about women developed from the 1830s until it matured and became firmly and gloriously established in the 1860s, namely 'the cult of true womanhood.' The rise of this 'cult' shows a determined effort to stabilize the 'domestic sphere' by instilling feminine ideals such as 'piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity', through sermons, etiquette books, women's novels, child-rearing books, and ladies' magazines which, for the first time, were widely available to the general public.

<sup>58</sup> David Belasco, *The Girl of the Golden West in American Melodrama*, Daniel C. Gerould, ed. (New York: Performing Arts Journal, 1983), 185-247.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-138.

<sup>60</sup> Irving Berlin, Dorothy Fields, and Herbert Fields, *Annie Get Your Gun*, Joshua Logan Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division. All subsequent quotations in this chapter and in future chapters notated as the "original" script come from this 1946 script. See also, Irving Berlin, Dorothy Fields, and Herbert Fields, *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946), unpublished manuscript, available at the Billy Rose Theatre Archive of the New York Public Library. These early librettos were not published.

<sup>61</sup> Marches are said to hypnotize soldiers, following on the heartbeat pattern. See Kislan, ch 11.

<sup>62</sup> Ferris, 137. This set-up becomes evident in Annie's first song, "Doin' What Comes Natur'ly".

<sup>63</sup> Furia, *Irving Berlin*, 221.

<sup>64</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies* 89; Ethan Mordden, *Beautiful Mornin': The Broadway Musical of the 1940s* (New York: Oxford, 1999) 114.

<sup>65</sup> Furia, *Irving Berlin*, 221.

<sup>66</sup> *Reminiscences of Dorothy Fields Part II*, 18.

<sup>67</sup> Ferris, 133-136.

<sup>68</sup> Steven Suskin, *Opening Night on Broadway* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1990), 55.

<sup>69</sup> She is said to have been sixteen when she first met Frank Butler.

<sup>70</sup> Furia, *Irving Berlin*, 221; Thomas, 96.

<sup>71</sup> Furia, *Irving Berlin*, 223; Mast, 46. Mast notes that Berlin's purposeful use of the "sweet, old-fashioned waltz in the popular style of the 1880s and 1890s. The old-fashioned style conveys Frank Butler's outdated (and sexist) ideal of a perfect mate. The plot of the show turns on his sexist rejection of Annie as a superior marksman, implying Berlin's critique of the outdated ideals that the song's musical style suggests. Because *Annie Get Your Gun* was set in the 1890s, Berlin's historical waltz simultaneously evokes the period in which the action takes place and comments, some fifty years later, on the parallel progress of American musical taste and social values.

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<sup>72</sup> Furia, *Irving Berlin*, 223.

<sup>73</sup> Mary Ellin Barrett, *Irving Berlin: A Daughter's Memoir* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 237.

<sup>74</sup> *Pistol Packin' Mama* was a popular Republic movie musical in 1943 that had a tough western casino owner furiously following the man who swindled her out of money, looking for revenge.

<sup>75</sup> Furia, *Irving Berlin*, 222.

<sup>76</sup> Lewis Nichols "Annie Get Your Gun," *The New York Times*, May 17, 1946, p. 14.

<sup>77</sup> Suskin, 56.

<sup>78</sup> Suskin, 55-56.

<sup>79</sup> Kerber and DeHart, 454.

<sup>80</sup> Mark Steyn, *Broadway Babies Say Goodnight* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 102.

<sup>81</sup> Robinson, Roberts, Barranger, 632.

<sup>82</sup> Atkinson, "Annie Get Your Gun," p.1.

<sup>83</sup> Lewis Nichols "Annie Get Your Gun" *The New York Times*, May 26, 1946, sec. II, p. 1. The opening phrase and particularly the held note on the first syllable of "wonderful" was assuredly written for Merman's vocal ability and styling.

<sup>84</sup> *Reminiscences of Dorothy Fields*, Part II, 14.

<sup>85</sup> *Reminiscences of Dorothy Fields*, Part II, 13.

<sup>86</sup> Ferris, 140.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> She never chooses this name in the play.

<sup>89</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 90.

<sup>90</sup> Nichols "Annie Get Your Gun," p.1

<sup>91</sup> Vonada, 132 & 140 & 143. *New York Sun*, May 20, 1894, quoted in Kasper, 45; Riley, "Peerless Lady Wingshot," 103.

<sup>92</sup> Despite the fact that she talks about sending them away, just bringing up the kids here aligns her with the domestic, since, there is really no reason to mention them at all.

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<sup>93</sup> In another twist of irony, this is exactly what Frank Butler's role was in real life. He performed as her assistant faithfully for the seventeen years they were with Buffalo Bill. For more information, see Tracy C. Davis' article, "Annie Oakley and Her Husband of No Importance."

<sup>94</sup> Renov, 160.

<sup>95</sup> In 1946 the divorce rate peaked as a result of hasty wartime weddings and post-warpost-war marital difficulties including, as will be examined in chapter 4, unemployment.

<sup>96</sup> Winer, *On the Sunny Side of the Street*, 150.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Woloch, 472.

<sup>99</sup> Amy Kesselman, *Fleeting Opportunities* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 109.

<sup>100</sup> Ferris, 139.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>102</sup> Renov, 100.

<sup>103</sup> Wolf, 92.

<sup>104</sup> Renov, 153 and Gluck, 16.

<sup>105</sup> Louis Botto, *Playbill: At This Theatre* (New York: Applause, 2002), xiii.

<sup>106</sup> All of the ads examined in this chapter are from the this *Playbill*. "Annie Get Your Gun" *Playbill* (New York: Playbill Incorporated) June 10, 1946. Available at the Free Library of Philadelphia's Theatre Collection, Folder *Annie Get Your Gun*.

<sup>107</sup> Noted advertising scholar, Jib Fowles asserts, "A program [in this case a musical] and its advertising cannot truly be said to have meaning until an individual *viewer* supplies that meaning. Although symbols exist at the extra-individual level, and are formed by social agreement, those symbols are only in repose and cannot be activated as meanings until they are greeted in the mind of an individual and matched against that individual's store of meanings. Conceived of this way, the individual spectator becomes the paramount element in mediated communications [and I would argue in the live theatrical transaction]. With focus on the viewer as individual, the extent and complexity of any one viewer's symbolic system becomes conspicuous. Incoming symbols will collide with that interior symbolic apparatus in a multitude of ways, depending on the nature of the viewer's symbolic store and that person's temperament and needs at the moment." Jib Fowles, *Advertising and Popular Culture* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1996), 23.

<sup>108</sup> The only exception is the young Philip Morris bellhop character that was part of a larger ad campaign at the time.

<sup>109</sup> Juergen Amft, "Psychographics in Marketing, Advertising and Sales," [website] available at <http://www.northcrossing.com/PsychographicMarketing.html> (accessed on December 21, 2007).

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<sup>110</sup> Daniel Chandler, "Analysis of Advertisements," (May 1996) [website] available at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Modules/MAinTV/analad.html> (accessed November 25, 2007); Alexander Clare, "A semiotic Analysis of Magazine Ads for Men's Fragrances," (April 20, 1998) [website] available at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Students/awc9401.html> (accessed November 25, 2007).

<sup>111</sup> Jib Fowles, 11. "Content pertaining directly to the commodity being sold...[and] noncommodity material (the symbolic elements that constitute the appeal)...[Therefore,] the task of the advertisement is to get consumers to transfer the positive associations of the noncommodity material onto the commodity...If this transfer occurs, the logic behind it is nothing more than the juxtaposition of the two orders of content within the frame of the advertisement or commercial."

<sup>112</sup> The Pepto Bismol ad was anomalous, so I placed it with the leisure activities as a need for this product might arise from these activities. Also, it pictured a middle-aged woman in a party dress clearly feeling ill, so its primary audience was women but I also feel this is a masculinity issue, as having a nauseous-looking man would have been emasculating at this time.

<sup>113</sup> Clare, "A Semiotic Analysis of Magazine Ads for Men's Fragrances."

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Fowles, 208.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Clare, "A Semiotic Analysis of Magazine Ads for Men's Fragrances."

<sup>118</sup> The Emergency Food Collection on behalf of UNNRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration). Eleanor Roosevelt stated in her "My Day" syndicated newspaper column from June 12, 1946, "You are asked to give money rather than food. Gifts of money will mean that a greater amount of canned foods can be bought and shipped more quickly to the places where the need is greatest." From the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project available at [http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?\\_y=1946&\\_f=md000363](http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?_y=1946&_f=md000363). (Accessed on December 22, 2007).

<sup>119</sup> Fowles, 16.

<sup>120</sup> Woolf, 12. "There are no apparent tricks of acting, no histrionic sophistication. She seems to be taking the audience into her confidence—not the audience as a whole, but each individual member of it. She is whispering into the ear of each, no matter how loudly she shouts her ditties."

<sup>121</sup> The perennially brassy, raucous, bawdy Merman who made the most of tawdry roles like DuBarry and Panama Hattie was, according to John Chapman's *Daily News* opening night review, "a better comedienne than she ever was before" as backwoods Annie in *Annie Get Your Gun*.<sup>121</sup> *New York Times* reporter S.J. Woolf describes Merman on and off the stage as "above all natural." He continues, she "adds more than a feminine touch to *Annie Get Your Gun*. She practically carries the show on her none-too-narrow shoulders and does it with no apparent effort."<sup>121</sup> Musical theatre historian Kurt Ganzl agrees that casting "amiably brash" Merman, whom he described as "anything but a romantic soprano," was "eminently more suitable than having a lusty western sharpshooter who tilled high B flats." He asserts that her combination of masculine and feminine qualities placed her "squarely in the fine old tradition of what earlier days had called coon-shouters, that band of chesty

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wallopers.”<sup>121</sup> This assessment of her voice also draws on the sentiment surrounding her persona’s appeal, which benefited a musical competing in the *Oklahoma!* era, by returning to the pre-war style of “lustily comical heroines and their good humored tales.”<sup>121</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 117.

<sup>123</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 114.

<sup>124</sup> Woolf, 12.

#### NOTES FOR CHAPTER 4

<sup>1</sup> For further reading on the musical as historical document see John Brown Jones’ *Our Musicals, Ourselves* and on casting and the physical and vocal attributes of particularly Merman and Martin see Stacy Wolf’s *A Problem Like Maria*.

<sup>2</sup> Evans, 446.

<sup>3</sup> Woloch, 462.

<sup>4</sup> Woloch, 463.

<sup>5</sup> Evans, 446.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Woloch, 467-468.

<sup>9</sup> Woloch, 463.

<sup>10</sup> Evans, 446-447.

<sup>11</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 77; William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II* 2ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 83-85.

<sup>12</sup> Woloch, 470; Evans, 447.

<sup>13</sup> Woloch, 467-468. “The full-scale revival of domestic ideology in the post-war era hardly materialized out of the blue. Rather it reflected currents that were present throughout the depression, when wage earning women seemed to threaten “breadwinners,” and throughout the war, when working women loomed as a threat to social stability.”

<sup>14</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 187. American men and women “eagerly read and consulted with psychiatrists, pediatricians, and experts in numerous other fields. The enormous popularity of the Kinsey reports (1948 and 1953) and Dr. Spock’s child care books indicated the near deification of post-war professionals.”

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- <sup>15</sup> Woloch, 471.
- <sup>16</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 65-66.
- <sup>17</sup> Lois Banner, *American Beauty* (New York: Knopf, 1983), 283.
- <sup>18</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 62-63.
- <sup>19</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 62-63.
- <sup>20</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 63
- <sup>21</sup> Woloch, 472.
- <sup>22</sup> Woloch, 468-469. Feminism, traditionally, was a middle-class movement with upper-class leadership. By the post-war era, a growing middle class no longer shared those common class interests that had propelled the suffrage and progressive movements. No umbrella issue, like the vote, could now appeal to a wide range of middle-class women.
- <sup>23</sup> Woloch, 472.
- <sup>24</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 119
- <sup>25</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 114 & 119; Wolf 49.
- <sup>26</sup> Lucy Greenbaum, "One Touch of Mary," *New York Times*, Oct 10 1943, p. X1.
- <sup>27</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 119.
- <sup>28</sup> Wolf, 47.
- <sup>29</sup> Robinson, Roberts, Barranger, 603.
- <sup>30</sup> "A Musical Version of Clare Boothe's 'Kiss the Boys Goodbye' Arrives at the Paramount," *New York Times*, Aug 14 1941, p. 21.
- <sup>31</sup> Greenbaum, "One Touch of Mary," p. X1.
- <sup>32</sup> Lewis Nichols, "'One Touch of Venus,' Which Makes the Whole World Kin, Open at the Imperial," *New York Times*, Oct 8 1943, p. 14.
- <sup>33</sup> Nichols, "One Touch of Venus," p. X1.
- <sup>34</sup> Robinson, Roberts, Barranger, 603.
- <sup>35</sup> Lewis Nichols, "The Play in Review" *New York Times*, Feb 7, 1946, p. 35.
- <sup>36</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 77-78.

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<sup>37</sup> Ethel Merman and Mary Martin are often compared in this way, which Ethan Mordden believes is “foolish, for they are apple and orange.” Despite that, he notes, “in the 1940s and ‘50s, as a pair they became something of a symbol of the American musical.” Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 113-114.

<sup>38</sup> Greenbaum, “One Touch of Mary,” p. X1.

<sup>39</sup> Greenbaum, “One Touch of Mary,” P. X1.

<sup>40</sup> McGovern and Winer, 162.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 114.

<sup>43</sup> Wolf, 49.

<sup>44</sup> In this section I work with images from the tour program and playbill, assuming that as a national tour there would not be multiple promotional photo shoots and that the advertising images would come from this same collection.

<sup>45</sup> The images analyzed in this section are from the souvenir program for the 1947 tour in the possession of the author, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>46</sup> “Annie Get Your Gun” *Chicago Stagebill* For the Shubert Theatre February 8, 1948. Available in the Free Library of Philadelphia Theatre Collection, Annie Get Your Gun—Mary Martin folder.

<sup>47</sup> The Hormel Soup ad was anomalous, so I placed it with the leisure activities since the ad pictures a man and woman in evening dress and encourages the reader to end their next party by “washing their sins away” in the “French tradition” with onion soup. I have no idea what that means.

<sup>48</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 119.

<sup>49</sup> Frank Hobbs and Nicole Stoops, USCB, Census 2000 Special Reports, Series CENSR-4 *Demographic Trends in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2002), 12-13. Available at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/censr-4.pdf> (accessed December 8, 2007); Dept. of Health and Human Services, available at [www.dhhs.gov](http://www.dhhs.gov); “Live Births and Birth Rates, by year,” available at [www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0005067.html](http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0005067.html) (accessed December 8, 2007).

<sup>50</sup> Friedan 40-44; Woloch, 472.

<sup>51</sup> Jane Ellen Wayne, *The Golden Girls of M-G-M: Greta Garbo, Joan Crawford, Lana Turner, Judy Garland, Ava Gardner, Grace Kelly and others* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 2003), 202-203. She began performing publicly at age three and her ambitious stage mother, Ethel Gumm, had her performing with her two older sisters in Vaudeville houses by the early 1930s. At the suggestion of another performer, Mrs. Gumm changed their last name to Garland and eleven-year-old “Frances, who loved the lyrics to Hoagy Carmichael’s song ‘Judy’ decided to change her first name as well.”

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<sup>52</sup> Emanuel Levy, *George Cukor: Master of Elegance: Hollywood's Legendary Director and his Stars* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1994), 224.

<sup>53</sup> Wayne, 204.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Wayne, 204.

<sup>56</sup> Wayne, 204.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 205.

<sup>58</sup> Banner, 282-283.

<sup>59</sup> Wayne, 205.

<sup>60</sup> Wayne, 205. 'When Mickey and I were in production,' Judy said, 'they had us working day and night. They gave us pep pills to keep us going and then took us to the studio hospital. We were given pills to help us sleep, Mickey on one cot and me on another.'

<sup>61</sup> Wayne, 207.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 213.

<sup>63</sup> Hugh Fordin, *M-G-M's Greatest Musicals: The Arthur Freed Unit* (New York: DeCapo Press, 1975), 270.

<sup>64</sup> Fordin, 271-272.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 272. The Breen Office oversaw the enforcement of the Motion Picture Production Code.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 272-273.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Wayne, 210.

<sup>69</sup> Fordin, 273.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 275-276.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Bosley Crowther, "Miracle of Morgan's Creek with Betty Hutton at Paramount," *New York Times*, January 20, 1944, p.15.

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<sup>74</sup> Fordin, 278.

<sup>75</sup> Banner, 283.

<sup>76</sup> Banner, 283. Banner asserts that “both ideals—the childlike model and the voluptuous one—reached their apogee in Marilyn Monroe.”

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>78</sup> Fordin, 278.

<sup>79</sup> Fordin, 281. In 1937, sixteen-year-old Hutton had been hired by Lopez to sing with his band for a local radio station in Detroit, Hutton’s home at the time.

<sup>80</sup> Fordin, 279-280.

<sup>81</sup> “Bad, Bad Man” was cut, but replaced by images of Frank with many women on the train as it pulls into town and as he arrives at the Wilson Hotel. Images of Annie’s physical appearance improving after she joins the show. A montage of her applying various face creams and hair treatments

<sup>82</sup> *Annie Get Your Gun*, M-G-M, 1950. The quotes for the 1950 film version were taken directly from the film.

<sup>83</sup> Which is now featured on both the album and modern DVD cover.

<sup>84</sup> Including the re-release in 1956-57. From the original motion picture soundtrack’s liner notes; Fordin, 283. Including the re-release in 1956-57.

<sup>85</sup> Fordin, 283.

<sup>86</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 13. May continues, “Black Americans, as a result of institutionalized racism and widespread poverty, existed on the fringes of the middle-class family ideal. Suburbia was not a part of the black experience, since blacks were systematically excluded from post-war suburbs. In segregated neighborhoods, black people created rich and thriving subcultures rooted in unique historical traditions. Nevertheless, blacks as well as whites participated in the same post-war demographic trends. The fertility rates of blacks peaked in the late 1950s, as did those of whites, and the divorce rate among blacks and whites followed similar patterns.”

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>88</sup> Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1963), 43.

<sup>89</sup> Friedan, 16.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>91</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 99.

<sup>92</sup> See note 467, also available at <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/08s0077.xls>

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<sup>93</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 18.

<sup>94</sup> Lori Landay, "Millions 'Love Lucy': Commodification and the Lucy Phenomenon," *NWSA Journal* 11.2 (1999), 28, 32 & 35.

<sup>95</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 165.

<sup>96</sup> Richard A. R. Pinkham, "Where Television Stands: A Report to Advertisers," *An Address Before the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of The Association of National Advertisers*, Chicago, IL October 23, 1956, 4.

<sup>97</sup> Landay, 34.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Brett Harvey, *The Fifties: A Women's Oral History* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), xiv.

<sup>101</sup> Harvey, xiii.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, xi-xii.

<sup>103</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 63.

<sup>104</sup> Chafe, 133.

<sup>105</sup> Banner, 283-284.

<sup>106</sup> Chafe, 134.

<sup>107</sup> Landay, 26-27.

<sup>108</sup> Wolf, 47.

<sup>109</sup> Wolf, 50. The tomboy...is a character defined by her performance of gender in relation to sex: masculine behavior in a female body....Even though the tomboy is primarily identifiable by her performance of gender, she often conveys signs of lesbian sexuality....The tomboy, by definition, is in a temporary state. Specifically liminal, she must move on, which means grow up, mature, and find her womanhood. The normative tomboy's story invariably follows her eventual rejection of her boyishness for conventional, heterosexual femininity."

<sup>110</sup> Wolf, 50 & 52.

<sup>111</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 119; Wolf, 48.

<sup>112</sup> Brooks Atkinson, "At The Theatre," *New York Times*, Apr 8, 1949, p. 30.

<sup>113</sup> Wolf, 52.

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- <sup>114</sup> Mary Martin, "My One Year of 'South Pacific'" *New York Times*, Apr 2 1950, p. 97.
- <sup>115</sup> Martin, "My One Year of 'South Pacific,'" p. 97.
- <sup>116</sup> Friedan, 71.
- <sup>117</sup> Friedan, 153.
- <sup>118</sup> Robinson, Roberts and Barranger, 604.
- <sup>119</sup> For a detailed account of the marriage and the way it can be read please see Wolf, 76-82.
- <sup>120</sup> Wolf, 77.
- <sup>121</sup> Ibid., 80.
- <sup>122</sup> Ibid., 81.
- <sup>123</sup> Martin, "My One Year of *South Pacific*," p. 97.
- <sup>124</sup> Wolf, 77.
- <sup>125</sup> Mary Martin, "My Second Year of Playing *South Pacific*," *New York Times*, Apr 1 1951, p. 97.
- <sup>126</sup> Mary Martin, "Farewell To Ensign Nellie," *New York Times*, Nov 2 1952, p. X3.
- <sup>127</sup> Martin, "Farewell To Ensign Nellie," p. X3.
- <sup>128</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 113-114.
- <sup>129</sup> Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (New York: MacMillan, 1983), 180.
- <sup>130</sup> Seymour Peck, "She's Washed that Gal Right Outa Her Hair," *New York Times*, Sep 20 1953, p. SM19.
- <sup>131</sup> Peck, "She's Washed that Gal Right Outa Her Hair," p. SM19.
- <sup>132</sup> Peck, "She's Washed that Gal Right Outa Her Hair," p. SM19.
- <sup>133</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 94.
- <sup>134</sup> Wolf, 77.
- <sup>135</sup> Wolf, 64 and 75. "If the play equates growing up with becoming sexual, then Peter's not wanting to grow up is precisely about not wanting to be or become heterosexual." (75)
- <sup>136</sup> Wolf, 53.

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<sup>137</sup> Robinson, Roberts and Barranger, 604.

<sup>138</sup> Wolf, 64-68. Wolf gives an extremely detailed breakdown of Martin's movement vocabulary and vocal performance in the role. On breeches roles: "Countless women have played Shakespeare's women who temporarily dress like men to acquire power, status or entry into forbidden places." (64-65). For more see Kirsten Pullen, "Burlesques, Breeches and Blondes" in *Actresses and Other Whores on Stage and in Society* (2005) or Marjorie Garber's *Vested Interests*.

<sup>139</sup> Walter Kerr, *Herald Tribune*, October 21, 1954.

<sup>140</sup> Brooks Atkinson, "A New Peter Pan," *New York Times*, October 21, 1954, p. 30.

<sup>141</sup> Brooks Atkinson, "Peter Pan," *New York Times*, Oct 31 1954, p. X1.

<sup>142</sup> Atkinson, "A New Peter Pan," p. 30.

<sup>143</sup> Chafe, 129.

<sup>144</sup> Pinkham, 3.

<sup>145</sup> Chafe, 130.

<sup>146</sup> Robinson, Roberts and Barranger, 603-604.

<sup>147</sup> Jack Gould, "Television: Neverland," *New York Times*, Mar 8 1955, p. 33.

<sup>148</sup> Jack Gould, "TV: Mary Martin Back in Neverland," *New York Times*, Jan 10 1956, p. 63.

<sup>149</sup> Val Adams, "Annie Get Your Gun Gets Set," *New York Times*, Dec 18 1955, p. X13.

<sup>150</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies*, 119.

<sup>151</sup> Wolf, 57.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>153</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 112; Banner, 285.

<sup>154</sup> Wolf, 64.

<sup>155</sup> The quotes for the 1957 television version are from the NBC script, available at the Library of Congress, Motion Picture Archive, TV Network (NBC) Master Broadcast Reports, Monday 11/25/57 – 11/27/57 [microfilm].

<sup>156</sup> Pinkham, 3; Robert W. Sarnoff, "Advertising's Challenge in 1956," *An Address Before the Chicago Federated Advertising Club*, Chicago, IL February 23, 1956, 11.

<sup>157</sup> Howard Prouty, ed. "Annie Get Your Gun" in *Variety TV Reviews 1957-1959* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1989), December 4 1957.

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<sup>158</sup> William Boddy, *Fifties Television: The Industry and Its Critics* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 156.

<sup>159</sup> Prouty, December 4 1957.

<sup>160</sup> All of the following commercial lyrics and dialogue are taken from the NBC Master Broadcast Reports, accessed at the Library of Congress, Motion Picture Archive, TV Network (NBC) Master Broadcast Reports, Monday 11/25/57 – 11/27/57 [microfilm].

<sup>161</sup> Landay, 35.

<sup>162</sup> Prouty, December 4 1957.

<sup>163</sup> Wolf 50, 56.

<sup>164</sup> Jack Gould, “TV: *Annie Get Your Gun*,” *New York Times*, Nov 28 1957, p. 75.

<sup>165</sup> Prouty, December 4 1957.

<sup>166</sup> Anne McLeer, “Practical Perfection?” *NWSA Journal* 14.2 (2002), 98.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 5

<sup>1</sup> Walker, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Friedan, 22.

<sup>3</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 218.

<sup>4</sup> Chafe, 187.

<sup>5</sup> Chafe, 329.

<sup>6</sup> Mintz and Kellogg, 206.

<sup>7</sup> Chafe, 329.

<sup>8</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 218-219.

<sup>9</sup> Chafe, 329-330.

<sup>10</sup> Chafe, 330.

<sup>11</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 209.

<sup>12</sup> Chafe, 335.

<sup>13</sup> Chafe, 336.

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<sup>14</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 221.

<sup>15</sup> Rebecca Klatch, "Women against Feminism," in *A History of Our Time: Readings on Postwar American* William H. Chafe and Harvey Sitkoff ed. (New York:Oxford University Press, 1990), 269 & 273.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 221.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Klatch, 268.

<sup>19</sup> Klatch, 267.

<sup>20</sup> Banner, 288.

<sup>21</sup> McLeer, 87.

<sup>22</sup> For a very detailed analysis of this role and the stars who played her, please see Stacy Wolf, *A Problem Like Maria*.

<sup>23</sup> McLeer, 81.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>26</sup> Vincent Canby, "Ethel Merman Returns at Lincoln Center," *New York Times*, June 1, 1966, p. 42.

<sup>27</sup> Wolf, 89.

<sup>28</sup> Wolf quotes Sid Ross, "I Was a Big Hick," in *Parade* (5 April 1953).

<sup>29</sup> Robinson, Roberts, Barranger, 633.

<sup>30</sup> Steyn, 101.

<sup>31</sup> Mordden, *Coming up Roses*, 248.

<sup>32</sup> Wolf, 90-91.

<sup>33</sup> Mordden, *Broadway Babies* 118.

<sup>34</sup> *Daily News*, May 22, 1959.

<sup>35</sup> Brooks Atkinson, "Return of Ethel Merman, She Rocks Broadway in *Happy Hunting*" *New York Times* December 7, 1956, p. 30.

<sup>36</sup> Wolf, 106.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>39</sup> McGovern and Winer, 151.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>41</sup> Wolf, 93.

<sup>42</sup> Irving Berlin, Herbert & Dorothy Fields, *Annie Get Your Gun* (New York: Rodgers and Hammerstein Theatre Library, 1966). With one small exception. In the 1966 version, Frank does not claim “her eyes were clear and bright...her face...” I read the removal of these youthful descriptions as more of a reflection the obvious and significant age difference between Yarnell and Merman than as any attempt to contrive the reception of gender.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 112-114.

<sup>44</sup> For much more on lyric construction see Kislán, 218-219.

<sup>45</sup> “Annie Get Your Gun” [Broadway Theatre] *Playbill* v.3 no. 9 (September 1966); “Annie Get Your Gun” [Forrest Theatre] *Playbill* (August 30, 1966). Both available at Free Library of Philadelphia Theatre Collection, *Annie Get Your Gun*—Ethel Merman Folder #1. All of the advertisements examined in this section are from the Broadway *Playbill*.

<sup>46</sup> The renderings were also possibly more flattering than and actual photo at age 57.

<sup>47</sup> Jerry Gaghan, “‘Annie’ Hits the Bull’s-Eye at Forrest,” *Philadelphia Daily News*, August 31, 1966, p. 32.

<sup>48</sup> Jay Carr, “Merman Reprises ‘Annie’ at the Fisher,” *The Detroit News*, July 13, 1966, sec. B, p. 14.

<sup>49</sup> Ernest Schier, “‘Annie Get Your Gun’ Revived,” *The Evening Bulletin* (Philadelphia, PA), June 1, 1966, sec. G, p. 19.

<sup>50</sup> Harry MacArthur, “Merman’s *Annie* Rides Again,” *The Evening Star* (Washington DC) August 11, 1966, sec. C, p. 20.

<sup>51</sup> Vincent Canby, “Ethel Merman Returns at Lincoln Center,” *New York Times*, June 1, 1966, sec. L, p. 42.

<sup>52</sup> Schier, “‘Annie Get Your Gun’ Revived,” p. G19; Robert J. Williams, “Ethel Merman Hits the Target in *Annie Get Your Gun* Musical” *The Evening Bulletin* (Philadelphia, PA), August 31, 1966, n.p.

<sup>53</sup> Canby, “Ethel Merman Returns at Lincoln Center,” p. L42.

<sup>54</sup> Carr, “Merman Reprises ‘Annie’ at the Fisher,” p. 14B.

<sup>55</sup> Schier, “‘Annie Get Your Gun’ Revived,” p. G19.

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<sup>56</sup> Carr, "Merman Reprises 'Annie' at the Fisher," 14B.

<sup>57</sup> Richard L. Coe, "Annie Gets her Ethel," *The Washington Post*, August 11, 1966, p. C14.

<sup>58</sup> Williams, "Ethel Merman Hits the Target in *Annie Get Your Gun* Musical," n.p.; Schier, "'Annie Get Your Gun' Revived," p.G19.

<sup>59</sup> Chuck Thurston, "Ethel's Back, Fabulous as Ever," *The Detroit Free Press*, July 14, 1966, n.p.

<sup>60</sup> Kantor and Maslon, 399.

<sup>61</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Families and Living Arrangements*, Current Population Survey (CPS) Reports, Table MS-2, "Estimated Median Age at First Marriage, by Sex: 1890 to the Present," (March 2006). U.S. Census Bureau [website] available at [www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html) (accessed March 17, 2008).

<sup>62</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Families and Living Arrangements*, Current Population Survey (CPS) Reports, Table MS-1, "Marital Status of the Population 15 Years Old and Over, By Sex and Race: 1950 to Present," (March 2006). U.S. Census Bureau [website] available at [www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html) (accessed March 17, 2008).

<sup>63</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *A Half-Century of Learning: Historical Census Statistics on Educational Attainment in the United States, 1940 to 2000*, Census 2000 PHC-T-41, Table 2, "Percentage of the Population 25 Years and Over with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Sex and Age, for the United States: 1940 to 2000," (April 2006). U.S. Census Bureau [website] available at [www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/education/introphct41.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/education/introphct41.html) (accessed March 17, 2008).

<sup>64</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Families and Living Arrangements*, Current Population Survey (CPS) Reports, Table HH-4, "Households by Size: 1960 to Present," (March 2006). U.S. Census Bureau [website] available at [www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html) (accessed March 17, 2008).

<sup>65</sup> Available at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/censr-4.pdf> (accessed December 8, 2007); Dept. of Health and Human Services, available at [www.dhhs.gov](http://www.dhhs.gov); "Live Births and Birth Rates, by year," available at [www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0005067.html](http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0005067.html) (accessed December 8, 2007).

<sup>66</sup> For example, I was 20 years old in 1991. Within the range of 1991-1996 my four of my five closest friends from high school got married and had babies. My other friend and I waited until we were close to 30 to get married and have babies. The four women who married first had three children and we that married last had two. This small sampling may illuminate the larger trend of later marriages, decreased birth rates, and decreased family size.

<sup>67</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Fertility of American Women*, Current Population Survey (CPS) Reports, Table H6, "Women 15 to 44 Years Old Who Had a Child in the Last Year and Their Percentage in the Labor Force by Selected Characteristics: Selected Years, 1990 to 2004." U.S. Census Bureau [website] available at [www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/fertility.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/fertility.html) (accessed March 17, 2008).

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<sup>68</sup> With no children as well as in single-income families with children under eighteen years of age.

<sup>69</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Families and Living Arrangements*, Current Population Survey (CPS) Reports, Table SHP-1, "Parents and Children in Stay-At-Home Parent Family Groups: 1994 to Present," (March 2006). U.S. Census Bureau [website] available at [www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html) (accessed March 17, 2008).

<sup>70</sup> Michael Kimmel, "Why Men Should Support Gender Equality," *Women Studies Review* (Fall, 2005), 109.

<sup>71</sup> "Work patterns are key. Specifically, women have fewer years of work experience, work fewer hours per year, are less likely to work a full-time schedule, and leave the labor force for longer periods of time than men. Other factors that account for earnings differences include industry, occupation, race, marital status, and job tenure"

<sup>72</sup> Daniel H. Weinberg, USCB, Census 2000 Special Reports, Series CENSR-15, *Evidence from Census 2000 About Earnings By Detailed Occupation for Men and Women*, (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2004), 21.

<sup>73</sup> Frommer and Frommer, 276.

<sup>74</sup> Alex Witchel, "A True Star, Looking For Places to Shine," *New York Times*, February 28, 1999, Sec. 2, p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> Peter Marks, "Rewrite a Classic Musical? Whatever Works Goes," *New York Times*, January 24, 1999, Late Edition, Sec. 2, p.1.

<sup>76</sup> Witchel, "A True Star, Looking For Places to Shine," p. 5. "Working since the age of 3 1/2, she developed her quirky, personal style during the 60's, when Broadway started its attenuated swan dive as the world turned to rock-and-roll. She stayed her course, winning a Theater World citation for her performance in "George M!," starring Joel Grey, and a Drama Desk Award for "Dames at Sea" Off Broadway. She was nominated for a Tony Award for the 1971 revival of "On the Town" and for Jerry Herman's "Mack and Mabel." She won a Tony as best actress in a musical for Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Song and Dance" in 1986 and was also nominated for Mr. Sondheim's "Sunday in the Park With George."

<sup>77</sup> Vincent Canby, "A New 'Annie,' The Same Old Berlin Magic," *New York Times*, March 14, 1999, Sec. 2, p. 10; Witchel, "A True Star, Looking For Places to Shine," p. 5.

<sup>78</sup> Witchel, "A True Star, Looking For Places to Shine," p. 5.

<sup>79</sup> Brantley, "Everything The Traffic Will Allow," p.1.

<sup>80</sup> Witchel, "A True Star, Looking For Places to Shine," p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> In contrast to Merman, who became matronly over time and changed the role.

<sup>82</sup> Steven Winn, "Lullabies on Broadway," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, April 29, 1999, p. E4.

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<sup>83</sup> Dena Kleiman, "Bernadette Peters Trains Voice Like A Muscle," *New York Times*, September 20, 1985, p. C3; Stephen Holden, "Bernadette Peters Animates a Lloyd Webber Score," *New York Times*, January 26, 1986, p. H26.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Brantley, "Everything The Traffic Will Allow," p. 1.

<sup>86</sup> Witchel, "A True Star, Looking For Places to Shine," p. 5.

<sup>87</sup> Brantley, "Everything The Traffic Will Allow," p. 1.

<sup>88</sup> Holland, "Forever Bel is the Canto, Dated or Not," p. 45:5.

<sup>89</sup> Irving Berlin, Herbert & Dorothy Fields, *Annie Get Your Gun*, as revised by Peter Stone (New York: Rodgers and Hammerstein Theatre Library, 1999). Unless otherwise noted, all of the lyrics and dialogue in this section are from this script.

<sup>90</sup> Holland, "Forever Bel is the Canto, Dated or Not," p. 45; Brantley, "Everything The Traffic Will Allow," p. 1.

<sup>91</sup> Marks, "Rewrite a Classic Musical? Whatever Works Goes," p. 1.

<sup>92</sup> Brantley, "Everything The Traffic Will Allow," p. 1.

<sup>93</sup> Winn, "Lullabies on Broadway," p. E4.

<sup>94</sup> Marks, "Rewrite a Classic Musical? Whatever Works Goes," p. 1.

<sup>95</sup> Brantley, "Everything The Traffic Will Allow," p. 1.

<sup>96</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* [online database] search term "gender-neutral," (accessed March 22, 2008).

<sup>97</sup> Kimmell, 104-105.

<sup>98</sup> Fowles, 216-217. This moment marks most clearly the "increasingly contested territory" of gender that Fowles notes is "in some degree of flux." He notes that in the late-twentieth century, "Gender definitions increasingly carry within them their own amendments and reversals: It is all right for a male to be sensitive (at moments); it is all right for a female to be independent and decisive (to a point)."

<sup>99</sup> Marks, "Rewrite a Classic Musical? Whatever Works Goes," p. 1; Brantley, "Everything The Traffic Will Allow," p. 1.

<sup>100</sup> Winn, "Lullabies on Broadway," p. E4.

<sup>101</sup> Cheryl Ladd, a woman much more statuesque than Peters, has a great shot for her touring company with the gun over both shoulders and her arms draped languidly over either end, very reminiscent of one of Buffalo Bill's most famous poses. Also, Merman, Martin, and Hutton all posed with their rifles in front of their "show" poster, but the revisical eliminates this moment, since a

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cartoon of Annie's likeness is painted on a small portion of a scrim, rather than a life-sized image of her.

<sup>102</sup> Chandler, "Media Studies Revision: Print-Based Advertising."

<sup>103</sup> In much the same way the WWII female war workers were sexualized in articles, advertisements, and photographs.

<sup>104</sup> "Annie Get Your Gun" [Marquis Theatre] *Playbill* v.99 no. 3 (March 1999). All ads from this section are from this *Playbill*. Available in the Free Library of Philadelphia Theatre Collection, *Annie Get Your Gun*—Bernadette Peters Folder.

<sup>105</sup> Linda Winter, "Annie Get Your Gun," *Newsday*, March 5, 1999.

<sup>106</sup> Brantley, "Everything The Traffic Will Allow," p. 1.

<sup>107</sup> Hirschak, 95.

<sup>108</sup> Winn, "Lullabies on Broadway," p. E4.

<sup>109</sup> Holland, "Forever Bel is the Canto, Dated or Not," p. 45.

<sup>110</sup> Brantley, "Everything The Traffic Will Allow," p. 1.

<sup>111</sup> Witchel, "A True Star, Looking For Places to Shine," p.5.

<sup>112</sup> Winn, "Lullabies on Broadway," p. E4.

<sup>113</sup> Vincent Canby, "A New 'Annie,' The Same Old Berlin Magic" *The New York Times* March 14, 1999, Section 2; 10:1.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

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