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## Safe Sex as Patriotic Ideograph in Wartime STD Prevention Campaigns

Jessica Ann Johnson  
*San Jose State University*

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<SAFE SEX> AS PATRIOTIC IDEOGRAPH IN WARTIME STD PREVENTION  
CAMPAIGNS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Communication Studies

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Jessica A. Johnson

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<SAFE SEX> AS PATRIOTIC IDEOGRAPH IN WARTIME STD PREVENTION  
CAMPAIGNS

by

Jessica A. Johnson

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

August 2013

Dr. Anne Marie Todd      Department of Communication Studies

Dr. Andrew Wood      Department of Communication Studies

Dr. Kathleen McConnell      Department of Communication Studies

## ABSTRACT

### <SAFE SEX> AS PATRIOTIC IDEOGRAPH IN WARTIME STD PREVENTION CAMPAIGNS

by Jessica A. Johnson

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are a problem that has afflicted people in the USA for centuries. Health communication and mass communication scholars have attempted to determine the effectiveness of STD prevention campaigns. It is crucial for scholars to take into account the persuasiveness of these campaigns and beliefs that become significant to these campaigns.

This rhetorical history examines how <safe sex> acted as a patriotic ideograph in World War I and II STD prevention campaigns. A history of war and knowledge associated with STDs gives readers a broad overview of the cultural aspects that are a part of the context of this time. Examining <safe sex> using this method allows for expansion on the notions of how identification, normalization, and stigma affected STD prevention campaigns. Using Foucault's insights on discipline, this research shows how patriotism becomes the reward of the microgesture of practicing <safe sex>. This study concludes by addressing broader implications and questions for advertisers and researchers in ways that encourage the question: how do culture and ideals become involved in STD prevention campaigns?

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are generally increasing in America. There are more than 20 million new infections annually in America (Centers for Disease Control, 2013). Campaigns against STDs use a variety of strategies. Public service advertisements plastered on buses in Denver, Colorado, target teenagers with the phrase “I have Riff-Raff in my Hoo Hoo” (ABC News, 2012). An internet ad, “Safer Sex for Seniors,” features a video of senior citizens in various sexual positions while techno music beats in the background. The video ends with the number of seniors with STDs and the message: “While there are many ways to do it, there is only one way to do it safely. Use a condom.” (Stallone, 2012). These ads define safe sex to raise awareness of the risk of sexually transmitted diseases. The phrase “safe sex” is not always explicitly stated, but the idea of safe sex conveys knowledge and suggests action.

Today’s public humor about safe sex is vastly different from sexual health propaganda decades ago. Vintage posters about STDs are making a popular comeback. Websites such as [www.icanhasinternets.com](http://www.icanhasinternets.com) and [www.excusememe.com](http://www.excusememe.com) feature lists of “30 terrifically terrifying STD ads” and “Tastefully Offensive: STDs.” Those websites are two examples that STD ads have become an internet meme. What is the fascination with vintage STD ads? How does this inform how we think about STDs today? These historical ads are part of contemporary public discourse about STDs. However, they can do more than make people laugh; they can show broader attitudes and values about safe sex.

<Safe sex> is an ideograph.<sup>1</sup> An ideograph is a rhetorical strategy that expresses complicated ideas in a persuasive way. <Safe sex> is an ideograph because it functions as a phrase (explicitly stated or implied) that stands for many things. In practice, safe sex could mean wearing a condom, having sex with only one partner, using birth control, getting tested, or getting treatment. This term not only gives audiences knowledge of what it means to engage in safe sex, but it persuades people how to think and behave in society.

<Safe sex> communicates a set of beliefs and values that reveals something about our culture. The vintage STD ads show that <safe sex> is an ideograph used historically to persuade people to practice safe sex. In my research on historical STD campaigns, I found that this vintage American STD propaganda published during World War I and World War II is a particularly interesting rhetorical artifact. Wartime STD prevention campaigns use provocative patriotic messages to promote safe sex practices. This thesis is an ideographic analysis of STD ads during this period and I find that <safe sex> is a patriotic ideograph used during wartime. This first chapter provides historical context for understanding historical and contemporary STD messages in America. First, I discuss sexual health campaigns in American history then I focus specifically on sexual health propaganda in World Wars I and II.

### **Sexual Health Communication in American History**

STDs have presented a health concern in America since the 16<sup>th</sup> century when syphilis was widely spreading across Europe and many writers were blaming travelers

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<sup>1</sup> I will follow the common practice in communication scholarship to use brackets “<>” to indicate an ideograph.

from the New World (Britannica Inc., 2013). The spread of STDs in America has been a public health issue for centuries, prompting numerous prevention campaigns aimed at various audiences. Health campaigns did not gain momentum for a few centuries. As new structures and developments expanded in America so did the issue of public health.

Beginning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, governments and public service agencies began to address issues of sexual health. The earliest sexual education pamphlets in the U.S. addressed theology, nutrition, and the “immense evils” of masturbation. Sylvester Graham (who invented the graham cracker to prevent venereal urges) traveled throughout the east coast in the 1830s to warn against “self-pollution” and made claims that masturbation caused warts, constipation, and death. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, health reformers equated bodily discipline with the ideal man and created pamphlets encouraging people to avoid self-satisfying methods. John Todd created a student manual in 1835 to help warn students about the dangers of masturbation (Cornblatt, 2009). In 1880, Prince Albert Morrow translated the pamphlet “Syphilis and Marriage” into English and launched a campaign in America, declaring venereal disease as a threat to family life (Carter, 2001). In 1892, the National Education Association began a campaign for moral education in schools. Two decades later, Chicago was the first major city to implement sexual education in high schools (although the Catholic Church quickly put an end to this campaign and forced the superintendent of schools to resign) (Cornblatt, 2009).

During the Progressive Era, from the 1890s to the 1920s, the federal government set out to dispel some sexual inaccuracies such as the pervasive rumor that gonorrhea was only as serious as a bad cold and the wide-held belief sexual activity was necessary for a

man's health. Educators warned of the seriousness of sexually transmitted diseases and encouraged a pure family life (Carter, 2001). Religion largely dictated the message in early STD prevention campaigns that framed personal and public health as a moral issue.

In 1918, the earliest sex education film, *Damaged Goods*, warned teenagers (understood as future soldiers due to the framing of the film as an impact on the military) of the consequences of syphilis. The movie depicted the terrible consequences of abusing moral law and pleaded audiences to abstain from premarital sex in order to prevent disease and bad hereditary traits. In 1920, the American Social Hygiene Association (ASHA) produced a sex education film, *The Gift of Life*, which cautioned students against masturbation, warning it would hinder boy's pursuit towards manhood. Around the same time, an English teacher named Lucy Curtiss wrote an article called "Sex Instruction Through English Literature" that encouraged teachers to use classical literature to explain sex to students (Cornblatt, 2009). By 1927, 45% of American high school students received sex education (Carter, 2001). That same year ASHA established the Valentine's Day Committee to promote public discussions about moral standards in heterosexual relationships and push for higher ideals in expressions of love (ASHA, 2012). The group gave lectures to church groups and distributed flyers with their new Valentine's Day messages.

### **Sexual Health Propaganda in World Wars I and II**

While most people might not associate the military with national health policy, militaries have addressed STDs for centuries. Syphilis had a substantial impact on military troops. In 1776, a Swedish physician wrote *The Diseases Incident to Armies*

*with the Method of Cure*, a text describing symptoms as ulcers on the penis and difficulty urinating. However, public knowledge remained limited due to misrepresentations of health science or lack of information. The statistics of syphilis before WWI were difficult to find because researchers grouped all venereal diseases (mostly syphilis and gonorrhea) together (Rasnake, 2005).

In WWI, the federal government engaged in sex education in response to rampant growth in the number of soldiers with STDs (Rasnake, 2005). Most pamphlets distributed information to soldiers about the medical consequences of venereal disease, some couched in empathetic messages, notably that soldiers were innocent victims of sinful prostitutes (Carter, 2001). A group of public health reformers committed to attacking venereal disease formed the ASHA in 1914. ASHA worked with governmental agencies, small companies, and local governments and was the first major group in America to create campaigns to prevent STDs (ASHA, 2012). Advertisements used surgeons or military officers to endorse messages. In the World War I era, surgeons were authority figures that gave advice to soldiers. One advertisement, “Surgeon Sage” (1915), presents an officer pointing at the audience with the writing by him as the focus, which says, “Only a poor boob pays his money, loses his watch, gets the sylph, and brags that he had a good time” [Surgeon Sage].<sup>2</sup> The ad appealed to the authority of military command to communicate the consequences of sex. In 1918, Congress passed the Chamberlain-Kahn Act that funded education for soldiers to learn about syphilis and gonorrhea (Cornblatt, 2009).

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<sup>2</sup> In this thesis, I use brackets “[ ]” to reference ads by titles. In cases in which the archives did not state a title for the ad, I assigned one. Advertisement citations are listed separately from references.

Syphilis was a problem within the military during World War II, and thus enlisted men remained the biggest target audience for STD prevention campaigns. In the 1940s, ASHA and the military discussed coordinating efforts to control venereal diseases (VD) in the event of war. They reached an agreement after ASHA research showed a large number of military men were still contracting VD (ASHA, 2012). Although scientists discovered penicillin in 1929, researchers did not prove it effective for the treatment of syphilis until 1943. Many soldiers still went uncured due delay of diagnosis and lack of treatment availability (Rasnake, 2005). The number of soldiers who contracted syphilis but never sought treatment prompted the development of national awareness campaigns for prevention and treatment of the disease.

In 1937, the Federal Council of Churches and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers collaborated with ASHA to promote sex education programs (ASHA, 2012). These programs mainly urged the public to act morally, that is, to wait until marriage to engage in sexual behaviors. That same year ASHA also established the nation's first Social Hygiene Day to convince people that the "battle on the home front against venereal disease [is] nation-wide and does not depend upon transportation to rally fighting forces" (Legge, 1943, p. 391). Government propaganda expressed concerns about the destruction the diseases had on the military and pushed for the effective use of "scientific weapons" to defeat this disease. This was an effort to gain cooperation from health and welfare agencies to provide medicine and push communities to seek treatment. Campaigns put the disease in military terms to gain the attention of the government and show that this was just as important as the war. Five years later, in 1945, a different kind

of fighter, professional boxer Joe Louis, joined ASHA for a major public awareness campaign (ASHA, 2012). The celebrity endorsement added notoriety to the issue and asked Americans to join the fight against STDs.

### **Preview**

Wartime propaganda promoting STD prevention uses <safe sex> as a patriotic ideograph to persuade soldiers and the public to practice safe sex. Chapter Two discusses how previous research framed STD prevention campaigns in terms of exposure, social norming, and stigma. Chapter Three introduces the methodological approach that informs this study. Chapter Four is an analysis of <safe sex> in World War I and II posters. In Chapter Five, I offer conclusions and discuss the implications of my research.

## **Chapter 2: A Rhetorical Perspective on Health Communication**

The study of health communication has focused on the influence of a population's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors through awareness of health threats and practices (Kreps et al., 2009). Campaign analysis usually examines specific outcomes and/or effects on specific groups. Health campaigns typically deploy a set of communication media, (e.g., announcements, pamphlets, or videos during a specific period) (Noar, 2006). Health communication research tends to examine if these sets of communication activities led to the desired effects of the campaign and what unintended effects the campaigns may have had on the public. Much of this research conducted is quantitative. Public health research, while outside of communication, is another field that has widely covered the topic of STD prevention campaigns. Most of the research divides into categories of exposure and identification, social norming, and stigma.

### **Exposure and Identification**

Health campaign designs typically engage an audience to teach them preventative measures against disease or illness. Both anti-smoking movements and STD awareness campaigns focus on prevention. Health and mass communication scholars study most of these health campaigns. Research usually examines the effectiveness of health education campaigns, but researchers also need to examine the potential undesirable effects (Cho & Salmon, 2007).

Mass communication scholarship examined the impact of exposure to sexual content on sexual health for decades. Walsh-Childers and Brown (2009) examined sexuality displayed on television programs and found that characters engage in casual sex

but never discuss STDs. Many forms of media echo this theme. Television programs hardly display consequences of sexuality. Cope-Farrar and Kunkel (2002) conducted a content analysis that showed only 14% of discussions about sex on TV mentioned the risk and responsibilities, and only 3% mentioned risk combined with sexual behavior (Harris & Barlett et al., 2009). Few broadcast programs discuss sexual risk and even fewer show sexual behavior as actually having consequences. Television audiences, therefore, may not believe exposure to STDs is a possible consequence of unprotected sex.

Media scholars have made a connection between STD prevention efforts and a lack of STD discussions between sexual partners. Cline, Johnson, and Freeman (1992) found that the “Talk to Your Partner” AIDS prevention campaign did not have an impact on condom use and might have caused more risky behaviors. They found that teens learned that they should talk to their partners, but most only asked their partner about his or her AIDS status without engaging in additional testing or condom use. Apparently, teens felt that by simply discussing the issue, they were no longer at risk, and thus engaged in more risky behaviors (Cline, Johnson, and Freeman 1992). Health campaigns have changed their approach to address this boomerang effect, but large numbers of people exposed to STD prevention campaigns will nonetheless engage in risky sexual practices. Researchers continue to examine how to create effective techniques to get audiences to not only discuss STDs, but also use effective techniques to prevent disease.

Researchers in health communication explore the negative effects of health campaigns and discuss the need for social change to support effective health

communication. For example, Peak and Gunther (2007) examined the media influence on adolescent smoking and found social influence explains the public's perceptual biases and opinions regarding this issue. More teens were inclined to smoke after watching anti-smoking commercials because they believed that the consequences did not apply to them. More teens decided not to smoke or to smoke less if they believed anti-smoking messages influenced their peers. The effects of the media on smoking had some unintended effects, sometimes changing and sometimes reinforcing beliefs.

While some problems may arise when audiences do not think that the consequences of sex apply to them, another issue occurs when audiences do not realize they are part of the target audience. Haslam et al. (2009) explained that consumers of health campaigns sometimes believe they are not the target for the message and thus react against the health related messages.

African Americans and American Indians who were exposed to messages about dieting that they saw as emanating from White middle-class sources came to see health-related behavior as non-normative for their group (as if to say "health is not a thing we do") and expressed less desire and intention to pursue healthy lifestyles. (Haslam, 2009, p. 10)

They found that when people do not identify with messages, they disassociate themselves from the issue and believe they are not at risk because the characters portrayed are not part of their group. Similarly, observers of STD campaigns may not identify with portrayals of people with STDs and therefore disassociate from the message. Keller et.al. (2002) stated that audiences might resist public service announcements as selling a particular behavior because of their infrequency and simplistic messages. This research suggests that characters in ad campaigns are often too simplistic or unrealistic, so people

do not identify with them and thus do not see themselves as at-risk of getting an STD. By reducing people to an overly simplistic image of negative characteristics, advertisements separate these people from society and therefore do not work.

For ads that aim to increase public awareness of risk of exposure to STDS, identification with people with STDs may be important. Kennedy et al. (2007) studied condom use of African American males in accordance with a condom promotion program. They found that campaigns that changed perception of people with STDs increased favorable attitudes towards using condoms and made social and personal connections to HIV/STDs. Researchers need to make more connections between how campaigns can change audience perceptions of safe sex.

### **Social Norming**

Some health research argues that changing individual perceptions of safe sex requires a change in social norms. Cho and Solmon's (2007) article discussed social reproduction and social norming as effects of health campaigns.<sup>3</sup> These two specific effects are important from a rhetorical perspective because they draw on social meaning. Social reproduction is the reinforcement of existing social distributions of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors rather than changing the conceptualizations of them. Morgan (2011) discussed how social reproduction has an impact on some health campaigns.

Society stigmatizes certain health issues, such as being HIV positive, and identification of an individual as a sufferer may shame, marginalize, or isolate him or her from society. Sensitivity and care in campaign design and implementation can alleviate perpetuation of such social norming. (Morgan, 2011,

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<sup>3</sup> Cho and Solmon (2007) name eleven unintended effects of public health communication: obfuscation, dissonance, epidemic of apprehension, culpability, desensitization, opportunity cost, social reproduction, social norming, enabling, system activation, and boomerang (pp. 304-306).

p. 4)

Campaign designers stigmatize individuals through social norming. Social norming is the social cohesion of groups in media campaigns. This unintended effect of health campaigns occurs through the representation of a certain group in one way, such that stereotyping becomes a form of negative social norming. Such prevention advertisements depict what it means to be a person infected with an STD and what it means to be clean. The accompanying result is marginalization by portraying people with STDs in a negative and often distorted light. This is harmful because campaigns via “social norming can render individuals to shame and isolation” (Cho & Solmon, 2007, p. 305). Mass dissemination of messages reinforces marginalization. Social norming occurs through stigmatization of individuals in health campaigns. Advertising creates social norms of what it means to be healthy, ergo desirable. The result is a shameful out-group in society who do not fit into the media constructed symbol of disease-free.

Some public health researchers have applied Social Cognitive Theory to analyze past health campaigns to aid planning of future health campaigns. Galavotti (2001) suggested that behavioral interventions to prevent HIV/AIDS are most effective when they provide personalized models of desired behaviors linked to social and cultural narratives. The research suggests STD prevention is most effective when education links media and interpersonal activities. Effective strategies account for opportunities in the environment and combine aspects of individual behavior with efforts to change social norms. From a social cognitive perspective, to be most effective, mediated messages must increase “positive outcome expectations, increase people’s sense of self efficacy,

and remove impediments” (Galavotti, 2001, p. 1602). This perspective suggests that campaigns would be most effective if audiences were educated through role modeling. Campaign messages influence audiences’ expectations of people with STDs by creating social and cultural narratives about this group.

I turn to Michel Foucault, a French philosopher who discussed issues of stigma and normalizing structures in society, for his ideas of the normalization of sexuality. Foucault wrote three volumes collectively entitled *The History of Sexuality* (1990) in which he discussed the normalization of sexual practices and the stigmatization of sex in public discourse. Foucault used the term normalization to reveal how social structures create power.

Foucault (1977) explained how normalization creates binaries of moralities not perceived by society. Institutions perpetuate what is normal by homogenizing groups by forcing them to conform and individualizing groups through assessments. This process “combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgment” (Foucault, 1977, p. 184). The norm introduces individual differences in a homogenized setting. Power produces reality through domains of objects and rituals of truth. Society no longer judges individual (mis)conduct by separate criteria, but in regards to a departure from the norm (Foucault, 1977).

Foucault stated that sexual discourse reveals other power relations that are already in place that bring about homogenization, stigmatization, and opposition. There is inherent control over sexual activities in society members due to individuals’ lack of knowledge of themselves and others. Individuals internalize the norms put forth by the

sciences of sexuality and conform to these norms by monitoring themselves. Relating Foucault's discussion of the cultural production of difference as a formulation of power can show how stigmatization leads to a simplified and misrepresented notion of what is normal.

Foucault (1980) discussed the social exclusion that certain groups feel as a result of "the gaze." "The gaze" describes institutional oversight that makes groups visible to government systems and creates an anxious state when people or groups become aware that they are visible. The gaze causes people to be aware of the normalizing behaviors and stigmatizes those who do not act within those behaviors.

Foucault (1995) discussed a similar gaze in terms of the panopticism as a form of punishment. Panopticism is a surveillance system model, based on Bentham's prison structure, in which society encloses prisoners in a cylindrical segmented space where the prisoners can only see a surveillance tower called a panopticon. This central tower acts as a laboratory of power in which someone can utilize the tower to watch all of the prisoners. Prisoners never know if there is someone in the tower or not, so they monitor their own actions to avoid punishment. Foucault (1995) explained:

He who is subjected to a field to visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (Foucault, 1995, pp. 202-203)

In this way, the surveillance no longer enacts the power alone, but the targeted population also engages in this power of discipline. Over time, the self-monitoring actions reinforce and reorganize the prison's internal mechanisms of power into a homogenized

environment in which the guards are no longer necessary. Through panopticism, the prisoner enacts the discipline through self-control.

Foucault (1990) discussed repressive and discursive power in order to understand self-discipline. Repressive power refers to the regulations by society members in order to control people. Discursive power refers to the micro politics, (e.g. norms, behaviors, and values that people use to govern their lives). Advertisements attempt to use repressive power upon audiences to control their urges and the audiences use discursive power to control their actions in relation to the advertisements.

I argue that advertisements function panoptically to highlight the punishments people would face and normalizes good behavior. Through this gaze, society pushes people to surveillance themselves. One main way people discipline themselves is through the normalized act of self-control. People learn to control their own sexual urges. Patriotism and <safe sex> act rhetorically as guidelines for ways to achieve this self-discipline. Society normalizes these acts through the surveillance structure of the advertisements.

### **Stigma**

Stigma is one of many factors that prevent people from seeking health care (Avert, 2012). Thus, stigma has led to the spread of STDs and an underestimation of the numbers of people infected (Avert, 2012). Research from both the mass communication and health communication fields has shown how stigma is present in health campaigns through the prevalent use of character identification. The principle of identification is for audiences to perceive the message as relevant to their lives. The health and media fields have also studied HIV/AIDS stigmatization. Even though most Americans know the

basic information about HIV, stigmatization still occurs. “As of 2006, one in five Americans (21%) say they would be ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ uncomfortable working with someone with HIV/AIDS, and more than a third (39%) would be uncomfortable living with someone with HIV/AIDS” (Davis, 2006, p. 5). These attitudes are not unique to America. Goh (2008) examined how the news coverage of the Singapore government blamed homosexuals for the rise of HIV/AIDS cases. The Singaporean government framed homosexuals as promiscuous and contrary to the country’s traditional values. This led to the government using its power to subvert homosexuality in Singapore. This demonstrates how stigmatization of individuals leads to oppression of individuals who go against the norms. This creates a segmented population in which some feel free to act naturally in their environment and others cannot.

Researchers have also discussed stigma as a format utilized in health campaigns. Smith (2007) discussed how the media depict health topics in challenge or stigma formats. For example, the media stigmatize health issues like STDs by presenting them as result of patient behavior rather than unfortunate circumstance. The media depict people with lung cancer as smokers who should have known better and depict women with breast cancer as innocent people who were unlucky. This example shows how media frames certain health concerns in different ways, often using the powerful rhetorical strategy of stigma. Public health research suggests ways to understand the role of campaigns in prompting behavior change both positively and negatively.

Similarly, Li et al. (2009) found a link between exposure to media messages related to HIV/AIDS in China and attitudinal and behavioral changes. They examined a

segment of the Chinese population's associations with HIV transmission, knowledge of the disease, and attitudes about people living with HIV/AIDS. There was a positive correlation between media images in prevention campaigns and stigmatization of people with STDs. Most of the participants in their study believed that people with HIV/AIDS were gay men and foreigners. The stigmatization affected the behaviors of the population.

Research on campaign rhetoric shows how depictions of people with STDs can lead to the increased transmission of STDs in general. Smith and Hipper (2010) investigated how members of a stigmatized health group cope. They found that putting health labels on people can encourage behaviors of secrecy and withdrawal or motivation to seek education. Observers of STD prevention advertisements learn to stigmatize people with diseases and cause them feel ashamed.

Taken in the context of public health messages, we can see stigmatization as a central rhetorical strategy to the establishment and maintenance of social order. Stigma is culturally constructed. The construction of stigma is the joining of systems of power to design difference between groups of people.

Stigma and stigmatization function, quite literally, at the point of intersection between *culture, power and difference*-and it is only by exploring the relationships between those different categories that it becomes possible to understand stigma and stigmatization not merely as an isolated phenomenon, or expressions of individual attitudes or of cultural values, but as central to the constitution of the social order.

(Parker, 2007, p. 9)

This has major implications for how researchers might investigate and respond to stigma involving STDs. Sexual health propaganda shows that America's persuasive techniques indoctrinate audiences to believe people with STDs fit into a certain negative stereotype.

Mass communication and public health research is necessary for understanding the scope of the problems with STD prevention campaigns. Previous research has mainly examined the effectiveness of campaigns. Media and health scholars usually discuss exposure and identification in terms of effectiveness instead of rhetorically analyzing the display of character themes as persuasive strategies. Rhetoricians should study campaigns because they influence attitudes and behaviors about people with STDs through persuasive messages. Research reviewed here reveals identification, social norming, and stigmatization as important communication strategies for STD prevention.

Rhetorical criticism adds a persuasive element to health communication and mass communication on this topic. While health communication and mass communication research do address some issues of identification, normalization, and stigmatization, they do so in a largely quantitative fashion. By highlighting the rhetorical aspect of these devices in the advertisements audiences can understand them as strategic tools. This methodology allows observers to understand the ideologies reinforced in advertisements that may help to explain the effectiveness or prevalence of these structures. This thesis expands our understanding of STD campaigns by examining the rhetoric of historical STD propaganda.

I explore the rhetoric of ideographs used in STD prevention campaigns. While stigmatization occurs globally, I am focusing on the particular norms and ideologies conveyed in STD campaigns in the United States. The ideographic analysis shows larger social, cultural, and political values that frame how public discourse constructs health issues. Health communication goes beyond preventing people from contracting diseases

and increasing awareness of treatment options. Viewed rhetorically, the goal of health communication is to persuade people to act in certain ways. For example, health advertisements promote safe sex behaviors as socially productive character traits. These character traits are not just desirable from a public health perspective but reflect a broader social significance of individual behaviors.

In this research, I discover that a rhetorical analysis of safe sex discourse can allow us to understand broader social and historical context of STD campaigns. Specifically, I find that the ideograph <safe sex> provides a lens to understand identification, social norming, and stigma displayed in patriotic STD prevention campaigns. In the next chapter, I will explain how rhetorical criticism can shed light on these persuasive strategies.

### **Chapter 3: Rhetorical History**

This thesis is a rhetorical history, a rhetorical criticism situated within a historical context. Rhetorical criticism is an analysis of persuasive discourse that reveals the normative functions of an artifact, in this specific case sexually transmitted diseases (STD) advertisements. I use historical context to provide meaning to the ads and understand how messages evolved along with different historical periods. The focus is on the ideas of exposure and identification, social norming, and stigmatization that come from these STD prevention campaign posters. Rhetorical criticism reveals the influences of the campaigns.

This chapter discusses my methodology. This process is about analyzing the text and images in the awareness campaigns to show how their design strategically and significantly transforms material events in the world through history. I first explain how rhetorical criticism is foundational for rhetorical history. Next, I discuss rhetorical history as a methodological approach. Then, I specifically discuss the rhetorical concept of the ideograph, which is the focus of my rhetorical history. Finally, I explain how I conducted this rhetorical history with a significant historical archive of STD advertisements.

#### **Rhetorical Criticism**

Rhetorical criticism should consider the larger social, political, and cultural forces that inform specific instances of rhetorical practice (Black, 1978). A rhetorical criticism is supposed to reveal the ideologies of humankind with the objective of understanding humanity itself (Black, 1978). “The critic can, in short, assess all the differences a

rhetorical discourse has made and will make, and how the differences are made and why” (Black, 1978, p. 74). I show how the rhetoric of STD campaign advertisements used in the past century expands beyond the immediacy of their exigencies and affects current ideologies surrounding people with STDs.

Current communication research on health campaigns is critical for examining the problem of STDs and campaign effectiveness. My review of the literature indicates that a rhetorical criticism is necessary for revealing the underlying ideologies associated with these campaigns. Cherwitz and Hikins (2000) stated that scholars could then use rhetoric to not only explore a new area, but also to build a new knowledge base through the decoupling of rhetoric and philosophy. Rhetoric is not in opposition of science-based health research. “We defend a theory of argument which retains for both science and rhetoric important roles in the process of knowledge acquisition” (Cherwitz & Hikins, 2000, p. 380). By rhetorically researching a health issue I am expanding, not competing with, the acquisition of knowledge on this subject. Rhetoric and science work together to lend a broader understanding of the transmission of STDs.

The overall objective of rhetorical criticism is to function as a piece of art that gives subjective evaluations of public discourse instead of grand theories. The artistic aspect focuses on persuasive appeals used to design. “Criticism, as a specific performance of general rhetorical knowledge, yields a form of scholarship that obtains social relevance by strategically reconstructing the interpretive design of civic discourse in order to diminish, bolster, or redirect its significance” (Ivie, 1995, p. 1). The design of this research shows the significance of these STD campaigns on the public.

Klumpp and Hollihan (1989) noted that this way of analyzing text is to “move beyond its emphasis on structure and design of the text and expose the strategies through which rhetoric transforms the material events of the world into sociopolitical power” (p. 90). The public understands phenomena by the way they choose to discuss it. “...social order is *performed* in language” (Klumpp & Hollihan, 1989, p. 88). The criticism has consequences to the public as a moral impact.

The moral imperative demands that the critic recognize that a society remakes its values in responding to problems and opportunities through rhetorical choice. The critic studies the rhetorical moment as a point in time when the appearance of the novel places a premise of the social order at risk; the response to the moment can reinforce the values and motivational approval of the society or contribute to the process of change in the society. (Klumpp & Hollihan, 1989, p. 90)

My research has a moral imperative because of the growing health toll of STDs. This means the rhetorical choices of these campaigns have an ethical dimension. Rhetorical moments reveal the social order throughout time, including what is valued, approved of, and disapproved of in society.

Rhetorical criticism seeks to find justice for groups wrongly portrayed in society’s persuasive messages. This is why criticism has an ethical purpose. “Criticism is the process of evaluation, i.e., the process of locating an object of criticism within a value system, but most critics agree that evaluation is dependent upon description and interpretation” (Sullivan, 1993, p. 341). Using the object of criticism, STD prevention campaigns, I reveal how the values and attitudes surrounding STDs have evolved over specific periods. This criticism reveals how health campaign rhetoric stigmatizes social groups and thus allows us to reflect on injustices fostered by these campaigns.

In rhetorical criticism, the researcher's perspective connects to the analysis of data. "Since no one can see the whole of any process from every conceivable vantage point all at once, a person must pick some perspective" (Brockriede, 1978, p. 6). I analyze this from a perspective that examines <safe sex> from the vantage point of the current era looking back on the past. I create a road map of sorts for reading these artifacts, and I acknowledge my perspective as a rhetorical scholar. "Maps are necessarily selective, partial and constructed to serve specific interest and purposes. They can be judged for their usefulness only with respect to such interests and purposes" (Schiappa et al., 2002, p. 114). My interest and purpose is to map how the concept of safe sex in advertisements rhetorically constructs a patriotic idea during wartime.

### **Rhetorical History**

In order to examine the changing messages in STD campaign posters over time, I employ the method of rhetorical history. Rhetorical history is an analysis of how artifacts utilize persuasive messages over time or within a particular context. It is an analysis of the relationship between symbolic elements in public action. Conducting a rhetorical history reveals the strategies in which dominant rhetorical structures of STD prevention advertisements create popular ideologies about STDs. By examining the context in which the message is constructed the reader gets a better understanding of how campaigns stigmatize people with STDs.

The analysis reveals some of the underling ideologies of certain historical periods. Zarefsky (1998) described the importance of rhetoric in shaping history and argued that by examining historical rhetoric we can gain insight into the exigencies and motivations

of particular historical periods. Rhetoric is a continuum of text and context that shows how symbols motivate humans towards action. By examining historical records, a rhetorician can reengage the discussion from the past through the lens of current actions and beliefs.

This approach allows me to cultivate insights in a way that interprets the impact on the public. When Tumolo (2011) called for a “useful history that serves as a repository of knowledge, insight, and inspiration for contemporary action,” he argued that a rhetorical account of history is important for examining the persuasive techniques for how we act, think, and judge (p. 59). We understand history rhetorically, as a persuasive message. People judge the past based on the telling and framing of history. History is an instrument for creating public memory and reveals the limitations of human agency in particular contexts. This process of recounting history reveals the predictability of how people act in these contexts.

This thesis is a rhetorical history that specifically addresses representations of STD campaigns in America during World Wars I and II. Through this analysis, I seek to understand broader social conflicts that cause stigmatization around controversial health issues. I create a narrative through the bracketed sequence of artifacts, sorted by time and space, which Gronbeck (1994) described as a way of creating a collective memory for the past events. This “narrativization” creates a story that will share what social lessons are recognizable in STD prevention campaign posters at different times (Gronbeck, 1994, p. 52).

Tumolo (2011) stated the “historical perspective is a narrative that serves varying, at time conflicting, purposeful ends. In this paradigm, the value of history hinges on its usefulness to think through contemporary problems in more expansive ways” (p. 61). By examining the past and the present in a succinct manner, people are able to acknowledge the reoccurring themes displayed in STD prevention campaigns. History allows researchers to understand ideographs in a nuanced way accounting for perspectives influenced by time.

### **Ideographs**

McGee (1980a) originated the idea of an ideograph as a series of symbols that create a social representation of ideas bound within a culture they define through artifacts. “If a mass consciousness exists at all, it must be empirically ‘present,’ itself a thing obvious to those who participate in it, or, at least, empirically manifested in the language which communicates it” (McGee, 1980a, p. 4). This method allows me to manage the relationship between text and context as McGee (1990) suggested contemporary scholars be aware of to understand America. The interpretations of the text as well as the construction of the text are crucial. I take a finished text that presents itself as transparent and consider its structural components. I display the salience of this text in a particular time and reveal the attitudes and beliefs behind the advertisements. While I am only focusing on a part of the speculative whole, my study does not presume homogeneity in the history. These are formations of the advertisements, which I examine as fragments and treat as a singular text to interpret, analyze, and criticize (McGee, 1990).

Numerous scholars have utilized ideograph analysis to demonstrate the persuasive power of textual and visual representations of a concept (Cloud, 2004; Edwards & Winkler, 1997; Moore, 1997; Palczewski, 2005; Pineda & Sowards, 2007). Edwards and Winkler (1997) examined photographs and editorial cartoons as representations that function ideographically to influence arguments in key points in history. Multiple messages reinforce the same ideas through slightly varied images. In historical analysis of ideographs, looking for repeated patterns across eras can reveal how issues and ideas evolve across different points of time.

Ideographs reflect our culture and encapsulate our values. The ideograph is a powerful rhetorical tool that influences what people believe: “Human beings are ‘conditioned’ not directly to belief and behavior, but to a vocabulary of concepts that function as guides, warrants, reasons, or excuses for behavior and belief” (McGee, 1980a, pp. 5-6). The narrow conceptualization of an idea creates normative beliefs. Ideographs have “romanticized our own normative commitments, reified them until many are convinced that ‘liberty’ is an objective state or condition which in name only adheres by fiat of definition to Anglo-American political systems” (McGee, 1980b, p. 45). Dysart-Gale (2007) explored the cultural aspect of ideographs in North America through the examination of caregiving, which provides a theoretical underpinning for the evolving meaning of terms related to values. Ideographs help identify common ground upon which people negotiate meaning and consensus.

Ideographic images are persuasive arguments in society. Pineda and Sowards (2007) argued that foreign flag waving during immigration demonstrations functions as a

visual ideograph for immigrants' status in society. Patriotism functions as an ideograph in the 2000s. Civil rights were still an issue during this period due to immigration debates. Congress was changing legislation, and there were major rallies in Los Angeles, California that drew large numbers of participants from across the nation. Foreign flags waved in such rallies represent larger ideas about immigrants. Specifically, this gesture demonstrates immigrants' failure to assimilate in society by engaging in deviant cultural practices and not complying with law enforcement. According to Pineda and Sowards (2007) the binary of the two ideographs of patriot and immigrant argue a clash between cultures happened during these demonstrations. While pictures do not offer a claim or supportive reasoning, the visual images act enthymematically for the audience to interpret. As Pineda and Sowards (2007) argue, "visual argument is powerful because the absence of verbal representation opens the contextual space in which the argument is situated. Freed from the rigid context of the verbal, visual arguments invite more fluid participation and interpretation" (p. 166). The context and audience become the forefront of discussion through the examination of visual arguments. The visual images can reveal larger social, political, or cultural binaries in society.

Similarly, an analysis of women's suffrage campaigns revealed the connection between ideographs created in visual postcards and ideologies related to the women's suffrage era and verbal arguments about woman's right to vote. Patriotism functions as an ideograph in the postcards, and this research traces the way this term changes in feminism. Patriotism changes during the eras due to historical moments and in light of certain issues in America (Palczewski, 2005). The representations of a male Madonna

and a feminine Uncle Sam in cartoon images of postcards feminized men, and thus changed the norms in society through ideographs.

Cloud (2004) argued that representations of Afghan women in U.S. media constitute an ideograph that constructs the idea of “white man’s burden.” Cloud (2004) reasoned that “visual ideographs are more than recurring iconic images that shift meaning depending on context; they also index verbal ideographic slogans, making abstractions such as <clash of civilizations> concrete” (p. 287). Words have power beyond the text and have evolved to signify a greater meaning, such that the image of a woman with a headscarf defines more than just that image of that woman. Ideographs (re)constitute ideas of people in a way that makes complex notions of interactions simple. Ideographs thus construct identity. Patriotism, as an ideograph, changes how Americans construct the identity of themselves and others. The ideograph of patriotism displays a clash between an other in society, in this case Afghan people.

Ideographs reveal a changing society. In Communist China, Lu (1999) analyzed how the political slogans functioned to meet the changing needs of society as well as the need for political authorities to gain control by altering the Chinese thought pattern in transforming from Confucianism to Maoism. This rhetorical strategy of public discourse unified public thoughts and functioned to agitate public actions and reactions. This functioned to teach the citizens “political correctness” (Lu, 1999, p. 494). Stuckey & Ritter (2007) used the ideograph of <human rights> to analyze the strategic use of association and dissociation in President George W. Bush’s actions, such as providing warrants for his actions while undermining them.

This thesis calls upon the link between ideographs and history. Ideographs are “persuasive because they are abstract, easily recognized, and evoke near universal and rapid identification within a culture” (Cloud, 1998, p. 2). Ideographs function as a rhetorical tool to abstract a concept to fulfill a normative goal. So one must first find the ideograph, situate it in a historical context, and then describe the structured tensions that arise. “Ideologies emerge from historical events and therefore are evident only in historical view” (Cloud, 1998, p. 4). Ideographs display the struggle of an object/subject over time and particular moments. Johnson (2007) contrasts between the “geographical” and “historical” ideograph to highlight the function of the meme through a materialism criticism of geographical orientation to historical modes of thought. The particular context establishes the meaning of an ideograph by referring to its history (Johnson, 2007).

Ideographs have a synchronic and diachronic function. The synchronic dimensions of the ideograph define terms based on consonance or clash with other ideographs. The related ideographs “produce a unity of commitment to a particular historical context” (McGee, 1980a, p. 436). By analyzing the diachronic function, I understand how the campaigns encapsulate our fears. These ideographs take place over time and create a unity of ideological beliefs. The approach of rhetorical history allows me to understand the shifts in ideographs and their meanings over time.

In isolation, each ideograph has a history, an etymology, such that current meanings of the term are linked to past usages of it diachronically. The diachronic structure of an ideograph establishes the parameters, the category of its meaning. All ideographs taken together, I suggest, are thought at any specific ‘moment’ to be consonant, and related to one another in such a way as to produce unity of commitment in a particular

historical context. Each ideograph is thus connected to all others as brain cells are linked by synapses, synchronically in one context at one specific moment. (McGee, 1980a, p. 16)

The diachronic aspect of ideographs is that fragmented artifacts have a range of uses in a particular history, while the synchronic aspect unifies the conceptualization in the present and how it relates to other ideographs in the same context. People only understand ideographs through their past usage and present usage in context with similar or opposing concepts in that period. Cloud (2005) argued that ideographs function diachronically to encapsulate our fears. The Afghan women in veils show oppression of society members. Viewers see these images and have a viewpoint that Muslim men subject these women to torment, and the wars in the media only display the violence to engrain fear into the system.

Patriotism exemplifies how ideographs function in a diachronic way. Towner (2010) analyzed comments the rock band the Dixie Chicks made about President George W. Bush and argued patriotism is an ideograph that communicates a wide variety of similar, yet distinct meanings. Through transcendence, <patriotic> moments lend themselves to a unified use of the concept for a broad variety of purposes.

Patriotism is a concept with multiple meanings. In general, patriotism can be thought of as “a natural and morally appropriate expression of attachment to the land where we were born and raised, and of gratitude we owe it for the benefits of life on its soil, among its people and under its laws” (Primoratz, 2008, p. 1). Patriotism has a moral dimension: it is “love of one’s country, identification with it, and special concern for its

well-being and that of compatriots” (Primoratz, 2008, p. 18). American patriotism relies on a democratic ethos and sense of self-government by promoting “political, social, and economic institutions conducive to political and moral autonomy” (Hansen, 2003, pp. 131-132). During wartime, patriotism is particularly persuasive. In World Wars I and II, patriotism was used to promote adherence to norms of the homefront, emphasizing “absolute self-control and self-mastery” (Hansen, 2003, p. 161). Throughout history, the U.S. government has spread its “information and propaganda” in movies to exhibit practical patriotism (DeBauche, 1997, p. 195). Wartime STD prevention campaigns are an example of this propaganda because <safe sex> is a patriotic ideograph. Before going into my analysis, I will explain my methodological process.

### **The Process**

My first step in this rhetorical history was to find an artifact from which I could evaluate patterns in rhetoric of STD campaigns. While the medium of health communication messages has changed over time, from radio, to television, and to the internet, posters have been a long-standing tradition in prevention advertising and will give a broad scope of the messages. A prominent archive of STD posters is “100 years of Sex,” a website presented by the San Francisco City Clinic. The purpose of the collection is to create institutional knowledge about safe sex. The clinic collected 100 STD advertisements between the dates of 1911-2011. The website commentary on the archive noted that some of the older posters seem scandalous and politically inappropriate while others seem scary, sexy, preachy, or naïve. “Perhaps more than anything, they tell the story of how society has viewed STD prevention and how our ideas about sex and

sexually transmitted diseases have evolved over time” (100 Years of Sex, 2013, para. 3). The archive functions to provide a sense of how <safe sex> has changed over one hundred years.

I began my initial analysis by examining each of the one hundred ads in the collection. I first cross-referenced each advertisement with its particular date by looking up the descriptions of the images or text in other archives to verify the publication of the advertisement fit in a particular historical era and was not a contemporary advertisement with a throwback to previous eras.

I recorded my initial thoughts about each ad, describing the images, noting any text, narrative, characters, or particular rhetorical devices. When looking at these archives I started to see patterns. I noticed that earlier posters included military men, prostitutes and later posters included minorities and gay men. I then noticed other major themes such as gambling, strength, morality, and patriotism. I made a concept map and identified subcategories that helped convey what each theme meant. Once I identified the themes, I classified each poster into one of these four themes. At this point, I made note of cross-themed ads and noticed how themes crossed eras. Some posters did not fall easily into any categories. I did not include posters that were global, published any time after WWII, and any outliers that did not fit within a theme or obviously share characteristics with other ads.

As I began selecting representative advertisements to discuss in my analysis, I noted that military-themed ads were among the most provocative in promoting <safe sex> and in fact, the theme of patriotism was dominant in almost all World War I and II

era posters. It became clear that the World Wars were a significant rhetorical moment in STD prevention history, and I came to see that analysis of <safe sex> as a patriotic ideograph in World War I and World War II STD prevention advertisements was the most exciting avenue for my thesis analysis.

I examined the revision of ideographic structure throughout history as an expression of public values. In an analysis of abortion rhetoric, Condit (1990) analyzed narrative and ideographic form and found that special terms used in the freedom of choice justifications revealed the American ideographic structure. Through a tracing of the development of the public discourse of the term abortion, Condit defined persuasion in narratives, characterizations, and ideographs.

Driven by this research, I acted as a critic and reveal what the embedded values in the ideograph of <safe sex>. Foss (1996) describes how rhetorical critics analyze text to discover the rhetorical construction of oppression. The role of the critic is to discover that the “dominant ideology revealed in an artifact suppresses the voices of important interests or groups seeks to explicate the role of communication in creating and sustaining the suppression and to give voice to those interests” (Foss, 1996, pp. 295-296).

Once I established patriotism as the driving force behind <safe sex>, I made minor changes to my themes and subthemes to create the outline I have now: security, strength, and morality. I then began organizing the fifty-six wartime STD ads into the different categories for an in-depth analysis of how these themes functioned as patriotic rhetoric. After I placed each poster into the correct category, I reexamined each advertisement within the context of patriotism. I used what I knew about identification,

social norming, and stigma to analyze how these advertisements functioned within the <safe sex> ideograph. I then wrote my analysis, weaving themes of security, strength, and morality to answer the following question:

RQ1: How does <safe sex> function a patriotic ideograph in wartime STD prevention campaigns?

## Chapter 4: Analysis

As an ideograph, <safe sex> communicates the values and beliefs of society. During World War I and II, American STD prevention campaigns used <safe sex> to inspire patriotic attitudes that would motivate safe sex practices. Patriotism acts as a conjoined ideograph that emphasizes the importance of the nation in individual citizens' lives and the role of individual efforts in supporting the nation. Three major themes emerge in the ads' depictions of <safe sex>: security, strength, and morality. These are essential elements of patriotism. These advertisements offer a look into how the nation saw itself in times of war.

### **Security**

During World Wars I and II many soldiers' lives were at risk. In addition, there was a sense that the nation's freedoms were at risk. Government propaganda emphasized national security to sell war bonds, promote rationing, and encourage conservation (World War II Homefront, n.d.). Notions of security at this time relied on the values of freedom that soldiers were fighting for during that period. Security is freedom from risk, freedom from danger, and freedom from insecurity. STD advertisements focus on the impact of security, generally educating people that STDs are a potential danger to the self and others. Security then is the opposite of risk. Security relies on a rhetoric of risk, communicated in a discourse of fear to promote symbolic awareness of danger. Shielding risk is about social control and a feature of the policies to control knowledge (Altheide, 2013, pp. 100-101). The ideograph of <patriotism> functions to promote the sense of security as vital to the country. The advertisements I examined warn of the risk

of STDs and present <safe sex> as the way to protect against this risk. <Safe sex> defines security through insecurity, and the advertisements portrayed security in three ways: in terms of gambling, chance, and threat.

**Gambling.** The campaigns I studied portray STDs as the result of risky behavior. This research references risk as an exposure to the chance of injury or loss (Altheide, 2013). While risk is often associated with danger or harm, it can sometimes seem exciting. Advertisements for Las Vegas and Reno, Nevada entice drivers on the San Francisco Bay Area's freeways promise excitement and reward if they visit those locations. STD ads use the metaphor of gambling to demonstrate the consequences of risky behavior. STDs require persuasive appeals because risky behaviors can be fun. STD advertisements portray gambling as a risky decision in which the people are never secure in their decisions. In other words, the ads portray people who engage in unsafe sex as risking losing much more than money; they may lose their life.

Many advertisements use the metaphor of gambling. One ad is a black and white illustration of a man in his mid-thirties with a stern expression on his face and a caption that reads, "Don't be a Dope...Play Safe!" [Don't be a dope]. Advertisements use the metaphor of gambling to assert the claim that unprotected sex is a game men do not want to play. These ads try to counter the excitement of gambling by explaining what people can lose, and arguing the unsafe sex is a risky game.

Soldiers were the center of many advertisements during the world wars. Advertisements targeted soldiers, featured soldiers, and contributed to the overarching narrative of wartime. Ads typically portrayed soldiers grappling with decisions about

risk. An ad published in 1940 depicts a military officer playing with dice. The tagline reads, “Don’t gamble with syphilis consult health authorities” [Don’t Gamble]. The soldier looks like he is having a good time: he raises his hand all the way in air preparing to toss the dice, his other hand tucks behind his back, while his legs bend forward in action. There is nothing modest about the way he is gambling. He is enthralled in the game. He has thrown one die already, and we can see that he is about to roll a “snake eyes” (two dice displaying one dot each). The snake eyes signify danger on multiple levels. The snake eyes is a losing roll in many games. The snake often represents evil and temptation; for example, it tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden. The snake is also a phallic symbol, which relates to the soldier’s own body. Either way he is going to lose his game. The poster explicitly warns men not to gamble while implicitly sending the message that if they avoid that risk, they will evade the disease. The bottom of the page advises them to consult the health authority to find out if they are at risk. The ad equates practicing unsafe sex to betting on games: both are socially unacceptable. Gambling is a metaphor for living carelessly and engaging in risky behaviors without thinking of the consequences.

The ads in this era portray sex as gambling and portray women as enticing creatures who persuade men to gamble with their health. A 1952 ad shows an attractive blonde woman with pouty lips, only wearing a pink bra, seductively staring at the observer while leaning back. The caption reads, “The Cards are Stacked...against any man who falls for her kind of man bait” [Man Bait]. A woman and her promise of sex is the bait that will lure men into her trap. The advertisement stresses this woman is not

playing fairly because she knows how to use her looks to lure men into sleeping with her. Like many ads, this poster stigmatizes women as dangerous. This ad portrays unsafe sex as playing with a stacked deck and shows the odds are against men who fall for unseemly women and engage in risky sex.

The metaphor of gambling functions as a rhetorical tool to persuade an audience that security is a social norm. Advertisements counteract the notion that gambling has rewards by portraying consequences as insecurity or risky behavior. Ads stigmatize sex as an illicit activity, and like gambling unsafe sex is a careless activity that will create insecurity. The ads also stigmatize women who tempt men into gambling with sex.

**Chance.** When people gamble in casinos, they play “games of chance.” In everyday life, people consider chance when they make decisions and evaluate the likelihood of consequences. In the 1940s, advertisements used the idea of chance to demonstrate that all people are at risk and the target of an unfavorable situation. To persuade Americans that STDS were a security risk, ads portrayed them as affecting everyone.

A large number of wartime STD advertisements centered on soldiers, but some targeted a broad audience of people who were likely to engage in sexual activity and warned that all people were at risk. One ad published in 1940 shows nine people standing around a swimming pool while one person floats alone in the water. The ad reads, “Syphilis strikes 1 in 10 before 50” [1 in 10]. The men and women outside the pool are wearing colorful bathing suits, talking with each other, and appear to be having fun. The man in the water represents the one person out of ten who has syphilis; he is

alone. The messages in this ad are that people can have fun without having sex and that people with syphilis are outcasts. The fact that the man is alone in the water suggests others are nervous to get in the water because they might contract the disease. This ad warns people that the chances of contracting a disease at a young age are high. All people are at risk if they take the chances of having unsafe sex.

Another ad published in 1940 shows a woman in a formfitting blue dress, cut just above her knees, leaning against a streetlamp [4 out of 5]. In large font, the caption reads, “4 out of 5 pickups have V.D. Guard your health.” Small letters at the bottom of the poster read, “Have you any doubts? See your doctor or local health department.” The big bold numbers imply that the chances are big. The ad states that there should be no doubt about the risk associated with casual sex. This is another example of stigmatization of women as the perpetrators of the disease.

Some ads used statistics to portray chance. A 1942 ad [98%] depicts a lineup of blonde women in brown dresses that extends far off the page. Three soldiers representing three branches of the military: Navy, Air Force, and Army look with their eyes wide open and mouths agape with interest at the women. A banner above the women reads, “98% of all procurable women have disease.” A note that seems pinned to the ad reads “Why bet against these odds?” The target audience of the ad is obvious, and the ad warns military men that the odds of getting a disease from a “procurable” woman (i.e. one whose services can be paid for) are so high that they are not worth taking the risk. The advertisement lines the women up in a way that suggests the endless temptation facing soldiers. The enormous number of prostitutes demonstrates the larger social problem of

living in a society at risk of coming in contact with immoral women. Advertisements also use the theme of chance to emphasize the importance of treatment. Two advertisements also published in 1940 feature statistics. One ad reads, “Syphilis six out of 10 cured because they didn’t wait too long” [6 out of 10]. Therefore, men who do take a risk and catch an STD have a greater chance of recovering if they see a doctor. Another ad claims, “8 babies out of 10 dead from syphilis” [8 out of 10]. Ads use chance to convince soldiers and other men that the chance that unsafe sex will have consequences is too great to risk.

The ads use the rhetoric of chance strategically to emphasize the risk of exposure. The logic of statistics demonstrates the likelihood of exposure. These expressions of chance establish social norms of testing and not being one of those who are unlucky. These ads stigmatize those who catch STDs, labeling them as outcasts. Further, advertisements stigmatize women as perpetrators of disease and a threat to society.

**Threat.** Wartime STD ads portray the dangers of sex against the backdrop of war, when the threat of the enemy lurked in the minds of Americans. STDs are a security risk because of the danger they pose to individuals who gamble with sex. STDs are a national threat, a common enemy.

Some ads personify STDs as an enemy. One ad that ran from 1936-1940 is a picture of a man wearing a gas mask with darkened lenses [Enlist]. The masked man stares down at three men in overalls walking below him. The men proudly march, as noted by their puffed-out chests. The ad portrays workers on the homefront similar to soldiers in the battle against STDs. By practicing safe sex, citizens defend the nation.

Advertisements sometimes anthropomorphize the disease into an animal or monster to defeat. A 1937 advertisement promoting education through National Social Hygiene Day displays a black and white photo of a cloaked knight on a white horse pointing a sword towards a monster in a cave. The advertisement labels what each piece of the picture represents. The knight's cloak says, "Nation-wide fight on venereal diseases." The sign on the cave says, "Mankind's ancient secretiveness and false modesty." The sword says, "Medical science and education." Lastly, above the monster is the word "syphilis." The message on the top of the advertisement states, "If we can get the beast out of his lair we'll win the fight" [The Beast]. The visual metaphors argue that Americans can use medicine and education as tools in the fight against STDs. The knight fights the human character flaws of secretiveness and false modesty that are causing VD, specifically syphilis.

Against the backdrop of World War II, weapons were already part of public discourse. Advertisements liken the impact of STDs to the physical danger of a weapon. A 1942 ad [Loaded?] features three attractive women: a blonde, a brunette, and a red head. One is seductively looking at the audience, and the other two are talking to each other. Above them, a gun points off to the side. The caption reads, "Loaded? Don't take chances with Pickups. VD is no V victory. Loose Women may also be loaded with Disease." The advertisement suggests that picking up women is as dangerous as shooting a loaded gun. Even though a gun is a phallic symbol, the women are the ones pulling the trigger. These "loose women" are a danger to society; their STDs are loaded cannons.

Just as soldiers protect the country, men can protect themselves and society by practicing safe sex.

The advertisements conflate the idea of prostitutes and the wartime enemy. Ads construct women as the enemy using wartime rhetoric. In a 1942 advertisement [Fight], a man in a military helmet with a stern look on his face gives an order to “Fight...syphilis and gonorrhea. Avoid exposure. Avoid pickups and prostitutes. If exposed, use prophylaxis. If infected, see a medical officer.” This ad sounds like a military order, a strategy for dealing with various contingencies. Ads draft Americans into the war against STDs.

The ads stress that the way to defeat the axis of evil is through protection. A 1942 ad, [Fool the axis] depicts three cartoon figures representing communist countries of Italy, Germany, and Japan marching in a unified line. These men represent the enemy that American soldiers fight in the battlefield. The caption reads, “Fool the axis-use prophylaxis. Prophylaxis prevents venereal disease!” The advertisement equates men who contract diseases to the communist enemy. Soldiers, and all men, can fool the communist and prevent the war by wearing a condom. The advertisement asserts that if Americans do not wear a condom, they are part of the axis of evil, and a threat to victory. A 1943 advertisement also uses images of the enemy to represent the threat of STDs [But prophylaxis prevents disease]. Images of three Nazis officers, including one who resembles Adolf Hitler, provide viewers with a new visual to associate with the disease. The caption reads, “American soldier could catch it with ease. Syphilis cancrroid, gonorrhea-VD. But prophylaxis prevents disease.” Here, rhyme acts rhetorically to

create a memorable message. Another ad uses wordplay to attract attention: “Sex exposure without prophylaxis pro axis. Venereal disease helps the enemy. Second Air Force” [Sex exposure without prophylaxis pro axis]. The message of this ad is that having sex without a condom helps the enemy win the war.

By communicating the real and physical danger that comes from gambling and taking chances with one’s sex life, these ads portray all sex as risky. The risks are too great to ignore these warnings. The danger always relates to physical injury or death. The warning is for people or other people in the future. The imagery emphasizes more in these advertisements than any other in risk does. The anthropomorphizing, or use of metaphor to help audiences understand the disease, lends an image to exposure of the disease.

Security is a central element of <safe sex> because it communicates that STDs are a danger and uses fear to motivate people to act differently. Through the understanding of insecurity, audiences become aware of the danger that something could happen and the odds are against them. The ideograph shows there is a risk and simultaneously provides Americans with a way to combat it. Ads portray risky sex as a gamble that threatens American security. By making the risk real to everyone, the advertisers want to express that it could happen to anyone and everyone should be hyper-vigilant, as the military is with snipers. The threat creates an enemy to defeat. As a rhetorical appeal, <safe sex> persuades audiences to use the tools of education and medical science the way soldiers would use a weapon to defeat an enemy. The storyline of good versus evil is metaphorically aligned with <safe sex> versus the enemy other. Ads convey <safe sex>

as essential to the security of the country. The ideograph of patriotism conveys that security is a need in the country that citizens must ensure to be patriots.

### **Strength**

Wartime STD prevention campaigns emphasize the threat of STDs to national defense and use <safe sex> as a display of strength. Advertisements particularize strength into patriotic strength, such as being a strong country through individuals. The ads describe prevention as essential to American strength. Strength means being physically and/or mentally able to deal with struggle. Calls to strength encourage people to persevere. “Army strong” may have been a short-lived recruiting campaign for the military, but strength is a popular theme in many social campaigns. For example, Lance Armstrong’s charity, Livestrong®, has been a motto since 2003 launched to support people affected by cancer (Livestrong Foundation, 2013). After the Boston Marathon bombings in 2013, the phrase “Boston Strong” became a catchphrase. Wartime STD prevention ads use the theme of strength to urge a commitment to safe sex. The categories that fit into this theme are strength through strong citizens, strong community, and strong country.

**Strong Citizens.** The ads emphasize the strength of citizens in important decisions. People in the ads face hard decisions about preventing STDs and seeking treatment. The ads present a person’s character as central to surviving challenges and threats. The advertisements describe Americans as having strong character. The ads use soldiers as model citizens who inspire a vicarious experience of struggle everyone can rise up from and use for future battles.

Advertisements put forth the idea that safe sex keeps America strong. One 1940's text-based ad reads, "America needs strong men and women. You can help...by guarding against syphilis and gonorrhea" [America needs]. This advertisement promotes safe sex practices as an important part of the national defense. Just as soldiers fight a war on the battlefield, Americans fight against disease, a war on the home front. Other advertisements during this period promoted the sale of bonds, scrap collection, etcetera. to build weapons against the enemy. The ads promote physical strength and strength of character as the main weapons in the complex fight against STDs.

The advertisements focus on strength of character and guard against bravado of soldiers who might boast about sexual encounters. A 1942 ad, [Prove] shows two sailors fighting in the middle of a street while a woman in a red dress leans against a streetlight. The light draws the observer's attention to the woman and to the looming possibility of sex in the distance. The sailors are competing for who can get the most women and thus prove their manhood. However, this display of competitiveness comes with a warning: "A sailor doesn't have to prove he is a man! There's no medicine for regret." The ad warns that if soldiers contract diseases, not only do they need to get medicine, they also need to gain their respect back. The ad states that soldiers do not need to prove they are men because their patriotic work is proof they are men. The ad suggests that all men should strive to have strength through means other than sex.

Another ad, somewhat to the contrary, uses shame to urge people to practice safe sex. A 1942 ad entitled, [Nothing] shows a picture of three soldiers on a navy deck. Two of the men are talking and looking down on the third man with his back to the audience.

He wears a shirt that displays the words VD. The other two men wear uniforms, suggesting the navy dishonorably discharged the third man for contracting a disease. The caption reads, “VD. Nothing to be proud of,” and suggests that the soldier was bragging about his good time with women. The ad warns of significant consequences of this weakness: dishonor in the form of discharge from the military.

Soldiers make an effort to keep their strong character; for others look up to them as a beacon of hope for the country. A 1945 advertisement [Look up] shows a soldier looking off into the distance, a boy with a baseball bat and glove looking up to him. The ad says, “Live up to it soldier and I bet you are stronger and braver than anybody. Guard against syphilis and gonorrhoea if you have sex relations...1. Use a rubber, urinate afterwards and wash your privates with plenty of soap and water 2. Go to a prophylaxis center as soon as possible.” The ad describes simple steps to practice safe sex and promotes a broader sense of responsibility. The ad argues that everyone engaging in sexual activities should embody the integral traits of a soldier.

**Strong Community.** Since the beginning of the World War I, sexual health communications encouraged controlling one’s own urges in order to be more pure for God. Such advertisements argue a person must practice self-control in order to control the disease and show strength over VD. Ads feature authority figures commanding people to practice self-control. The advertisements go beyond asking individuals to be strong for themselves; they ask individuals to be strong for the community.

Advertisements create this sense of community by conveying that their activities have an impact on others.

Advertisements during World War I combine the notions of control and freedom. At a time when the nation freed slaves less than 50 years earlier, most African Americans still did not have equal rights. Women too were fighting for the right to vote at the start of World War I. One ad uses the metaphor of slavery to demonstrate that STDs control individuals. The ad shows a picture of a skinny woman chained to two metal balls that say “Venereal Disease” and “Enslaving Habits” and above asks, “Will you be a free man or chained?” [Free man, 1918]. The woman is alone and poor, wearing a ratty pair of shoes and clothes. Her VD destroys her freedom. The writing indicates primal instincts enslave people to give into pleasure instead of thinking about the future. The chains symbolize the restriction of freedoms that comes with catching a disease.

The advertisements emphasized the importance of building a united front to control the disease with strength of medicine. One ad that appeared from 1936-1943, [Chicago] features a giant needle with red lines around it. Chicago is a place that is trying to control syphilis. The caption says, “Chicago will control syphilis and you may have your blood test free and confidentially at one of the following stations.” The size of the needle represents the strength of Chicago and the city’s determination to control the disease. The ad encourages observers to feel more empowered about controlling the disease in life. The city’s efforts to control the disease strengthen individuals. Medicine gives individuals tools for controlling the disease as a group.

The advertisements also emphasize individuals’ ability to control their future through regular treatments. Two 1940s advertisements compare and contrast two men with syphilis. The advertisements portray one man with crippling effects of a disease

while the other man is happy, known by the grin the man has on his face and his upright posture [Your future] and [Two men]. The advertisements emphasize that these men have control over their future through treatment. By showing multiple people, the advertisement conveys that this goes beyond an individual situation to one affecting multiple individuals.

Advertisements also emphasize the importance of self-control over the urge to have sex. A 1942 ad, [Self-Control], shows a woman seductively looking at a soldier who is walking out of the frame. He has stopped in his tracks to look back at her. They are both in a dark warehouse both framed by light. The soldier is clearly attracted to her, and as noted by his adjustment of his collar, he has not yet made the decision to have sex. The caption reads, “Self-Control is self-preservation. Pick-ups spread syphilis and gonorrhea.” The ad urges men to control their impulses to engage in wild desires and persevere, clean and strong. The message asserts soldiers are able to practice self-control in order to control the disease, and so should others. This ad is another example of stigmatization of women as spreaders of disease and threats to the community. Individual actions of strong citizens contribute to the well-being and strength of the community.

Patriotism unites the civilian population in protection of the country from VD. A 1944 campaign shows a red, white, and blue picture that says, “Unite the whole community against venereal disease. VD delays victory” [Unite against]. The ad displays a doctor, pharmacist, health officer, police official, mayor, businessperson, labor

leader, teacher, youth leader, and patient. The advertisement conveys that this is a community effort to fight against this disease.

**Strong Country.** STD campaigns that call for a defense of the body are calling upon people to defend the country. The ads communicate defense by creating opposition between a person and the enemy. The ads state that there is a winner and a loser in terms of safer sex, and the loser must be the STD. People who do not practice safe sex are helping the enemy win the war. The country is strong as long as America has a good defense. Based on America's physical ability, the ads suggest that defeating disease should be easy.

Advertisements assert that a citizen's duty is to help stop the spread of disease to ensure a strong country. One of the earliest advertisements (1918-1920s) displays a soldier standing strong with rifle in hand with a needle attached, representing medicine, and an eagle in the background reminding the audience of the country [Hun]. The caption reads, "You kept fit and defeated the Hun. Now set a high standard a clean America! Stamp out venereal disease." This phrase dispels the rumors that once people catch a disease they are weak. It refers to American strength that individuals preserve by being treated or wearing a condom. Soldiers will battle VD as they did the Hun. The ad acknowledges past accomplishments of Americans, but the duty now is to end the national battle with sexually transmitted diseases.

The advertisements use words such as stamp, or smash, and in some simple visual images associated with harm to emphasize the physical power to destroy the disease. [Smash], a 1937 advertisement shows a big picture of a fist and says, "Smash the

prostitution racket.” Prostitution spreads venereal disease.” The fist acts in multiple ways. It shows that Americans have found the cause of disease and know how to stop it. The fist represents the defeat of prostitution as a person would physically in a fight. The fist depicts a masculine strength, a physical power that men have to stop obstacles such as prostitution. A 1942 advertisement shows a male doctor and two nurses walking beside each other looking forward as blurred people follow behind in the background [We are helping]. The phrase “We are helping to stamp out syphilis” reads across the ad. This ad recognizes that nurses and doctors have the power to stop this disease and argues that the medical community is essential for national defense.

The advertisements sometimes feature men giving orders to others as they would to the military, similar to the “American wants you” campaign to encourage men to enlist. A 1938 advertisement shows a clean cut male, looking straight ahead and pointing at the audience [Stamp out]. The caption reads, “Have you had your blood test and examination? Go to your doctor or dept. of health. Stamp out syphilis and gonorrhoea.” Ads use authority figures to persuade people to control the disease through the physical ability.

Advertisements match the character qualities of strength to safe sex and weakness to exposure to risk. The character assessment involves social norming, conveying that all people must be role models. People must be responsible at all times by being cautious of their health and trusting doctors. The ads offer character assessments of people with STDs. People with STDs not only are weak by disease, they are weak citizens. Strength is defined as masculine in these ads, which stigmatize women as perpetrators of disease.

The theme of strong community links risk exposure to being a weak community and the notion of not having self-control. Throughout all the advertisements, the message argues people with STDs have a lack of self-control. This description in advertisements expresses what is un-American. Strong country illustrates the grand scale of the strength theme. The campaigns call for everyone to identify as American. The ads create social norming about strength and argue that Americans should fulfill a duty through physical ability. Being strong is normal in America. When people contract a disease, they are no longer part of the country: stigma. The campaign treats people with STDs as weak people.

These ads define strength as strong character, self-control, strength over the disease, and physical power over the enemy. Patriotism is about individual strength in society and building a stronger nation. Strength supports <safe sex> by giving audiences a mission or goal to achieve. Strong citizens think about individuals first in order to have a stronger whole. Advertisements create the idea of soldiers as role models for audiences to model <safe sex> practices after. As an ideograph, <safe sex> functions as a way to communicate that pride should be part of the American character, while characteristics of shame and obligation to prove their manhood is in opposition to <safe sex>. The theme of control functions to connect individuals' need to control their desires with modern medicine's ability to control the spread. Individual ability to practice self-control with safe sex corresponds with society's ability to control disease. The message is that <safe sex> protects the community. Individuals take an active role in strengthening society and believe everyone in the community is responsible, united, and strong together.

## **Morality**

The characters and appeals in the advertisements studied here also engrain a sense of morality in America by emphasizing what is wrong and right. The theme of morality emphasizes a strong character that conforms to the rules of society and/or religious law in order to do well in society or suffer the consequences. The ads argue that <safe sex> is moral because consequences of unsafe sex affect innocent people. Advertisements familiarize audience with the thought that patriotic Americans are similar to soldiers who must also uphold a moral representation of the country. When soldiers return home, they must face their families and perhaps a wife and children. Soldiers have a responsibility to their family and to their country. Prostitutes try to seduce soldiers, so the ads aimed at soldiers try to make them remember the innocent people in America and uphold their responsibilities. Ads communicate a sense of morality in three ways: through communication of innocence, seduction, and responsibility.

**Innocence.** Innocence and morality closely relate because society may understand innocence as the absence of any kind of sin. Women and children are symbols of innocence in society. “Women and children first!” is the common call for evacuation, commonly on ships. Men must protect women and children and preserve their own moral standing. It is a duty of the individual and society to preserve the innocence.

A 1942 campaign shows a bride, featured in silhouette, walking into some oversized masculine hands. The caption reads, “Here comes the bride. A man suffering from Venereal Disease who infects his wife commits a vile crime against her and children yet

unborn” [Bride]. Unsafe sex is a moral crime; the hands represent the pull of vice, and the bride and future children are the symbols of innocence that encourage men to act responsibly.

Children are one of the most prominent symbols to represent innocence. A 1919 advertisement shows a young girl with a face of innocence, looking scared. The caption reads, “This girl may become an invalid for life if she marries a man who has had gonorrhea not entirely cured. Gonorrhea causes 1. Many surgical operations upon women. 2. Much invalidism among innocent wives 3. A childless marriage” [This girl]. The focus is on the man’s responsibility to complete his treatments and save this innocent young girl and future wife. Children represent the beacon of innocence in society. The ads tell audiences to keep innocent children in mind when making decisions about sex.

Some ads displayed the effects of STDs on children. A 1936 advertisement shows a thin prepubescent girl wearing ragged clothes holding a baby doll in one hand and a crutch in the other. The toy signifies her innocence, and the crutch signifies the risk to her health. The message is “The greatcrippler, syphilis” [Great Crippler]. The juxtaposition of characteristics in the young girl emphasizes her lost innocence, contrasting her physical features alongside her clothing and crutch. Innocent children are dependent on the parent to be responsible. A 1943 ad shows kids doing the most innocent of activities, such as reading or pulling each other on a wagon. The non-sexual activities show that the children are innocently playing and yet are at risk of getting a disease. The caption states, “Their health depends on you. Destroy syphilis. Cooperate with the local health department” [Their health]. Audiences are responsible to protect the

innocent children. In 1940, the ad shows a handicapped boy with the message: “Make sure you’re fit to be the parents of tomorrow’s citizens. Treatment is free and confidential” [Tomorrow]. The picture portrays an innocent child with a dark shadow behind him, suggesting the looming impacts of STDs because of poor choices by his parents. The morality promoted by STD campaigns argues for a consideration of the broader effects of individual actions.

Advertisements also depict innocence through the symbol of women, particularly as mothers. A 1940 advertisement shows a woman knitting while watching her two kids innocently playing on the floor. The caption says, “Syphilis could have ruined my home, but...the doctor found my infection and regular treatments saved me and my children” [Ruined home]. Looking off in the distance, she seems to ponder what could have been the case if not for taking her regular treatments. Ads such as these emphasize treatment as the means to preserve the innocence of mothers and children. The preservation of family is something Americans must strive for in this country.

Some advertisements used both representations of the innocent wife and child. A 1922 advertisement targets the man’s responsibility to his future wife and child with the prominent picture of a young girl with the caption below: “Blinded by gonorrhoea. If the mother has gonorrhoea, her child may be blinded at birth. Simple medical treatment at time of birth will prevent such blindness. Men who think themselves cured sometimes infect their wives with gonorrhoea” [Mother & child]. This ad appeals to men’s responsibility towards their wives and children.

A 1936 ad shows a picture of a white silhouette of a woman looking off with despair holding a baby that clasps back onto her. The caption states, “Your family needs protection against syphilis. Your wife or husband and children should be examined and treated if necessary. NY state health department” [Your family]. Interestingly this ad targets men and women; the focus is on the family. The family represents the moral good in America.

**Seduction.** Sex sells, and advertisements against STDs have to promote safe sex. From Latin literally meaning “to lead astray,” seduction means persuading someone away from a certain path. These ads use seduction to call for action to preserve a sense of morality. Since the beginning of World War I, advertisement portrayed women as seducers and perpetrators of disease. Advertisements convey the role of military men is to have a good woman to pin up in his barracks, not have a woman with VD pin him up as one of her conquests. In a 1940 ad, a woman looks off in the distance. She appears to be a prostitute, noted by the emphasis of her sex appeal displayed by exposing her nipples through her dress. Three pictures hang on her wall of men, one from each branch of the military. She wears a sign on her chest, similar to a Scarlett letter, saying “Venereal Disease.” The caption, “Don’t be her pinup boy” suggests that men should not allow a woman to have the control, and women are not supposed to brag about sex [Pinup boy]. The ad describes prostitutes who use their powers of seduction to transform military men from being strong to being men weak with diseases.

Certain body parts heighten women’s seductive qualities in some ads. A 1940 ad displays a woman seductively approaching two men. Both men seem interested, looking

up at her and smiling. The ad draws the observer's attention to her disproportionately large chest as she leans into one of the men with her chest. The words across the page read "Booby trap" and thus warn of a woman trapping men with her large breasts and spreading a disease [Booby trap]. Her large size suggests the power of her body. A 1942 advertisement [Venus] also uses size and shadow to convey seduction. The ad is mostly dark with barely exposed woman trying to look seductive with an off-the-shoulder dress draping down and a tilt of her head and come-hither eyes. She is holding a needle that towers over her. "A minute with Venus, a year with mercury" [Venus]. The message is to prevent the disease by avoiding pretty women whose beauty may slyly overshadow the enormous consequences of action.

The ease of having sex with prostitutes is something advertisements constantly try to counteract. The 1942 advertisement shows a woman standing against a brick wall in the middle of a suburban neighborhood with the saying, "Easy to get...syphilis and gonorrhea" across the top [Easy to get]. The play on words suggests she is easy to get into bed, and syphilis and gonorrhea are easy to get. This message reminds the audience that prostitutes are people that will sleep with anybody who look their way and that such seduction is hard to resist. A person may be walking down the street, and there will be a prostitute looking to lure people in and give them VD. The broader message is that Americans should always be cautious of things that come easy to them.

Advertisements continually warn seduction is trouble when it involves a prostitute. As early as 1940, one advertisement features a prostitute smoking a cigarette and squinting her eyes at the audience as if she knows she is trouble. The words by her

say, “She may be...a bag of trouble syphilis-gonorrhea” [Bag of trouble]. This ad literally says women are bags, only defined by the trouble they cause men. [Juke Joint] is a 1942 ad that has a woman with a slim hourglass figure and dark face, a prostitute, smoking outside of a building labeled “Shorty’s Place.” The caption says, “Juke joint sniper: syphilis and gonorrhea.” These advertisements define women only by their seductive qualities and as carriers of disease with a deadly impact.

Ads leading into World War II emphasized the idea that spreading disease helps the enemy. The enemy was also seduction by prostitutes. A 1944 ad warns about “Miss G.I. Pickup,” suggesting the enemy uses women to distract Americans. Another ad warns that women tend to disguise their disease cleverly in their looks to help the enemy. A picture shows a woman, innocent and content with her short hair down wearing a colored shirt, buttoned up to her neck. She is different from most of the other women depicted in these ads. The ad says, “She may look clean- but pickups goodtime girls prostitutes spread syphilis and gonorrhea. You can’t beat the axis if you get VD” [Look clean]. This slogan declares that even innocent looking women should not be trusted, for women’s looks may be seductive and could be helping the enemy. Some ads were more explicit. One 1942 ad depicts a huge crowd of military men getting off a train. The ad reads, “Syphilis all of these men have it. Women stay away from dance halls” [All these men]. The image of the crowd of men visually portrays a statistic of the disease to warn women to stay away from high-risk places. The sexual metaphor of the ad is clear: the train is a phallic symbol, and the men streaming into the dance halls suggest the spread of disease through bodily fluids. The caption names dance halls as places for seduction.

The shifting eyes of the men follow the audience and communicate that these men are looking with intent for the next women to spread their disease. Sexuality surrounds the military and actions should be taken stop the spread of disease. This ad warns of soldiers who were seduced and are now perpetrators of the disease themselves.

**Responsibility.** STD prevention campaigns promote safe sex as responsible sex. Americans not only have a responsibility to themselves, but also to their country. Advertisements focus on soldiers and safe sex as patriotic duty. These advertisements reveal a sense of the responsibility soldiers feel towards the country that everyone should in society. The duty to serve one's county is not limited to soldiers; these ads remind audiences that they are always Americans, even in the bedroom.

Men who are knowledgeable about seduction act as an authority to warn others to uphold a responsibility to the country. A 1940 ad features three different types of military men: a marine, a soldier, and a naval officer standing together. The caption reads, "Men who know say no to prostitutes-Spreaders of syphilis and gonorrhea" [Men who know]. The men are standing together in their morals united against the disease. The ad conveys military men as responsible for the country in many ways.

The responsibility for safe sex is a prerequisite for serving the country. In a 1942 ad, chains hold down a strong shirtless man to the letters VD [Delayed]. He looks off hopelessly suggesting that the VD is preventing him from going off and serving the country. The image shows no matter how healthy a soldier looks, the disease could delay them from going into service. When men are strong and people want to serve, VD will overpower them, in the same way the large letter VD tower over the man in the image.

The ad suggests that no matter how much a person wants to serve their country, VD may delay their desires.

Other ads use this theme of shame to convey soldiers' responsibility. A 1946 ad shows a soldier looking shamefully down contemplating something on a bench with his bags and the thought bubble is a cloud that says, "VD." The caption above him reads, "A sorry ending to a furlough prophylaxis prevents venereal disease!" [Sorry ending]. The military man is a visual warning for men on shore duty or furlough leave to make a responsible choice or risk deterring their dreams. A 1946 ad shows a man in uniform looking disappointedly at the ship pulling away from sea without him unable to board because he contracted VD [Almost]. A hand rises from the ocean to stop him from serving his country. <Safe sex> is patriotic because unsafe sex prevents soldiers from completing their moral obligation and patriotic duty.

Advertisements warn that unsafe sex is unpatriotic. One undated ad shows a picture of women in a short dress and an ominous looking man in the darkness in the background. The ad is in black and white and look like a movie scene. It says "Gonorrhea or syphilis? Tut-tut, think nothing of it! It doesn't hurt anyone but you, your family, your future family, your shipmates, your navy and your country. And what's that compared with those few minutes of questionable pleasure?" [Tut tut]. The message argues that the momentary pleasure of unsafe sex will lead to much broader impacts on the family and country. Another ad conveys the same message: it shows three military men saluting a home. A woman stands out front under an American flag. The caption states "land, sea, and air" on their shirts and says, "For home and country avoid venereal

disease” [For home and country]. The American flag waving in front of the house shows the patriotism on the home front. This advertisement combines the responsibility to the family and the responsibility to the country.

Morality is a strong theme in the advertisements and provides an ethical dimension to <safe sex>. Innocence is a strong theme that represents the values of American society. Seduction is the vehicle by which immorality catches on in society. The ads emphasize responsibility and patriotic duty as a way to be moral.

The ideograph of <safe sex> functions through representations of an ideal society and warnings of a corrupt society using a moral lens. Children and certain women represent innocence in American society. The men in society must protect these symbols of innocence. Rhetorically, this tool of <safe sex> displays moral characters and storylines. The most pervasive storyline to understand the moral theme of <safe> is good versus evil. Prostitutes versus soldiers (seduction versus <safe sex>) are one way STD prevention advertisements play out the storyline of good versus evil. This recasts seduction through fear appeals, and the ideograph of <safe sex> responds to seduction by allowing sex to be a moral choice. Patriotism means using self-control to resist seduction and uphold a moral representation of America.

Using responsibility as a grand theme in advertisements, the ads convey <safe sex> as a value that needs protection, much like a country. Patriotism means being responsible for the country and the citizens that inhabit America. Citizens monitor themselves and others in society by bringing awareness to the issues and disciplining themselves to protect everyone. Metaphorically, <safe sex> is an important battle

strategy in the fight against evil. The ads urge Americans to act like soldiers. <Safe sex> is a community responsibility, and thus every patriotic American's responsibility.

## **Conclusion**

By examining terms, rhetoricians can reveal the nuances of how terms function in and outside a political system. Security, strength, and morality are rhetorical strategies that allow audiences to understand the broader message of <safe sex>. These ads argue that <safe sex> is a patriotic duty all that Americans must actively pursue. Patriotism creates a framework for persuasive appeals to protect themselves and thus protect the country. <Safe sex> is a patriotic ideograph that functions through a commonly understood need for security, a belief in national strength, and a strong sense of morality. The visual and textual representations of the ads studied here encapsulate wartime fears and national pride in <safe sex>. Patriotic rhetoric communicates to Americans about the norms of society and persuades them to act in specific ways. A patriotic American always uses protection. The ads stigmatize activities that do not fall within the framework of <safe sex>. Advertisements conceptualize stigma with the notion of opposing patriotism. Even though there are risks to having sex with a person infected with an STD, such images make them seem worse. The images go beyond showing the risk to certain behaviors; they create exaggerated caricatures that reduce the represented people to the most undesirable consequence of their behavior. Acting like soldiers is the best way to take their individual responsibility to the nation seriously.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

After World War II, STDs remained a national concern. Military tensions continued in the form of the Korean War beginning in 1950. Communism was on the minds of Americans, and there were allied forces lending support to other countries. President Truman ordered the construction of the hydrogen bomb during this period. Patriotism was about building a strong defense in opposition to communism. Meanwhile, there was research conducted on sexually transmitted diseases as well. In 1954, the American Social Health Association (ASHA) began to collect data, monitor venereal disease (VD) rates, and work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to analyze the issue on a wide scale. ASHA created a campaign for VD prevention called “Today’s VD Control Problem.” In a telling rhetorical move, the American Social Hygiene Association changed its name to the American Social Health Association in 1959 (ASHA, 2012) to refocus its energy and draw more people. The refocus shows a shift from the early days of sex education that correlated STDs to lack of personal hygiene to campaigns highlighting broad matters of health.

Some individuals claimed the dramatic rise in STDs in the 1970s was due to international travel, sexual revolutions, and increasing drug use (ASHA, 2012). Sexual culture changed in an era of “free love.” Sex was an act freely practiced and free from consequences. Scientific research discovered pathogens such as genital herpes, the human papillomavirus (HPV), and hepatitis B. There was not only growing knowledge within the health community but also an increase in public awareness about STDs. Representing the first major departure from the campaigns of World War II, in 1973, ASHA launched

the first modern public awareness campaign *VD is for Everybody*. In 1979, ASHA created the National Herpes Resource Center, which included a hotline. After the World Wars, the concept of <safe sex> continued to evolve. While patriotism was not as strong a theme, there was still an emphasis on concepts of strong individual and community efforts. At the same time, the U.S. was fighting wars in North Korea and Vietnam, but these did not have as active or as unified a home front as World War II. The nation's extended presence in Vietnam was controversial, and as more Americans watched television news, the idea of patriotism became more complicated.

It was not until the AIDS era that public sexual health campaigns dramatically changed. Historically, public messages were heteronormative, focusing solely on heterosexual relationships as the means for transmitting STDs. In 1981, the CDC reported five cases of *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia. Even though the five patients had no known common contact or sexual partners, because they were all gay men, doctors suggested an association between the disease and homosexuality. Scientist labeled HIV/AIDS a “gay disease.” It was not until 1982 that the CDC formally named the disease “Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome” (AIDS). Activists led education projects and campaigns in New York City and San Francisco with billboards, broadcasts, buttons, and leaflets (Davis, 2006). Yet, it soon became clear that AIDS affected a broader population. In 1984, an Army recruit became ill after a small pox vaccination. After admission to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center for evaluation, he tested HIV positive, and died 18 months later from complications with AIDS. This was the first recognized military member with HIV (Rasnake, 2005, p.4). The death of Rock Hudson

in 1985 was the earliest public image of death from this disease. That year, fashion designer Kenneth Cole featured an advertising campaign with the message “For the future of our children...support the American Foundation for AIDS Research.” Such publicity worked; within two years, Gallup polls found that 95% of Americans had heard of AIDS (Davis, 2006, p.7). The emphasis on children is a theme that echoes from the wartime advertisements studied here. The Cold War, a term first used post-World War II to describe psychological warfare occurring due to geopolitical tensions, left the country in sustained military tension with other countries.

In the late 1980s, after the U.S. Surgeon General created HIV prevention guidelines and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first treatment, the first national HIV campaign ran using television and print advertising (Davis, 2006, p.5). Public perception of people with AIDS was becoming increasingly harsh; almost 47% of Americans admitted they would avoid someone who was HIV positive. A series of celebrity public service announcements (PSAs), featuring Meryl Streep and Robert De Niro, attempted to change the myths surrounding the disease. Popular ads stated, “Rumors are spreading faster than AIDS” and featured the iconic pink triangle stating “Silence=Death” (Davis, 2006, p.9). In 1988, the word “condom” first appeared in advertisements. At the end of the 1980s, the *America Responds to AIDS* campaign featured ads targeted at higher risk groups including “minorities, sexually active young adults, and injection drug users” (Davis, 2006, pp.10-11). During 1987-1992, the PSA aired 59,000 times. The national campaign around AIDS awareness demonstrates the

continuing importance of understanding how STD campaigns rhetorically frame disease and prevention.

In the 1990s, the national government-sponsored campaigns tapered off due to a slower rate of HIV infections. In 1991, Magic Johnson announced that he was HIV positive. In the coming years, as America fought the Persian Gulf War, the population living with HIV changed, and thus public rhetoric changed. The advertisements for prevention were pushing condom use, abstinence, and monogamy. Advertisements focused on Latinos and African Americans using “real” people to deliver messages. *The Real World* actor, Pedro Zamora, became the Latino face of AIDS. There was also a focus on drug use and the tie to AIDS. The long running campaign *America Responds to AIDS* ended in 1996. In 1997, MTV launched the *BE SAFE* campaign for reach the youth. The 1990s brought a focus on at-risk groups (Davis, 2006). AIDS prevention has been the focus of many STD ads since the disease became widespread. This public health concern is focused on some of the themes discussed here: issues of risk and the emphasis on a diverse array of strong citizens. The target audience for <safe sex> was changing during this time. The new focus on race changes how advertisers intertwine <safe sex> as a cultural aspect of daily life. Instead of creating a unified idea that <safe sex> is an action everyone should take, there was a move for <safe sex> is something particular groups should be more aware of because it affects them.

In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, as the American war front became terrorism and insurgent battles in Iraq and Afghanistan, STD rhetoric increased public discourse in sexual health campaigns clustered on music television stations and in ads sponsored by

the CDC. In a 2003 survey, 42% of respondents reported they saw a PSA about STDs, and those respondents who reported being sexually active said they would take safety and testing more seriously as a result. In 2006, MTV's HIV prevention campaign won both an Emmy and Peabody award (Davis, 2006). The characters portrayed in these advertisements tended to be young adults, thus encouraging another subgroup of teens and young adults to identify with specific character traits.

In 2007, an advertising series began that showed men with words describing their character. The ads<sup>4</sup> describe previous hardships these men faced that give them strength of character to deal with the disease. Hardships now become being gay and drug addiction, but still function using the ultimate characteristic of strength.

In 2009, the CDC and the White House launched the *Act Against AIDS* campaign, a multi-faceted, five-year national communication campaign to raise awareness among at risk communities, such as gay and bisexual men, African Americans and Latinos (Campaigns-Act Against AIDS, 2012). Another CDC campaign, *Let's Stop HIV Together*, aims to raise awareness that people with HIV are real people: "mothers, fathers, friends, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, partners, wives, husbands, and co-workers" (Campaigns-Act Against AIDS, 2012). This shift moved the discussion of <safe sex> towards the direction of creating once again a unified group.

Currently, the main push in sexual health care is for testing for STDs. The *Testing Makes Us Stronger* campaign encourages African American gay and bisexual men to test for HIV. *Take Charge. Take the Test* is a campaign encouraging African

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<sup>4</sup> [Strength], [Perseverance], and [Determination]

American women to test for HIV. *One Test. Two Lives* advocates that obstetric providers test all pregnant women for HIV while *HIV Screening. Standard Care* urges primary health care providers to screen all patients for HIV. *Prevention is Care* campaign encourages providers who treat HIV to help patients to reduce risky behaviors (Campaigns-Act Against AIDS, 2012). These campaigns attempted to give people back control over diseases as well as display a sense of risk as a loss of security. People can actively participate in security protocols by getting tested, which is as familiar as other patriotic security rituals.

Campaign frames of STD information have changed over time, reflecting a shift in target audiences and public health messages. Although the demographic targets of the advertisements changed over time, the wartime themes remain prominent. The strength of character theme continued in these advertisements. Using skills acquired from past obstacles to get through tough times today is still a prominent theme. While in the past the strength allowed audiences to connect vicariously through experiences of war, these ads allow audiences to connect through battles of drug addiction, being a minority, and/or coming out. Advertisements continue to create role models to inspire audiences. These role models may not look like soldiers, but they have the same characteristics of strength. Like soldiers, these people put others above themselves, protect others, and physically look strong. Of all of the themes identified in the wartime STD prevention campaigns, strength is the strongest occurrence in more contemporary ads. Post-World War II advertisements attempted to unify subgroups and then evoked everyone in the cause. The direct affiliation with the war may have changed, but the themes established in the

wartime STD ads still resonate today. Rhetorical history shows how themes continue and change over time and allows a new perspective on contemporary ads. The next section discusses significant lessons learned from these ads.

### **Safe Sex as a Patriotic Act**

This research reveals motivations in society and helps identify those that are otherwise hidden. This research helps identify the construction of ideas about <safe sex>. The ideographs of <safe sex> and patriotism remain strong. Using the themes discussed in Chapter 4 as well as the themes in health communication of identification, social norming, and stigma, I show how these concepts are reoccurring today. Looking back at campaigns in history within the context of contemporary ads provides three significant findings. First, advertisements use security and insecurity; second, ads use patriotism to change discipline into a reward; and third, ads create a dichotomy of us versus them.

First, as a nation, public discourse portrays America's security as contingent upon the ways other countries perceive the nation. Headlines like "Why do they hate us?" suggest the enemy is unseen and unknown. Americans perceive the War on Terror through embassy bombings and airport security lines. Citizens engage in microgestures on a daily basis to show their patriotism. Taking off one's shoes and going through a full body scanner at the airport citizens are minor sacrifices for the country. These are safety measures, which, similar to safe sex, are preventative. These symbolic actions ensure that the enemy will not terrorize the country. Citizens are not directly engaged in a battle, but they fight off danger with controlled gestures.

With wars moving towards psychological warfare, combat actions of security start with microgestures. The actions of putting on a condom or getting medical treatment also become patriotic microgestures. The gesture of remaining medically healthy keeps America strong due to the ready supply of healthy Americans that could fight, and thus, the country appears strong with a surplus of able soldiers. The advertisements also show people how to make decisions based on facts instead of instant pleasure, such as the pleasure that comes with gambling. The country then appears to have more secure citizens because the population makes decisions based on logic. This posturing is similar to other microgestures initiated during the Cold War of creating strong military weaponry, instead now the country is creating strong citizens. The action communicated in the <safe sex> ideograph is something all Americans can participate in society. Americans still compete with other countries to show they are more secure on all regards. By having <safe sex>, a person shows they are a prime citizen fighting for the country: secure. The security risk is still prominent for American citizens; if the population takes risks, the country will appear weak.

Second, the advertisements also used patriotism to change the discipline associated with <safe sex> to a freedom. The issues of war are different from World War I and II. Today the issues of war are more subtle. Patriotism keeps wartime issues relevant. Patriotism in advertisements attempts to persuade the citizens to share in the mutual responsibility to contribute to the strength of the country on the home front as soldiers do on the battlefield. During wartime, the soldier was an important role model. While that has changed today—a small percentage of Americans serve in the military—

the post-9/11 patriotic support for soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrates the importance of troop support to Americans. These wars do not consume American media or civilians' daily lives. Most people do not know someone who serves in the military.

The major influence of the advertisements is that they reclaim what freedom and oppression are using rhetoric in advertisements. "Free sex" changed from being casual sex to freedom from STDs. Instead of people thinking about having sex with whomever they wanted, people think about being clean and free from diseases. Advertisements pushed cleanliness in forms of moral innocence and the freedom that comes with being clean. The freedom from STDs includes many other freedoms, such as freedom to choose your future. A person can still have their pride in the future to say they are STD free. Americans can still fulfill the dream of having a family and home. The freedom is to be with whom they want in the future by not engaging carelessly in unsafe behaviors in the present. A good woman/man should still be a choice, and nobody should be stuck paying huge medical bills when their money could go to home ownership. Current advertisements focus on different obstructions from goals than in wartime, but the grand emphasis is on the freedom to reach general goals. People have their freedom oppressed by STDs because it limits their future options. Being a patriotic American means being free to have protected sex.

Advertisements help propagate what it means to be free; to be free, a person must discipline themselves. The power relation to discipline changes through these advertisements much like the panopticon. Observers internally realize the power of the

gaze of the advertisements and the overall warning of the consequences. The advertisements let audiences know that people are aware of the disease and thus become a form of surveillance. The consequence of not having <safe sex> is not as simple as getting an STD, it is a loss of freedom. Consequences come in the form of judgments that the person is insecure, weak, and immoral. These advertisements equate the flaws to the person being less patriotic, and thus, the ultimate consequence is the loss of being a patriotic citizen.

People then discipline themselves through <safe sex> and feel not only self-disciplined, but also patriotic. Instead of feeling diseases in the world are a punishment, people feel like they are taking actions to ensure their freedom and the country's freedom. The previous punishment of having to wear a condom and think carefully about whom people choose to have sex with is no longer a punishment, instead is a choice that leads to the reward of patriotism. The alteration is that instead of feeling the advertisements represent a surveillance in which someone will punish them, the audiences are encouraged to surveillance themselves to feel free. People then feel freer because the power is in them instead of an outside source.

The punishment is a reward through the ideographic shift in the definitions of <safe sex> and <patriotism>. Instead of viewing <safe sex> as hindering their pleasure, people now view <safe sex> as building their good character. For instance, by putting on a condom a person feels they are being responsible by not putting themselves and others at risk of catching a disease. Patriotism is a reward achieved through <safe sex>.

Patriotism can also have other effects on observers of advertisements, such as creating an us versus them dichotomy.

Third, through advertisement's ideographic descriptions, the idea of patriotism unifies audiences as well as divides them with the creation of a dichotomy of us versus them. There is always a clash between ideographs, and the clash in these advertisements comes in the form of the other. Society only understands community as existing in opposition of other communities. People who fall outside of the norm amplify the normative qualities of the community. Communities have boundaries to define who belongs, for example the Greek community (fraternities and sororities) initiate only a select few into their group after completing rituals and proving they fit into the group. The binary creates a perspective of us in society through ads that serve to highlight an "other." The other is the enemy, and practicing safe sex combats the enemy.

This call for action can be problematic because the enemy takes many forms. The enemies are sometimes the personification of the disease, risky behaviors, prostitutes, or women. These people are at risk of having actions taken against them. These actions may not be physical, but they may be psychological warfare. The psychological warfare played against the other is most often stigmatizing these groups. Overall, the consequence of the dichotomy of us versus them is stigmatization of certain groups, particularly women.

The use of stigma also reveals some problematic representations of women. Wartime calls for <safe sex> also relies on sexist interpretations of men and women. Advertisements often highlight masculine qualities to the physical strength needed to

combat the disease. Soldiers are always men and it is harder for women to fulfill this role. Men fulfill the exemplary role of patriot, and women can only achieve the role of patriot by acting like a man. Women have a harder time fulfilling the role of patriot because advertisements often cast them as the enemy. Advertisements depict women as prostitutes and align them with the axis of evil. Ads warn that women use their bodies to get what they want at the disadvantage of men. Thus, men learn to distrust women in the pursuit of safe sex. Women are either innocent, without power, or they are seductresses who put the country's security at stake. Men view women as trying to oppress their freedom to engage in <safe sex>. Women use their bodies to force men not to pursue the micro-behaviors that make them patriotic and free. Men want to use a condom to prevent STDs and remain strong citizens, while women want to spread disease and weaken people. When women are involved, men are at risk of not being strong enough to fulfill their patriotic duty and therefore be free. The recasting of freedom through the changing description of <safe sex> forces men to rethink how they relate to women. Advertisements do not portray women as allied in the pursuit of freedom, and thus stigmatize women. The ideographic analysis reveals that advertisements outcast women throughout history.

As a whole, <safe sex> stands in for freedom, national security, and ideals of democracy. These ads tell audiences what it means to be a citizen in America. The ideograph <safe sex> reinforces, challenges, and forms American ideals. Ultimately freedom is redefined through the argument that <safe sex> and <patriotism> work in conjunction. Freedom means being able to engage in sex without getting an STD.

Freedom allows someone to be free from the confines of an STD. National security is everyone's responsibility, and <safe sex> is a tool every day citizens can use to defend the country. Feeling secure is a basic human need that advertisements have appropriated for persuading people to engage in certain practices. The changing notion of freedom through the ideographic understanding of <safe sex> and patriotism profoundly affects Americans. The changing notion of <safe sex> as reward instead of punishment is an interesting trick the advertisements have pursued for decades. However, it has led to some under-examination of consequences such as stigmatization of gender roles. This redefinition also stigmatizes women and men as a price of encouraging freedom by overemphasizing the dichotomy of us versus them. By examining these ideographs in conjunction, the issues unfold in current advertisements.

The power of ideographic analysis is it shows how changing concepts have major implications in society. Society normalizes ideals by reducing the complexity of terms in a simplistic way they choose to represent them. By limiting the scope of the definitions of <safe sex> and patriotism the underlying thoughts of Americans change. The actions people take are part of a unified structure already in place in the media. Rhetorical history shows how these persuasive techniques have prevailed through time and direct relate to issues prominent during certain periods. War was a telling marker of time, and the representation of <safe sex> and patriotism tells a lot about American society. There are symbolic elements that elicit public action that this analysis explores. Rhetorical history shows exigencies and motivations of particular historical periods. In wartime, the motivations were to create patriotic, physically strong people to ensure they could fight in

wars, while today the motivation is still to create patriotic Americans to have a strong nation. Ideographic analysis shows that these terms occur as part of contemporary consciousness. The visual and textual nature of the changing terms <safe sex> and patriotism reveal the persuasive nature of advertisements. Women and men change their outlook on each other as enemies or allies based on the media's combination of patriotism and <safe sex>. By combining these terms, readers are able to understand that health communication goes beyond effectiveness to prevent disease to how societal ideals change with the changing notion of a term(s). This research brings insight and inspiration for actions in the future.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

As with any study, there are limitations. This thesis only examined one archive. Other archives have STD ads available. While I cross-referenced the dates of the advertisements by searching the internet and national library databases, I realized that there were many archives to study. Some such archives are Mother Jones: The Enemy in Your Pants-The Military's Decades-Long War Against STDs<sup>5</sup>, U.S. National Library of Medicine: Visual Culture and Public Health Posters,<sup>6</sup> or Science Museum Group: SCM- Public Health and Hygiene.<sup>7</sup> Studying these archives could expand on the advertisements already examined in this work. While this work narrowed the advertisements to a sample from *100 Years of Sex*, some websites framed these advertisements differently. The

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2010/05/us-army-std/enemy-your-pants-9>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/visualculture/venereal.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://umedia.lib.umn.edu/node/47300>

advertisements in other websites sometimes had subcategories of funny, wartime, sexist, etc., and reading them in that context might lead to different insights to add to this study. A future step for broadening this research would be to examine STD ads across time and various contexts.

Expanding this to a comparison of STD campaigns internationally would also be an interesting project. I initially wanted to look at a global set of STD prevention campaigns. I went to China in search of STD advertisements and was prepared to find little to no material. I knew their first condom advertisement came out less than a decade ago, and the government quickly took the ad off the air. When I arrived, I found some advertisements for family planning, but none regarding STDs. I went specifically to STD/HIV clinics to find advertisement and found two posters outside of the CDC. One advertisement showed two people holding hands and had writing underneath that loosely translates to “Communicate Better.” The other advertisement featured a crowd of men in blue jumpsuits and the man in the front waving a Chinese flag. Neither mentioned anything about STDs. This advertisement seemed to communicate about the countries unity: patriotism, but I could not make that assumption without further research. The pamphlets inside displayed more ambiguous with broad messages of the harms of STDs. They mainly featured HIV, while only affecting less than 1% of the population it is the country with the second highest number of people who are HIV positive. The people in the campaigns always featured ambiguous figures, cartoon like, or homosexual men. The cartoon figures personified versions of the disease. As I went to take pictures of the posters, the front desk assistant told me that pictures were restricted in the front area and

exclaimed they were uncomfortable with reports about their advertisements. I then knew the perception of advertisements was something some people did not want discussed and was intrigued about how much a critique on advertisements is a critique on culture. This is a contrast to the widely available STD archives available to me as an American student. Studying global advertisements may reveal how <safe sex> and patriotism perform in advertisements in other countries. Research may also show if this phenomenon is uniquely an American rhetorical strategy.

Researchers should expand these findings to search for themes repeated in other countries. What themes used in the past do advertisers use today? Mapping the history of campaigns can lend insights into the persuasive techniques in messages. How do STD prevention campaigns highlight the values in a culture? What or who becomes stigmatized in a culture through their interpretation of <safe sex>? I imagine as the STD campaigns developed in history the demographics are more nuanced. I would like to track how the changing demographics relate to the wartime themes.

### **Final Thoughts**

Examining campaigns in the context of culture allows researchers to analyze the themes used to push agendas. Security, strength, and morality function as subthemes to highlight the characteristics needed to protect society. Individuals learn life lessons through parents, teachers, religious affiliations, and the media. Advertisements distribute mass messages that have prevailed in society for over a century. A system that has operated for that duration reveals progress and stagnancy in society. Identification of social norms and stigmatization allows society to exact what works and what needs to

change. Rhetorically examining how these themes situate in advertisement during the World War I and II era in a dominant way reveals the function of them today. The problems that existed during these eras have grown and yet the same strategies continue. Awareness of these themes allows society to name the ideals in society and analyze if they hold true. The control of diseases is in the hands of society, but the government largely puts forth the message. The government largely funds STD campaigns today and patriotism as a theme may fit some American's agenda, but whose? How much of safe sex is creating a more patriotic society?

Examining the strategies in advertisements allows audiences to be more knowledgeable consumers and producers of advertisements to be more strategic in campaign designs. This research reveals the motivations hidden in the advertisements, convincing people to identify with certain character traits and pursue those traits through self-discipline. People have become unaware of why they commit certain actions and pursue certain goals. This research causes people to reexamine those questions. When putting on a condom, individuals should think deeply of whom they are doing this for: themselves, their partner(s), or America.

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