also provoke readers to consider anew the challenges and rewards of engaging in boundary-crossing research and inspire more scholars to pursue projects that help broaden and transform our conceptions of politics and the political.

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Reflections of a Politically Engaged Scholar

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I was delighted to be invited to participate in this symposium in honor of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Women and Politics program at Rutgers because, to put it bluntly, I do not believe I could do the work that I do within the discipline of political science — interdisciplinary and normative research informed by feminist scholarship, democratic theory, and sexuality studies with an eye to practice — if not for the program, which played a key role in legitimizing feminist scholarship within the discipline of political science. When I entered the Rutgers Ph.D. program in 1988, as part of the third cohort, it was an exciting time. We were very much aware of being among the first students in the country able to make feminist scholarship a central part of our doctoral studies in political science, particularly those of us pursuing political theory. My entry into graduate school came on the heels of four years of political activism in the feminist, peace, and social justice movements, so the question of practice was pressing to me at the time and has always hovered around my academic work. The Women and Politics program was a perfect home for me because of the way in which it linked the theoretical and empirical questions of academic political science with the politically engaged concerns of women's and gender studies and

I would like to thank Susan Carroll for creating the Women and Politics program, teaching me, mentoring me, and working with me on this essay. I would also like to thank Linda Zerilli for the central role she played in my intellectual development, during my time at Rutgers.

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nurtured in me an interdisciplinary way of thinking that always strives for creative connections.

The Women and Politics program was distinctive because it linked the study of mainstream work in the discipline of political science with interdisciplinary feminist scholarship. While feminist scholarship can be as rigorous and objective as any other field of study, in its origins women's studies was an explicitly political project, designed not only to study the oppression of women, but also to remedy it. And while feminist scholarship has arguably become less overtly political over time, much of the work in that subfield retains a political edge. In fact, one of the important insights made by feminist scholars is the recognition that ostensibly "objective" research often has a particular perspective and that explicitly normative work can also be scholarly.

As a feminist political theorist, I strive to do work that is normative yet scholarly and to bring feminist concerns and insights into a variety of conversations — with political theorists, policy analysts, social conservatives, and even the feminist movement itself. My first book, *Citizen-Soldiers and Manly Warriors: Military Service and Gender in the Civic Republican Tradition*, which began as my dissertation, deployed Judith Butler's original articulation of performativity to reread canonical works of political theory, including Machiavelli, Rousseau, and Tocqueville (Snyder 1999). During the 1990s, the field of political theory was just starting to feel the impact of poststructural understandings of identity. Previously, feminist approaches tended to focus on either examining what canonical authors had to say about women or theorizing how their theories were fundamentally masculinist in a way that made it impossible to simply "add women and stir," as we used to put it.

What I sought to do was to utilize the tools of feminist poststructuralism to open up a place in civic republicanism in which women could claim traditionally masculine subject-positions, so that the democratic impetus of the tradition could be used by feminists for progressive purposes. In arguing that civic identity, like gender identity, is performatively constructed, I make two major claims. First, I articulate a vision of citizenship that requires active participation in civic practices for its constitution, rather than simply accruing to those with a particular bloodline or place of residence. Second, I argue that because masculine citizenship is performatively constructed, rather than rooted in nature, women can also become citizens if they engage in practices that are constitutive of traditionally masculine citizenship. With these moves, I attempt to open up a space for women to lay claim to the ideals of civic

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republicanism, which are frequently invoked by those concerned about strengthening democracy.

Although my discussion of gender and citizenship in *Citizen-Soldiers and Manly Warriors* focuses primarily on canonical authors and offers a feminist analysis of contemporary practices (specifically right-wing militias and military basic training), I did not want to remain isolated in the realm of theory. Consequently, I ended up writing an article for the journal *Armed Forces and Society* that sought to engage actual debates about gender integration in the military (Snyder 2003a). This was one of the most challenging pieces I have ever written because the article sought to link the arguments and commitments of feminist theory to the practice-grounded discussions of military policy analysts. It was a grueling review process because the discourse of feminist theory had not made significant inroads into military studies. Even the idea that gender is socially constructed seemed foreign. Eventually, however, I was able to satisfy enough of the reviewer comments to satisfy the (female) journal editor, and my contention that the military's mission is to protect democracy from internal and external enemies requires that it rid itself of practices that reinforce gender inequality, which destroys democracy from within, was actually published.

The desire to build bridges between feminist scholarship and mainstream debates also animated my subsequent work. For example, the special issue of *Hypatia* that I coedited with Noelle McAfee attempted to create a dialogue between feminist scholars and mainstream "democratic theorists," most of whom happen to be male (McAfee and Snyder 2007). Likewise, my second book project began with an essay in an edited volume entitled *Fundamental Differences: Feminists Talk Back to Social Conservatives*, which asked feminist scholars to engage seriously with social conservatives, who are often simply dismissed as ignorant (Snyder 2003b). When I expanded my initial research into a book, *Gay Marriage and Democracy: Equality for All*, I once again used my normative commitment to gender equality to expand political theoretical discourse, focusing this time on liberalism, communitarianism, and queer theory (Snyder 2006).

Finally, my third and most recent major project on third-wave feminism, which consists of a series of essays, once again strives to take feminist criticism seriously, but this time the focus is on traditional second-wave feminist thought, rather than androcentric political theory. This line of research explores the challenge sexual desire poses to arguments for gender equality, taking seriously the arguments of sexual minorities who

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feel they were marginalized and maligned by second-wave feminists, particularly during the "sex wars" of the 1980s. What surprises me most about this project is that my work ended up getting published in *Perspectives on Politics* as part of a symposium on "choice feminism" (Snyder-Hall 2010). I think it is safe to say that without the Women and Politics program and the blossoming of feminist scholarship that followed in its wake, a mainstream political science journal would never have published an essay addressing debates over lesbian sadomasochism.

Although my research topics have been varied and fall on various sides of the borders between political science, feminist theory, and sexuality studies, my work holds together as a normative political project that takes seriously a commitment to the principles of gender equality, sexual self-determination, and political participation, which is what I really care about; and because of that political impetus, the question of practice always looms large, even if sometimes only in the background. Fortunately, the infusion of feminist scholarship into the discipline has made politically engaged and practice-oriented scholarship more acceptable and has moved social science research back toward its roots in normative scholarship designed to make the world a better place (Snyder 2000).

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