

# Gender Roles in the U.S.

“Masculine and feminine roles are not biologically fixed but socially constructed” - Judith Butler

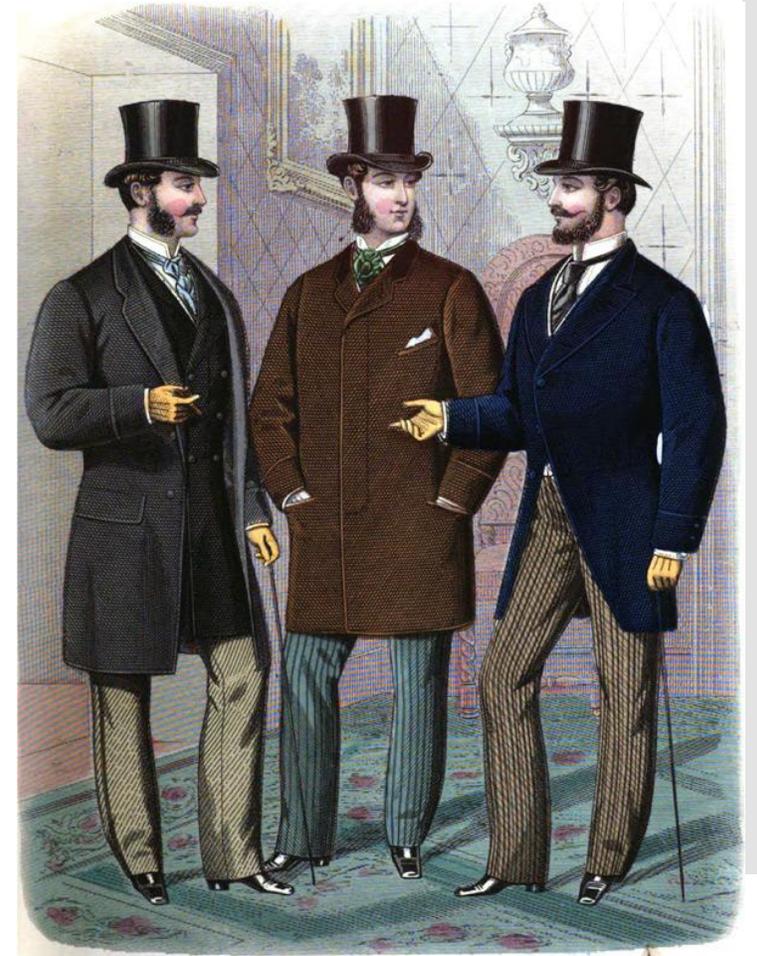
# How Does Time Influence Family Structures?

- As time progresses, new **gender roles, stereotypes** and **norms** emerge. These changes in culture depend on the needs of that society, and what is in style.
- Gender roles and stereotypes influence family structures, and what is considered “socially acceptable”
- Between the Victorian Era, and contemporary times, **gender roles** and **stereotypes** have changed a great deal. Today we are going to analyze these changes.



# The Victorian Era

- The Victorian Era, named for Queen Victoria of England, was a time of rapid social change. This era lasted from **1837-1901**. It was a time of **colonialism** and very rigid gender norms.



## “Separate Spheres”

- Women were expected to stay home and do housework, while men were expected to go out and work.
- Because of this rigid structure, men and women rarely interacted outside of the home, creating what seemed like **different worlds between the lifestyles of men and women.** This phenomena is called **“Separate Spheres”** of living.



## Stereotypes in the “Spheres”

- Victorian socially constructed gender roles went something like this:
  - **Women** were thought to be kind, tender, emotional, and domestic. They were expected to cook, clean and take care of the children.
  - **Men** were thought to be strong, logical, tough, and aggressive. They were expected to participate in politics and make money.

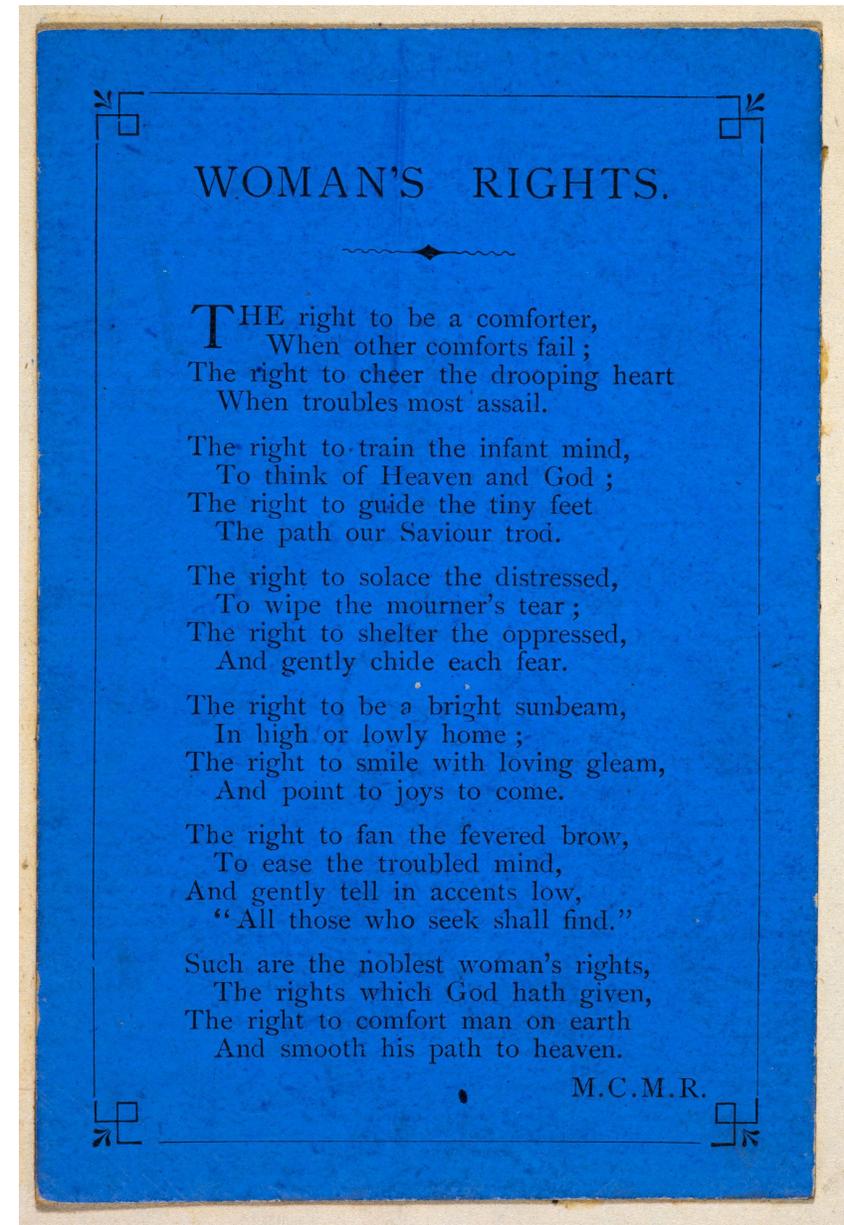
*Do these sound familiar to the expectations/stereotypes of men and women now?*

*How are gender stereotypes different now? How are they similar?*

# Separate Spheres

Analyze the text!

- *What is the text saying?*
- *Does this document support Victorian gender stereotypes for women?*
- *How or how not?*



# The Second Industrial Revolution (Late 1800s- Early 1900s)

- The Second Industrial Revolution was a period of rapid urbanization and mechanization. **This caused a massive shift in gender roles, especially in the heavily industrial US Northeast.**

# The Second Industrial Revolution (Late 1800s- Early 1900s)

- Women, especially poor women, were sought after by factory employees, as they generally had smaller hands which was good for machine work.
- **Employers could also pay women and children less than adult men.** Women became very active in factory work, especially in the Northeast's textile mills.



# The Beginning of Feminism

- In the early 1900s, since women began to do “men’s work”, women began fighting for equal political right, like the right to vote.
- This was the beginning of feminism.



# The Roaring Twenties

- The 1920's were known as the Roaring Twenties because they were a time of great economic prosperity and social change in the U.S.
- The biggest change was the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment which gave **white women** the right to vote. **In some Southern states, black women did not have the right to vote until the 1960s.**
- With the rise of "Flapper" fashion, **some women began to express sexuality publicly.**



# World War II

- The Second World War sent ripples through the world, socially and economically. The mistreatment of people and the ravages of war profoundly changed our society.



# World War II

- As massive numbers of men were sent off to war, women were left home with little to no financial support. As a result, women became the leaders of manufacturing machinery for the war. The most famous of these women was the iconic figure **Rosie The Riveter**.
- Gender roles for women began to shift during these time. Many women were now doing masculine duties.



# The 1960's

- The 1960's were a rocky time for Americans. **People were challenging unfair social conditions**, and new social norms were being evaluated.
- Arguably, the biggest social shift of this decade was the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. **This was when all citizens, regardless of race and gender got the right to vote and participate in government, a previously white and male only space.**



## The 1960's

- As more women were entering the workforce, the way we viewed women changed -- and so did laws.
- During the 1960's:
  - Women were able to serve on **juries**, access **birth control**, attended **Ivy League colleges**, and apply for **credit cards** without a man's approval (yes, this was actually a law once).

The issue of equal pay for equal work began to be a topic of debate.



# Contemporary Times

- We have come along way since the Victorian Era. Today, 58.6% of American women participate in the workforce and many women have access to healthcare and education.
- **Oregon became the first state in 2017 to guarantee equal pay for men and women doing work.**
- Family structures have also changed a lot. Today, many households are blended (having children from one or more marriage, guardians instead of parents, same-sex couples, single parents, interracial couples, multigenerational etc.)

*How is your family blended?*

# Contemporary Times



# Changing Perceptions of Gender

- **Transgender** and **non-binary** people have always existed, but only recently in the US have these genders become visible.
- Oregon and California became the first states to allow people to identify as non-binary on state issued forms of identification, like licences.



Photo credit:  
NBC San  
Diego

# Changing Perceptions of Gender

- However, trans and non-binary people in the U.S. still face challenges and discrimination. In many states, transgender people can still be **fired, denied housing** cannot change their gender on their ID without expensive surgery, and are very likely to be attacked and harassed simply for being trans





# #32REASONS:

STATES THAT LACK FULLY INCLUSIVE NON-DISCRIMINATION PROTECTIONS

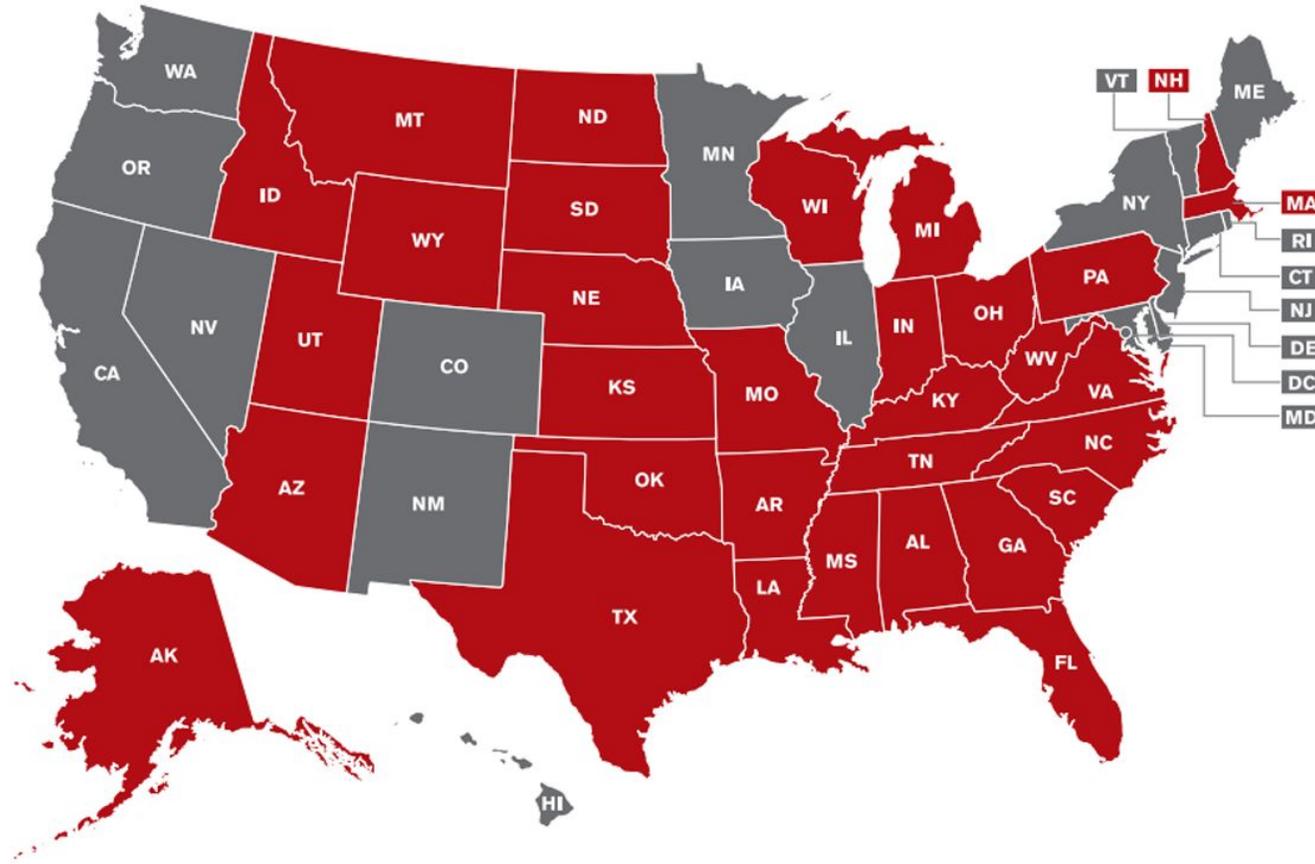


Photo from 2015. Some laws may have changed. Check out <http://www.hrc.org/state-maps> for updated information.

# What Issues Do We See Today?

- Although we have made great strides since the Victorian Era, there is still a lot of work to be done. In the United States **women earn, on average, \$0.80 for every \$1 a man earns.**
- Women are 50% of the population but are only 19% of congress.
- Women are much more likely to be victims of violence.

# Present and future

- What have been some of your own experiences and encounter with gender inequality in your own life? Reflect on these instances and write them down.
- What do you think the future holds? Reflect on what you have learned about how gender roles have shifted in the past to consider what might change in the future. Write down your ideas.