AMERICAN EXPRESSIONS:
THREE CASES ON CURRICULAR FORMS OF TEACHING ABOUT AMERICA IN SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

By

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation presents three cases of three different high school social studies teachers and the curricular forms through which they express different ideological constructions of America as a contested concept in the social studies curriculum. The concept of America is read across all three cases as a curricular text theorized through three distinct curricular forms: fantasy, myth, and fabulation. This method of critically reading the forms of teachers' pedagogical expressions entails explaining characteristics of America produced discursively through their teaching. This method also accounts for how the curricular forms in the teachers' pedagogy work as symbolic structures that contain various social and political anxieties and desires social studies teachers may or may not realize are appearing in their teaching, anxieties that constitute and constrain teachers' expressions of America.

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INTRODUCTION

Prelude

If, as the National Council for the Social Studies explicitly states, one of the purposes of social studies education is "to foster more positive relations and interactions with diverse people within our own nation and other nations" (NCSS, 2010, p. 26), then what, exactly, does that look like in classrooms? What does "our" nation have to do with the "relations and interactions" (positive or otherwise) that are, as is suggested, necessary for "an understanding of civic ideals and practices" that serve as "an essential component of education for citizenship, which is the central purpose of the social studies" (NCSS, 2010, p. 23)? Furthermore, how is America, perceived as a nation, in all of its fluid constructs, expressed in social studies classes aside from the official designation it is given as a specific country whose historical narratives and institutions should be studied? The "we" and the "our" implied in the NCSS standards are always already inextricably bound together by America, prior to joining a class or reading a textbook, by our very presence in the spaces bounded by borders of America (Vinson, 2001; Tupper, Cappello, & Sevigny, 2010). For the NCSS standards, and for the teachers I studied in this dissertation project, "America" seems to be an assumed relation, a quick explication of all the practices subsumed within the curriculum of social studies that offer an occasion for exploring what it means when people of a nation share markers of national identities and distinct subject positions as political and economic citizens. When we encounter America in social studies, we encounter not just an idealized temporal and spatial construct we are told that we share, but also a set of fantasies and the various expressions that make these fantasies meaningful.

Musical theatre composer Jason Robert Brown (1997) uses seemingly disparate and unrelated songs in his Off-Broadway musical *Songs for a New World* to stitch together a "story"

about America across musical numbers over two acts. In Brown's song cycle, the "new world" is a multitude of things. It is the New World in which the United States historically emerges after the European conquest of the continent in the song "On the Deck of a Spanish Sailing Ship, 1492." Brown's new world is also an abstract place located in a shifting idea of America his characters create, inhabiting this new world once they make important decisions at major turning points in their lives. "The Flagmaker, 1775" is one song exemplifying this inhabiting of a new world literally and metaphorically, narrated as a story of a woman sewing a flag as a way to work through her mourning of her husband who died fighting in the Revolutionary War. The loosely collected narratives in this piece of experimental musical can be read as fantasies that give each song its particular form and the theatrical production as a whole its particular shape. What these "songs for a new world" have in common is their expression of fantasies of and for America implicated in the whole system of this "new world" of America (as a nation, as a society, as an idea) and how its inhabitants express different fantasies of America in the songs they sing and the stories they tell, fantasies expressed by inhabitants of the new world and the spectators in the audience watching the narration of this new world through song and dance. Much like the songs that express different fantasies of America in *Songs for a New World*, the stories in social studies education operate in a similar manner that I aim to explain in this dissertation.

My dissertation collects examples from lessons of three different high school teachers I studied in 2013. Across these lessons I examine how America as a curricular text is presented through particular expressive forms: fantasy, myth, and fabulation. This method of critically reading the forms of teachers' pedagogical expressions entails explaining characteristics of America produced discursively through their teaching. This method also accounts for how the

expressive forms in a teacher's pedagogy work as symbolic structures that contain various social and political anxieties and desires social studies teachers may or may not realize are appearing in their teaching, anxieties that constitute and constrain teachers' expressions of America.

Contextualizing the Problem and Inquiry of the Study

To ask if and how America is examined in the research on social studies education is too broad of a query. Nor is it helpful to ask how America appears in the various disciplines of the social studies as it appears everywhere and at all times. As one example, America appears in economics education most visibly whenever capitalism and the free enterprise system are studied. Similarly, America appears in government and civics education most often in the form of various political institutions and practices associated with the United States. Even social studies content that is not specifically about America *per se* as a specific topic indirectly and inescapably touches upon issues about America, from the environment (Cotton, 2006) to Hurricane Katrina (Garrett, 2011), from terrorism (Hess & Stoddard, 2007) to Asian American internment (Camicia, 2007). These and many other topics elicit strong standpoints and feelings about America that often define and structure the curriculum of social studies education (Biesta, 2011; Cary, 2001; DeLeon, 2008; Helfenbein, 2005; Shinew, 2001).

Reading America in the Social Studies Education Research Literature

Concepts of America emerge most often in social studies research as a particular kind of narrative or "cultural tool" to help students make connections between the past and the present (Barton, 2001). Wertsch (1998) identifies the "quest-for-freedom" narrative as a powerful shaper of how Americans view the origins of the United States. VanSledright (2008) problematizes the

notion of a common American history when he asks, "what exactly does an Americanizing narrative or (hi)story contain? How does *a* story become *the* story; that is, how is that story authorized? How is it then promulgated" [emphasis his] (p. 110)? VanSledright maintains that despite America's status as a nation of immigrants, and persistent social struggles to negotiate vast cultural differences among American citizens, what gets transmitted to students in social studies classrooms is often an uncomplicated narrative of national development and progress. Kim (2004) criticizes unifying narratives of U.S. history for their failure to address the importance of multiple perspectives and interpretations in historical analysis.

Research also suggests that America often appears in social studies education as a nation overcoming any and all obstacles on a triumphant march towards the perfect fulfillment of its founding ideals of freedom, equality and justice. (p. 989). Epstein (2009) challenges what she describes as the typical progressive narrative of U.S. history, where "people successfully and relatively effortlessly challenged inequality, the government created and expanded freedom and rights, and civil rights leaders brought equality to all" (p. 1-2). Many teachers and students in U.S. History courses, despite having to confront the thorny historical realities of slavery, segregation, and discrimination, often point to the accomplishments of the Civil Rights Movement as a signifier that racism has been extinguished once and for all (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Wills, 1996). As Kim (2004) argues, "A hallmark of triumphalist narratives is their transformation of national vices into virtues and their citation of the putative overcoming of these vices as proof of the nation's dynamic progress towards the fulfillment of its creed" (p. 989). Several researchers have argued that U.S. History textbooks typically convey an "archetype of progress" when tackling race relations, particularly around slavery and Reconstruction (Loewen, 1995; Zimmerman, 2002).

What poststructural perspectives have generated in the field is an unsettling of narrative as a construct, a refutation of an objective truth about any social group's historical experience. Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob (1994) delineate this skeptical position:

> Once there was a single narrative of national history that most Americans accepted as part of their heritage. Now there is an increasing emphasis on the diversity of ethnic, racial, and gender experience and a deep skepticism about whether the narrative of America's achievements comprises anything more than a self-congratulatory story masking the power of elites. (pp. 3-4)

The implications of this approach have not been absent in social studies, nor has it been widely adopted, either. Segall (1999) argues that critical scholars have attempted to recast the discipline of history in ways that involve "scrutinizing the idealized version of history as a picture-perfect presentation of an unmediated, authorless past" (p. 358). His survey of critical practices of historians and anthropologists who disturb the received traditions of linear narratives have resulted in "a heightened awareness of history's literary and creative functions" that allowed for history and historiography to be "defined as partial, subjective, and partisan" (p. 358).

In the wake of Segall's call to this orientation of critical history and approaches to history education in this vein, few have provided compelling studies to illustrate such possible enactments. His consideration of history education argues for how curriculum/pedagogy should focus on construction—investigating how particular versions of the past came to be known, repudiated, and recapitulated in subsequent reconstructions. In the work of den Heyer 2003, 2007, 2011, 2012), we see instances in social studies education when historical narratives are mobilized for a type of agency derived inside the humanist subject of the student as a social agent. Thus, not all attempts to effect a critical historical thinking in social studies show us the

focus is on human motivations in social studies, a focus den Heyer describes as "questions about the relative roles played by, and interaction between, leaders, discourses and ideals, and social movements" (2012, p. 292).

Such an approach problematizes historical assemblages and historical thinking. I aim for my study to bring Segall's work to bear in how students and teachers engage with America as a historical narrative when different perspective emerge and conflict with their various subject positions (gendered, political, economic, etc) and how such perspectives produce and violate various dispositions and sensibilities (Barton, 1994; Chandler & McKnight, 2009; Seixas & Clark, 2004; VanSledright, 2002). Related to the identification of narrative power of histories within social studies education is the field's tracking of historical consciousness or "historical thinking" (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Seixas, 1993, 1997; Levesque, 2007; Stearns, Seixas, & Wineburg, 2000). In this trajectory of research, America would appear as a vehicle for providing examples of historic moments for students to puzzle through and think about using chronology, cause and effect, propaganda, and other cognitive tools to help students take on different historical perspectives.

I began this dissertation study by asking in what ways in different social studies courses does the construct of America provoke students and teachers towards confrontation, exaltation, refutation, and related actions and passions? I examined social studies teaching as a collection of acts, statements, and stances expressed by teachers gesturing towards particular meanings of America and what such meanings signify. What I have collected in the three articles for this dissertation is a focused examination of desires and ideologies that each speak to different characteristics of learning to live with(in) America.

With the articles in this dissertation I am not referring to the traditional Marxist definition of ideology as a false understanding awaiting to be corrected through one 'true' understanding (of class, of oppression, of America, etc.) Rather, I am referring to conception of ideology that "represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their conditions of existence" (Althusser, 2001, p. 109). Especially important in Althusser's definition is the focus on representation and the imaginary, which I understand to mean that ideology is a linguistic issue, a textual problem or condition. This understanding moves us away from thinking of ideology as a form of mind-control imposed upon individuals by external powers. As ideology is bound up in language, ideology is everywhere in our lives where we imagine and 'fantasize' stories: movies, songs, locker room talk, replays of sports, red carpet chatter before award shows, religious ceremonies, documenting family histories and traditions, in the discourses produced in schools, prisons, national parks, historical reenactments, department stores, fashion shows, and so on.

We can therefore never access the real conditions of existence due to what Jameson (1972) calls the "prison-house of language." In and through language we create our ideas of reality, as we are only able to imagine various ways in which we live out our daily lives tied as we are to social functions expressed through values, ideas, images, and other expressions of a reality mediated through language. In short, language is what enables us to perceive the ways in which those real conditions are expressed and inscribed in ideology. I follow Jameson (2008) in claiming ideology as not so much a concept as it is a problematic. While we cannot entirely escape the ideologies in which we exist, we can, through self-reflexive thinking, reading, and interpretation, change our relation within ideology as I suggest in this dissertation's concluding chapter. Out of necessity, it appears, teachers repress certain knowledges and desires of America that expressed in their teaching that prescribes and orders their curriculum. The curriculum of

America in social studies education needs to be disordered if we are to perceive ideology in order to view it, legitimate it, challenge it, to confront our expressions of America as symbolic acts.

My study attempts to follow ideology as it manifests into the forms of teachers' pedagogies and their expressions of America. The expressive modes a teacher uses in social studies education are tonal styles and moods that work through different themes to express ideas of America as seemingly natural and taken-for-granted constructs. If, as Ryan (1984) argues, "ideology makes the social world seem natural and endowed with a self-evident truth value," then our use in education of critical theories can show how ideology makes "the productive operations of representation and discourse seem to be merely passive reflections of a pre-existing reality" (pp. 33-34). One approach in doing this in educational research is particularly relevant for social studies education and that approach is to "use the narrative raw material" of social studies education to read "what happens when plot falls into history" or any other related curricular form taught in social studies education (James, 1981, p. 130). In other words, when we attempt to tell a story or impose a narrative on our curriculum, about America, for example, we are giving it a plot, a story to be told. These narratives can cohere as master narratives that inscribe themselves into our pedagogical expressions of America. Such expressions contain what Jameson (1981) would call "narrative signifieds" and they require our attention and critique because "they reflect a fundamental dimension of our collective thinking and our collective fantasies about history and reality" (p. 34). These fantasies about the history and reality of America may be *re*pressed by social studies teachers, but are nonetheless *ex*pressed through their teaching. While I wish our postmodern condition rejected grand narratives about our world and about America as Lyotard (1984) suggests we do, and while we have seen the proliferation of critical practices that scrutinize and interrogate many grand narratives in social studies over the

past many years, such grand narratives or "master narratives" inarguably continue to be shared, shaped, told, and expressed in social studies curriculum. To confront these master narratives we need critical practices in social studies education that read the unconscious desires and investments of a teacher's pedagogy to show how such desires and investments are symptomatic of ideology in the expressive modes social studies teachers make legible, to be read to explicate what a teacher's pedagogical acts and expressions of America hide, silence, and repress.

Some colleagues have argued with me that "we" as teachers do not give our curricular narratives a plot, that the narratives we teach arrive emplotted to us already enunciated in the textbooks we use and the standards we follow and use to outline our teaching. This is true, especially given my understanding of ideology as already there, that we are always caught up in an ideology, inescapable from it. Further, I agree that textbooks and standards are powerful objects that inform our teaching, that give us a script to read our teaching on the surface of what we "do" much like we expect a lesson plan to provide a truthful script indicating we intend explicitly to teach. However, the argument I advance in this study is tied to the different modes the expressions of America take on in a teacher's pedagogical performance, not to curriculum standards, curriculum maps, textbooks, or teaching resources with the exceptions of certain instructional materials a teacher uses explicitly during direct teaching for the entire class of students present. I attend to the style of the teachers' narrations, the rhetorical and semantic devices that operate in their teaching, the ideas that are always partially expressed and held in tension by the different modes through which the teachers express America from seemingly neutral stances.

Yet no social studies teacher, nor my position as a researcher of social studies teaching, can be neutral to the effects of any established meanings we encounter. We cannot pretend to

situate ourselves outside of the ideological positions that are effected by social studies education. However, the content of our fantasies, of our pedagogical expressions, and the particular modes they use, should be regarded as simultaneously empowering and disempowering. They work as strategies of containment working to store and call forth certain explanations, suppressing underlying contradictions that sometimes manifest when in conflict with clashing viewpoints (most often elicited from students' comments, questions, and response to their teachers). For Jameson (1981), a strategy of containment is "a representational structure which allows the individual subject to conceive or imagine his or her lived relationship to transpersonal realities" (p. 30). The representational structures I examine in this dissertation are the fantasies circulating in social studies teaching encountered in the expressive mode to the pedagogy of social studies teachers. My analytic move is to uncover and unsettle the ideological content a teacher's pedagogy attempts to contain in the form of our fantasies.

Reading America as Curricular Form in Social Studies Education

My overarching argument that I have been building thus far is that the more decisive ideological aspect of social studies education is the particular *form* of its pedagogical and curricular expression, not its particular pedagogical and curricular *content* (especially the content found in textbooks and standards). I propose that examining expressive forms of a teacher's pedagogical practice can shift our attention to how social studies teachers constitute the objects of their pedagogy, which in this dissertation study are particular fantasies about America. To think in this way requires a particular method of reading curriculum and pedagogy not as distinct objects, but as expressions to be read that make certain readings of the world and of ideas possible. How I go about this interpretive act is just one among many possible approaches to

critical reading, critical theory, and, by extension, critical pedagogy. As Segall (2002) implies "there is no one, single, authorized text of any phenomenon…from which to start one's (different) reading; no agreed-on version on which to base one's investigation" (p. 8). The expressions I identify in this study are ones that appeared to me not only through the processes of coding I employed to find emerging themes, but also ones that I felt to be of crucial significance, samples I curated to exhibit and explain. They are by no means generalizable nor final. They are examples that allow me to construct a theory of the narrative forms that give shape to the American expressions in social studies teaching.

The title of this dissertation uses the word expression in multiple ways. One way to think about expressions is to consider particular phrases of speech or colloquial sayings that expresses a particular, often localized, meaning. When learning Standard American English, one would encounters learning a wide array of idiomatic figures of speech and expressions, ranging from "as American as apple pie" to "the land of the free." These statements express particular understandings as a form of linguistic shorthand. A second way to approach expressions is in the way they are extensions of our internal thoughts and desires. Our expressions give form to our particular views, thoughts, and feelings, which can include facial expressions, expressions of good faith or bad faith, expressions of condolence, grief, gratitude, and so forth. One can assume such expressions are unproblematically given, with clear intentions laid bare, but such expressions can be misinterpreted, misunderstood, and received if far different ways than expected. A third way to think about expressions is to consider them as semiotic constructs. A work of art, music, literature, film, and other cultural texts express some idea, feeling, or state of being. The Statue of Liberty can be said to express particular ideas associated with freedom, prosperity, and equality. In this sense expressions are a vehicle containing possible meanings of

an idea, appearing in a way to make such definitions external or visible. Expressions, in this sense, are the opposite of impressions, which are internalizations of particular definitions and ideas. Consider the concept of expressions as found in algebra. Algebraic expressions do not include equal signs to declaratively correspond a value; they are only phrases constructed of variables, constants, symbols, and signs, not the whole sentence that an equation presents. As such, algebraic expressions show something, but only through their particular combination of signs, symbols, and numbers. In a similar way, "American expressions" order and organize various signs, symbols, and sensations of people, places, and society.

These three ways of approaching expressions (American or otherwise) relate in some way or another to the way I approach the concept of expressions as particular signs that indicate, invite, and signal a possible world for us to inhabit. For Deleuze (1990) expressions are always explanations the Self attempts to provide of the Other. Expressions are created through our attempt to give shape or form to a particular world or a particular "out there." When explaining how facial expressions work, Deleuze suggests "a frightened countenance is the expression of a frightening possible world, or of something frightening in the world–something I do not yet see" (p. 346). The reason we do not yet see this world as expressed to us is because it only exists within the expression itself. Whatever sense, idea, or signification an expression attempts to make intelligible, the expression "implicates it, envelops it as something else" (p. 307). For Deleuze and other poststructuralist thinkers, the world can only exist in its expressions. Thus, for, Derrida (1997) there is nothing that is non-textual as everything is mediated through text. For Deleuze there is nothing that is non-expressive as everything is mediated through expressions. Expressions explicate possible worlds that always implicate their observers, which allows Deleuze (1990) to explain expressions as the moment when attributes we attribute to a

particular thing are qualified because no one thing can have its own pure, eternal, transcendental essence. In this vein of thought, America consists of infinite attributes that can have infinite expressions, but, as such, America only exists as a collection of attributes, substances, and, affections. By carefully considering the expressions of social studies education's content we can be attuned to its construction, one of the hallmarks of poststructuralist theory and the ways such theories demand attention to how meaning and understanding is constructed through language. Any meaning of "America" is always mediated and evidence or traces of such construction is in the expressions of America we observe, learn, reproduce, disseminate, and teach, expressions that contain attributes, and affections of particular ideological fantasies as I explained earlier.

I demonstrate in the following chapter how different expressions of America are produced with pedagogical indications and signals, such as the intonations, gestures, signposts, highlights, emphases, deflections, inflections, and other expressive maneuvers a teacher makes during each pedagogical act. This requires reading the pedagogy of a teacher for its formal, rhetorical, and linguistic conventions and characteristics. The different expressive forms social studies express in the narrative constructions of their teaching contain a complex set of ideological influences or fantasies. I read each teacher's fantasies of America as an index of their concerns, feelings, fears, desires, and anxieties of America. We are able to "read" such aspects of a teacher's pedagogy–or any ideation–by "construing its expressions in terms of the activities that sustain them" (Geertz, 1973, p. 152).

Overview of Chapters

The sheer immensity of this study, and the dizzying amount of data produced from this study, has required an uncomfortable amount of focusing, trimming, and limiting of my inquiry.

This dissertation focuses on analyses that I have relegated to writing up in articles for publication in academic journals. What the three manuscripts that comprise this dissertation have in common is a focused attention on the expressive forms of three teachers in pedagogical moments I observed in specific lessons of their teaching as an attempt to explain what these expressive modes disclose in terms of the teachers' fantasies about America.

To examine these fantasies about America at work in the expressive forms of social studies teachers' pedagogies, I follow Jackson & Mazzei (2012) who "think with theory" in qualitative research, using the practice of "plugging in" theoretical concepts to turn on, uncover, spotlight, and diffract the findings from a semester of daily observations in three high school social studies classrooms. In the first of these three manuscripts (Chapter 1), I think with theories of fantasy to read a lesson on the Industrial Revolution in Mr. Bauer's world history class and a lesson on the Vietnam War in Mr. Reardon's U.S. history class. I intend to submit this manuscript as an article for review in the *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. In the second manuscript (Chapter 2), I think with theories of myth to read two lessons in Mrs. Stewart's eleventh-grade civics class. I describe the curriculum Mrs. Stewart teaches as a curriculum of belonging and locate within her instruction instances of myth operating as a pedagogical form. This allows me to offer concrete examples of what a mythologizing pedagogy looks like in social studies education. I intend to submit this manuscript as an article for review in *Theory & Research in Social Education*. In the third manuscript (Chapter 3) I think with Deleuze & Guattari's theories of fabulation and becoming to offer an alternative stance on using social studies education classrooms as safe spaces for learning about queer history and queer life in America. Using a lesson from Mr. Reardon's ninth-grade U.S. history class, I describe how Mr. Reardon employs a pedagogy of fabulation to teach students about LGBT history, in turn

creating his classroom into a space where becoming-American occurs in the surprising moments in which students confront the queerness of certain narratives of LGBT history in America. This manuscript has been published in the *Journal of Social Studies Research*.

In the summary that concludes this dissertation I consider the different implications my study has for research on social studies education and for curriculum studies. After reviewing the results and limitations of my study, I discuss implications my study has for social studies education by way of discussing practices of othering and exceptionalism that occur across the cases analyzed and discussed in this dissertation study. I close with some thoughts on future directions my work and the field of social studies education can take in continued examinations of the expressive dimensions of teachers' pedagogical practices when teaching about America and other contested cultural/curricular constructs in social studies education.

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CHAPTER 1

EPIC LESSONS: DE/CONSTRUCTING FANTASIES OF AMERICA IN TWO HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY CLASSES

Introduction

From the time I began teaching social studies education methods courses in the 2010s, I could discern among some preservice teacher candidates the desires radiating from various contemporary social movements, propelling through the conversations, animations, and protestations of those students who wanted to make a difference with their teaching, wanted "to do something" with their students to respond to what they perceived as a momentous social change in their lives. The crumbling of dictatorships, uprisings grouped together as an Arab Spring, the diffuse social spaces of the internet converging in very real ways in our lives (in and out of schools) all were propelled by intense unconscious desires. Tamboukou (2003) sees desire everywhere in educational settings because "education is a field *par excellence* for the study of how economies of power and economies of desire produce realities" (p. 219). She supports such a bold claim by citing Marks (1993) who suggests "desire is the central force in teaching, a force that can be dangerous if it is not recognized and controlled but without which the language and literature classroom is a dry and boring place" (pp. 3-4). Desire appears in social studies classes as a spontaneous attraction to some*thing* or some*one*, creating an emergence of relation between people and things. By exploring desire in subjects and in classroom spaces, we can "understand that the construction of subjects involves a historically specific fixation of desire, brought about by the action of social codes, and behavior towards the child" (Patton, 2000, p. 71). Teachers and students, as subjects located within social studies education, are inseparable from the desires tethered to ideas of America that produce American subjectivities, which makes teaching and

learning about America—and America in the world—a process rather than an origin of identity and essence that is inescapably American.

One way to see desire at work in social studies education is to consider Willinsky's project of explaining how learning "divides the world" (1999) through the colonizing project of education, especially geography and history, through a coupling of social desires with nation-building and the learning of such origin stories in schooling through narrative strategies in history and geography education. Similarly, in a critique of the logics of area studies that relate quite closely to the logics of social studies, Chow (2010) posits desire as that which animates what she terms "empirical givens." These are "facts of cultural life whose importance is undeniable and yet whose significance is often overlooked, forgotten, and even foreclosed" (p. xiii). Social studies education is a project thoroughly invested in the learning and teaching of empirical givens, including ones Chow has paid special attention to in her work: the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the American pledge of allegiance; the use of travel films in understanding foreign cultures; and the U.S. military's support of African Studies, Asian Studies, etc. as academic disciplines born in the U.S. academy during the Cold War and later re-appropriated as different course renderings within social studies, such as World Cultures and Western Hemisphere Studies. For Chow, some desires that make such empirical givens so entrenched involve the arrangement of the flow of unchecked desires that work to make the world visible in some particular way (such as how desires structure the covers of National Geographic magazines and pool together in the images of Discovery Channel documentaries used in classrooms). Desires to know (about America and elsewhere) require that "the subject must give up something of its own in order to be 'hooked up' with the Other, the visual field, which is, none the less, forever beyond its grasp. No matter how successful, therefore, the

subject's possession of meaning is, it is by definition both compensatory and incomplete" (p. 87). From this understanding of what desires are and how they can appear in social studies education, we can begin to work out a theory of forms that give shape to specific desires. This article examines one form that gives shape to desires in social studies education—fantasy.

A Framework for Theorizing Fantasy in Social Studies Education

Fantasies are the settings for our desires to play out indirectly, and they do so frequently in social studies education. In a fantasy, we are "caught up" in a particular "sequence of images" that represent our desires, fears, anxieties, and other forces" (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1986, p. 26). Getting caught up in the scenarios and settings that fantasies offer us engage with social studies learning in an "as if" mode due to how a fantasy is a "sustained metaphoricity" (Riley, 2000, p. 13). This metaphorical quality of fantasy ensures that a fantasy is never entirely straightforward. As a fantasy erupts from our unconscious desires, it changes our perceptions to and relations of the world through its stabilizing actions.

An example of this stabilizing action is when a fantasy works to shape an identity (an individual identity or a collective identity, such as a national identity). Pease (2009) calls this work of fantasy in schools and other state institutions "state fantasy work" being "the dominant structure of desire out of which U.S. citizens imagine their national identity" (p. 1). Even when traumatic events, such as 9/11 or the Great Recession of 2007, "exceed the grasp of the available representations from the national mythology," leading to a temporary breakdown in the traditional work of an existing myth, the state fantasy work of schools (and social studies in particular) facilitates re-teaching myths in a new manner to a new situation in a way that does not shake the social and political order "by inducing citizens to want the national order they already have" (Pease, 2009, p. 4). Fantasy does this in how it "extracts coherence from confusion,

reduces multiplicity to singularity" and "enables individuals and groups to give themselves histories" (Scott, 2011, p. 51). Fantasies thus impose order on "chaotic and contingent occurrences" and operate in social studies education to articulate particular ideological identities. This imposition is possible because fantasy "provides the sticky psychic glue that binds together the elements of social and political reality (Rose, 1996, p. 4). Such fantasies are always utopic because any time social and political realities are glued together, to extend Rose's metaphor, it is always in the service of imagining something different, not-yet or yet-to-come. This is especially visible in the representations of collectivities fantasies conjure, be they collectivities in suburban Michigan, rural Wyoming, twenty-first century America, gay pride parades, military veteran reunions, and so on. Without such fantasies and their utopian impulses, no collective solidarity (for better or worse) would be impossible without them.

To illustrate this point, I wish to consider the expressions at Donald Trump's presidential campaign rallies as particular fantasies. While I would be hesitant (if not at times accurate) to compare the social studies classrooms I observed for this study to a Donald Trump rally, the fantasies circulating both in social studies classrooms and in Trump rallies are utopian to the extent that they affirm a particular collectivity. At the Trump rallies, the fantasies of the collective compensate for all that ails it: immigration, unemployment, gay marriage, terrorism, affirmative action, an oppressive politically correct culture. However, the fantasy of "Making America Great Again" positions members of this collective to see their utopia as anticipatory, not compensatory, as it anticipates (negatively and violently) a future desirable *only* for un(der)employed, straight, white supremacist men and presumably few others.

The expressions of America I relate in this article all contain a symbolic support for different ways of thinking America, not just about America, but thinking with, alongside, for,

and against America. This is why a critique of any fantasy in social studies education is necessary for the possibility of teachers and students to imagine a different future. What this kind of imagining can be called is dissent as it makes possible "resistance on principle to institutional controls" of social studies education in how it imagines "open-ended reform and change" (Bercovitch, 1993, p. 346). To engage in this kind of thinking requires reading the modes and contents of our fantasies in confrontational ways. Rose (2005) considers what such confrontations with our fantasies could make possible for us to think when she asks about our (un)willingness to question the fantasies that give identity shape:

> What would happen to a political or religious identity, even the most binding, if it could see itself as a contingent, as something that might have taken another path? Can you be devoted to an identity–or would you be differently devoted to an identity–if you knew it was also unsure (p. 96)?

As a partial response to Rose's question, this article considers how such dissent could be possible in social studies education when we invent and project new visions and new possibilities for a future through our desires for America expresses in the fantasies of our teaching. If this results in students refusing identifications with fantasies of America expressed in social studies education, then it is possible that teachers could maneuver their teaching towards disarticulating a curriculum with America as an exceptional object of study, a remapping of desires and possibilities for many new Americas, and unsettling a political unconscious that can imagine them in social studies education.

Epic Fantasies as a Mode of Social Studies Education

This article examines one particular mode through which I find social studies teachers express their curriculum: the epic mode. There are other modes at work in social studies education, including the comic mode, romantic mode, gothic mode, grotesque mode, pastoral mode, to name a few. The concept of mode is a concept from literary studies. Modes enable literary, cultural, and artistic works to "collectively build a significant and orderly world around themselves" (Miller, 1995, p. 69). The pedagogical modes through which I find social studies educators teaching match closely to the kinds of narrative modes found in literature. These modes endow a particular work or expressive form with particular identities and meanings through their own "series of incidents, figures, motifs and characters" that work together to "generate meaning according to repetition, emphasis, amplifications and other rhetorical devices" (Wolfreys, 2004, p. 163). Modes possess "particular thematic features, moods, and modalities of speech" (Frow, 2006, p. 65). Unlike genres, modes do not follow technical rules, organizations, conventions, or dimensions that are often identified only by readers alert to the workings of a particular genre. Genres are measured by whether or not their expectations are successfully met in a particular text (Currie, 2011). The horror genre, for example, must have some established rules governing any narrative or expression following the laws of horror as a genre: a dark setting, an element of haunting, and some form of ruin in either spatial form (such as a castle) or temporal form (such as a cursed family). Texts in the genre of horror tend to either fit or exceed their generic conventions, and since the establishment of postmodern expression and thought, genres can be upended, transgressed, or hybridized (Currie, 2011). Modes highlight, emphasize, and establish particular tones, such as a sad tone in an elegiac mode, or an triumphant tone in an epic mode (Fowler, 1982). Because modes are adjectival in nature they are useful for

discriminating and differentiating the kinds of expressions that appear in social studies classrooms. We can identify modes in any kind of text through the styles by which texts are modified, qualified, and thematized (Gennette, 1992). On a cultural level, modes signify particular movements a given society or culture undergoes (Frye, 1967). These modes work as thematic repetitions to make expressions (of America, in my study) appear universal, natural, timeless, or given. The operative modes shaping pedagogical expressions in the two classrooms I discuss in this article render particular constructions of America to appear factual, homogenous, and familiar. This rendering, as I shall now explain, is in keeping with the particular mode of fantasy expressed in the pedagogy of these two social studies teachers, that of the epic. In the epic mode, movement is shown as a quest or a journey that a hero makes through overcoming obstacles, challenges, and external threats.

As I demonstrate in this article, the epic mode allows one to celebrate conquest, struggle, and heroes. Fantasies expressed in an epic mode focus on demonstrating how the historical reverses of a given place, a given age, or a given group of people are often outweighed by an external set of influences, either divine or predestined in nature, shaping their ambitions through a continuous demand of commitment and self-determination in completing a journey or a quest (Innes, 2013; Moretti, 1996). A dominant feature in epic is the how the teller of an epic, an epicist, can speak both narratively of an event, recounting the actions and deeds of a hero or a group externally, while also being able to project an internalized mindset that attempts to speak for a given place, given age, or a given group of people (Damrosch, 2003; Dekker, 1987; Dimmock, 2006, 2008; Murrin, 1980). This gives epic what Bellamy (1992) terms a "definitive" and "self-sufficient" stance in speaking of the past, as she argues epic is a psychoanalytically powerful "account of history" (p. 3). For Bellamy all epics work emerge from narcissism insofar

as they project a sense of triumph, grandeur, and success of the Self imposed upon the World. This large-scale quality of epic allows those who tell and transmit epics to appear objective and omniscient, the epicist sees and knows all and can thus speak on behalf of the past which is being recounted in the epic form (Becker, 1995; Quint, 1993).

Epic is a form of fantasy well suited for styles of social studies education that teach through celebration, commemoration, nostalgia, and heroizing. Lévesque (2008) identifies this strand as a dominant trope in history education through how it history educators often place "generous emphasis on the stories of national heroes and the superior moral character of the nation" (p. 103). This emphasis is a central feature in paradigms of history education described as "traditional" or otherwise adhering to forms of memorializing national accomplishments through patriotism, nationalism, or, in the case of the United States, virtues of classical republicanism (Levstik & Barton, 2008, 2011; VanSledright, 2011; Wineberg, 2001). A less overt attention in these studies, however, is towards how history education forms such a close affinity to narratives of heroes and triumph, to narratives of progress and victory, and especially how such narrative construction occurs through ideological processes. This is where I see thinking history education through the concept of fantasy as a productive maneuver.

I arrived at this hunch through a long study of ideas that structure the disciplinary field of American Studies. As this article comes out of a larger, rather sprawling study of America as a concept imagined in social studies education, I took a detour through American Studies literature to see what its practitioners have said what it is we talk about when we talk about America. For Pease (2009), when we teach and talk about America we take a "need for an idealized national heritage" and find ways to link that need to "an epic narrative" (p. 162). What we create through this process is a particular "idealization" thoroughly "imagined, symbolized, and supplied with

characters and events" (p. 162). In the canon of books at the heart of American Studies—*The American Adam* (Lewis, 1955); *Virgin Land* (Smith, 1950); *The Machine in the Garden* (Marx, 1964); *Errand into the Wilderness* (Miller, 1956)—we can see how, throughout history, American writers, artists, and philosophers (along with their interlocuters, school and college educators) expresses America (rather narcissistically in keeping with the epic mode) as a "figure of heroic innocence and vast potentialities" (Lewis, 1955, p. 1).

Methodological Framework & Methods of Study

This study is located in between the design formations of an ethnography and a case study. Ethnographies often determine how a given culture works whereas case studies are used to understand an issue or problem through the specific illustration of a case (Simons, 2014). Ethnographies tend to be experiences in systematic, extensive fieldwork over a long period of duration, often a year or more in length of time. In terms of those characteristics this study is not an ethnographic study in such a sense as I only spent four months visiting four different teachers in two high school twice a week, two of whom are discussed in this article. For precision, I used the multiple case study approach advanced by Yin (2003). Creswell (2007) summarizes Yin's approach to case study methods as a focus "in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case *description* and case-based themes [emphasis his] (p. 73). Yin (2003) divides case study research into explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive qualitative case studies. This is in contrast to the general approach to qualitative case studies in education research that Merriam (1998) advocates or the argument by Stake (2005) that case

study research is neither a method nor a methodology, but a choice of what is to be studied. The multiple case designs for my study allowed me to take the design of my inquiry across four different classrooms (one of which is the focus of the analysis for this article). My aim was not to generalize from one classroom case to the next, but to use the logic of replication to see how ideas and ideals associated with America are expressed in different social studies classes.

Contextualizing Springfield High School

Springfield High School (S.H.S.) is the only high school in a suburban school district located on a boundary line within the unincorporated community of Springfield and the adjacent the large metropolitan city of Washington (pseudonym). The information pertaining to S.H.S. reflects its demographics and available public data about the school for the 2013–2014 academic year. S.H.S. is a Title I high school serving 1036 students in grades 9-12, 80% of whom qualify for free or reduced lunch under federal guidelines. According to student demographic data available for the academic year, the composition of ethnic groups of the student population is 34.4% White, 31.6% African American, 16.0% Hispanic of Any Race, 13.3% Two or More Races, 4.4% Asian, and 0.3% American Indian or Alaska Native (www.mischooldata.org). The neighborhood of Springfield in which S.H.S. resides is illustrative of many of the distinguishing features of an American Rust Belt community: higher than average unemployment, a mobile student body that frequently sees shifting patterns of enrollment and un-enrollment throughout the academic year, and a neighborhood space heavily patrolled by local police forces to guard against high incidents of property crime and assorted violent crimes. The two teachers I studied at S.H.S. (Mr. Bauer and Mr. Reardon) constructed a brief history of S.H.S. they recounted to me during my first few weeks visiting the school. According to this history, S.H.S. was an integral

element of the Springfield community for much of its history in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. It had a homogenous zone of student enrollment entirely within the Springfield community. Beginning in the late 1990s, the school district of the city of Washington allowed a school of choice enrollment option for Washington residents living outside of the Springfield community to enroll in Springfield's public schools. Mr. Bauer and Mr. Reardon have viewed this change in enrollment patterns negatively, feeling it creates a sense of distrust amongst students and teachers in S.H.S. towards students from Washington who live outside of Springfield. Both teachers claim that levels of student academic achievement began to decline broadly in the 2000s once students from Washington began enrolling at S.H.S.

Contextualizing Mr. Bauer

During the spring 2013 semester, Mr. Bauer taught three different courses at S.H.S., including World History, Genocides, and The History of Me. That year marked Mr. Bauer's 24th year on the faculty of the school. As the coordinator of the world history curriculum, Mr. Bauer helped lead his social studies department in transitioning from a curriculum in global studies to the curriculum used in the current world history curriculum. He describes himself as a "self-taught historian," having majored in sociology as an undergraduate and later pursuing teacher certification as a non-traditional adult student returning to a university. The logic of Mr. Bauer's world history course, as he shared with me in an interview (Bauer, personal communication, May 29, 2013), is to "get the students to see there is a whole lot out there besides us, that there's more to the story of history than what we Americans have done." The "out there" Mr. Bauer invites his students to consider becomes always populated with the "us. The primary goal or

objective in his world history course is to call attention to the exceptional nature of America: "I want kids to understand how unique America is."

Contextualizing Mr. Reardon.

During the spring 2013 semester, Mr. Reardon was in his ninth year as a teacher at S.H.S. and in his twelfth year of teaching high school social studies. His specialty is teaching the U.S. history course for ninth graders at S.H.S. Mr. Reardon's educational background consists of undergraduate study in history, post-baccalaureate study in history education, and graduate study in history with a M.A in history. He identifies with a concern for "making history relevant" and "showing all sides of history." He describes his role within the social studies department as the "peacekeeper" who tries to "keep the parents and admin happy while doing what's best for the students."

Analyzing Findings from Two Case Studies of Classroom Instruction

In this section, I share findings from two lessons observed at Springfield High School. The first excerpt of data describes a lesson on causes and effects of the Industrial Revolution during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Mr. Bauer's tenth-grade world history class. The second excerpt of data describes a lesson on the experiences of U.S. military personnel in combat during what in the United States we call the Vietnam War, a conflict within the broader global history of the Cold War. After sharing moments of classroom instruction observed in each class I analyze the findings from my observations to identify dominant impressions and expressions related to fantasies of American exceptionalism.

Observing Mr. Bauer's Lesson on the Industrial Revolution

During a unit on the Industrial Revolution in his tenth-grade world history class, Mr. Bauer focuses on three concepts that structure the entirety of the unit for his tenth-grade students: labor, production, and manufacturing. Commencing his lesson on manufacturing, Mr. Bauer begins by displaying three corporate logos in a PowerPoint slide on the screen in the front of the classroom. He asks students to identify each of the three logos. Mr. Bauer commends the students for their correct identification of the Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler logos and informs the class these companies are collectively known as "the Big Three" automobile manufacturers in the United States. Mr. Bauer claims that what makes these three companies so important "is their role in symbolizing the American automobile market." Mr. Bauer provides a concise overview of how the Big Three companies worked in tandem to establish the United States as the major market for the production and distribution of personal automobiles around the world. "For most of the 20th century," Mr. Bauer framed, "America was synonymous with the car industry. Cars are what helped build America and the center where this all happened was right here in Michigan." He asks the class if this is still the case. Students spend a few minutes quietly pondering his question until a student, Lauren, breaks the silence to suggest that after the bailout of the automobile industry in 2009, the Big Three are "helping rebuild America." Mr. Bauer acknowledges Lauren's response, writing the word "bailout" on the chalkboard. He asks Lauren if she could say more about why the bailout is necessary for understanding how the car industry is important to America. Lauren responds by claiming the bailout helped the Big Three from "going out of business" and because they did not "go under" the Big Three remain important parts of "the American economy." Mr. Bauer uses this response to launch into a lecture on the economics of the automobile industry. During this lecture, he offers ideas about

how the U.S. market for buying automobiles was significantly altered in the 1980s when Asian car manufacturers entered the market:

> **Mr. Bauer**: We were once on top and then, suddenly, almost overnight, America starts losing its pride and joy to Honda, Toyota, and then later Nissan and other foreign car companies. Sure, there had already been Volkswagens and Volvos on the streets here, but even in Michigan the Big Three started losing ground to these other companies. And, of course, we all know what happened then.

It is not immediately spelled out what happened, although it can be inferred Mr. Bauer is referring to the economic struggles associated with a diminished market for the Big Three, associated with financial crises for Michigan when the Big Three began downsizing and closing assembly factories and management offices in the state. A student, Danny, asks Mr. Bauer if he thinks the automobile industry should have been bailed out. Considering Danny's question for a few seconds, Mr. Bauer responds with an ambivalent answer.

> **Mr. Bauer**: Well, it's not really important what I think. But I would say it's important to point out that America needs to diversify its economy. If in Michigan we're only focused on producing one thing, that's not going to be good for us in the long run. The problem, though, is that America has changed. And I don't think there's any going back to how it once was. We've lost our dominance as a global economic force. So whether it's NAFTA or globalization or iPhones or whatever, or even our cars, it might be that America has to rethink what we specialize in and what we export.

Nick quickly follows Mr. Bauer's reply with a perspective that Nick attributes to his father. He explains how his father had told Nick "manufacturing in America is dead." Nick bemoans this situation because, as he sees it, manufacturing is the main livelihood for many residents of the

state. Nick points to a specific factory in town that was once a central source of employment and middle-class advancement, but is now no longer seen as being able to support families in the Springfield community. Nick claims "you can't make as much money there as you could back in the day with GM or Ford." The alternative he offers is going to college, which leads only to indebtedness according to Nick. Mr. Bauer agrees with Nick and issues a cautionary comment about debt. Mr. Bauer explains how during and immediately after the Industrial Revolution debt was a cause for imprisonment in debtors' prisons. In our contemporary moment, Mr. Bauer contends, "we have so many people in your generation imprisoning themselves from loans and credit cards and other stuff people your age didn't have to worry about long ago." Mr. Bauer indicates many people share the perspective of Nick's father:

> **Mr. Bauer**: This is a great lesson to remember, that even a country as large as America can't be on top all of the time. If you look back at our history, you can see how America grew through industry and manufacturing–steel, copper, mining, like all of the coal mines in Appalachia. That's all pretty much gone. So what do we have now?

With this question Mr. Bauer realizes this is an opportune time for students to work in pairs to create a list of major exports from the United States. Working in pairs, students discuss together which goods are produced in exported by the United States. Mr. Bauer gives students six minutes to work on their lists and then calls the students to reassemble as a class, calling on volunteers to share items from their lists. Students share out the following: automobiles, electronics, oil, paper and wood products, farm animals, arms and ammunition, grain, coal, and uranium. After acknowledging the items on the list (with the exception of uranium, which he claims is an odd item to include), Mr. Bauer situates America as a global trading entity. One student, Katie, asks if money can be classified as an export, "like the stuff on Wall Street and with the other big

banks?" Mr. Bauer responds that "yes, we do export money, as well as intangible things such as knowledge. We're a big exporter of knowledge. What else is missing from this list?" he asks the class. Paul suggests airplanes, to which Mr. Bauer confirms that is true, claiming aircraft and spacecraft are some of the most rapidly growing exports for the United States. This discussion spurs Paul to ask Mr. Bauer "why do people complain about stuff being made in China and not in America if we're number two or three in the world at exporting? Doesn't make sense." Mr. Bauer responds to Paul by way of providing an explanation.

> **Mr. Bauer**: We've tried to do in the past what Paul is talking about. In the 1930s we said, 'if only people would buy domestically then we can avoid a depression.' This is why we put tariffs on things of importance. Let's say we said to China that if they wanted to import cars, if they want to sell cars in the United States, we would put a five-thousand-dollar tariff on any car sold here. Do you think they're going to turn around and do? They won't sell here! And that's what made our economy so strong for so long. We resisted things overseas. We made things here and we sold them here. We kept Americans making and buying American things. It was all about manufacturing, which is what we're taking about today. This is what is different about the American economy now from the past. The factory system is pretty much dying out. In the past, with Rockefeller and Carnegie and Ford, vertical integration transformed America. Those days are gone so now we have to figure out what the business of America will after the glory days of American manufacturing.

Danny asks Mr. Bauer why factories were so successful earlier in the world's history. This question allows Mr. Bauer to draw crucial connections between earlier domestic systems of manufacturing and production to more modern factory systems of manufacturing and production.

Mr. Bauer reminds students how earlier in the unit they learned that the appearance of factories forced people to move from smaller rural homes and farming communities to relocate and live in larger urban areas:

> **Mr. Bauer**: Remember all of the changes we've been talking about in this unit. This is when we started seeing our old ways of life die out. The countryside was no longer where we wanted to live. Well, maybe we did want to live there, and maybe we still do want to live in the romantic and rugged wilderness, but most of us live in cities. You're all going to have to move to big cities if you want a good quality of life, I'm afraid to say.

The class period ends with Mr. Bauer previewing the next day's lesson, which will be a case study of Wal-Mart as an example of globalization. "A lot of people say they don't want to shop at Wal-Mart," Mr. Bauer adds. "But we'll see just how difficult that is to put into practice." The bell rings signaling the end of the class period and this lesson.

Analysis of Mr. Bauer's Lesson

In Mr. Bauer's lesson, one encounters expressions of America existing in a state of disorientation. The economic might it once enjoyed appears to be fading. As a narrative of fall and decline, the curriculum in Mr. Bauer's lesson expresses America in an epic mode through focusing on loss: a loss of comfort in terms of wages and employment, a loss of comfort in terms of business interests to support communities, such as Springfield, and a loss of comfort in terms of the sense of respect and prowess America enjoyed as a global leader in manufacturing, specifically automobiles, a particularized vision of greatness that is localized to Springfield in the way historical narratives of America's epic greatness in leading the world in manufacturing steel would be localized at schools in, say, Pittsburgh or Cleveland. Functioning in the role of teacher-

as-epicist, Mr. Bauer serves as a kind of prophet. He can both see behind in the past for causes and point towards likely paths America will continue down in its currently unfolding historical quest. His prophetic view is not entirely positive, as when he suggests to his class "I don't think there's any going back to how it once was." This tone is reflective throughout Mr. Bauer's lesson, as he expresses a sense of disenchantment with future economic outlooks for America. That which America must intimately value the most, it's "pride and joy" in Mr. Bauer's phrase, is the grand position it held as one of the world's leaders in manufacturing automobiles. When this was "lost" we see a value judgment established that this is a blow to America, a fatal flaw from which it may never recover, as Mr. Bauer expresses tragically in his lesson.

This disenchantment appears in how he identifies in this history he is teaching a "great lesson" that students must heed. For Mr. Bauer it is a sobering reality that America, described as large, can fail. Despite the epic nature of America ("even a country as large as America") the lessons of its history prevent us from ignoring that "it can't be on top all of the time." Mr. Bauer's apparent aim in his lesson is to present a total fantasy of America as a mighty hero who has fallen. In his teaching we see a fantasy that wants a transposition both to show everything that was great about the American economy through the specific example of the automobile industry in Michigan. The epic nature of this curriculum means for Mr. Bauer that it must be taught comprehensively, both in how America works, literally and figuratively, as an epic hero and as an epic space where the ideals of the Industrial Revolution can be materialized for students to learn, accomplished by Mr. Bauer's own totalizing representation of America as a power to make his students better consumers of history by leading them to sympathize with rise, decline, and fall of America he provides in his lesson. There is a performative element to Mr. Bauer's instruction in that he wants his teaching to make something happen. His students will be

able to “see how American grew” and will be required to “figure out what the business of America” will one day be in this unknown future, a dark future of which Mr. Bauer forewarns his students by offering a historical detour through debtors’ prisons and their modern-day equivalent in the crushing debt of student loans and credit cards. Debt is just one more arduous obstacle to face and overcome, a villainous concept in need of defeat in this epic quest America has undertaken. Mr. Bauer teaches his students that their fate, and the fate of all of America, is tied to the actions of the nation in terms of economic output.

Observing Mr. Reardon’s Lesson on the Vietnam War

During his unit on the Vietnam War in his ninth-grade U.S. history course, Mr. Reardon devotes three class periods to an in-class screening of the documentary film *Dear America: Letters Home From Vietnam*. On the third and final day of this lesson students conclude their viewing of the film and discuss with Mr. Reardon their perceptions of how living in Vietnam during armed conflict affected U.S. soldiers. As the film nears its conclusion, a montage of black and white photographs of U.S. soldiers disembarking planes upon returning to the United States are shown while Chuck Berry sings lyrics to one of his songs: “I’m so glad I’m living in the U.S.A.” Many students audibly say “aww” in unison displaying an affection for the young men whose faces and bodies occupy the large projection screen in front of them. Witnessing the soldiers’ reassembling in the physical space of their country as U.S. citizens, a few of the students visibly shed tears. A student sitting next to me takes tissues from Mr. Reardon’s desk and wipes her eyes during this part of the film. As the narrator of the film discusses the death of a solider whose letters to his family are featured prominently throughout the documentary, a student, Alexis, says aloud to no one in particular, “it’s a shame he died so needlessly.” Mr. Reardon asks Alexis what she means

by this and she offers her thoughts in the form of walking back the intensity of her original comment, saying "I don't know, I mean, it's just kind of dumb that this person had to give up his life, for what?" Mr. Reardon says Kylie makes a "heartfelt" point and that "patriotism is a fuzzy thing."

He then asks students to answer the remaining list of questions on the handout. Upon their finish, Mr. Reardon calls the students back together as a class. He turns their attention to the eleventh question on the study guide, which reads: "After watching footage of the war and hearing the letters that soldiers wrote during the Vietnam War, write a paragraph on what you saw. How did the movie make you feel? Has your opinion about the war and those that fought in it changed?" He solicits responses from students after asking for students to voluntarily read their responses aloud. The first student to share is Jennifer:

> **Jennifer:** Before watching this movie I didn't have a stance on whether the war was a good thing or not. But after watching it, I don't think I would have supported the war. With the massacres of villages with children and women angers me. Those young children and women have done nothing wrong. Also being a solider you should be proud to fight for your country, not miserable as the soldiers' families were as well. They were terrified for their family member's life and was (sic) not for sure if they would ever see them again.

Mr. Reardon questions Jennifer on her first sentence about not truly having a stance, asking her if she had a feeling or thought about the war at all, or what the term "Vietnam War" made her think or feel prior to this film. She replies that all she thought of when hearing those words were of "old people fighting somewhere in Asia and some came home and some didn't, but that we were proud of them." When Mr. Reardon asks Jennifer where such pride comes from, she claims that

"it's who you are, you're an American and you were put there to protect America." On this comment, Mr. Reardon points out what he finds to be a contradiction in Jennifer's comments. "Could one be proud and not support the war?" he asks the class. Students think over this for a few seconds and one student, Michael, responds that "yeah, you do what you have to do because that is your job, but you don't have to like it." Mr. Reardon acknowledges Michael's comment and asks Michael about his opinion on war, to which Michael shares that his opinion on the war did not change:

> **Michael**: I still oppose war and now more than ever. This movie made me think about how hard it must have been for the soldiers and their families. I don't understand war and never will. Seeing all the dead bodies and the missing soldiers and people being carried away by helicopters hurt. It made me angry that the war started, but the people at home that hated America and the soldiers were more infuriating.

Mr. Reardon asks students to recall ideas he had mentioned about President Johnson from an earlier lesson in their unit, reminding students to "remember that even President Johnson didn't really understand the war and didn't really want to send more young people over there. But he had to do what he felt he had to do. Why?" Upon considering this question, students are quiet for a few seconds. After waiting for responses from students and receiving none, Mr. Reardon answers his question, claiming President Johnson was worried that his plans for achieving the Great Society initiative would be futile if the United States surrendered and withdrew from the conflict in Vietnam. A student, Adam, questions Mr. Reardon's claim, asking if the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution changed the president's perspective on the war:

> **Adam**: Didn't that give the president all the power to make decisions to fight in Vietnam? If so, why didn't he use that power to remove the troops? He could have saved

a lot of lives and just brought everyone home and then he could say that Congress wanted him to do it because of the resolution, right?"

Adam's question opens up a space for deeper speculation about the conflict in Vietnam and how the United States should have approached the conflict as it unfolded and how the nation should remember it in the present. Mr. Reardon says that Adam is "kind of on the right track" in his thinking, but that the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution put the Vietnam War into "warp speed." By this Mr. Reardon says he means it was the moment President Johnson widened the war after he won the election in 1964:

> **Mr. Reardon**: He felt this was America's duty, that it had no other choice but to fight on and press on. America never gives up, and Johnson didn't want to give up, either. So he sends 50,000 additional troops. The U.S. drops almost half a million ton of bombs on North Vietnam, and over a million in South Vietnam. It kept escalating and escalating. But it's not American to just give up. We stay the course. America wins wars, we save the world, but we didn't do that in Vietnam.

Mr. Reardon transitions to the final part of the lesson, which covers the lottery system that drafted U.S. citizens into combat during the Vietnam War. Students work with photocopied newspaper articles about local residents who were drafted into combat during the Vietnam War and work on this and related activities for the remainder of the class period.

Analysis of Mr. Reardon's Lesson

In Mr. Reardon's class we see America in a state of redemption. When students are invited to take a stance regarding America's involvement in the Vietnam War epic characteristics allow Mr. Reardon to salvage America in the face of criticism and uncertainty voiced by the

students. In the documentary film, an epic trope humanizes the soldiers through their efforts to communicate with loved ones at home. Exposed and vulnerable far away from home in a strange and unfamiliar land (Vietnam), the soldiers are on a journey which many did not ask to be a part. Indeed, the contested nature of the conflict—as both a foreign war and as an epic fantasy to be taught in this lesson—is stated in the title of the Buffalo Springfield song that plays in the documentary film students view. "For what it's worth," as the title proclaims, is not something that can be answered for and by the soldiers on their epic quest. To do so would upend the epic convention of being firm and committed to following through on the quest. In epic fantasies one follows the course, even when straying off the path due to external temptations and challenges, only to return to follow through on their principle of determination. As Mr. Reardon informs his students, "it's not American to just give up." When he says "we say the course," his use of we performatively binds the students to him and to this greater, epic identification with America while simultaneously staking out a definitive, normative claim about America that an epic mode demands.

But this condition of America and being American must be taught. To do so, Mr. Reardon must execute in his role of teacher-as-epicist the work of assaying his students to answer the question of worth. When his student Kylie proclaims a solider "died so needlessly," she calls into question the very nature of this war and challenges its status as an epic quest. Mr. Reardon attempts to downplay this conflicted feeling Kylie expressed by describing patriotism as "a fuzzy thing" rather than confront how Kylie could challenge a consensus that fully supports the sacrifices America made with its soldiers fighting in Vietnam. However, this querying Mr. Reardon sets up for his students throughout this lesson is less about the ethical and political quandaries of fighting in the war and more about properly celebrating the cathartic involvement

of America as an actor in the war, as soldiers fighting for America, and as students of history engaging with this event a history lesson. Epic makes this cathartic involvement more consumable in the classroom because of the strong, overpowering emotions it offers. This is very much the case when we see how students react to the film Mr. Reardon selected to screen for them, form anger to sadness to grief in a students' tears, an epic mode in teaching can easily solicit extreme attitudes and reactions. Those for whom an epic is retold are expected to invest in the telling with a similarly appropriate level of heightened emotional appeal. His student Jennifer is clear on her stance when she connects her favor to the very being of American: "it's who you are." When Mr. Reardon questions one's ability to critique duty and honor, his student Michael aptly demonstrates how epic fantasies, especially when set in times of war or conflict, flatten critique of duty and honor. Even though Michael expresses hesitation in glorifying the soldiers as heroes, one of the signature elements of an epic fantasy, he nevertheless falls in line with the demands of glorification epic requires when he states he has anger for "the people at home [who] hated America."

Discussion

Two distinct fantasies that emerge as dominant themes in the course of Mr. Bauer and Mr. Reardon teaching about America in their respective history classes: fantasies of heroism and fantasies of duty. Both contribute to a curriculum of American exceptionalism as discussed in this section.

Fantasies of Heroism

There are inevitable consequences for America in both lessons examined in this study. In Mr. Bauer's class, is it inevitable that America accept a new role in the global economy that

shakes off any lingering desire for industrial might it once enjoyed. In Mr. Reardon's class, it is inevitable that America follow through in requests to fight conflicts and engage in war even when such calls of duty are questionable or contested. Reading these lessons as epic fantasies of heroism calls our attention to how America exists as a hero in its own quest, its own struggle to arrive at a predestined end. In the lesson Mr. Bauer teaches the predestined end for America is in a reconfigured sense of purpose and self-sustaining role in a global economy. In his unit on the Industrial Revolution, "all of the changes" Mr. Bauer reminds students they have learned in studying industrialization serve as a kind of foe for America. The fantasy of a strong, powerful America allows Mr. Bauer to personify the Big Three automobile manufacturers as heroes who helped lead America in its epic quest for global economic conquest. Fantasies of national strength and global dominance allow Mr. Bauer to teach the Big Three as heroes of America, emphasizing a fixed identity of the Big Three as heroes in the epic mode of history his pedagogy expresses. Mr. Bauer articulates a past that was "so strong for so long" made by progress in industry, manufacturing, and trade. When his student Paul wonders about the change in fortune America faced with its fall and decline in exports and imports, Mr. Bauer points to Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Ford as virtuous, individuals who "transformed America" during its quest/history as a nation. America was a hero at the height of its powers before certain forces changed its course with destiny. As provider and protector, America's heroic qualities are left in doubt as Mr. Bauer guides his students to consider the nation's future, a future that they "have to figure out" and "what's next?"

Mr. Reardon does not express such a sanguine view of America's past in his epic construct of America, chronicling the Vietnam War as but one of many obstacles America has faced in some play 'over there' and 'far away' from here, it's 'home.' By resisting to use wealth

as a symbolic power for America as a hero, Mr. Reardon instead turns to the soldiers as heroes in spite of their desire to return to home, not in spite of it. This allows Mr. Reardon to construct a powerfully emotional fantasy using the way epic expressions demand heightened states of awe, compassion, pity, or sadness, or, to use Mr. Reardon's phrase, that "fuzzy thing" we feel when we encounter patriotism. This herofication evacuates from Mr. Reardon's instruction any need for questioning exterior motives, ideological influences, alternative possibilities, or other forms of critique that would lessen the purchase of duty as an organizing and explanatory concept in this lesson. The power of duty as an epic fantasy overrides the scathing tone of the "Fortunate Son" song Mr. Reardon plays for his students. It is not destiny that an unfortunate man not born into a political family would fight in the Vietnam War, despite how much Mr. Reardon connects this causality to a national draft. Yet the epic mode of Mr. Reardon's lesson prioritizes heroizing the solider in this protest song in spite of Mr. Reardon's acknowledgment of social and political forces that bind the solider to serve in combat.

Fantasies of Duty

Mr. Bauer constructs a fantasy of duty for his students when he presents a bleak future of America, one in which students will have the duty to move to cities if they "want a good quality of life." The patriarchal values associated with epic work to construct America not only as someone who must win, but must win particular things, such as a good quality of life, a shorthand for money and the patriarchal belief in heading a household or sacrificing other forms of happiness to be financially sound. Mr. Bauer teaches students this quality of life is to be found only in the city presumably because of an abundance of employment opportunities and not because of other reasons left unmentioned, such as access to goods and services, culture and

entertainment, infrastructure and transportation, and so forth. In keeping with epic fantasies presented in stark black and white terms, with no gradients of ambiguity, we can identify how in Mr. Bauer's lesson the changes in America's manufacturing history are not taught as complex and multitudinous, but rather as something that we have a duty to fix, to change, and confront with a renewed entrepreneurial spirit that may be lacking in the present, thus creating the current conditions in which America finds itself. But as with all fantasies, if America were to recover its epic sense of greatness, of being a hero of the world once more, what would Mr. Bauer desire? Fantasies work as container for our desires in the sense that if we were to ever fulfil them, or satisfy then, we would be left with no search, no yearning for that desire. We would have no pleasure or no basis to fantasize. Because fantasies work not by obtaining our desires, but by being turned on, seduced, and entranced by that which we desire, we risk losing the very animating drives of fantasy if we achieve and realize it. Mr. Bauer's pedagogy we lose its driving force: would would be left to desire in fantasizing an America that is broken, beaten, and in need of a comeback (another 'bailout' to salvage and redeem America?) While it may seem unpleasant to feel anger, resentment, or despair at America's economic lot in life, the epic quest for winning and resuming the mantle of "being on top of the world," to borrow Mr. Bauer's phrase, is to drag out America's epic quest without ever ending it or realizing its conclusion. In this way, teaching the history of America is to teach it as a never-ending story, one without end.

Using a similar strategy of displacement and deferral, the epic fantasy of Mr. Bauer's lesson both embraces and condenses the history in rather fatalistic ways. We see "old ways of life die out" presumably never to return. Despite not saying "Detroit is dead," Mr. Bauer does suggest the progress of America's epic quest, its "good ol' days of booming industry and manufacturing" will not return as they "are clearly over." Detroit becomes works as part to

whole, a synecdochal relationship for America at large. The limit of this troping of Detroit, however, is that all examples available to Mr. Bauer are necessarily unique. It is dangerous to claim that so goes Detroit, so goes all automobile manufacturing in the United States, as the success of foreign automobile manufacturing in the South, despite one's stance on right-to-work labor conditions, is neither typical nor explanatory for a totalizing history (economic or otherwise) of America, and certainly not of the world as a global entity, even more necessary to consider given that Mr. Bauer teaches this lesson in a world history course.

This act of displacement appears in Mr. Reardon's lesson in the move to displace questions and critiques of American duty onto President Johnson. Even while acknowledging the conflicted impulses in President Johnson, Mr. Reardon gestures towards some grander cause, or sense of fate, returning an epic sense to his lesson on the Vietnam War. This is a fantasy of duty. Consider his contention that President Johnson "had to do what he had to do." Mr. Reardon soon thereafter answers this question by once again invoking duty. As an external force, duty shapes the destiny and directs the outcome of those involved in the Vietnam War.

Conclusion

The role of fantasies in social studies education in the United States allow teachers to play a decisive role in establishing certain meanings, certain truths, and certain ideas of America that appear in their teaching as universal, essential, or natural. Social studies education is, in this regard, a fantastical subject matter as it encodes underlying desires of the nation, the self, the other to form a curriculum that on the surface plays out as reality itself. Žižek (1989) gets at this issue when he suggests

> ideology is not a dreamlike illusion that we build to escape an insupportable reality; in its basic dimension it is a fantasy-construction which serves as a support for our 'reality' itself: an 'illusion' which structures our effective, real social relations and thereby masks some insupportable, real kernel (p. 45).

The fantasy-constructions I identify in the expressive modes of a teacher's pedagogy shape learning about America, fantasies of the nation that range from civic virtues to national exceptionalism. Indeed, one of the most pervasive fantasies in learning about America through social studies education can be found in the American Dream, a fantasy-construction that serves to support a national reality and structure social relations in America (Blankenship & Helmsing, 2016). Once we understand there is no neutral position from which one can teach about America, as a nation, a place, an idea, or a concept, we can begin to read such fantasies as forms our pedagogy rely upon in our classrooms. Rather than rejecting fantasy outright as something inappropriate or problematic in social studies education, we should instead learn to read our fantasies rather than strive to excise them from our teaching; identifying fantasies and recognizing their effects can be a productive practice for social studies educators. This is partly why Žižek believes the choice between accepting reality or accepting fantasy is a wrong construct for "if we want to change or escape our social reality, the first thing to do is change our fantasies that make us fit this reality" (in Wood, 2012, p. 126). For Žižek (1997) the symbolic order that structures our sense of reality is dependent on fantasies that supplement the symbolic order as they provide a sense of coherence or completeness to the stories we construct to make sense of our lives.

Fantasies regulate our teaching because they offer a "framework which tells us how we are to understand" and make sense of our world and in the very same move how we can suspend,

transgress, escape, and violate such structured understandings (Žižek, 1997, p. 29). We can see that fantasy organizes desire in our pedagogy through the narratives, expressions, and other representations that give map onto distinct modes we use to make sense of the narratives, expressions, and other representations we consume and pass on in art, literature, and other forms of culture. Social studies education, and especially its project of history education, must heed special attention to how it engages with the fantasies of its teachers, students, and curriculum. Because social studies education all too often explains historical narratives, social problems, and cultural behaviors without the intervention of a speaker, no "I" and no "you" appear directly allowing social studies education to just happen and to explain itself. By reading moments of social studies education closely for the fantasies it creates and uses in different pedagogical scenarios, we can better identify how the predominantly essentialized and given traits of its curriculum constrain the choices teachers and students consider, thereby permitting teachers and students to share hopes, fears, anxieties, and other desires as one way we exist in the world.

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CHAPTER 2

A CURRICULUM OF NATIONAL BELONGING: INTERROGATING MYTH AS PEDAGOGY IN AN ELEVENTH-GRADE CIVICS CLASS

Introduction

"One of the main words you're going to hear repeatedly in this course is the word 'republic' – let's all say it out loud." With this preview from their teacher in mind, the assembled group of 21 students chime aloud in unison the word republic within the first few minutes of their first day in Ms. Stewart's civics course. Ms. Stewart places a concentrated emphasis upon the concept of a republic in each unit throughout the duration of her civics course. Ms. Stewart foreshadows the premise of her course when she informs the class, "Thomas Jefferson said that if a nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be." As she shares with me during one-on-one discussions about the philosophies informing her teaching, Ms. Stewart desires to lead her students out of their own ignorance of how their nation's government operates. This desire is the fundamental guiding force in her teaching. Ms. Stewart strives for her students to complete the course leaving less ignorant about their republic than before they began the course. This flight away from ignorance will presumably allow students to exist in a state of freedom whereby they transcend the ignoble (not)knowing of what it means to be a citizen in this republic, to be a citizen in America. Ms. Stewart's provides a brief description of her course at the very top of the course syllabus: "the study of our government and our role as citizens in the republic." The *who* and *whom* of "our government" and "our role" is implied to the syllabus reader as that of an Oakdale student residing in the United States. The student is already "in" the republic. Bounded by borders of the

nation that give rise to how we configure the United States, the student is already turned towards an introspection of possession: this government is yours/ours; there is no refusal possible. This brief description is interesting for as much as what the course is not about than what it claims to be about. Absent are indications that the course focuses on how the United States government operates and functions (or malfunctions). As will be demonstrated throughout this case study, the civics course at Oakdale High School, according to its description Ms. Stewart provides in the syllabus, exists less for the student's personal purposes and more for the maintenance of "informed and responsible citizens" that belong to the nation and must inherit its ideas and ideals. To this end, we read in the syllabus, "a republic cannot survive without the participation of an informed electorate" and indeed Ms. Stewart suggests as much when she tells the class, "this fact was both a consideration and a concern of our nation's Founders when our Constitution was developed." The role of citizen in a republic is taken on by acquiring the tools and apparatus of national citizenship. The means of this acquisition, as I explain in this article, is through a curriculum and pedagogy of myth.

Purposes of the Study

It is, I argue, a curriculum and pedagogy in the form of myth that Ms. Stewart transmits each day to her class in lessons on civic virtues, civility, and the common good, to name just a few. The forms of pedagogy given to a specific vision of American in this civics class are presented to students as conditions by which they, individually, take on a mode of belonging as members of the nation. Rather than becoming a citizen by growing into a role according to terms of their own lives and situational contexts, the students already enter into the position of a citizen of the United States through modes of American belonging Ms. Stewart introduces to them on

the first day of class. This article sketches out how the construction of the nation as a set of ideas, and of a shared sense of national belonging, is operationalized through engagements with myth as a form of civic knowledge. As Ms. Stewart's course syllabus states, "our role" is presumably collective and unified by virtue of belonging to this government. Therefore, learning multiple and differing conceptions of what constitutes citizenship, and the constraints and possibilities citizenship the United States government affords, do not appear in the course rationale, but do appear in the lessons I observed that I describe in this article. As a curricular and pedagogical form, myth operates in Ms. Stewart's class by prioritizing expressions of belonging to the nation through teaching students *what* constitutes an individual as an American citizen. Myth, as I aim to show, simultaneously teaches students *how* an individual is denied, rejected, our dismissed by the borders of a singular American citizenship: one either belongs or does not belong to America and the conventions of myth allow such dismissal and acceptance to be taught as natural, normalized, and unquestioned.

I constructed this article out of a case study of one civic teacher from a larger semester-long study of four high school social studies teachers. The purpose of the study was to follow moments and events in observations of course sessions and interviews with Ms. Stewart and her students that read the nation as a discrete set of civic characteristics and qualities. Ms. Stewart and her students use these concepts to learn about "America" as a way of life, a tradition of belonging that is made available to certain people under certain conditions, which are, presumably, foundational to the American nation articulated in rhetoric and discourses of belonging. I unpack these conditions in two examples of instruction from Ms. Stewart's civics class: first, in a lesson on the common good, and secondly, in a lesson on individual rights. I conclude the article by interrogating how ideas of belonging are destabilized by myth, a

pedagogical form predicated upon safeguarding and transmitting the very essence of belonging to any community, society, or group. The article concludes with a consideration of how social studies educators can read their own moments of teaching for instances of myth circulating in and through their curriculum and pedagogy, becoming alert to the possibilities and foreclosures myth creates as a curricular form.

Theorizing Myth in Social Studies Education

Most theories of myth suggest myth is not a primitive or irrational construct, but something that exists outside of (and parallel to) scientific thought insofar as myth projects a political way of explanatory thinking related to life in a social realm (Segal, 2004). Whereas studies of 'ancient myth focus on the Greek myth of Persephone or the Egyptian myth of Isis, we can think of the myth as a contemporary concept in the myth of Aryan supremacy, or the 'rags to riches' myth of American meritocracy, or the myth of a 'clash of civilizations' between the West and the East as two distinct spheres of our world. Each of these examples exist as a complex narrative because each myth is never transmitted or narrated in the exact same way, with the exact same plotting, setting, and characters. Thus Bottici & Challand (2013) associate myth with a pedagogical significance, "situated between what is consciously learned about the world and what we unconsciously apprehend about it" (p. 4). This conscious learning and its own unconscious apprehension is what leads Anderson (1983/1991) to identify myths as a chief component nations use to create an 'imagined community' out of nationality. As such, myths are part of the "biography" of a nation, such as Canada and the U.S. (Anderson, 1983/1991, p. 204) and work as a type of answer to a nation's "need for a narrative of 'identity'" (p. 205). This work of myth in an imagined community is what Berlant (1991) calls the "national symbolic," a socio-

historical function a nation carries out by "traditional icons, its metaphors, its heroes, its rituals, and its narratives" in order to "provide an alphabet for a collective consciousness or national subjectivity" (p. 20). Some go so far as to call myth a "civil religion" (Bellah, 2005) or a narrativized form of "public feeling" (Stewart, 2007) which work to establish the nation as premised upon what myths make possible for its citizens to apprehend. Greenwalt (2009), while not directly engaging with the construct of myth, suggests one's imaginations of a nation are "vibrant, flexible, and alive" when one learns the discursive and symbolic markers of a nation and nationhood (p. 515). These approaches all suggest myth—in its various forms—provides some sort of symbolic means to make sense of and cope with life in a nation or society. A way to cope with society, therefore, is to reconcile myth and history as complementary narrative modes of explanation. This produces two kinds of engagement with myth. The first is an engagement I describe as affirmative, which is played out in the hermeneutical practices of Paul Ricoeur. The second engagement I term as critical. This engagement is best exemplified in the hermeneutical practices of Roland Barthes.

Affirmative Engagements with Myth

Ricoeur (1974) attempts this in his defense of critiques of myth that seek to debunk or "demythologize" aspects of society. For Ricoeur, a myth is a "disclosure of possible worlds" that work by showing us alternate ways we can imagine our collective past and future through a "logic of surplus and excess" (Ricoeur, 1974, p. 410). The sacred qualities of myth should give society a resource to hope and imagine for a better future over the profane explanations that a "cold" or "hard" science offers. Thus, Ricoeur argues myths help us live in the here and now, in between the past and the future, between the way things have been and the way things ought to be. It is an expressive stance, however, that cannot 'hold up' the content of their curriculum as

we shall see. This is in part because myths are always illusory and thus any mythic form of explanation or teaching deconstructs through the very language one uses to express a myth.

Critical Engagements with Myth

For Barthes (1972/2012), it is this illusory quality he finds in myths that render them as explanations for a social force, taken for granted and permeated through mediated forms of culture and society, be it in schools, on television, in advertising, and so forth. After engaging with ideas that would later be associated with poststructuralist thought, Barthes realized the indeterminate quality of language, always in flux with unstable meaning, meant it is not possible to locate a universal, essential truth hidden within myths (McQuillan, 2011). His revised reading of myth held that "myth hides nothing: its function is to distort, not to make disappear" (1972/2012, p. 231). This distortion is made possible by the way language (and, I would argue, teaching) works, by expressing something as full of meaning even though the meaning is distorted in order to deprive the statement of any traceable meaning. This is one process by which myth operates in social studies education. Through this distortion of meaning, myth becomes depoliticized speech, by which social studies teachers can inflect and translate their curricular content into universal and symbolic significance in a form that does not signify directly with the curricular content explicitly expressed (Bazzul, 2015). I suggest myth, as a pedagogical form, acts "economically," a term Barthes uses to explain how myth "abolishes the complexity of human acts" and gives social explanations "the simplicity of essences…organiz[ing] a world which is without contradictions" (p. 256). Myths simplify concepts that we may not otherwise wish to discuss or confront. Segall (2013) imports this reading of myth as a concept for critical thought in social studies education by claiming myths work by "making dominant values, assumptions, and beliefs appear self-evident and timeless"

(p. 479). In describing how myth works in economic education, Segall singles out how "the myths of upward mobility, individualism, and the American dream, have managed to "hide" their social consequences" (2013, p. 483). Social studies education employs these myths to maintain "a mostly unquestioned status" of capitalism and consumerism in society (p. 483). It is this critical engagement of myth that informs my reading of pedagogical practices in this article.

Studies of Myth in Social Studies Education

The relationship between myth and social studies education operates on two levels. The first level is myth as a concept of social studies curriculum itself. This requires identifying and dislodging myths from textbooks and other social studies curriculum materials. The second level is myth as a metaconcept within social studies education, as an object or function of some sort of cognitive process worked on by either a teacher or student or sometimes both.

Researchers in social studies education have chosen by and large to focus on identifying ideological constructs in social studies curriculum rather than analyze and theorize the presence of myth as curricular constructs (Brown & Brown, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Marino, 2011; Sanchez, 2007; Thornton, 2006). These studies are characterized by identifying misrepresentations, erroneous descriptions, ideologically influenced perspectives, and the choices of how concepts such as race, gender, and violence are presented and discussed (or not). Illustrative of this mode of inquiry is the title "Lies My Teacher Still Tells" by Ladson-Billings (2003). This title cleverly builds off the prodigious influence Loewen's work on ideological analyses of social studies education has offered in his versions of *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (1995) and the variations of this title employed in his subsequent books. Yet what Loewen's reading offers that few of these studies do is a focused reading on the narrativization of how

certain people, places, events, and topics are constructed mythically, ranging from the usual suspects of Christopher Columbus to less suspect figures, such as Helen Keller. Although Loewen chooses not to use the word myth, presumably because of the word's connotation that makes it so immediately dismissed out of hand as a narratively false concept, he does show how myth in social studies education, particularly history textbooks, operates, mostly through actions such as heroization and vilification, two narrative actions quite operative in many forms of social studies education (Bickford, 2013; Carlson, 2003; van Kessel & Crowley, 2017).

Myth is often framed as a problem in social studies education, something to avoid at best or, at worst, attempt to debunk or demythologize. This was not always the case. May (1991) reminds curriculum historians that "history's ancient ancestors were poetry and mythology, and when the Greeks began to use history in education to convey lessons of the past, it replaced poetry" (p. 168). Eliminating distortions of a blurred reading of history contaminated by myth is the process most commonly evidenced in research on history education. Nonetheless, Thornton & Barton (2010) found that the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, and the National Council for the Social Studies all agreed in 1943 that providing a "unifying narrative theme" was upheld as a key curricular aim of social studies education, one that was "to be accomplished through critical thinking and not inculcation for national myths" (p. 2476). Thornton & Barton (2010) show that forty years later a concern in social studies education continued to exist that strove to avoid teaching "blind patriotism, myths, and mastery of facts" (quoted in Banks, 1982, p. x). In geography education, Brenner (2009) calls on geography educators to teach geography through "unmasking the myths, reifications and antimonies" that constitute geographic thought (p. 1999). McFarlane (2011) extends this goal of critical geography not only to expose myths as "necessary or truthful" but to follow up in

presenting “an alternative set” of “knowledges, imaginaries, logics, and practices” that would supplant myth (p. 154). Harvey (2001) implicates myth as a form the past takes when it is subsumed by geography under the guise of learning heritage, which flattens a learner’s experience of space and place when memorializing a space or place in effect becomes an instance of mythologizing.

Examples of Myth in Social Studies Curriculum

If we take as exemplary the standard survey course of U.S. national history, we would first see lessons on Christopher Columbus and the myth of discovery, which includes tropes of “the new world,” “visitors,” “discovery,” and “contact,” all of which have profound semantic implications in how this myth works as curriculum, if not formally as pedagogy. This myth is one that is more frequently demythologized, with Berry (2012) describing it as “the Columbus affair” and Todorov (1984) calling attention to how Columbus and the myth of discovery work to ‘other’ indigenous people conquered after contact with Columbus’ crew. Simon (1993) offered a critical reading of how a pedagogy of counter-memorialization reroutes the effects of how the myth of discovery is taught. For some time now social studies educators have domesticated the demythologization of the myth of discovery after Bigelow & Peterson (1998) packaged pedagogical strategies of demythologization in their *Rethinking Columbus* text.

Other myths prominent in canonical U.S. history curricula receive less critical attention. The study of Pilgrims and Puritans through the myth of a ‘promised land’ could reveal powerful attachments to origin stories, less as a predestined linear experience and more as a disordered beginning full of paradoxical struggle and discontinuous formation of national cohesion. Yet most often the myth is left in tact with an inconvenient presence/absence of indigenous Native

Americans and the effects of settler colonization and the complicated encounters amongst "Puritan clergy, the emergent bourgeoisie, the white backwoodsmen, the mixed-blood, American Indians, and African Americans (Schueller & Watt, 2003, p. 5). In the textbook *An American Promise: A History of the United States* (Roark et. al., 2015), the myth of a promised land operates both in outlining learning objectives ("understand how Puritans came to dominate New England society"; "recognize how Puritanism influenced the development of New England", p. 77) and in organization with sections on "Puritans and the Settlement of New England" (p. 79) and "The Evolution of New England Society" (p. 84) that claim the origins of American democracy began with the Puritans and Pilgrims as they 'found' a 'utopia' in the 'new world.' Similar myths exist when studying the American Revolution, which uses the myth of the Founding Fathers to allegorically position notions of legitimacy within a language of kinship (fathers, birthing a nation, a nation coming of age, getting along and putting aside conflict, etc.). This myth often deconstructs in popular culture, such as when President Barack Obama appears with a wig in an illustration on the January 26, 2009 cover of *The New Yorker*), but rarely within U.S. history curriculum. The national paradigm constructed in textbooks and in most official curriculum rarely calls into question various contestations of this myth. Recognizing and reflecting on the different strands of this myth—via race, gender, class, entrepreneurship, radical political orientations—would disrupt the hold of the Founding Fathers myth. Myths of Manifest Destiny and westward "expansion" of the U.S. as a melting pot, and of the American Dream and the self-made American are a few other prevalent myths in U.S. history curriculum (VanSledright, 2008).

Myth as metaconcept. Myth also works as a concept in social studies education as a metaconcept, by which I mean the ways myth works pedagogically to postpone any social and

political discontent in a national belief system, a system that is often upheld in the curricular goals and standards of social studies education. In a study on students' conceptions of historical significance, Cercadillo (2001) identifies symbolic significance as one of five types of ways students regard the significance of historical events. This perspective allows students to endow historical events with a significance symbolizing a mythic past.

In a study of how social studies textbooks construct history through the use of performance activities for students, Chappel (2010) found that tasks in textbooks often asked students to perform understandings related to myths rather than detailed historical accounts, such as the mythos surrounding performances and reenactments of the First Thanksgiving in the U.S. Chappell argues myth operates in these creative, theatrical activities in social studies textbooks by "colonizing the imaginary" through "narrative structures and performances intended for children's consumption" (Chappell, 2010, pp. 248-249; Chappell, 2008, p. 18). Letourneau (2006) works through the repressive pedagogical effects of teaching and learning grand narratives when learning national histories through what he terms "mythohistory," which refers to "meta-representations or general frameworks [and narrative structures] that will act as sorts of intellectual crutches that help [students] understand the world in its past and present, and anticipate its future as well" (p. 71). In related work, Den Heyer & Abbott (2011) explain how history education can often appropriate elements of myth, or the stylings and sensibilities of myth, to work through curriculum and pedagogy in the form of "proper nouns," which work to "consolidate a shared identity" amongst students (p. 616). Barton & Levstik (2004), in their taxonomy of stances with which students take when learning history, found "a mythic view of the past" was prevalent among elementary age students in social studies classrooms. Gesturing towards a stance I seek to advocate in this article, Barton & Levstik suggest that "rather than

simply discounting (or ignoring) such mythic identifications, educators might treat them as open questions, suitable for investigation by students" (p. 63). While their attention is focused on how students engage with myth, I am interested in the pedagogical operation of myth in social studies teachers' practice. Having explored theories of myth, and locating myth in the relevant literature from educational research, a supple understanding of myth allows me to locate a particular ground or area within the field of social studies education for me to place and share this study.

Methodological Framework & Methods of Study

A case study methodology for data collection and analysis informs this study, specifically an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) as my intent was to learn from Ms. Stewart's instruction as a way to better understand how social studies teachers construct and frame ideas and understandings about what defines America as a curricular concept. The data discussed and analyzed in this article is one "bounded system" from a larger study that included four bounded systems of four different social studies classes, each a different social studies disciplinary area taught by a different teacher (Stake, 1995, p.2). This method allowed me to adopt and use certain ethnographic approaches and conventions to study the daily events of a classroom without conducting a full-scale ethnography (Rex, Steadman, & Graciano, 2006).

Data Collection

My primary method of data collection was regular observations of Ms. Stewart's instruction during the spring 2013 semester. I observed Ms. Stewart's class approximately two times per week from the beginning of the school's third academic trimester in February through its conclusion at the beginning of June. I consulted with Ms. Stewart each week about arranging

times to visit her 5th period class that would align with class sessions devoted primarily to teacher-lead instruction (thus excluding class days devoted to testing, watching films, review periods, and so forth). Following guidelines for participant observation (Merriam, 1998), the majority of my time was spent observing Ms. Stewart's instruction. I would, on occasion, talk with students with whom I sat nearby in the classroom.

During each class period spent observing in Ms. Stewart's class I took detailed field notes using a protocol that allowed for me to delineate observed events for subsequent coding and analysis. I designed an instrument that would allow me to identify and later interpret moments during instruction that related to some course content on or about America broadly defined. I audio-recorded classroom conversations following Internal Review Board approval and used transcriptions of audio-recorded classroom conversations to provide the dialogue between Ms. Stewart and her students contained in this article. Classroom conversations are presented in this article verbatim from transcriptions and, where indicated, contextualized with notes I wrote during the observation(s) associated with the lesson(s).

I informally discussed my observations with Ms. Stewart at the end of each day I visited her classroom. I wanted to increase the validity of my interpretations and returned to her classroom with a more formalized summary of the previous observation to help ensure I had understood what was delivered in her instruction. I formally interviewed Ms. Stewart once during an hour-long one-on-one semi-structured interview. I also interviewed the class of students discussed in this article during an hour-long optional and voluntary focus group interview. Little to no data from either interview is included in this article, however.

I followed the recommendation of Yin (2003) to collect multiple types of documents and physical artifacts that could be relevant to interpreting Ms. Stewart's instruction and her civics

class curriculum. During the course of the semester, I collected the following: (1) printed samples of Ms. Stewart's handouts, worksheets, notes, quizzes, tests, and projects; (2) my own copy of the civics textbook Ms. Stewart used in her course; and (3) samples of student written work.

Contextualizing Oakdale High School

Oakdale High School (O.H.S.) is the only high school in a rural school district located in the small town of Oakdale, which is located 15 miles south of the large metropolitan city of Washington (pseudonym). The information pertaining to O.H.S. reflects its demographics and available public data about the school for the 2013–2014 academic year. O.H.S. serves 1027 students in grades 9-12, 26% of whom qualify for free or reduced lunch under federal guidelines. According to student demographic data available for that year, the composition of ethnic groups of the student population is 89.48% White, 5.36% Hispanic of Any Race, 2.92% African American, 1.27% Asian, 0.08% Two or More Races, and 0.01% American Indian or Alaska Native (www.mischooldata.org). While the total enrollment of students at O.H.S. is only nine students fewer than the enrollment at S.H.S, the demographic breakdowns by reported student ethnicity is markedly different. The community of Oakdale resembles many small Midwestern farming communities that evoke a small town feeling. Much of the commercial activity in Oakdale, unlike Springfield, centers around a downtown square that forms a perimeter of a county courthouse that serves Springfield, the seat of its county.

The effects of globalization and post-industrialization are less pronounced upon Oakdale's visible surface due to the heavy presence of farming and agriculture that in part defines Oakdale. As such it appears less in keeping with the nearby Rust Belt socioeconomic

cultures of Springfield, Washington, and other locales; however, Oakdale is not an affluent community and its school district is not wealthy in comparison to other rural and suburban districts nearby that have recently constructed new school buildings. Residents of Washington (where I resided while conducting this study) often remark that Oakdale is "all white" in terms of the racial and ethnic makeup of its community. Given that almost 90% of the students at O.H.S. identify as non-Hispanic White, this is not an inaccurate description. Much of the discourse from O.H.S. teachers and students about the identity of their school works through a process of difference; which is to say O.H.S. is often defined by what it is not: it is not like the high schools in Washington and not like the larger communities to the north of the town. As is the case with many rural towns outside of larger urban and suburban areas, the close distance between Oakdale and Washington (15 miles) means Oakdale residents go to Washington for shopping, dining, and employment, but return to Oakdale as a place to reside.

Contextualizing Ms. Stewart's Civics Curriculum

The civics course at Oakdale High School is required for graduation. Many students take the course during their junior year (Grade 11). It is one trimester in length, which means students have the course for one 50-minute period five days a week for a duration of twelve weeks. Ms. Stewart and one other faculty member teach all sections of civics. They use seven content areas pulled from the Michigan Merit Curriculum to give shape and meaning to what this apparatus looks like in terms of social studies curricular content: Conceptual Foundations of Civics and Personal Life; Origins and Foundations of U.S. Government; Functions of U.S. Government, The United States in World Affairs; Citizenship in the United States; Citizenship in Action; and Civic Inquiry and Public Discourse. Many of the units in this course take on titles of a romantic

style of civic education, with tiles including: “The Perils of a No Rules World,” “Judeo-Christian Religious Traditions in America,” “British Origins of American Constitutionalism,” “Promoting Civic Virtues,” “Abuse and Misuse of Governmental Power in America,” and “Understanding States Rights.”

The conceptual focus in Ms. Stewart’s civics instruction coheres around descriptions and appreciations of American political culture, with significant historicizing detail included as content, as opposed to the truncated version of political science operating in high school civics courses that use unit titles to foreground present-day issues such as “Public Opinion,” “Elections and Campaigns,” “Interest Groups,” and “The Judicial System.” Adding to this construct of America-as-republic and of the model U.S. citizen is Michigan’s “Core Democratic Values” that are a coextensive part of the state social studies academic content standards. Ms. Stewart and other civics teachers at Oakdale High School teach these as the values that “framed” the U.S. Constitution and in turn “frame” students’ identities as citizens.

Ms. Stewart’s classroom is decorated with posters and framed prints of what could be called Americana: folk art paintings, portraits of U.S. presidents and political thinkers, such as George Mason, and photographs of landscapes and places located on the east coast of the United States that are likely quite familiar to most students: Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty; The homes of Presidents Washington and Jefferson, Mt. Vernon and Monticello, respectively; and paintings of U.S. Civil War battlefields. There is a bulletin board near the front of the classroom on which several small laminated posters are arranged on a backdrop of red, white, and blue patriotic patterns. Each poster displays one of the Core Democratic Values identified by the State of Michigan. Students in Michigan devote much of their time studying social studies in the elementary grades to thinking about and writing about issues related to these values. At the

secondary level, the values become less explicit curricular content as instruction gives way to subject matter devoted to history, economics, etc. During one of my classroom visits early in the trimester, Ms. Stewart emphasizes two values in a lesson she is teaching on the concept of the common good. She gestures directly to "Common Good" and "Individual Rights." Letting her land linger on the value located in the middle of the arrangement, Ms. Stewart exclaims, "If I could teach only one lesson for this entire course, it would be about individual rights and the common good and what happens when rights interfere with the good."

Data Analysis

To analyze the data collected, I used an analytic strategy that identifies issues within each case study constructed for this study and looks for themes that cut across all four teachers (Saldaña, 2009). This required establishing a detailed description of each case and themes within the case as well as thematic analyses across the cases, anchoring assertions and interpretations to the empirical encounters within each case. Using what Miles & Huberman (1994) term "a time-ordered display", I arranged emerging themes and ideas in each of the lessons observed over the chronological sequence in which they were presented in the course. These emerging themes became data for coding, what Auerbach & Silverstein (2003) term "relevant text," which exist as the material used during a six-step interpretivist process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). First, I read my field notes along with the guided notetaking handouts and reading guides Ms. Stewart provided for her students (and me). I then created provisional codes to thematize issues related to teaching about America as an explicit concept and began identifying patterns, refining each pattern to find thematic connections across each case and within each case.

Analysis of Findings from Ms. Stewart's Civics Class

In this section, I present two lessons I observed Ms. Stewart teach in her civics class at Oakdale High School. The first lesson centers on teaching about national identity, national symbols, and bonds of the nation. The second lesson centers on teaching about the civic concept of the common good. Within the description of each lesson, I narrate pedagogical moments recorded during the lesson and analyze the curriculum of belonging as it is shaped by how myth operates in Ms. Stewart's teaching. This integrated analysis also serves to discuss ways in which myth operates in Ms. Stewart's class and, by extension, provides an example for how to locate and engage with myth at work within social studies education.

Myth in a Lesson on National Symbols

During a class conversation about national symbols, Ms. Stewart guides students as they take notes from her lecture on what kinds of moral behavior and commonality Americans learn through national symbols. Ms. Stewart informs the class that the national anthem of the United States is "one thing we all know and that we all sing in common." Michael asks Ms. Stewart if Michigan has a state song. She replies, "I'm not sure, but that's a good question. Songs are important for telling us who we are. They contain our stories and we remember them easily because we sing them so often." On the classroom video projection screen, Ms. Stewart displays a series of images: a bald eagle, the Statue of Liberty, the U.S. national flag, and a stock photograph of a woman reciting the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance with her hand over her heart. Ms. Stewart's attention goes towards Suzie, a student spending the year at O.H.S. as a visiting student to the U.S. from Taiwan:

Ms. Stewart: Do you have any symbols in your country that are unique like ours?

Suzie: I don't know. But we do have a song we all sing.

Ms. Stewart: Many Olympic athletes feel that hearing our anthem played is one of the most moving moments of the Olympics. Why, then, is it good to share rituals and to agree on some morals?

Henry: Because it's like the fabric we talked about earlier, it binds us together. If you're an American, you know these things. Or should know them. And you should feel proud about them.

Alice: Yeah, but you can still be a good person and not say the Pledge or refuse to salute the flag.

Judd: Then you're a Commie.

Alice: No, it means you're still a patriot. You don't have to like the government to like the country.

Ms. Stewart: Well, our Founders were pretty clear about the need for everyone to learn about our agreed-upon morals. This was what they valued in a moral education. You admiring these symbols described in history, literature, poetry, and music. But many Americans today don't necessarily feel that way, unfortunately.

One of the pedagogical powers of myth is in how it inscribes feelings of commonality among members of a given group (French, 2009). Ms. Stewart ascribes to the U.S. national anthem a mythic ability to invoke a shared bond. Ms. Stewart presents the anthem as a song everyone is supposed to know, identified as part of a cultural effort to create a community of commonality. Although Suzie does not share which images may be symbolic of Taiwanese nationalism, she does indicate there is "a song we all sing." The question Ms. Stewart poses regarding the efficacy

of these symbols and rituals exhibits a mythic stance in regard to Henry's answer. "Should know them" and "should feel proud" become rationales linked to an aspect of citizenship introduced in a previous lesson, which Henry recalls as "the fabric we talked about earlier." The binding properties of this fabric are activated by the commonality Henry articulates in his answer to Ms. Stewart, supporting myth to frame this lesson as part of a curriculum on belonging. Alice objects to the totalizing possibility of this commonality by "refusing to salute the flag." Her objection that "you can still be a good person" pushes back on the limits of myth insofar as she envisions America as a space to allow dissent. When Judd rejects this with his accusation of one being a "Commie" if one does these things, it is unclear if becoming a Commie invalidates any mythic claim to belonging in this lesson as an American. It seems having that status would disallow someone to "still be a good person" in Judd's eyes. When Alice counters Judd's claim in providing the incompatible logic between not liking one's country and not reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, Ms. Stewart reroutes the curriculum by employing a mythic stance of the Founding Fathers to intervene in Alice's argument.

Yet there is an important shift in address in how Ms. Stewart pedagogically uses this construction of commonality, moving from a claim that the Founders desired this in the past to a doubled address of "you": the "you" in need of admiring these symbols is referring to the past citizens living in the 1700s, but also the "you" of the students in the room today. Here Ms. Stewart taps into one of the concretizing effects of myth in its ability to universalize normative behavior as a condition for learning (Stivale, 2002). Ms. Stewart qualifying the state of present affairs as unfortunate informs the class of her desire for a shared, communal moral sense or moral education. The "many Americans today" is a concept that works pedagogically in the service of myth informing this instruction, existing as something threatening for the

commonality associated with the nation. Alice's suggestions work to expel her from this curriculum of belonging as any suggestion of not valuing these traditional formulations of recognizing shared cultural beliefs and symbols of moralism and national identity are taught in contrast to how one "should know them" in keeping with Henry's phrase. As such, Ms. Stewart uses myth to position America within her curriculum of belonging as a fragile whole, with its commonality at risk when faced with a pluralistic set of competing viewpoints, diverse perspectives, and the conflict that ensues when one stands up for an individual's right. This is worded as such in the a sentence students complete on their note sheet for this lesson on national symbols: "When _____ (individuals) want certain rights, the _____ (fabric) of our nation begins to buckle and tear, pulling us apart."

Myth in a Lesson on the Common Good

I analyze Ms. Stewart's pedagogical use of myth as an attempt to foreground in her curriculum of belonging a privilege of the majority, especially so when she teaches lessons on the civic concept of the common good. The power of the common good as an expression of unification against difference appears frequently in Ms. Stewart's civics class during lessons that position rights (always termed individual, never as civil or communal) as objects that take dismantle the common good. An example of this positioning occurs in the following lesson I describe in which Ms. Stewart has given students a hypothetical situation to consider: should the Oakdale City Council ban video games in the town? Students create lists of "pros and cons" for supporting the ban on video games. The students show some struggle with articulating reasons why the City Council may want to ban video games at all. Ms. Stewart notices the difficulty with which students are having in thinking of possible rationales so she pauses the activity to have

students reflect on conditions and characteristics of Oakdale. Ms. Stewart instructs students to write down on their note sheet the word "homogenous." She informs students that "our Founders desired small, homogenous communities." Students copy this down on their note sheet. She defines for the class the word homogenous as "same or being composed of the same thing." After students write this down Ms. Stewart leads the class in a consideration of exemplifying what homogeneity looks like in their world:

> **Ms. Stewart**: We live in a small community here, how do you think this would be different in a city like New York City? How is life different here? Turn to a partner and discuss. (*Students discuss examples for about a minute*). Ok, let's hear from Henry.
>
> **Henry**: Here you can leave your house unlocked, but in a big city, you have to lock your house whenever you leave.
>
> **Ms. Stewart**: Yes, that is true. We don't have much crime at all here in Oakdale. Do you have to lock your doors where you live, Suzie?
>
> **Suzie**: Yes, we lock our doors when we go out somewhere.
>
> **Ms. Stewart**: You must enjoy not having to do that here then!

An unlocked door takes on a powerful role in transmitting a myth about belonging and commonality, which, Ms. Stewart teaches, is something that does not exist in New York City. New York City exists within this myth pedagogically as the 'other' of Oakdale in this construct, everything that Oakdale is not. In this manner, Ms. Stewart leverages myth's expressive hold in shaping pastoral worldviews. By this, I mean specific desires conveyed in many mythic forms to leave, abandon, or reject cities and urban landscapes for rural areas (Alpers, 1996; Garrard, 2004; Huggan & Tiffin, 2010). Through pastoral expressions, myth often idealizes simplicity and

sameness, exploiting feelings of vulnerability and susceptibility to the 'outside' or 'the other,' working to teach a provincial worldview that severs critical connections between one's current location and their wider world (Buell, 1995; Gifford, 2011, 2014; Williams, 1975). Through invoking the pastoral, Ms. Stewart's mythic pedagogy highlights in her curriculum of belonging a set of ideologies that romanticize and idealize provincial spaces of sameness ("homogenous" as she terms it) without acknowledging the problematic sides of such spaces, teaching Oakdale as unspoiled by markers of progress (technology, modernity, growing infrastructure) compared to New York City. This mythic pedagogy teaches the class at the expense of acknowledging the complex realities of life in both spaces.

Unlocked doors are an idealized part of a pastoral myth of small towns, where citizens presumably can enjoy the peace of mind of not having to lock doors, something the citizens of New York City must regrettably concern themselves with doing, offering a cautionary note to the myth that such is one's lot in life to endure this hardship in large, diverse cities. Still, I am interested in why Henry first things of unlocked doors. The "freedom" to not lock one's door at one's house serves functions in a curriculum of belonging as a lesson in both commonality and communality. Immediately Ms. Stewart turns to Suzie, who, visiting from Taiwan, is upheld as someone who most likely has to lock her door because she lives "in a big city." Suzie's response neither confirms nor refutes the assertion that her community that experiences crime, taught to students as lacking homogeneity solely because of its location in a city, despite Ms. Stewart's pronouncement that Suzie clearly benefits from the commonality that America offers her in Oakdale, a virtue of belonging reinforced in the mythic power of this social studies curriculum.

As the lesson progresses Ms. Stewart extends her construction of homogeneity to a consideration of neighborhoods and how neighborhoods function in cities. She asks her students:

Ms. Stewart: Have any of you been to a city that has neighborhoods?

Isaac: Yeah. I've been to Greektown in Detroit.

Ms. Stewart: Yes, a lot of larger cities have neighborhoods for certain ethic groups, like Chinatown in Chicago. Good. Why would the same groups of people want to live in the same neighborhood with each other?

Hollis: People feel more at home in small communities.

Ms. Stewart: Right. Why is it helpful to live in a small town?

Alice: Because we can help one another.

Ms. Stewart: But if someone in this town took a brick and threw it through someone's window, what would happen? I would call you mother. In a small community, we take care of one another and we pay attention to what people are doing. Most of the time we like that, but sometimes we do not. We might have a little crime here, but of course it's much better here. The Founders liked the idea of small, homogenous communities. In what ways are small communities mostly homogenous?

Isaac: Everyone looks the same or talks the same or acts the same. Like here in school, we're all mostly White and everyone speaks English. Except you, Miguel.

Miguel: Hey! I speak English just fine.

Ms. Stewart: Homogenous means uniform and that there isn't much difference. There's mostly agreement about how we live and what we want for our nation. A lot of people want to move to Oakdale because it is small and uniform. This is a benefit of living in a homogenous community and our Founders felt that would be a strength for our nation. It would cut down on disagreement and conflict.

Even though Detroit's Greektown currently lacks several, if any, Greek or Greek-American residents, Ms. Stewart allows Isaac's example to stand in the conversation as an example of demarcating boundaries. The reason given for populations to reside communally in larger cities is to replicate Oakdale's commonality that cannot be found in large cities. This rationale, again, like the example of low crime and unlocked doors, allows myth to pedagogically suture violence and deviancy with diversity and urban spaces in the scenario of someone throwing a brick through a window and to "help one another." The pastoral nature of this social studies lesson teaches students that because of their size and diverse populations, these city neighborhoods cannot support a sense of the common good because of their size. The small size of Oakdale, as an exemplary contrast, is taught as desirable in Ms. Stewart's claim that "a lot of people want to move to Oakdale." The reason why, we learn, is because of the absent of one the values on the bulletin board Ms. Stewart relates to the class:

> **Ms. Stewart:** Now if we look over here at the Core Democratic Values on the bulletin board we see the value "Diversity." This is a very controversial one because diversity means difference and when you have different viewpoints and different people it leads to conflict. Think about places with lots of diversity. Let's name some diverse countries.
>
> **Will**: China.
>
> **Ms. Stewart**: Suzie, you live in China. Is it diverse?
>
> **Suzie**: Well, it's complicated. I live in Taiwan, which we call China, but some people don't call it China. But most people on the island have commonalities.
>
> **Ms. Stewart**: Ok, so there's disagreement. Diverse viewpoints, like the kind Suzie shared, leads to disagreement and conflict. Where else? Miguel, what about Mexico?
>
> **Miguel**: I guess Mexico is diverse. I don't know.

Ms. Stewart: Isn't your family from Mexico?

Miguel: No, Puerto Rico. It's a part of America.

Ms. Stewart: Do people there speak Spanish and English and other languages?

Miguel: Yeah.

Ms. Stewart: So we could say Puerto Rico is diverse. Iraq is probably a good example of the problem with diversity. They have a difficult time compromising. There's a lot of conflict there. Places with lots of diversity are generally places of war and homogenous communities are generally places of peace. If they're so entrenched on how people are different, then conflict is a way of live in these large, diverse communities.

Suzie wishes to complicate the way Taiwan is constructed against America in Ms. Stewart's lesson. Conflict stems from disagreement and disagreement stems from diversity which is in turn a condition of lacking homogeneity. Ms. Stewart others Puerto Rico, despite its belonging to the United States as a part of its national identity, which momentarily destabilizes the curriculum of belonging taught in this lesson. Students are given time to write down some of the details Ms. Stewart has shared on their note sheet under the heading for this command: "Give two examples of the benefits of a small, homogenous community." Within the span of a few minutes we make an analytic leap from not locking doors in the small town of Oakdale to ethnic civil wars in Iraq. In the request to "name some diverse countries" Ms. Stewart and her students do not mention the United States. It is possible that diversity is already present in this construct beginning when Ms. Stewart references New York City. The query that begins the conversation—what makes living in New York City different from living in Oakdale—is left largely unexamined. Henry suggests leaving doors unlocked would be a key difference, but it difficult to believe that in most "small,

homogenous communities" in the United States, including Oakdale, doors are left unlocked. And yet the notion of unlocked doors can be read as a mythic example in Ms. Stewart's curriculum of belonging: if you belong in a certain community, by a perceived sameness, you are afforded the ability to leave one's home unlocked. Whether this is a convenience or a luxury is unclear. Why is this a desirable characteristic of where one lives? It is neither a right nor a duty in the binary framework Ms. Stewart constructs in the beginning of the lesson. What an attention to how myth works in Ms. Stewart's class makes possible to consider is this process by which students are taught to learn national belonging as a set of "practices of group identity" that work to "mark out terrains of commonality that delineate the politics and social dynamics of 'fitting in'…" (Fortier, 1999, p. 42). In this way myth operates in Ms. Stewart's lesson as a strong marker of inclusion and belonging through a pastoral ideology idealizing the choice or the space of trust in which one can live behind unlocked doors.

And yet this lesson Ms. Stewart constructs is not only about unlocked doors. Ms. Stewart's misrecognition of Suzie's Taiwanese national identity and Miguel's ethnic family heritage prevent a fully inclusive demonstration of shared belonging. Thus, it follows, from how Suzie and Miguel are positioned, that they must be able to share details of life outside homogenous comforts and stability. Suzie is quick to point out there are commonalities amongst citizens of Taiwan just as Miguel is quick to point out how he identifies as American given Puerto Rico's territorial status. Suzie perhaps unintentionally thwarts the movement to locate diversity as exterior to America by pronouncing its supposed other, commonality, is present and at work in Taiwan. Miguel's inability to comment and offer an example of personal experience living in a supposedly diverse nation fails the attempt to other him. Diversity is singled out as "controversial" in Ms. Stewart's mythic conception of America because diversity leads to

conflict and exists as the source for conflict in Iraq, an ambiguous example to use in this lesson as it neglects the quite common celebration of diversity and multiculturalism within the United States. Rather than claiming a pluralistic notion of diversity as an aspect, or even a value, that is esteemed and admired in many narratives of America, Ms. Stewart prioritizes a mythic approach to teaching the common good in a curriculum of belonging by suggesting diversity is to be found elsewhere and, with it, conflict and violence. Difference is something that Ms. Stewart teaches as "entrenched" within and associated with "large" spaces, exterior to the desirable homogenous spaces of Oakdale. This demonstrates how the pastoral mode of myth in her lesson complicates an insistence of belonging by mystifying students' attitudes towards Oakdale, New York City, Taiwan, and Iraq. A wider range of legitimate relationships to one's home or place of residence becomes problematic, tacitly warned against as something that works against the common good. As a result, the curriculum of belonging in Ms. Stewart's civics class enables students to learn how "they (Iraqis) have a difficult time compromising" but we in America apparently do not.

Discussion

The mythic impulse in Ms. Stewart's class serves to promote the sanctity of the universal, which is deeply wedded to the power of the students' capacities to belong as active citizens and subjects of the nation both during and after participation in Ms. Stewart's class. The proud affirmations of the purportedly unique characteristics of both the national government and the national character of the United States are deeply entwined with ideas of national and ethnic diversity that work through a double process of particularism and universalism in the examples of the two lessons I analyzed in this article. If a distinct American subject is formed by belonging to America, then it is in no small part a consequence of myth's ability to "immobilize the world"

through how a myth can "suggest and mimic a universal order" (Barthes, 1972/2012, p. 155). Ms. Stewart mythologizes national belonging through a series of confrontations and contestations with that which is not-American in her lessons. The pedagogical form of myth enables Ms. Stewart to naturalize and universalize these contestations on terms by which we (as students, as citizens, as a university researcher) read our own sense of national belonging. Through a pedagogy of myth, certain students learn they have the right to belong as Americans, their attachment to the nation goes unquestioned. Yet there is always an outsider in myth, an 'other' whom, as embodied in Ms. Stewart's lessons, exemplify what it means not to belong when they present a perspective that challenges, questions, or undoes the curriculum of belonging in Ms. Stewart's civics course. Such moments in Ms. Stewart's class lessons come up against the very idea of national belonging, endlessly deferred in a continuous process of de/re-constructing a legitimate citizenship in America. In Ms. Stewart's civics class, and against civic processes outside the class in an increasingly cosmopolitan world, conceptions of citizens who do not belong are in tension with how myths embody and particularize otherness to those who are not of the nation and who must stay in place as othered, positioned outside the bounds of a national belonging as presented in Ms. Stewart's social studies curriculum. In the process, an idealized national citizenship is (re)naturalized through a (re)affirmation of legitimacy and belonging. This runs counter to the increasingly heightened calls for a more inclusive version of civics within social studies education (Parker, 2008; Sapon-Shevin, 1999), one that "encompasses those who are outside the norm, as defined by the dominant group" (Santora, 2011, p. 13)

Because social studies education is a powerful system of meaning that works to attach significance to various representations of the world, mythologizing allows social studies

educators to naturalize aspects of culture, history, politics, and other social structures, transforming social studies content into universal norms. Barthes (1972/2012) terms this process "inoculation." It is the characteristics of myth that allows teachers to admit, acknowledge, and account for a small amount of imperfection, deficiency, faultiness, or problematic characteristics of some idea, object, or person. This immunizes or inoculates the object of critique from greater scrutiny and criticism by downplaying its problematic features once we have spoken for a rather minimal problem with it by comparison. Inoculation allows myths to ward off more complicated and sustained critique, as in how Barthes (1972/2012) analyzes the way French commercials acknowledge some of the minor blemishes and inadequacies of butter to deflect greater attention away from its more serious inferiority to butter. Inoculation is what allows Ms. Stewart to mythologize the virtues of homogenous communities when she acknowledges there may be a small amount of crime in Oakdale, but not on the level found in communities that lack homogenous populations, such as New York City. The pastoral ideal reflected in Ms. Stewart's mythologizing of sameness and difference simultaneously upholds and ignores the complex nature of crime through inequalities and inequities, systemic social structures that foster crime. The mythologizing at work in Ms. Stewart's civics class does not equip students to discriminate against location, culture, or history—context seems to evaporate or wash out in this curriculum of belonging. Contexts and examples are historicized in favor of others, which subsequently overdetermines the examples Ms. Stewart chooses to use in her instruction in favor of structuring other places (e.g. New York City) as inherently and naturally opposed to reimagining and rethinking the place one inhabits (e.g. Oakdale). The bucolic life in Oakdale is presumed in Ms. Stewart's lesson as having always existed that way. In Ms. Stewart's curriculum of belonging, the qualities of American belonging lack causality and agency, they merely exist, inherited from

ideas we associate with the Founding Fathers. This also occurs in the lesson on national symbols when Ms. Stewart claims "many Americans" do not share the viewpoint the Founding Fathers are taught as having held on the value of national constructs, such as a shared national literature, music, and so forth. Despite that "many Americans" may reject the need for such common bonds, Ms. Stewart sustains the power of national symbols and upholds their pedagogical role in her curriculum of national belonging. Myth allows Oakdale to be inoculated from the alienating features of belonging as taught in this civics curriculum. Ms. Stewart uses myth to inoculate her students against the alienating effects of small places. In thinking and writing about small places, Kincaid (1988) explains how "people in a small place cannot see themselves in a larger picture, they cannot see that they might be part of a chain of something, anything" (p. 52). Smallness, and, by extension the homogeneity privileged in Ms. Stewart's curriculum, does not champion or promote context. Whatever historical sense or discrete set of causes and effects that can be mapped onto broader practices of belonging in Ms. Stewart's curriculum is diluted through mythologizing local embeddedness and sameness over and above perceived threats of global (or even urban) interconnectedness and diversity.

Conclusion

Several features of Ms. Stewart's pedagogy are salient for understanding how myth and mythologizing inform instructional practices in social studies education. First, in contrast to alternative modes of pedagogy in social studies education defined as radical (DeLeon & Ross, 2010); critical (Segall, 2013); or democratic (Kincheloe, 2001), the mode of pedagogy supported by mythologizing content through one's curriculum and instruction privileges neutrality, denies biases and partiality, narrowly defines concepts, refuses to embrace and take advantage of

uncertainty, and obscures the limitations and boundaries of our world and representations of it. Rather than drawing attention to the organizations, relationships, and frameworks for rethinking insider/outsider statuses and other ways of living with and among other people, a pedagogy of myth distorts and quiets diverse interpretations of the world. The kind of constitutive distortion of how one belongs to America in Ms. Stewart's curriculum is not a matter of false consciousness, but rather a matter of being attuned and sensitive to any inexorable closure of difference and otherness. This creates a kind of openness Popkewitz (2009) identifies in educative acts of myth-recognition, a pedagogical project whereby the teacher is engaged in "making visible the authority of existing systems of reason [as] a strategy to open to the future the possibilities of alternatives other than those already present" (pp. 303-04). Social studies education can challenge myths, teaching "against the global order and the ideological mystification that sustains it" (Ẑiẑek, 2011, p. xv) and teach mythologized curriculum in a different light, turned around and put to use in novel, surprising, and productive ways to forge new meanings and new understandings that arise out of engaging with the gaps, ruptures, and contradictions of the concepts we teach.

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CHAPTER 3

BECOMING-AMERICAN: EXPERIENCING THE NATION THROUGH LGBT FABULATION IN A NINTH-GRADE U.S. HISTORY CLASS

Introduction

Many classrooms in schools and universities in the United States are increasingly displaying a verity of related stickers indicating the particular classroom or educator's office is a "safe space" or "safe zone" (Mayo, 2013). The symbolic power of safe space or safe zone stickers underscores a hope invested in such stickers that their visible presence deems a particular space safe for all occupants, particularly students of minority sexual orientations in a school setting. The Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) offers a Safe Space program that identifies a designated Safe Space as "a welcoming, supportive and safe environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students" (www.glsen.org)[1]. The informal curricula of these advocacy programs attempt to assist in creating educative spaces where LGBT students (and, increasingly, students with diverse gender expressions) can learn without fear of ridicule, shame, or verbal and emotional abuse. Educators and students work together to channel particular frames of language and thinking that serve to structure what Pepler terms a "social architecture" built to prevent bullying and victimization (2006). Distinct roles for teachers and students in designated safe spaces predominantly attend to deeds and words, encouraging or discouraging particular forms of student voice and peer relation (Doll et. al., 2013). Such programs often do not take as their focus the planned or explicit curricula of the

[1] I consciously choose to use the phrasing LGBT in this article as my focus is on narrating histories of people who identify, or are identified with, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans* identities. I use the letter sequence LGBT in keeping with the title of this special issue on "LGBT and Queer Issues."

courses that convene in such designated spaces; rather the focus is beyond the scope of any one curricular area and is aimed at developing and practicing discursive practices for educators and students that enhance acceptance and tolerance and minimize opportunities for threatening conversational or otherwise interpersonal moments, preventing injurious speech from spreading in the safe space. The goal is to prevent and intervene in moments of abusive or harassing discourse (Espelage & Rao, 2013; Goodstein, 2013) or to help create a responsive educative space that counters anti-LGBT talk by promoting awareness and inclusivity of LGBT-related topics or issues across the curriculum (Greytak & Kosiw, 2013; Ollis, 2013).

These laudable goals, however, can be quite difficult to achieve with respect to the tensions involved with negotiating sexuality and sexual identity (Airton, 2014; Gilbert, 2014; Loutzenheiser, 2010; Weems, 2010). Indeed, my own experience teaching in both high school and college classrooms has long given me significant doubt about the effects of an educative space inclusive of LGBT issues that is rendered "safe", a word synonymous with benign, harmless, innocent, and sheltered. Such doubts lead me to wonder if the social studies education classroom can and should be a safe space for formal curriculum related to sexuality and queerness. How much novel learning and challenging perspectives and worldviews can be cultivated in a space that is safe or restrictive in what is allowable to be said or thought? And yet, not wanting to reject the necessity of a safe classroom that prevents harm, nor the necessity of a dangerous classroom that opens up uncensored avenues of perhaps taboo inquiry, I want to share with social studies educators in this article an alternative possibility: the social studies classroom as a space of becoming. This is an educative space with a social studies curriculum oriented towards considerations of how different viewpoints, perspectives, and epistemologies for thinking of one's place in the world are always changing, forming and reforming, and ongoing

processes that are never completed. Reading a social studies classroom as a space for becoming means being alert and vigilant to observing, noticing, and describing instances in which students are confronted with external stimuli (music, images, art, literature, sounds, words, bodies, texts) that induce some kind of change in how they think with and respond to their world. It is an ethical space one that is constantly desiring change, flux, movement, and a swirling distribution of felt forces—affects, emotions, feelings, moods—that move between teacher and student, student and student, student and text, text and text, and other spaces in which the classroom exists and in which students and teachers occupy. There is very little that is meant to be "safe" about a space of becoming. What matters in spaces of becoming are not the fixed terms of agreement that we can associate with a safe space; instead, what matters in spaces of becoming are constantly negotiating interactions with ideas and forces that cannot be contained within the intentions of a teacher, the manners of a student, the mandates of a curriculum, or the pages of a lesson plan. Expect the unexpected in spaces of becoming, welcome that which pushes, prods, and probes limits of comfort and familiarity. The spaces of becoming I present in this article come from a ninth grade U.S. History course in which two lessons on LGBT histories are analyzed, drawn from the teacher's week-long unit on LGBT minority populations and current issues since the 1990s.

The following sections examine how spaces of becoming can work beyond safe spaces to be more inclusive of competing and contentious perspectives on LGBT issues. To do so I first begin by consulting the literature on how LGBT issues are treated as curriculum within social studies education. Informed by the terrain in which social studies education engages with a curriculum of LGBT issues, I then outline a theoretical framework for LGBT histories in social studies education that makes use of two concepts receiving significant attention in Deleuzian

theories of educational studies: becoming and fabulation. After defining and illustrating the utility of these concepts for social studies education, I follow the tenets of humanities-oriented qualitative research by "thinking with theory" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) across data from a qualitative research study on social studies classrooms I conducted in 2013. This section examines in detail how the narration of LGBT histories in two lessons of a ninth grade U.S. History course work both for and against a space of becoming in this social studies classroom in a suburban high school. After viewing these data through the lenses of becoming and fabulation, I discuss some implications one can draw from this study for social studies education, namely how social studies education can push beyond awareness and visibility for LGBT persons for more radical curricular possibilities.

Review of the Literature

The social studies education field is increasingly devoting attention and consideration to issues of LGBT sexual identity (Mayo, 2011, 2013). We can see different areas of focus within this burgeoning research, perhaps coming into sharp relief during the 1990s when education researchers sometimes referenced social studies when calling attention to LGBT issues in promoting richer frameworks for multicultural education (Bloom, 1998; Pang & Park, 1992) or in theorizing critically about infusing sensibilities and topics of queerness into curriculum thought (Britzman, 1995; Summara & Davis, 1999). These broad considerations of LGBT issues began to focus more sharply on specific curricular interventions LGBT issues could make within forms of social studies education that are more attentive to gender and sexuality (Crocco, 2001; Levstik & Groth, 2002; Mayo, 2007). Another fruitful strand of research born out of these developments examines the intersection of LGBT issues, sexuality, and education for democratic

citizenship. The knowledge content of such curricular concerns often remains at an expansive level with a focus on the effects of particular dispositions for students, such as tolerance (Avery, 2002); trust (Niemi & Niemi, 2007); heterosexist ideologies (Bickmore, 2002; Schmidt, 2010); or on the effects of approaches to student learning, such as critical literacies that include content on LGBT issues (Wolk, 2003). Predominant in this research are moments in classroom interaction where LGBT issues are framed around rights-based discourse, namely deliberating and discussing same-sex marriage as a controversial issue. Goldberg (2013) suggests issues of gender and sexuality help engage student interest in deliberating public issues as many students express particular interest in discussing such issues. Hess (2009a, 2009b) finds that including LGBT issues, especially the politics of same-sex marriage as an "open" controversial issue, is productive, but remains "rare in many parts of the nation" (2009a, p. 117), facing significant curricular gatekeeping from groups and individuals who do not want LGBT issues or same-sex marriage issues discussed in the classroom despite evidence strongly suggesting adolescent learners support same-sex marriage (Hess & McAvoy, 2015, p. 32). Beck (2013) underscores the necessity of focusing on establishing and maintaining "safe" discourses for students when discussing same-sex marriage in classrooms in order to safeguard the identities of LGBT-identified students. A prominent concern amongst educators when considering the place of LGBT issues, such as same-sex marriage, in the context of social studies classroom is the presence of homophobic discourses. Crocco (2002) warns that homophobic discourses make it difficult to support "ideas about democratic citizenship that are respectful of diversity" (2002, p. 218). Frank (2002) explored school-wide and student-centered classroom interventions designed around anti-homophobic solutions to reroute what he identifies as "a negative social force" that affects everyone in a school community (p. 274). Homophobia thus appears in social studies

education as a challenge to a democratic vision for citizenship education and requires an additive element to social studies in order to be combatted (Marchman, 2002; Oesterreich, 2002)

What the next movement of research on LGBT issues in social studies education can investigate is the effects of LGBT issues when they become significant and explicit parts of an enacted social studies curriculum. Thornton (2002, 2003) has argued persuasively for social studies teachers to visibly connect and express LGBT topics connected to traditional social studies content knowledge in way that is more than mentioning or referencing. An example of Thornton's reasoning would be informing students that Alan Turing, one of the founding thinkers of what we know today as computer science, was persecuted, arrested, and arguably killed for his gay identity. This making-visible for Turing's gayness must be connected to a deeper curricular objective in historical perspective taking or in making connections to present day analyses of the criminalization of LGBT persons in many parts of the world. No conceptual domain of content knowledge within the social studies is removed from the possible intersection of LGBT issues and themes. Students in a geography course could examine changes in governmental regulation of LGBT policies and rights in different regions of the world while a sociology teacher could have students explore the high rates and causes of homelessness amongst LGBT youth. A limitation of Thornton's suggestions lies in how such curriculum would be received as a curriculum of awareness. The array of possible adjustments to the social studies curriculum offered is within a conception of social studies as informational or factual coverage. In Thornton's clarion call for gay and lesbian inclusion and awareness, some aspects of social change and acceptance receive less consideration, including aspects of queer visibility and recognition related to political, social, and interpersonal aspects of civic life and social living. I would argue a curriculum of awareness is better than nothing, certainly preferable to the

curricular realities in some public schools, such as in Utah and Tennessee, where, at present, the word "gay" is not allowed to be spoken or used by either students or teachers. But does an additive process of "making time" to talk about gays and lesbian reify stereotypical assumptions? Or does the inclusion of this yet still controversial array of social studies content knowledge have the potential to deepen critical thinking skills and enrich civic dispositions? Both are possible outcomes, but more research is needed in investigating how the social studies curriculum operates with/in content knowledge expressly connected to LGBT issues and topics. Maguth & Taylor (2014) believe greater inclusion and representation makes a significant impact. Their research on *The Difference Maker Project* suggests that "the inclusion of LGBTQ topics in the social studies will not only begin to dismantle the process of erasure for millions of U.S. students but will provide a greater understanding of how heteronormativity operates in the United States" (p. 24).

The effects of such inclusion are, however, framed as contributing to the creation of a safe space. Maguth & Taylor point to this in their reasoning to "infuse" LGBT topics in the social studies curriculum, suggesting that omitting LGBT persons, histories, issues, and topics is in effect silencing, which can only serve to marginalize "the struggle of sexual minorities" presumably both in the classroom and the wider world (2014, p. 25). Additionally, they suggest *a priori* that teachers must create "a safe and relevant environment for the discussion of sociopolitical issues for LGBTQ youth." One may wonder, then, if a teacher will avoid any or all attempts to include LGBT issues if the social studies classroom cannot always already be a safe and relevant environment. This presents a somewhat similar dilemma to the one I raise with Thornton's assessment of partial success in providing visibility versus none at all. While I share their concern for preventing harm to befall any student in a classroom, I do think an overly

cautious and safeguarded approach may unintentionally backfire in creating a sterile, sanitized celebratory exploration of LGBT histories, issues, and topics. As I argued earlier, goals of establishing a safe space are admirable, but insufficient and could offer unintended consequences of curtailing critical thought and admonishing inarticulate yet passionate thinking on the part of a student in need of guidance toward more ethical considerations of the Other. I would once have strongly agreed with Maguth & Taylor when they bemoan a reality in which "it seems as if gays and lesbians exist everywhere but within the social studies curriculum" (2014, p. 25). But as data from the research study I share in this article illustrates, there are some social studies classes with a heavy infusion of LGBT perspectives and representations, perhaps problematically too much in the case study I share.

Theoretical Constructs

A growing interest has exploded amongst educational researchers for work that mobilizes ideas and concepts from Gilles Deleuze and his occasional writing partner Félix Guattari. However, the field of social studies education has yet to significantly work with research that speaks through Deleuzian thought or uses the vocabulary from Deleuze and Guattari's sole and co-authored works. Masny and Cole (2012) suggest that one reason Deleuze is gaining rapid attention in the areas of educational research is because Deleuzian theory "offers an approach that charts beyond the false opposition of anarchic relativism on the one hand and a pragmatic subjection to already established norms" (p. viii). Deleuzian theories are often labeled as post-structural theories of difference and are used in instances when we sense in our research encounters "deviation, deflection, or mutation" in our efforts to "recognize that judgment and speaking take place through constituted systems" (Masny & Cole, 2012, p. vii). I employ two

theoretical concepts for examining and interpreting LGBT curriculum in a ninth grade U.S. History course that are informed by my reading of Deleuze: becoming and fabulation.

Becoming

Deleuze offers a "grammar of becoming" that situates the process of becoming as a co-mingling of "perspective, point of view…voice, and all the other devices for revealing the locatedness of position [that] ultimately situates thought" (Deleuze in Colebrook, 1999, p. 130). We can think of becoming as a concept to help us think beyond the limits of how a student or teacher expresses a given, singular identity. When thinking with research data through the concept of becoming the researcher attends to how research participants continuously express changing reactions to presumably stable content matter. Thus, when studying moments of becoming in a classroom, the researcher should focus on affective engagements: moments of surprise, delight, disgust, laughter, and boredom, to list just a few affective engagements that occur with moments of becoming in a social studies class period. To pursue moments of becoming in a social studies classroom is to focus on a process that is exterior to a subject, undergone by an interactive group, or a "multiplicity" composed of student-teacher-textbook-TV-PowerPoint and so on indefinitely. Youdell (2010; 2011) studied politics and practices of becoming in a study of subjectivity in secondary schools for at-risk students. Her analyses of becoming show that schools are sites where "knowledges, subjectivities and affectivities are produced, regulated, and erased and where subjects, both students and educators, are schooled in the acceptable and unacceptable forms that these take" (Youdell, 2010, p. 324). Jackson & Mazzei (2012) succinctly capture the power of becoming in their assessment of its usefulness as a concept for qualitative researchers in education. They identify becoming as a process that is "directional, away from sameness" a

theoretical construct that demands qualitative researchers consider movement within specific spaces, such as classrooms, movements among students and teachers that is "immanent to, not outside of, the social field to which it applies" (p. 87). In her study of young children and their "becoming" of their school curriculum, Sellers (2012) suggests that "becoming is all there is" in a classroom (p. 89).

Zembylas (2003) discusses the potential for studying becoming as an effect of schooling in his consideration of resistance and self-formation in the work of Britzman. Zembylas suggests that an identification of the various processes of becoming in classrooms may help to give shape to the "dynamic character" of teachers' and students' subjectivities. He adds that "even small events within a particular cultural and political context play a significant role in this dynamic of change" (p. 114). Such contexts are always already at work in fostering particular pedagogical moments for teachers and their students in social studies classrooms. In her ethnographies of student teachers learning to teach in classrooms, Britzman (1992) pays close attention to moments of becoming in the subjectivities of the teachers in her study. Effects of becoming as a pedagogical enactment in classrooms exhibit durations of change because:

> …each of us struggles in the process of coming to know, we struggle not as autonomous beings who single-handedly perform singular fates, but as vulnerable social subjects who produce and are being produced by culture (p. 28)

The case study I share in this article comes from a larger yearlong study of moments of what I term "becoming-American." I argue these moments capture particular ways and styles of expressing the idea of "America"—broadly and openly defined—through how teachers and students perform ideas, visions, and invocations of America as an allegorical concept across multiple social studies classes in different high school settings. Such moments and examples of

becoming-American in the course of observing multiple social studies classes over the course of one school year allowed me to experience the misfires, contestations, negotiations, breakdowns, affirmations, and other passionate attachments that form among and between the teachers and students of social studies classes when America appears in the content studied. The National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies (NCSS, 2010) ask teachers to assume the autonomy of the subject when their students are expected to "expand their knowledge of democratic ideals and practices" and "see themselves taking civic roles in their communities" only by "recognizing and respecting different points of view" (p. 23). Becoming-American is an unfolding of the subject's vulnerability in these and related affairs beholden to the social studies classroom when conceptualizations of America materialize in class. In the case study of Mr. Reardon's ninth grade U.S. History course at Springfield High School (both pseudonyms), I focus exclusively on how representations of LGBT histories of the United States produce particular moments of becoming-American across different moments in the teacher's lessons. Two questions theoretically inform my analysis in this paper. First, how does an attention to these processes as or against a type of becoming work in social studies education? Secondly, are such normative knowledges, identifications, and feelings about (and for) LGBT histories in the United States troubled by particular acts within social studies education? If so, in what ways does becoming take place through the intended, the enacted, and the hidden curricula of LGBT issues in social studies classes? Thus moments and examples of becoming-American in the course of observing multiple social studies classes over the course of one school year allowed me to experience the misfires, contestations, negotiations, breakdowns, affirmations, and other passionate attachments that form among and between the teachers and students of social studies classes when America appears in the content studied and especially so in the lessons on LGBT histories Mr. Reardon

presents for his students. The affective moments discussed from this study illustrate the potential for a critical history education to provide learners with a complex engagement with narratives, and the expressions of such narratives, that challenge notions of history as mere referential reality or a corresponding truth to an idealized version of the past (den Heyer, 2003; Segall, 1999). A poster I had displayed on one wall of the high school classroom where I began my social studies teaching career addressed readers with the suggestion, "unfortunately, history has set the record a little too straight." Below this large lettering appeared black and white photographs of Walt Whitman, James Baldwin, and the other historical figures Thornton and others used to open up the social studies education field to a serious acknowledgment of curricular inclusion and diversity. I am interested in how this particular record, of LGBT history in the United States, is fabulated in a number of many creative, confounding, and contradictory ways throughout social studies classrooms. The case study of Mr. Reardon's 9th grade U.S. History course is an entry into this exploration. Somewhere, over the rainbow on Gay-Straight Alliance posters in schools, LGBT identities are constructed through the dynamic narrative making of becoming-America in social studies education.

Fabulation

Fabulation derives from the Latin *fabulare*, which translates into English as "talking." Engaging in the creation, making, and dissemination of stories is to fabulate. As a method of telling stories fabulation is one expressive choice amongst many from which historians can choose to narrate historical content (White, 1975; Munslow, 2007). Fabulation offers narratives a creative flourish or a bit of embellishment that impress upon receivers of the narrative through colorful details or memorable features that entertain. Fabulated narratives must be distinguished from tall tales,

legends, myths, or fantasies. Myths, for example, are created and disseminated to explain a phenomenon or concept (Coupe, 1997). A legend is a particular tale bounded in time and place about a person the details of which are beyond any possible empirical verification (Dégh, 2001). Fabulation in the sense I find useful for research on history education derives from Deleuze's concept of fabulation as an act of narrative performance that presents "larger-than-life" persons and personages (Bogue, 2010, p. 19). Fabulation provides looser, more flexible and creative renderings of stories, narratives, histories, biographies, and related forms of representing a person, place, idea, or concept. This can allow for an increase in the diminished visibility of a dominated category of peoples—such as gays and lesbians in the United States—to be understood and approached by people from other categories in less constrained/constraining ways. The paired learning goals of making strange things familiar and familiar things strange for students are closely related to the pedagogical promise of fabulation. Thus, the potential for fabulation in Deleuze's estimation is that it can "electrify" any social context in which narrative performances occur.

The history classroom, perhaps more than any other social studies course and almost all other academic courses with the exception of perhaps literature courses, is always already a fertile place for fabulation to occur. Fabulation works through taking familiar notions of a concept and connecting the concept intimately to an audience by making the concept "fabulous" (in both the literal sense and the figurative sense associated with gay male vernacular – history can be "absolutely fabulous"). Fabulations can be traditional, verified histories that are slightly transformed with a fabulist's own personal interpretive modifications, often to elicit an imaginative effect in the minds of the fabulist's audience. I find much generative utility in thinking of history education through the narrative expressions fabulation provides.

To see imposed practices of fabulating America, one could use a number of classificatory schemes to refer to what is traditionally taught and learned as that which "makes" America (a middle class working towards the American Dream through upward mobility; a preordained manifest destiny; hospitality toward immigrants; a tolerance for diversity) while also that about America which is sometimes absent in normalized models of social studies curriculum (class conflicts; divisive ideological passions; genocide coupled with imperialism). The descriptions of these historical processes appear through fabulation expressed in the titles of commonly used U.S. history textbooks. Through such naming, fabulating the nation for students in the U.S. becomes a: *Challenge of Freedom* (Sobel, LaRaus, DeLeon, & Morris, 1990); a *Call to Freedom* (Stuckey & Salvucci, 2003); and a *Land of Promise* (Berkin & Wood, 1983). Teachers and students ostensibly come to experience America in social studies variously as the following things: an *Anthem* (Ayers, de la Teja, White, & Schulzinger, 2009); a *Progress* (Jackson & Perrone, 1991; Feeland & Adams, 1946); an *Unfinished Nation* (Brinkley, 2010); an *Odyssey* (Nash, Salter, Scholl, 2002); a *Vision* (Appleby et. al., 2010); a *Triumph* (Todd & Curti, 1986); an *Adventure* (Peck, Jantzen, & Rosen, 1987); a *Struggle* (Strong, 1976); a *Pageant* (Bailey & Kennedy, 1991); a venerable coupling of *Life and Liberty* (Roden, Greer, Kraig, & Bivins, 1984); and even ineffable grammatical constructs, including America as an exclamation—*America! America!* (Buggey, 1977) and a future progressive verb—*America Will Be* (Armento et.al., 1999). One could reasonably agree with Pease (2009) that such identifying tropes of an imagined essence of America operates less as a "collection of discrete, potentially falsifiable descriptions of American society than as a fantasy through which U.S. citizens bring these contradictory political and cultural descriptions into correlation with one another through the desires that make them meaningful (p. 8). Considering how the framing discourses that regulate

interpretive orientations of America for social studies education stops short, however, in considering what these constructions make (im)possible for teachers and students. It is those effects I intend to study as they come to life in the classrooms I will observe in instances of "becoming-American."

Methods of Study

This study is located in between the structures of an ethnography and a case study. Ethnographies often determine how a given culture works whereas case studies are used to understand an issue or problem through the specific illustration of a case (Simons, 2014). Ethnographies tend to be experiences in systematic, extensive fieldwork over a long period of duration, often a year or more in length of time. In terms of those characteristics this study is not an ethnographic study in such a sense. For precision, I used the multiple case study approach advanced by Yin (2003). Creswell (2006) summarizes Yin's approach to case study methods as a focus "in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case *description* and case-based themes [emphasis his] (p. 73). Yin (2003) divides case study research into explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive qualitative case studies. This is in contrast to the general approach to qualitative case studies in education research that Merriam (1998) advocates or the argument by Stake (2005) that case study research is neither a method nor a methodology, but a choice of what is to be studied. The multiple case designs for my study allowed me to take the design of my inquiry across four different classrooms (one of which is the focus of the analysis for this article). My aim was not to generalize from one classroom case to

the next, but to use the logic of replication to see how America is expressed in four different social studies classes: an economics course, a civics course, a world history course, and a U.S. history course (Mr. Reardon and primarily 9th grade students).

Contextualizing Springfield High School

The story told in this article comes from data collected in the 2012-2013 academic year at Springfield High School (pseudonyms used throughout). Springfield High School is the only high school in a suburban school district located on a boundary line within the large metropolitan city of Washington. It is a Title I high school serving 1400 students in grades 9-12, 80% of whom qualify for free or reduced lunch under federal guidelines. According to student demographic data available in 2013, the composition of ethnic groups of the student population is 40% African-American, 40% White Non-Latino, 17% Latino, and 2% Other. The neighborhood of Springfield in which S.H.S. resides is illustrative of many of the distinguishing features of a rust-belt American city: higher than average unemployment, a mobile student body that frequently sees shifting patterns of enrollment and un-enrollment throughout the academic year, and a neighborhood space heavily patrolled by local police forces to guard against high incidents of property crime and assorted violent crimes. Beginning in the late 1990s, the school district of the city of Washington has allowed a school of choice enrollment option for Washington residents living outside of Springfield to enroll in Springfield schools.

Contextualizing Mr. Reardon's U.S. History Curriculum

Mr. Reardon, who is the focus of the case study explored in this article, has been a teacher at Springfield High School since the early 2000s. At the time of collecting data for this

study, Mr. Reardon was in his twelfth year of teaching high school social studies. His specialty is teaching the U.S. History course for ninth graders at Springfield High School. Mr. Reardon's educational background consists of undergraduate study in history, post-baccalaureate study in history education, and graduate study in history with a M.A in history. He identifies with a concern for "making history relevant" and "showing all sides of history." While his pedagogical orientations I observed rarely aligned with the hallmarks of a critical pedagogical tradition, he does have an interest in social and cultural history evident in most of his lessons, although rarely does Mr. Reardon employ counternarratives, "histories from below," or other radical-critical approaches to history curricula. He describes his role within the social studies department as the "peacekeeper" who tries to "keep the parents and admin happy while doing what's best for the students."

The U.S. History course at Springfield High School is typically taken by students in the ninth-grade year, although high rates of students not passing the course in their ninth-grade year means many sections of the course also have tenth grade students enrolled. In the section I observed, all students were enrolled in the ninth grade. The course met for 45 minutes each day Monday through Friday in the period immediately after the first lunch hour. There is no officially assigned textbook. Most course content is transmitted to students via Mr. Reardon's daily PowerPoint lectures, handouts he writes, and photocopied readings from magazines, newspapers, books, and other print sources, many of which Mr. Reardon downloads from the internet.
When I first visited Springfield High School to meet Mr. Reardon and inform him of my year-long study of how America is constructed in social studies classrooms, I was initially surprised to learn that he includes annually a substantive unit on LGBT history in his 9th grade U.S. History course. The working-class culture of Springfield, its volatile internal school politics, and its

location in a politically conservative region of the country lead me to think this space was inhospitable to an explicit instructional unit on LGBT histories. What I discovered, however, is that this same assemblage of social forces (class, politics, etc.) position Mr. Reardon to both view and enact his curricular design of LGBT history in what he describes as a "matter of fact" way, an approach he feels mitigates parental concerns about the appropriateness of this unit in his course. Both Mr. Reardon and I discussed how we suspect this kind of curriculum would either be more vocally accepted or more rejected in an affluent school district where parents appeared to be more intimately involved in their students' education than is the case at Springfield.

Contextualizing Mr. Reardon's Students

The group of students who appear in this study were from Mr. Reardon's 4th period U.S. History course. 26 of the 27 students in the class were in 9th grade while one student was in 10th grade and re-enrolled in the course after failing the course in the prior year. 18 of the 27 students were female and 10 of the students were male. There was no knowledge of, nor attempt made to learn, by either Mr. Reardon or the researcher, if any of the students in the class identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, or queer. As a whole, the class of students consistently expressed qualities of compliant pupils: rarely talking out of turn, quiet when writing down notes from Mr. Reardon's PowerPoint slide lectures, and completing work tasks during class. Attempts I made to engage the students in open-ended, semi-structured, off-topic, or pointed informal conversations during downtime in the class mostly remained unsuccessful. This was not unique to the unit on LGBT History. Although the students consented to participate in the study and

knew me as “the guy from the university,” their desire to actively engage in informal conversations for the purpose of eliciting responses to my study was mostly muted.

Contextualizing the Researcher

My predisposed thinking on this reception of a LGBT history unit comes from my own positionality as the researcher in this study. My formal public education through high school occurred in a small rural town located in the Eastern Midwestern region of the United States. Throughout my school experiences in the 1980s and 1990s, LGBT history was never expressed or included in the formal curriculum. The only time LGBT lives or identities were given voice in my schools occurred in the context of “special” gender segregated half-day lessons once a year beginning in 5th grade in which the school nurse and the school physical education teacher implemented a very basic, rudimentary form of sex education. During this lesson in 6th grade I asked my PE teacher how someone might know if he or she is gay. I do not recall his answer verbatim, but I remember clearly that it was an awkward, overly cautious mix of supportive approval and an attempt to de-stigmatize the students’ perceptions of gay individuals. It was my first move towards negotiating and incorporating my sexual orientation as a gay man into my experiences of school. Since that time, I have had an ambivalent relationship to how I control and perform my sexuality as one part of my educator-scholar identity. Although I was never actively closeted to my high school (and now university) students, I was also not actively out. Cultivating a non-stance made me think I could be permitted to more actively create and present LGBT-related curriculum for my high school students. Mr. Reardon is a teacher who if read only on outward appearances registers as a straight male, which is how he chooses to identify himself. This creates for his teaching a context of presumed dispassionate or personal disinterest in being

an “activist” or “advocating” for a “biased” view of history that affirmatively includes LGBT voices and perspectives. Fears amongst teachers who identify as gay that their sexual orientation will somehow position them as overly invested in a LGBT-inclusive curriculum felt muted when I was in Mr. Reardon’s classroom. I often wondered if his enactments of fabulation occurred primarily by virtue of his identification as a straight male social studies educator. Throughout this article I approach the fabulations of the LGBT history unit with my own gay sensibility. This provided an acute alertness to the historical examples, references, and content Mr. Reardon chose to share with his students. Seeing my own “history” as I had internalized the narratives made it impossible for me to distance my own interest and curiosity in how Mr. Reardon fabulated these LGBT histories.

Data Collection & Analysis

For data collection, I followed the recommendation of Yin (2003) to collect six types of information: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observations, and physical artifacts. During the course of the 2013-2014 academic year, I collected the following: (1) printed samples of Mr. Reardon’s study guides, lecture outlines assignments, tests, and projects; (2) copies of readings Mr. Reardon assigned to students, of which there were none for the LGBT history lessons; (3) samples of student written work; (4) weekly or semi-weekly written notes during each time I observed Mr. Reardon’s class, which includes a total of six lessons observed for the LGBT history portion of the Civil Rights unit; (5) audio recording of Mr. Reardon and his students from the beginning to end of each class period observed; (6) audio recordings of three semi-structured hour-long interviews with Mr. Reardon; and (7) an audio recording of an hour-long focus group interview I conducted with Mr.

Reardon's class in May of the 2014. For the scope of this article, I consulted only the transcripts of the lessons I observed in the duration of the LGBT history learning segment. The other five types of data collected throughout the scope of the study did not yield information relevant to the focused consideration of LGBT history I discuss in this article. Both the semi-structured interviews and the focus-group interviews contain some general observations and remarks from Mr. Reardon and his students about this unit, but they are more of an interpretive reflection on the Civil Rights unit as a whole and relate less to the examples analyzed and interpreted in this article that come directly from observed classroom lessons, constituting one type of data category collected.

To analyze the data collected, I used an analytic strategy that identifies issues within each case and looks for themes that cut across all of the cases (Saldaña, 2009). This required establishing a detailed description of each case and themes within the case as well as thematic analyses across the cases, anchoring assertions and interpretations to the empirical encounters within each case. Still, one can read this approach, despite all objective attempts at empirical social science, as an act of fabulation itself. Surrounding one's researcher self in the voices of Mr. Reardon and his students and the affective environments of each lesson observed—the tone of the lesson, the mood of the classroom, the voice of the teacher and the students, the reactions to images and sounds shared during lectures—all become material artifacts presenting as data to analyze. In order to bring integrity to my analysis of data collected from this study I chose to conduct analyses that emerged as the findings emerged when reading transcripts and listening to recordings of the observed class lessons. I knew a compelling story should be shared from what I felt was a daring attempt by a teacher to offer his students a thorough exploration of LGBT

history in a 9th grade course. I *wanted* a story to exist, but it was not clear what the "story" about Mr. Reardon and his classroom was.

Using what Miles & Huberman (1994) term "a time-ordered display", I arranged emerging themes and ideas in each of the lessons observed over the chronological sequence in which they were presented in the course. A critical incident chart organized key events related to the narrative making enterprise Mr. Reardon employed in each lesson I observed. This allowed me to identify key inflection points in Mr. Reardon's instruction in which colorful elements, entertaining aspects, or embellished depictions of LGBT history lead to the fabulation of a distinct marker or identifying element of LGBT communities in the United States. Using a descriptive coding strategy (Saldaña, 2014) allowed for the summarizing of each key inflection point as a datum contributing toward the larger process of narrative making I wanted to document and explain (and, later, theorize as fabulation). These key inflection points became data for coding, what Auerbach & Silverstein (2003) term "relevant text," which exist as signs expressing LGBT history as a fabulation: songs Mr. Reardon played for the students, photographs he incorporated in his PowerPoint slides, and pieces of explanatory or expository text that students quickly copied down off of the PowerPoint slide and on to the pages in their notebooks.

Findings from Mr. Reardon's First Lesson

On the first day of his unit on LGBT history in his ninth grade U.S. History course, Mr. Reardon begins the class period by playing the song "It's Raining Men" from the late 1970s disco music group The Weather Girls as he takes attendance. This is the first of many examples of how Mr. Reardon engages in fabulating LGBT histories in the United States during a three-

month long unit on the history of minority citizens of the United States during the 20th century. With this song, Mr. Reardon fabulates the concept of progress for gay men despite the song itself never acknowledging gay men, their histories, or their particular circumstances. Does Mr. Reardon use this song out of a stereotypical sense of how and where gay and lesbian people belong in the concept of America? The song has, since the early 1980s, been almost exclusively associated with the gay male community and same-sex desires and pleasures in the United States (Stockbridge, 1988). I look around the classroom of 27 students, no student is smiling, or laughing with me. Mr. Reardon does not emote any particular emotion through his facial expressions (nor does he do this for any song I observed him use). Characteristic of a frequent use of playing popular songs in his course lessons, Mr. Reardon neither introduces the song by identifying its title or artist nor does he explain its significance after the song ends. I immediately recognize it as As a kind of silent disc jokey, he plays this song, as he does all others, and walks around the room as the students listen. Sometimes the students are busy copying down in their notebooks bullet point information from a slide in the PowerPoint files Mr. Reardon creates for each lesson. But most of these songs are three to four minutes in length and students finish copying the notes long before the songs end their playtime. So how do these songs work and how do they contribute to the wider processes at work in these lessons that achieve a becoming-American for students amidst curricular content very much taboo in many classrooms across the United States?

Much like the use of incidental music in a play, the songs curated in this U.S. History course "address" the content and action being played without direct commentary or reference from the persons on stage, or, in this case, the teacher and his students. But the audience/students hear the song and cannot avoid it. And each song Mr. Reardon plays for students in these lessons

contributes to how Mr. Reardon fabulates LGBT histories as examples of becoming-American, ranging from sympathy to ridicule to compassion to pity. If America's heteronormative society had been without any change from its founding as a free nation, the emerging new forces in LGBT histories appear for the students in this song through the suggestion of a storm brewing through America's landscape of values and morals (crucial to dramatizing tolerance for national belonging in the history course):

> I feel stormy weather/Moving in about to begin/
>
> Hear the thunder/Don't lose your head/
>
> Rip off the roof and stay in bed/

At the end of the class I asked some of the students what they thought this song was about. Kyle remarked it was about "how gay guys love men and disco." Pushing for some historical context, I asked what informed his connection. "I don't know. Maybe dancing?" he offered. Rachel felt the songs, as she phrased, "are really gay." I asked her if she had a reason for that assessment. "Not really, I mean they're happy songs and so gay people are probably happy because of their rights," she offered. I wondered if the students fully understood the suggestions of the lyrics, that the song's recommendation to "stay in bed" implied: acceptance has started to storm in over the country pouring liberation down to gay men who should seek this triumph to have more sex.

Mr. Reardon frames this unit on LGBT histories in the U.S. by providing a rationale for students to learn what he terms "a very controversial topic":

> For one [reason], the gays are another group inspired by the successes African-Americans have in their civil rights movements, just like women's rights, and Latino rights, and Native American rights. They were very active in the 1960s and 1970s and are still active

> today in struggling for equality. Another reason to learn about it is because it is a controversial topic. There are many conservatives who think being gay is a sin whereas there are many liberals who think being gay is a civil rights issue. And so I think because it is controversial, it's a good reason to learn about it and be more informed and have more to add to the conversation. Another reason, not that the other rights movements are "done", but this maybe more than any other minority we study about is really current. And really in the past two years there have been a lot of changes, a lot of gains for the gay rights movement. It's one of the frustrating things about teaching this, too, because I always have to change it. I had to change it last Thursday to update the content based on what is the news because things changed that day. Another reason to learn about it is because it's part of the Michigan social studies curriculum. I am supposed to teach you about women's rights, Latino rights, and gay rights. So there are lots of reasons to learn about it.

In other units and lessons that I observed with Mr. Reardon, he never mentions student comfort as a concern or attempts to preview his content with any kind of advisement or caution. On occasion, he will offer a rationale, but not in the pointed and direct manner he does with this lesson. He begins the lesson by offering a starting point, an "origin story" of sorts from where he jumps off the presentation of information about gay and lesbian people in the United States, by going outside of the United States:

> To learn the history, we have to go way back thousands of years ago to ancient civilizations. And there are lots of historical and archaeological evidence that sexuality was pretty common and not looked down upon. Some of the evidence

> we have today that indicates homosexuality wasn't looked down upon as much as it has in recent years, there are depictions of homosexual acts drawn by cave men on cave walls. Archaeologists have found Egyptian pharaohs and mummies buried together as same-sex mummies. There's written history on ancient Greece and in ancient Rome condoning homosexual activity. It's not until about 500 years ago that views on homosexuality change to a negative one.

A student, Jared, asks, "what caused it to change?" Mr. Reardon promises to answer Jared's question later in the lesson, but for now he continues building his historic timeline. As students take down notes the instrumental theme music for the film *Brokeback Mountain* plays in the background. This is the first song Mr. Reardon plays during the lesson. He does not identify the song nor associates the song with the film, which the students might or might not have known. If they did know the film it was likely as a synecdoche for gayness and being gay. Teaching high school students when the film was released and in the few years that followed, I noticed that the phrase "Brokeback Mountain" could be used in any combination of syntactical formation to indicate an insult or leverage disdain or scorn at someone (e.g. "Hey guys, look, it's Brokeback Mountain!" or "that's so Brokeback, yo!").

Additional information Mr. Reardon shares during this moment of the lesson works as a fabulation across cultures and across time periods. In establishing a historical context, Mr. Reardon mentions "ancient Greek society promoted relationships between adult princes and adolescent boys" to how "Emperor Nero of Rome married two men in legal ceremonies, one of whom is given the same honors as a wife." Mr. Reardon does not break down this information or explain any significance of these "facts" (which strike me as hewing more towards scandalous

tidbits from legend and could serve to induce disgust or shame in students). Mr. Reardon next plays the song "Go West" by the Pet Shop Boys. The choice to play "Go West" is particularly surprising in the context of a U.S. history course given the issues of American exceptionalism, imperialism, and Manifest Destiny that undergirds so much of the concept of America as a historical national construct. The Pet Shop Boys sing about a utopic future that Mr. Reardon could have pointed out during the playing of the song, a future that his students are perhaps being called up on to help create and bring about—a people yet to come, as Deleuze would say—given the urgency Mr. Reardon highlighted in his opening framing of the lesson:

> (Together) We will go our way/(Together) We will leave someday/
> (Together) Your hand in my hands/(Together) We will make our plans/
> (Together) We will fly so high/(Together) Tell all our friends goodbye/
> (Together) We will start life new/(Together) This is what we'll do/

The togetherness of the song and the students' own togetherness coincide with information Mr. Reardon shares with students as the song plays out. Students record in their notes facts on a slide titled "Gay History in North America." They learn that "in 1624 a man is tried and hung for sodomy in a Virginia colony" and that "in 1649 a Massachusetts colony woman is convicted of lesbian activity." The next historical event Mr. Reardon shares fast-forwards three centuries to 1903 when, he rapidly tells students, "NYC police raid a gay bathhouse, and several men inside are convicted and sentenced to prison for violating sodomy laws." A student, Ryan, asks, "What is sodomy?" Another student, Brittany, almost eagerly says, "I know!" Mr. Reardon turns to her and implores of her, "Are you really brave enough to explain sodomy because I really don't want to explain it." Brittany replies that sodomy is "when people take it in the butt." Surprisingly,

students do not lose their cool or display raucous behavior that I was certain was to be exhibited when I noticed the formation of this conversation. Perhaps this speaks to my own expectations I imposed on the class based upon how I expected a classroom of 9th graders to react to hearing the word sodomy used and explained in a less than clinical through legally accurate manner. I wonder how much more of the lesson is going to proceed through an annual (anal?) chronicle of "Gay History in North America." Mr. Reardon displays a map of the United States showing the different years each stake struck down sodomy laws before the Supreme Court struck down sodomy laws in 2003. The thrust of this inclusion of sodomy laws on the map is presented as progression, an evolution in American attitudes towards gay and lesbian persons. This advancement produces a becoming-American that challenges the perceived preexisting notions and feelings of and towards gays and lesbians. The intensity of having national history fabulated through sex acts such as sodomy is an element in the students' becoming-American. Recognition and acceptance of national belonging do not require approval or liking or tolerance or empathy.

Findings from Mr. Reardon's Second Lesson

For the lesson on day two of the LGBT history unit, Mr. Reardon focuses on political events in the United States from 1947 to the present. Mr. Reardon positions America as a protagonist in its own search for sexual acceptance and liberation, as he does in his explanation of the famous sexologist Dr. Alfred Kinsey:

> After Kinsey comes out with his findings America began changing its attitude towards gays. Kinsey suggested 10% of people are gay and this allowed for consideration of gay peoples' existence in America. Then we have Evelyn Hooker's published study on

> homosexuals being what she called "well adjusted" and this helped the cause for gay people even more.

Mr. Reardon then makes brief, passing references to *Vice Versa*, "the first North American LGBT publication" and the Mattachine Society, "the first American homosexual society founded in Los Angeles." These groups are not described in detail, nor are their histories explained in depth, but they appear to work as part of the dizzying tour through a LGBT American history. Mr. Reardon associates the "start" of the Gay Rights Movement with cafeteria riots in Compton, California that in his words "brought transgenders (sic) into the movement." He follows up with a reference to 1967 when "a raid on the Black Cat Bar in San Francisco promotes homosexual rights activity. The Student Homophile League at Columbia University is the first institutionally recognized gay student group in the United States."

As students write down these notes Mr. Reardon plays the song "Macho Man" by the Village People. The long association with the Village People and gayness goes unexplained or unannounced. Mr. Reardon goes into more depth in explaining the Stonewall Riots, emphasizing the riots "are widely recognized as the catalyst for the modern-day movement towards LGBT rights. Gay, lesbian, and transgender people had never before acted together in such large numbers to forcibly resist police harassment directed towards their community." He emphasizes that the victims of the police raids were not able to prove any discrimination or targeted unwarranted violence occurred. For gay people, Mr. Reardon insisted:

> there's still a big problem because back then just like today how would you know about it? In the news, of course. Your name would be published in the newspaper. This was a time when every gay person was closeted. So imagine if your name

was listed in the newspaper, even if you weren't prosecuted, what would everyone think of that? Imagine that in a 1960s society.

A potential for developing new feelings and new affections towards gay and lesbian Americans are opened up through the foregrounding of topics Mr. Reardon walks students through, accompanied by the songs he plays without reference and the images he curated to include in the slide show.

To usher students through considering the 1970s, Mr. Reardon plays Diana Ross' song "I'm Coming Out" to accompany information about activism in the 1970s. He shares in one of the few examples of connecting the music to his instruction by proclaiming, "lots of gay people in America, as you heard in that song, are coming out. No longer hiding who they are. They started to have parades and marches in support of gay rights. Some universities begin departments of Black Studies, Asian Studies, and later Gay Studies." During a slide about the 1980s Mr. Reardon returns to the Village People to play their iconic song "YMCA." He mentions some gains gay and lesbian people made politically, such as electing Barney Frank who came out during his tenure in office. He also mentions backlash towards gay and lesbian Americans because of a "panic" over HIV and AIDS. A student asked about the connection between gay men and AIDS and Mr. Reardon claims it is "about swapping bodily fluids." He seems to pause for a moment before elaborating, "Maybe you should ask your health teacher for the details because I don't want to get into it, but sodomy results in HIV/AIDS being transmitted easily, so AIDS becomes more prominent during this time among gay men." The student does not ask for more clarification and without saying more about the proliferation of gay activism in the 1980s Mr. Reardon moves to the 1990s with facts on a slide about transgender teenager

Brandon Teena's murder, gay college student Matthew's Shepherd's murder, and celebrities coming out in popular culture such as Ellen DeGeneres. Cyndi Lauper's song "True Colors" plays during this part of the lecture.

The final slide of his PowerPoint shows current issues and the status of current governmental rights for gay and lesbian people in the United States. He emphasizes that if Michigan residents get married in a different state, they lose their rights in the United States. As with each lesson in the Rights Movement unit, the "group-a-day" approach comes with a handout of questions Mr. Reardon wrote for students to answer as homework. It is exciting for me to imagine a 9th grader sitting at her kitchen table in her home answering questions such as "What developments in the 1950s and 1960s inspired the burgeoning gay rights movement?" and "What issues is the gay rights movement still struggling to have rectified?" But the most interesting question on the handout may be the fourth question, "What is the history like for homosexuals in the United States?" Students are encouraged to create variations of political cartoons to illustrate what Mr. Reardon terms, "the struggle for gay rights" in a scrapbook to which they will add more illustrations with each subsequent unit of study on a minority group in the United States.

Discussion

If it all sounds too much, it may be because it really is too much. Schmidt (2010) locates within social studies education a particular representation that places students in a thought process that follows a certain logic, that gay "must be bad" if students only encounter "images and discussions" pitched from a space of negativity, making such negative associations "the only visible representations serve an unintended process of limiting imaginable categories of gender

and sexual identification" (p. 320). Part of what I find striking in Mr. Reardon's lesson is the presence of sexuality and sex itself. Gayness begins to look dispersed and everywhere in American life in this lesson, leading to a becoming-American in which an American citizen can take on sexuality different than what is permissible, governed, or allowed in the school. On the one hand, Mr. Reardon's lessons follow a linear, chronological path to show advances, gains, and evolution for LGBT populations in the U.S. And yet the more exciting trajectory of this lesson finds Mr. Reardon along with students embedded in the situation of a struggle for gay and lesbian rights, going in diverse directions instead of a single path, establishing, as Semetsky (2006) describes, "the plurality of unpredictable connections in the open-ended smooth space" the classroom and America itself became during this lesson (p. 168). Uncertainty over conflicting experiences constituting what we call America and the history/histories of America we express constitutes a curricular space open to becoming. Consider again Mr. Reardon's rationale he shared with his students: "And so I think because it is controversial, it's a good reason to learn about it and be more informed and have more to add to the conversation." I am drawn to his use of the word "more." More is not often better, less is often more, and related maxims cast doubt about the efficacy and validity of Mr. Reardon's perspective. But when we see in schools, and in the national imaginary, a set of practices that promote self-disciplining, censoring, and silencing sexual diversity and a multiplicity of sexual personae who can belong to the nation, then more options are necessary. So rarely does it seem we in social studies pose the question "is this it? Is this all there is and can be?"

King and Langston (2008) suggest that arranging national narratives that highlight national belonging for minority citizens can "make the familiar strange and thus exposes unresolved problems capable of endangering comfort and harmony" (2008, p. 238). The

unresolved problems of the crusade for gay and lesbian rights in the United States is accompanied by more images, more songs, and more pronounced claims from Mr. Reardon as is evident in this lesson. The lessons on LGBT histories that comprise Mr. Reardon's unit disrupt the normative working-class heartland identities of Springfield High School. Fabulation works through the images and texts in the slides and songs Mr. Reardon curates across these lessons. The active forces of becoming-American in this lesson—from the song "It's Raining to Men" to witnessing the assassination of Harvey Milk—draw upon the own becoming-American of gay and lesbian citizens in the U.S. in affirmation of the civic potential all students in Mr. Reardon's class have in becoming-American. Such becoming opens a pedagogical space in Mr. Reardon's classroom for students to consider what Wallin (2010), following Deleuze & Guattari, refers to in his reading of curriculum theory with Deleuze as a "people not yet seen, a pedagogy for a people yet to come" (p. 39). In this lesson we see glimpses of national belonging that problematize molar or majoritarian conceptions of America.

The classification of gay that Mr. Reardon conjures up in these lessons is a function of its dominant oppositional term—straight, which goes unsaid in his lesson—constructed in order to institute and sustain patterns of domination. The fixing of identities such as gay/straight in Springfield High School and the establishment of a stable taxonomy that assigns individuals their roles, characteristics, motives, abilities, and so on operates in Springfield High School as a microcosm of similar yet larger forces that constitute national belonging. This is what Deleuze cautions about the powerful potential of fabulation. The path of resistance to oppressive power relations is not simply through struggle with dominant authorities but also through subversion of the categories we live by, an unfixing of identities and inauguration of a process of metamorphosis. A becoming is a passage between categories that can undermine or at least

displace both poles of an opposition. Becoming-American is a passage between a student before and after experiencing expressions of the nation and national belonging in social studies classes, the curricular past and present of their lives, so to speak. If this is so, then is Mr. Reardon not simply reifying and fixing stereotypical and oppressive representations of gay people by dredging up seemingly irrelevant facts and statements about gay people? I argue that he is not in this specific context precisely because the very mentioning and suggesting that America is peopled by gay and lesbian individuals must, for Mr. Reardon, be extended to his students through first showing that gay people have existed as far back as "ancient history", a history that is expressed as much older than America in far-away places. I did wonder if Mr. Reardon's rather risky slide listing sexual practices in the "ancient world" upheld staid conceptions of ancient Greeks and Romans as always already gay, chasing after boys and holding court with their decadence in white robes. But I think for many adolescent learners these notions are not received as common sense as they are for older adults. In an America that began for these ninth grade students in Mr. Reardon's class with *Will & Grace* and Adam Lambert instead of Ryan White and AIDS, gay and lesbian history is controversial, but not absent or foreign. In this context Mr. Reardon's curating of facts and images that make gayness old and preternatural is a type of fabulation. Mr. Reardon greatly magnifies a zone of proximity for the students in ways he chooses not to do or needs not to do in prior lessons given that so many of his lessons and units are predicated on identity mappings of U.S. history—it is the history of people(s), not one singular people (White, straight, etc.) Should we be dissatisfied with all of this? I think we should recognize the possibilities and limitations of such curricular moves, much in the way Donahue (2014) does in his evaluative assessment of eight lesson plans that treat the historical biography of U.S. gay liberation leader Harvey Milk. As can be seen in the lesson plans Donahue

studies, and in the examples from Mr. Reardon's lessons, fabulation as a pedagogical concept strives towards an "undoing" of stereotypical identities.

Conclusion

The becoming-American in Mr. Reardon's class plays an important role in reconfiguring what we may think of as a "safe space" for learning with/about LGBT subjectivities. Accessing and retrieving a repertoire of actions and impressions, many of which are selected by Mr. Reardon, restores what Britzman (1998) terms a "contested object" for social studies. Such objects open immediate room for disagreement and discomfort through the difficult knowledge (Garrett, 2011; Pitt & Britzman, 2003) of sexual identity that many adolescent learners may struggle to come to terms with in their thinking and feeling, to say nothing of censoring habits of thought that come from their families, friends, other teachers, and community at large. And yet contested objects are at the very heart of a democratic social studies education open to the possibilities of creating effective and thoughtful citizens. Fabulation and moments of becoming (-American and otherwise) create unmapped possibilities through such contested objects for new identities, including the identities of gay and lesbian Americans unmentioned and unseen in schools. The contested objects that constitute the LGBT historical narratives through fabulation go beyond "safe" representations of the traditional "canon" of LGBT history curriculum, as put forward by Thornton's (2002) call for curricular inclusivity and on the poster I had in my classroom mentioned earlier, with its portrait gallery of "important homosexuals" ranging from Michelangelo to Walt Whitman. Unruly topics and examples of LGBT cultural and social history, even if made larger than life through pedagogical fabulation, make the boundaries of LGBT history curriculum less stuffy, less predictable, and less "safe." This may work to push

students of all sexual identities to think in less reified or constricted ways about what "counts" as LGBT history and expressions of LGBT lives, voices, cultures, and experiences.

The impact Mr. Reardon's lessons have for promoting and furthering equality for gay and lesbian citizens serves to engender for his students a new space that creates a space of becoming-American. This becoming-American can help position students away from being the dominant and toward considering the experiences of those who are dominated. The uptake is that becoming-American is an unpredictable affirmation of minority peoples in America Mr. Reardon has tried to fabulate. This changes the capacity for his students to think about who has been an American in the past, who is an American in the present, and who can be Americans of the future, a "people yet to come" that require social studies education to help students not remember and interpret the past, but improvise and improve the future (Deleuze & Guattari).

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SUMMARY

Review of the Study

This dissertation is both a beginning and an end to the research agenda I began with data collection in 2013. It is an end because it culminates analysis and writing about the expressive modes I associate in the pedagogical practices of the teachers I studied. I have talked about these teachers and their teaching at great length for the past three years at numerous academic conferences. I suspect both conference attendees and reviewers/readers of my articles are by now more than familiar when encountering yet again another description of Mr. Bauer, Mr. Reardon, Ms. Stewart, and their students. This dissertation is also an end in the sense that the findings from this study have already given birth to a new project, a book length monograph I have been drafting that takes in additional forms of data from the study to include interviews with the four teachers; focus group interviews with students in each of the four classes I observed; content analyses of the textbooks, content standards, and other curriculum materials used; and many more classroom moments than have been shared in the articles collected for this dissertation, such as an assembly with veterans of the Vietnam War, an informational meeting for students to discuss a school trip touring Auschwitz, and a day in which a circuit judge holds real trials in the Springfield High School auditorium for students to witness. In that project, I consider a larger range of educative experiences across four social studies classes to consider how social studies education can be read across different genres as opposed to narrative modes. Whereas the three articles that comprise this dissertation focus on pedagogical expressions of fantasy, myth, and fabulation, my book project describes different genres by which we can categorize different ideological forms teaching about America takes on in social studies education. Building upon

and expanding the critical practices I employ in this dissertation, I argue in the book that genres actively generate and shape our knowledge of America, from interpreting America as a horror story in the gothic conventions of teaching about slavery and genocide, to interpreting America as an adventure story in the epic conventions of teaching about America at war, to interpreting America as a coming-of-age story in the pastoral conventions of teaching about Manifest Destiny and westward expansion. While both are drawn from the study I conducted in 2013, the dissertation is focused on the ideologies and desires that shape expressive modes for teaching about America; the book is about narrative modes and their conventions that make teaching about America always a choice of plot, characterization, and narration.

But this dissertation is also, paradoxically, a beginning in the sense that it represents my first sustained effort to synthesize what it precisely is that I read, write, theorize, and teach about as part of my scholarship as an academic. In other words, part of the long, protracted delay of writing this dissertation is that I wanted a coherent arc for the stories I wished to tell from my research. When I went on the job market for my first academic position in 2014, a year after I had done fieldwork for the data in this dissertation, I had completed much analysis, but very little authoring of a story. I had coded (too much and too often), but had not encoded a plot. Thus, my research talks during campus visits were unfocused and without a plot. I talked about theories, participants, and data, but I did not have a story to tell. This came to its logical climax when, during a job talk at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, a senior scholar in curriculum studies interrupted my job talk to ask, "this is all very interesting, but what is your dissertation *about*?" I finally feel that I have a story to tell. While I cannot go back in time two years ago to answer his question, I am now able to tell it. I hope this dissertation has made the telling convincing and worthwhile, despite its limitations I discuss in this next section.

Limitations of the Study

This dissertation appears to me in a different form than I how imagined it would look when I proposed it to my committee in 2013. When I proposed this study I was chiefly interested in applying affect theory to aspects of social studies education as issues and topics related to affect theory were only then beginning to appear in educational research literature. Some preliminary work I undertook in theorizing affect in social studies education gave shape to an article I published in *Theory & Research in Social Education* (Helmsing, 2014), leading to what I prepared for my dissertation proposal. At the defense of my proposal a crucial question was posed to my intended research: how will you know affect when you see it? The answer, according to most tenets of affect theory as it is operationalized in the humanities and conceptual social sciences, is that one does not 'see' affect; affect itself is imperceptible to humans and when it is perceived affect turns into what we would call emotion or feeling. Soon I began to realize not only the immense difficulty in undertaking an empirical qualitative study of affect in social studies classrooms, but also a realization that affect theory was an unsatisfactory theory for the kinds of critical work with which I most closely identify. The whole of my work, spanning my reading, writing, and teaching, is on representational issues: how we represent different conceptions of America; how we represent time and the past; how we represent different ideologies and beliefs about social studies concepts. Thus, my work cannot give up theories of representation and its discontents, limitations, possibilities, and alternatives. In the middle of data collection I realized this problem perhaps too late. A study I designed to study affect in social studies began moving away from considerations and analyses of affect towards critiques of different ideological forms in which curricula and pedagogies of social studies education may appear. The three forms that appear in the examples I analyzed for this

dissertation, myth, fantasy, and fabulation, are the three examples I bring together in this dissertation.

A second limitation of this study lies within the kinds and quantities of data used in this study. I spent one trimester (approximately 12 weeks) in schools almost each weekday observing classrooms. This resulted in several hours of audio recorded class instruction, some of which was transcribed and some of which remains to be transcribed. Each semi-structured teacher interview and student focus group class interview has been transcribed, but very little data from those interviews appears in this dissertation. My reason for omitting interview data from the articles in this dissertation is one of scope. I wanted to remain as close as possible to descriptions and analyses of classroom interactions, chiefly in the form of a teacher's pedagogical practice. This meant the student focus group interview would have had limited relevance and applicability to the issues I discuss in each article. The student focus group questions ask students to speak freely and openly about how they define America, what America means to them, and to reflect on how they have learned about America in schools and elsewhere. Few of the questions specifically inquire into how students connect lessons from their then-current social studies course in which I interviewed them to the lessons and topics they were studying at the time of the interview. On the one hand this means I have numerous hours of focus group interview data to code, analyze, and write up for future articles that inquiry into how adolescent learners understand and talk about America.

Similar to the limitation of excluding focus group interview data from this dissertation, I perceive another shortcoming in my decision to omit the semi-structured interviews I conducted with teachers. I conducted two hour-long semi-structured interviews with each of the four primary teachers who participated in this study. While I have transcribed, coded, and analyzed

those interviews, I left the teacher interview data out of the study for similar reasons mentioned above with the focus group interviews. My aim in focusing solely on classroom interactions made me feel I had to bracket out as much as I could about the intentionality teachers ascribed to their curriculum and pedagogy. I wanted to look at how a teacher's social studies pedagogy was enacted in classrooms, not intended to be implemented, which I felt was the central viewpoint presented in the teacher interviews. In hindsight I see this as a major flaw because my dissertation presents the teachers with little to no contextualization as to the beliefs, values, principles, and commitments they bring to their teaching. I felt that by omitting such context from my study I could be given a greater affordance to issues of form, offering to the social studies education research field a typological study of different forms of ideology we may see in social studies classrooms. To do so, I reasoned, would mean not historicizing, contextualizing, or grounding the teacher participants; to read them rather as placeholders for larger constructs and ideas that could travel interchangeably to other social studies classrooms. At the same time, the kind of formalist stance I adopted for this study responds to what I see as particular ethical and political demands of curriculum and pedagogy that a focus on context seems less able to achieve when formal, rhetorical, and modal explorations of classroom instruction are subsumed to context.

These data omissions, however, mean I have more data to use in future writing, but there is a considerable question to consider as to the appropriate 'shelf life' of the data I have from this study. Beyond the programmatic, ethical, and legal qualifications of how long data can be utilized in keeping with institutional review protocol, I face a more interpretive dilemma of what it means to be writing in the year 2017 about data produced in 2013. Four years have elapsed between the spring 2013 academic year when I engaged in data collection and what is now at the

time of this writing the spring 2017 academic semester. The freshmen in Mr. Reardon's U.S. history course at Springfield High School would now be freshmen in college if they were on track to graduate as expected. President Obama was only in the second year of his second term of office and the undeniable changes wrought by President Trump's election campaign and first few months of his presidency were not present in the social studies classrooms I observed. Would the myths, fantasies, and fabulations of America in the classrooms I observed be different today? I think the answer is inarguably yes.

Implications for Social Studies Education

One connective tissue that most strongly binds and strings together the case studies and articles together for this dissertation is how expressions of America often are taught within and as practices of othering. In contexts of teaching, we can think of othering as a concept that indicates various pedagogical practices in which beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives a teacher or student possesses about a person, group, or community serve to objectify or exotify said person, group, or community (Freeman, 2010). The person, group, or community can appear "in an essentialized or overly simplistic manner" (MacQuarrie, 2010, 635). This results in a type of framing through which educators teach and students come to learn about others in a process that highlights differences of "them" from "us." In this way othering works as a practice, unintended or otherwise, of marginalization and exclusion. Practices of othering often result in "overly generalized perceptions of particular groups of people based on behaviors associated with a stereotypical notion of place" (Freeman, 2010, 2107). Pedagogies of myth, fantasy, and fabulation express America in ways that permit othering to occur during social studies discussion, as I discuss in the examples below.

In the lesson on the common good in Ms. Stewart's civics class, Ms. Stewart uses the example of Greektown in an instance of othering. Ms. Stewart teaches her social studies concept of homogenous communities through mythic constructions that enact a form of othering, specifically "ownership, belonging, segregation, and racialization" (Freeman, 2010, 2107.). When Ms. Stewart asks her students if they have "been to a city that has neighborhoods," she presents the idea of neighborhoods in general as the same as ethnic neighborhoods. Cities are places that have neighborhoods. The America that exists in Ms. Stewart's class consists of two kinds of places: small communities that are desirable and large communities that are not desirable. Ms. Stewart others spaces that are not like Oakdale, even when students passively uphold othering, such as when Suzie confirms people in Taiwan lock doors to their homes. The interplay of social, cultural, and geographic factors that give shape to the Taiwan in which Suzie lives, and from which Ms. Stewart's students can learn, disappears when Ms. Stewart' teaching others Taiwan from America. Many of the mythic expressions of America that appear in Ms. Stewart's civics class cultivate and promote a curriculum of belonging that works through othering. China, Taiwan, and other foreign nations exterior to and 'other' than America serve as "diverse" places in Ms. Stewart's curriculum. These places are other-ed from Oakdale in many ways, including Ms. Stewart's assertion that "places with lots of diversity are generally places of war."

Othering also occurs in Ms. Stewart's class when kinds of people, or their conditions of personhood, are essentialized through actions and dispositions that are other-ed from those associated with belonging as an American. During Ms. Stewart's lesson on national symbols, Ms. Stewart's student Alice argues someone belonging as an American "can still be a good person and not say the Pledge [of Allegiance]," but this condition of difference or differing from

an essentialized American belonging is challenged by Ms. Stewart's student Judd. For Judd, not reciting the pledge is to be a "Commie" and thus a failure to perform an expected kind of American belonging. Practices of belonging, such as reciting the pledge or listening to the national anthem at attention, essentialize who belongs in/to/for America. Othering works through these examples to exclude or expel those who would choose to dissent, refuse, or reject performing such actions.

In Mr. Reardon's lesson on the history of gay and lesbian rights in the United States, othering occurs during moments in which Mr. Reardon expresses gay and lesbian identity through cultural markers that put gay life on display in stereotypical ways. By playing songs for students that ostensibly share some connotation to gay history, such as the Pet Shop Boys' song "Go West" or Cyndi Lauper's song "True Colors," Mr. Reardon both embellishes and flattens queer identities through this gesture. This othering could have been minimized or challenged had Mr. Reardon explained what the songs signified, why they can be associated with gay history, or analyzed for lyrical meaning that would inform students' historical understanding of the struggles in the associated civil rights movements for LGBT peoples in America. Mr. Reardon's curriculum and instruction positions LGBT peoples as others as a way for the students to come to terms with LGBT persons as yet another minority construct that deserves passing attention in a unit that groups minorities together for students to study. In this way Mr. Reardon controls all minorities as others in the sense that they gain visibility only as a conglomeration of other-ed Americans to study in a unit at the end of the academic year after having studied all other existing units surveying America's history. Despite Mr. Reardon's attention to how LGBT groups organized for representation and equal rights, his pedagogical expressions of LGBT peoples are themselves a way of organizing power and controlling their representation within his

expressions of America. There are moments when some of the expressions of gayness as a part of American identities threatens to transgress what is acceptable to talk about, to study, and to know in social studies classrooms. When, for example, Mr. Reardon evades the question a student poses about how AIDS and gay men are connected thematically within this U.S. history lesson, Mr. Reardon is controlling this expression of gay America, othering both peoples with AIDS and gay men, suggesting that students ask their health teacher for this knowledge. Similarly, Mr. Reardon reaches the transgressive potential of discussing gay sex practices when he becomes demure at a student's question about sodomy. Rather than attempting to normalize sodomy, or to deconstruct how sodomy as a construct is itself an instance of othering and disciplining bodies through categorizing sexual practices, Mr. Reardon admits he does not want to explain the concept. By othering sodomy as something that transgresses notions of acceptable sexual behavior, Mr. Reardon upholds a boundary between what students can or should talk about and what they cannot or should not talk about in terms of human sexuality and in terms of belonging as a 'normal' American. As the teaching of LGBT history takes on new traction in U.S. social studies curriculum, normalizing certain sexual practices may be one of the next significant moves teachers of LGBT history undertake if they wish to destabilize the stigma and shame that surround discussing and thinking about diverse sexualities in the service of how we learn about belonging to or fitting in America both past and present.

Practices of othering flatten economic and cultural differences of national and global markets other than, and outside of, the United States in Mr. Bauer's lesson on the decline of the automobile industry and industrial manufacturing in the United States. Mr. Bauer and his students learn within a worldview that presents America as an entity, a beleaguered hero, working with and against everything and everyone else outside of it. Ideas of othering in Mr.

Bauer's lesson occur through how notions of a global economy, and of globalization itself as an economic force, both thematized in Mr. Bauer's world history curriculum, present the world as America's other in a rather melancholy manner, mourning as Mr. Bauer appears to do over something lost. Indeed, this sense of loss or mourning for an America that once was but may no longer exist also occurs in Ms. Stewart's mythic expressions of America through her instruction on the Founding Fathers, as well as in how Mr. Reardon fantasizes U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War as an epic quest that included lost innocence and a loss in trusting governmental powers. The sense of loss that pervades the many points Mr. Bauer makes in his lesson creates a faultline between an America that is stunted, defeated, and beleaguered. As a practice of othering, this sense of loss contrasts an economic identity and history of America with an economic identity and history of the rest of the world. The epic expressive form through which Mr. Bauer teaches his lesson on the Industrial Revolution invites students to think historically about its industrial identity as one of tension and competition, narrating a history of America in a quest or struggle against other-ed parts of the world, or the world itself as one large Other. A different instance of othering occurs when Mr. Bauer separates an idealized countryside from what is figured to be less desirable city spaces. Forewarning his students they will "have to move to big cities" if they wish to have "a good quality of life," Mr. Bauer others the industrial city from rural areas, ironically the places where industry "died out" and left. The object that Mr. Bauer holds as the lost essence of America, its industrial might, does exist, apparently, but only in the city spaces, spaces that are other than where he and his students currently exist.

Mr. Bauer's lesson brings to the fore issues of cooperation against competition and strength against weakness. Mr. Bauer reduces this sense of loss into one singular condition that characterizes (and others) the world from America, a condition that can be seen all that is

"different about the American economy now from the past," as he suggests to his class. Indeed, this one large Other as a role for the idea of the world as a global entity to occupy in Mr. Bauer's world history class is an important implication for social studies educators to consider how world history curriculum always already others the world from America. Myth, fantasy, and fabulation are expressive forms of curriculum and pedagogy that can both reinforce yet also complicate national identity and national narratives and a world history curriculum aware of such practices and possibilities can work on the very tentative nature of both "America" and "the world" as constructed ideas. Critiquing practices of othering and pointing out how they operate in social studies education demonstrate how nations exist as unfixed and flexible constructs (Bhabha, 1990, 1994). An overarching theme of the studies collected for this dissertation is in how America often appears as a concept to be taught or learned only in relation to "what lies outside or beyond it" (Bhabha, 1990, p. 4). Othering helps create this relation when a curriculum and pedagogy of myth, fantasy, and fabulation render ideas in social studies instruction to appear simple and straightforward. An alternative can be found in how Bhahba (1990) presents the problem of othering, a problem of "outside/inside" that can instead be taught by "incorporating 'new' people in relation to the body politic, generating other sites of meaning and, inevitably, in the political process, producing unmanned sites of political antagonism and unpredictable forces for political representation" (p. 4).

Future Directions for this Research

Since 2009 I have taught methods courses to students learning to teach social studies education at the secondary level. This teaching engages students in considering different methods, materials, approaches, practices, problems, and styles of how we teach and learn

content matter associated with social studies education. Through this teaching I have engaged preservice teachers in considering how they choose, select, design, and implement particular orientations to social studies curriculum. One implication this dissertation has for my teaching is in how I ask students to attend to their own style of teaching social studies. Asking students to become conscious of the choices they make in selecting content, as constrained as such selections are by standard, testing, and textbooks, is in a way an aesthetic choice related to formal considerations of one's pedagogical style. This instance of asking is in service of a larger question guiding my teaching: what are we doing when we engage learners in social studies education? This dissertation has given my teaching an array of ideas to use in my teaching when helping students conceptualize teaching practices in social studies. While no social studies educator consciously approaches planning an instructional lesson or unit with an intention to teach through myth, fantasy, or fabulation, the educator must, however, pause to reflect on what their teaching intendeds to do—or could do—during moments of instruction in their classroom.

Many of the topics and concepts I include in my methods courses have focused on learning practices adolescent learners undertake as students in social studies methods courses. The orientation this approach offers is one focused on placing teenage students as the central object of inquiry in methods courses, asking questions about how to engage students in historical thinking, how to support adolescent literacy practices through specific instructional strategies, how to design assessments that will measure student thinking and represent patterns of growth in terms of acquiring content knowledge, facility with critical thinking skills, and competency in civic practices, such as discussion, deliberation, and debate. In short, my methods courses have focused on what students do (or can or should do) rather than what social studies teachers do. In a way this is perhaps a consequence of what I see as a desire to appease my own methods

students when they remark that their teacher education program has not served them well to meet the challenges and demands of working in secondary classrooms. By focusing on students, we can remove ourselves from speculation, critique, and consideration. We can dissect what it is that students do, or fail to do, that result in the realities we face in social studies classrooms. But working on this dissertation for the greater part of the past four years of teaching social studies methods courses has placed the form of the teacher more clearly in view of how I construct a social studies methods course.

With this study I had planned to construct a theory as to how America as a concept constructs and deconstructs in social studies education. In early stages of formal data analysis, for each amount of time I began coding moments when the teachers and students offered specific examples of America as a concept or construct I spent twice as much time reading the research literature about nationalism, nationhood, and theories of the nation. I soon realized I would have needed a more coherent study design and theoretical framework that took into account how students and teachers approach the idea of a nation and how America as a nation fits (or not) within different approaches offered by teachers and students in this study.

The challenge of doing such a study is also one of its more alluring aspects of inquiry for me because of the lack of overt attention in secondary social studies education to discussions of what America is. In secondary social studies classrooms America is an implied concept, operating as part of an implicit curriculum rather than in an explicit curriculum. There is no unit, for example, that I can find in a secondary social studies textbook or curriculum document that asks students to define America; no unit with the title "What is America?" or "Elements of America." One way to respond to this is to acknowledge that a study about the United States in the United States would presuppose students and teachers begin social studies education with a

shared understanding of what America is. However, when I discussed this dissertation in its early states, and indicated I was studying "how teachers and students study America," an immediate response was often "America means much more than the United States, and so you need to be sure you are aware of that." I met such responses in part with slight irritation on the notion that I would not have yet considered this possibility, but I mostly met such responses with a sense of acknowledgment that I was studying something of importance if my topic consistently produced such a response from other people.

If I positioned myself as an elementary social studies education researcher, my dissertation would likely have attended more to specific instances in the explicit curriculum. Studying elementary social studies education, especially with its dominant design of presenting curriculum in the form of "expanding horizons" (Halvorsen, 2009, 2012), would likely have provided this study with a more direct accessibility for examples in the explicit curriculum that explore how teachers and students conceive of America. Questions of "what is a nation?" and "what do Americans believe?" can be read more directly in elementary social studies curriculum. The more common disciplinary approach to social studies education in the secondary grades seems to presume teachers and students have no need to grapple with questions of defining America; conceptualizing America is a foregone conclusion when the terms of inquiry fall into disciplinary modes of learning the history, geography, culture, political systems, economic systems, and social systems of the United States (as America).

As the study unfolded, however, it has enabled me to practice a form of research that examines ideology in different forms and has required of me an interpretive methodology grounded in critical practices of reading classroom pedagogies as a "text." One overarching argument that connects the three articles in this dissertation offers social studies educators the

argument that an inherently ideological aspect of social studies education is in the particular *form* of its pedagogical and curricular expression, indivisible from any particular pedagogical and curricular *content* (especially the content found in textbooks and standards). By examining the expressive modes of instruction in social studies classrooms we can shift our attention to how social studies teachers constitute the objects of their pedagogy, which in this dissertation study have been particular fantasies about America. To think in this way requires reading curriculum and pedagogy not as distinct objects, but as expressions to be read that make certain readings of the world and of ideas possible. Reading curriculum and pedagogy as text is one methodological orientation suitable for critical work in social studies education research. As Segall (2002) asserts "there is no one, single, authorized text of any phenomenon…from which to start one's (different) reading; no agreed-on version on which to base one's investigation" (p. 8). The expressions I have analyzed in this dissertation are ones that appeared to me not only through the processes of coding I employed to find emerging themes, but also ones that I felt to be of crucial significance, samples I selected to exhibit and explain. They came to me just as much as I came to them. They stuck out and demanded to be read. The analyses of the findings I assembled in these three articles are by no means generalizable nor final; rather, they are examples that allow me to construct a theory of expressive modes and pedagogical forms that give shape to ideologies about America in social studies teaching.

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