
When Mad Men Pitches Feminism: Popular Education and Historical Witnessing Through DVD Special Features

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Abstract

This article analyses *Birth of an Independent Woman*, a 2009 documentary about the U.S. women's liberation movement. An archive of feminist memories produced for mainstream audiences largely ignorant of this past, the film's social, political, and cultural significance is complicated. On the one hand, this documentary's ability to inspire critical consciousness is potentially compromised by its corporate production as well as its distribution on one of *Mad Men*'s DVD boxed sets. On the other, it may signal an emergent form of popular culture that upsets traditional notions of both commercial entertainment and alternative media, not to mention historiography. Drawing on viewers' investments in this popular television series to build knowledge about women's history, gender oppression, and feminist activism, this documentary deserves critical consideration for its potential to facilitate ethical reception that contributes to progressive public memory and social change.

Keywords: active witnessing, DVD special features, feminist documentary, *Mad Men*, performative historiography

The act of correcting the visual record carries certain expectations about what the past can teach us and how this learning will most appropriately take place. While many agree that we have to attend to knowledge of the past and historical trauma, there are many views on how and why we should proceed. Kyo Maclear¹

This article focuses critical attention on an ancillary product associated with *Mad Men*, a U.S. dramatic series that is heading into its fifth season on AMC (American Movie Classics) at the time of this writing. Exploring transformations in the American advertising industry in the 1960s, the show's primary plot concerns the emotional development of its protagonist, advertising executive Don Draper (Jon Hamm). *Mad Men's* stories move well beyond Madison Avenue, however, touching on many other aspects of U.S. society during the Cold War including politics, popular culture, and domestic relations. Given its content, as well as the production company's extensive efforts at \, the drama has inspired considerable discussion both inside and outside the academy about its representations of the past.²

Released in July 2009, *Mad Men's* Season Two DVD set gives viewers the option of watching three special features that provide some historical backdrop for the series. One is titled *Birth of an Independent Woman*.

Figure 1. *Mad Men's* Season Two DVD Special Features. Lionsgate. 2009.



Given its title, those who have not seen this extra, but are familiar with *Mad Men*, might think that the “independent woman” to which it refers is Betty, or Joan, or Peggy, the programme’s main female characters. In some ways, such viewers would be correct. Each of these characters becomes increasingly agential over the course of *Mad Men's* second season, and *Birth of an Independent Woman* includes clips demonstrating their development. Nevertheless, this DVD extra is about much more than that.

Produced by Cicely Gilkey (*Mad Men's* DVD Content Producer) for Lionsgate (the series’ production house) at the suggestion of Matthew Weiner (Creator and Executive Producer),³ *Birth of an Independent Woman* is a two-part, 40-minute documentary that explores the rise of the U.S. women’s liberation movement.⁴ The first half, entitled “The Problem”, takes viewers back to post-World War II

America to examine women's frustrations with the suburban housewife ideal and the resurgence of traditional gender norms. The second half, "Independence", continues this presentation of feminism's revival by exploring various socio-cultural transformations that contributed to women's increased agency and public presence in the 1960s.

Although this history is well known to anyone who participated in, or has studied, the women's liberation movement, the material presented in this documentary is not part of most people's knowledge about 1960s America (including most U.S. citizens). Based on surveys of popular history textbooks, this movement was a subject largely avoided in many U.S. history classes before the turn of the twenty-first century.⁵

While the primary function of this DVD extra is to promote *Mad Men* and extend its economic value beyond its broadcast airings, we do well to consider the possible effects *Birth of an Independent Woman* might have, not only on viewers' reception of the series, but more broadly on popular memory of feminist history and knowledge about gender oppression. After all, this documentary is now available to all those who rent, purchase, and borrow *Mad Men's* Season Two DVD set—a figure that will likely reach a few million internationally.⁶ Its availability online is sure to increase and expand viewership even further.⁷ Not everyone who rents or buys this DVD set will watch this special feature, yet it remains significant in that its distribution (and therefore its potential audience) far exceeds that of most independently released feminist documentaries.

Those individuals intrigued by this phenomenon either know something about the conventions of DVD special features or are familiar with the gender politics of documentary film-making, two of the larger frames through which we might understand *Birth of an Independent Woman's* cultural significance. First, the supplemental material on DVDs is usually comprised of deleted scenes, interviews with producers and cast members, or "behind the scenes" production footage. Reconfiguring such conventions, some recent DVD sets for "quality" television dramas include special features that help viewers understand the finer details of a show's diegesis, such as the science of forensics for *CSI* fans.

These extras, which combine clips from the fictional series with footage of real life experts, function in the liminal space of "edutainment"—informative footnotes for media texts designed to amuse. Not surprisingly, documentaries about political movements are rarely included in such boxed sets. Indeed, *Birth of an Independent Woman* may well be the first.⁸

Second, despite the increased popularity and commercial success of documentary films in the U.S. since *Fahrenheit 9/11's* release in 2004, feminist documentaries have not played much of a role in this trend. This is because directors must often overcome not only political conservatism, but also sexism, to get their work distributed broadly.⁹ *Born into Brothels* is one of the very few contemporary feminist documentaries to get widespread theatrical distribution, although its US\$3.5 million in receipts seems rather paltry compared to *Fahrenheit's* US\$119 million.¹⁰ Such contextual factors suggest that *Birth of an Independent Woman* is an extreme rarity in contemporary U.S. media culture.

Indeed, its inclusion in a popular TV show's DVD release up-ends conventional notions of marketing and commercial entertainment, as well as documentary and historiography.

DVD special features always serve an economic function; extending viewers' interest in and loyalty to the original text. This increases its commercial value for the production company and, in the case of broadcasting, the television network and advertisers. Yet an analysis focused solely on political economy would obscure the complexity of socio-cultural significance on some DVD extras, particularly those that fall into the edutainment category.

In addition to extending Kyo Maclear's theory of historical witnessing to media reception, this article expands on Alison Trope's theory of DVD special features as potential "form[s] of popular education" and the possible pedagogic functions of *Mad Men's* DVD extras.¹¹ Trope's interest is in how such features can facilitate a kind of "do-it-yourself" course in film studies by familiarising viewers with the practices of film-making and formal analysis. My concern is how such extras might impact viewers' knowledge of the political issues and broader socio-historical context referenced in the narrative texts with which they are affiliated.

This history-based pedagogic function of DVD extras is made somewhat explicit in the boxed sets for *Mad Men*, a series well known for its attempts to provide historically accurate representations of U.S. society in the 1960s. Each of the DVD sets for this series includes documentary features that, like sidebars, offer further information on the social, cultural, and political history related to the series' diegesis, from the post-war rise of the divorce rate to the 1963 March on Washington.¹² Despite being an oddity in DVD culture, *Birth of an Independent Woman* is therefore no anomaly within the universe of ancillary products for the *Mad Men* series.

Since *Mad Men*—like other "quality" television dramas—attempts to attract what Ron Becker labels the "slumpy" audience (18 to 49-year-old socially liberal, urban-minded professionals), the educational perspective of the DVD extras produced for this series is not surprising. Most of the special features cover subjects rarely addressed in educational institutions or by those who are not socially liberal. Thus, such features potentially serve a broader socio-political function than most DVD edutainment extras. How then might *Mad Men's* extras serve as both containers and facilitators of critical consciousness and progressive public memory, and what is at stake in these practices?

With these questions in mind, this article analyses how *Birth of an Independent Woman* constructs its histories of post-war gender oppression and feminist activism. I consider the impact that watching this documentary might have on viewers' knowledge of the past, not to mention their critical understanding of, and ethical responses to, the present. I also explore this film's potential signalling of an emergent form of popular culture that upsets not only traditional notions of commercial entertainment and alternative media, but also those of historiography. In doing so, *Birth of an Independent Woman* offers a partial response to the question posed in this article's epigraph about how the record of traumatic histories might be corrected.

Form

Adhering to many of the conventions of expository documentary delineated by Bill Nichols, *Birth of an Independent Woman* uses archival footage, photographs, and sound recordings of feminist marches and other significant events to recount the rise of the women's liberation movement.¹³ The film also includes relevant imagery from Cold War American culture, including advertisements directed towards housewives and promotional shots of popular television shows, such as *Father Knows Best*. Yet *Birth of an Independent Woman* also veers from these documentary conventions in several ways. For instance, much in keeping with the practices of progressive historiography, it avoids constructing a “great men”—or in this case “great women”—narrative of this collective past.

The document also has no voice-over narration, so does not present a uniform historical perspective. Instead, it relies on commentary from six contemporary experts whose age, race, gender, and professional expertise result in multiple, partial, perspectives on this topic: Emily Bazelon, an editor of *Slate.com*; Diana York Blaine, who teaches writing and gender studies at the University of Southern California; Ellen Dubois, professor of women's history at the University of California, Los Angeles; Marcelle Karp, a writer and co-founder of *Bust* magazine; Michael Kimmel, professor of sociology at the State University of New York, Stonybrook; and Michele Wallace, professor of English at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, as well as founding member of the National Black Feminist Organization.

Further complicating any monolithic construction of feminist history, not to mention the conventions of expository documentary, *Birth of an Independent Woman* also incorporates clips from *Mad Men*, re-cutting the series to produce a different narrative of 1960s America where this time women dominate the screen. There is no doubt that such clips are primarily included to promote *Mad Men* and to increase Lionsgate's and AMC's profits. Moreover, they compromise the film's documentary credentials. Yet these narrative bits also construct something along the lines of an “aca-fan vid”, having been poached from the series and repurposed as historical material.¹⁴ Supplementing expert discourse, yet substituting for oral history, these *Mad Men* clips offer evocative displays of women's intimate experiences of gender oppression, which are rarely articulated in mainstream histories of this period.

The result flirts with performative documentary and historiography, as well as what Ann Cvetkovich calls “an archive of feelings”, drawing on viewers' investments in *Mad Men*'s fictional narrative and characters to facilitate both our knowledge and feelings about the real history of sexism.¹⁵ Betty, Joan, Peggy, and *Mad Men*'s other female characters function as stand-ins for the everyday women whose post-war experiences were not deemed worthy enough to be documented and archived. Viewers' identification with and desire for these characters not only facilitate further consumption of, and profits from, *Mad Men* and its ancillary

products. Such reception processes also maximise these characters' function as our avatars in this affective exploration of gender politics and feminist activism after World War II. To borrow from Cvetkovich, *Birth of an Independent Woman* constructs an affective archive for "an earlier generation of struggle that threatens to become lost history".¹⁶ As with the experts who appear in this documentary, *Mad Men's* multiple female characters provide viewers with different and fragmented glimpses into this multi-dimensional history.

"The Problem"

Helping to immediately situate viewers in feminist discourse, *Birth of an Independent Woman* begins with a montage of images featuring well-known American feminists: Susan B. Anthony, Margaret Sanger, Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan, and Sojourner Truth. While these individuals will be familiar to some viewers, the documentary misses an opportunity to educate those who lack this knowledge since no titles are included. The different formal qualities of the photographs used, as well as the clothing, hairstyles, and racial identities of the women, work together to suggest that feminists have been around for a long time and that we a diverse group.

As noted, *Birth of an Independent Woman's* first half focuses on "The Problem", as in "the problem that has no name", a phrase made famous by Friedan in the 1960s via her book, *The Feminine Mystique*. To contextualise this problem, the documentary relates the unique challenges and frustrations American women faced after World War II. As veterans returned from fighting battles overseas, women were encouraged via government and marketing propaganda to leave their paying jobs, identify primarily with the roles of housewife and mother, and consider the domestic sphere their primary site of effort and influence. Yet many homemakers felt that something was missing from their lives. Some psychiatrists responded by pathologising such women and increasing their prescriptions for tranquilisers. Despite this depressing history, this half of the documentary concludes on an upbeat note, as it explores how Friedan's book motivated housewives to look to the public sphere for fulfillment.

While a few images of Peggy (Elisabeth Moss) are used in "The Problem" to supplement the experts' commentary about working women, most *Mad Men* clips used in this half feature Betty (January Jones), who becomes increasingly dissatisfied with her role as "Mrs Don Draper" during the second season. Fans invested in the show will likely be moved by the inclusion of these clips, and thus perhaps more energised by *Mad Men's* own exploration of gender politics, if they are not already. Yet even viewers unfamiliar with the series will likely draw critical connections between the experts' comments on the post-war housewife ideal and images of Betty struggling to create a picture-perfect home and family while feeling alienated, isolated, and depressed.

Figure 2. Betty defrosts the fridge. Lionsgate. 2009.



Yet “The Problem” does not restrict its critique of 1960s gender politics to the housewife ideal. In one of the most evocative *Mad Men* clips in this half of the documentary, Joan (Christina Hendricks) sits on her bed massaging her shoulder. Via a slow zoom-in, viewers are made aware of the deep, red imprint left by her bra strap, a shot that subtly (yet poignantly) communicates the burden of heteronormative femininity during the Cold War era.

Figure 3. Joan and the post-war burden of femininity. Lionsgate. 2009.



Melodramatic clips like this and others from *Mad Men* demand more than just viewers’ aural and visual processing of information, the primary objective of expert commentary and archival imagery in documentaries. They challenge us not only to think about post-war gender politics, but also to *feel* their construction and effects.¹⁷ In doing so, they repeat the performative documentary impulse and move viewers into what Kyo Maclear describes as active witnessing, a state that implicates us in the reclamation and remembering of this widely experienced, yet largely unwritten, history. In Maclear’s words, “[W]e are asked to become midwives to memories still caught in the throes of becoming.”¹⁸

Despite the progressive potential of *Birth of an Independent Woman*'s inclusion of *Mad Men*'s narrative clips, like that of many other histories of American feminism, "The Problem's" memory work is flawed. Most concerning, it paints all women in hues that are specifically white, as well as middle-class, reproductive, and heterosexually monogamous. As a result, this half of the documentary, like the series it promotes, ignores poor women, queer women, and women of colour who also experienced the resurgence of patriarchal gender norms during the post-war era. This seems particularly weak point, especially given that its introduction includes an image of Sojourner Truth and part of a speech by Gloria Steinem on the need to connect sex- and race-based discrimination. Such content suggests that *Birth of an Independent Woman*'s version of feminist history will avoid the homogenising discourse of "sisterhood" that has vexed feminist activism and scholarship.

"Independence"

As if in response to the exclusion of marginalised women in "The Problem", one-third of "Independence"—the second part of *Birth of an Independent Woman*—focuses on the intersection of the civil rights and women's liberation movements. This may be one of the documentary's most important contributions, since many white-authored histories of feminism ignore the contributions of African American women and the influence of abolitionism and civil rights activism on women's liberation, just as many male-authored histories of the civil rights movement ignore women's contributions and the influence of feminist activism on abolitionism and the liberation of people of colour. Also, the prolonged attention to race and racial politics in "Independence" functions as a significant corrective for the *Mad Men* series, whose diegesis has largely been void of people of colour.

Given that one of the objectives of the DVD extras is to promote *Mad Men*, a series primarily created by and pitched to white people, it is interesting to consider that Gilkey, the film's producer, was able to include such a large portion of this history in *Birth of an Independent Woman*. More intriguing, however, while the documentary's first half includes many clips from the series to demonstrate "the problem that has no name", *Mad Men*'s marginalisation of women of colour required Gilkey to rely primarily on archival footage to demonstrate the experts' comments about black women's activism. Betty, Joan, and Peggy are of no use here, and even Sheila (Donielle Artese), one of *Mad Men*'s two women of colour, barely makes an appearance.¹⁹

Because women of colour rarely feature in public memories of either the civil rights or the women's liberation movements, this half of the documentary is a significant archival response to historical erasure. Yet there may be risks in this formal decision. Recall that the first part of this film conditions viewers to expect *Mad Men*'s clips to help them relate affectively to the political material discussed by the talking heads. Thus, Gilkey's reliance on archival footage in this

second segment may ultimately work to reinforce some viewers' (especially white viewers') emotional and thus ethical distance from black women's experiences of gender oppression and feminist activism, not to mention the profound intersections of gender and racial politics that impact all women's lives.

An audience study would be necessary to confirm the prevalence of this reading strategy, of course, but the remainder of "Independence" suggests that the containment of particular feminist experiences and memories is at play. The rest of this half of *Birth of an Independent Woman* homogenises feminist concerns by ignoring other feminist groups and ideologies that contributed to the diversity of the U.S. women's movement during this period. Although the film briefly addresses some challenges women faced in the post-war labour market, the remainder focuses almost exclusively on women's increased sexual agency as a result of effective birth control and legalised abortion.

Here, "Independence" is able to rely heavily on clips from *Mad Men*, which regularly draws attention to these issues. Yet while clips of Peggy and Betty masturbating help to disentangle female sexuality from its traditional heterosexual context, the unique issues lesbians and other queer women faced in the post-war era are absent from "Independence", just as they were in 1960s' gay and feminist politics, and just as they are in the first few seasons of *Mad Men*.²⁰ For a feminist archive that positions the housewife ideal as one of the primary barriers to women's liberation, it is strange that those who most resisted that role are excluded from *Birth of an Independent Woman's* feminist history.

Also unexplored are such common feminist concerns as women's education and the more traumatic, and thus controversial, issues of rape and domestic violence that feminists brought to public consciousness via their adherence to "the personal is political" philosophy.²¹ Instead, the film relies on contemporary mainstream rhetoric about women's "choices" to pitch feminism less as an organised, collective movement to end gender oppression than one geared toward individual women's labour and reproductive freedom (a neo-liberal perspective also evident in the film's title). In choosing this particular frame, this half of *Birth of an Independent Woman* ignores the different opportunities available to women in these and other aspects of everyday life as a result of their identity and background. It thus fails to return to the compelling exploration of feminist diversity and collaboration with which it begins.

Distribution

Despite the potential socio-political effects of *Birth of an Independent Woman's* marginalisation of women's diversity, as well as the feminist movement's more challenging elements, it is necessary to consider the constraints of production on such a text. It is quite likely that these exclusions resulted from Gilkey's attempts to appeal to *Mad Men's* targeted viewers who, although liberal, are also privileged and may therefore find radical histories disturbing. We might also understand such

exclusions as resulting from the film's length and short production schedule.²² After all, few other documentaries of comparable length have been able to present in its entirety this complex slice of U.S. feminist history, even those with much lengthier running times and production schedules.²³ Nor should such films be expected to. No one text can cover all of the women's movement's history, for historiography should never be univocal if it means to be pedagogically and ethically progressive.

What we might consider then is that *Birth of an Independent Woman's* contribution is as an engaging *introduction* to the rise of the women's liberation movement that lays the groundwork for viewers' further education on this topic. Teachers eager to get students interested in women's history, gender oppression, or feminist politics might use it as a supplementary text. This speculation has as much to do with the nature of the film's distribution and pricing as it does with its content, for the documentary is readily accessible. Collected in a boxed set that retails for about US\$40, *Mad Men's* Second Season DVD (two of which together contain *Birth of an Independent Woman*) can be rented individually for a few dollars from video stores or borrowed for free from many public libraries in the U.S. This documentary is also available online, where it can be viewed at no additional cost.²⁴ By comparison, most documentaries about feminist history rent for about \$75 apiece and cost over \$200 if purchased new, and very few of these films are part of public library holdings, and none is available online in its entirety.

Yet *Birth of an Independent Woman's* low price and easy access are indicative of only part of this text's significance for feminist historiography, pedagogy, and media. Also crucial to this discussion is the format in which it is distributed and the implications of that format with regard to garnering an audience. Historically, feminist documentaries have served a small, specialised constituency. With the decline of women's bookstores and film festivals since the 1980s, distributors have had considerable difficulty attracting viewers for theatrical screenings of such films. In fact, college classrooms are the primary location for group screenings of feminist documentaries today. As a result, feminist film distributors (such as Women Make Movies) are exploring alternative ways to get such work seen by more individuals, including those who may not identify as feminist.

While the web's potential in this regard is just beginning to be tapped, feminist documentarians have increasingly seen television as a useful platform, since that medium can increase by tens of thousands the average theatrical audience for their films.²⁵ Moreover, with the expansion of broadcasting via cable and satellite, progressive film-makers in the U.S. no longer have to rely on public television for reaching viewers. Yet, as with theatrical distribution, feminist documentarians interested in using television as a distribution platform have had a very difficult time competing with documentary's male superstars, such as Ken Burns.

As a result of such challenges, most documentaries about feminist history—indeed, feminist documentaries at large—are not broadly, easily, or cheaply available, so have not been primary players in educating the public about gender oppression and this movement. Many feminist film-makers are wary of working within the media industries, due to their histories of sexism and censorship of

radical politics. Yet *Birth of an Independent Woman*'s production by Lionsgate, and inclusion in a popular TV series' boxed set, may signal new possibilities for progressively-minded documentarists.

In particular, this text suggests emergent mechanisms for the production of critically conscious texts from within the culture industries, as well as for the distribution of such material to large audiences. As a result of its mainstream creation and distribution, *Birth of an Independent Woman* is bound to be seen by thousands more viewers than if it had been circulated via the traditional channels of feminist documentary. Clearly, not all documentarists have the same opportunities as Gilkey, whose work as *Mad Men*'s DVD Content Producer is strongly supported by both Weiner and Lionsgate. Nevertheless, her identity as an African American challenges white privilege in the media industries, just as her gender identity and feminist sensibility challenge their historical patriarchy and sexism. Thus, while debate continues among feminist documentarians about the potential effects of commercialism on the content of their films, new forms of progressive intervention from within the culture industries (such as those developed by Gilkey) deserve more critical attention from progressive film-makers and scholars.

Reception

Empirical audience research is beyond the scope of this article. Yet given the histories of mainstream and feminist media distribution, not to mention sexism, some hypotheses about *Birth of an Independent Woman*'s reception can be offered. Most significant, *Mad Men*'s boxed sets are not available globally, and in those countries where they have been imported, such sets may contain different extras.²⁶ So, even with its global online presence, the documentary's audience is restricted. It also seems likely that of those who have access to the series' DVDs, few might take time to view all or even part of this film. For while its inclusion in the extras suggests that Weiner and, perhaps, Lionsgate are interested in pitching feminism in more direct ways than they do on *Mad Men*, neither they nor Gilkey can force anyone to watch this special feature. Indeed, many people who stumble upon this documentary's title in the DVD menu may be put off by the phrase "Independent Woman". Even if some viewers begin watching, its division between two discs will likely cause audience attrition for its second half.

At the same time, however, it seems probable that a good number of *Mad Men* fans who self-identify as feminist will watch *Birth of an Independent Woman* if they hear about or happen upon it. Perhaps some viewers who would never step foot in a women's studies class or a feminist film festival will watch it simply *because* it is on a DVD for one of their favourite shows. How those viewers might respond to this documentary, and how it might affect their viewing of *Mad Men*, are questions deserving of much more attention than I am able to offer here. It is my hope, however, that when those viewers watch it, they will respond in the

same way that its primarily male crew members did while they were making it, that is, with surprise that they know so little about post-war gender politics, and with concern that sexism continues to limit the opportunities for some girls and women today.²⁷

In conclusion, I want to return to Maclear's theory of witnessing, for I believe it can help us to understand the progressive potential of mainstream documentaries like *Birth of an Independent Woman*. According to Maclear, historical art (and I would add media) that resists the "documentary impulse" of "gathering ... chronological facts and information", that draws attention to the partiality of remembering, and that challenges us to rethink what we know of as knowledge thereby implicates its viewers in the construction of history by facilitating our critical thinking about the past and its connections to the present.²⁸ Given *Birth of an Independent Woman*'s deviation from the traditions of expository documentary, I remain hopeful that it offers viewers the opportunity not only to develop a better understanding of the rise of the women's liberation movement, but also (and perhaps more important) to reflect on the connections between gender politics past and present.

With this potential in mind, I think *Birth of an Independent Woman*'s use of *Mad Men* clips is most compelling, for by juxtaposing archival footage and expert commentary with scenes of fictional characters that viewers already "know", desire, and identify with, the film's performative historiography encourages our emotional response to its history of gender oppression and thus activates our ethical concern through its construction of an archive of feelings. Because of this, *Birth of an Independent Woman* has the potential to make active witnesses out of all of its viewers, a position of not only expanded knowledge and emotion but also political agency. In other words, the film's use of *Mad Men* clips encourages more than attentive watching and re-watching of the series with new knowledge of the history of gender politics. Rather, it urges us to think critically well beyond our viewing experiences and to translate our knowledge and concern into action.

Attention to this latter step in the reception process is crucial, for as Maclear provocatively challenges viewers of historical texts, "[I]t is not enough to ask whether or not art remembers [the past], or even how it remembers. We need also ask to what ends *we* have remembered, what actions we are prepared to take in light of our new understandings."²⁹ Whether *Birth of an Independent Woman* leads its viewers to political action and what type of action it inspires are questions unanswerable by the present project. It is my hope that those interested in progressive historiography pay more heed to the possibilities for popular education and public memory made possible via emergent media forms, such as DVD special features.

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Endnotes

¹Kyo Maclear, *Beclouded Visions: Hiroshima-Nagasaki and the Art of Witness* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 23.

²For an example of public discourse about *Mad Men*'s attention to authentic detail, see Gail Pennington, "With Emmy Buzz and Plenty of Revelations, It's a 'Mad' World," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 20 July 2008: F1.

³Gilkey shared such information with the author during a telephone interview.

⁴*Birth of an Independent Woman*'s two parts appear on Disc 1 and 2 respectively of *Mad Men*'s Season Two DVD set.

⁵Like many other women's issues, the women's liberation movement has appeared only recently in textbooks for high school classes in U.S. history. See, for example, Jeffrey Allard, Roger Clark, and Timothy Mahoney, "How Much of the Sky? Women in American High School History Textbooks from the 1960s, 1980s and 1990s," *Social Education* 68(1), (2004): 57.

⁶This speculation is based on sales figures for *Mad Men*'s Season Two DVD set. Nearly 300,000 copies were purchased in the U.S. by late September 2009, 11 weeks after its release on 14 July 2009 (The Numbers, "US DVD Sales Chart for Week Ending Sep 27, 2009," Nash Information Services 27 September 2009, accessed March 27, 2010, <http://www.the-numbers.com/dvd/charts/weekly/2009/20090927.php>.) These figures do not include data on international sales or on domestic and foreign DVD rentals and borrowings.

⁷Stagevu, "Birth of an Independent Woman (documentary)," accessed June 29, 2011, <http://stagevu.com/video/uafxtzpkxbyr>; Veoh, "Birth of an Independent Woman," accessed June 29, 2011, <http://www.veoh.com/watch/v18899193gfYEsthH?h1=Birth+of+an+Independent+Woman>.

⁸This speculation can be confirmed only via a review of every DVD set produced to date.

⁹See ed. Alexandra Juhasz, *Women of Vision: Histories in Feminist Film and Video* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

¹⁰Box Office Mojo, *Born Into Brothels* domestic total gross data, IMDB.com n.d., accessed September 11, 2009, <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=bornintobrothels.htm>; Box Office Mojo, *Fahrenheit 9/11* domestic total gross data, IMDB.com n.d., accessed September 11 2009, <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=fahrenheit911.htm>.

¹¹Alison Trope, “Footstool Film School: Home Entertainment as Home Education,” *Inventing Film Studies*, eds. Lee Grieveson and Haidee Wasson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008) 353.

¹²In addition to typical content focusing on the series’ production, *Mad Men’s* Season One DVD extras include *The Desire of the American Dream*, which explores transformations in advertising during the 1960s. The Season Two DVD set includes: *Birth of an Independent Woman*; *Time Capsule*, which examines in further depth some historical events featured in *Mad Men*; and *An Era of Style*, which explores 1960s fashion and its influence on contemporary designers. The Season Three DVD set includes: *Medgar Evers: The Patriarch. The Activist. The Hero.* and *We Shall Overcome: The March on Washington*. The Season Four DVD set includes: *Divorce: Circa 1960s*; and *1964 Presidential Campaign*.

¹³Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2001), 105-09.

¹⁴“Aca-fans” are academics who consider themselves fans of their object of study. A “fan vid” is a video produced by a fan of a particular cultural text and typically incorporates material from that text.

¹⁵Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 130-37.

¹⁶Ann Cvetkovich, “In the Archives of Lesbian Feelings: Documentary and Popular Culture,” *Camera Obscura* 17(1), (2002): 111.

¹⁷I do not mean to suggest that expert commentary and archival imagery cannot affectively move listeners and viewers, but rather that *Mad Men’s* narrative clips, which have been constructed primarily for eliciting such emotional investment, have been used in this documentary specifically to achieve this effect.

¹⁸Maclear, *Beclouded Visions*, 20.

¹⁹By the end of *Mad Men’s* second season, the only black women featured were Sheila, Kinsey’s girlfriend, and Carla (Deborah Lacey), the Draper’s maid.

²⁰A lesbian character, Joyce Ramsay (Zosia Mamet), is introduced in Season Four.

²¹The absence of rape as a feminist issue in *Birth of an Independent Woman* seems odd since *Mad Men* had dealt with this issue three times by the end of its second season.

²²Gilkey reported to the author that she was working on several other *Mad Men* DVD extras when she was making *Birth of an Independent Woman*.

²³Other documentaries about the U.S. women’s liberation movement include: *Freedom is Contagious*; *Sisters of ’77*; *Some American Feminists*; *Some Spirit in Me*; *Step by Step*; and *Women Now*.

²⁴Stagevu, “Birth of an Independent Woman (documentary)”; Veoh, “Birth of an Independent Woman.”

²⁵As Executive Director, Debra Zimmerman informed the author that Women Make Movies is currently strategising on how to use the web as part of its promotion and distribution practices.

²⁶For example, the film is not available on *Mad Men’s* Second Season DVD set in New Zealand.

²⁷Gilkey reported these crewmembers’ reactions to the author.

²⁸Maclear, *Beclouded Visions*, 10.

²⁹Maclear, *Beclouded Visions*, 24.

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Biographical note

Mary Celeste Kearney is Associate Professor of Radio-Television-Film and Women’s and Gender Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Specialising in feminist media and cultural studies she is author of *Girls Make Media* (Routledge, 2006), and editor of *Mediated Girlhoods: New Explorations of Girls’ Media Culture* (Peter Lang, 2011) and *The Gender and Media Reader* (Routledge, 2011). Her essays have appeared in *Camera Obscura*, *Cultural Studies*, *Feminist Media Studies*, *Journal for Children and Media*, and the *NWSA Journal*.

Email: mkearney@mail.utexas.edu